



April 15, 2008

Ms. Susan Spain  
Project Executive  
The National Mall Plan  
National Mall and Memorial Parks  
900 Ohio Drive, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Susan:

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The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) welcomes the opportunity to participate as a consulting party to the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 review of the National Mall Plan and appreciates the National Park Service's (NPS) willingness to work with interested parties to preserve the historical and cultural resources of the National Mall. However, in order for ASLA to provide constructive recommendations on maintaining the historical integrity of the National Mall – one of America's most important landscapes - I am writing to request that the National Park Service provide additional historical information on the Mall and its resources.

In particular, ASLA is requesting that the NPS provide an overview of the history and cultural resources of the National Mall during one of its upcoming Section 106 meetings. Specifically, we are requesting that you discuss the L'Enfant Plan, the McMillan Plan, the Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill (S.O.M.) Plan and other relevant historical plans and events that could impact the Section 106 review of the Mall. Perhaps the NPS has filed a Cultural Landscape Report, which may include much of this information. If so, ASLA requests that this report be available to Section 106 consulting parties.

ASLA also requests that the NPS develop an additional map that identifies and documents the cultural and historical resources of the National Mall. A map that includes this important information would provide the landscape architects reviewing the National Mall Plan alternatives a critical visual aid that would allow them a better opportunity to make historically based recommendations.

Further, ASLA requests detailed information and history on the Tidal Basin – particularly a summary of the historical and aesthetic significance of the Tidal Basin and responses to the following questions.

- When was the Tidal Basin formed?
- Who designed the Tidal Basin and what is the significance of its shape?
- When was the bridge overlooking the Tidal Basin constructed and what is its significance?
- With regard to filling or altering the Tidal Basin, has NPS performed any hydrology studies?

- Has NPS investigated other sewer or stormwater management alternatives to filling the Tidal Basin?

ASLA also requests the history of Union Square and responses to the following questions:

- What was Union Square before the S.O.M. plan?
- How much of the formal vision of the McMillan plan was carried out, if any?
- Where are the boundaries for the Olmsted design for the Capitol grounds?
- Did any of the historical plans envision recreational activities for this area of the Mall?

ASLA would also like to know the historical use and development of allowing demonstrations on the National Mall and if there is a difference between the types of demonstrations held at the Lincoln Memorial v. the U.S. Capitol v. The White House?

Moreover, ASLA is also requesting responses to the following questions:

- Roadways: When were Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison streets constructed? And when were Washington and Adams streets removed?
- Pedestrian Improvements: When did the NPS begin using the “crushed stone” on pedestrian walkways? Why was this surface treatment chosen?
- Recreational Activities: When did it become commonplace for recreational activities, including organized sporting events to occur on the National Mall?
- Park Police Equestrian Stables: What is the history of maintaining equestrian stables on the National Mall?

Finally, it would be great to have a “walking tour” of the National Mall for Section 106 consulting parties. This in-person overview of the Mall could point out particular historical and cultural resources of the Mall along with important historical and background information. ASLA would certainly appreciate NPS providing such a personal tour of the Mall.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to work with the National Park Service on developing a National Mall Plan that balances the Mall’s historical significance with its other intended uses. I look forward to your responses to these questions and other inquiries regarding the National Mall. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at [rblackwell@asla.org](mailto:rblackwell@asla.org) or 202-216-2334.

Sincerely,



Roxanne Blackwell  
Federal Government Affairs Manager  
American Society of Landscape Architects