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## **Decision Memorandum: 15th Street Cycle Track Removal and Road Repaving Project National Mall and Memorial Parks**

This Decision Memorandum documents the National Park Service's ("NPS's") final decision to implement the 15<sup>th</sup> Street Cycle Track Removal and Road Repaving Project for the reasons set forth below.

### **Description of Project**

The 15<sup>th</sup> Street Cycle Track, a one-mile on-street protected bike lane that opened in the Fall of 2021, provides a connection from Pennsylvania Avenue NW and the 14th Street Bridge. Prior to the implementation of the Cycle Track, cyclists generally traversed the corridor in mixed traffic, riding in the general travel lane or along the adjacent sidewalks along with pedestrians.

This project will remove the Cycle Track facility from the corridor and return that space to general-purpose vehicle operations as they existed prior to 2021. The scope of the work is limited to the paved roadway within the existing curbs and include removing the Cycle Track barriers/delineators/anchor bolts, performing an asphalt mill-and-overlay, grinding and removing paving markings, removing bicycle signal faces, rephasing/retiming traffic signals, removing bike route signage, installing new signage, and re-striping the roadway to re-establish two northbound/two southbound lane sections with standard crosswalks.

Once removal of the Cycle Track is complete, the transportation corridor will look and operate as a conventional, all-vehicle roadway within the existing curbs much as it did prior to the implementation of the Cycle Track. An additional lane will be open to vehicular traffic as it was prior to the installation of the Cycle Track in 2021. Roadwork activities necessary to accomplish the project are planned to commence on April 23, 2026, and thus will not impact the National Cherry Blossom Festival, which concludes on April 12, 2026. Work activities are expected to be completed prior to May 14, 2026, or to be modified or sequenced so that they do not interfere with special events occurring in and around the National Mall on the weekend of May 16, 2016.

The project will be completed as a joint project that will be carried out by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, on behalf of the NPS on National Park System lands, consistent with the Agreement between the NPS and the Federal Highway Administration, dated May 19, 1983 ("1983 Agreement").

## Authority

The proposed project is authorized under 54 U.S.C. § 101511(a) (“The Secretary may construct, reconstruct, and improve roads and trails, including bridges, in System units.”), 54 U.S.C. § 100101, and other applicable authorities.

## Basis for Decision

July 4, 2026 is America’s 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. The National Mall will be central to a months-long series of planned events celebrating the Semiquincentennial. These events will substantially increase visitation to the National Mall. Removal of the Cycle Track will open an additional lane on 15<sup>th</sup> Street from Pennsylvania Avenue to Maine Avenue to vehicular traffic, increasing carrying capacity of that road in advance of the upcoming America 250 events.

Removal of the Cycle Track supports implementation of Executive Order 14252, “Making the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful,” which calls for the Nation’s Capital to “showcase beautiful, clean, and safe public spaces,” and for the city’s “highways, boulevards, and parks” to be “clean, well-kept, and pleasant.”<sup>1</sup> It also supports implementation of Secretary’s Order 3428 of the same name. The proposed project will improve the visual quality of these prominent federal public spaces through removal of roadway appurtenances and restoration of a standardized, maintainable corridor configuration, and will help the public enjoy those events by relieving vehicular traffic congestion and allowing existing roads to bring more people to the National Mall and through the National Mall. The Project will be coordinated with infrastructure planning to support mobility, security, and a positive visitor experience. Improvements made in anticipation of events planned for this Summer will benefit visitors to the National Mall and surrounding System lands for years to come.

Removal of the Cycle Track is also consistent with Executive Order 14189 “Celebrating America’s 250th Birthday,” which set the policy of the United States “to provide a grand celebration” on July 4, 2026, and “take other actions to honor the history of our great Nation.”<sup>2</sup> The upcoming events celebrating America’s 250th birthday will bring large numbers of visitors to the National Mall and surrounding National Park System lands. The project will facilitate the substantial visitation expected for these events.

The window for implementing the project is constrained as some of these celebratory events on or around the National Mall are scheduled to commence in mid-May 2026 and events will run through August 2026. Below is a list of some of the special events scheduled during this period, which are in addition to any scheduled or unscheduled demonstrations or special events unrelated to the Semiquincentennial that may be occurring in and around the National Mall:

- **Rededicate 250/ The Interfaith Day of Prayer** — This event, scheduled for May 17, with construction of event infrastructure beginning on May 10, will have an estimated six-figure attendance on the National Mall, with multiple events on May 17 from 6:00 a.m. through approximately 6:00 p.m. Other significant events that weekend include the George Washington University commencement on the Washington Monument grounds and the National Peace Officers’ Memorial Service on Capitol grounds.

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<sup>1</sup> Executive Order 14252 is publicly available at <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-14252-making-the-district-columbia-safe-and-beautiful>.

<sup>2</sup> Executive Order 14189 is publicly available at <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-14189-celebrating-americas-250th-birthday>.

- **UFC Event** — This event, scheduled for June 14, is expected to draw more than 100,000 people. The main event will take place on the South Grounds of the White House with viewing opportunities on surrounding NPS property, and related activities are planned for the area adjacent to the Lincoln Memorial.
- **FIFA Fan Fest** — This event, scheduled to last from June 11 to July 19, will have static viewing area on the National Mall between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- **The Great American State Fair** — Construction of event infrastructure is scheduled to start on June 1, with the event lasting from June 25 through July 10, and removal of event infrastructure is scheduled to end on July 30. The event is expected to feature pavilions throughout the National Mall on an east-west axis with space for all U.S. states and territories.
- **Salute to America: The Nation’s 250th Birthday Fireworks Celebration**—The event will take place on July 4, but will be substantially larger than prior July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations. Several hundred thousand visitors are expected to attend.
- **Indy Car Race** — The event is scheduled to take place on August 22-23 with construction of the track expected to begin on approximately August 8 and end on approximately September 1, with pedestrian bridges over several parts of the track.

The NPS has considered impacts to pedestrians and cyclists as a result of this project. Pedestrians and cyclists will continue to have access to the National Mall. The project will not change existing pedestrian walkways. Bicycle use will continue to be allowed on sidewalks adjacent to roadways, consistent with Section 3(i)(i)(A) of the National Mall and Memorial Parks Superintendent’s Compendium (Jan. 13, 2026), available at <https://www.nps.gov/nama/learn/management/superintendent-s-compendium.htm>. Cyclists who prefer to ride in the roadway instead of on the sidewalk will be able to do so. The NPS will implement transition signing/markings and will monitor operations after implementation and adjust striping/signals as warranted to address any observed operational issues.

The NPS is aware of a Post-Implementation Analysis prepared by the D.C. Department of Transportation (“DDOT”) on the 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW/SW Protected Bike Lane. This analysis has been reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration in an internal review that identified “significant methodological flaws” in the DDOT analysis and found that the “report’s claim of a ‘46% reduction in all crashes’ is mathematically unsupported.” The Federal Highway Administration also noted that the report “fails to account for city-wide post-pandemic traffic reductions, ignores potential traffic diversion to adjacent routes, and entirely omits the necessary multi-modal exposure rates required to evaluate a bicycle facility.” Given that the Federal Highway Administration found the “DDOT study’s methodology is significantly compromised by its failure to use standard corridor exposure metrics (VMT) and multimodal trip rates,” the NPS gave limited weight to DDOT’s study.

After weighing competing interests, the NPS concludes that this roadway space would be best used as an additional lane for vehicular traffic.

### **Compliance with applicable laws and policies**

National Environmental Policy Act: The NPS completed a Categorical Exclusion Documentation Form (CE Form) on February 23, 2026, which concluded that the project fits within the CE that is now found at 516 Departmental Manual 1, DOI NEPA Handbook, Appendix 2, 16.1(G)(5) (at the time, it was numbered as 12.6(G)(13)), and that no extraordinary circumstances apply. The project was delayed. Thus, the NPS reconsidered its analysis in the February CE Form in light of the new timeframe for completion of the project and to update that analysis as needed. On March 31, 2026, the NPS completed a new CE Form. The updated analysis is consistent with the analysis in the February 2026 CE Form and also reflects updated information about the effects of the proposed project, in light of the change in the

timing of the proposed project. The updated analysis found that the project fits within the CE now found at 516 Departmental Manual 1, DOI NEPA Handbook, Appendix 2, 16.1(G)(5). Both CE Forms are incorporated herein by reference.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act: The NPS completed an Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on Historic Properties (Assessment) on February 23, 2026, which concluded that the project would have no adverse effect on historic properties, and meets all conditions for a streamlined review under Section III of the 2008 Servicewide Programmatic Agreement for Section 106 compliance. The change in timeframe for the proposed project does not affect or impact this analysis so the NPS did not revise the February Assessment. The Assessment is incorporated by reference in this decision memorandum.

Endangered Species Act: The project does not include vegetation clearing, tree removal, habitat conversion, excavation outside the paved roadway section, or in-water work. Because effects are limited to temporary construction disturbances (noise, equipment presence, localized dust) within an already developed roadway, the action is not anticipated to adversely affect listed/proposed species or designated critical habitat, and significant impacts are not expected.

National Capital Planning Act: The National Capital Planning Commission has for several years taken the position that it lacks jurisdiction to review projects that involve demolition. On March 23, 2026, the NPS verbally consulted with the Director of Urban Design and Plan Review of the National Capital Planning Commission regarding whether the Commission would review the project if it were submitted by the NPS. This was confirmed on that same day via email that the Commission would not review the proposed project.

NPS Organic Act: A written non-impairment determination is not required for this action. As stated in the *Guidance for Non-Impairment Determinations and the NPS NEPA Process* (April 2025), only actions that require an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement have the potential to impair park resources and values. In any event, NPS has confirmed that this action will not impair park resources and values or have unacceptable impacts. As discussed in the CE Form, all work will be confined to the existing roadway footprint, and impacts to resources will be temporary, localized, and not significant.

## Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the NPS has decided to implement the 15th Street Bike Lane Removal Project, as described in this Decision Memorandum and in the documents incorporated by reference.

**Regional  
Director,  
National  
Capital  
Region:**

**Date:** 3/31/2026

Jennifer T. Nersesian