

PENNSYLVANIA AVE-MINNESOTA AVE, S.E.  
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT  
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT



JUNE 2015





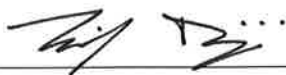
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FOR THE  
PENNSYLVANIA AVE-MINNESOTA AVE, S.E.  
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT  
WASHINGTON, DC**

Prepared pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c) by:

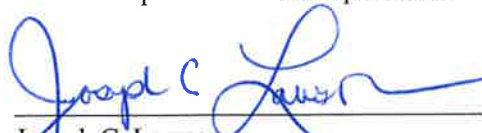
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
District Department of Transportation

with the cooperation with  
National Park Service  
National Capital Planning Commission

6/10/15  
Date of Approval

  
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Leif A. Dormsjo  
Director  
District Department of Transportation

6/17/15  
Date of Approval

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph C. Lawson  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
DC Division Office



**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**FOR THE**  
**PENNSYLVANIA AVE-MINNESOTA AVE, S.E.**  
**INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT**  
**WASHINGTON, DC**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in conjunction with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS) and the National Capital Planning Commission, proposes the construction of improvements at the Pennsylvania and Minnesota Avenues, SE intersection in Washington, D.C. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and the FHWA's Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 CFR 771), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), NPS Director's Order #12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impacts Analysis and Decision-Making* (NPS 2001), FHWA *Technical Advisory* (T6640.8a), and other applicable laws, regulations, and policies ; an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared and was released for agency and public review and comments on October 28, 2013. A public hearing was held on November 13, 2013. Subsequently, a Final EA and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is prepared to fully address all agency and public comments received.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide transportation improvements to the Pennsylvania and Minnesota Avenues, SE intersection in keeping with the District of Columbia's Great Streets Initiative. The Great Streets Initiative is a multi-agency program that strategically uses public investments to improve local quality of life and attract private investments to communities. Several corridors, including Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, were chosen to be a part of the Great Streets Initiative when the program began in 2005. The Proposed Action includes a transfer of jurisdiction of certain parcels of land in the project area from NPS to DDOT, as agreed upon, by covenant with stipulations between the agencies. The land transfer is needed to facilitate the some of the improvements proposed to the intersection.

The project need is multi-fold: to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety at the intersection; to create a consolidated, usable park space; to improve multimodal connectivity and access to and through the intersection; and to support land use and community needs.

### **PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE AND OPTIONS**

In accordance with the project's purpose and need, multiple alternatives were considered. Three alternatives, including the No Build Alternative, the Revised Square Alternative (Build Alternative 1), and the Conventional Intersection Alternative (Build Alternative 2) were analyzed in detail in the EA. Build Alternative 2 evaluated two options for the direction of one-way traffic flow along the L'Enfant Square, SE roadway.

**Preferred Build Alternative:**

Following the public comment period, DDOT identified *Build Alternative 2 – Conventional Intersection Alternative*, as the *Preferred Alternative*. Under Build Alternative 2, the intersection would be reconfigured to achieve an improved typical at-grade intersection. Build Alternative 2 would improve the existing split roadway system that currently contains two complex intersections by reducing multiple traffic movements into one signalized intersection. This alternative would provide for left-turn movements in all directions and increase the left-turn bay storage length for vehicles. Build Alternative 2 would include a jurisdictional land transfer from NPS to DDOT of approximately 1.44 acres to enable the proposed modifications to the intersection and consolidate the green space. Build Alternative 2 would consolidate the two park parcels to the north of Pennsylvania Avenue and the two park parcels to the south of Pennsylvania in order to provide more contiguous park area than exists today for residents and visitors to the area.

Build Alternative 2 would meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action in promoting the principles set forth in the District’s Great Streets Initiative. Build Alternative 2 would improve pedestrian and vehicular safety, create a usable park space, improve multimodal connectivity and access, and support improved land use and community needs, as discussed below:

- Improves safety for pedestrians and vehicles by reducing multiple confusing traffic movements at two adjacent intersections along Pennsylvania Avenue into one signalized intersection. Left-turn bay storage length would be increased for vehicles and a pedestrian-activated crossing signal would be provided to allow safe crossing. Other safety improvements for pedestrians include new bulb-outs to reduce vehicle speeds, shorter crosswalks in some locations, and enhanced traffic signalization. Additionally, the one-way flow of traffic to the north and east under Option 2 is designed to reduce the traffic volume adjacent to the residences along L’Enfant Square, SE, as cut-through traffic would be minimized along L’Enfant Square, SE; Option 2 eliminates right turns from southbound L’Enfant Square, SE onto Pennsylvania Avenue, SE westbound, significantly reducing vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.
- Creates a consolidated, usable park space for intersection users by combining the two reservations north of Pennsylvania Avenue and the two reservations south of Pennsylvania Avenue into two larger, usable park spaces, totaling approximately one acre and 0.4 acres, respectively. This would enhance the park space and the overall intersection for residents and other intersection users by providing usable green space for passive recreation or a public plaza.
- Improves multimodal connectivity and access to and through the intersection by providing a safer environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles and buses to navigate. In the future, the Pennsylvania-Minnesota Avenues, SE intersection is along the proposed route planned for Phase 3 of the DC Streetcar. The improvements and design of Build Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) would work in tandem with DC Streetcar to further promote mobility for all modes of transportation and particularly for transit users and commuters.

- Supports land use and community needs through providing streetscape, aesthetic and transportation improvements. Proposed improvements under Build Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) would create opportunities to change the public and market perceptions of the area, which is needed in order to create an environment capable of supporting and attracting community needs. Additionally, the availability of park land at this intersection provides an opportunity to create a significant Public Plaza, an attractant for retail and housing development.

Additionally, DDOT selected the following preferred option to be implemented in conjunction with the Preferred Alternative, in order to support improved safety and reduced traffic volume for residents and visitors to the intersection.

**Preferred L’Enfant Square, SE Option:**

Build Alternative 2 maintains the one-lane roadway along L’Enfant Square, SE that exists currently, including the on-street parking on both sides of the street on L’Enfant Square, SE to the north of the “square.” Build Alternative 2 included two options for the movement of one-way traffic to the north and west of the “square” on L’Enfant Square, SE.

The preferred option to be implemented in conjunction with the Preferred Alternative is Option 2, the one-way flow of traffic to the north and east along the L’Enfant Square, SE roadway. Under this option, cut-through traffic would be minimized along the L’Enfant Square, SE and residences and the vehicle/pedestrian conflict would be reduced. Option 2 maintains L’Enfant Square, SE as a one-lane roadway with on-street parking on both sides of the street.

The total cost of the Preferred Alternative and option is estimated to be approximately \$9 million. The construction is expected to take approximately 18 to 24 months. A complete description of the Preferred Alternative and Option is provided in Section 2.2, Proposed Action, of the Final EA.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT SELECTED**

In addition to evaluating the Preferred Alternative, the EA and Final EA considered the No Build Alternative and one other build alternative (Build Alternative 1 – Revised Square Alternative). Additionally, one other option (Option 1) was considered as part of *Build Alternative 2 – Conventional Intersection Alternative (Preferred Alternative)*. Other alternatives were considered in the EA and Final EA, but were not retained for further analysis, as discussed in Section 2.3, Alternatives Eliminated from Consideration, of the Final EA.

Under the No Build Alternative, no land jurisdiction exchange between NPS and DDOT would occur. The intersection would continue to function as it does today without any modifications to the intersection layout. Existing traffic patterns, crosswalks, signalization, and sidewalks would remain unimproved.

Build Alternative 1 - Revised Square Alternative would reconfigure the roadway alignment and intersection configuration to create a “traffic square” concept, which requires all vehicles, with the exception of through-movements on Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, to go around the expanded central park area. The perimeter route is intended as a traffic calming measure, similar to how a traffic circle works, by allowing vehicles to enter and exit the square at locations identified by the intersecting streets. As is the case with Build Alternative 2, Build Alternative 1 requires a jurisdictional land transfer from NPS to

DDOT of approximately 1.44 acres to enable the proposed modifications. Build Alternative 1 would consolidate the two park parcels to the north of Pennsylvania Avenue and the two park parcels to the south of Pennsylvania Avenue in order to provide more contiguous park area for residents and visitors to use as green space. In this alternative, L'Enfant Square, SE to the north of the square would be widened to three lanes from the existing one lane to accommodate the traffic traveling around the square. As a result, on-street parking would only be maintained on the north side of the street, adjacent to residences.

Build Alternative 2 (Option 1), which would include the flow of traffic one-way to the west and south on L'Enfant Square, SE was provided as one of two options under *Build Alternative 2 – Conventional Intersection Alternative (Preferred Alternative)*. With Option 1, commuter traffic could continue to cut-through the “square” to avoid the Pennsylvania/Minnesota Avenues, SE intersection. Due to the ability to make right turns onto Pennsylvania Avenue, SE (westbound) from L'Enfant Square, SE, right-turning vehicle/pedestrian conflicts to the west of the square would remain.

More detailed descriptions of the build alternatives considered are provided in Section 2.1 and Section 2.2 of the Final EA.

## **ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

As stated in 40 CFR 1508.27(a), the analysis of significance as used in NEPA requires consideration of both the context and intensity of an action.

(a) Context. This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts and that significance can vary with the setting of the Proposed Action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant.

(b) Intensity. As stated in 40 CFR 1508.27(b), intensity refers to the “severity of impact,” or how much of the resource(s) will be used or affected by the project. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. The following should be considered in evaluating intensity:

- Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.
- The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.
- Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.
- The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.
- The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
- The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.



- Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.
- The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
- The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.
- Intensity durations are provided throughout the analysis for negligible, minor, moderate, and major impacts. Beneficial impacts are addressed qualitatively.
- Long-term and short-term durations are defined for each impact category.

For this EA, intensity durations are provided throughout the analysis for negligible, minor, moderate, and major impacts. Beneficial impacts are addressed qualitatively. Long-term and short-term durations are defined for each impact category within the Final EA.

Based on the impact analysis presented in Section 4.0 of the Final EA, the project would not result in significant impacts. The “intensity” of the preferred alternative’s impacts, or its use of the resources in the Study Area, will be small in the “context” of the regional environment, or the relative abundance of resources in the Study Area. The following environmental resources are not present in the Study Area and therefore are not impacted by the project: wetlands, farmland, surface water, floodplains, navigable waters, wild and scenic rivers, coastal zone, aquatic organisms, rare, threatened and endangered species. In addition, there would be no or negligible long term impacts to geology, soils, topography, ground water, water quality, wildlife, cultural landscapes, paleontology, joint development, emergency services, utilities and infrastructure, environmental justice, Indian trust resources, sacred sites and ethnographic resources, transit, hazardous waste and materials, and energy conservation.

The project would have overall long-term beneficial impacts to vegetation, parks and recreation areas, aesthetics and visual quality, safety, demography, land use, zoning, economics and development, community resources, and the bicycle and pedestrian network. In addition, the project would:

- Not result in any appreciable increases in noise levels above the No Build Alternative;
- Not contribute to any violation of the air quality NAAQS and meets the project level CO conformity requirements of 40 CFR 94;
- Not result in any direct changes to land use or zoning;
- Result in a net benefit to Section 4(f) properties (U.S. Reservation 487 / Twining Square); and

- Result in a No Adverse Effect to historic properties and archaeological resources, as determined by FHWA and concurred with by the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO).

Minor adverse impacts in the long term are anticipated to be limited to the roadway network and traffic; minor adverse short-term impacts (during construction) are anticipated to the natural, cultural, socioeconomic and transportation environment, however, none of these impacts meet the CEQ criteria for either context or intensity; therefore, these long-term and short-term impacts do not rise to a level of “significance” as defined by CEQ. A brief summary of the effects to the roadway network and traffic, and an evaluation of the significance per CEQ guidance, is provided below. Additionally, the findings for Section 106 and Section 4(f) are summarized below. A detailed analysis of the effects of Build Alternative 2 is provided in the Final EA.

***Transportation – Roadway Network and Traffic:*** The Preferred Alternative would have minor short-term and long-term adverse impacts on the roadway network and traffic. Minor short-term adverse impacts to the roadway network and traffic are likely to occur for short durations during construction. Temporary disruption to vehicles using the intersection is likely; however detour routes and alternate routes would be dedicated during this time, which help to offset impacts. It is anticipated that the intersection could be improved without major disruptions to traveling public either through re-routing vehicles or by implementing the project in phases.

In the long term, by 2040, the Preferred Alternative would result in minor adverse impacts to the roadway network and traffic due to the increase in queue length. In 2015, travel times would be improved with the Preferred Alternative for most approaches; however by 2040, travel times would be comparable to the No Build Alternative and queue lengths during the AM and PM peak hours would be longer than the No Build Alternative. Vehicle delay and level of service (LOS) in the AM peak period at the eastern intersection (1B in the Final EA) would be worse than with the No Build Alternative because all traffic crossing Minnesota Avenue would be rerouted to this one intersection. Although the technical findings of the traffic analysis result in minor impacts to the roadway network and traffic by 2040, the intended benefits at this intersection are in alignment with the Purpose and Need for the project. Specifically, the implementation of Build Alternative 2 will further the project need(s) to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety, and to improve multimodal connectivity and access. The impacts to transportation resources do not meet the CEQ criteria for either context or intensity; therefore, these impacts do not rise to a level of “significance” as defined by CEQ.

***Section 106 Determination of Effects:*** It is anticipated that the proposed changes will not diminish the integrity of location, design, setting materials, workmanship, feeling or association for historic resources in the project vicinity; therefore, FHWA has determined that the preferred alternative for the improvements to the Pennsylvania Avenue and Minnesota Avenue SE intersection will have “no adverse effect”, as defined in 36 CFR 800, on the referenced historic properties and archaeological resources. Prior to implementation of the project, FHWA and DDOT will ensure the following:

- DDOT will conduct a Phase IB/II/archaeological testing of an area within Res. 487 near the Phase IA geoarchaeological boring # 4, where an intact historic surface was identified at approximately 0.7 feet below ground surface (see attached map). The Phase IB/II/archaeological study would be used to determine whether intact landforms are present within the limit of disturbance, including landforms currently covered by the existing road.

- DDOT will continued consultation with the SHPO on the project if there are any changes to the project footprint as the designs are finalized and for treatment of any NRHP-eligible archaeological resources identified during Phase IB/II testing; and
- DDOT will complete the archaeological reporting requirement for the project, following the District and federal guidelines, curation of resulting collections, records, images, and geospatial data. If unanticipated archeological discoveries are encountered during any activity associated with this undertaking, DDOT will continue consultation with DC HPO on measures to avoid or mitigate the potential adverse impacts to these resources.
- Should unanticipated archaeological discoveries be encountered during any activity associated with this undertaking, DDOT will contact DC SHPO Archaeologist for further guidance.

Based on a letter to DDOT (see Appendix E of the Final EA), DC SHPO concurred with the FHWA determination that the project will have “No Adverse Effect” on historic properties and archeological resources as defined by 36 CFR 800.

**Section 4(f) Resource:** The Section 4(f) resource in the project study area consists of publicly owned NPS land (U.S. Reservation 487/Twining Square). There are no recreation areas, wildlife or waterfowl refuges, or historic sites in the project study area. Because of the size, condition, and location of the affected Section 4(f) properties, DDOT proposes the use of the FHWA *Net Benefit 4(f) Programmatic Evaluation* as the appropriate level of Section 4(f) evaluation. Specifically, it is the appropriate approach to achieve a net benefit to the parks while at the same time recognizing the potential impacts from the transportation improvements. Coordination is ongoing regarding the assessment of impacts, the proposed measures to minimize harm, and the mitigation necessary to preserve the values of the Section 4(f) resource.

Due to the location of the Section 4(f) properties within the needed roadway improvements, the No Build Alternative is the only alternative that avoids use of the Section 4(f) resource; however, it is not a feasible and prudent alternative because it would neither address the purpose of the project nor correct the needs cited in the project’s purpose and need. Therefore, the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2, is developed in a way that will enhance (i.e., provide a net benefit to) the affected Section 4(f) resources.

The *Findings* section (#2) of the FHWA’s *Net Benefit 4(f) Programmatic Evaluation* states that with regards to the consideration of improving the transportation facility in a manner that addresses the purpose and need without use of the Section 4(f) property (avoidance alternatives) that the engineering design or transportation system management techniques implemented should not result in a substantial missed opportunity to benefit a Section 4(f) proper nor meet the identified transportation needs. Therefore, based upon these considerations, the following are the findings of the Section 4(f) evaluation for this project:

- (1) There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from U.S. Reservation 487 (Twining Square), and
- (2) Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2 both include all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from such use; and
- (3) This project will comply with any other related laws applicable to this resource.

## MITIGATION MEASURES

The following mitigation measures would be implemented to mitigate or minimize adverse impacts of the Preferred Alternative and Preferred Option:

- Erosion and sediment control plans will be prepared in accordance with District Department of the Environment (DDOE) Standards and Specifications for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control and implemented during construction. Best management practices (BMPs) will be used during construction, to include practices such as stabilized construction entrances, silt fences, temporary sediment traps and filtering devices and earth dikes.
- Landscaping will be utilized where possible to improve stormwater management features by following the low impact development (LID) concepts. Following development, the landscape will be monitored and maintained to ensure successful establishment. Landscape plans will be developed in accordance with the NPS and DDOT's Urban Forestry Administration, and may include planting, grading, erosion control and irrigation systems. Landscape plans will be submitted to the DC Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and NPS for review and comment.
- Measures will be implemented, to the extent practical, to avoid impacts to larger or older tree specimens within the limits of disturbance. Landscaping and replacement of trees will be conducted in accordance with the DDOT *Design and Engineering Manual*. New trees and vegetation will be planted in appropriate locations to maintain and enhance the tree canopy along the project corridor.
- The proposed undertaking will include a Phase IB/II archaeological testing of an area within U.S. Reservation 487 near geoarchaeological boring # 4 where an intact historic surface was identified at approximately 0.7 feet below ground surface (see Figure 3-5 of the Final EA). If during construction, archaeological resources are discovered, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery would be halted until the resources can be identified and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed. If necessary, consultation with the DC SHPO, NPS, and/or the NPS Regional Archeologist will be coordinated. Archaeological reporting requirements for the project following District and federal guidelines, curation of resulting collections, records, images, and geospatial data will be completed.
- DDOT will prepare a Maintenance of Traffic Plan that will identify routes to be used by contractors to minimize traffic impacts and disruption to residential areas and commercial properties during construction. Additionally, DDOT would use public notification techniques such as posting information on the DDOT website to notify residents, commuters, merchants, etc. of temporary roadway closures or any other restrictions at the intersection.
- Active construction areas of the project site will be closed to pedestrians and bicyclists by using signage and fencing. Signage will be provided to indicate alternate routes and detours to be used when walkways, paths, or street crossings are blocked.
- DDOT will coordinate with the local emergency services with regard to access through the project intersection during periods of construction and how the ultimate intersection design may affect emergency responders.

- DDOT will consult with utility companies to determine if and how utility poles and other above-ground utilities in the Study Area would be impacted during construction or with project implementation.
- DDOT will continue coordination with WMATA during design and construction to avoid impacts to WMATA's facilities, maintain access, and allow for future access. All bus stops in the Study Area will be designed in accordance with WMATA's guidelines for the *Design and Placement of Transit Stops* (2009) and will meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- Contractors will follow all DDOT Standard Construction Specification sections that address the control of construction equipment exhaust or dust during construction.

## AGENCY CONSULTATION

At the commencement of the EA planning process, DDOT, NPS and FHWA attended a kick-off meeting in August of 2010 to re-introduce the project to NPS and FHWA and to discuss agency roles for the development of the EA. NPS and FHWA were both involved during the concept design phase in 2006 and 2007 throughout the Great Streets Concept Design Report. Following the initial kick-off meeting, the agencies met several times throughout the EA planning process to discuss the alternatives and the resource impact categories.

As part of the planning process for the Pennsylvania and Minnesota Avenues, SE Intersection Improvements EA, DDOT and FHWA conducted agency coordination as part of the planning process for the Pennsylvania and Minnesota Avenues, SE EA. Agency coordination included project scoping, consultation with resource agencies in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), consultation with the DC SHPO and NPS in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA, and individual scoping meetings.

FHWA, NPS and DDOT held an inter-agency meeting on September 6, 2012 at the DDOT headquarters in Southeast DC. Agencies in attendance included DC SHPO, WMATA, EPA, and CFA. Additionally, the project was coordinated at DDOT's monthly meeting with these agencies. The purpose of the scoping meeting was to solicit feedback from the agencies that could potentially affect the scope or content of the EA and to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the improvements to be made at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Minnesota Avenue, SE.

Coordination with the DC SHPO about the project intersection originally began in 2006 with the development of the Pennsylvania Avenue Great Streets Program when tasked with considering the environmental constraints. When DDOT began refining the project alternatives at the start of the EA process, DDOT submitted a letter to the D.C. SHPO on December 17, 2010 to formally initiate the Section 106 process in accordance with the NHPA. DDOT held a meeting to re-introduce DC SHPO staff to the project on February 2, 2011 to discuss the project status, any cultural resources in the project vicinity, the potential APE, and any necessary consulting parties. In March of 2011, DDOT requested DC SHPO's concurrence with the project APE. The DC SHPO responded with their concurrence on April 8, 2011.

In July of 2011, DDOT submitted an *Archaeological Assessment of Potential* to the DC SHPO with recommendations for archaeological survey.

On October 26, 2011 the DC SHPO provided additional Section 106 comments on the project with response that no previously identified historic properties are located in the APE and that if the Build Alternative 1 – Revised Square Alternative (referred to as Modified Square Alternative in the letter) were selected, the project would likely have no adverse effect on historic properties. DC SHPO states that because of its proposed design, the Build Alternative 1 would reestablish Twining Square to its original and historical shape, therefore constituting a no adverse effect to the built environment. In an email correspondence to DDOT on June 2, 2014, DC SHPO clarified that the selection of Build Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative would not alter its determination of no adverse effect because the Build Alternative 2 also reestablishes the original and historical shape of Twining Square. Geoarchaeological coring was requested to further investigate the potential for archaeological resources. A Special Use Permit was obtained from NPS and the testing was conducted in November of 2012 (signed copy of Special Use Permit is included in *Appendix E, Cultural Resources*). The *Geoarchaeological Interpretations in the Vicinity of the Intersection of Pennsylvania and Minnesota Avenues in the Anacostia Section of Washington, D.C.* report provides the results of the preliminary testing.

In June 2014, FHWA determined that the project will have a “No Adverse Effect” on historic resources in the project area. DCSHPO concurred with this determination. Coordination with the DC SHPO and cultural reports submitted are provided in *Appendix E, Cultural Resources*.

NCPC was invited to be a cooperating agency on the EA and as a consulting party under Section 106 in a letter dated September 27, 2012.

Upon the Notice of Availability and publication of the EA for public review on October 28, 2013, hard copies or electronic copies of the document were distributed to the appropriate District and Federal agencies. An email announcement was distributed to additional members of these agencies with information regarding the publication of the EA and how to provide comments. Additionally, agencies were invited to attend an Inter-Agency Meeting at DDOT for information and updates pertaining to the release of the EA from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Wednesday, November 13, 2013.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

DDOT sent scoping notices to the public to solicit comments on environmental, historical, cultural and other issues relevant to the proposed project. Scoping notices, scoping letters and project brochures were distributed to the public in September 2012. DDOT provided a project website in the fall of 2012 that detailed the project history and proposed improvements. The public was asked to send comments by mail to DDOT or to leave comments on the project website by October 15, 2012. A summary of comments from the public is presented in *Appendix C, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement*.

DDOT hand-delivered brochures in the project Study Area in April of 2013 that contained project information and notice of a project presentation at the ANC 7B Monthly Meeting held on May 16, 2013. There were approximately 50 attendees at the meeting. DDOT presented the project purpose and need, Proposed Action and alternatives being carried forward in the EA. Handouts were provided for attendees, along with optional comment cards that could be left at the meeting or mailed to DDOT. The public had an opportunity to ask questions and comment on the information provided. The majority of comments were questions regarding the traffic operations of the alternatives and concerns regarding bicycle and pedestrian movement through the intersection.

The Notice of Availability for the EA and public hearing date was advertised in *The Washington Times* and as a DDOT Press Release on Monday, October 28, 2013. The EA public review and comment period was officially extended an additional 30 days, through December 31, 2013; however comments continued to be accepted through March 2014. The EA was available for review in hardcopy at DDOT (55 M Street, SE, Washington, DC), FHWA (1990 K Street, NW, Washington, DC) and the Francis A. Gregory Library (3660 Alabama Avenue, SE, Washington, D.C.). A public hearing with an open house and presentation and formal comment period was held at the Francis A. Gregory Library on November 13, 2013 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. Announcement of the availability of the EA and the public hearing were also advertised on the project website. Electronic and/or hard copies of the EA were submitted to all ANC7B and 8A commissioners, relevant civic associations, the Mayor, and Ward 7 and 8 councilmembers for their review and distribution. Approximately 17 members of the public attended the public hearing and six people provided official testimony. Nine written comments were received from the public or community organizations during and following the public comment period.

DDOT has attended multiple civic association and ANC meetings since the publication of the EA to provide project information and to update the public on the EA's progress. Additionally, this project was included in the projects presented at the public meeting for the DDOT Projects Update: Ward 7 on March 6th, 2014.

Public comments received and DDOT responses to comment, along with public meeting materials, are included in *Appendix C, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement*.

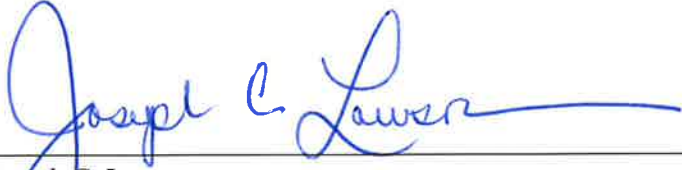

The following is a summary of the written and oral comments by general topic received throughout the formal comment period. For each topic, examples of the types of comments are presented.

- The need for improved safety at this intersection, particularly for bicyclists and pedestrians, was a major issue for many commenters. Several commenters specifically referenced the need to make the intersection Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible and safe for users of all ages.
- Many of the comments received pertained to the need for enhanced green space and less pavement at the intersection. Some comments included suggestions for enhancing the green space as a public space or plaza, with suggestions for monuments and other aesthetic enhancements such as park benches. Several comments noted that permeable pavement and pavers should be utilized at the intersection.
- Residents expressed concern for traffic at this intersection and voiced uncertainty that either of the build alternatives would address their traffic concerns. Several comments indicated that the design appeared to favor commuters and would not be an improvement for residents.
- Several comments requested that the study area be expanded to toward Prout Street, Fairlawn Avenue, and that more coordination be conducted with other ongoing DDOT studies and projects.
- Several comments made note of the heavy bus activity and amount of bus riders using this intersection. Commenters stated that the project should accommodate the bus traffic and necessary bus movements.
- The need for DDOT to reach out to individual homeowners and conduct more outreach to the residents around the intersection was noted in several comments. Specifically, the residents along L'Enfant Square, SE were identified as residents that could be impacted by Build Alternative 1.

- Preference was stated for the No Build Alternative by several individuals or organizations. Build Alternative 2 was stated as the preferred alternative if the No Build Alternative was not selected.

## CONCLUSION

The FHWA has determined that the Preferred Alternative and options for the Pennsylvania Ave-Minnesota Ave, S.E. Intersection Improvement project will not have a significant impact on the natural, human or built environment as defined by CEQ. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on the findings of the proposed project's Final EA, and comments submitted during preparation of the EA. The Final EA has been evaluated by the FHWA, using CEQ regulations and FHWA guidelines, and has been determined to adequately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an environmental impact statement is not required. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached Final EA.

Approved:  

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Joseph C. Lawson  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
District of Columbia Division

Date