

Triumphal Arch Project

Addendum - Public Comment Summary Response Report

A public comment period for the proposed Triumphal Arch project was conducted from June 5, 2026, to June 15, 2026, in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800. Due to additional public interest, the National Park Service (NPS) extended the opportunity to comment from July 10, 2026, to July 30, 2026. Project materials were provided through the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) system, and comments were accepted on the same platform. This comment period allowed consulting parties, organizations, and members of the public an additional opportunity to review the Assessment of Effects and the draft Programmatic Agreement and to provide feedback on these materials, consistent with the requirements of 36 CFR Part 800. During this July comment period, the NPS received a total of 6,254 comments.

To develop this report, the NPS downloaded the public comments from PEPC and other channels and used artificial intelligence (AI) tools to organize the comments by subject matter themes. NPS staff with expertise in the subjects involved developed and tested tailored prompts to ensure the AI outputs accurately reflected the full range of issues raised by commentors. Using these AI-generated digests as a foundation, NPS subject matter experts reviewed the comments, synthesized them into broader themes, and prepared this comment report.

Most of the comments submitted during this comment period were already addressed in the summary report prepared for the previous comment period. To avoid redundancy, NPS has prepared this addendum to highlight only the new comments received.

Cultural Resources

Lincoln Memorial

Proposed Alternatives or Mitigations Related to Lincoln Memorial

Some commenters suggested that the arch opening should be aligned so visitors on the bridge can see the full Lincoln Memorial through the arch and should honor both the Civil War veterans at Arlington and the 250th.

Arlington National Cemetery

Adverse Effects

Some commenters noted that the Arch would increase visitors to the area which would disrupt the solemnity of the area.

Commenters asserted that NPS did not fully consider potential impacts to the following historic properties within Arlington National Cemetery:

Sections 30, 36A, 51, 53, 55, 56, 57, 60, 66, 73, 74, 75, and 76, including the Taft Memorial in Section 30 and General Colin Powell's grave in Section 60.

George Washington Memorial Parkway and Memorial Circle

Adverse Effects

Commenters asserted that the project would have an adverse impact on major events in the area (e.g., Cherry Blossom 10 Mile Run, Marine Corps Marathon) because of traffic and other congestion.

Beneficial Effects

Some commenters noted that planned transportation improvements (e.g. safer crossings, wider trails) are beneficial and should proceed independently of the arch.

National Mall

Adverse Effects

Some commenters expressed concern that the project erodes established planning norms for the National Mall.

Historic Bridges

Adverse Effects

Some commenters expressed concern about the loss of the historic granite pylons and the integrity of the Memorial Avenue Corridor.

Proposed Alternatives or Mitigations Related to Historic Bridges

Some commenters suggested restoring or maintaining existing historic bridges and resources instead of constructing new monuments

Cultural Landscapes - Generally

Adverse Effects

Some commenters were concerned about the cumulative effects on the broader monumental landscape, including lighting, utilities, and security features.

Visitor Experience, Access, and Safety Concerns

Traffic and Circulation

Negative Impacts

Some commenters highlighted adverse impacts to major events (e.g., the Cherry Blossom 10 Mile Run, Marine Corps Marathon) from increased congestion.

Beneficial Effects

Commenters expressed support for planned transportation improvements (e.g., safer crossings, wider trails).

Proposed Alternatives or Mitigations Related to Traffic and Circulation

Some commenters suggested pursuing the transportation upgrades independent of the Arch project, including suggestions to pedestrianize parts of Memorial Circle or improve bike infrastructure.

Project Design and Location

Arch Design and Scale

Proposed Alternatives or Mitigations Related to Arch Design and Scale

Commenters proposed the following instead of a Triumphal Arch: a 250th anniversary museum, amenity improvements to Ladybird Park, additional educational programs.

Some commenters proposed choosing the final design in a distinctly American manner, such as holding a public design competition. Others suggested that the final design should be selected by veterans' organizations.

One commenter submitted a detailed alternative design ("Independence Arch") that aims to preserve sightlines and offer a more American civic monument.

Commenters noted that the project to celebrate the 250th should reflect "shared values," "democratic ideals," or "collective achievement."

Arch Location -Generally

Proposed Alternatives or Mitigations Related to Arch Location

Commenters proposed specific locations for the Arch: South Capitol Street, Chevy Chase Circle, near stadiums or Route 1, Commodore Joshua Barney Circle, and near Nationals Park.

Decision Making Process & Public Input

Public Review and Input

Beneficial Effects

Commenters appreciated the opportunity to provide public input noting appreciation for the reopening of the public comment period.

Proposed Alternatives or Mitigations Related to Public Review and Input

Commenters asserted construction should be delayed for further public and professional input and competitive design selection.