

Agency Official 106 Effect Report

*Rehabilitation of Lee Drive Intersection with US Business Route 1 (Lafayette Boulevard)
Fredericksburg Battlefield
Fredericksburg, Virginia*

**U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park
120 Chatham Lane
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22405**

Description and Purpose of Undertaking

Purpose

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park was authorized by an act of Congress on February 14, 1927 (44 Stat. 1091). The purpose of the park, as stated in the act, is “to commemorate the Civil War battles of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania Court House, Wilderness, and Chancellorsville, including Salem Church...” The legislation further states that the park shall “open, construct, and repair such roads, highways, paths, and other approaches as may be necessary to make the historical points accessible...” By Executive Order 6166 in 1933 the park was transferred to the Department of the Interior to be administered by the National Park Service.

Need

A land developer is creating a residential and commercial development along US Business Route 1 (Lafayette Boulevard) within the city of Fredericksburg. The development will be built directly across from the entrance to Lee Drive. Lee Drive is a park road and the primary auto tour route for the Fredericksburg Battlefield. The developer has been working with the City of Fredericksburg to address traffic concerns and issues along Lafayette Boulevard. Traffic analysis and reports indicate that the most appropriate, safest and functional entrance to the private property should be on Lafayette Boulevard and directly across from the current intersection of that road and Lee Drive. The construction of the development's entrance at that location will result in the creation of a four-way intersection. The park's current entrance at Lee Drive was not designed for, nor is it conducive with, the development of a four-way intersection. As a result, the City of Fredericksburg and the land developer plan to construct vehicular roundabout on Lafayette Boulevard. The roundabout will serve both the entrance to Lee Drive as well as the entrance to the planned development. The park is proposing to allow the rehabilitation of the Lee Drive entrance to adapt to the construction of the roundabout.

Property Description

A. Major Physical Components - The area of the proposed project is the entrance to Lee Drive where it joins Lafayette Boulevard. The site is bordered to the south and east by National Park Service lands on the Fredericksburg Battlefield, and to the north and west by private property slated for residential and commercial development.

B. Historical Significance - The project area is the entrance to Lee Drive, a National Park Service tour road and primary access to the Fredericksburg Battlefield. Constructed in 1931, Lee Drive was the first road built in the park and was constructed parallel to surviving trenches and military defenses used by the Confederate army during the Civil War. Lee Drive was built when the park was under the administration of the War Department.

C. Architectural Significance

1. Lee Drive - completed in 1931, Lee Drive was the first road built in the park. The road, and its entrance, is on the park's List of Classified Structures as IDLCS #82056. Lee Drive consists of two entrances on Lafayette Boulevard. These two entrances converge to create Lee Drive. In the draft of the park's most recent updated National Register documentation, Lee Drive is considered a contributing resource under the historic context of "Park Development."
2. Coolidge Dedication Monument - located at the entrance to Lee Drive is the Coolidge Dedication Monument. This marker was erected in 1928 and the plaque was presented by President Calvin Coolidge to commemorate the start of construction within the park. The monument originally stood along the edge of Lafayette Boulevard, but by 1937 it had been moved back into the corner created by the two entrance lanes of Lee Drive. The monument is on the park's List of Classified Structures as IDLCS #82055. In the draft of the park's most recent updated National Register documentation, Lee Drive is considered a contributing resource under the historic context of "Park Development."
3. Confederate Line - Confederate trenches constructed during the winter of 1862-1863 still exist along Lee Drive. These earthworks begin at US Business Route 1 and stretch south paralleling the road. The Confederate Line is on the park's List of Classified Structures as IDLCS #07858. In the draft of the park's most recent updated National Register documentation, the Confederate Line is considered a contributing resource under the historic context of "Civil War."

C. Archaeological Significance - It is doubtful that archeological resources will be adversely affected by the rehabilitation of the entrance to Lee Drive. The proposed rehabilitation does not include any excavation on park lands.

D. Historical Landscapes - The entrance to Lee Drive was designed in the late 1920s. It has two sweeping entrance lanes that access US Business Route 1 and merge together to form Lee Drive. The designed entrance will not be adversely altered during the rehabilitation.

Description of Alternatives

Alternative A – No Action

Under this option, the entrance to Lee Drive would not be altered or rehabilitated. The City of Fredericksburg and the private developer would still create an intersection on US Business Route 1 to access the new residential and commercial development. As a result, the park entrance would fail to work properly and would likely result in traffic and safety concerns for park visitors.

Alternative B - Four-Way Signaled Intersection

Under this alternative, a four-way signaled intersection would be constructed at the entrance to Lee Drive. This would involve the reconstruction of Lee Drive, removing its originally designed two entrances and the construction of a single entrance that would connect at the signaled intersection. Under this alternative, the originally designed character of the entrance to Lee Drive

would be altered if not destroyed. The City of Fredericksburg has also determined that a traffic roundabout is what they intend to construct.

Preferred Alternative - Roundabout

Under this alternative, a traffic roundabout would be constructed on US Business Route 1 at the entrance to Lee Drive. This would not involve any significant alteration in the design of the existing Lee Drive entrance. Both access points would be engineered into the new traffic patterns. The only required change would be the need to raise the grade at which the northern arm of the Lee Drive entrance would engage the roundabout. This would involve 175 cubic feet of fill to be brought in to raise the Lee Drive entrance 3 feet. New asphalt would be put down. This alternative would not adversely alter the originally designed Lee Drive entrance nor would it involve any excavation or ground disturbance.

Park Consultation

The park has consulted and worked with the City of Fredericksburg in designing this project.

The proposal is being addressed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), coordinated by the Federal Highways Administration.

The proposal is being circulated among the park's Section-106 Team of Advisors for archaeology, historic landscapes, and architecture.

The proposal will go through a 30-day public comment and review period. During that time, the project was posted on the National Park Service's Planning, Environment and Public Comment website. The park contacted representatives of interested local organizations such as Mary Washington College's Department of Historic Preservation, Friends of the Fredericksburg Area Battlefields, the City of Fredericksburg, the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, and the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust.

The project will undergo a 30-day comment and review period with the Virginia SHPO.

Description of Mitigation Measures

A. The City of Fredericksburg and the private developer looked at no less than six design alternatives (see attachment). These alternatives were developed at the request of the NPS to try and find a way to facilitate the traffic concerns created by the residential and commercial development's new access onto Lafayette Boulevard, while at the same time addressing the park's desire for as little impact on the park and its Lee Drive entrance.

B. The City of Fredericksburg and the private developer have altered the design of Lafayette Boulevard and shifted it to the west, thereby providing for the future widening of the road to four lanes without needing or requesting NPS lands for a roadway expansion.

C. The private developer and the City of Fredericksburg consulted with the NPS on the visual impact of the new development on the west side of Lafayette Boulevard. The development will be screened with vegetative planting along its boundary with Lafayette Boulevard.

Effect Analysis

It is the park's opinion that this undertaking will have "no adverse effect" on historic resources.

Attached Supporting Documentation

- A. Aerial Photo
- B. Design Alternatives
- C. Plans
- D. Photos
- E. Maps

Conclusion

It is the park's opinion that this project will continue to provide adequate access to the park tour route and Lee Drive, while having "no adverse effect" upon historic resources.

Report Prepared By

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