



## *News Release*

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# **Capitol Visitor Center to Close for Waterproofing, Tunnel Projects**

*~ Closure expected through December; Alternate  
entrance, tour drop-off locations identified ~*

**RICHMOND, Va.** – The Department of General Services (DGS), at the request of and working in conjunction with the Clerks of the House of Delegates and Senate of Virginia, today announced the Capitol Visitor Center will close to the public effective May 2 so DGS can complete waterproofing and tunnel construction projects.

During the closure, which is expected through at least December 2022, the historic Capitol will remain open. All visitors must use the west entrance to the Capitol, where they will be screened upon entry. Buses, tour groups and other large multiple-passenger vehicles can unload on the eastern-most lane of 9<sup>th</sup> Street near the Capitol Square vehicular entrance at Grace Street. Individuals who need accessibility accommodations and are arriving via a passenger vehicle can call (804) 389-5338 and arrange for drop-off inside Capitol Square. Due to ongoing construction and limited turning ability, no buses or other large passenger vehicles will be allowed to enter Capitol Square. Paid parking for Capitol Square visitors is available from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Monday through Friday in the 9<sup>th</sup> and Franklin Street Parking Deck, accessed from 9<sup>th</sup> Street.

Additional fencing will be placed on the east side of the Capitol and at the Bank Street Visitor Center entrance the week of May 9. Fencing already exists on the west side of the Capitol where the tunnel work is being completed. All Capitol Square visitors should stay clear of fenced construction areas for safety reasons.

The subterranean Visitor Center opened in 2007 and includes two large event/meeting rooms, a café, gift shop, exhibit space, and a media room. The closure of the Capitol Visitor Center is necessary for DGS to safely complete both critical waterproofing and tunnel construction projects.

The waterproofing work is the second of a two-phase project to rectify water infiltration issues. Phase One, which was completed in 2021, included replacing the former skylight at the Capitol portico plaza with a new granite compass rose inset and a new lighting element inside the Visitor Center.

The second phase will include temporarily removing the steps to the historic south portico and many of the pavers on the plaza below to install new roofing in those areas. The steps and pavers will be stored on site until they are returned. New lighting inside the Visitor Center will complement the large lighting feature installed last year.

DGS also will be working simultaneously to continue the excavation and construction of a new tunnel between the new General Assembly Building (GAB) and the underground Visitor Center. Approved by the General Assembly in 2020, digging for the tunnel began in 2021 and should be complete later this year. While the GAB is expected to open in late 2022, the tunnel to the Capitol will not be complete until 2023.

“These are complex projects that incorporate renovation, the repair of existing infrastructure, and new construction and require the coordination of various design and construction teams as we make improvements to Virginia’s historic Capitol,” said **Joe Damico, DGS Director**. “Closing the Capitol’s underground extension is critical to ensure everyone’s safety as we complete these important projects.”

“Enhancing the visitor experience to and around the Virginia State Capitol is a priority for us and all legislators,” said **G. Paul Nardo and Susan Clarke Schaar, Clerks of the House and Senate**, respectively. “While work continues on the new GAB, there also are ongoing efforts to improve and better share the important educational, cultural and learning opportunities for citizens and visitors to the home of America’s oldest continuously elected representative lawmaking body.”

For more information about the Virginia State Capitol, visit [Virginia State Capitol](#).

For more information about DGS, visit [dgs.virginia.gov](https://dgs.virginia.gov).

**About DGS:** DGS provides laboratory, procurement, real estate, and engineering and architectural services for state agencies, as well as fleet vehicle management, graphic design, surplus property disposal, and mail services at the seat of government. The agency also manages the facilities and grounds at Capitol Square.

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