



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

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL: NO HARD COPY TO FOLLOW

Memorandum

To: Benjamin Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Interested Parties

From: Karen L. Cucurullo, Acting Superintendent, National Mall and Memorials Park

Subject: Benjamin Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements

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 includes the construction of a temporary stairway and ramp between the overlook at Benjamin Banneker Park (Banneker Overlook), a NPS property, and the southwest waterfront near the Hoffman Madison Waterfront LLC (the Wharf) redevelopment (Attachment 1). The Wharf is implementing the improved pedestrian connection in fulfillment of a zoning requirement. The temporary project also includes landscaping, improvements to pedestrian crosswalks, lighting installation, universal accessibility, and stormwater management. 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 National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 processes at a later date.

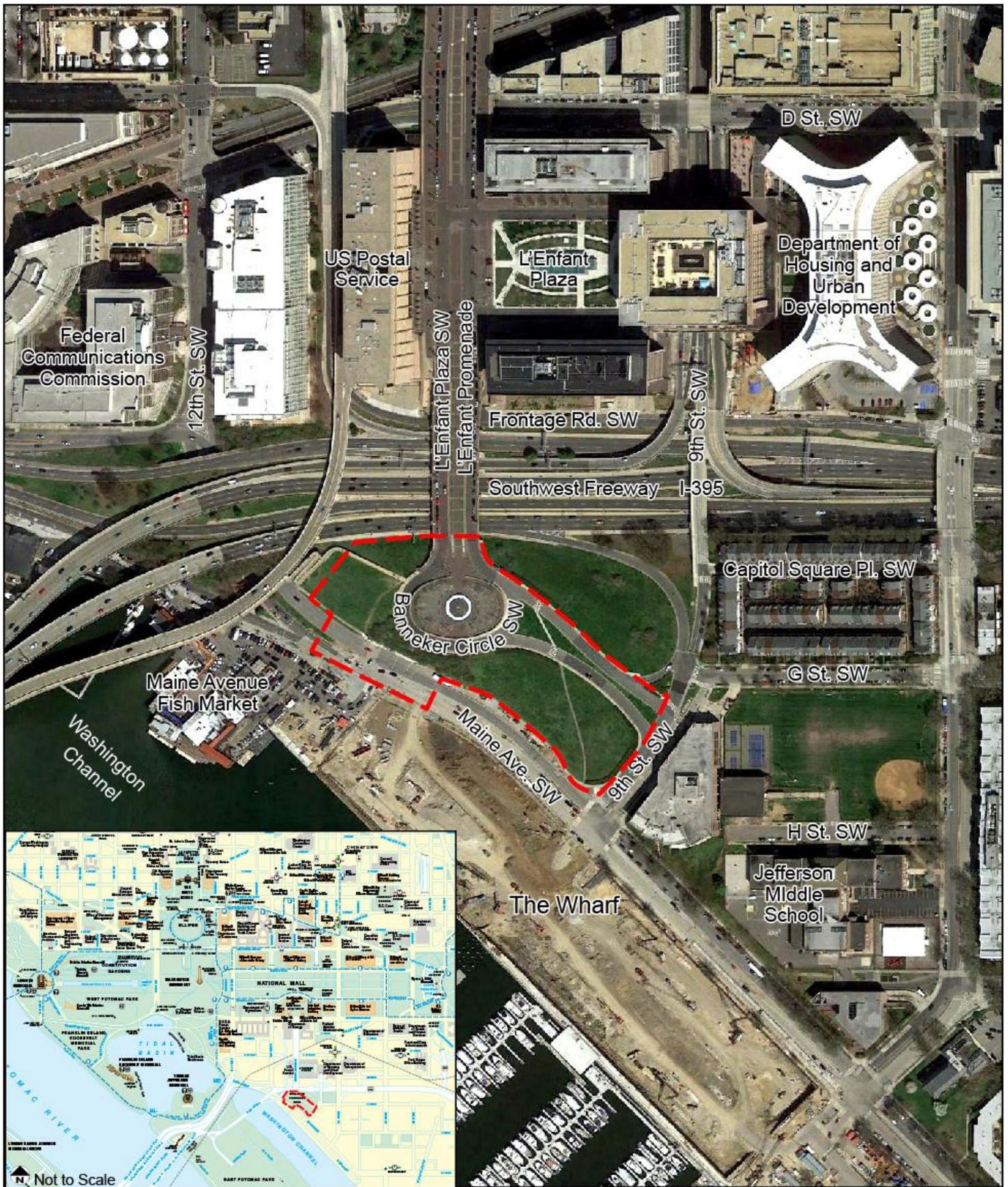
The purpose of the proposed stairway and ramp is to provide a safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian connection between the Banneker Overlook and the southwest waterfront. The project is needed to improve urban connectivity by providing greater accessibility between the waterfront, Benjamin Banneker Park, the National Mall, and surrounding areas. 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. NCPC has been identified as a cooperating agency. Concurrently, the NPS and NCPC will conduct consultation

under Section 106 of the NHPA and NCPC will review and approve the project under its authorities set forth by the National Capital Planning Act.

The purpose of this memorandum is to notify agencies and potential project stakeholders of an opportunity to assist the NPS and NCPC to identify environmental issues that could result from the implementation of the proposed project. The project team is presenting two potential concepts for the improved pedestrian connection (Attachments 2 and 3); however, based on public feedback, the project team may identify and evaluate additional or modified alternatives in the EA. During this public scoping period, submit comments and concerns online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BannekerConnnection>. Comments will be accepted until September 2, 2015. Your comments will assist the NPS and NCPC to identify potential issues and concerns to address in the EA. The NPS and NCPC welcome your participation throughout the planning process for this project.

We also invite you to a public open house that is 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. The purpose of the open house is 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 National Historic Preservation Act.

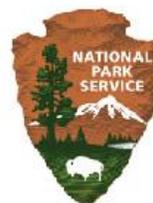
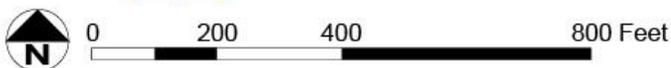
If you have any questions, please contact Catherine Dewey, Chief of Resource Management, at catherine_dewey@nps.gov.



PROPOSED PROJECT STUDY AREA (APPROXIMATE)

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

Legend: Study Area (Approximate)



THE WHARF



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.

