

Remarks on Maryland & Independence Avenues Site

Location & Current Use:

Site #1, the preferred site of the Eisenhower Memorial Commission is located on Maryland Avenue, between 4th and 6th Streets, SW, and bounded by Independence Avenue on the north side. It is designated Site #3 on NCPC's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*. Currently, the site is primarily a spare, uninviting plaza with a sunken courtyard. Maryland Avenue bisects the site, separating the plaza from a small, triangular green space.

Accessibility:

The site is in an open, urban plaza of about 4 acres under the jurisdiction of three different agencies. General Services Administration (GSA) holds 1.5 acres, National Park Service (NPS) holds .24 acres, and the District of Columbia holds 2.76 acres. Pedestrian access is excellent, and the site would benefit from heavy walking traffic. Tour groups constantly arrive on buses at the National Air & Space Museum (NASM) across the street and this museum, as well as the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) draw tourists from the National Mall directly into the path of the preferred site. In 2004, NASM had 4.9 million visitors and NMAI had 1.7 million. If just 10 percent of those tourists cross the street to the National Eisenhower Memorial, it would have a huge tourist population.

In addition, the site is less than two blocks from both the Federal Center SW and L'Enfant Plaza Metrorail stations, which provide access to the Blue, Orange, Green, and Yellow Lines. Multiple Metro Bus routes run in this area, and the

Virginia Rail Express stops nearby. Street parking in the area is poor and there are few parking garages nearby.

Surrounding Landmarks:

The site lies just north of the Department of Education and west of the Voice of America buildings. The National Air & Space Museum (NASM) is across the street from the site, and the National Mall is on the other side of the museum. The site has a direct view of the Capitol and is adjacent to the Department of Transportation building that houses the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The recently opened National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) shares a corner with the site. Several of these institutions provide strong thematic links to Eisenhower's legacy.

Thematic Ties to Eisenhower:

Capitol of the United States

President Eisenhower had only one Congress controlled by his own Republican party, and even then by the slimmest of margins. Nevertheless, Eisenhower created and maintained close working relationships with the leadership of both parties. He never felt the need to enhance his own image or reputation, and his word could be taken seriously. He was always respectful of the Congress and its individual members. He never publicly engaged in personalities, refusing ever to mention Senator Joe McCarthy's name or to point out certain Senators who were creating a scare over a "missile gap" when they knew none existed. This trait and his unflappable personality helped Ike create a new level of

comity in the Capitol. Because they knew they could trust him, the nation's Senators and Representatives gave Eisenhower the support he needed to govern effectively.

United States Department of Education

President Eisenhower was a strong proponent of education, and created the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (predecessor to the Department of Education) in 1953. In addition, he offered education initiatives throughout the years of his presidency, but had little success until October 1957, when the Soviets launched Sputnik. In the next year, the administration proposed and assisted in the passage of laws such as the National Defense Education Act, which created the first federal grant and loan programs to students, as well as graduate fellowships and grants to improve public school instruction in mathematics, science, and modern foreign languages. In his memoirs Eisenhower remarked that Sputnik, "caused us to give increased attention to scientific education in this country and ultimately to all phases of education." While others used Sputnik to cause fear among the American public, Eisenhower used it to focus on and improve public education.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

When President Eisenhower created the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (predecessor to HHS) in 1953, he appointed Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby as its first Secretary. Later Ike wrote of her, "You made the heart in Government a visible fact and an effective influence." Secretary Hobby was instrumental in getting Eisenhower's Social Security legislation passed in 1954, a measure which extended coverage to an additional 10.5 million Americans. This act constituted the largest single expansion of Social

Security in the program's history. Social Security is still one of the largest functions of that Department.

National Air and Space Museum (NASM)

Dwight Eisenhower strongly supported aviation development during his military career, and, when Chief of Staff of the Army, he led the way in the creation of the United States Air Force as an independent, co-equal branch of our military services. He also supported the development of the Air Force Academy and signed the legislation creating it. As President, he took a great interest in moving America into the space age. Despite military pressure, Eisenhower insisted that a civilian agency and not the military be responsible for space exploration because he did not want it to be seen as a weapon. He was the driving force in creating the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and was the first president to review photographs taken from earth-orbiting satellites.

United States Department of Transportation

President Eisenhower changed the face of America with innovation in transportation. He personally managed the creation of the Interstate Highway System we rely on today, and he also led the way to completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway, which opened the Midwest to global markets. Eisenhower pushed through several measures as part of a plan to consolidate air traffic and controls for military and civilian planes and on August 23, 1958 signed the final bill (PL 726) creating the Federal Aviation Agency. He actively promoted airport development and took a personal hand in selecting the site of the first international airport in the United States specifically designed for jet-propelled passenger and cargo

aircraft. Today, that facility is known as Washington Dulles International Airport.

Voice of America

In 1953, President Eisenhower established the United States Information Agency and made the Voice of America [VOA] its principal component. He worked hard to differentiate VOA from the propaganda organizations of other countries, especially those behind the Iron Curtain. He believed that the world should know that VOA broadcasts only the truth. During his presidency he proposed and shepherded to acceptance the VOA Charter, a draft of which was approved by the State Department in 1960. As expressed in this Charter, the VOA's mission is to be accurate, objective, balanced, comprehensive, and responsible.

Reasons for Preference:

The size of the Maryland Avenue site is more than twice that of the Freedom Plaza site, and therefore permits greater flexibility in design. Additionally, good opportunities exist for locating living memorial components in an adjacent federal office building. In addition, this site already has informal support from review agencies and stakeholders who support the National Eisenhower Memorial's ability to re-energize the plaza and create a new tourism destination.

A potential obstacle to building on this site is Maryland Avenue, which runs diagonally through the site, breaking it into two parcels. The site is being modestly refurbished as a maintenance project by the General Services Administration (GSA). The Commission has inquired into closing the street and has found that its closure would have minimal impact on traffic flow. The EMC would be required

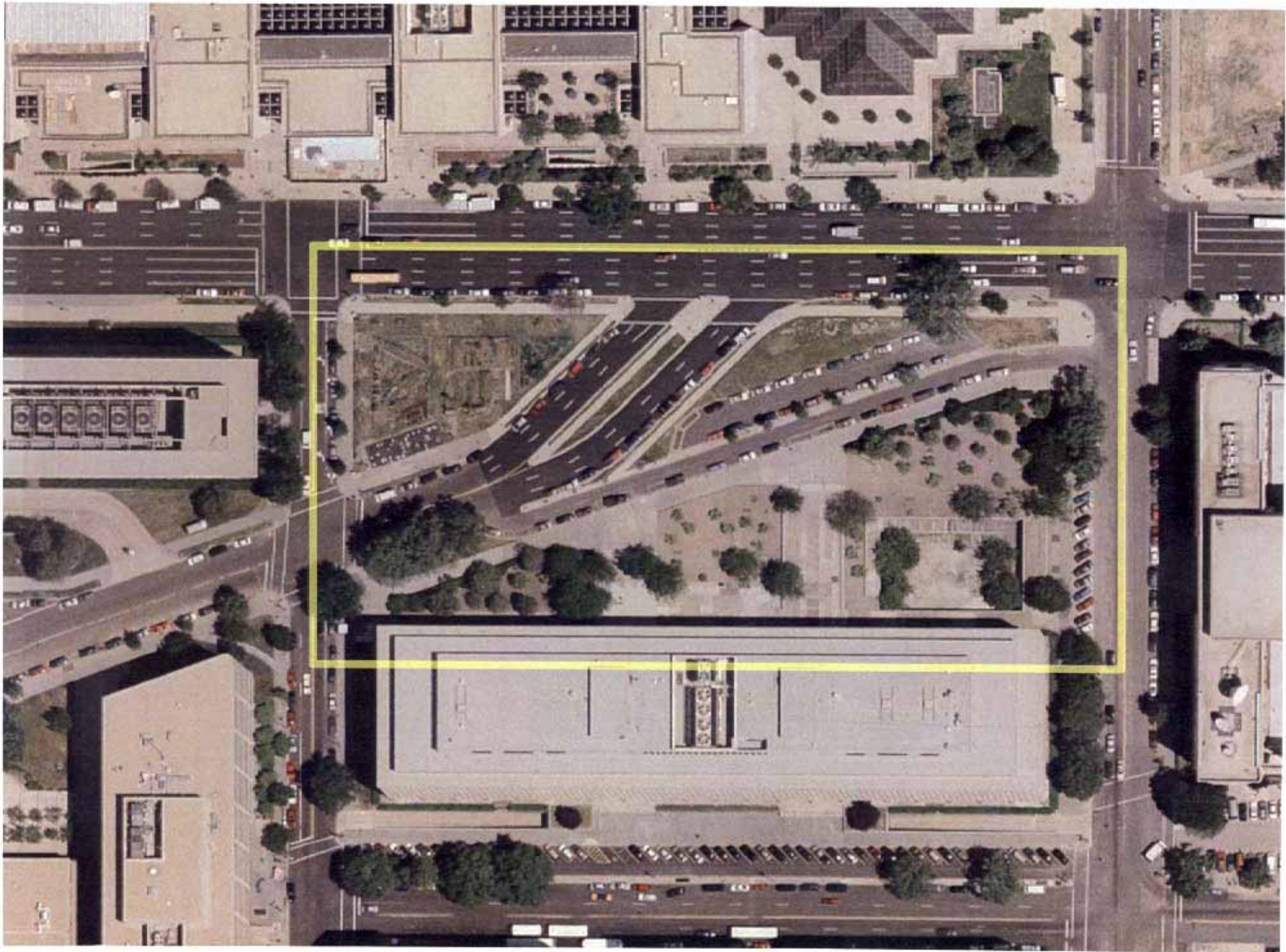
to make a one-time payment to the District of Columbia for loss of parking revenue from approximately sixty metered parking spaces currently on the street. Further, the EMC has pledged to respect the historic vista to the Capitol that is part of the L'Enfant Plan. Review agencies have been initially encouraging regarding the closing of Maryland Avenue. The closing of Maryland Avenue through the site and its rerouting toward the perimeter of the site is in conceptual consonance with the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*.

The greatest benefit offered by the Maryland Avenue site is the thematic associations with its surroundings. These surrounding institutions provide a fitting context for the National Eisenhower Memorial, and the accomplishments of Eisenhower continue to live in these buildings. In many ways, he personally shaped the performance or the mission of each adjacent federal presence.

Conclusion:

Site #1 at Maryland Avenue fulfills all of the Commission's criteria. It is a very prominent site in close proximity to the National Mall and is partially in Area I. It is very accessible, especially for those riding Metro and for pedestrians. It lies on a major tourist route and is near two of the most visited museums in America. Memorial development on this site is not only feasible, but has been encouraged by various review agencies. Closing Maryland Avenue has also received positive informal support. In addition to these factors, the surrounding landmarks are the most thematically appropriate of all the sites reviewed, and give the Commission a fitting place in which to memorialize President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Site #1: Maryland and Independence Avenues, SW



Site - Maryland and Independence Avenues



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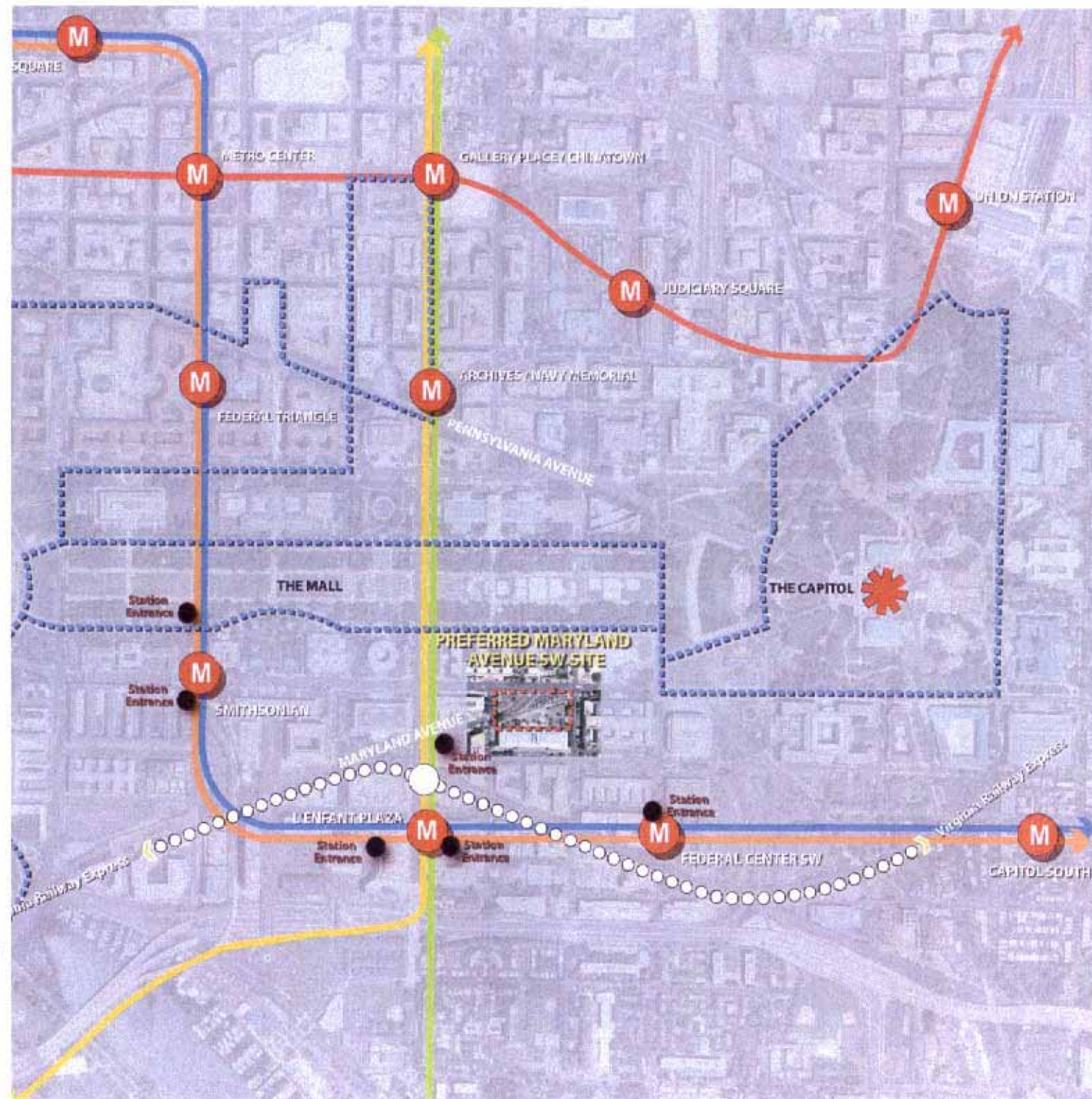
1. Department of Education building
2. National Air and Space Museum
3. Sunken Garden
4. Parking along Maryland Avenue
5. FAA and loading dock, looking west
6. U.S. Capitol, looking northeast along Maryland Avenue axis

Thematic Context of Preferred Site



Preferred Site Access and Public Transportation

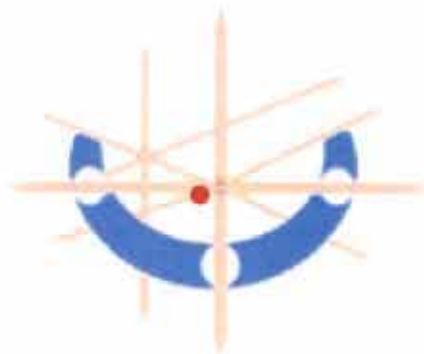
-  TOURMOBILE ROUTE
-  METRO STOP
-  Metro Station Entrance
-  VA RAILWAY EXPRESS



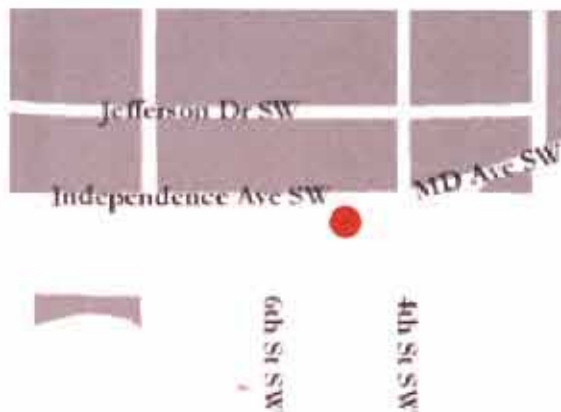
Location:



Framework Context:



Vicinity:



Site Description Summary

This site location is between Maryland and Independence Avenues and 4th and 6th Streets, SW. It is located south across Independence Avenue from the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum on the National Mall and southwest of the Capitol Grounds. The generally rectangular site is currently a mix of paved streets under the jurisdiction of D.C.; a triangular community garden under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, and the Department of Education (FOB-6) which borders the paved plaza to the south. FOB-6 is under the jurisdiction of the General Services Administration.

Urban Design Conditions

This site is prominently located at the intersection of two Special Streets and offers axial views along Maryland Avenue to the U.S. Capitol. The site location falls on the Monumental Corridor element of the Urban Design Framework. The site is within walking distance of the National Mall and the Capitol. The site location's prominent framework and design qualities offer a high potential for accommodating a major federal memorial. A primary memorial on this site could relate thematically to the Department of Education.

Economic Conditions

The site is adjacent to primary tourist destinations such as the National Air and Space Museum, as well as governmental installations such as NASA and the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The site offers little in terms of potential for neighborhood revitalization or economic development, but would increase the demand for visitor amenities in the immediate area. Conceivably, the site could provide these amenities and capitalize on existing visitor traffic. However, the potential to generate new economic activity for the region is not high.

Transportation Conditions

This site has an excellent supporting transportation system that has the potential of capitalizing on every mode of transportation evaluated with the exception of water transportation (i.e., highways, commuter trains, Metrobus, touring vehicles). The closest Metrorail station is L'Enfant Plaza (2 blocks), through which the Yellow, Blue, Orange and Green lines can be accessed. (The Federal Center Metrorail Station (4 blocks) and the Smithsonian Metrorail Station (5 blocks) provide access to the Blue and Orange lines.) It is expected that a significant percentage of visitors to a memorial/museum at this location would utilize the Metrorail because of the number of lines connecting at L'Enfant Plaza, the secondary Metrorail stations in the vicinity and the number of surrounding attractions. Public transportation use would increase with the implementation of the Circulator system, which could connect at L'Enfant Plaza to create an Intermodal Station. The transportation characteristics surrounding this site demonstrate that it would be possible to accommodate a large volume of visitors.

Environmental Conditions

The location's current mix of an urban plaza, roadway, and triangular garden area contains a variety of environmental features. The urban plaza has a section of tree groves and the garden area has a section of grasses. There are no water resources on the site. The site receives some noise impact from the tour buses and automobile traffic on Independence Avenue. However, there are no adverse air quality characteristics and no evidence of previous industrial uses or environmental contamination.

Commemorative Opportunity:

**Jurisdiction: Federal— General Services Administration and the National Park Service
District of Columbia, Department of Public Works**

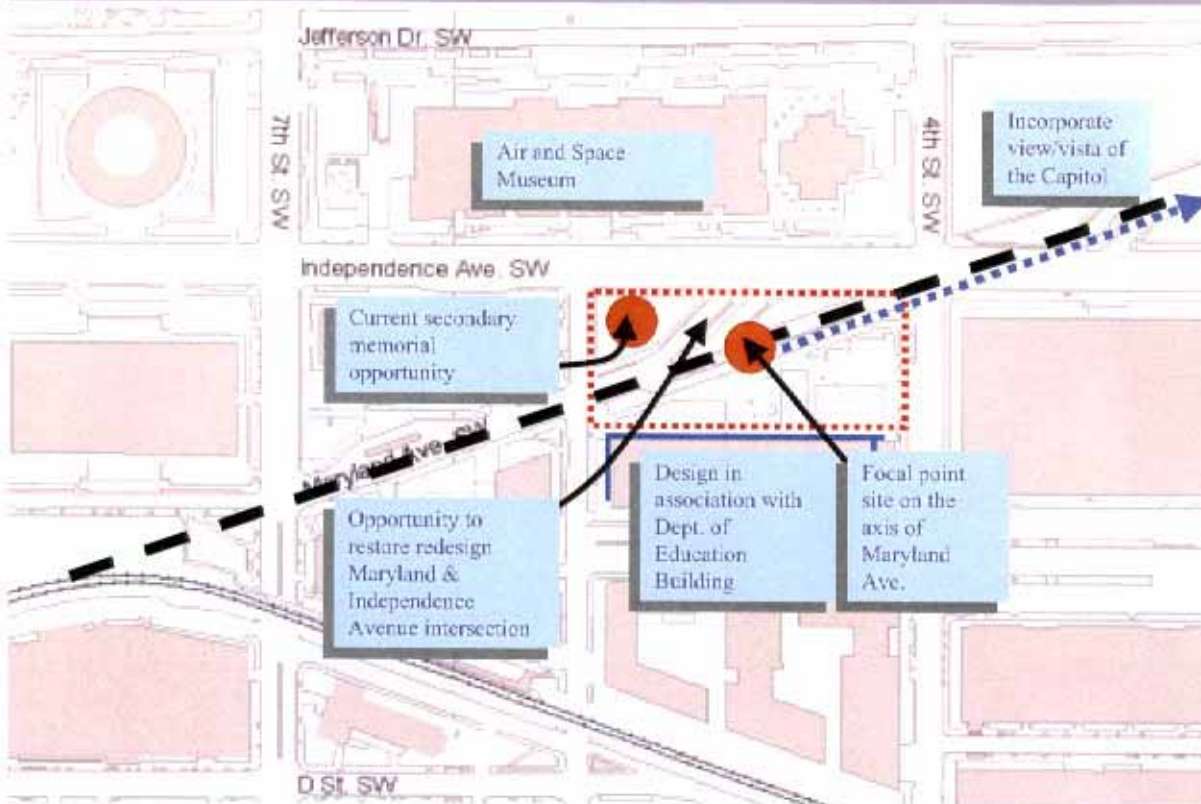
The Maryland Avenue Monumental Corridor is one of several avenues identified in *Extending the Legacy* for major revitalization. Proposals have been made to redefine the previous alignment of Maryland Avenue between the Capitol and the Tidal Basin area. These actions would increase the prominence of the existing public plaza that is located north of the Department of Education building.

The visibility of the site is also shaped by its location facing the National Air and Space Museum. In the near future, this prominence will be heightened by the completion of the new Native American Museum that will adjoin the site on Independence Avenue and 4th Street, SW.

Memorial development should take advantage of the site's location on two Special Streets, as well as the direct axial vista to the Capitol. The significant scale of the existing plaza is similar to that of Freedom Plaza on Pennsylvania Avenue. Depending on specific location and configuration, memorial development could displace some current uses. Renovation and redesign of the existing plaza would complement adjoining federal government and visitor uses.



The Maryland Avenue Monumental Corridor as it appears today, above, with an existing park at the U.S. Department of Education. A revitalized alignment of this prominent Avenue would provide new opportunities for public space improvements and commemorative elements.

Design Considerations:

1. Any future memorial should respect and reinforce this location's prominence as a civic plaza at the intersection of two Special Streets, Maryland and Independence Avenues, and its association with the Dept. of Education.

2. The opportunity exists to redevelop either portions of or the entire plaza in conjunction with a new memorial. The site could consist of a primary memorial, with associated and smaller memorials.

3. Any future memorial should incorporate existing reciprocal vistas along Maryland Avenue. The mass and scale should not obstruct or obscure the primary axial relationships along the Avenue, and should not overshadow the Department of Education building.

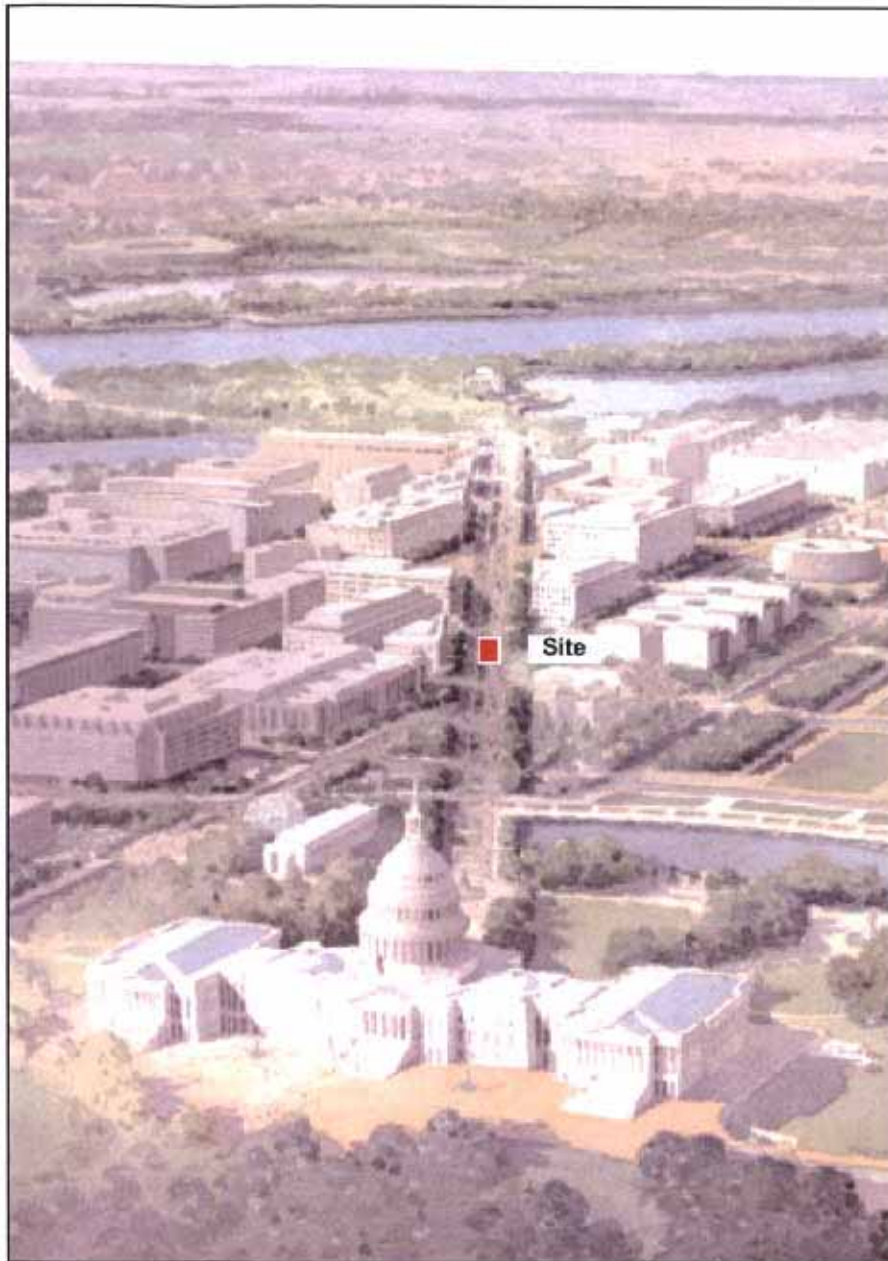
4. The location is facing the National Air and Space Museum and will adjoin other important sites that draw tourists and visitors. A memorial could draw visitors to the plaza while advancing plans to revitalize and realign Maryland Avenue.

5. The design of any future memorial should allow for public gatherings while providing adequate space for commemorative reflection.

6. Any future memorial should utilize and take advantage of existing infrastructure, including existing street parking and Metrorail access.

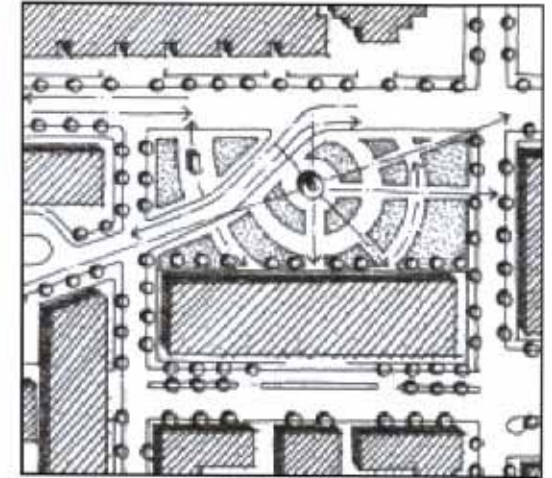
7. Amenities such as parking and visitor services, i.e., restrooms, gift shops, and parking, should not be located at this site; nearby buildings should serve these uses. This site is not appropriate for a building.

Design Considerations:



A concept for re-establishing the alignment of Maryland Avenue is shown at left. The illustration depicts the potential future prominence of the Avenue, with visual linkages and new public spaces between the U.S. Capitol and the Tidal Basin.

Design Proposals:



In the future, the Maryland Avenue Monumental Corridor could provide increased vitality and accessibility to Southwest Washington. The image at left proposes a sequence of public space improvements within a reconfigured street alignment.

The concept plan above conveys one idea for redesigning the existing public plaza at the U. S. Department of Education, located on Maryland Avenue and facing the Air and Space Museum.