



*U.S. Department of
Homeland Security*

**United States
Secret Service**

PRESS RELEASE

July 30, 2015
Contact: (202) 406-5708
GPA 07-15

U.S. SECRET SERVICE ANNOUNCES UPDATED INFORMATION CONCERNING THE VISIT OF POPE FRANCIS TO PHILADELPHIA, PA

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - On November 23, 2014, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson designated the visit of Pope Francis to Philadelphia, PA for the World Meeting of Families as a National Special Security Event (NSSE). When an event is designated a NSSE, the Secret Service assumes its mandated role as the lead agency for the design and implementation of the operational security plan. As a means to accomplishing this important task, the Secret Service has been working in conjunction with other Federal, State and Local law enforcement and public safety partners to ensure a safe environment in and around Philadelphia for not only Pope Francis, but the general public as well. The Secret Service, in an effort to keep the public aware of significant security developments ahead of the visit of Pope Francis to Philadelphia, PA, September 26-27, 2015, would like to provide the following information:

While the schedule of Pope Francis' visit to Philadelphia has been released, the exact configuration of the venues he will visit has not been finalized. As such, the overall security plan has not been finalized. Once completed, more specific details regarding perimeter, road closures and access will be released.

It is important to note that the Secret Service does not force businesses to close during NSSE events or during any other protective functions. The City of Philadelphia has repeatedly stated that it will be open for business during this event. The Secret Service has taken unprecedented steps to work with local area business owners to help facilitate keeping the businesses in Center City Philadelphia open, and within the past month, Secret Service agents have begun to meet personally with business owners, residents, and others whose buildings have been identified to be within the secure zone. As with all large scale security events, specific details are still in progress. However, agents will continue to have an open dialogue with those within the secure perimeter.

Transportation plans are still developing in collaboration with city officials and mass transit representatives. The Secret Service has not directed any of the transit systems to limit stops due to security concerns however, the projected volume of people in attendance and the management of that projected crowd will likely impact the transit system's ability to operate on their normal schedule and stops. More information will be forthcoming as the plans develop.

The United States Secret Service thanks the City of Philadelphia, the Office of the Mayor and the citizens of Philadelphia for their partnership as we work together to make the Pope's Visit to Philadelphia a safe, secure and successful event.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For questions concerning this release, please contact the U.S. Secret Service Office of Government and Public Affairs at 202-406-5708.