President's Park South Design Competition
Frequently Asked Questions

Why can't E Street be opened to traffic now?

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, E Street, NW between 15th and 17th Streets, NW was effectively closed to unauthorized vehicular traffic for security reasons through a series of temporary closures. These concerns still exist today and are expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

Will the redesigned E Street be like Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House?

It may be like Pennsylvania Avenue in some ways. The E Street redesign is intended to restore the dignity of the space while providing accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists. Like Pennsylvania Avenue, it would prohibit unauthorized vehicular traffic. However, each space is unique and the proposed designs for President's Park South and E Street will take this into consideration. Moreover, there are some differences because E Street between 15th and 17th Streets is a National Park Service park roadway, while Pennsylvania Avenue is a District of Columbia-managed roadway.

If improvements are constructed, would they prevent E Street from being re-opened in the future?

This initiative's goal is to improve the portion of President's Park South overtaken by temporary security elements. This will be done without restricting the ability to re-introduce vehicular traffic along the closed portion of E Street at some point in the future should the threat environment change and a decision to do so is made.

Will the winning concept from the design competition ultimately be implemented?

The design competition's purpose is to generate creative alternatives to the challenge before us. As part of the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process and compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (Sections 106 and 110), the National Park Service, the U.S. Secret Service, with input from the public will evaluate a broad range of alternatives that are expected to include the

competition's five concepts. Moreover, one or more of the concepts may end up as the preferred alternative. While the competition's winning design may evolve into the preferred alternative or another alternative that is ultimately implemented, there is no guarantee of that.

How will this design competition impact east-west mobility?

The designs are not expected to affect mobility across the city although they will also be considered in that context. The design competition is intended to identify solutions that make it easier for pedestrians and bicyclists to move through President's Park South. NCPC supports efforts by the District Department of Transportation to improve downtown vehicular mobility.

What will happen to our comments on these design concepts? Will they become part of the NEPA record?

All public comments received by NCPC as part of the design competition process will be shared with the National Park Service and the U.S. Secret Service and will become part of NCPC's record for the design competition process. As a practical matter, not all of these comments may be relevant to the development of alternatives for the NEPA process and compliance with the NHPA, even though they are considered and aid NCPC in the design competition. All interested parties should also participate in the NEPA/Section 106 process including providing comments. For information on the NEPA process, please visit http://parkplanning.nps.gov/prpa

How does this design competition relate to the White House Area Transportation Study?

The just-released White House Area Transportation Study (WHATS), led by the Federal Highway Administration, examined the congestion and mobility impacts caused by the closure of E Street and Pennsylvania Avenue and identified engineering solutions to mitigate those impacts. This design competition is informed by WHATS, and would not preclude future implementation of improvements to the transportation system.