



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Mall and Memorial Parks
900 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024-2000



July 20, 2015

Mr. David Maloney
State Historic Preservation Officer
District of Columbia Office of Planning, Historic Preservation Office
2000 14th Street, N.W., 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20009

RE: Initiation of NEPA/Section 106 Consultation
Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements Project

Dear Mr. Maloney,

The National Park Service (NPS), in cooperation with the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), is proposing an improved pedestrian connection between the National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA) 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 is through Benjamin Banneker Park (Banneker Park) and includes the construction of a temporary stairway and ramp between the overlook at Banneker Park (Banneker Overlook) and the southwest waterfront near the Hoffman Madison Waterfront LLC (the Wharf) redevelopment. The Wharf is implementing the improved pedestrian connection in fulfillment of a zoning requirement. Banneker Park, owned by the NPS, was constructed between 1968 and 1969, and has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) with the concurrence of the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C)), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (54 U.S.C. § 300101) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR § 800), and other laws, regulations and policies, the NPS and NCPC will be preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the effects this undertaking will have on the natural, cultural, and human environment. Anticipated future redevelopment along 10th Street, SW, as envisioned in the *SW Ecodistrict Plan*, will necessitate the design of a permanent connection, which will require additional NEPA and Section 106 processes at a later date.

The purpose of the project is to provide a safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian connection between the Banneker Overlook and the Wharf redevelopment along the southwest waterfront. The NPS and NCPC have identified a Preliminary Area of Potential Effects (APE), which extends from the East and West Potomac Parks to the south and west, to just south of Independence Avenue, S.W., to the north, and along 6th Street, S.W., to the west (Attachment 1). Within the APE are

properties listed in the NRHP, the DC Inventory of Historic Sites, as well as those that have been determined eligible for listing.

The NPS and NCPC are presenting two potential concepts for the improved pedestrian connection (Attachments 2 and 3) during public and agency scoping; however, additional or modified alternatives may be identified and evaluated within the EA. In addition to the proposed stairway and ramp, all action alternatives will include landscaping, improvements to pedestrian crosswalks, lighting installation, universal accessibility, and stormwater management, if required.

The NPS and NCPC plan to coordinate the Section 106 and NEPA processes per the implementing regulations (36 CFR § 800.8) of the NHPA. A 45-day public scoping period will occur from July 20, 2015 through September 2, 2015, at which time interested members of the public are encouraged to submit written suggestions, comments, and concerns regarding the project online at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BanneckerConnection> no later than September 2, 2015.

A public open house is also scheduled on August 11, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Wharf offices located at 690 Water Street, SW to share project information with the public, receive comments, and invite participation in the planning process in accordance with NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA.

At this time, the NPS and NCPC would like to initiate formal Section 106 consultation with your office in accordance with section 36 CFR § 800.3 of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations implementing Section 106. If you have any questions or comments regarding the proposed project, please contact Catherine Dewey at 202-619-7107 or by email at catherine_dewey@nps.gov.

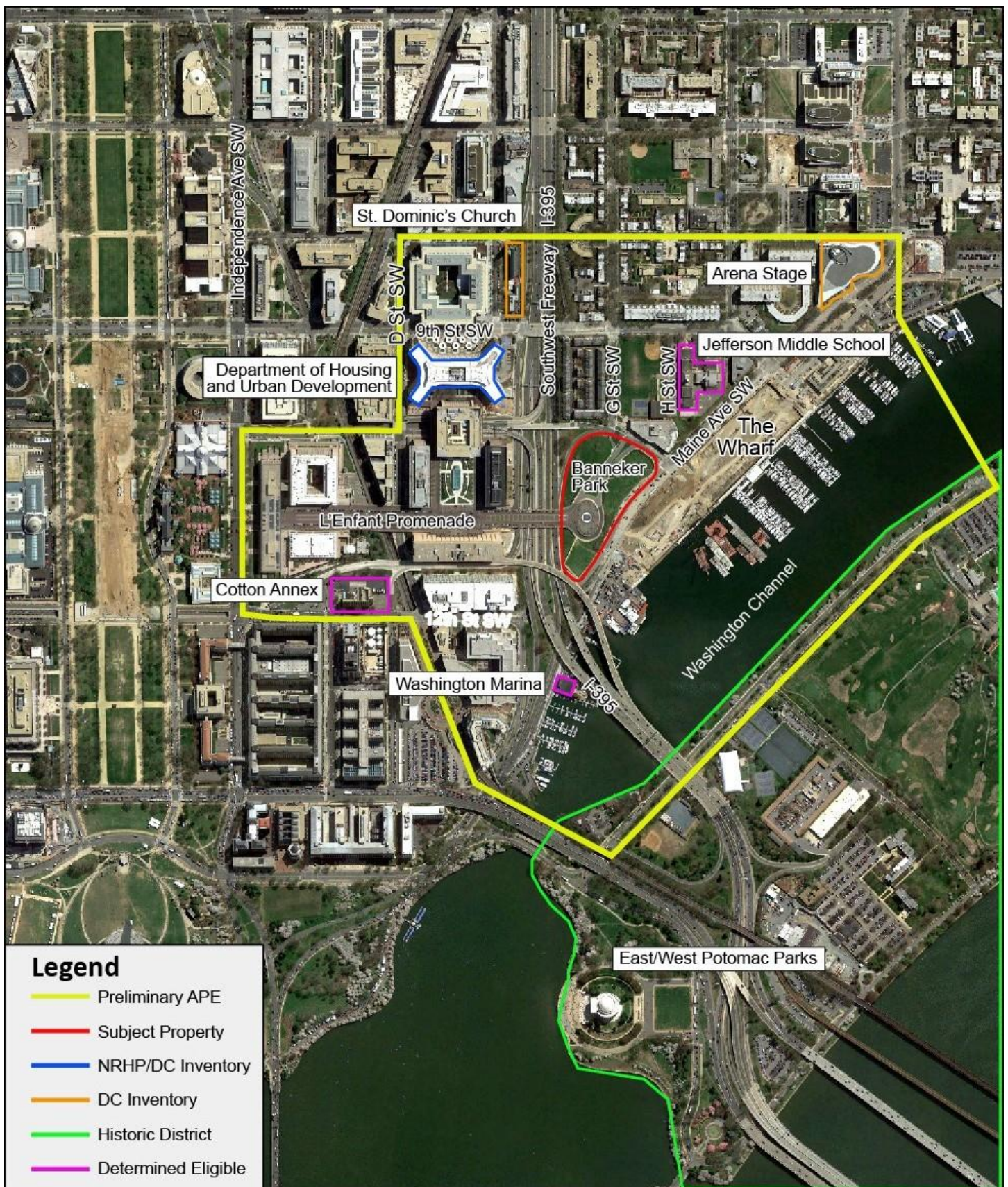
Sincerely,



Karen L. Cucurullo
Acting Superintendent
National Mall and Memorial Parks
National Park Service

Enclosures

cc: Catherine Dewey, National Mall and Memorial Parks, Chief of Resources Management
Diane Sullivan, National Capital Planning Commission, Senior Urban Planner
Jennifer Hirsch, National Capital Planning Commission, Federal Preservation Officer
Yasmine Doumi, PN Hoffman
Brett Schrader, Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
Kim Daileader, EHT Tracerics



PRELIMINARY AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)

Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements
National Mall and Memorial Parks
Washington, DC



BANNEKER PARK PEDESTRIAN ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

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 up to the overlook. This concept would also include landscaping, improvements to pedestrian crosswalks, lighting installation, and stormwater management.



BANNEKER PARK PEDESTRIAN ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Concept #2

Under this potential 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. As previously stated, this concept would include landscaping, improvements to pedestrian crosswalks, lighting installation, and stormwater management.

