



U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Mall and Memorial Parks



# WELCOME!

## Benjamin Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements

Public Open House  
August 11, 2015  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

### PURPOSE OF TONIGHT'S PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

- ✓ Present an overview of the pedestrian access improvements project.
  - ✓ Identify potential concerns regarding the proposed project.
- ✓ Provide the opportunity to share your knowledge of important environmental and cultural issues that should be considered during project planning.
- ✓ Present potential project alternatives and gather public feedback.



View of the west side of Banneker Park where the interim pedestrian connection would be constructed under the proposed project



Conceptual rendering of the proposed Banneker Connection as envisioned in the SW Ecodistrict Plan



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# PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service (NPS)/National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA), in cooperation with the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), is proposing an improved pedestrian connection between the National Mall and the waterfront along Maine Avenue, SW in Washington, DC, as identified in the SW Ecodistrict Plan and the National Mall Plan.

The proposed connection includes the construction of an interim stairway and ramp between the overlook at Benjamin Banneker Park (Banneker Overlook), a NPS property, and the southwest waterfront near the Hoffman-Madison Waterfront (the Wharf). The project also includes landscaping, improvements to pedestrian crosswalks, lighting installation, universal accessibility, and stormwater management, if required.

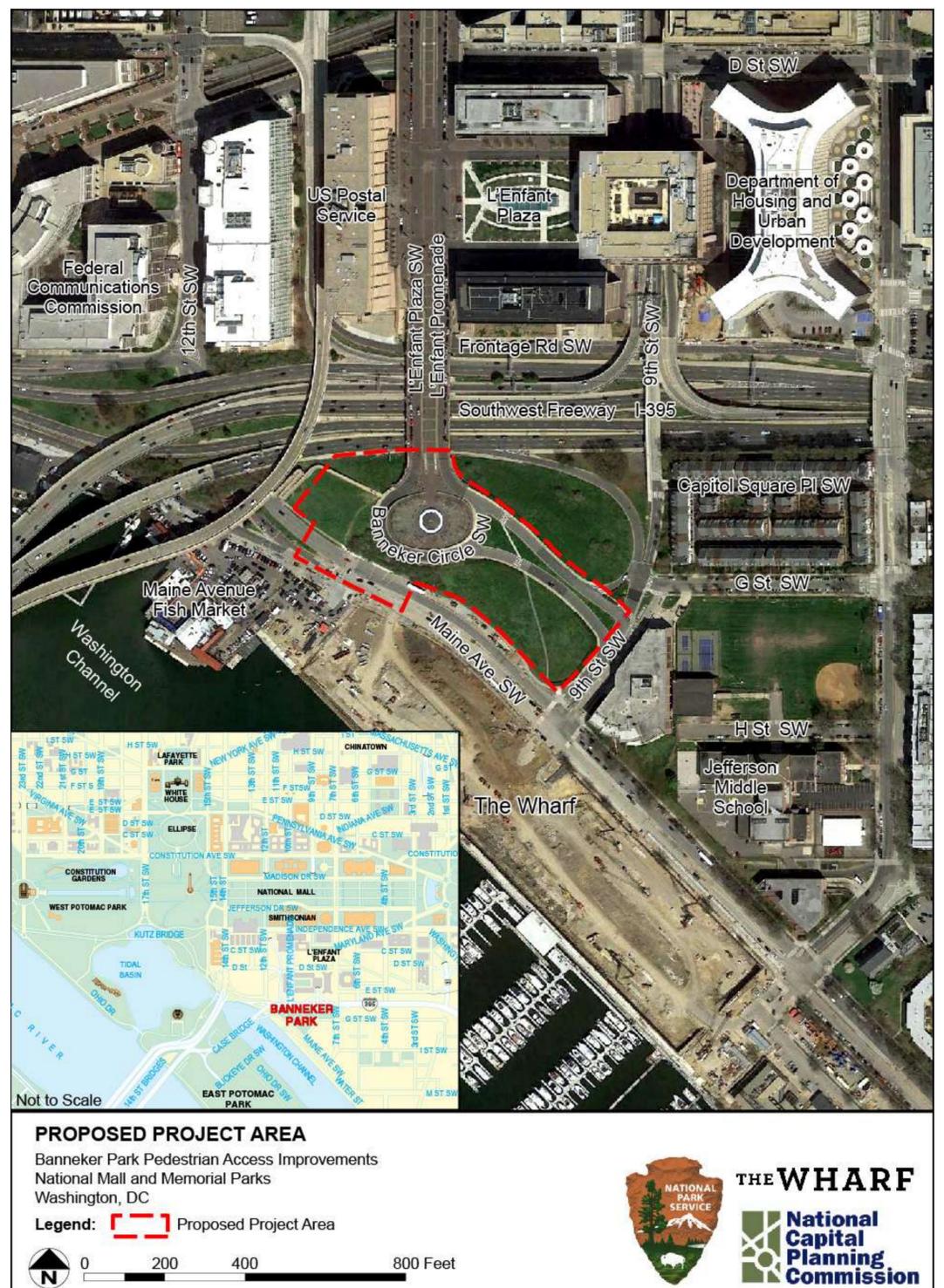
Hoffman-Madison Waterfront has committed to the planning and construction of the interim Banneker Park pedestrian connection as part of the Wharf redevelopment project.

Anticipated redevelopment along 10<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, as envisioned in the SW Ecodistrict Plan, will necessitate the design of a permanent connection in approximately 10 years.

## Purpose and Need

The purpose of the stairway and ramp is to provide a safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian connection between the Banneker Overlook and the southwest waterfront.

The project is needed to improve urban connectivity by providing greater accessibility between the waterfront, Banneker Park, the National Mall, and surrounding areas.





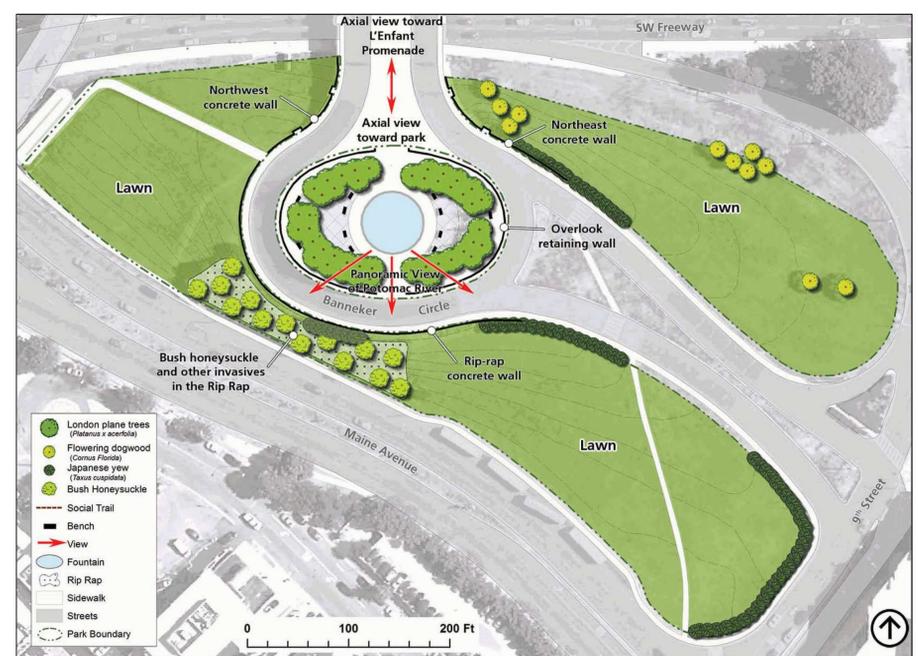
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# BENJAMIN BANNEKER PARK

- Banneker Park is located within the NAMA administrative unit of the NPS. Originally known as the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Overlook, the park comprises the southern terminus of the L'Enfant Promenade in southwest Washington, DC.
- Banneker Park serves as a monument to Benjamin Banneker, the free African American who charted the stars for the first survey of Washington, DC.
- Banneker also published a series of almanacs predicting the movements of the sun, moon, and stars to guide farmers in the best timing for planting and harvesting.
- Designed by Dan Kiley and constructed in 1967-1969, Banneker Park includes an approximately 200-foot wide elliptical plaza known as Banneker Overlook that contains a water fountain surrounded by London planetrees (*Platanus acerifolia*), and provides benches, trash receptacles, and interpretive signage.
- The rest of Banneker Park is comprised of grassy fields that slope steeply down to Maine Avenue, SW.
- From Banneker Overlook, visitors are afforded views of the waterfront, Washington Channel, and East Potomac Park.
- Banneker Park has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).



Banneker Park Site Plan

Source: Benjamin Banneker Park Cultural Landscapes Inventory (2013)



View from Banneker Overlook of the Maine Avenue Fish Market, Washington Channel, and East Potomac Park



View of Banneker Overlook from the north on the L'Enfant Promenade



View of the L'Enfant Promenade facing north toward the Smithsonian Castle



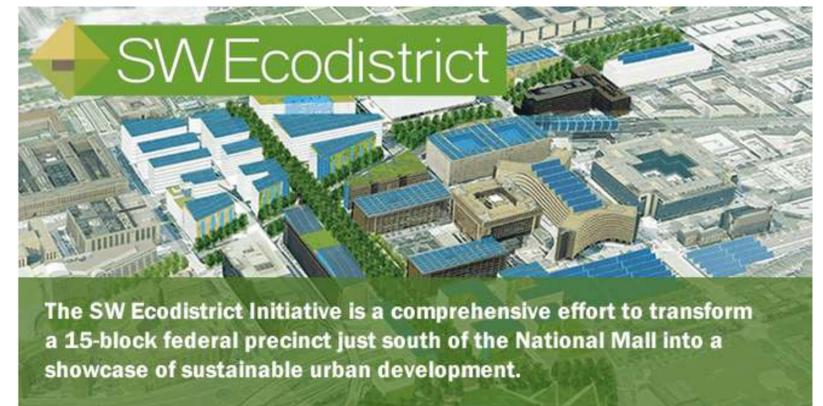
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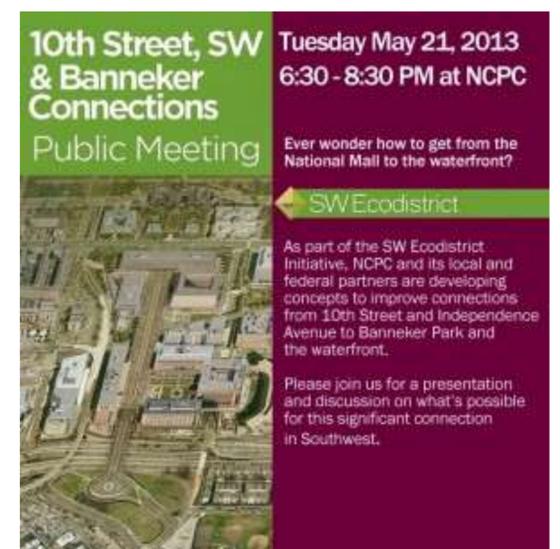
## PROJECT BACKGROUND

In January 2013, NCPC accepted the SW Ecodistrict Plan in an effort to create a sustainable, livable environment within southwest Washington, DC. As part of the plan, NCPC and its project partners launched the 10<sup>th</sup> Street, SW and Interim Banneker Connection Projects.



## SW ECODISTRICT TASKFORCE AND WORKING GROUP

Between January and December 2013, the NCPC-led SW Ecodistrict Taskforce, which included 17 federal and local agencies, held three meetings to define the scope, assess alternatives, and select a preferred concept for the 10<sup>th</sup> Street, SW and the Interim Banneker Connection projects. Each agency also appointed a staff person to the SW Ecodistrict Working Group that participated in six workshops and produced work for the Task Force to review.



## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Public input was obtained through NCPC's website and two public meetings in May and November of 2013.

## CFA AND NCPC COMMISSION

Project concepts were presented to the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) in June and November 2013, and to the NCPC Commission in June 2013 and January 2014.



**The SW Ecodistrict**  
PROGRAMMATIC DESIGN CONCEPT SUMMARY  
10TH ST, SW AND INTERIM BANNEKER CONNECTION  
MARCH 2013  
National Capital Planning Commission

## CURRENT PROJECT

More recently, Hoffman Madison Waterfront has committed to the planning and construction of the interim Banneker Park pedestrian connection as part of the Wharf redevelopment project.



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# POTENTIAL PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

The NPS, NCPC, and the Wharf have identified two potential alternatives for the improved pedestrian connection at Banneker Park.

## Concept #1

Under Concept #1, both the proposed stairway and ramp would be located west of the Banneker Overlook. To accommodate the ramp at this location and to make the ramp ADA-compliant, several switchbacks with resting platforms would be necessary to gradually elevate the ramp to the overlook. This alternative would also include landscaping, improvements to pedestrian crosswalks, lighting installation, and stormwater management, if required.



Signalized intersection where the proposed stairway would connect to Maine Avenue, SW



I-395 pedestrian bridge connection at Banneker Overlook

**NOTE: Additional or modified alternatives may be identified and evaluated based on public feedback.**



Grassy slope west of Banneker Overlook down to Maine Avenue, SW



Wharf redevelopment from Banneker Overlook



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# POTENTIAL PROJECT ALTERNATIVES (CONTINUED)

## Concept #2

Under this concept, the proposed stairway would be constructed on the west side of Banneker Overlook. A portion of the wall along Banneker Circle, SW at the connection to the I-395 pedestrian bridge would be removed to provide access for the stairs. The stairs would lead down the grassy slope of the park and connect with the new signalized intersection at Maine Avenue, SW that has been created as part of the Wharf redevelopment.

In addition, the existing path to the east of the overlook would be improved and made ADA-compliant under Concept #2. This alternative would also include landscaping, improvements to pedestrian crosswalks, lighting installation, and stormwater management, if required.



Banneker Overlook and the proposed location of the stairway under Concept #1 and #2



Existing pedestrian path leading from Maine Avenue, SW to Banneker Overlook on the east side of Banneker Park

**NOTE: Additional or modified alternatives may be identified and evaluated based on public feedback.**



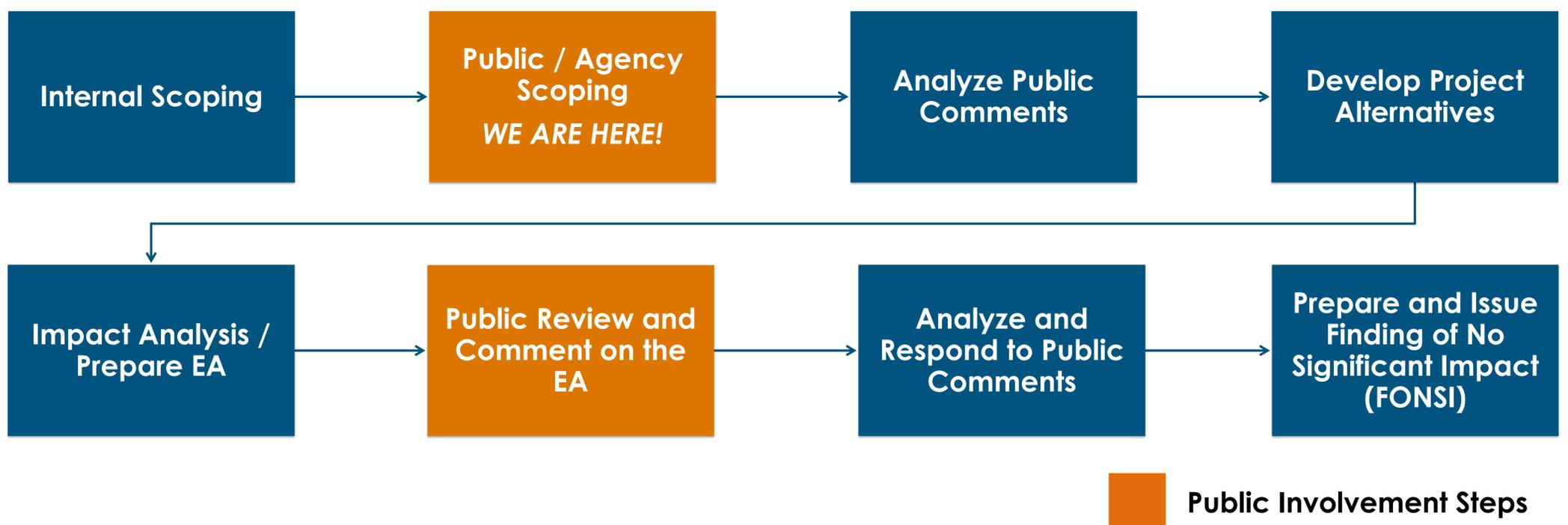
# NEPA COMPLIANCE

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 was created to ensure federal agencies consider the environmental impacts of their actions and decisions.
- Federal agencies are required to systematically assess the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and consider alternative ways of accomplishing their missions, which are less damaging to and protective of the environment.
- The NPS will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project that documents the analysis of environmental impacts of several alternatives in accordance with NEPA and other applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

## WHAT IS AN EA?

- An EA is a document prepared by a federal agency to comply with the requirements of NEPA that generally includes discussions of the following:
  - The purpose and need for the proposed action;
  - A reasonable range of alternatives;
  - The environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives; and
  - A summary of public involvement and agency coordination.
- The analysis of project impacts generally focuses on several resource areas or “impact topics” that are based upon issues and concerns identified during scoping.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS





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## SECTION 106 COMPLIANCE

- Concurrent to the NEPA process, the NPS and NCPC, a cooperating agency, will assess the effects of the project on cultural resources in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).
- The NHPA established a comprehensive program to preserve the historical and cultural foundations of the nation as a living part of community life.
- Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the effects of projects they carry out, approve, or fund on historic properties.
- The NPS and NCPC have initiated consultation with the DC State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA.



A 1980 aerial photo looking north towards Banneker Park and L'Enfant Promenade

## CONSULTING PARTIES

A “consulting party” is any individual or organization with a demonstrated interest in a project due to the nature of their legal or economic relation to the undertaking or affected properties, or their concern with the undertaking’s effects on historic properties.

Individuals and organizations may participate in the Section 106 review as consulting parties. To become a consulting party, submit your request in writing using one of the following methods:

- 1) Submit request tonight on a comment form.
- 2) Online: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BannekerConnection>
- 3) Mail written request to:

Superintendent  
National Mall and Memorial Parks  
Attn: Banneker Park Connection  
900 Ohio Drive SW  
Washington, DC 20024

### Banneker Circle: Vista to the Past

THIS HIGH GROUND SERVES as a monument to Benjamin Banneker, the free African American who charted the stars for the first survey of Washington, D.C. Banneker was 60 years old when he hired on to assist surveyor Andrew Ellicott. A tobacco planter from Baltimore County, Maryland, Banneker had taught himself mathematics and astronomy. With these skills, he observed the stars' movements each night. Ellicott used Banneker's calculations to determine the District's boundaries. In addition Banneker published a series of almanacs predicting the movements of the sun, moon, and stars to guide farmers in the best timing for planting and harvesting.

This vista once belonged to Notley Young. The Maryland planter owned nearly all of today's Southwest when President George Washington chose the spot, then part of Maryland, for the new nation's capital in 1791. Young's brick mansion stood close to where you are now. Young owned many farms in the new city and nearby Maryland, and reported owning 265 slaves to 1790 Census takers. Before the Revolution, Maryland's Catholics were prohibited from worshipping in public churches, so Young and his Catholic neighbors gathered for Mass in his house. In 1857 Young's grandson, Father Nicholas Young, Jr., helped establish St. Dominic Church.

The L'Enfant Promenade to your right, designed by I.M. Pei and others for New York developer William Zeckendorf, now covers the site of Young's house. Zeckendorf envisioned a dramatic expanse lined with office and cultural buildings as a link between the National Mall and Southwest's waterfront. Today's Forrester Building blocks what was to be a view to the Smithsonian castle.

Excerpt from interpretive signage located at the Banneker Overlook

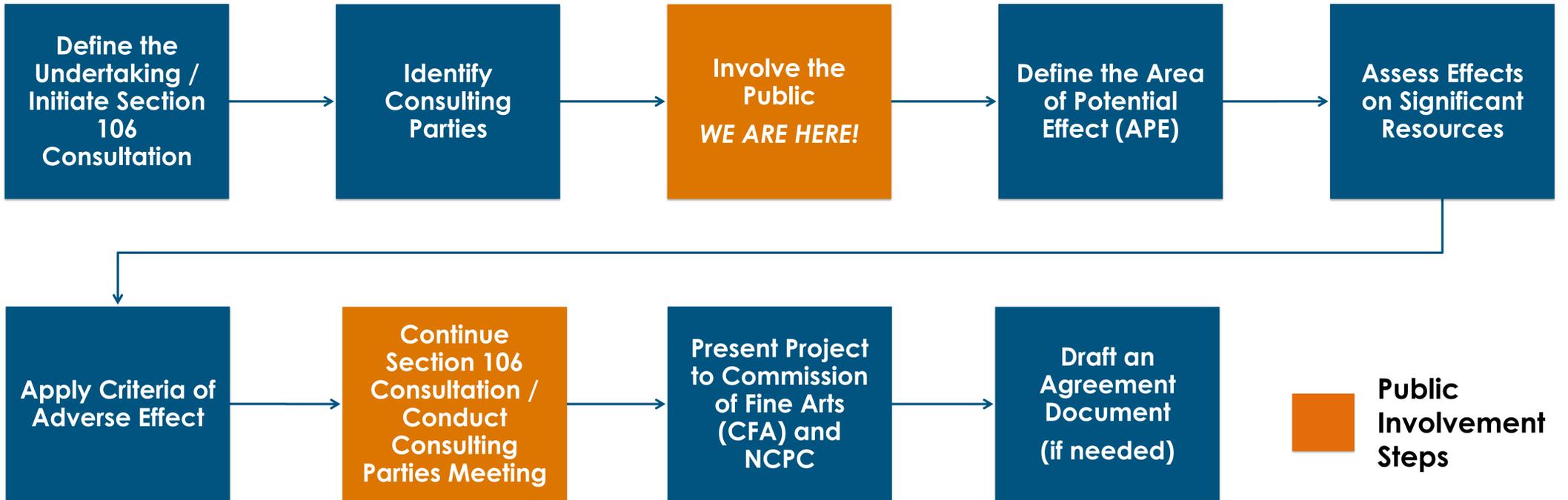


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# SECTION 106 PROCESS

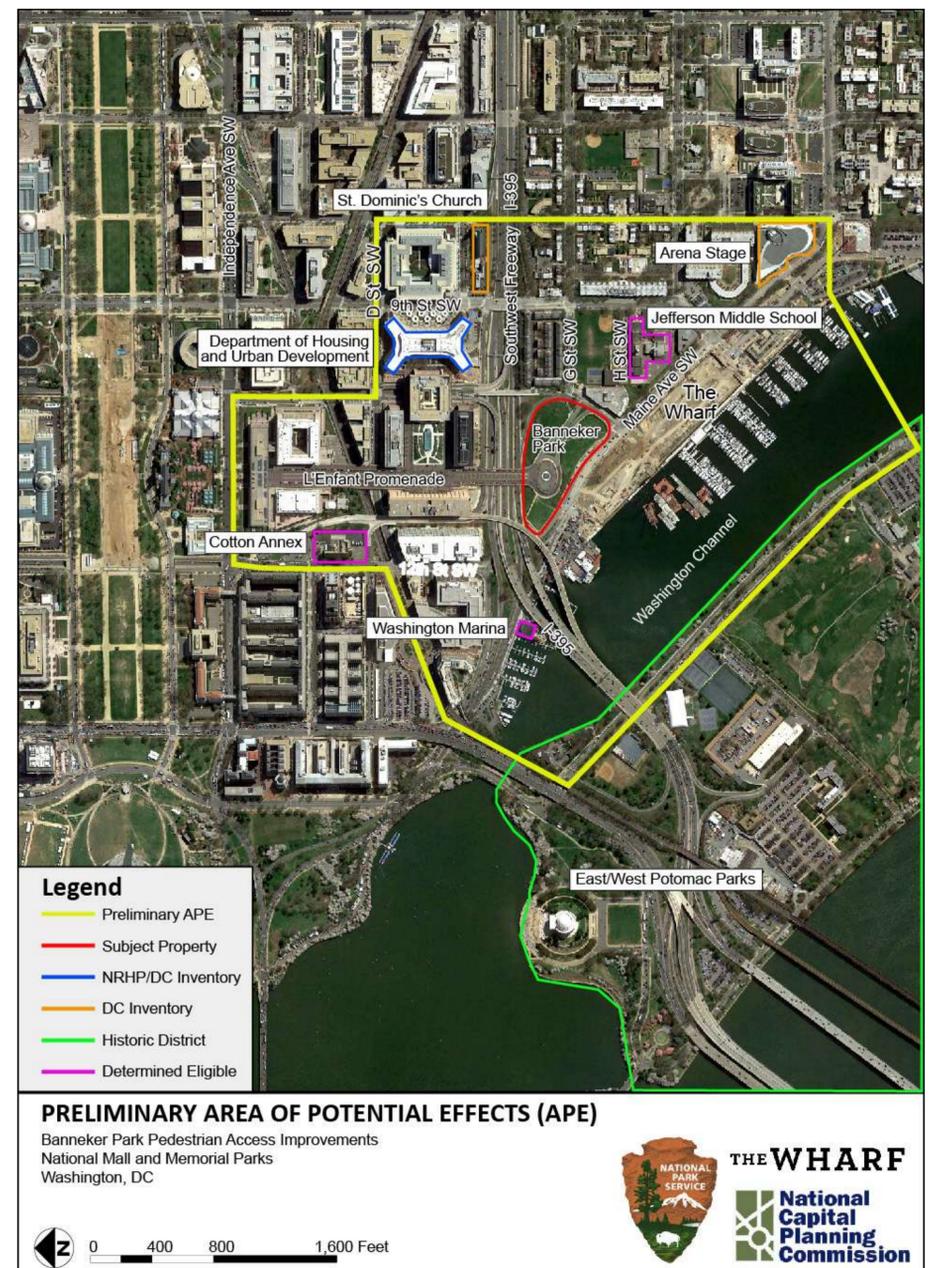


## AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

As part of the Section 106 process, a Preliminary Area of Potential Effects (APE) has been identified for the project. Several properties within the APE are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the DC Inventory of Historic Sites, or have been determined eligible for listing.

### HISTORIC PROPERTIES WITHIN THE APE

- Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
- Saint Dominic's Church
- Arena Stage
- East/West Potomac Park
- Benjamin Banneker Park
- Washington Marina
- Jefferson Middle School
- Cotton Annex





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## GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK

The NPS and NCPC are conducting a public scoping period to provide an opportunity for the public to assist with the identification of potential environmental issues that could result from the implementation of the proposed project.

The NPS and NCPC invite you to share your knowledge about the project area and your ideas for the proposed pedestrian access improvements at Banneker Park.

Comments received during scoping will assist the project team to identify potential issues and concerns to address in the EA.

## HOW TO COMMENT

### Provide Comments Tonight

Take a moment to write down your comments on the forms provided.

### Online

Submit written suggestions, comments, and concerns regarding the project online at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BannekerConnection>

### U.S. Mail

Written comments may be mailed to:

Superintendent  
National Mall and Memorial Parks  
Attn: Banneker Park Connection  
900 Ohio Drive SW  
Washington, DC 20024



View of the central water fountain at Banneker Overlook

Comments must be received  
by September 2, 2015.

**WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROCESS!**