

**Statement of the Honorable Stephen T. Ayers, FAIA, LEED AP  
Architect of the Capitol**

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**Statement before the Committee on House Administration, United States  
House of Representatives**

February 6, 2017



Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today and to provide an overview of the Architect of the Capitol's (AOC) operations, achievements and goals.

The AOC has a legacy that is rooted in the very beginnings of Washington, D.C., with the laying of the U.S. Capitol cornerstone in 1793. As the country grew, so did the U.S. Capitol campus and with it the AOC's responsibilities. Today, we operate and care for more than 17.4 million square feet across 36 facilities and 570 acres of grounds.



VIEW OF THE U.S. CAPITOL CAMPUS AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BUILDINGS

In the last two decades, our footprint has increased substantially. Along with the sheer growth in size, the complexity of operating these facilities has undergone significant change. The number of people that work here has grown, and the number of people that visit has skyrocketed. The Capitol campus is home to 30,000 daily occupants and has hosted approximately 3.4 million visitors from throughout the U.S. and around the world in FY 2016. During this time, the AOC has not only kept up with, but staked a leadership role, in using innovative technology and addressing significant security challenges all while driving down injury rates, driving up energy efficiency and reducing costs.

In recent years, we have proudly undertaken several major projects across the campus, all on-time and within budget. This includes the first major restoration of the U.S. Capitol Dome and Rotunda in more than 50 years and the initial phases of the Cannon Renewal project and the conservation of the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial. We are also working hard on the next phase of the expansion of the Library of Congress' book storage facility complex at Fort Meade. However, much more work remains to address the deferred maintenance and capital renewal projects that make up a growing backlog of work estimated at \$1.55 billion at the close of FY 2016.

Our mission – to serve Congress and the Supreme Court, preserve America's Capitol, and inspire memorable experiences for all who visit the buildings and grounds – is essential to the operations of the country's legislative and judicial branches of government.

## Trusted Partner

Recognizing the trust placed in us by Congress and the American people, the talented men and women of the AOC, 2,100 strong, proudly work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to provide Congress and the Supreme Court with the facilities and infrastructure to conduct their business.



PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2017  
PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

We are honored to be the builder and steward of the iconic landmarks of Capitol Hill, including the U.S. Capitol, Capitol Grounds, Capitol Visitor Center, House office Buildings, Library of Congress, Senate office buildings, U.S. Supreme Court and the U.S. Botanic Garden. Utilizing unique craftsmanship and ingenuity, we provide professional expertise on the preservation of the architectural and artistic elements entrusted to our care and manage the design, construction and maintenance of the facilities and grounds.

In addition, the AOC serves the Congress by supporting high-profile special events including the Presidential Inauguration, State of the Union, joint sessions of Congress, Congressional Medal of Honor ceremonies and laying in state in the Rotunda. And our teams manage the post-election office moves that occur every two years. This year, we conducted office moves for 199 members in the House of Representatives in just 24 working days with no injuries.

The AOC's annual budget is approximately \$600 million per year, and we currently manage more than \$1 billion in active, concurrent construction projects. The AOC is funded across 10 separate appropriations accounts within the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, each having specific facility and operational responsibilities.

We are effective stewards of taxpayer dollars, and our expert management of federal funds has earned clean independent audit opinions 12 years in a row. Balancing growing needs and increasingly limited budgetary resources requires addressing repairs and upgrades while also attending to necessary security requirements, accessibility, code-compliance issues, historic preservation measures and the needs of AOC clients. Our ability to identify and execute cost-saving projects allows us to maximize each and every dollar.

In 2015, the AOC was one of the few agencies that successfully exceeded the energy reduction target established by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, achieving a 30.9 percent reduction from the 2003 baseline. The installation of over \$90 million in energy conservation measures in our buildings using energy savings performance contracts, which are great examples of public-private partnerships, significantly aided in this effort. Further reducing energy consumption remains an agency priority, and we have established a new 10-year goal of achieving an additional 20 percent reduction in energy consumption by the end of FY 2025.



HOUSE EMPLOYEES MONITOR ENERGY USAGE BY  
INSPECTING STEAM EQUIPMENT

The AOC requires a high-performing and engaged workforce to achieve our mission and continue to deliver and improve upon the services we provide. We have an agile and effective human capital program that uses technology to attract, source, recruit and acquire new talent.

## Leaders in Promoting a Culture of Safety

The AOC’s philosophy of “People First, Safety Always” serves as the foundation for continuous improvement. Our goal is to provide a safe, secure environment for all who work at or visit the Capitol campus, while also ensuring access to our public buildings.

We integrate safety into everything we do as we pursue our zero-injury safety culture. The Safety Observations and Reflections (SOAR) program was instituted to provide behavior-based training that focuses on what people do, analyzes why they do it and applies an intervention strategy for continuous improvement. In addition, we implemented several key safety initiatives and developed a safety dashboard to track metrics for safety, fire and environmental programs. These efforts have played a major role in our ability to decrease the injury and illness rate by 38 percent over the last 10 years.



CAPITOL GROUNDS JURISDICTION  
TREE TRIMMING

Safety is also a major factor in planning and allocating funds for capital projects. The investments the Congress has made in the AOC have bolstered our efforts to create a healthier, safer and more vibrant workplace for the congressional community. To support this work, the AOC develops budget recommendations at levels required to ensure that all the facilities on the Capitol campus remain safe, functional and protected.

Looking ahead, the AOC has determined that a number of security enhancements put in place after September 11, 2001, are nearing the end of their useful life and will soon need to be replaced. To address this issue in a fiscally responsible manner, we plan to implement short-term, annual maintenance and security upgrades until funding is available for full replacement.



RESTORATION OF THE U.S. CAPITOL ROTUNDA

## Experts in Preservation

The AOC uses the best tools available to manage our portfolio of diverse buildings and projects. We are determined to continue to be an industry leader in the use of effective project management to ensure that we direct finite resources in the most efficient and effective manner.

Across the Capitol campus, the AOC balances the responsibility of preserving historic buildings while meeting the needs of a modern workforce. Viewed from a distance, our buildings are inspiring and impressive, but up close, they are more distressing than impressive, as weather, age and deferred maintenance are destroying many of the finer details.

Stone preservation across the Capitol campus remains a top priority for us, as nearly every building is enveloped in stone and all have significant problems. While we face many challenges, we continue to successfully tackle this issue. Preservation of the exterior stone, windows and doors at the U.S.



INITIAL PHASE OF THE CANNON RENEWAL PROJECT

Capitol, U.S. Botanic Garden, U.S. Supreme Court and Russell Senate Office Building are all underway. These projects will prolong the life expectancy and preserve the historic features of the buildings by preventing water and air infiltration, slowing deterioration of the stone and corrosion of the metals, repairing damage and removing soil and stains.

Here on the House-side of the campus, the Cannon Renewal project is well underway. The first phase of the project has been completed on-time and within budget. All members who occupied offices that are impacted by the second phase have been moved, and the west wing of the building is now closed.

In addition, we are making progress on the Rayburn House Office Building garage rehabilitation program. Ensuring this critical project advances as planned will prevent continued deterioration that has jeopardized the garage structure, resulted in the loss of parking spaces, and increased the risk of potential tripping hazards and falling stone.

I want to express my gratitude to this Committee and the congressional community for your support as we undertake these essential projects. You will continue to see us reaching out through town halls, newsletters, websites and signage as this work continues.

## Conclusion

The AOC has four goals that it strives to achieve in order to carry out its mission to Serve, Preserve and Inspire:

- Maintain Awe-Inspiring Facilities
- Provide Extraordinary Services
- Foster an Innovative and Empowered Workforce
- Work as One Team, With One Mission



RAYBURN GARAGE REHABILITATION PROJECT

From cleaning up the campus after the January 2016 snow emergency, to supporting U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's lying-in-repose ceremony, to planning and executing congressional office moves and supporting the 58th Presidential Inauguration, we strive to be a world-class organization providing superior service to our clients.

We appreciate the continued support of Congress to enable us to carry out our important mission.