



July 6, 2012

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
National Mall & Memorial Parks
900 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024-2000



Mr. David Maloney
District of Columbia Historic Preservation Officer
1100 4th Street, SW E650
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Mr. Maloney,

Subject: Install Irrigation, Drainage, Water Collection Systems, and Relandscape the Mall,
Phases 2 and 3

The National Park Service (NPS) wishes to continue consultation with the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office by providing the following summary of alternatives under consideration for Phases 2 and 3 of the above subject project. The first phase of the project is currently under construction with an anticipated completion date of December 2012. Phases 2 and 3 are expected to be under construction between the summer of 2014 and the spring of 2016 and result in the installation of below grade infrastructure, such as cisterns, water lines and drainage lines, along with visible (at grade) work such as curbs, soil and turf in the lawn panels on the Mall between 7th and 14th Streets.

We have developed three schemes for the Mall turf panels and walkway layout between 7th Street and 14th Streets. All of the schemes have been modified according to feedback we have received in previous reviews from the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and National Capital Planning Commission. The ultimate goal of each of the schemes is to allow for event functions to take place on the Mall without destroying the turf while still respecting the historical precedent of the continuous green or *tapis vert* and the surrounding urban design context.

Scheme 1 is derived from the idea that creating eight nominally equal lawn panels is an effective way to preserve the *tapis vert* on the Mall and still provide a functional framework for staging events off of turf areas. In Scheme 1, the edges of the lawn panels are determined according to existing north/south roadway conditions, museum entrances, and extensions of the adjacent city street grid through the Mall. Two key event plazas would be separated from one another to reinforce the visual quality of the continuous green in the long view between the Capitol and



Washington Monument. Alternating with the event plazas would be widened walkways, dimensioned slightly larger than the existing walkway condition but sized at the minimum dimension to allow for efficient event space. The ordered hierarchy of walkway width is consistent with the ordered hierarchy of the Mall's immediate design context.

Schemes 2 and 3 are both based on the concept that an appropriate location for a key event plaza is at the implied 8th Street corridor extension (centrally located) on the Mall. Both of these schemes preserve *tapis vert* along the majority of the east/west axis of the Mall with a purposeful break at a single key event location. These schemes draw upon the 8th Street corridor's unique building and urban design conditions, which extend from the Mall into the architectural fabric of the city. There are minor differences between Schemes 2 and 3. These schemes differ with respect to the implied representation of the 9th Street roadway, since 9th Street is buried in a tunnel below the Mall. In Scheme 2, the 9th Street extension is delineated on the Mall grounds by a widened walkway. In Scheme 3, 9th Street is similar in width and configuration to 12th Street- with a small turf panel in the center of the corridor. These schemes rely on smaller areas of turf where temporary facilities would be required to be located. The turf would be replaced following each event when it was damaged.

Given the potential scope of the Mall Turf project and the ground disturbing activities associated with the project's various phases, the NPS originally determined the need to conduct a phase 1a archeological review, and if necessary, phase 1b archeological testing. Dr. Stephen Potter of the NPS will continue to communicate directly with Dr. Ruth Troccoli of your office on all pertinent archeological issues related to Phases 2 and 3 of the project.

The NPS has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze impacts specific to all phases of this project. The NPS continues to coordinate Section 106 process with the National Environmental Policy Act per the ACHP's regulations (36 CFR 800.8).(NEPA). At the beginning of Phase 1 of the project, a public scoping/Section 106 meeting was held at the National Capital Region headquarters building on March 9, 2010. The NEPA process was concluded with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on January 21, 2011. The Section 106 process for Phase 1 concluded on December 22, 2011 with a determination by your office of no adverse effect.

The NPS has reviewed the three proposed schemes for Phases 2 and 3 of this project in conjunction with its review of the area of potential effect established under Phase 1, the list of potential historic properties, also identified under Phase 1, and in coordination with the extensive Section 106 review and Programmatic Agreement completed as part of the National Mall Plan. The NPS believes that the three schemes, regardless of the scheme carried forward, will not have an adverse effect on historic properties. We hope that you concur with our finding of no adverse effect.

The NPS intends to continue consultation with your office and with the public per 800.3(e) through our Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website – www.parkplanning/nps.gov - as we progress through Phases 2 and 3 of the project. It is anticipated that these outreach efforts will continue to accommodate both the NEPA and the Section 106 process. We will also post presentation materials and other documents associated with Phases 2 and 3 to PEPC so as to keep the public and consulting parties informed about the overall project. The NPS will be submitting presentation materials to the CFA in anticipation of the commission's July 19, 2012 meeting. We will post this presentation to PEPC shortly.

Should the outcome of the CFA meeting result in substantive changes to one or more of the schemes, we will inform your office and continue consultation with you. If the CFA indicates a preference for one or a combination of the schemes, we will also inform your office so that you can finalize your determination of effect for Phases 2 and 3 of the project.

Thank you for your help. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me or James Perry, Chief of Resource Management, National Mall and Memorial Parks at (202) 245-4711.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Vogel
Superintendent
National Mall and Memorial Parks

cc: Ms. Katry Harris, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Ms. Jennifer Hirsch, National Capital Planning Commission
Mr. Thomas Luebke, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts