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# New Washington flood barrier to be tested: Metal wall would block surging water



By Michael E. Ruane October 30

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Washington's long-delayed 17th Street flood barrier is scheduled to be tested Friday when officials from the Army and the National Park Service install the metal apparatus across 17th Street, near Constitution Avenue.

Seventeenth Street, between Constitution and Independence avenues, near the National World War II Memorial, will be closed in both directions from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Army Corps of Engineers said. The test installation will take place during that time.

The temporary barrier is designed to block floodwaters surging north from the Tidal Basin and flowing into downtown Washington.

The test is designed to demonstrate how the post-and-panel

maps after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and parts of the Gulf Coast in 2005.

When FEMA reviewed the District's flood zones, it concluded that the usual plans to use sandbags and Jersey barriers to prevent floodwaters from flowing up 17th Street were inadequate.

FEMA foresaw a scenario in which a flood could inundate a huge crescent of downtown Washington from 17th Street and Constitution Avenue east to the Capitol and south toward Fort McNair.

Mike is a general assignment reporter who also covers Washington institutions and historical topics.

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