

# Current Conditions

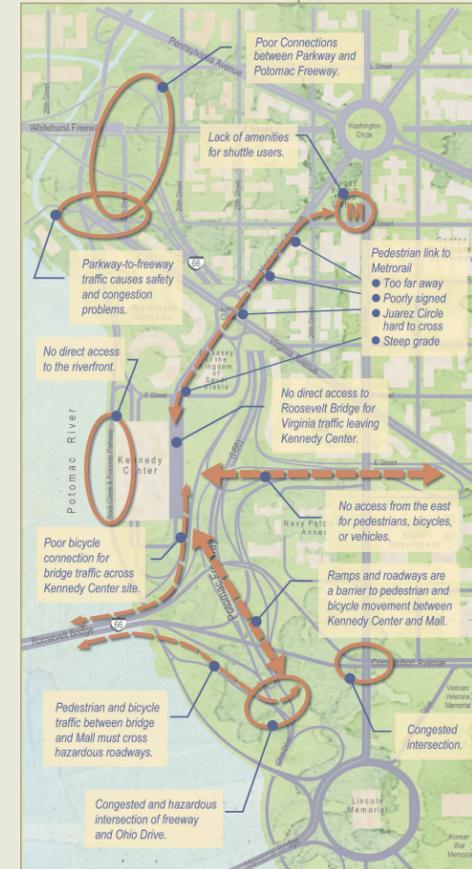
Despite the design's appeal, its cost far exceeded the amount of private funds that could be raised for development. The building was subsequently redrawn to its current configuration. The riverfront connection was lost. The grand entrance was replaced by a stub driveway from New Hampshire Avenue and the park-like setting was given up to the bulk of the structure.

The configuration of the Potomac Freeway created the largest barrier of all. Its main line and ramp connections to the Roosevelt Bridge cut the Center off from areas to the south and east—i.e., the Mall, E Street, and much of Foggy Bottom. The nation's symbol of artistic vibrance was separated from the residents,



workers, and visitors it was meant to serve. L'Enfant's vision for integrating the symbolic capital with the working city—and linking the Nation's most important buildings with its finest avenues—was scuttled. As one critic noted, "the physical manifestation of our culture is a traffic island between highways and freeways which is virtually inaccessible on foot."

*The scaled back design lost connections to the Center's surroundings and set it apart from the rest of the City.*



*Numerous conditions contribute to the Center's isolation.*

Visitors and patrons suffer from the compromises of the past in several ways.

- There is no direct path from the Center to the east or southeastward to the National Mall, and there are inadequate connections from the riverfront to the Center. In the absence of clear walkways, pedestrians improvise a hazardous footpath and sprint across the freeway. Others dash across the parkway near a blind corner on the Center's south side. The bicycle connection to the Custis/I-66 trail crosses an Interstate off-ramp. Dangerously narrow pedestrian and bicycle portals exist on the east side of the parkway under the Roosevelt Bridge.
- Performances begin near the end of Washington's evening rush hour. Vehicular traffic is confounded by high levels of congestion on the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and various bridge ramps near performance times. In addition, there are high accident rates at the foot of the Roosevelt Bridge and at the intersection of Virginia Avenue, 27th Street, and the parkway.
- Nearly 200,000 vehicles a day use the complex of ramps and roadways adjacent to the Center. Improvements must ensure that these volumes are served and that traffic is not backed up onto the Roosevelt Bridge or diverted onto neighborhood streets.
- The Foggy Bottom metro station is too far away for most patrons to walk comfortably to the Center. Visitors unfamiliar with the area are not likely to find the Center since it is not visible from the station and there are no directional signs. The Kennedy Center Show Shuttle addresses some of these concerns but must use residential streets for its route.