



Smithsonian Institution

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

# Program & Alternatives Discussion



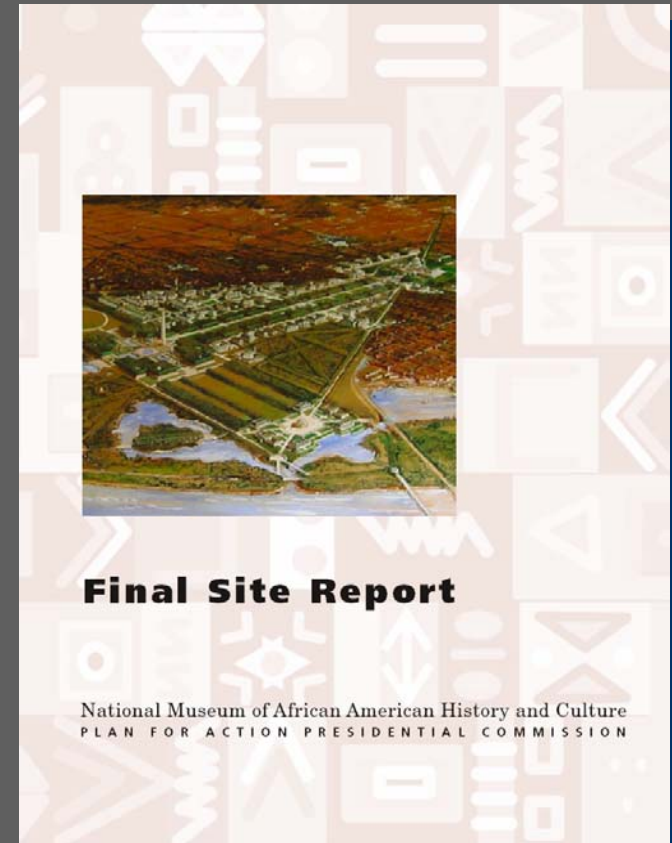
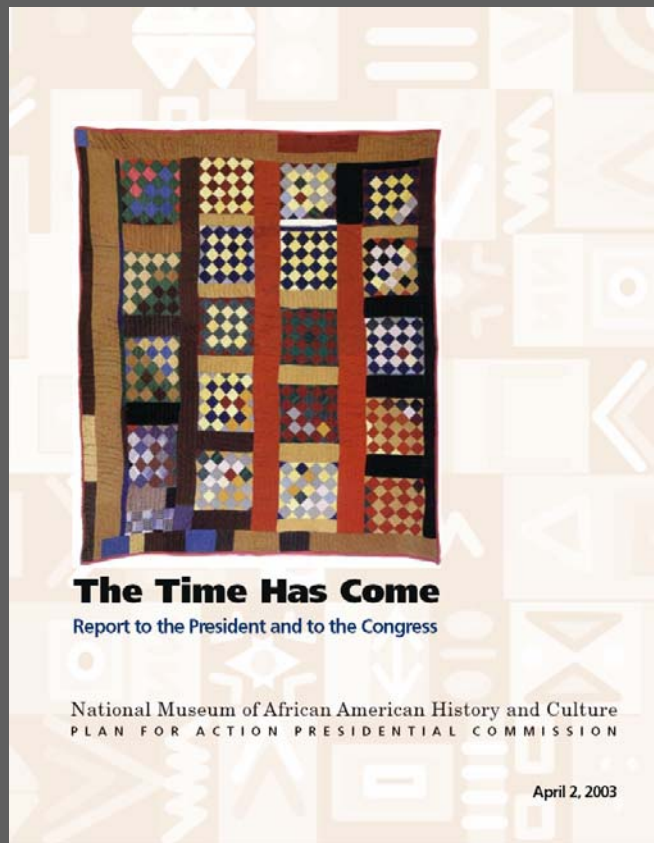
NHPA, Section 106

## Consulting Parties Meeting

October 10, 2007

# NMAAHC Plan for Action Presidential Commission Act of 2001,

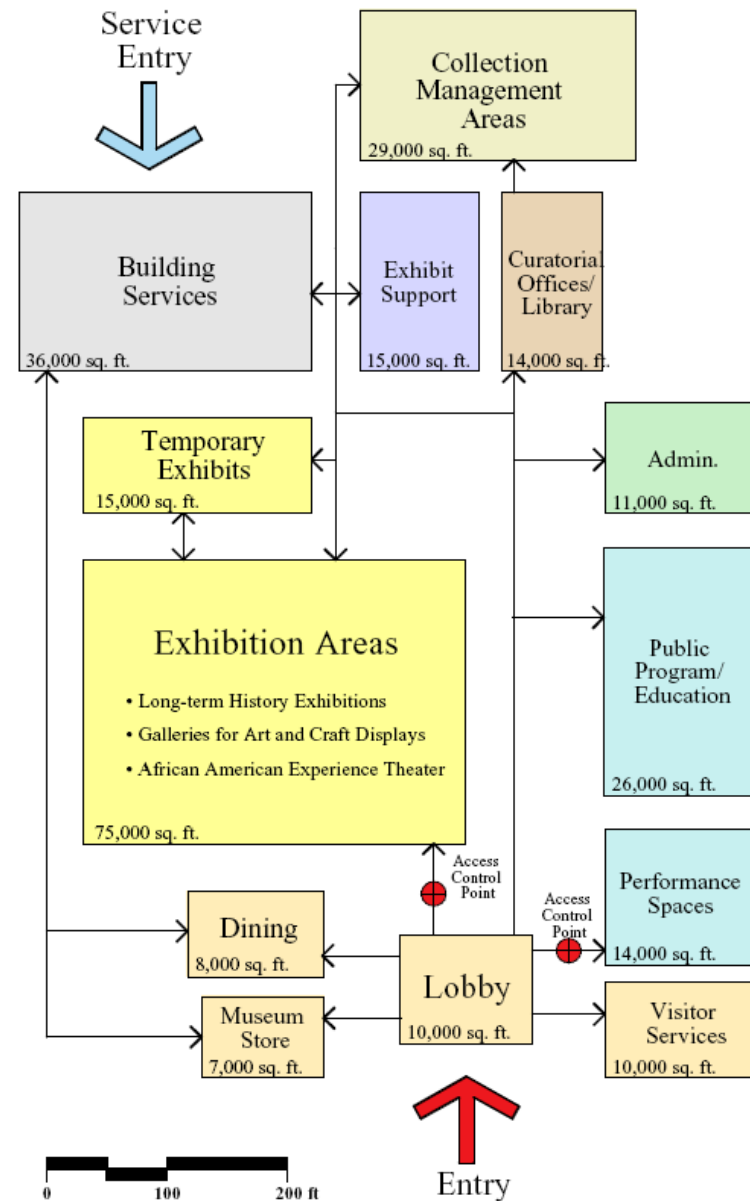
Public Law 107-106



# Architectural Program

- “Reasonable needs”
- Neither “too conservative or unnecessarily generous”
- Is a “critical benchmark in evaluating sites”
- Recognizes museum will grow and evolve overtime

Facility Program Organizational Diagram



# The NMAAHC Act, P.L. 108-184

## One Hundred Eighth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

*Passed and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday,  
the seventh day of January, two thousand and three*

### An Act

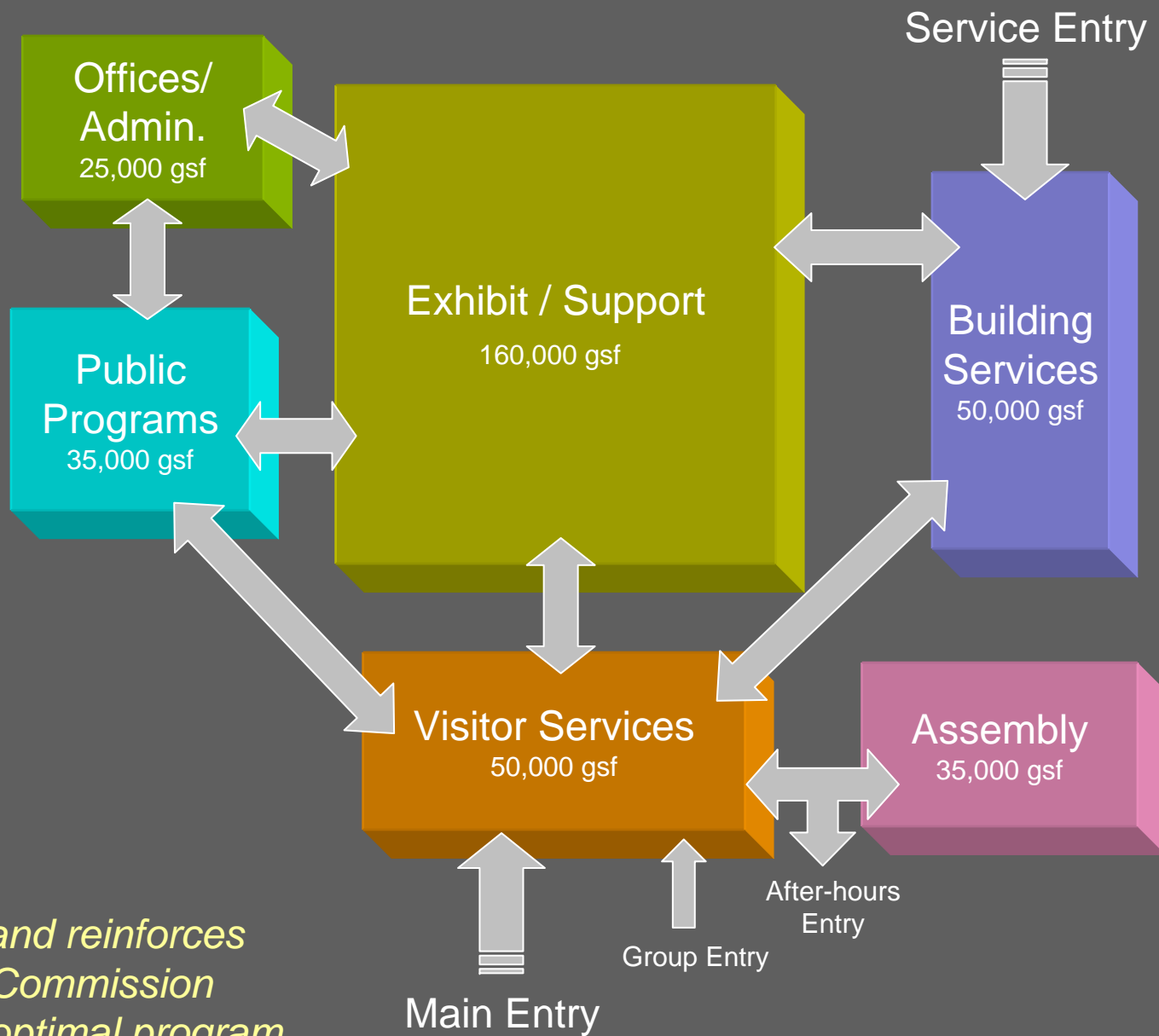
*To establish within the Smithsonian Institution the National Museum of African  
American History and Culture, and for other purposes.*

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of  
the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

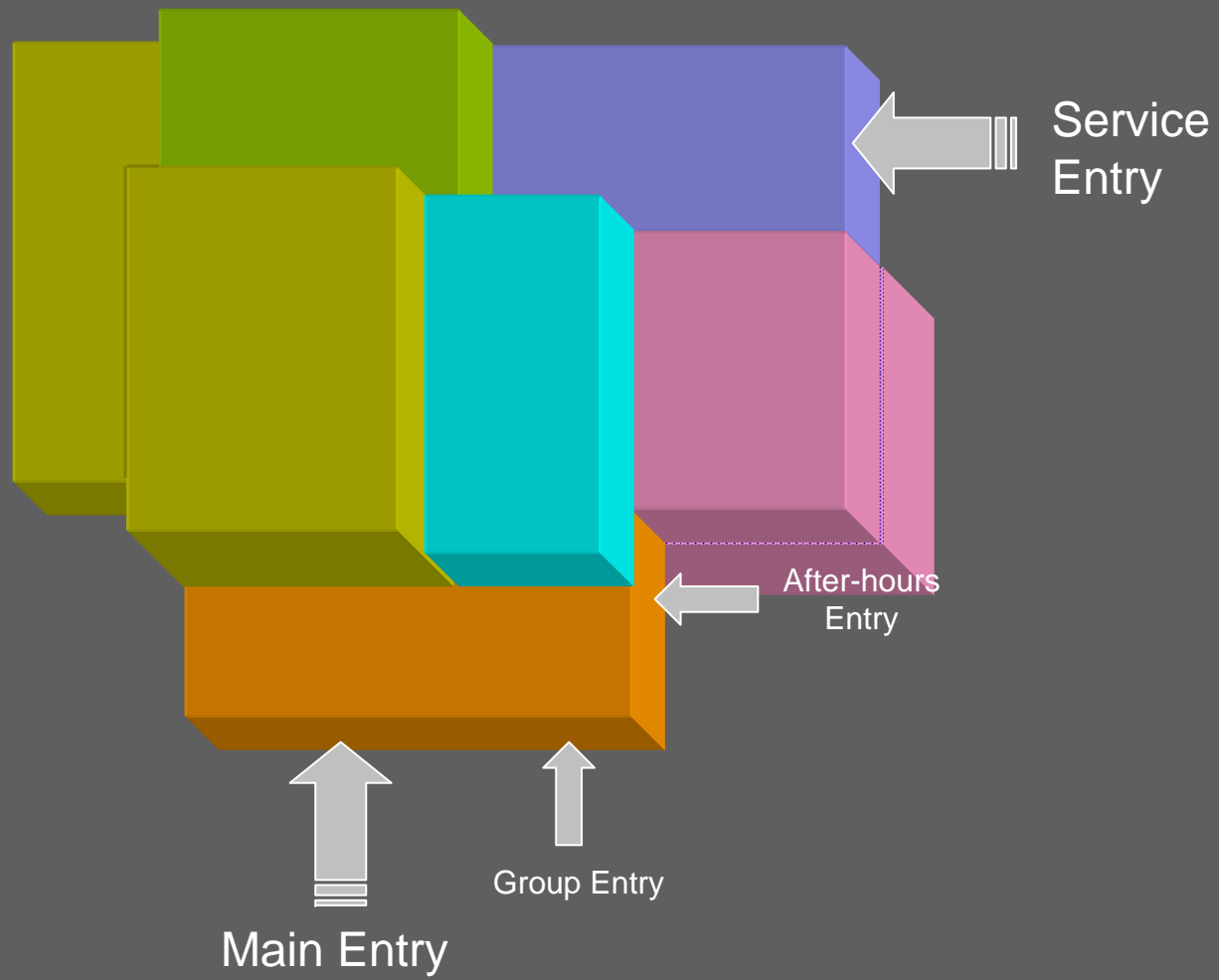
#### **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “National Museum of African  
American History and Culture Act”.

---



*SI validates and reinforces  
Presidential Commission  
350,000 gsf optimal program*

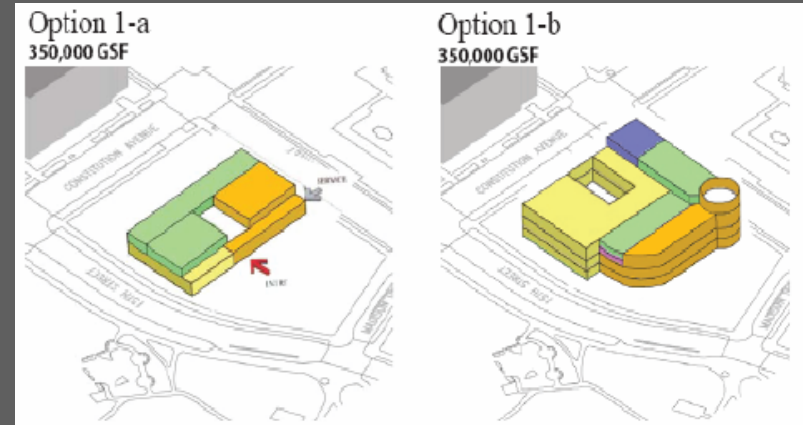


*Prepare "block, stacking and massing"  
diagrams for scenarios*

# Alternatives from Previous Studies

- **Presidential Commission**

- Option 1a & 1b: both 350,000 gsf with varying levels above and below ground



- **Site Evaluation Study**

- Option 2: 490,000 gsf; 3 levels above ground, 1 below
- Option 3: 840,000 gsf; 8 levels above ground, 5 below

(Note in both options one level was considered to be about 15 feet slab to slab)



# Alternatives

- First round in the EIS process pulled alternatives for earlier report for further analysis
- Simple “boxes” to test wide range of massing
- Used 350,000 gsf as optimal
- Some alternatives more, some less



# Alternatives considered

- Option 1 series

- About 45 feet high
- 3 levels above grade  
(60,000 – 80,000 sf)
- 1 or 2 levels below grade  
(111,500 sf)

- Option 2 series

- About 75 feet high
- 5 levels above grade  
(60,000 – 80,000 sf)
- No or 1 level below grade  
(111,500 sf)

- Option 3 series

- About 105 feet high
- 7 levels above grade  
(30,000 – 54,000 sf)
- 1 or 2 levels below grade  
(21,000 - 95,000 sf)

# Alternatives considered

- Option 1 series

- Low, horizontal element
- Not in scale with purpose & need or the surroundings
- 350,000 gsf difficult, without much of it underground

- Option 2 series

- More reasonable scale
- Massing similar with surroundings
- 350,000 gsf easier to achieve

- Option 3 series

- Visual impact may be too great; creates vertical element
- Footprint could be smaller; more open space
- More than 350,000 gsf easy to achieve

# Alternatives

Second round in the EIS process  
12 alternatives were other than  
No-Build considered.

# No Build Alternative

- Pros

- Historic viewsheds & landscape preserved
- Existing open space preserved

- Cons

- Purpose & need not met
- Contradicts Presidential Commission Report and SI Site Evaluation Report, both noting this as a suitable site for the program
- Puts aside a long thoughtful site selection process
- New site selection process must be justified and initiated through SI Regents and Congress
- Must also be justified to public & community at large

# Alternatives considered

- Contextual building alignment
- Washington Monument orientation
- Central diagonal view preservation
- North diagonal view preservation
- South diagonal view preservation
- Floating museum
- Multi-volume
- Hinge
- Blob
- Monumental Pavilion
- Courtyard
- Green roof park

# Alternatives dismissed

- Contextual building alignment
- Washington Monument orientation
- Central diagonal view preservation
- ~~North diagonal view preservation~~
- ~~South diagonal view preservation~~
- ~~Floating museum~~
- ~~Multi-volume~~
- Hinge
- Blob
- ~~Monumental Pavilion~~
- ~~Courtyard~~
- Green roof park

# Alternatives dismissed

- **North diagonal view preservation**
  - Inefficient, small above ground floor plate
  - Over priority on one viewshed
- **South diagonal view preservation**
  - Same as above
- **Floating museum**
  - Nearly continuous landscape, but program challenges with significantly separated above & below grade levels
- **Multi-volume**
  - Inefficient, small above ground floor plate
  - Very little above grade programming flexibility
- **Monumental Pavilion**
  - More specific than other alternatives
  - Begs a design solution that could be incorporated in any alternative
- **Courtyard**
  - Any courtyard of sufficient size would create undue bulkiness

# Alternatives advanced

- Contextual building alignment
- Washington Monument orientation
- Central diagonal view preservation
- North diagonal view preservation
- South diagonal view preservation
- Floating museum
- Multi-volume
- Hinge
- Blob
- Monumental Pavilion
- Courtyard
- Green roof park



# Alternatives advanced

- Contextual building alignment
- Washington Monument orientation

• Central diagonal view preservation

• North diagonal view preservation

• South diagonal view preservation

• Enframing

- Floating museum
- Multi-volume

• Hinge

• Blob

• Free Form

• Monumental Pavilion

• Courtyard

• Green roof park

• Terraced Roof

# Additional Alternatives to be considered

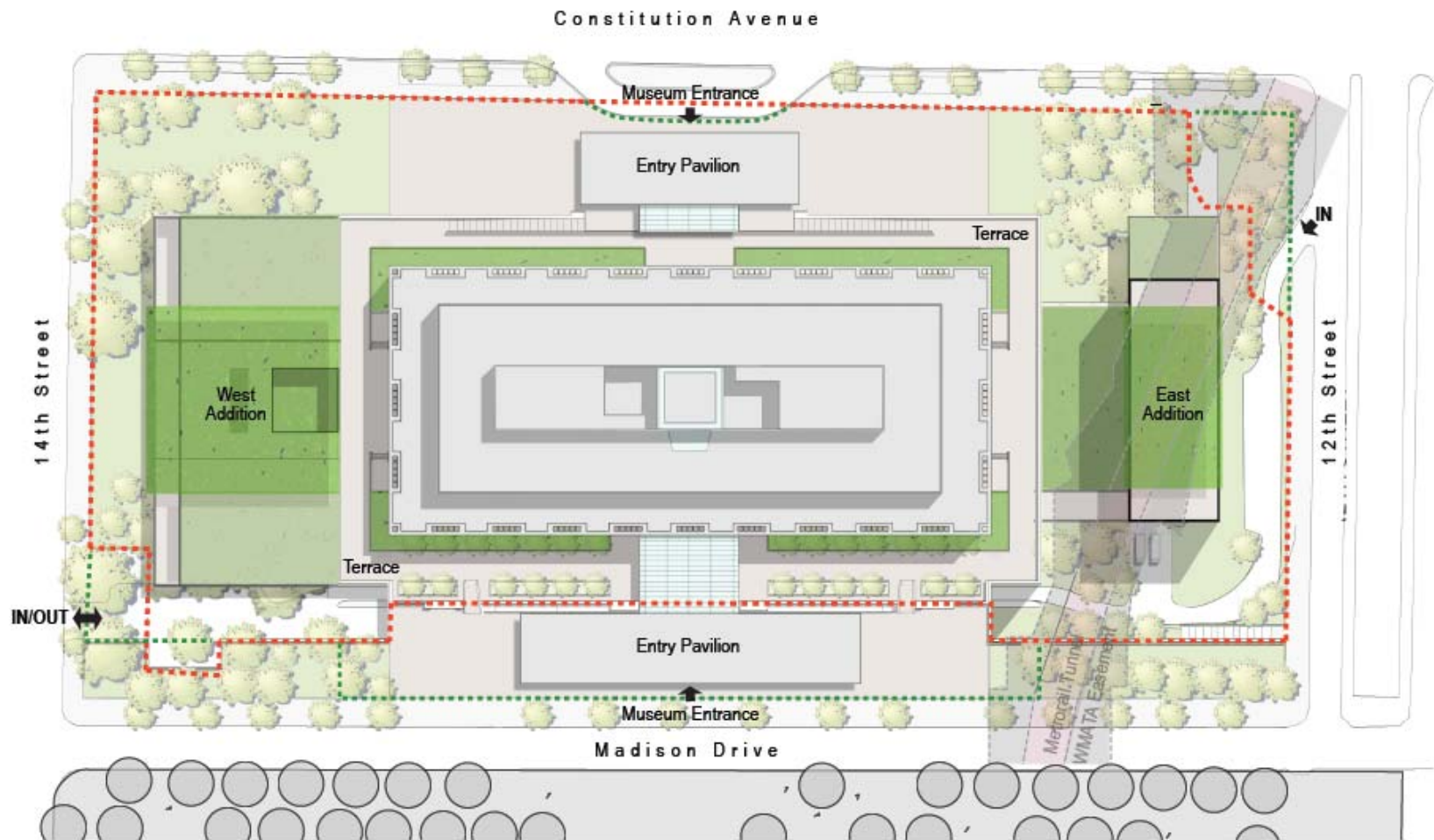
- Bifurcated program and site (especially, noting NMAH west side)

## Principles

- Potential for smaller footprint and profile, ergo, smaller viewshed impact
- Potential for some, but not all, historic landscape being preserved

## Reasons for Probable Dismissal

- Builds in museum program inefficiencies
- Builds in administrative difficulties
- Builds in maintenance redundancies
- Does not meet intent of P.L. 108 -184; select one of four sites, not two or three, or from other sites not designated
- SI would need to set aside to thoughtful, earlier studies and justify this change in thinking to Congress
- Implies institutional re-structuring
- Future plans for NMAH west side



## Site Development Plan

Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History, Behring Center  
 Comprehensive Facilities Development Plan, February 3, 2006

Executive Summary - XXXII  
 Master Plan

# Conclusion

- Long, sometimes iterative, process
  - Before NEPA & 106
  - During NEPA & 106
  - Into Programming & Design
- Keep the two processes in tandem
- But, always moving forward

