

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

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1.1 Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) and the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (the Foundation) have proposed to establish an international memorial as a tribute to the millions of people throughout the world who have fallen victim to communism. The Foundation is a non-profit organization established by an Act of Congress for the purpose of building a memorial in Washington, DC to commemorate the more than 100 million victims of communism; to honor those who successfully resisted communist tyranny; and to inform current and future generations about communism's crimes against humanity.

The National Captive Nations Committee (NCNC) was created in 1959 by Public Law 86-90, for the purpose of maintaining a Captive Nations List of the nations in the world still under control of a communist regime. Enacted on December 17, 1993, Public Law 103-199, Section 905 authorized the NCNC to create an independent entity, the Foundation, to establish the Victims of Communism Memorial (the Memorial) in accordance with the Commemorative Works Act. The chosen site, located at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue, New Jersey Avenue and G Street, NW, is shown in Figure 1-1. The establishment of the Memorial is the subject of this Environmental Assessment (EA).

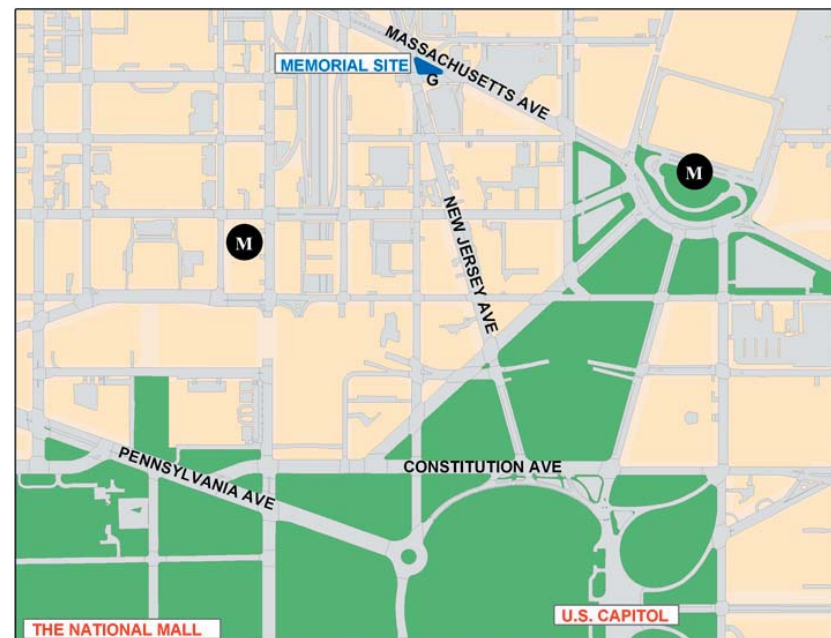


Figure 1-1: Site location for the proposed Victims of Communism Memorial.

National Environmental Policy Act

The NPS and the Foundation have prepared this EA in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA [40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508], and the NPS Director's Order-12 (as reflected in the DO-12 Handbook). The EA is also consistent with the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA).

This EA seeks to document and describe the proposed Victims of Communism Memorial, determine its potential impacts on the natural and man-made environment, and recommend mitigation measures related to its implementation. The EA also evaluates a No Action Alternative, as required by CEQ. The EA addresses: 1) short-term construction-related impacts, 2) long-term operations-related impacts, and 3) cumulative impacts that would result from this and other projects that have been completed recently, are currently under development, or are proposed within the study area.

1.2 Study Area

The selected site for the Memorial is defined by the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue, New Jersey Avenue and G Street, NW. The chosen location of the Memorial permits an unimpeded view of the U.S. Capitol, topped by the symbolic Statue of Freedom. For the purpose of identifying environmental impacts potentially associated with the proposed Memorial, the study area can be defined as the area within two to three blocks of the site. The defined study area is intended to serve as a guide within which short-term, long-term, and cumulative impacts of the proposed Memorial are analyzed. The study area may expand or contract for each resource discipline, depending upon the potential for a specific impact to affect a given geographical area.



Figure 1-2: Proposed Memorial study area

1.3 Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the proposed Memorial is to commemorate the millions of people across the world who have fallen victim to communist practices and to honor those who were successful in resisting tyranny. The sculpture will also serve as an educational monument to the general public, informing current and future generations about the crimes of communism. As a symbol of democracy, the sculpture will serve to inform the general public about the struggles against communist oppression.

Over 100 million victims have died as a result of communist tyranny throughout the world, beginning with the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 and continuing through such tragic events as Ukraine's forced famine in 1932 through 1933, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Fidel Castro's infamous Isle of Pines prison, Mao Zedong's disastrous "Great Leap Forward" from 1959 to 1962, the Czech rebellion of 1968, Cambodia's "killing fields" in the mid-1970's, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. As stated by former Czech President Vaclav Havel, "The fall of the Communist empire was an event on the same scale of importance as the fall of the Roman Empire", however there is no memorial to commemorate those who have struggled for freedom in the face of communist tyranny. The Victims of Communism Memorial would be established to ensure the heroic sacrifices of the victims of communism never be forgotten.

1.4 Planning Process

The planning process for the proposed Memorial began with the enacting of legislation authorizing such a commemorative work. Passed in 1993, Public Law 103-199, Section 905 authorized the NCNC to establish the Memorial to Honor Victims of Communism (Victims of Communism Memorial) in accordance with the Commemorative Works Act. A site selection study and site approval process, including an environmental analysis, was also completed. Review and approval of the selected site have been completed and Memorial design concepts are under review. The planning process has also entailed coordination between the Foundation, NPS and other affected agencies during the process of site selection and approval, the preparation of design parameters for the site, and the development of a design concept.

1.4.1 Legislative Framework

Legislation authorizing the "Memorial to Honor the Victims of Communism" (Public Law 103-199) was signed into law by President William Jefferson Clinton, Speaker Foley and President pro tem of the Senate Robert Byrd on December 17, 1993. The legislation was introduced under HR 3000, sponsored by Representative Dana Rohrabacher and Senator Claiborne Pell, and became Section 905 of Public Law 103-199. It has since been renewed through Section 326 of Public Law 105-277, approved October 21, 1998, until December 17, 2007.

The NCNC is authorized to construct, maintain and operate an international memorial for the purpose of honoring the over 100 million victims of communism. The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation was created as an independent entity from the NCNC to perform this function. The authorizing legislation found that:

- (1) “since 1917, the rulers of empires and international communism led by Vladimir I. Lenin and Mao Tse-tung have been responsible for the deaths of over 100,000,000 victims in an unprecedented imperial communist holocaust through conquests, revolutions, civil wars, purges, wars by proxy, and other violent means;
- (2) the imperialist regimes of international communism have brutally suppressed the human rights, national independence, religious liberty, intellectual freedom, and cultural life of the peoples of over 40 captive nations;
- (3) there is a danger that the heroic sacrifices of the victims of communism may be forgotten as international communism and its imperial bases continue to collapse and crumble; and
- (4) the sacrifices of these victims should be permanently memorialized so that never again will nations and peoples allow so evil a tyranny to terrorize the world.”

The Act authorizes the Foundation to “construct, maintain, and operate in the District of Columbia an appropriate international memorial to honor victims of communism.” The legislation further establishes that the Memorial shall be in accordance

with the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.), and that no federal funds may be used to pay any expenses for establishing the Memorial.

1.4.2 Selected Site

Reservation 77B, located approximately one half mile from the U.S. Capitol, has been approved as the site for the Victims of Communism Memorial. The site, identified in the 2001 Memorials and Museums Master Plan as Site 98, is an open, landscaped triangular piece of land bounded by Massachusetts Avenue, New Jersey Avenue and G Street, NW. The site offers a prominent, unimpeded view of the U.S. Capitol.

A total of 19 sites were investigated as part of the site selection process. The selection of Site 98 was based on the size and scale of the site, as well as its proximity to the U.S. Capitol and Georgetown University Law Center. The site is located within two blocks of Union Station, one block from the National Guard Memorial Museum and across from the Georgetown University Law School, as well as several office buildings. The site has been approved by the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission.

The chosen site is located within a triangular parcel measuring 9,500 square feet. The proposed Memorial site, Reservation 77B, includes the 3,500 square foot grassed area under the jurisdiction and management of the National Park Service. The NPS area is defined by the rolled curb. With its location near Union Station, the site is easily accessible via Metrorail service at Union Station, as well as several other public transportation sources.

1.4.3 Memorial Design Concept

The proposed Memorial incorporates a ten-foot tall statue upon 3.5-foot high pedestal, within a circular paved area and visitor seating area. The Democracy Statue, a bronze replica of the original “Goddess of Democracy” statue erected on May 30, 1989 by pro-democracy Chinese students in Tiananmen Square, and based on our own Statue of Liberty, is the focus of the proposed Memorial. The Democracy Statue represents not just the tragic events of June 1989 but has become a global symbol of freedom and democracy. Lutheran pastor H. Tureck, a leader of East Germany’s bloodless revolution that brought down the Berlin Wall in November 1989, said “We saw Tiananmen Square here in Leipzig on West German television...and it influenced our world.”

Replicas of the Democracy Statue have been erected in London, Paris, Lagos, Vancouver, Taipei, San Francisco, New York and Philadelphia. Since 1991, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), created and funded by the U.S. Congress, has given 19-inch high maquettes of the statue to U.S. representatives of more than 25 nations, winners of NED’s annual Democracy awards. The Democracy Statue is an expression of the American people’s belief that the people of every nation are deserving of freedom, democracy and fundamental human rights.

The Victims of Communism Memorial is planned as a human scale Memorial, appropriate for the chosen site. Prominent characteristics of the statue include the woman’s heroic posture and resolute facial expression as well as the torch of liberty held proudly. Lacking any specific race or culture, the statue

embodies the universal desire for freedom. The materials in the Memorial design include bronze for the statue and a granite pedestal. Further detailing and site design is currently under review

1.4.4 Design Framework

The design for the Victims of Communism Memorial consists of a triangular plaza with its apex located northwest at the corner of Massachusetts and New Jersey Avenues, as shown in Figure 1-3. The two primary edges of the triangle meet the sidewalks along Massachusetts and New Jersey Avenues and will have a flush accent band of granite the same width as the existing quarter round curb. The rear edge of the triangle will be formed by a low granite seating wall that arcs out slightly in response to the sculpture in the center of the plaza.

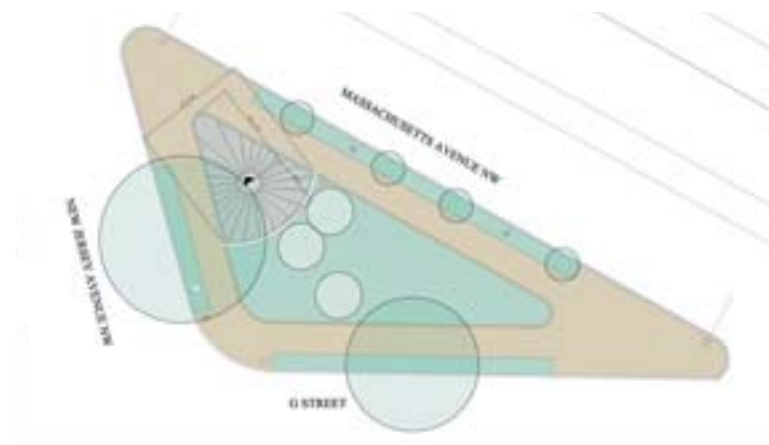


Figure 1-3: Proposed design scheme for the Victims of Communism Memorial

Ornamental red maple trees or similar species trees will be planted behind the wall to provide a soft background to the Memorial and shade to Memorial visitors. The memorial plaza paving will have two tones of granite. Medium gray granite accent strips will be laid in a radial type pattern springing from points set at equal distances along a central line rather than radiating from a central point. The associated fields will have a lighter shade of gray granite paving. Both tones of granite are warm gray with undertones of bronze chosen to compliment the bronze patina of the Democracy Sculpture.

The figural sculpture will sit atop a round 52-inch diameter by 42-inch high dark gray granite pedestal. The base of the pedestal steps out to provide a 6-inch high by 9-inch wide platform that features the title of the Memorial in bronze letters and will provide a location for the public to leave personal offerings, commemorative objects or flowers. According to the preliminary design, the engraved dedication inscription on the front of the pedestal would read “To the more than one hundred million victims of communism and to those who love liberty” and the rear of the pedestal would feature the engraved inscription, “To the freedom and independence of all the captive nations”. The bronze Democracy Sculpture will stand atop this pedestal and be oriented northwest toward Massachusetts Avenue, allowing views of the U.S. Capitol and the Statue of Freedom as a backdrop to the Memorial sculpture. The Democracy Statue is a representational female figure that stands at 8 feet 6 inches to the top of the figure with an additional 18 inches to the top of the extended torch. The figure will be cast bronze with a bronze torch.

1.4.5 Agency and Public Coordination

As part of the overall planning process for the Memorial, the appropriate agencies have been consulted for input, feedback and scoping. Coordination has included meetings and/or correspondence with:

- NPS,
- National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC),
- National Capital Memorials Commission (NCMC),
- Commission of Fine Arts (CFA),
- District of Columbia Department of Transportation,
- District of Columbia Office of Planning,
- District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office,
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

Public scoping has also been conducted through local Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) meetings (ANC6C) and continued correspondence with ANC representatives.

1.4.6 Environmental Issues Assessed

This EA has been prepared to examine the potential impacts the proposed Memorial may have on the socio-economic, cultural, viewshed, aesthetics, and transportation resources. Since each resource discipline has its own unique characteristics, the EA varies in the amount of detail necessary to convey significant issues.

Due to the location of the subject site for the proposed Memorial and the specific landscape design intended for it, several environmental issues were not considered in this analysis. These include:

- Demographic and Economic Resources, and Environmental Justice,
- Water Resources (Groundwater and Surface Water),
- Hazardous Materials, and
- Climate and Air.

Key issues requiring special emphasis include:

- Visual and Cultural Resources, and
- Visitation.