



***Docket Item #1  
Informational Item  
Carlyle Courthouse Security Improvements***

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| <b>Application</b>                         | <b>Purpose of Application</b>  |
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| <b>Project Name:</b><br>Carlyle Courthouse | Provide an overview of the proposed security improvements to the Federal Courthouse in Carlyle, specifically along Jamieson Avenue, Elizabeth Lane, and within and around Courthouse Square. |
| <b>Location:</b><br>401 Courthouse Square  |  |

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## **I. SUMMARY**

In the recent months, Planning and Zoning staff have been meeting with the U.S. Marshals Service and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) to discuss removal of the temporary security measures that were implemented several years ago (Jersey barriers, guard booths, and mechanical barriers), and develop a more architecturally appropriate plan for the Courthouse that considers the larger Carlyle neighborhood. This portion of Carlyle and Eisenhower East has experienced significant changes in the last few years with the completion of many new buildings, including the Westin and Marriott hotels, the Jamieson condos, the Mill Race office building, the two Mill Race residential buildings, and the Simpson garage and office building. In addition, the office and retail building on Ballenger Avenue across from the Courthouse (Carlyle Block J) will be completed in the next few months, thereby completing construction in this area. Given the increased number of people living, visiting, and working in the neighborhood, it is extremely important that the City and Courthouse work together to create a finished look for the Courthouse that will contribute to the Carlyle neighborhood.

This project is being undertaken by a Federal agency and, thus, does not need to be approved through the City's regulatory process. However, it will need to be reviewed by the National Capital Planning Commission and staff from this agency has been involved in the discussions and work that has been done to date. At this time, the Marshals Service and GSA are in the process of preparing construction plans for the improvements. Since the project falls within Carlyle, staff is presenting the proposal to the Design Review Board as an informational item to keep the Board aware of what is happening and allow for the opportunity to comment.

## **II. PROJECT SUMMARY**

After several internal meetings, staff, the Marshals Service, and GSA have designed a solution that meets the City's goal of maintaining an urban and inviting streetscape along Jamieson and Courthouse Square, while also addressing the security needs of the Courthouse. Initial ideas for Elizabeth Lane have also been discussed, although no plans have been developed for this portion at this point. A summary of each component of the improvement proposal is provided below.

### Jamieson Avenue

The ultimate goal for Jamieson Avenue is to provide a typical streetscape while addressing the security needs of the Courthouse. To do this, low, hardened planters will be installed along the perimeter of the building to provide a security offset. By removing the jersey barriers along Jamieson Avenue, the curb can be extended away from the building to essentially the point where the jersey barriers are currently located. This will provide the space needed to install a standard sidewalk (minimum 6 feet) with tree wells. No parking will be allowed along the curb adjacent to the Courthouse, but on-street parking spaces could be returned to the Carlyle Towers side of the street during off-peak hours at a minimum. Since Jamieson Avenue widens at the intersection with Mill Road, there is room to provide a dedicated left turn lane, which would be an important addition considering the new Mill Road ramp to the Capital Beltway.

The existing garage entrance on Jamieson Avenue is the point where prisoners are transferred via bus into the Courthouse. Since the current garage opening is not wide or high enough for the bus

that is used for this transfer, an alternate solution for this location has been proposed. Two walls, approximately 7-8 feet high, flanking each side of the garage doors are proposed to be installed for a bus to pull in, drop off passengers, back up into the opposite enclosure, and pull back onto Jamieson Avenue. The walls have been designed to look like an extension of the base of the building and should adequately screen a bus when parked in the space. The concept also allows for a mechanical barrier (either rising barricades or a rolling gate) that could completely separate the transfer area from the public sidewalk when security concerns require it. Additionally, the Courthouse may consider adding a trellis to the top of the transfer area to provide additional security, as well as additional screening.

#### Courthouse Square

A second part of the proposal addresses improvements at the entrance to the Courthouse facing Courthouse Square Park. Currently, the street between the Courthouse and the park is blocked off. With this proposal, the jersey barriers would also be removed in this location and the new curb line along Jamieson Avenue would extend past the street to connect with the existing curb around the park. The street would be integrated with the sidewalk in front of the Courthouse and the park to eliminate the appearance of a closed street. Accommodations for emergency vehicles will be made through special paving and curbs.

Staff is also exploring ways to incorporate renovations and enhancements to Courthouse Square Park in conjunction with the Courthouse security improvements. This park is owned and maintained by the Carlyle Development Corporation (CDC). With the elimination of the street in front of the Courthouse, the design for the park should be reconsidered to create one integrated public space that seamlessly transitions to the secured area of the Courthouse. Staff has prepared a conceptual sketch of one possible design for the park and will continue to develop this plan through additional public input. There is currently no designated funding for renovation/enhancement of this park; however, staff will continue to discuss this matter with the CDC and the Carlyle Community Council, when it is formed.

#### Elizabeth Lane

There are also jersey barriers along Elizabeth Lane that are proposed to be removed. Given the narrower sidewalk on this side, there is not enough room to install hardened planters for the security offset as is proposed for Jamieson Avenue. Additionally, with the improvements on Jamieson Avenue, there will no longer be parking for the courthouse officials on the street. To address both of these issues, it has been initially proposed to relocate the official vehicle parking to Elizabeth Lane to provide this parking as well as create an offset for this side of the building. There is currently enough room in the street to provide on-street parking. Once plans are developed, a closer study of the impacts to the garage and service entrance to the Block J office/retail building will need to be examined to ensure the parking will not impede vehicles turning into and out of this entrance.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

Staff is hopeful that this plan will provide a great improvement to the streetscape and overall neighborhood and is eager to see it appropriately implemented. While official DRB approval is not required for this case, staff recommends the DRB support the proposal.