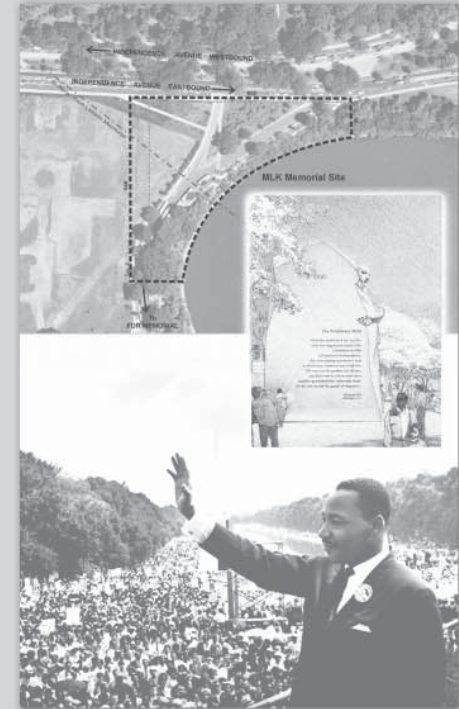
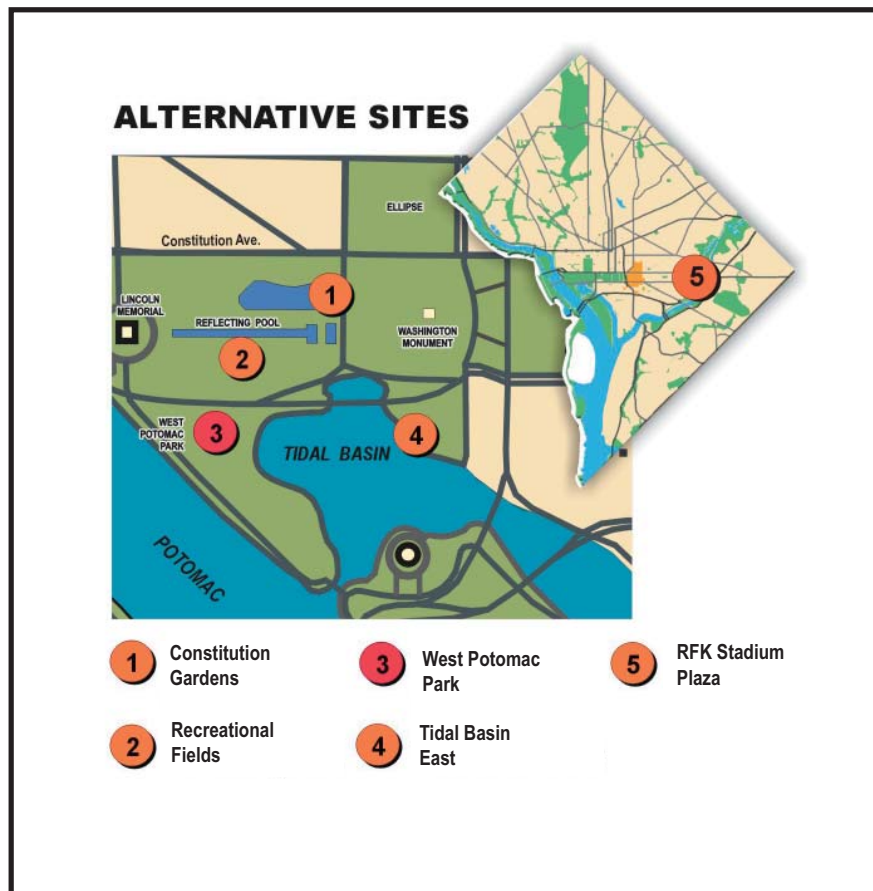


2.0 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES



2.1 Consideration of Alternative Sites

The approved Tidal Basin location for the Washington, DC Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial was selected after evaluation of an initial twelve (12) potential sites. From the initial 12 sites, the development potential and limitations of a reduced candidate list of five (5) sites were investigated in a Site Selection Study, which culminated in a report dated October 1998. The primary findings of the site selection study with respect to the reduced list of five sites are summarized on the following pages.



Site #1 (Constitution Gardens)

This site is located near the intersection of Constitution Avenue and 17th Street, within the northeast section of Constitution Gardens and the Reflecting Pool. The site consists of 2 buildable acres within a 27.5-acre total area. Advantages of the site include its peaceful landscaped setting, large space for public gatherings, location near public transit, and central location on the National Mall. The site has no major environmental constraints or planning restrictions.



Source: Adapted from graphic by Terra Designs, Inc.

Site #2 (Recreational Fields)

This site is located adjacent to the Washington Monument Reflecting Pool. There are approximately 1.2 buildable acres within this 12.5-acre area. The site offers flexibility, a historical connection to the 1963 march on Washington, one of the pivotal events in Dr. King's life, and an ability to serve as a gathering place. However, a number of constraints, such as requirements to maintain access to the Reflecting Pool, preserve critical views, observe height restrictions, and maintain the ratio of built to open space, limits its development potential.



Source: Adapted from graphic by Terra Designs, Inc.

Site #3 (West Potomac Park)

This triangular-shaped site is located south of the Independence Avenue/West Basin Drive intersection, adjacent to the Tidal Basin and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial. It offers approximately 2.2 buildable acres within a 27-acre setting. While advantages of the site include its flat, open setting and views to other memorials, development of the Memorial would be adversely affected by noise, traffic, and a lack of contextual compatibility.



Source: Adapted from graphic by Terra Designs, Inc.

Site #4 (Tidal Basin East)

This site is located on the northeastern side of the Tidal Basin, along the general axis between the White House and Jefferson Memorial. Since the site is currently bisected by a service roadway, the buildable space ranges from .75 acres to 1.4 acres of the total 17.5-acre site. The site is subject to a no-build area along the vista between the White House and the Jefferson Memorial, lacks a prominent location and strong connections to other memorials, and does not offer space for public gatherings. This site was effectively disqualified as a potential site for the proposed Memorial.



Source: Adapted from graphic by Terra Designs, Inc.

Site #5 (RFK Stadium Plaza)

This site is a 3.2-acre planting island located on the east-west axis with the Capitol. The site offers convenient access to public transportation, has no height restrictions, allows for viewing from all sides, and corresponds with future redevelopment plans for the city. However, the site's size would limit the Memorial's landscape setting, visual detractions surround the site, and there is little tourist activity in the vicinity.



Source: Adapted from graphic by Terra Designs, Inc.

Subsequent Considerations of Alternative Sites

The analysis resulted in a preferred site at the east end of Constitution Gardens Lake, encompassing the surrounding plaza and landscaped area. At the NCPC's March 4, 1999 meeting, the Constitution Gardens site was approved as the site for the Washington, DC Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial. On March 23, 1999, the CFA disapproved the site because it is "intended as a place of refreshment and respite for the visitor" in the plan for Constitution Gardens. After the decision, a task force of representatives of the Foundation, NPS, NCPC, and CFA was convened to examine the issue. The west end of Constitution Gardens Lake was introduced and considered, as was a site off to the side of the Lincoln Memorial. Within this period of analysis, the Western Tidal Basin site emerged as a part of the FDR Park playing fields site alternative.

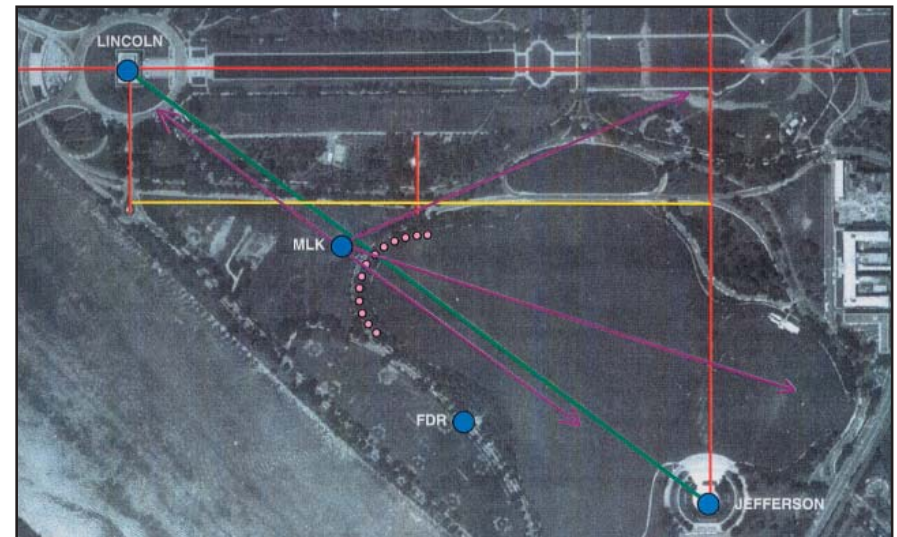
Western Tidal Basin

The Western Tidal Basin site, which is located north of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial at the midpoint between the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, was evaluated in a similar manner as the previous five sites. According to the Addendum to the Site Selection Study, the site is an advantageous location for the Memorial because it occupies a symbolic position with respect to Dr. King's life, and it is a relatively quiet place with stunning views to nearby monuments. The potential disadvantages of the Western Tidal Basin site include the current alignment of West Basin Drive through the site and the restrictions on massing and height. The location of this site is illustrated in the image on the following page.

The CFA endorsed the concept of a memorial at the Western Tidal Basin site on June 17, 1999 but reserved approval until design parameters were prepared, resulting in a December approval of the site by CFA. At a July 1, 1999 meeting, the NCPC raised questions about a site for the Memorial in the Tidal Basin's general area. Issues of concern included its location in a floodplain, the roadway 'spur'

that currently bisects the site, and aircraft noise from its location along the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport flight path. The Coordinating Committee of NCPC reviewed the Tidal Basin site again at its November 10, 1999 meeting and forwarded the proposal to NCPC. According to the proposal statement, the project had been coordinated with the participating agencies: the DC Office of Planning, the DC Fire Department, the DC Department of Housing and Community Development, the DC Department of Public Works/ Department of Transportation, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, GSA, NPS, and NCPC.

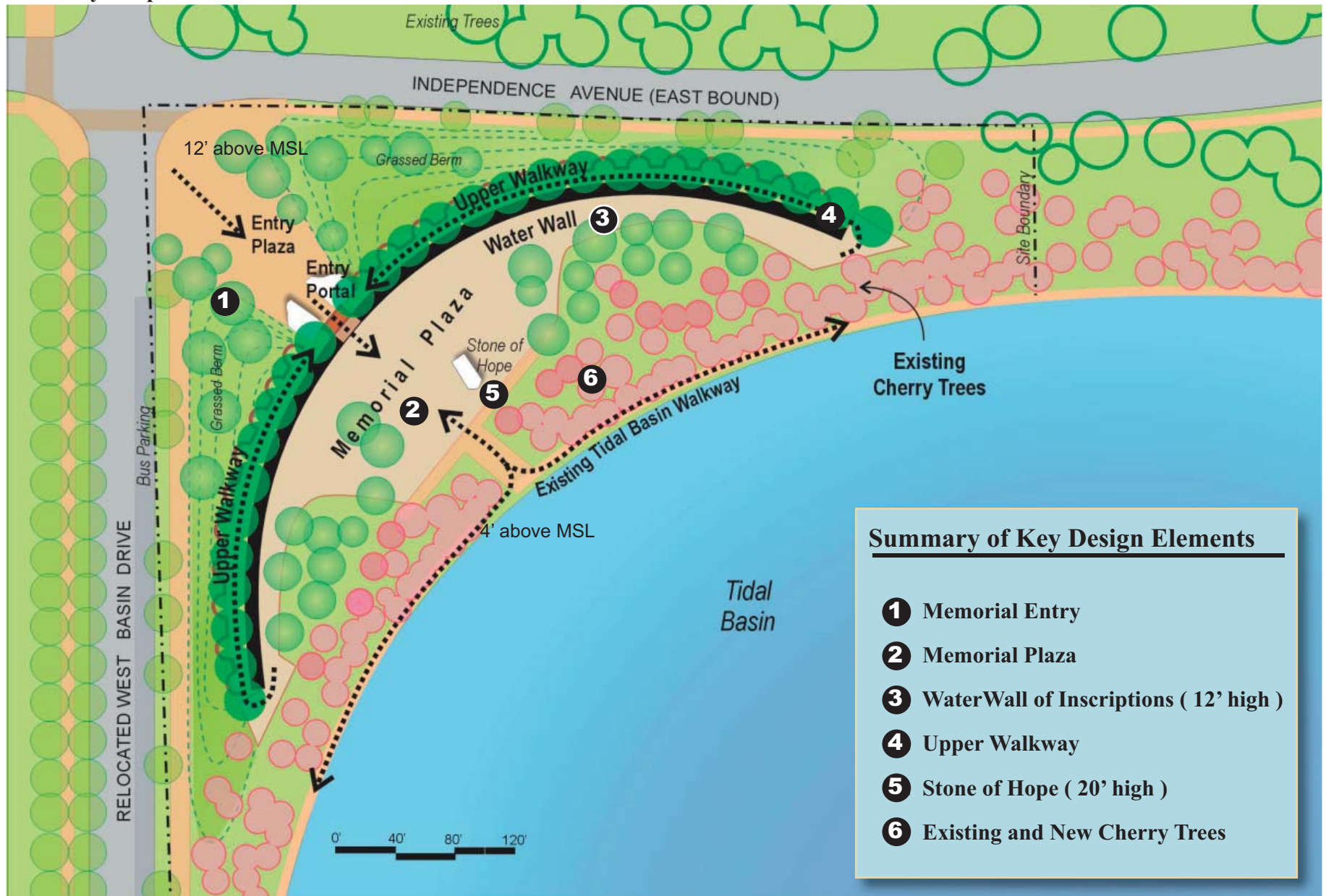
On December 2, 1999, NCPC rescinded its March 4, 1999 action that approved the East End of Constitution Gardens for the Memorial. The Commission took further action to approve the four-acre site adjacent to the Tidal Basin for the Washington, DC, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial. This site was also approved by the National Capital Memorial Commission and the CFA subject to the design parameters listed in Section 1.6.1 above.



As an addendum to the Site Selection Study, the Western Tidal Basin site was evaluated in a similar manner as the previous five sites.

Source: Martin Luther King Jr., Memorial Foundation

Summary Graphic



Proposed features of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial

2.2 Proposed Memorial

The proposed action is the establishment and operation of a memorial to Dr. King on a 3-acre site, within the triangular area bounded by Independence Avenue, relocated West Basin Drive, and the western edge of the Tidal Basin walkway in Washington DC. The proposed Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial is conceptually a landscape experience, using stone, water, and trees to convey the central themes of Dr. King's legacy: justice, democracy, and hope, as well as peace, active citizenship, and moral integrity.

The major components of the proposed Memorial concept include a central plaza partially enclosed by earthen berms, a symbolic entranceway, and a large sculptural element. The primary entrance to the Memorial would be from the intersection of Independence Avenue and West Basin Drive.

Visitors would enter the site through the "Mountain of Despair," a rough, hewn stone portal consisting of two parted stones and a single stone pushed back into the horizon, appearing as if it were the missing piece of a single boulder. As proposed, a pedestrian bridge would span the entrance and connect the two walkways on top of the earthen berms.

This 15-foot wide entry portal would lead from the Entry Plaza at elevation 12 MSL near Independence Avenue to the Memorial Plaza, a public gathering space at elevation 8 MSL that would be defined by a crescent-shaped, sloping Water Wall. Extending over 600 feet in length, and peaking at 8 to 12 feet in height, the Water Wall would be inscribed with prominent excerpts from Dr. King's writings.

The centerpiece of the Memorial Plaza would be a rough-hewn, 20-foot high boulder. This boulder, known as the "Stone of Hope," would be sculpted with Dr. King's image and excerpts from his speeches on the side facing the Tidal Basin, along the viewshed to the Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Jefferson Memorials.

The Memorial site would be enhanced with additional tree plantings, such as cherry, magnolia, oak, and evergreens, to reinforce the spatial integrity of the Memorial and ensure seasonal floral change. At the top of the wall, oak trees would be planted in a regular arrangement to delineate the curvature of the site. Throughout the rest of the site, the trees would be planted in a more random fashion, weaving together the cherry trees and the edge of the Tidal Basin. The proposed Memorial would not alter the existing Tidal Basin walkway or water's edge.

With implementation of the proposed Memorial, approximately 2 acres would consist of green softscape and 1 acre of hardscape area (an additional 1 acre would be dedicated to the realignment of West Basin Drive and its associated sidewalks to the west). A bus drop-off area with three bus parking spaces and six disabled parking spaces would be provided. The entire Memorial would be ADA-compliant. The Memorial would be constructed as a single project from start to finish but certain activities would be phased to minimize site disruption.

2.3 No Action Alternative

As part of the environmental analysis process, the consequences of a No Action Alternative are also considered. Under the No Action alternative, all existing features of the site would remain in their existing condition and use. There would be no new development or re-configuration of the site. The existing configuration of the roadways and parking would also be maintained.

The existing trees, including cherry trees, would not be affected and no new plantings would be added to the site. West Basin Drive would remain in its current configuration, as would the surrounding recreational fields. The existing pathways, fencelines, and furniture would remain in their existing locations, without any improvements.