



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Mall & Memorial Parks
Date: 11/15/2010

Section 106 Analysis

A. Project Information

Park Name: National Mall & Memorial Parks

PEPC Project Number: 28606

Project Title: Reconstruct Turf and Soil on the National Mall

Project Type: Capital Improvement (CI)

Project Location:

County, State: N.A., District of Columbia

Project Leader: Patrick Macdonald

Project Title: Reconstruct Turf and Soil on the National Mall

Administrative Record Contact: Jennifer Talken-Spaulding

B. Section 106 Analysis Summary

The Mall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is also a documented cultural landscape. The potential actions of the project to Reconstruct Turf and Soil on the National Mall that impact the Mall include the addition of curbs, the radius of curbs, and the removal of some north-south walks to re-establish the length of the center lawn panels. Because the water storage systems are at depth, the National Park Service (NPS) is also considering impacts to potential archeological resources. A summary of the analysis for consideration by the public and Section 106 consulting parties is below with supporting documents attached. We welcome your comments as to any potential impacts to historic properties as a result of this project.

The present condition of the Mall is severely eroded lawn panels with little edge definition (see attached Oct. 2010 photo). Curbs were installed in the 1930s along the inner drives (now walkways); there is a precedent for curbs on the Mall (see attached 1930s Mall drives and curbs photo). This project will replace existing failed edging with curbs to protect the edges of the reconstructed lawn panels and the irrigation system. The preferred curb/gutter option (A2 – see attached curb/ gutter alternatives from the Environmental Assessment) would also provide more sustainable 15 ft. radius corners which define the boundaries of the turf panels while still allowing adequate pedestrian movement. Due to the high volume of pedestrian traffic, the existing eroded corners are 25 ft. radius. In addition, the curb design allows universal access from all edges of the panel.

The reconstruction of the center turf panels of the Mall will preserve the historic character of the Mall and the primary east-west vista. The Mall will remain the designed promenade west of the

U.S. Capitol, featuring expansive green lawns (tapis verte or green carpet) bordered by formal rows of American elm. The Mall also remains an extremely popular venue for demonstrations, special events, cultural activities, and other civic events. Reconstruction of this historic space must also provide sustainable methods for continued public use. The designs proposed in this project are consistent with the elements discussed during public consultation for the National Mall Plan and the development of a preferred alternative. Elements of the National Mall Plan that may be implemented through this proposed project include: improve and protect the condition of critical elements of the historic landscape, such as lawns; reduce social trails through a combination of design elements, paving, edging, and stewardship messages; restore soils to improve turf conditions by replacing or augmenting soils; provide drainage and irrigation designed so that it would not be damaged by event facilities; and remove narrow strips of turf and create wider sidewalks in center sections along 3rd, 4th, 7th, and 14th streets.

The Mall is a documented cultural landscape. The intent of the Mall, as designed by L'Enfant and as stated in the McMillan Report is: "The axis of the Capitol and Monument is clearly defined by an expanse of undulating green a mile and a half long and three hundred feet broad, walled on either side by elms, planted in formal procession four abreast." Developments in the built environment of the Mall over time have been documented through the Cultural Landscape Inventory (NPS 2006) and in a Mall Mapping study (Heritage Landscapes 2010 – see attached Mall Mapping). This project will provide reconstruction of the lawn panels and preservation of the character and design intent of the Mall.

Geoscientific investigations were undertaken to assess the general condition of the landscape by the Louis Berger Group. These investigations focused on identification of prehistoric and historic landscapes that might contain archeological resources. Subsurface testing was completed at the locations where large underground cisterns (7th and 10th Streets) and a pump house are planned (see attached water storage locations below grade – preferred alternative is E2). These elements of the proposed water storage and irrigation system will require relatively large areas of ground disturbance. Preliminary results (Oct. 2010) indicate little archeological potential, though there is a recommendation to conduct additional archeological work to focus on possible loess deposits and an underlying landscape surface. The preliminary results of the geoscientific study have been shared in consultation with the DC SHPO. The NPS will continue to coordinate with the DC SHPO on any further archeological investigation or mitigation if necessary.

Because the proposed project will reconstruct the turf panels of the Mall and restore the designed tapis verte (or green carpet) effect while maintaining an open and sustainable landscape for continued public use, the NPS believes that there will be no adverse effect to the Mall as a result of this project.