

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

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4.1 Socio-Economic Environment

4.1.1 Land Use

Proposed Memorial

The proposed Memorial would transform the underutilized triangular parcel into a landscaped commemorative space with visitor seating. Creating this area into a visitor point of interest would improve the underutilized open space, and encourage visitors to admire the Memorial while offering them a place of contemplation. The proposed Memorial would result in a positive impact on the site.

Locating the proposed Memorial away from the Monumental Core would strengthen the cultural character of the surrounding area, currently lacking in cultural facilities. The addition of a new Memorial to the area would diversify the land uses, with the area currently being predominated by office buildings.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the approved site would remain as a vacant parcel, and the study area would remain without a new Memorial. Thus, there would not be a positive land use impact to the area.

4.1.2 Planning Controls and Policies

Proposed Memorial

The proposed Memorial design is currently under review by the Foundation. The Memorial and site is being designed consistent with the natural site parameters. The proposed Memorial will comply with applicable planning controls by conforming local and federal policies and plans governing the study area. These include:

- The proposed Memorial would comply with the Commemorative Works Act of 1986, which established standards for locating works of commemorative value in the Monumental Core. The approved site is located within Area II as defined by the Act, and where works of “lasting significance can be placed.”
- The site of the proposed Memorial is in compliance with NCPC’s Memorials and Museums Master Plan, which recommends the project site as a location for a future memorial.
- The proposed Memorial would enhance an underutilized urban open space, as identified in the Parks and Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan, by creating an identifiable commemorative feature.
- The proposed Memorial would enhance the general views along adjacent vistas and prominent locations by creating a special feature that is currently characterized

as a minimally maintained vacant parcel, meeting the goals of the Preservation and Historic Features Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

- The proposed Memorial would meet the goals of the Visitors Element of the Comprehensive Plan by providing visitors to the District of Columbia with a new cultural attraction within walking distance of three Metrorail stations and in proximity to a popular tour-mobile stop

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the approved site would not be developed as the proposed Memorial. The site would remain available for another undetermined memorial project.

4.1.3 Visitation

Proposed Memorial

The proposed Memorial would not add significantly to the long term total visitation to this area of Washington, DC. As a result of the site's location on New Jersey Avenue, NW, the Memorial may draw visitors along this corridor to the site. In addition, visitors may come from nearby Union Station. Locating a new Memorial at this site would attract visitors from the Monumental Core. In addition to the dedication of the Memorial and anniversary celebrations, it may be anticipated that the proposed Memorial would be the site of special events or demonstrations, which would be permitted and coordinated by NPS. It is expected that a moderate increase in visitors

would access the site in the short term. As a distinct destination and novel attraction near the National Mall, the Memorial would most likely experience greater than average visitation in the first few years before becoming stabilized at a more typical visitation level. This has been the general experience with other new memorials in Washington, DC.

The construction of a commemorative piece within a well-landscaped plaza is planned to enhance the visitor experience to the study area.

In conjunction with several nearby existing or planned cultural attractions (e.g., Postal Museum, Union Station, U.S. Capitol), the Memorial would contribute to these tourist destinations. The addition of this Memorial could, therefore, have a minor positive long-term impact on pedestrian movement in the area by creating a feature in the proposed location.

Through an agreement with NPS, the Foundation will maintain the site.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would remain as an unimproved piece of land and the visitor experience on and around the site would not be enhanced. The site's potential as an area of interest to visitors would not be realized.

4.1.4 Community Facilities and Services

Proposed Memorial

There are no public restrooms planned as part of the proposed Memorial. The use of nearby public restroom facilities at the Postal Museum and Union Station could be slightly impacted by visitorship to the Memorial.

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, existing conditions would not be modified. Therefore, there would be no increased demand and no impact on existing community facilities.

4.1.5 Public Safety

Proposed Memorial

The long-term operation of the proposed Memorial would result in a slight increase in demand on safety services by increasing the number of people in an area where there previously have been few or no visitors. This could potentially increase the need for police patrol, fire protection, and emergency medical service responsibilities of the U.S. Park Police, who have jurisdiction for the project site. Any increase in services needed will be coordinated between the U.S. Park Police and District Police.

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, there would be no increased demand for safety services.

4.2 Cultural Resources

Standards for evaluating potential effects on historic resources are derived from Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the potential effects of a proposed federal or federally assisted undertaking on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This includes above-ground (historic) and below-ground (archaeological) resources.

Supporting NHPA regulations define “effect” as an “alteration to the characteristics of an historic property qualifying it for inclusion in or eligibility for the National Register” (36 CFR 800.16). An “adverse effect” occurs “when an undertaking may alter, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of the historic property that qualify the property for inclusion in the National Register in a manner that would diminish the integrity of the property’s location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association.

4.2.1 Archaeological Resources

Proposed Memorial

The National Park Service has completed the Section 106 process as part of the site selection study environmental analysis. As a result, it was determined that the construction of the proposed Memorial on this site would result in no adverse effect

Mitigation: In the event that any archaeological resources were to be found during construction, all construction activities would be ceased until the proper studies were conducted. At that point, NPS would resume its Section 106 responsibilities by coordinating the new information with the DC SHPO.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would result in no modifications to the existing site, and would therefore have no effect on archaeological resources.

4.2.2 Historic Resources

Proposed Memorial

There are no historic resources located on the project site, and the site itself is not eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Use of the site for the proposed Memorial is consistent with the L'Enfant Plan. The proposed Memorial would have several positive effects on the area's historic resources. Locating the Memorial on the existing underutilized triangular parcel would create a point of interest and visual connec-

tion between the Memorial and the U.S. Capitol, enhancing the view corridor along New Jersey Avenue, NW. No walls or visual barriers are proposed in association with the Memorial, therefore allowing existing views to be maintained.

The Memorial would have an unimpeded view of the Capitol Building, which in effect enhances the view of that resource from the Memorial site. The orientation of the Democracy Statue would be such that it faces northwest, allowing views of the Statue of Freedom atop the U.S. Capitol in the backdrop.

The Memorial design concept will be subject to a thorough review by public agencies prior to implementation. Ground surfaces and plantings would be of the highest quality and appropriate with historic precedents. Overall, the proposed Memorial would have no adverse effects on historic properties.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not modify the existing conditions at the proposed site; therefore, implementation of this alternative would result in no effect on historic or cultural resources at the site.

4.2.3 Visual Resources

Proposed Memorial

The existing open space at the proposed Memorial site is a flat, underutilized grassed area, located at the intersection of two major avenues, Massachusetts and New Jersey, and G Street, NW. Development of the Memorial in this location would enhance the visual quality of the area by transforming the area into a landscaped setting, providing a place of contemplation and reflection for visitors. The site's location along New Jersey Avenue, NW would establish a visual connection between the proposed Memorial and the U.S. Capitol. The connection between the Democracy Statue and the Statue of Freedom would be unimpeded along New Jersey Avenue, connecting two major symbols of liberty and strength both visually and symbolically.

Reaching 13.5 feet in height, the Memorial would be partially visible from all directions. The statue is planned to be of bronze material, atop a granite pedestal. The use of bronze



Figure 4-1:
A visual and symbolic connection of liberty and strength would be established between the Democracy Statue (left) and the Statue of Freedom (right).

would strengthen the visual connection to the bronze Statue of Freedom atop the Capitol building.

The top of the Memorial would be the highest point of the site. Existing view corridors would not be disrupted as a result of the proposed Memorial. Landscaping of the site and the creation of a connection between the proposed Memorial and U.S. Capitol would result in an overall positive impact to visual resources.

Mitigation: The concept design for the proposed Memorial will include coordination and consultation with CFA and NCPC.



Figure 4-2: View of the U.S. Capitol from the proposed Memorial site

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would continue to offer the same views to nearby buildings and roads. Likewise, the site would continue to appear as an underutilized triangular land parcel and associated infrastructure, lacking aesthetic value and focal purpose.

4.3 Natural Resources

4.3.1 Vegetation and Land Cover

Proposed Memorial

Current vegetation at the site consists of grasses and soils that would be disturbed during construction of the proposed Memorial. The existing vegetation is not ecologically significant and existing street trees surrounding the site will not be removed for the purpose of constructing the Memorial. While the establishment of the proposed Memorial would not require significant cut and fill of the landscape on site, surface soils may be reworked and recompacted underneath structures, paving and fill. Due to the site's existing flat and level condition, construction of the Memorial would not require modification to the slope or contour. Construction of the new Memorial would not be expected to affect any surrounding parklands or community resources.

The construction phase could contribute to erosion through the run off of soils as they are reworked and recompacted. However, through the utilization of best management practices

during construction, erosion and resulting runoff would be minimized.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the site would remain in its current state. Thus, there would be no impact to vegetation and land cover.

4.3.2 Wildlife

Proposed Memorial

The limited wildlife currently visiting the site would be displaced during the construction phases. None of the urban wildlife, however, is endangered, threatened or sensitive, and should be able to adapt quickly and easily to habitats surrounding the approved site.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing on-site wildlife would remain in their current state and would not be affected.

4.3.3 Noise Levels

Proposed Memorial

Noise levels at the project site would increase during the construction phase, which is expected to last for approximately seven months. However, Memorial construction would be conducted in accordance with the D.C. Noise Control Regulations and any disturbances would be of limited duration. No permit for construction or demolition should be issued until the permit applicant provides written documentation that construction noise would comply with District noise regulations.

No Action Alternative

The No Action alternative would not modify the existing conditions at the approved site; therefore, the implementation of this alternative would result in no impact on noise levels.

4.4 Transportation

4.4.1. Roadways and Traffic

Proposed Memorial

The proposed Memorial site is physically constrained by the adjacent roadways and building facilities. No alterations to the existing roadways would be included in the construction of the proposed Memorial.

The movement of construction materials, equipment, and workers on-site would constrict roadways in the immediate area, G Street, NW in particular, thereby reducing roadway capacity and creating minor traffic delays on roadways near the Memorial site. Therefore, traffic would be diverted to other roadway lanes or other roadways. This would result in moderate, short-term increases in traffic congestion and delays on project roadway segments during peak traffic periods. Maintenance of traffic (MOT) plans will be required to address specific construction activities.

Although there would be a direct increase in visitation and associated traffic volumes in proximity to the project site, most visitors would not be attending the Memorial during peak hours. The Memorial would not likely add substantially to the long-term visitation and traffic to the area because most visitors will already be attending other local memorials and museums. As a result of the scale of the proposed Memorial and its proximity to other memorials and museums, as well

as its adequate access to public transportation, the potential to impact local traffic is significantly lessened.

Mitigation: Prepare a Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plan to manage construction-related traffic, parking, and materials delivery, including coordination with other construction projects occurring at the same time in the area.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed Memorial would not be constructed and no impacts to roadways and traffic would occur.

4.4.2 Vehicular Parking

Proposed Memorial

The construction of the proposed Memorial would temporarily constrain, and/or close the metered parking spaces that border the project site along G Street, NW. The existing on street parking would not be modified as a result of the proposed Memorial. The 14 metered spaces along the border of the site would remain. Additional parking would not be necessary as it is expected that most visitors would access the site by walking from other nearby attractions or would be coming from the nearby business establishments.

In addition, adequate public transportation is available in the immediate vicinity of the site including metro rail and bus. The planned DC Circulator, estimated to begin service in July 2005, will directly access the site.

Construction of the proposed Memorial would temporarily encroach on the roadways adjacent to the site. This may require temporary use of the existing parking spaces for construction equipment and vehicles.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed Memorial would not be constructed; therefore, there would be no impact on parking.

4.4.3 Public Transportation

Proposed Memorial

The proposed Memorial would result in an increase in visitors to the project site; however, the project would not significantly increase the overall level of visitation to the area because the Memorial would attract visitors already visiting the nearby cultural facilities and Mall. Therefore, ridership on DC transit systems is not anticipated to increase due to the project. Additionally, the planned DC Circulator could offset any increase in transit riders by providing an additional source of public transportation accessing the Memorial.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed Memorial would not be constructed; therefore, there would be no change in transit activity in the study area

4.4.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Proposed Memorial

The sidewalks located on the periphery of the proposed Memorial site are used by pedestrians on a daily basis. The construction phase of the proposed Memorial would temporarily disrupt current pedestrian flow as well as traffic routes around the site. Over the long term, establishment of the proposed Memorial would result in a slight increase in pedestrian traffic to the site.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed Memorial would not be constructed; therefore, there would be no change in pedestrian/bicycle circulation in the project area.

4.5 Utilities and Infrastructure

4.5.1 Stormwater Management

Proposed Memorial

The establishment of the proposed Memorial would minimally increase the amount of impervious surface area on the project site, resulting in a slightly increased potential for impacts related to runoff.

No Action Alternative

There would be no impact on stormwater management systems under the No Action Alternative.

4.5.2 Site Utilities

Proposed Memorial

The proposed Memorial would not require any new electrical connections. Existing lightposts surrounding the site would provide light to the Memorial. The proposed Memorial is designed as an outdoor memorial with a hardscaped pedestrian plaza without indoor areas requiring systems to support climate control.

There is currently no gas or telecommunications utilities supplied to the site. The existing water connection may be used for the Memorial site. The proposed Memorial would not require use of any new utilities.

Mitigation: Should WASA require improvements to the existing water supply, NPS and the Foundation will coordinate with WASA and follow the appropriate procedure.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts on utilities would occur.