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National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Rock Creek Park  
Washington D.C.

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## **Transfer of National Park Service Property to the Department of Housing and Urban Development**



*Environmental Assessment*

*May 2013*

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## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

To comply with the Fort Lincoln New Town (FLNT) Urban Renewal Plan (URP), the District of Columbia (District) proposes to build townhomes on two adjacent parcels of federal land. One parcel is owned by the federal government through the National Park Service (NPS) and the other parcel is owned by federal government through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In order for development to occur, both ownership and jurisdiction of these land parcels must be united and transferred to a developer as one package. To comply with the steps outlined in the Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Land: Land Disposition Agreement (LDA), the federal land must first be transferred to the District. The District would then transfer the land to the developer. This document assesses this land transfer process: the transfer of ownership and jurisdiction of the NPS land parcel to HUD as well as the connected actions of transferring the land from HUD to the District and from the District to the developer.

The NPS currently maintains federal ownership of an approximately 0.91 acre land parcel adjacent to Urban Renewal land owned by HUD along the District of Columbia-Maryland border. The NPS transferred jurisdiction, but not title, of this parcel of land to the Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA) in 1994. In the early 2000s the RLA became the quasi-independent District/Federal National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC), which in turn, transferred its authority and responsibility to the Office of the D.C. Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED). As such, DMPED currently maintains jurisdiction of this parcel, although it is still owned by NPS. Before NPS can transfer this parcel to HUD, DMPED will transfer jurisdiction of the parcel back to NPS thereby uniting ownership and jurisdiction. NPS would then transfer ownership and jurisdiction of this land parcel to HUD, facilitating the District's proposal of developing townhomes within the FLNT neighborhood in Washington, D.C.'s northeast quadrant. HUD would then proceed to package the NPS parcel with its abutting Urban Renewal land for subsequent transfer of both parcels to the District. The District would subsequently convey the land to Fort Lincoln Eastern Avenue, LLC (APEX, 2008a).

The total Project Area analyzed in this document consists of the NPS land parcel proposed for transfer (see Figure 1, Parcel for Transfer) and the abutting Urban Renewal land currently owned by HUD. As noted above, the proposed development would occur on both the NPS land parcel proposed for transfer and the Urban Renewal land which together are 2.5 acres. In addition, a second parcel of land adjacent to the NPS parcel (also owned by NPS and under jurisdiction of the District) would remain under NPS ownership and the District's jurisdiction. This land would be maintained by the District and would not be developed (See Figure 1, Open Space). The Project Area is located approximately 1.3 miles southwest of the town of Bladensburg, Maryland. This area is bounded by Bladensburg Road to the northwest, Eastern Avenue to the northeast, and Fort Lincoln Drive NE to the southeast (Figure 1).

The proposed development would be part of the larger FLNT neighborhood. The only planned community in the District, FLNT was established in the late 1960s when land formerly used by the National Training School for Boys became available upon closure of the school. FLNT is located adjacent to historic Fort Lincoln, one of many small forts constructed to protect the U.S. Capital during the Civil War.

The land parcel proposed for transfer is part of Rock Creek Park. Rock Creek Park, an administrative unit of the NPS, includes approximately 1,754 acres from the Maryland state line south to the Thompson's Boat Center along the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway North West. The NPS manages the 0.91 acre land parcel as part of the Civil War Defenses of Washington (CWDW), a collection of Civil War resources. Since the 1930s, the land parcel was considered for the development of a parkway connecting fort resources, which was never built. In the early twentieth century, the parcel contained a gas station, which has since been demolished. It is currently undeveloped land in a mixed-use residential and retail area.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates two alternatives: the no action alternative (Alternative 1) and the proposed alternative (Alternative 2), which proposes to transfer ownership and jurisdiction of the NPS parcel to HUD to facilitate the development of townhomes. The developer plans to construct approximately 50 stacked townhomes with a green space and a total of 109 onsite parking spaces. If Alternative 2 was implemented, the land parcel would no longer be part of the Rock Creek Park system and would no longer be managed by NPS. The no action alternative represents the continuation of current conditions.

Impacts of the proposed alternatives were assessed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the NPS Director's Order 12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making*, which requires that impacts to park resources be analyzed in terms of their context, duration, and intensity. Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (Appendix A) and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Appendix B) has been conducted concurrently with the NEPA process.

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# 1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

To comply with the Fort Lincoln New Town (FLNT) Urban Renewal Plan (URP), the District of Columbia (District) proposes to build townhomes on two adjacent parcels of federal land. One parcel is owned by the federal government through the National Park Service (NPS) and the other parcel is owned by federal government through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In order for development to occur, both ownership and jurisdiction of these land parcels must be united and transferred to a developer as one package. As outlined in the LDA, the land must be transferred to the District after ownership and jurisdiction are united. This document assesses the transfer of NPS land to HUD and the connected actions that follow..

The NPS currently maintains federal ownership of an approximately 0.91 acre land parcel adjacent to Urban Renewal land owned by HUD along the District of Columbia-Maryland border. The NPS transferred jurisdiction, but not title, of this parcel of land to the Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA) in 1994. In the early 2000s the RLA became the quasi-independent District/Federal National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC), which in turn, transferred its authority and responsibility to the Office of the D.C. Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED). As such, DMPED currently maintains jurisdiction of this parcel, although it is still owned by NPS. Before NPS can transfer this parcel to HUD, DMPED will transfer jurisdiction of the parcel back to NPS thereby uniting ownership and jurisdiction. NPS would then transfer ownership and jurisdiction of this land parcel to HUD, facilitating the District's proposal of developing townhomes within the FLNT neighborhood in Washington, D.C.'s northeast quadrant. HUD would then proceed to package the NPS parcel with its abutting Urban Renewal land for subsequent transfer of both parcels to the District. The District would subsequently convey the land to Fort Lincoln Eastern Avenue, LLC (APEX, 2008a).

The total Project Area analyzed in this document consists of the NPS land parcel proposed for transfer and the abutting Urban Renewal land currently owned by HUD. As noted above, the proposed development would occur on both the NPS land parcel proposed for transfer and the Urban Renewal land which together comprise 2.5 acres. In addition, a second parcel of land adjacent to the NPS parcel (also owned by NPS and under jurisdiction of the District) would remain under NPS ownership and the District's jurisdiction. The District would continue to maintain this area as open space. The Project Area is located approximately 1.3 miles southwest of the town of Bladensburg, Maryland. This area is bounded by Bladensburg Road to the northwest, Eastern Avenue to the northeast, and Fort Lincoln Drive NE to the southeast (Figure 1).

The proposed development would be part of the larger FLNT neighborhood, the only planned community in the District. FLNT was established in the late 1960s when land formerly used by the National Training School for Boys became available upon closure of the school. FLNT is located adjacent to historic Fort Lincoln, one of many small forts constructed to protect the U.S. Capital during the Civil War.

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The land parcel proposed for transfer is managed by Rock Creek Park. Rock Creek Park, an administrative unit of the NPS, includes approximately 1,754 acres from the Maryland state line south to the Thompson's Boat Center along the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway North West (Borchelt, No Date). The NPS manages the 0.91 acre land parcel as part of the Civil War Defenses of Washington (CWDW), a collection of Civil War resources. Since the 1930s, the land parcel was considered for the development of a parkway connecting fort resources, which was never built. In the early twentieth century, the parcel contained a gas station, which has since been demolished. It is currently open space land in a mixed-use residential and retail area.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates two alternatives: the no action alternative (Alternative 1) and the proposed alternative (Alternative 2), which proposes to transfer jurisdiction of the NPS parcel to HUD to facilitate the development of residential areas. The developer plans to construct up to approximately 50 stacked townhomes and a total of 109 onsite parking spaces. If Alternative 2 was implemented, the land parcel would no longer be part of the Rock Creek Park system and would no longer be managed by NPS. The no action alternative represents the continuation of current conditions.

This EA has been prepared in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and implementing regulations, 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508, and NPS *Director's Order (DO) 12 and Handbook, Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making*. Compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 has been conducted in conjunction with the NEPA process.

If it is determined after this EA process that there are no significant impacts to resources within the Project Area or the District and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would not be required, then NPS and the District would prepare decision documents summarizing the findings of the EA. These decision documents would provide a brief rationale for how the NPS and the District each made their final decision. In accordance with 40 United States Code (USC) Section 8124, the District would subsequently present this proposal and all enclosed documents to the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) for approval, and NCPC would ensure compliance with city plans. If NCPC approves the proposal, it would provide its recommendation of the transfer to the District of Columbia City Council for its approval. Following City Council approval, the proposed project could be carried forward. The District authorities would be responsible for reporting this transfer of jurisdiction to Congress (Cornell University, 2012).

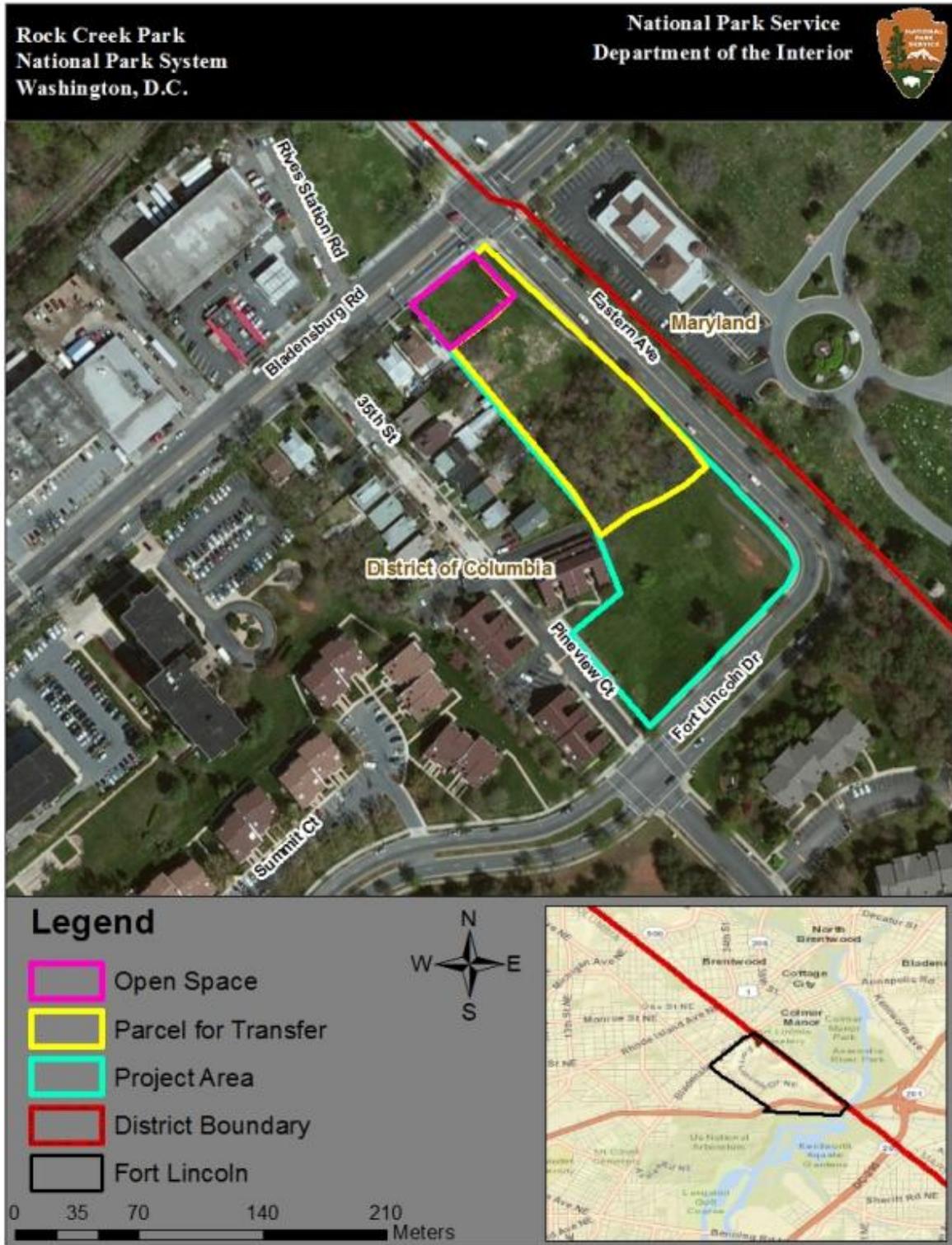


Figure 1: Project Area

## **1.2 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION**

### **1.2.1 PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The purpose of the proposed action is to respond to the proposed transfer of jurisdiction of an approximately 0.91 acre parcel of NPS land to HUD to assist both the District and HUD with complying with the FLNT URP. After transferring jurisdiction to HUD, HUD would package the transferred parcel with abutting Urban Renewal land (currently owned by HUD) and transfer both parcels to the District. The District would subsequently convey the packaged land to Fort Lincoln Eastern Avenue, LLC to develop approximately 50 stacked townhomes.

### **1.2.2 NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The need for the proposed NPS land transfer is to assist HUD and the District in fulfilling the residential component of the FLNT URP to provide quality housing in the Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Area.

### **1.2.3 PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ROCK CREEK PARK AND THE CIVIL WAR DEFENSES OF WASHINGTON**

All units of the national park system are formed for a specific purpose as well as to preserve resources or values for the enjoyment of future generations. A park's purpose and significance identify uses and values that individual NPS plans should support.

Congress established Rock Creek Park, one of the earliest National Park areas, on September 27, 1890. It was established as a unique natural park containing historic and archeological resources as well as providing a variety of recreational opportunities for visitors and residents of the District's metropolitan area (NPS, 2005).

**NPS PURCHASED THE LAND PARCEL FOR TRANSFER IN 1934 WITH THE INTENT TO CREATE A SCENIC DRIVE ENCIRCLING DOWNTOWN AND CONNECTING THE NUMEROUS CIVIL WAR-ERA FORT PROPERTIES THAT ONCE PROTECTED THE CITY. AT THE TIME OF PURCHASE, THE PARCEL WAS LABELED "RESERVATION 520." IN THE 1960S, PLANS WERE MODIFIED TO CREATE AN ENCIRCLING TRAIL RATHER THAN A SCENIC DRIVE CONNECTING THESE RESOURCES. ALTHOUGH COMPONENTS OF THE SYSTEM HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED FOR THE PUBLIC AND ARE IN USE AS PARKS, THE CONNECTING TRAIL DID NOT MATERIALIZE.**

### **1.2.4 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Area was established in 1972 as a mixed-use development that would maximize urban amenities and livability. The FLNT URP for this area was last amended in April of 1990 to allow for development of the current Land Use Plan. To comply with this plan, the District proposes to develop residential units on the Project Area. The proposed 50 stacked townhomes would help satisfy the URP's objective of constructing approximately 3,000 dwelling units with a wide variety of housing types. The proposed land transfer also helps address the growing need for high-quality housing within FLNT. In order for development of the 50 townhouses to occur, ownership and jurisdiction of the Project Area must be transferred to Fort Lincoln Eastern Avenue, LLC. The transfer process is discussed below.

Approximately 0.91 acre of the Project Area is owned by the NPS, though the District was given jurisdiction of this parcel in 1994 pursuant to D.C. Code Section 8-111. This 0.91 acre parcel is part of Rock Creek Park and is recognized as part of the CWDW as a “Connecting Corridor Zone”. The stated desired visitor experience in these zones is the ability for a visitor to walk along a well-maintained paved road, sidewalk, or designated trail. It is currently open space in a mixed-use residential and retail area.

The total land disposal process would consist of the District transferring jurisdiction of the 0.91 acre parcel back to NPS, thereby allowing NPS to transfer both ownership and jurisdiction of the parcel to HUD. HUD would then package the parcel with adjacent Urban Renewal land to create a total parcel large enough for the small development project (2.5 acres). The Project Area would be transferred to the District which governs development of Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Land under the terms of the LDA (Appendix C) (USDOJ, 1994). The District would convey ownership to Fort Lincoln Eastern Avenue, LLC for completion of the development project. This EA analyzes the transfer of both ownership and jurisdiction of the 0.91 acre of NPS land to HUD and the connected action of transferring both NPS and HUD land to the District.

The District proposed developing on this NPS parcel of land because of its location in relationship to HUD’s Urban Renewal land within the Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Area. While both of these parcels are small, combining them allows for the construction of approximately 50 stacked townhomes. Currently, the NPS parcel is open space and the surrounding area is mainly residential. Residential properties surrounding the Project Area include apartments and townhomes.

## **1.2.5 RELATIONSHIP TO LAWS, EXECUTIVE ORDERS, POLICIES, AND OTHER PLANS**

### Federal Laws and Executive Orders

#### ***National Environmental Policy Act (1969)***

The purpose of NEPA was to declare a national policy, which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment. Additionally, it was established to promote efforts to prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere. Further, NEPA was to stimulate the health and welfare of man, to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation, and to establish a Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (CEQ, 2012a).

#### ***National Historic Preservation Act (1966)***

The purpose of the NHPA was to preserve U.S. historical and archaeological sites. The legislation established several institutions: the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, State Historic Preservation Office, National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and the Section 106 review process (36 CFR Part 800). The act requires Federal agencies to evaluate the impact of all federally funded or permitted projects on historic properties.

#### ***Archeological Resources Protection Act (1979)***

The purpose of the Archeological Resources Protection Act is to protect archaeological resources and sites on public and Indian lands and to foster increased cooperation and exchange of information between the governmental authorities, the professional archaeological community,

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and private individuals. This Act establishes the uniform definitions, standards, and procedures to be followed by all Federal land managers in providing the protection for archaeological resources, located on public and Indian land of the United States (43 CFR Part 7).

***In 1976, Congress extended the Section 106 review process to include buildings, archaeological sites, and other historic resources eligible for listing. 40 CFR 1500-1508***

This regulation establishes policy, sets goals, and provides means for carrying out NEPA. It contains "action-forcing" provisions to make sure that Federal agencies act according to the letter and spirit of NEPA. It establishes regulations for Federal agencies to comply with the procedures and achieve the goals of NEPA (CEQ, 2012b).

### ***10140 USC – Section 8124***

Federal and District of Columbia authorities administering properties in the District may transfer jurisdiction over any part of the property among or between themselves for purposes of administration and maintenance under mutually agreed upon conditions. If the EA finds no major impacts to resources from the proposed action, then an EIS would not be required. Decision documents would be prepared summarizing the findings of the EA and would provide a brief rationale on how the NPS and the District made their final decision. Once completed, compliance documents would be presented to the NCPC for its approval in accordance with 40 USC 8124. Upon approval, the NCPC would provide its recommendation for the transfer to the Council of the District of Columbia. District authorities are responsible for reporting this transfer of jurisdiction to Congress (Cornell University, 2012).

### City Plans

#### ***District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan Update (2006)***

In December 2006, the District Office of Planning completed the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: District Elements, which was amended in 2011. The plan focused on the District as a whole, including Federal elements, the framework of many established neighborhoods, and the role of transportation. The plan also focused on topics, such as land use, transportation, housing, environmental protection, economic development, parks, recreation, and open space, urban design, historic preservation, community services and facilities, educational facilities, infrastructure, and arts and cultural. The plan is not intended to be a substitute for more detailed plans and does not dictate what other plans will cover; instead, it brings together all other detailed plans. The comprehensive plan looks at the “big picture” of how changes will be managed in the future (NPCP, 2006).

The land use element is the backbone of the comprehensive plan. It establishes the basic policies for guiding the physical form of the city and provides direction on a range of development, conservation, and land use compatibility issues. The proposed land transfer to the District would adhere to the District’s comprehensive plan. Below are the policies that support the proposed project (NPCP, 2006):

- Policy LU – 1.4.1: Infill Development: Encourage infill development on vacant land within the city, particularly in areas where there are vacant lots that create “gaps” in the urban fabric and detract from the character of a commercial or residential street.

- Policy LU – 1.4.2: Long-Term Vacant Sites: Facilitate the reuse of vacant lots that have historically been difficult to develop due to infrastructure or access problems, inadequate lot dimensions, fragmented or absentee ownership, or other constraints. Explore lot consolidation, acquisition, and other measures which would address these constraints.
- Policy LU – 1.4.3: Zoning of Infill Sites: Ensure that the zoning of vacant infill sites is compatible with the prevailing development pattern in surrounding neighborhoods. This is particularly important in single family and row house neighborhoods that are currently zoned for multi-family development.

### ***Zoning Ordinance (1920)***

The Zoning Ordinance as amended was adopted on August 30, 1920; the authority for this is the Zoning Act of 1920- which was approved by Congress on March 1, 1920. The zoning ordinance is the formal codification of land use policies for the District. The goal of the zoning ordinance is to establish permitted uses for land covered by the ordinance and to distinguish between different types of uses, which may be incompatible. In addition to defining specific types of land uses, the ordinance also divides the District into “zones” where certain types of permitted uses can occur (District of Columbia, 2000).

The District of Columbia’s zoning ordinance was adopted for the promotion of the public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity, and general welfare to:

- Provide adequate light and air,
- Prevent undue concentration of population and the overcrowding of land; and
- Provide distribution of population, business and industry, and use of land that will tend to create conditions favorable to transportation, protection of property, civic activity, and recreational, educational, and cultural opportunities as well as that will tend to further economy and efficiency in the supply of public services (District of Columbia, 2000).

### ***Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Plan***

The Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Plan (URP) was adopted on May 19, 1972 and readopted on April 5, 1990 by the NCPC. It was established to guide development of the Fort Lincoln neighborhood in a manner that is consistent with the objectives and policies contained in the District’s Comprehensive Plan and to express the special character of the neighborhood as a model in-town community. The most important development objective is the creation of an attractive and racially, socially, economically, and functionally inclusive community. The development of the neighborhood is envisioned as a physical arrangement of activities and uses that respect the area’s environmental character and maximize urban amenities and livability. The general development objectives of this Plan include:

- Construction of workforce affordable housing,
- Construction of a service and employment center and an office/warehouse area,
- A full complement of public and private community facilities and services,
- A public park, recreation, and open space system,
- A balanced circulation system, and

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- Preservation of the neighborhood's natural beauty and ecology and recognition of its scenic values and historic landmarks (NCPC, 1990).

### ***Inclusionary Zoning Affordable housing Program***

The Inclusionary Zoning requires that a certain percentage of units in a new development sets aside affordable units in exchange for a bound density. The goals of this program are to create mixed income neighborhoods; produce affordable housing for a diverse labor force; seek equitable growth of new residents; and increase homeownership opportunities for low and moderate income levels (DHCD, No Date).

### NPS Policies and Plans

#### ***The National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 (16 USC §§ 1-4, 39 Statue 535)***

The Organic Act established the National Park Service and directed the agency to:

“promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations... by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Importantly for all planning processes in the park system, the Organic Act provides a fundamental standard for management – that park resources should remain “unimpaired” for the enjoyment of future generations (NPS, 2012).

#### ***Redwood National Park Expansion Act of 1978 (16 USC §§ 1-1a, 92 Statue 166)***

The Redwoods Act amends the Organic Act and clarifies the importance Congress placed on protecting park resources such that:

“The authorization of activities shall be construed and the protection, management, and administration of these areas shall be conducted in light of the high public value and integrity of the National Park System and shall not be exercised in derogation of the values and purposes for which these various areas have been established, except as may have been or shall be directly and specifically provided by Congress.”

#### ***NPS Management Policies (2006)***

The NPS Management Policies use the terms “resources” and “values” to mean the full spectrum of attributes for which a park unit is established and managed, including the Organic Act’s fundamental purpose and any additional purposes as stated in a park unit’s establishing legislation. The impairment of park resources and values may not be allowed unless directly and specifically provided by statute. The primary responsibility of NPS is to ensure that park resources and values will continue to exist in a condition that will allow the American people to have present and future opportunities to enjoy them (NPS, 2006).

***Directors Order 12 Handbook: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making***

The Department of the Interior produced its NEPA regulations as Part 516 of its departmental manual, and the National Park Service produced several NEPA handbooks. The Department of the Interior has also produced and continuously updates a series of environmental statement and compliance memoranda, which further interpret Part 516 and need to be consulted in this process (NPS, 2001).

Most of the information in this handbook is derived in whole or in part from the CEQ regulation or Department of Interior's NEPA guidelines, giving them the force of law. The processes described in the handbook are binding on all NPS personnel. Under the terms of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998, the "Secretary shall take such measures as are necessary to assure the full and proper utilization of the results of scientific study for park management decisions. In each case in which an action undertaken by the National Park Service may cause a major adverse effect on a park resource, the administrative record shall reflect the manner in which unit resource studies have been considered." The development of alternatives, analysis of impacts, and incorporation of the best available information, coupled with identification of environmentally preferable courses of action as called for in the handbook, are one set of steps required in meeting this obligation to the public (NPS, 2001).

***Final Management Plan- Fort Circle Parks, Washington D.C. (2004)***

The 2004 Fort Circle Management Plan provides "broad direction for the use, management and development of the Fort Circle Parks". It coordinates the management of the CWDW park system, which is spread through three NPS units (George Washington Memorial Parkway, Rock Creek Park, and National Capital Parks- East) within the District. The Plan is intended to unify the level of maintenance, facilities, and interpretation across park boundaries.

The Management plan outlines interpretive themes for the Park and defines the desired visitor experience for the seven zones of the Park- Cultural Resources, Connecting Corridors, Recreation, Natural Resources, Visitor Services, Special Uses, and Administration.

### **1.3 SCOPING**

On October 10, 2012 the NPS and FLNT Corporation held a public scoping meeting to initiate public involvement and solicit community feedback on the proposed action to transfer the NPS property to HUD. The meeting was held from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Mount Horeb Baptist Church, 2914 Bladensburg Road NE, Washington, DC 20018. This location was chosen based on its proximity to the Project Area and availability. Approximately 14 people attended.

The NPS and FLNT Corporation sent out 13 scoping letters to interested parties. A letter was also sent to the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner (ANC) on September 30, 2012 for distribution via email to residents of the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. The Ward 5 Council member's office informed residents of the scoping meeting via email. In addition, notification of the meeting was posted at New Canaan Baptist Church, Unity Church, and Second New St. Paul Baptist Church. The public scoping was also announced on the NPS's Planning, Environment,

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and Public Comment (PEPC) website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ROCR>). No comments were received over PEPC.

The public scoping meeting provided numerous methods by which the public could comment on the proposed action. At the meeting, NPS and FLNT Corporation engaged in open dialog with the public. Written comment forms were provided to be completed and returned at the meeting. If the attendee chose not to complete the form at the meeting, a return address was provided on the sheet to mail back to NPS at a later date. Two comment form drop-off locations were provided for local residents at Fort Lincoln Realty and the Wesley House Apartments, both within the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. Attendees were also provided with contact information to send comments on the project through NPS's PEPC website, to a designated representative via email, or by phone. The public scoping comment period began on September 30, 2012 with the email notification of the public scoping meeting. The public scoping period concluded on December 3, 2012.

### **1.4 ISSUES AND IMPACT TOPICS**

No issues have arisen as a result of either internal or public scoping.

#### **1.4.1 IMPACT TOPICS ANALYZED IN THIS EA**

The following topics will be discussed in the "Affected Environment" chapter and analyzed in the "Environmental Consequences" chapter. These resource areas were identified through issues that arose during scoping, independent environmental studies, Federal laws, regulations, executive orders, and NPS's *2006 Management Policies*.

##### Soils

Activities associated with the proposed land transfer and the subsequent development of the approximately 50 stacked townhomes would disturb approximately 2.5 acres of soil between the land parcel for transfer and Urban Renewal land within the Project Area (Apex, 2008a), resulting in the loss of soil productivity and increasing the potential for soil erosion during construction. As a result of the potential impacts to soils from the proposed action alternative and potential modifications to soils in the Project Area and surrounding area, these resources will be addressed in this EA.

### Transportation

Activities associated with the proposed land transfer and the subsequent development of the stacked townhomes would cause traffic to increase during a.m. and p.m. peak hours, would require additional parking, and cause an increase in the use of public/transit services. Due to these potential impacts from the proposed action alternative, transportation will be addressed in this EA.

### Land Use

The proposed transfer of land to HUD for the construction of stacked townhomes would result in the Project Area's existing land use changing from recreational to medium density residential. Because of the potential impacts to land use from the proposed alternative and potential impacts to surrounding land use, land use will be addressed in this EA.

### Cultural Resources – Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA; 16 USC §470 et seq.), NEPA, NPS 1916 Organic Act, the NPS's 2006 Management Policies, DO-12 (Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making), and NPS DO-28 (Cultural Resource Management Guideline) require the consideration of impacts on cultural resources that might be affected by a federally funded project. Section 106 of the NHPA requires Federal agencies to undergo a review process for all federally funded and permitted projects that will influence sites listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In particular, it requires the Federal agency to take into account the effect a project may have on a historic property.

The proposed transfer of land to HUD for transfer to the District for the construction of townhomes would affect the following historic structures and cultural landscapes found within and near the Project Area: the Fort Circle Park System / Civil War Fort Sites and the Boundary Stones of Washington, D.C. This project is being coordinated with the Washington, D.C. State Historic Preservation Officer as required under Section 106 of the NHPA. Because of the potential impacts to architectural resources from the proposed alternative, cultural resources – historic structures and cultural landscapes will be addressed in this EA.

### Socioeconomics

Multiple socioeconomic characteristics may be affected by the proposed action. These include population, demographics, local economic characteristics, housing characteristics, and local business that operate in proximity to the Project Area. Because of these impacts, socioeconomic resources will be addressed in this EA.

#### **1.4.2 IMPACT TOPICS DISMISSED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS**

The following resource topics were eliminated from further analysis in this EA. Below is a brief rationale for dismissing these topics.

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### Hydrology

Hydrology is the science that deals with the occurrence, distribution, movement, and properties of the waters of the Earth and their relationship with the environment. This includes the amount of water flowing down a river, the velocity at which it travels, the fluctuations of these parameters over time, and the water's chemical composition (USGS, 2012). There are no hydrologic features found within 100 feet of the Project Area, as such the proposed action would result in negligible impacts to hydrologic resources. If the no action alternative were selected, there would be no additional impacts to hydrology.

### Water Quality

The 1977 Clean Water Act (CWA) is a national policy that was established to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's water, enhance the quality of water resources, and to prevent, control, and abate water pollution. The NPS's 2006 Management Policies provides direction for the preservation, use, and quality of water originating, flowing through, or adjacent to park boundaries. The NPS looks to restore, maintain, and enhance the water quality within its boundaries consistent with the CWA and other applicable Federal, state, and local laws and regulations (NPS, 2006).

During the construction of the proposed stacked townhomes, soils would be exposed, creating an increased potential for erosion and the transportation of surface pollutants into adjacent storm sewers and eventually into the tributaries that empty into the Anacostia River. The Project Area is not located in close proximity to any streams. Any stormwater runoff from this area is expected to enter existing drop inlets along Eastern Avenue and directly into the stormwater utility. An erosion and sediment control plan (Appendix D), to be implemented during construction, would be developed and approved by the District (VIKA, 2009), pursuant to the District's Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Program (District of Columbia, 1988a). The erosion and sediment control plan will outline Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be implemented during construction. It would also look to reduce erosion of exposed soils, which would slow the rate that water leaves the site, and would capture eroded soils and concentrated nutrients before entering the downstream water flow. Post-construction, stormwater will be directed to stormwater utilities via drop-inlets and other stormwater conveyance structures. Due to the Project Area not being located near a stream, the implementation of these BMPs, the potential for adverse impacts to water quality and adverse impacts to the Anacostia River during and after construction would be negligible.

During construction, BMPs would be developed to protect against potential groundwater contamination. These BMPs would include the implementation of proper onsite refueling techniques, the proper storing and handling of hazardous materials, and developing notification and containment procedures in the event of a spill. These BMPs would also provide protection to the overall quality of surface waters and would help ensure that any spills that may occur are contained and cleaned up prior to entering any ground or surface waters through either overland flows or stormwater conveyance systems. Groundwater may be directly encountered during the excavation for utility trenches. Any groundwater or surface water entering the trench would be pumped out of the trench and containerized. The contained trench water would be hauled, treated, and disposed in conformance with NPDES permits issued through the District.

After construction, under the proposed action, the total amount of impervious surface on the Project Area would likely increase by less than two acres. An increase in impervious surfaces could increase both the volume of stormwater runoff and the amount of sediments and pollutants transported to the Anacostia River through the stormwater systems during storm events. Under the proposed action, there would be no noticeable permanent increase in the volume of stormwater discharge generated onsite. All surface run-off from the site is currently routed to the stormwater system. Due to the planned design of subsurface stormwater retention and filtering as part of the stormwater utility conveyance system for the development, less stormwater is expected to enter the stormwater utility than current conditions. The project would be in accordance with the District's Stormwater Management Guidebook and 21 D.C. Municipal Regulations, Chapter 5 (Sections 526-535: The District of Columbia-Stormwater Management Regulations), which states stormwater discharge generated on a newly developed site must be equal to or below pre-development peak discharge (District of Columbia, 1988b). Since stormwater BMPs would be incorporated into the overall site design to prohibit stormwater discharge from the new dwelling units from surpassing the current stormwater discharge, there would be no added burdens to the current stormwater conveyance systems or beyond what it is currently required.

Standard erosion and sediment control BMPs would be used to protect against potential groundwater contamination implemented during the construction phase of the proposed action. Additionally, with the implementation of an approved stormwater management plan, impacts to water quality to nearby waterways and the Anacostia River during both the construction and operation of the proposed facilities would be negligible. As a result, this impact topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA.

### Air Quality

The Clean Air Act (CAA) as amended (42 USC §7401 et seq.) requires the NPS to follow policies that protect air quality in national parks and other Federal lands. The Federal Land Managers' Air Quality Related Values Work Group assigns Federal Land Managers (FLM) with direct management of Federal Class I parks and wilderness areas. They have an affirmative responsibility to protect air quality related values, including visibility, plants, animals, soils, water quality, cultural and historic resources and objects, and visitors, from adverse air pollution impacts. Section 118 of the CAA requires that the park meet Federal, state, and local air pollution standards (NPS, 2010).

The Project Area is located within the National Capital Interstate Air Quality Control Region. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated the National Capital Interstate Air Quality Control Region as in attainment for the following National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) criteria pollutants: particulate matter less than 10 micrometers (PM<sub>10</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and lead (Pb). The EPA has designated the District as a moderate non-attainment area for ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and as non-attainment area for particular matter less than 2.5 micrometers (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) (EPA, 2012).

Apex Companies, LLC completed an air quality study of the proposed alternative in compliance with EISF requirements through the District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA). The results of the 2008 study can be found in Appendix E. If the proposed action were selected, local air quality would be temporarily affected by dust and

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emissions from construction vehicles. Hauling materials and operating equipment would result in increased vehicle exhaust and emissions during construction. An increase in traffic would have long-term impacts due to an increase in vehicle exhaust and emissions. It is expected these temporary and long-term sources of emissions from construction vehicles, an increase in dust, and an increase in traffic would not change regional air quality and would fall below the minimum pollutant levels for non-attainment PM<sub>2.5</sub> and a moderate ozone non-attainment area. As a result, this impact topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA. If the no action alternative were selected, there would be no additional impacts to air quality as this alternative represents the Park's current conditions.

## Wetlands

Executive Order 11990 requires Federal agencies to the extent possible to avoid long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands and to avoid direct or indirect support of new construction in wetlands wherever there is a practicable alternative (White House Press Secretary, 1977). Wetlands are defined by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) and the EPA as an area that is inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. The diagnostic environmental characteristics of wetlands include:

- Vegetation consisting of macrophytes that are typically adapted to areas having hydrologic and soil conditions as described under the wetland definition;
- Hydrophytic vegetation species that have the ability to grow, effectively compete, reproduce, and/or persist in anaerobic soil conditions;
- Hydric soils or soils that possess characteristics that are associated with reducing soil conditions; and
- Areas inundated either permanently or periodically at mean water depths of less than or equal to 6.6 ft. or soil that is saturated to the surface at some time during the growing season of the prevalent vegetation (USACE, 1987).

Based on the results of the wetland delineation report performed by APEX (Appendix E), there is a lack of hydric soils, of wetland hydrology, and of hydrophytic vegetation at any one location with the Project Area (APEX, 2008b). Due to those findings, no impacts to wetlands would occur because of the proposed action. Consequently, this impact topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA. If the no action alternative were selected, there would be no additional impacts to wetlands as this alternative represents the Park's current conditions.

## Floodplains

Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) requires Federal agencies to avoid to the extent possible the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative (FEMA, 2010). The NPS's *2006 Management Policies, Section 4.6.4 Floodplains*, and the *1993 NPS Floodplain Management Guidelines – DO-77-2* establish guidelines for development in floodplains. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has designated the Project Area as Zone C. Zone C is an area that has a minimal flood hazard and is usually above the 500-year flood level, which is an area that

statistically would flood once every 500 years. These areas may have ponding and local drainage problems that do not warrant a detailed study or designation as base floodplain. Due to this, the Project Area is not located in a 100-year or 500-year floodplain. Since the proposed action and no action alternative would have no long- or short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and would avoid direct or indirect support of floodplain development, this impact topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA.

### Vegetation

The proposed action is located in an urban environment and constructing approximately 50 stacked townhomes would disturb approximately 2.5 acres of previously disturbed land. Of the Project Area, 0.66 acres are classified as wooded, and the rest are classified as lawn areas (grass) (Apex, 2008a). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) does not list any federally threatened or endangered plant species as occurring in the District (USFWS, 2012). Vegetation in the area has been disturbed from the surrounding residential properties and the proposed action would not remove any sensitive trees. Additionally, the proposed action would replace existing vegetation with the following planting plan: red oak (*Quercus rubra*), willow oak (*Q. phellos*), crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia* spp.), serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.), Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*), cypress, laurel, sweetspire (*Itea* spp.), and pachysandra. Consequently, the implementation of the proposed action would result in localized negligible impacts on vegetation during construction. This impact topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA. If the no action alternative were selected, there would be no additional impacts to vegetation as this alternative represents the Park's current conditions.

### Wildlife

Wildlife impacts associated with the proposed action would be localized and negligible. The Project Area is vegetated with lawn grass and a small swath of mature hardwoods. It is unlikely to serve as habitat for wildlife other than squirrels, deer, and common birds. Given the small size (2.5 acres) and location at the corner of a busy intersection, this topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA. If the no action alternative were selected, there would be no additional impacts to wildlife as this alternative represents the Park's current conditions.

### Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

The purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, is to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend (USFWS, 2011). The NPS also has policies in place that require the examination of the impacts on Federal and state threatened, endangered, rare, declining, and sensitive species.

Since the Project Area is located in an urban environment and the proposed action would be located entirely within previously disturbed or maintained landscapes, no impacts to any state- or federally listed species are expected. The NPS accessed the USFWS' Information, Planning, and Conservation System (IPaC) website on August 29, 2012. The IPaC website confirmed that no federally proposed or listed threatened or endangered species are known to exist within the Project Area. Consequently, this topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA. A copy of the IPaC can be found in Appendix B. If the no action alternative were selected, there would be

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no additional impacts to rare, threatened, and endangered species as this alternative represents the Park's current conditions.

## Geology and Topography

Overall topography of the area slopes toward the Anacostia River to the south and southeast. Elevations on the Project Area range from 90 feet above mean sea level (msl) near the corner of Bladensburg Road and Eastern Avenue to 128 feet above msl in the south corner of the Project Area (APEX, 2008d). While topography would be altered, especially in the southern portion of the Project Area to allow for the planned development layout as well as connections to pedestrian thoroughfares, adverse effects would be negligible. The topography of the surrounding area would remain the same and any change to topography within the Project Area would be slight. The geology of the area would remain intact. Therefore, topography and geology were dismissed from further analysis in this EA. If the no action alternative were selected, there would be no additional impacts to geology and topography.

## Cultural Resources - Archeological Resources

According to the Section 106 regulations (36 CFR 800), an Area of Potential Effect (APE) is defined as the geographic area or areas in which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause alterations of the character or use of historic structures, if such properties exist. The APE is influenced by the scale and nature of an undertaking and may be different for different kinds of effects caused by the undertaking.

Because this project includes the development of 2.5 acres which includes modifications to the existing landscape and topographic conditions, the APE for archaeology is defined as the entire proposed construction footprint, including any easements associated with the project.

In April 2008, Dovetail Cultural Resource Group performed a Phase IA cultural resource evaluation of the Project Area. The Project Area was found to have once been part of the grounds of the late-nineteenth century National Training School for Boys. No structures associated with this use currently exist in the Project Area. No historic artifacts or features were found on the surface, and it is recommended that the entire parcel has no to very low potential to contain intact archeological sites. A collection of 1940s Bungalows is located just south of the Project Area, but these homes are examples of architecture common to the area and are in poor to moderate condition. Based on this, it was recommended that no additional cultural resource investigations were necessary (APEX, 2008c). The Phase IA report was submitted for review as part of the Environmental Screening Form (EISF) for the proposed actions at the site (Appendix E).

Further evaluations of the project's potential impacts were prompted following EISF review, in which the District's State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) voiced concerns that the site may have been part of an area of troop advancement during the Battle of Bladensburg, fought in 1814 during the War of 1812. Local interested parties also expressed interest in a subsurface assessment of the site for any artifacts of historical significance. In August 2010, a Phase I Archaeological Survey and Geoarchaeological Study were performed in an effort to further evaluate the site (Appendix F). Follow-up Phase II testing performed in August, 2010 provided a thorough subsurface assessment of the western portion of the Project Area. The Phase I and Phase II studies uncovered extremely disturbed soils due to the construction and subsequent

demolition of a mid-twentieth century gas station in the Project Area. One early-twentieth century archaeological site associated with the nearby bungalow development was found to be not eligible for the NRHP under criteria A-D, due to an absence of features and limited information available from this site to contribute to area history (Dovetail, 2011). All materials associated with surveys of the Project Area are at the D.C. Office of Planning, Historic Preservation Office.

The results of these archeological assessments were submitted to the SHPO regarding the potential for impacts to sites listed in, or eligible for listing in, the NRHP. On January 11, 2012, the SHPO determined that Site 51NE040 is not eligible for the NRHP and that there are no additional archeological properties listed on or eligible for listing on the NRHP within the Project Area of potential effect. A copy of SHPO's finding letter can be found in Appendix A. According to the District's Historic Preservation Office, the Project Area contains no sites of archaeological significance. Therefore, archeological resources were dismissed from further analysis in this EA. If the no action alternative were selected, there would be no additional impacts to archeological resources. As noted above, cultural resources – historical structures and properties will be analyzed further in this document due to the presence of the Boundary Stones of Washington, D.C. and the Fort Circle Park System / Civil War Fort Sites.

#### Museum Collections

The proposed alternatives would not have any direct effects upon recognized museum collections (historic artifacts, natural specimens, and archival and manuscript material); therefore, this impact topic is dismissed from further analysis.

#### Traditional Cultural Properties and Ethnography

A traditional cultural property (TCP) is a place that is eligible for inclusion on the NRHP due to its association with cultural practices and beliefs that are (Parker, 1993):

1. Rooted in the history of community and
2. Are important to maintaining the continuity of that community's traditional beliefs and practices.

Ethnographic resources are defined by the NPS as any "site, structure, object, landscape, or natural resource feature assigned traditional, legendary, religious, subsistence or other significance in the cultural system of a group traditionally associated with it" (NPS, 1998).

Since no TCPs exist within the APE and there are no known ethnographic resources within the APE, this topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA. The no action alternative would represent a continuation of the Park's current conditions.

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### Visitor Use and Experience

NPS Management Policies state that the enjoyment of park resources and values by the people of the United States is part of the fundamental purpose of all parks and that the NPS is committed to providing appropriate, high-quality opportunities for visitors to enjoy the parks (NPS, 2006).

Currently, there are no public facilities on the NPS parcel of land proposed for transfer, and there are no plans to develop any.

Under the 2004 Fort Circle Parks Management Plan, the NPS parcel of land is considered a “Connecting Corridor Zone.” The stated desired visitor experience in these zones is the ability for a visitor to walk along a well-maintained paved road, sidewalk, or designated trail. The proposed alternative would maintain and enhance the visitor use experience by providing a well-maintained sidewalk through the area. Land adjacent to the parcel of NPS land proposed for transfer would also remain under NPS ownership and the District’s jurisdiction. This land would remain open space. If the no action alternative were selected, there would be no additional impacts to visitor use. This alternative represents the Park’s current conditions. This topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA.

### Human Health and Safety

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations specify appropriate protective measures for all employees. Following proper OSHA regulations, construction workers at the proposed Project Area would be subject to the same types of health risks that are generally associated with their professions. The project would not generate any solid, medical, infectious, radioactive, or other hazardous waste as well as no liquid waste during construction. Additionally, the project would not produce any noxious odors and would not produce any noise above the allowable 80 decibel level. The operation of the housing would not introduce any unusual health and safety risks. Consequently, this topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA. If the no action alternative were selected, there would be no additional impacts to human health and safety as this alternative represents the Park’s current conditions.

### Park Operations and Management

The NPS portion of the Project Area is currently an open space parcel that is not operated as a park, and currently there are no plans to operate a park at this location. However, NPS maintains ownership of the property and has published a map of self-guided walking paths connecting various CWDW historical sites which directs park visitors through the NPS owned land within the Project Area if traveling from Barnard Hill to Fort Lincoln. The map indicates the possibility of installing a new interpretive sign in the area. The transfer of land would provide the District with an opportunity to develop the Project Area, and would result in the construction of a walkway and historical plaque at no cost to NPS. Since the proposed action would result in beneficial impacts to park operations, this topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA. If the no action alternative were selected, jurisdiction of the land parcel proposed for transfer would remain with the District and management would continue under the 2004 Fort Circle Parks Management Plan.

### Environmental Justice and the Protection of Children

Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) requires Federal agencies to identify and address actions that may disproportionately affect low-income or minority communities. Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, requires Federal agencies to address actions that may present environmental and safety risks to children. Specifically, the executive order requires identification of large populations of children (e.g., schools and childcare facilities).

As shown in Table 1, most of the impacts from both alternatives are beneficial or minor. The impacts that are not minor or beneficial would be felt evenly among the populations regardless of income or race. Further, the project is designed to help the community by providing some workforce affordable housing. Therefore, disproportionately adverse impacts to low-income or minority populations is not expected.

Marshall Elementary School is located approximately 0.13 miles to the south of the Project Area (DCGIS, 2006a). The closest daycare is Scoobies before and after school program, about 0.4 miles south of the Project Area (DCGIS, 2006b). Some churches are located further away from the Project Area and may provide childcare services (DCGIS, 2004). Construction would occur during school and daycare hours. This could expose children to air pollution and noise from the construction. However, Marshall Elementary School is across a four-lane, divided road (Fort Lincoln Drive) and has a vegetative buffer between it and the Project Area. The childcare facilities are even further from the Project Area, allowing more of a buffer to reduce impacts. Thus, the addition of the construction activities for the proposed project would not be expected to be incrementally different for these children. The operation of the housing units would cause no impacts to these children as they are compatible uses.

If the no action alternative were implemented, there would be no additional impacts to environmental justice or protection of children as this alternative represents a continuation of the Park's current conditions. Therefore, this topic was dismissed from further analysis.

### Utilities

Utility impacts associated with the proposed action would result in localized negligible impacts. The project would be served by existing utilities and would connect to existing water, sanitary, storm and combined sewers, and other utilities. Consequently, this topic was dismissed from further analysis in this EA, and if the no action alternative were selected, there would be no additional impacts to utilities as this alternative represents the Park's current conditions.

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## 2.0 ALTERNATIVES

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

NEPA requires that Federal agencies explore a range of reasonable alternatives. The alternatives under consideration must include the “no action” alternative as prescribed by 40 CFR 1502.14. Project alternatives may originate from the proponent agency, local government officials, or members of the public at public meetings as well as during the early stages of project development. Alternatives may also be developed in response to comments from coordinating or cooperating agencies. The alternatives analyzed in this document, in accordance with NEPA, are the result of design scoping and internal scoping.

The NPS evaluated two alternatives in this EA, which are described below.

#### Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

- Represents the Park’s current conditions. Ownership of the 0.91 parcel of NPS land would remain with NPS and jurisdiction of this land would remain with the District.

Alternative 2 – Transfer of 0.91 acre of NPS land to HUD to facilitate the District’s proposal of constructing townhomes. Actions include:

- Transferring jurisdiction of the 0.91 acre parcel of NPS owned land from the District to NPS, NPS would then transfer both ownership and jurisdiction of this land parcel to HUD. After this transfer is complete the following actions would take place:
  - HUD would package this parcel with abutting Urban Renewal land (Project Area) for transfer to the District.
  - The District would subsequently convey the land to Fort Lincoln Eastern Avenue, LLC.
- Construction of up to approximately 50 stacked townhomes with a total of 109 onsite parking spaces.

#### 2.1.1 ALTERNATIVE 1: NO ACTION

The no action alternative serves as the baseline by which all other alternatives are compared. Under the no action alternative, ownership of the 0.91 acre parcel would remain with NPS, and jurisdiction and maintenance of this parcel would remain under the control of the District. This baseline data will be described in the Affected Environment chapter and analyzed in the Environmental Consequences chapter.

#### 2.1.2 ALTERNATIVE 2: TRANSFER OF NPS PROPERTY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF DWELLING UNITS (NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

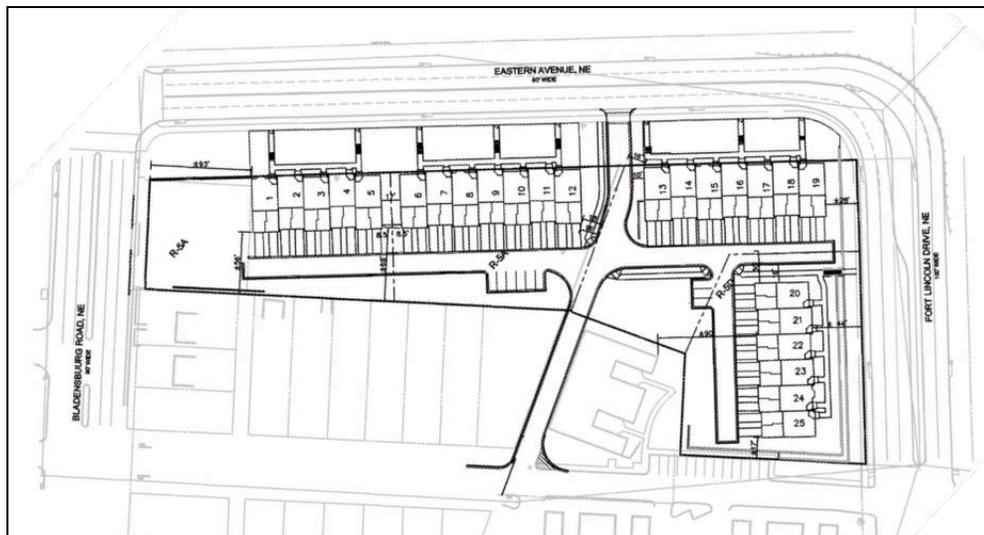
Under this alternative, NPS would help facilitate the District’s proposal to build approximately 50 stacked townhomes with onsite parking to comply with the FLNT URP. In order for this to take place a 0.91 acre of NPS land along with abutting HUD Urban Renewal land needs to be packaged together and transferred to the District. This proposal analyzes this land transfer process: the transfer of the 0.91 acre of NPS land to HUD as well as the connected actions that

## Alternatives

follow. This step and its connected actions are described below. In addition, a portion of land adjacent to the NPS parcel proposed for transfer would remain under NPS ownership and the District's jurisdiction. This land would be maintained by the District and would not be developed (See Figure 1, Open Space).

The District would first transfer jurisdiction of the 0.91 acre parcel back to the NPS, uniting ownership and jurisdiction under one managing party. The NPS would then have the legal ability to transfer the parcel to HUD. HUD owns a parcel of abutting Urban Renewal land, which would be combined with the transfer parcel. The larger, combined area (Project Area) would be transferred to the District so that the final transfer to Fort Lincoln Eastern Avenue, LLC could occur. Fort Lincoln Eastern Avenue, LLC. would then build up to approximately 50 stacked townhomes to be sold. The proposed transfer of land is needed to aid in the construction of townhomes in the Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal neighborhood. If this alternative were implemented, the land would no longer be part of Rock Creek Park and would no longer be owned by the NPS and managed under the CWDW.

The proposed action would provide high-quality housing in accordance with the Fort Lincoln URP. These townhomes would also be subjected to the Inclusionary Zoning Regulations for workforce affordable housing. Development plans include the construction of up to approximately 50 stacked townhomes in four separate building units (Figure 2). These townhomes would need to be connected to existing water, sanitary, stormwater sewers, and other utilities. As part of the development, 109 onsite parking spaces would be provided, including garage spaces, driveway spaces, and visitor spaces.



**Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan**

## 2.2 MITIGATION MEASURES OF THE ACTION ALTERNATIVE

NPS and the District place a strong emphasis on avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potentially adverse environmental impacts. If the land transfer were to take place, the property would no longer be owned by the NPS and would be the responsibility of the District. Consequently, the District's environmental standards would apply. To help ensure the protection of natural and

cultural resources and the quality of visitor experience, the District would ensure the following protective measures would be implemented as part of the selected action alternative. The District would implement an appropriate level of monitoring throughout the construction process to help ensure that protective measures are being properly implemented and are achieving their intended results.

### **2.2.1 SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES**

#### District Law 2-23 (D.C. Erosion and Sediment Control Act of 1977)

Pursuant to District Law 2-23, the District would develop and implement an approved D.C. Erosion Control Plan prior to any construction associated with the proposed action. The program regulates land-disturbing activities to avert accelerated erosion and the transportation of sediment to its tributaries. The program requires the District to review and approve all construction and grading plans that are submitted to the District to ensure compliance with the regulations. Plans may call for the use of measures or a combination of measures to reduce the amount of soil washing away from construction sites. Examples of possible measures are

- Straw bale dikes,
- Silt fences,
- Brush barriers,
- Mulches,
- Sediment tanks or temporary sedimentation ponds,
- Seeding or sodding,
- Earth dikes,
- Brickbats,
- Stabilized construction entrances, and
- Vehicle wash racks (District of Columbia, 2012).

In addition, the program also makes it the responsibility of the District to investigate erosion, drainage, and other related complaints and provides recommendations towards their resolution. The Erosion and Sediment Control program complements the water management program. Therefore, in an effort to meet the goals and objectives of the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program, D.C. strengthened its sediment control law by enacting D.C. Law 10-166 (D.C. Erosion and Sediment Control Amendment Act 1994) to remove the exemption provisions for sediment control compliance associated with construction activities by Federal agencies.

#### District of Columbia's Stormwater Guide Handbook (2009)

In accordance with the Stormwater Guide Handbook and 21 D.C. Municipal District Regulations, stormwater discharge generated on a newly developed site must be equal or below pre-development peak discharge (District of Columbia, 2009). Prior to construction, a stormwater management plan would be developed for the construction and operation of the townhomes. This plan would address the increase in impervious surfaces and subsequent increases in overland runoff by incorporating stormwater control designs, such as bioretention ponds/rain gardens, into the project to manage the rate at which runoff leaves the Project Area.

### **2.2.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Mitigation to historical structures includes maintaining a portion of the Project Area closest to Bladensburg Road under NPS ownership and the District's jurisdiction. This would maintain a visual connection between the green space on the parcel being transferred and the NPS-owned land on the west side of Bladensburg Road. In addition, the developer would provide signage in this area highlighting several aspects of local historical importance, including the War of 1812 Battle of Bladensburg, the Civil War Fort Lincoln, the postbellum National Training School for Boys, and the evolution of 1960s–1970s FLNT.

If during construction archeological resources were discovered, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery would be halted until the resources could be evaluated and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed, if necessary. This strategy would be developed in consultation with the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office, following the procedures for post-review discoveries found in the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Protection of Historic Properties (36 CFR 800.13). In the event that human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered during construction, work would be halted immediately and consultation would be initiated with NPS and the D.C. Historic Preservation Office. In addition, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 USC 3001) of 1990 would be followed.

### **2.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS**

CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA require Federal agencies to explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives to the proposed alternative and to briefly discuss the rationale for eliminating any alternatives that were not considered in detail. The agency decision is to accept or reject the development by the developer as proposed. Consequently, alternative housing types or locations are not evaluated in this EA.

### **2.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE**

The NPS is required to identify the “environmentally preferable alternative” in its NEPA documents for public review and comment. The NPS, in accordance with the Department of the Interior policies contained in the Departmental Manual (516 DM 4.10) and CEQ's *NEPA's Forty Most Asked Questions*, defines the environmentally preferable alternative (or alternatives) as the alternative that best promotes the national environmental policy expressed in NEPA (Section 101(b) (516 DM 4.10). In their *Forty Most Asked Questions*, CEQ further clarifies the identification of the environmentally preferable alternative, stating “Ordinarily, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources” (Q6a).

As evaluated against the CEQ regulations, Alternative 1: the No Action Alternative, is the Environmentally Preferable Alternative as it would have no additional adverse environmental impacts. Constructing approximately 50 stacked townhomes would impact approximately 2.5 acres, and it would affect soils, vegetation, and wildlife in the Project Area. Constructing the 50 townhomes, however, would provide the community with some workforce affordable housing and help the District comply with the FLNT URP, which would not occur under Alternative 1.

A summary of the environmental consequences is in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

<b>Impacted Resource</b>	<b>Alternative 1 – No Action</b>	<b>Alternative 2 – Proposed Alternative</b>
Soils	Overall, this alternative would result in negligible impacts to soils. Cumulative impacts would be negligible and would result in a slight increase in cut-through pedestrian traffic.	This alternative would result in long-term minor adverse impacts to soil, primarily due to disturbance and erosion from construction activities. Adverse cumulative impacts to soils would be both long-term and short-term moderate adverse.
Transportation	Impacts to transportation under this alternative would be negligible. Adverse cumulative impacts would be long-term and minor. The increase in traffic from cumulative impacts would be small and would not require major road repair or expansion of existing roadways or facilities. Changes to public transportation due to cumulative impacts would be small and visible and would not limit user access.	Under this alternative, impacts to transportation would be long-term and minor. The increase in traffic would be noticeable but small and would not require major road repairs or expansion of existing roadways or facilities. Changes to public transportation would also be small and would not limit user access. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long-term moderate adverse impacts to transportation.
Land Use	This alternative would result in long-term minor adverse impacts to the District’s land use goals, and negligible impacts to NPS land use goals. Permanent changes in land use are not expected and this alternative does not conflict with surrounding land uses. This alternative would conflict with the District’s land use policies and the Fort Lincoln URP. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long-term minor adverse impacts. Any permanent changes would be visible but small.	This alternative would result in long-term minor adverse impacts to land use. Changes would be permanent, small, and visible, and would not conflict with surrounding land uses. This alternative may conflict with the National Park Service’s 2004 Fort Circle Parks Management Plan, but the Project Area that would remain as green space would connect this area to other areas identified in the 2004 Fort Circle Parks Management Plan. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long-term minor adverse impacts.

Alternatives

Impacted Resource	Alternative 1 – No Action	Alternative 2 – Proposed Alternative
Cultural Resources – Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes	<p>This alternative would result in long-term negligible impacts to cultural resources found within the APE. Changes would be at the lowest level of detection with neither adverse nor beneficial consequences. There would be no effect to cultural resources outside of the APE. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long-term minor adverse impacts.</p>	<p>This alternative would result in long-term minor adverse impacts to cultural resources found within the APE. There would be no effect to cultural resources outside of the APE. Impacts would alter the feature(s) of a historic district or structure listed the NRHP but the proposed project would not diminish the integrity of a character-defining feature(s) or the overall integrity of the historic property. This alternative would result in the creation of signage documenting the cultural resources of the area and contribute to realization of For Circle Parks Management Plan. For purposes of Section 106, the determination would be a <i>no adverse effect</i>. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long-term minor adverse impacts.</p>
Socioeconomics	<p>This alternative would have negligible impacts. Long-term and beneficial cumulative impacts would occur from past, present, and future activities in the neighborhood that would contribute to the local economy and the economic composition of the area.</p>	<p>This alternative would result in long-term beneficial impacts to socioeconomics. Long-term beneficial impacts would occur from the addition of high-quality affordable housing. Cumulatively, this alternative would have short-term beneficial and long-term beneficial impacts, with the level of impact depending on the percent of local labor and materials used in the construction and operation of the development. This project along with past, present, and future projects would contribute to the local economy and the economic composition of the area.</p>

## **3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter of the EA describes the baseline conditions for resource areas potentially affected by the alternatives evaluated in this EA. The resource areas discussed in this section are the following: soils, transportation, land use, cultural resources, and socioeconomics. Potential impacts are discussed in Chapter 4 “Environmental Consequences,” which follows the same order.

### **3.2 SOILS**

Fort Lincoln is underlain by the Atlantic Coastal Plain Physiographic province that typically consists of marine deposits of sand, silt, and clay. It consists of a seaward thickening wedge of unconsolidated to semi-consolidated sedimentary deposits from Cretaceous Period to the Holocene Geologic Epoch (APEX, 2008d). The Potomac Group formation is the oldest sedimentary deposit in the District.

Soils within the Project Area are dominated by Christiana silt loam associated soils. These soils exist at higher elevations of the Coastal Plain and have slow to moderate permeability (NRCS, 2012). From a construction perspective, fill materials observed at shallow depths should be removed and replaced with stable fill prior to construction (APEX, 2008d).

### **3.3 TRANSPORTATION**

#### Commuting Characteristics

There are 1,179 workers aged 16 and over in the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. Of this, 83.3 percent drive, 14.3 percent take public transportation, less than one percent takes other means, and 1.6 percent work from home. The average workers per car are 1.7 and 73.5 percent of workers drive alone. Of the 1,179 workers aged 16 and over, 75.8 percent work within the District and 24.2% work outside the District (U.S. Census, 2010a). Peak a.m. hours are between 7:45 to 8:45, and peak p.m. hours are between 4:30 to 5:30 (APEX, 2008e). The mean travel time to work is 28.4 minutes with 20.3 percent of the workers taking 20 to 24 minutes and less than one percent taking 25 to 29 minutes to travel to work (U.S. Census, 2010a).

#### Roadway Network

The main access roads to and from the Project Area are Bladensburg Road, Fort Lincoln Drive, and Eastern Avenue (Figure 3). A brief description of each of these roads is provided below (APEX, 2008e).

- Bladensburg Road is a six-lane, divided minor arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour (mph) in the Project Area. Between South Dakota Avenue and Eastern Avenue, Bladensburg Road carries an average of daily traffic volume of 28,500 vehicles per day.
- Fort Lincoln Drive is a four-lane, divided roadway that serves the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. This roadway has a posted speed limit of 25 mph. Sidewalks are located on both sides of the road. Near the intersection of Bladensburg Road and

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Eastern Avenue, Fort Lincoln Drive carries an average daily traffic volume of 11,000 vehicles per day.

- Eastern Avenue is a two-lane, undivided roadway that connects Bladensburg Road to Rhode Island Avenue.

### Public Transportation

The Bladensburg – Anacostia line (Metro-bus Route B2) and the Fort Lincoln Shuttle Line (Metro-bus Routes B8 and B9) currently provide bus service to the Project Area. Route B2 provides service to the Anacostia, Potomac Avenue, and Stadium Armory Metro Stations. Routes B8 and B9 provide service to the Rhode Island Metro Station. There are 20 bus stops located less than a mile from the Project Area (Figure 3). The three closest bus stops are to the south and southwest along Bladensburg Road and southeast at the intersection of Fort Lincoln Drive and Commodore Joshua Barney Drive. The nearest metro station, Deanwood, is serviced by the orange line and is located two miles to the southeast of the Project Area (APEX, 2008e).

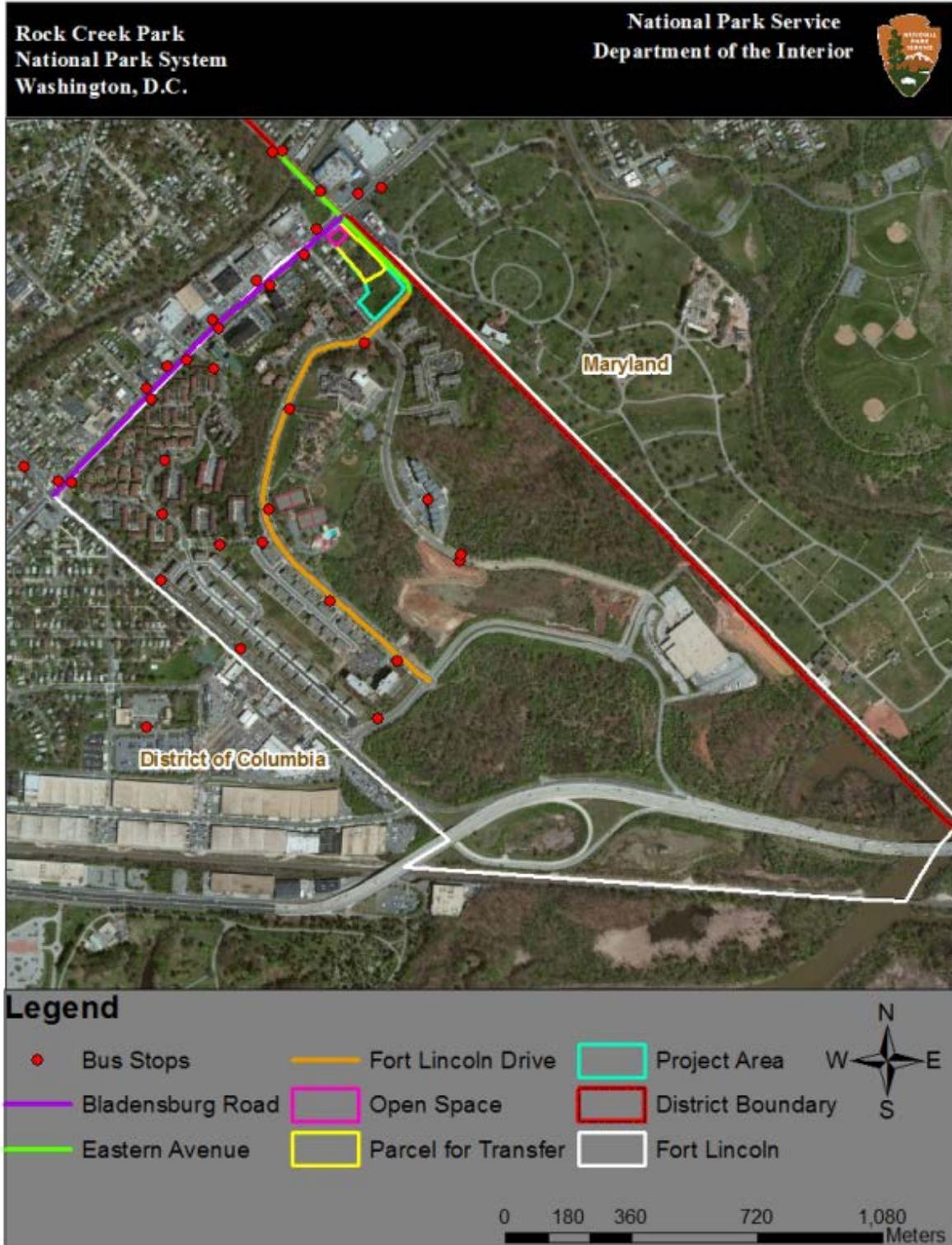


Figure 3: Transportation Network

### **3.4 LAND USE**

The Project Area is located within the Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Area, and is part of FLNT. Fort Lincoln New Town is the last Model Cities New Town in the nation still under development and it is the District’s only planned community. The neighborhood can be described as a suburban neighborhood in an urban setting. Fifty-one percent of the land in the neighborhood is classified as residential (District of Columbia, No Date).

The Project Area incorporates a parcel of land identified in the 2004 Fort Circle Management Plan as a “Connecting Corridor Zone”. The plan defines land use in these zones as follows- “The landscape...will be substantially modified from natural conditions. A mix of exotic and native plants will be used to create an aesthetically pleasing landscape in keeping with the historic parkway design.”

Below, Table 2 provides a breakdown of land use in the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. Existing land use for the Project Area is classified as parks and open space. Existing adjacent surrounding land use is mostly comprised of low-medium density residential to the east and medium-density residential to south. Remaining surrounding land uses are low-density residential to the south, commercial to the west and southwest, parks and open space to the west, and industrial to the southwest. The two surrounding industrial land uses are an auto body shop and a brewery (District of Columbia, No Date). Figure 4 depicts existing land uses for Fort Lincoln, the Project Area, and surrounding properties.

**TABLE 2: FORT LINCOLN LAND USE BREAKDOWN**

<b>Land Use Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent of Total Acres</b>
Commercial	66	21.4%
High-Density Residential	5	1.7%
Industrial	18	5.9%
Local Public	10	3.3%
Low-Density Residential	2	0.8%
Low-Medium Density Residential	107	34.6%
Medium-Density Residential	43	14.1%
Parks and Open Spaces	56	18.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

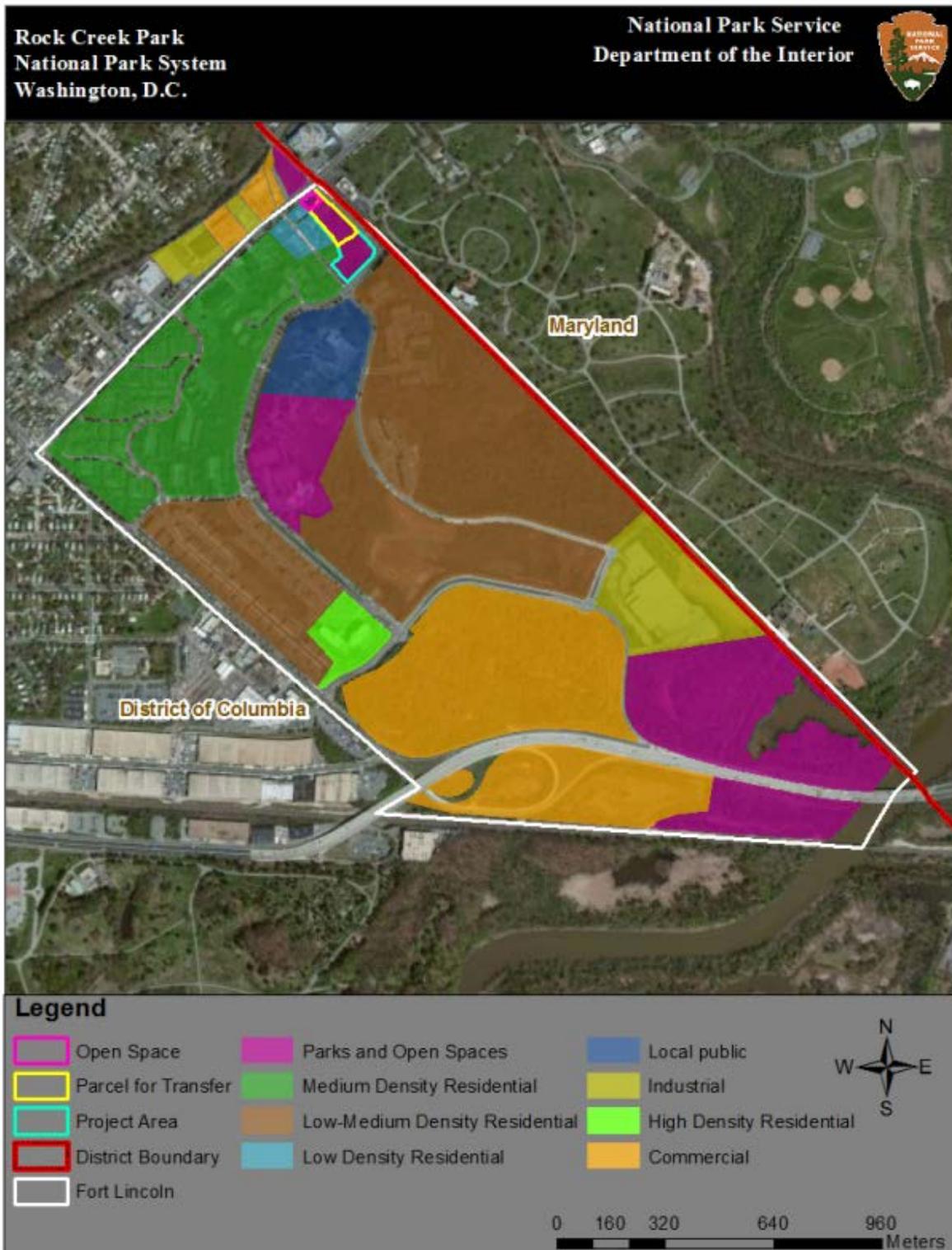


Figure 4: Land Use in Fort Lincoln and Surrounding Areas

### **3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES – HISTORIC STRUCTURES AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES**

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA; 16 USC §470 et seq.), NEPA, NPS 1916 Organic Act, the NPS's 2006 Management Policies, DO-12 (Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making), and NPS DO-28 (Cultural Resource Management Guideline) require the consideration of impacts on cultural resources that might be affected by a federally funded project. Section 106 of the NHPA requires Federal agencies to undergo a review process for all federally funded and permitted projects that will influence sites listed on or eligible for listing on the NRHP. In particular, it requires the Federal agency to take into account the effect a project may have on a historic property.

#### Areas of Potential Effect

According to the Section 106 regulations (36 CFR 800), an APE is defined as the geographic area or areas in which an undertaking make directly or indirectly cause alterations of the character or use of historic structures, if such properties exist. The APE is influenced by the scale and nature of an undertaking and may be different for different kinds of effects caused by the undertaking.

Because this project includes the development of 2.5 acres which includes modifications to the existing landscape and topographic conditions, the APE for historic structures and cultural landscapes is the project footprint plus any areas where alterations to a resource's setting and feeling could occur (area viewshed) (Figure 5). This includes the Project Area and areas to the west across from Bladensburg Road (Dovetail, 2013).

This APE is equivalent to the Project Area for cultural resources in this EA.

#### Historic Context for the Land Parcel for Transfer and Fort Lincoln

Fort Lincoln, one of several Civil War-era forts built around Washington, was constructed by 1861 and served to protect the Baltimore Turnpike, the B&O Railroad, and many auxiliary roads that lead into Washington from Confederate attack (Young, 1968). The fort was established to help fortify the capital from possible attacks by the Confederate army. Located on a knoll about 1,000 feet (304.8 m) to the southeast of the project area, the fort complex included Barney's Battery, several exterior earthworks, and Fort Lincoln itself. Fort Lincoln was supplied with four 24 pound siege guns, two 24 pound howitzers in embrasure, four 12 pound field pieces, and eight 6 pound field pieces (Mahan, 1860). The fort was in operation until the war's end in 1865.

The War Department began implementing reductions in the Civil War fortification system of Washington, D.C. in June of 1865 in order to return most of the lands to their original owners (Monteleone, 2010). The government offered the military improvements as compensation to landowners but fell short of offering to purchase the damaged land. All but a few of the forts within the ring encircling Washington were dismantled. Some of the roads connecting the forts were used but many were altered, in some cases causing the destruction of the forts they once served. Supporters of Civil War site preservation and those wishing to improve the park system combined forces in an attempt to restore the roads and remaining fortifications. Although

successful at preserving some individual sites, the road system was largely ignored until, toward the end of the nineteenth century, the views from the hills on which the forts were built were praised for their tourism value (Monteleone, 2010). By 1898, Fort Drive, which connected the fortifications, was labeled on the D.C. highway map.

It was not until 1924 that legislation was finally approved to create the National Capital Parks Commission (Monteleone, 2010). Fort Stevens was initially acquired and plans were made to establish Fort Drive as a parkway separate from the city streets. The Capper-Crampton Act of 1930 provided for the acquisition of most of the lands necessary for the completion of Fort Drive. Despite the acquisition of numerous parcels of land across the proposed route, only short sections of the “scenic drive” were actually constructed. These segments were graded by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and some of the road was constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). By 1940 plans changed from a scenic drive connecting historical points with scenic views to an efficient way to decongest sections of Washington with the introduction of the Downer Plan. After World War II, a plan was embraced that would use existing roads to complete Fort Drive but funds for construction were never allocated (Monteleone, 2010). By 1961, an attempt was even made to use the right-of-way for portions of Interstate 95. In 1968, the National Park Service released the *Fort Circle Parks Master Plan* which focused on tying the forts together through a contiguous bikeway and foot trail. Again, due to funding constraints, only three miles of the hiker-biker trail was constructed. Current plans based on the 2004 *Fort Circle Parks Final Management Plan* have continued the proposal for a hiker-biker trail to be established along the entire 23 miles (37 km) of the ring encircling Washington, DC.

Although Fort Drive was never completed, its place in Washington, D.C. history is notable and this element was included within the *Fort Circle Parks Master Plan*, crafted by the NPS and finalized in 1974 (NPS 1974). Fort Circle Park System/Civil War Fort was listed in the NRHP in 1977–1978 and determinations on contributing elements were clarified through additional research in 1998 (NPS, 1977; Raiche, 1998). A 2004 update to the master plan re-emphasized that Fort Drive is a contributing element to this eligible district (NPS, 2004). NPS is currently expanding the NRHP nomination for this resource to expand on the significance of the Fort Drive planning effort.



**Figure 5: Project Area (red) and Historic Structures/Area of Potential Effect (blue)**

Identification of Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes within the APE

To identify the potential of the project area to contain significant NRHP-eligible or listed historic properties within the APE and project area, the SHPO file maps and records were reviewed. In addition, the office of the Cultural Resources Program Manager for Rock Creek Park provided the project team information pertaining to the Civil War Defense of Washington. The background research revealed that there are no eligible archaeological sites within the project area and two previously recorded, eligible architectural properties within the APE (Table 3).

**TABLE 3: ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE APE**

<b>Property Number</b>	<b>Site Type</b>	<b>Temporal Period</b>	<b>Description/Artifacts</b>
71	Historic	1792	Boundary Stones of Washington, D.C.
96	Historic	c. 1861 – 1865; late 1930s	Fort Circle Park System/ Civil War Fort Sites

***Boundary Stones of Washington***

The Boundary Stones of Washington, D.C. were the first monuments erected by the United States government. In 1792, Major Andrew Ellicott, principle surveyor of the city, placed 26 stones along the D.C./Maryland border. Twenty-three still stand today, two of which are adjacent to the current project APE (Figure 6).

***Fort Circle Park System/Civil War Fort Sites***

The land parcel for transfer is part of the Fort Circle Park System. As stated above, although Fort Drive was never completed, its place in Washington, D.C. history is notable and this element was included within the *Fort Circle Parks Master Plan*, crafted by the NPS and finalized in 1974 (NPS, 1974). The Fort Circle Park System, was listed in the NRHP in 1977 -1978 under the multiple property listing “Fort Circle Park System/Civil War Fort Sites” and determinations on contributing elements were clarified through additional research in 1998 (NPS, 1977; Raiche, 1998). Land comprising part of the Fort Circle Park System within the APE includes NPS owned land known as Reservation 520. Reservation 520 includes several parcels of land, but within the APE Reservation 520 includes the land parcel for transfer along Bladensburg Road and a second piece of property located across Bladensburg Road (Figure 6). Both were acquired by the Federal government with the intention to create a roadway connecting the Civil War resources encircling the city. This land was to serve as a “Connecting Corridor Zone” to allow pedestrian access to the war-related elements while also providing green space for interpretive signage.

Along with these parcels another element of the Fort Circle Park System/Civil War Fort Sites is located near the Project Area. Although no longer extant, remnants of Fort Lincoln are located southeast of the current Project Area. A previous archaeological investigation of Fort Lincoln and the surrounding area found that nearly the entire fort area was destroyed during the construction of the late-1860s National Training School for Boys, located on the same parcel (Young, 1968). See Appendix A for a location of the remnants of Fort Lincoln.

Viewshed Analysis

A viewshed study was conducted to assess the current conditions of the viewshed and the potential to diminish the setting and feeling of these resources. The closest previously recorded above-ground resource is the Fort Circle Park System. The vicinity around both the Project Area and the land on the west side of Bladensburg Road owned by NPS has viewshed integrity issues. Bladensburg Road is lined with modern commercial structures, overhead utilities, large signage, and large swaths of pavement. Little green space can be found along the corridor in general, with the exception of the NPS-owned land, and the integrity of setting, feeling, and association have all been diminished through decades of development.

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East of the current project parcel, Fort Lincoln itself is no longer extant, but the knoll upon which the fort once stood is still in existence and is registered as a historic property with the DC SHPO. The Fort Lincoln knoll is now the site of the Fort Lincoln community center.

Archaeological excavations in the area have determined that all vestiges of the Fort are now gone. Although the proposed development will be visible from the Fort Lincoln knoll, the viewshed is compromised through the creation of the community center itself as well as modern apartment buildings, new roads, numerous overhead utilities and vegetation. Most recently, a Costco and other commercial buildings were erected southeast of the Fort Lincoln knoll on the site of what was once the National Training School for Boys. These new buildings are visible from the knoll but the viewshed from this area was already compromised through modern intrusions.

The Boundary Stones of Washington, D.C. adjacent to the APE (Stone NE 6 and NE 7) are located along Eastern Avenue; one is northwest of the project parcel and one is southeast. Stone NE 6 is located at 3601 Eastern Avenue near its intersection with 34th Street and northwest of the project area. The stone is in the front yard of a private dwelling and faces Eastern Avenue to the northeast. Stone NE 7 is within the boundaries of Fort Lincoln Cemetery. Both stones are technically in the State of Maryland. Neither stone is visible from the project area, as the area between the two stones and the development parcel contains modern homes, recent commercial buildings, and vegetation.

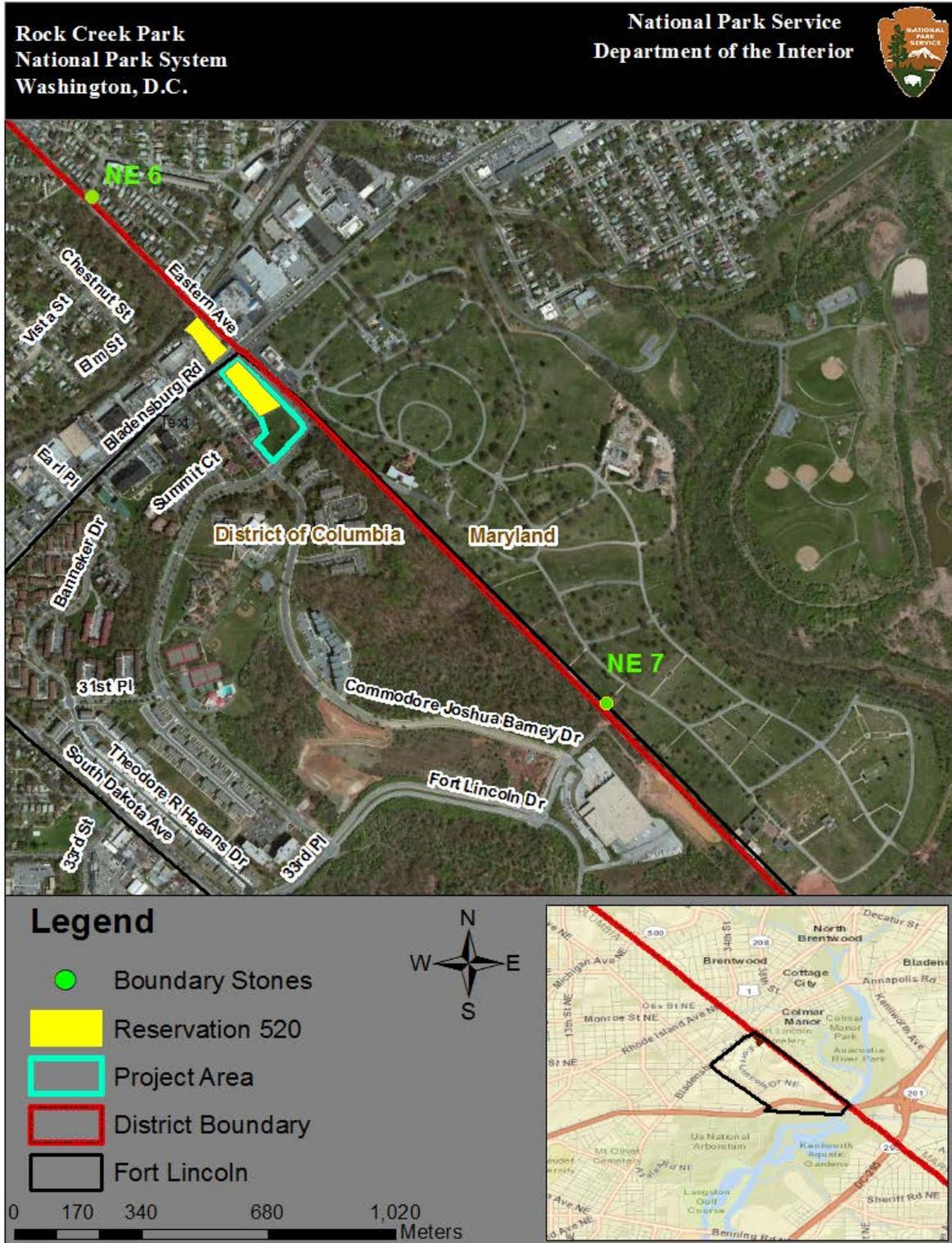


Figure 6: Project Area and Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes

### **3.6 SOCIOECONOMICS**

#### Demographic Indicators

The Project Area is in Census Tract 90, which encompasses the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. This tract had a population of 2,732 in 2010 while all other tracts in the District had an average population of 3,201. Census Tract 90 experienced a 16 percent increase in population from 2000 to 2010, whereas all other tracts in the District had a 5.2 percent average increase (Neighborhood Info D.C., 2011).

Fort Lincoln neighborhood's 2010 population was classified as 89 percent African American (2,431 residents), 4.1 percent Caucasian (113 residents), 0.2 percent American Indian and Alaska Native (6 residents), 2.5 percent Asian (68 residents), 1.1 percent some other race (30 residents), and 3.1 percent two or more races (84 residents). Additionally, 2.8 percent or 76 residents also identify as Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census, 2010b).

#### Housing Indicators

Census Tract 90 has 1,533 households. The classifications of these households are family (31.9 percent or 496 households) and non-family (68.1 percent or 1,057 households). The average household size is 1.64 persons per household, and the average family size is 2.73 persons per household (U.S. Census, 2010b).

Of Census Tract 90's 1,646 housing units, 94.3 percent (1,533) are occupied. Owners reside in 39.7 percent or 616 housing units, and 60.3 percent or 937 housing units are renter-occupied (U.S. Census, 2010b).

#### Economic Indicators

The Fort Lincoln neighborhood has seen positive economic growth between 2000 and 2010. Census Tract 90 went from 10 percent unemployed in 2000 to 3.3 percent of the population being unemployed in 2010. Census Tract 90 has nearly three times less unemployment than the District's 2010 average of 9.4 percent, which is down from the District's 2000 average of 11 percent (U.S. Census, 2010c; Neighborhood Info D.C., 2011).

Median household income for the neighborhood, which considers all households, is \$39,653, which is lower than the District's average of \$58,526. Median family income only accounts for households with two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption. The median family income for the neighborhood is \$79,583, which is higher than the District's \$70,883. Census Tract 90's average household income was \$61,644 while the District's was \$91,778 in the 2006 to 2010 period. The District had 257, 317 total households in the same period. Fort Lincoln's percentage of people whose income is below the poverty level is 16.9 percent, which is below the District's 18.5 percent (U.S. Census, 2010c). The median home value in the Fort Lincoln neighborhood is \$317,200, which is lower than the District's \$440,500 (U.S. Census, 2010d).

## 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an evaluation of the potential effects or impacts of each of the alternatives on the resources described in Chapter 3 “Affected Environment”. This chapter also includes definitions of impact thresholds (i.e., negligible, minor, moderate, and major), methods used to analyze impacts, and the methods used for determining and analyzing cumulative impacts. As required by NEPA regulations, a summary of the environmental consequences for each alternative is provided in Table 1.

### 4.2 GENERAL METHODOLOGY FOR ESTABLISHING IMPACT THRESHOLDS AND MEASURING EFFECTS BY RESOURCE

The analysis of impacts follows CEQ guidelines and Director’s Order 12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making* (NPS, 2001) and is based on the underlying goal of supporting forest regeneration and providing the long-term protection, conservation, and restoration of native species and cultural landscapes at Rock Creek Park. The action alternative is compared to the no action alternative, or baseline condition of the project area, to determine impacts to resource topics. In the absence of quantitative data, best professional judgment applicable to region, setting, and actions being considered was used.

As described in Chapter 1, the NPS created an interdisciplinary team to provide important input to the impact analysis. For each resource topic addressed in this chapter the applicable analysis methods are discussed, including assumptions and the impact intensity threshold.

Determining impact thresholds is a key component in applying NPS *Management Policies* and Director’s Order 12. These thresholds provide the reader with an idea of the intensity of a given impact on a specific resource. The impact threshold is determined primarily by comparing the effect to a relevant standard or baseline based on applicable or relevant/appropriate regulations or guidance, scientific literature and research, or best professional judgment. Because definitions of intensity vary by impact topic, intensity definitions are provided separately for each impact topic analyzed in this document. Intensity definitions are provided throughout the analysis for negligible, minor, moderate, and major impacts. In all cases, the impact thresholds are defined for adverse impacts. Beneficial impacts are addressed qualitatively.

Potential impacts of all alternatives are described in terms of type (beneficial or adverse), context, duration (short- or long-term), and intensity (negligible, minor, moderate, and major). Definitions of these descriptors include:

- **Beneficial:** A positive change in the condition or appearance of the resource or a change that moves the resource toward a desired condition.
- **Adverse:** A change that declines, degrades, and/or moves the resource away from a desired condition or detracts from its appearance or condition.
- **Context:** Context is the affected environment within which an impact would occur, such as local, park-wide, regional, global, affected interests, society as whole, or any combination of these. Context is variable and depends on the circumstances involved

with each impact topic. As such, the impact analysis determines the context, not vice versa.

- **Duration:** The duration of the impact is described as short-term or long-term. Duration is variable with each impact topic; therefore, definitions related to each impact topic are provided in the specific impact analysis narrative.
- **Intensity:** Because definitions of impact intensity (negligible, minor, moderate, and major) vary by impact topic, intensity definitions are provided separately for each impact topic analyzed.

### **4.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ANALYSIS METHOD**

NEPA regulations require the assessment of cumulative impacts in the decision-making process for Federal projects. Cumulative impacts are defined as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or Non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions” (40 CFR 1508.7). As stated in the CEQ handbook “Considering Cumulative Effects” (CEQ, 1997), cumulative impacts need to be analyzed in terms of the specific resource, ecosystem, and human community being affected and should focus on effects that are truly meaningful. Cumulative impacts are considered for all alternatives, including the no action alternative.

Cumulative impacts were determined by combining the impacts of the alternative being considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Other ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future projects and plans at Rock Creek Park and, if applicable, the surrounding area were identified. Table 4 summarizes the actions that could affect the various resources at the park as well as the plans and policies of both the park and surrounding jurisdictions. A list of these actions follows Table 4.

The analysis of cumulative impacts was accomplished using a four-step process:

1. Identify the resources that could be affected, which include the resources addressed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.
2. Identify the appropriate boundary for each of these topics.
3. Determine which past, present, and future actions would impact these resources.
4. Summarize the impacts of these cumulative actions plus the impacts of the proposed action to come up with a total cumulative impact.

The analysis for each of these resources can be seen below in Section 4.4 “Impact Analysis”.

**TABLE 4: CUMULATIVE IMPACT SCENARIO TABLE**

<b>Impact Topic</b>	<b>Geographic Study Area</b>	<b>Past Actions</b>	<b>Present Actions</b>	<b>Future Actions</b>
Soils	Area between the following road segments: Fort Lincoln Drive to 33 <sup>rd</sup> Place; Eastern Avenue from the intersection of Fort Lincoln Drive to Monroe Street NE; and Bladensburg Road from South Dakota Avenue to Eastern Avenue	Dakota Crossing  Wesley House	Shops at Dakota Crossing  Villages of Dakota Crossing	Fort Lincoln Multi-Family Project  Banneker Project
Transportation	Area between the following road segments: Fort Lincoln Drive to 33 <sup>rd</sup> Place; Eastern Avenue from the intersection of Fort Lincoln Drive to Monroe Street NE; and Bladensburg Road from South Dakota Avenue to Eastern Avenue	Dakota Crossing  Wesley House	Shops at Dakota Crossing  Villages of Dakota Crossing	Fort Lincoln Multi-Family Project  Banneker Project
Land Use	Fort Lincoln neighborhood	Dakota Crossing  Wesley House	Shops at Dakota Crossing  Villages of Dakota Crossing	Fort Lincoln Multi-Family Project  Banneker Project
Cultural Resources – Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes	Project Area and areas to the west across from Bladensburg Road	Dakota Crossing  Wesley House	Shops at Dakota Crossing  Villages of Dakota Crossing	Fort Lincoln Multi-Family Project  Banneker Project
Socioeconomics	Fort Lincoln neighborhood	Dakota Crossing  Wesley House	Shops at Dakota Crossing  Villages of Dakota Crossing	Fort Lincoln Multi-Family Project  Banneker Project

### Past Projects

- Dakota Crossing – Project involved the construction of 209 townhomes at market price on a 22 acre site.
- Wesley House – Project involved the construction of 120 senior living units.
- Regional Stormwater Facility – Serves the retail center, villages, and multifamily project phase I of Villages of Dakota Crossing (first 85 of 334 townhomes). Total area of project was 5 acres.

### Present Projects

- The Shops at Dakota Crossing – This project involves the construction of 430,000 square feet of retail on 44 acres of land, with the recently opened Costco.
- The Villages at Dakota Crossing – Phases II and III involving the construction of 334 townhomes in three phases. This development consists of both market rate and workforce affordable (80% AMI) priced Units.

### Future Projects

- Fort-Lincoln Multi-Family Project – This project involves the construction of more than 300 affordable work housing apartments.
- Banneker Project – Involves the construction of an unknown number of townhomes on 5 acres of land.

## **4.4 IMPACT ANALYSIS**

### **4.4.1 SOILS**

#### *Methodology and Assumptions*

Potential impacts to soils are assessed to determine the impacts of the proposed development on natural undisturbed soils, and the potential for soil erosion. It presents an analysis of existing conditions (no action) and expected future conditions with the proposed development (proposed alternative).

#### *Study Area*

The geographic study area for soils is located between the following road segments: Fort Lincoln Drive to 33<sup>rd</sup> Place; Eastern Avenue from the intersection of Fort Lincoln Drive to Monroe Street NE; and Bladensburg Road from South Dakota Avenue to Eastern Avenue.

#### *Impact Thresholds*

*Negligible:* Impacts to physiographic resources would be below or at the lower levels of detection. Any impacts to soils would be slight.

*Minor:* Impacts to soils would be detectable. Impacts to undisturbed areas would be small. Mitigation would be needed to offset adverse impacts and would be relatively simple to implement and would likely be successful.

*Moderate:* Impacts to soils would be readily apparent and result in changes to the soil over a relatively wide area. Mitigation measures would be necessary to offset adverse impacts and would likely be successful.

*Major:* Impacts to soils would be readily apparent and substantially change the character of the soils over a large area both in and out of the Park. Mitigation measures necessary to offset adverse impacts would be needed, extensive, and their success would not be guaranteed.

*Duration:* Short-term impacts would occur during the implementation of the alternative; long-term impacts extend beyond implementation of the alternative.

### ***No Action Alternative***

#### Analysis

Under the no action alternative, the study area would remain unchanged. Soils would continue to be used in their current conditions. Fill material and debris in the shallow layers of the soil would remain. Natural erosion would continue at its current rate. Impacts to soil would be negligible.

#### Cumulative Impacts

The past, present, or future construction of retail centers or dwelling units within or near the study area would increase pedestrian traffic along the following road segments: Fort Lincoln Drive to 33<sup>rd</sup> Place, Eastern Avenue from the intersection of Fort Lincoln Drive to Monroe Street NE, and Bladensburg Road from South Dakota Avenue to Eastern Avenue. Under the no action alternative, changes to the study area would not be expected, except for a nominal increase in cut-through pedestrian traffic. These impacts, in combination with the negligible impacts caused by the no action alternative, would result in negligible cumulative impacts.

#### Conclusion

This alternative would result in negligible impacts to soils. Cumulative impacts from development in the area would have negligible adverse effects and would include a slight increase in cut-through pedestrian traffic.

### ***Alternative 2– NPS Preferred Alternative***

#### Analysis

Under this alternative, construction would consist of approximately 50 stacked townhomes in four separate building units. These units would need to be connected to existing water, sanitary, and stormwater sewers. As part of the development, shallow soils would be removed and replaced with fill suitable for slab on-grade building. Thoroughfares would be added by the construction of retaining walls, notably along Fort Lincoln Drive along the southeast side of the Project Area.

During the construction of the proposed townhomes, soils would be exposed, creating an increased potential for soil erosion. To minimize soil erosion, an erosion and sediment control plan would be developed and approved by the District (VIKA, 2009) pursuant to the District's Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Program (District of Columbia, 1988a). The erosion and

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sediment control plan would outline Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be implemented during construction and would also look to reduce erosion of exposed soils. Adverse impacts from soil erosion would be short-term and minor due to the size of the Project Area and the implementation of a sediment control plan during construction. Also, impervious surfaces within the study area would increase, minimizing natural soil erosion. The grading of Site slopes and the construction of retaining walls would further minimize natural erosion and decrease the sediment inputs from the Fort Lincoln area. Under this alternative, impacts to soils would result in long-term adverse minor impacts.

### Cumulative Impacts

The past, present, or future construction of retail centers or dwelling units within or near the study area would contribute to the short-term increase of soil erosion from construction sites, and the topographical changes from project grading operations. These increases would be short-term and moderate and would be minimized by the proper preparation, implementation, and adherence to project specific erosion and sediment control plans. Upon completion of the projects, soil erosion would be minimized due to soils being converted to impervious surfaces. The decrease in natural erosion would decrease the sediment inputs from the Fort Lincoln area. These impacts, in combination with the long-term minor impacts caused by the proposed action and from project grading would result in both long-term and short-term moderate adverse cumulative impacts to soil.

### Conclusion

This alternative would result in short-term adverse minor impacts to soils, primarily due to erosion from construction activities. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long- and short-term moderate adverse impacts to soil, primarily due to erosion from construction activities.

## **4.4.2 TRANSPORTATION**

### ***Methodology and Assumptions***

Potential impacts to transportation are assessed to determine the impacts of the proposed development on the surrounding roadway network including traffic and public transportation. It presents an analysis of existing conditions (no action) and future conditions with the proposed development (proposed alternative). Analysis of possible impacts to the roadway network was based on a transportation impact study conducted for this project and a review of existing literature.

### ***Study Area***

The geographic Study Area for transportation is located between the following road segments: Fort Lincoln Drive to 33<sup>rd</sup> Place; Eastern Avenue from the intersection of Fort Lincoln Drive to Monroe Street NE; and Bladensburg Road from South Dakota Avenue to Eastern Avenue.

### ***Impact Thresholds***

*Negligible:* Impacts to transportation resources would be at or below the current volume of traffic and impacts to public transportation would be at or below current levels.

*Minor:* Impacts to transportation would include a small increase in traffic that does not require major road repair or expansion of existing roadways or facilities. Changes to public transportation would be small and visible, but would not limit user access.

*Moderate:* An increase in traffic would be obvious and result in a moderate change to the flow of traffic. Major road repair and/or expansion of existing roadways or facilities would not be expected. An increase in public transportation users would occur, causing transportation users to choose other sources of transportation.

*Major:* Increase in traffic would be large and would upset the normal flow of traffic. Major road repairs and/or the expansion of existing roadways or facilities would be expected. The expansion of public transportation facilities would also be needed.

*Duration:* Short-term impacts would occur during the implementation of the alternative; long-term impacts would extend beyond the implementation of the alternative.

### ***No Action Alternative***

#### Analysis

Under the no action alternative, the study area would remain unchanged and the roadway network would continue to be used in its current conditions. Traffic would be at or below current traffic volumes and traffic flow would remain the same. Additionally, impacts to public transportation would be at or below current levels. Overall, impacts to transportation would be negligible.

#### Cumulative Impacts

The past, present, or future construction of retail centers or dwelling units within or near the study area have and would increase traffic along the following road segments: Fort Lincoln Drive to 33<sup>rd</sup> Place, Eastern Avenue from the intersection of Fort Lincoln Drive to Monroe Street NE, and Bladensburg Road from South Dakota Avenue to Eastern Avenue (Apex, 2008e). Additionally, these projects would increase the number of people using public transportation. The increase in traffic from these projects is expected to have a minor effect on normal traffic flow, major road repairs, and existing roadways or facilities. Changes to public transportation would be visible but small and would not noticeably limit user access. Cumulative impacts from past, present, and future construction projects would result in long-term minor adverse cumulative impacts.

#### Conclusion

Under this alternative, impacts to transportation would be negligible. Cumulative impacts would be long-term minor and adverse. The increase in traffic from cumulative impacts would be small and would not require major road repair or expansion of existing roadways or facilities. Changes

to public transportation due to cumulative impacts would be small and visible and would not limit user access.

### ***Alternative 2 – NPS Preferred Alternative***

#### Analysis

A transportation impact study was completed for the Concordia Group by Wells & Associates for this Alternative (Appendix E). While this study assumed 56 stacked townhomes would be built, the plans have since been altered to construct approximately 50 homes on the property. The estimated increases in population and transportation trips calculated in this study are, therefore, somewhat higher than would actually occur if Alternative 2 were selected.

According to the transportation study, car traffic under this alternative would increase by an estimated total of 29 a.m. peak hour trips and 33 p.m. peak hour trips. An estimated 45 percent of the Project Area-generated traffic would approach/depart the Project Area to/from the southwest via Bladensburg Road, while approximately 10 percent would approach/depart the Project Area to/from the southeast via Fort Lincoln Drive. Approximately 30 percent of Project Area-generated traffic would approach/depart the site to/from the northwest via Eastern Avenue, while an estimated 15 percent would approach/depart the site to/from the northeast on Bladensburg Road. The estimated small increase in traffic would be spread throughout the surrounding roads resulting in minor adverse effects on normal traffic flow, road repairs, existing roadways, and facilities serving the area.

The study also assessed impacts to public transportation services. The study estimated that 10 percent of trips created by this alternative would be via public transportation, adding three morning peak hour trips and four afternoon peak hour trips to local public transportation services (APEX, 2008e). Due to the number of bus stops and routes which serve the area, changes to public transportation would be small and would not limit user access. Under this alternative, impacts to transportation would be long-term and minor.

#### Cumulative Impacts

The past, present, or future construction of retail centers or dwelling units within or near the study area would increase traffic along the following road segments: Fort Lincoln Drive to 33<sup>rd</sup> Place, Eastern Avenue from the intersection of Fort Lincoln Drive to Monroe Street NE, and Bladensburg Road from South Dakota Avenue to Eastern Avenue. Additionally, these projects would increase the number of people using public transportation. Though the increase in traffic would be obvious and change traffic flow, the need for major road repairs or expansions of existing roadways or facilities would not be expected. The number of public transportation users would also increase, causing public transportation users to choose other sources of transportation. Under this alternative, cumulative impacts would be moderate and long-term. The proposed project would contribute a small percentage of the total a.m. and p.m. peak hour traffic volumes. Wells & Associates estimated that the total amount of traffic increase from the proposed project would account for less than one percent of the total a.m. and p.m. peak hour traffic volumes at the Bladensburg Road/Eastern Avenue Intersection in 2010 (Apex, 2008e).

## Conclusion

Under this alternative, impacts to transportation would be long-term and minor. The increase in traffic would be noticeable but small and would not require major road repairs or expansion of existing roadways or facilities. Changes to public transportation would also be small and would not limit user access. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long-term moderate adverse impacts to transportation.

### **4.4.3 LAND USE**

#### ***Methodology and Assumptions***

Impacts to land use were determined by considering the effect of existing conditions and the proposed construction of the dwelling units on existing and future land use. The impacts of the proposed land transfer would affect land use by causing a noticeable change in existing land use to the Project Area and surrounding area.

#### ***Study Area***

The geographic study area for land use includes the Fort Lincoln neighborhood and several properties along Bladensburg Road (see Figure 4).

#### ***Impact Thresholds***

*Negligible:* There would no noticeable changes in existing land use.

*Minor:* Impacts to land use would be permanent, small, and visible. Changes would conflict with Federal, State, regional, or local plans. Changes would not conflict with surrounding land uses.

*Moderate:* Impacts to land use would be readily apparent and result in a permanent change to existing land use. Changes would conflict with surrounding land uses and results in a noticeable change to Federal, State, regional, or local plans.

*Major:* Impacts to land use would be permanent and result in a substantial change to existing land use. Changes would conflict with Federal, State, regional, or local plans as well as with surrounding land uses in a way that degrades the overall character of the neighborhood.

*Duration:* Short-term impacts would occur during the implementation of the alternative; long-term impacts would extend beyond the implementation of the alternative.

### ***No Action Alternative***

#### Analysis

Under the no action alternative, jurisdictional rights would stay with the District and NPS would retain ownership of the land. There would be no change to existing land use and the 50 stacked townhomes would not be constructed. The no action alternative would conflict with the District's land use policies, specifically Policy LU-1.4.1: Infill Development, Policy-1.4.2: Long-term Vacant Sites, and Policy LU 1.4.3: Zoning of Infill Sites because each of these policies promotes or ensures either:

1. The development of vacant lands;
2. The reuse of vacant lots that have historically been difficult to develop; or
3. That the zoning of vacant infill sites is compatible with the prevailing development pattern in surrounding neighborhoods.

These policies are described in more detail above in Chapter 1: Purpose and Need.

This alternative would also not fulfill the objective of the URP to create “an attractive and racially, socially, economically, and functionally inclusive community”. This Alternative would not conflict with the NPS 2004 Fort Circle Management Plan, and the NPS parcel would continue to serve as a connecting corridor zone in the CWDW system. Under this alternative, adverse impacts to the District's land use goals would be long-term and minor, while impacts to NPS land use goals would be negligible.

#### Cumulative Impacts

The past, present, and future construction of retail centers or dwelling units within or near the study area would change land use within the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. These changes would result in a permanent change in land use that is small and visible, but does not conflict with surrounding land uses. These impacts, in combination with the long-term minor impacts caused by the proposed action would result in long-term minor adverse cumulative impacts.

#### Conclusion

This alternative would result in long-term minor adverse impacts to the District's land use goals, and negligible impacts to NPS land use goals. Permanent changes in land use are not expected and this alternative does not conflict with surrounding land uses. This alternative would conflict with the District's land use policies and the Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Plan. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long-term minor adverse impacts. Any permanent changes would be visible but small.

### ***Alternative 2– NPS Preferred Alternative***

#### Analysis

Under this alternative land use would change from parks and open space to medium-density residential. The development would require zoning relief from the Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA) for special exception approval. Pursuant to Section 353 (the remaining 26 units are

located in the R-5-D Zone District, and are not subject to Section 353), the developer filed BZA Application 17741(Appendix G) for special exception for the construction of residential units in two buildings, consisting of stacked townhouse condominiums, on the portion of the property that is located in the R-5-A Zone District. In addition, the Applicant is seeking special exception approval on the entire property in order to construct more than one building on a single record lot pursuant to 11 DCMR § 2516. The Applicant is seeking variance relief from Subsection 2516.4 regarding the requirement that each theoretical lot satisfy all bulk requirements. The proposed lots in the R-5-A Zone District do not satisfy the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) requirement (Section 402). The proposed project was approved by the District's BZA on February 2, 2010 (District of Columbia, 2010).

This alternative is consistent with the District's land use policies, specifically Policy LU-1.4.1: Infill Development, Policy-1.4.2: Long-term Vacant Sites, and Policy LU 1.4.3: Zoning of Infill Sites. This alternative also fulfills the Fort Lincoln URP objective. Additionally, this alternative would have a permanent change in land use that is small and visible. While this alternative may conflict with the National Park Service's 2004 Fort Circle Parks Management Plan, an area of NPS land would remain as an open space adjacent to the proposed 50 stacked townhomes. Also, under the proposed project a portion of the Project Area would remain as green space an historical signage would be installed, connecting this area to other areas identified in the 2004 Fort Circle Parks Management Plan. Therefore, this project would not be in conflict with surrounding land uses. Under this alternative, adverse impacts to land use would be long-term and minor.

#### Cumulative Impacts

The past, present, or future construction of retail centers or dwelling units within or near the study area would cause land use to change within the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. Changes in land use would be permanent, small, and visible. Land use changes are not expected to conflict with surrounding land uses. These impacts, in combination with the long-term minor impacts caused by the proposed action would result in long-term minor adverse cumulative impacts.

#### Conclusion

This alternative would result in long-term minor adverse impacts to land use. Changes would be permanent, small, and visible, and would not conflict with surrounding land uses. This alternative may conflict with the National Park Service's 2004 Fort Circle Parks Management Plan, but the Project Area that would remain as green space would connect this area to other areas identified in the 2004 Fort Circle Parks Management Plan. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long-term minor adverse impacts.

#### **4.4.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES – HISTORIC STRUCTURES AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES**

##### ***Methodology and Assumptions***

Only impacts on historic properties are a potential concern for this project. The analyses of impacts on cultural resources that are presented in this section respond to the requirements of both NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA. NPS has concurrently completed Section 106 compliance process with the NEPA process to satisfy the Section 106 requirements.

Impacts on cultural resources were identified and evaluated by (1) determining the APE; (2) identifying cultural resources present in the APE that are listed in or eligible to be listed in the NRHP (i.e., historic properties); (3) applying the criteria of adverse effect to affected historic properties; and (4) considering ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects. An Assessment of Effects to determine whether the transfer of the parcel out of federal ownership constitutes an adverse effect has been completed and was sent to the DC SHPO on March 20, 2013 (Appendix A).

Under the implementing regulations for Section 106, a determination of either adverse effect or no adverse effect must also be made for affected historic properties. An adverse effect occurs whenever an impact alters, directly or indirectly, any characteristic of a cultural resource that qualifies it for inclusion in the NRHP (e.g., diminishing the integrity of the resource's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association). Adverse effects also include reasonably foreseeable effects caused by the proposal that would occur later, be farther removed in distance, or be cumulative (36 CFR 800.5). A determination of no adverse effect means there is either no effect or that the effect would not diminish, in any way, the characteristic of the cultural resource that qualify it for inclusion in the NRHP.

CEQ regulations and DO-12 of the NPS also call for a discussion of the appropriateness of mitigation, as well as an analysis of how effective the mitigation would be in reducing the intensity of a potential impact: for example, reducing the intensity of an impact from major to moderate or minor. Any resultant reduction in intensity of impact due to mitigation, however, is an estimate of the effectiveness of mitigation under NEPA only. Cultural resources are nonrenewable resources and adverse impacts generally consume, diminish, or destroy the original historic material or form, resulting in a loss in the integrity of the resource that can never be recovered. Therefore, although actions determined to have an adverse effect under Section 106 may be mitigated, the effect remains adverse.

The NPS guidance for evaluating impacts, DO-12, (NPS, 2001) requires that impact assessment be scientific, accurate, and quantified to the extent possible. For cultural resources, it is rarely possible to measure impacts in quantifiable terms; therefore, the impact analysis must rely heavily on the professional judgment of resource experts.

The impact analysis is an assessment of the effect of the undertaking (implementation of the alternatives) on NRHP-eligible or listed cultural resources only, based upon the Advisory Council's criteria of adverse effects.

### ***Study Area***

The Study Area for cultural resources is the same as the APE as described in the "Affected Environment" Chapter.

### ***Impact Thresholds***

*Negligible:* The impact is at the lowest level of detection with neither adverse nor beneficial consequences. For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *no adverse effect*.

*Minor:* Alteration of a pattern(s) or feature(s) of a historic district or structure listed on or eligible for the NRHP would not diminish the integrity of a character-defining feature(s) or the overall integrity of the historic property. For purposes of Section 106, the determination would be *no adverse effect*.

*Moderate:* The impact would alter a character-defining feature(s) of a historic district or structure and diminish the overall integrity of that feature(s) of the historic property. For purposes of Section 106, the determination of effect would be *adverse effect*, but one that could be fairly easily avoided, minimized, or mitigated through a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the NPS and applicable SHPO and, if necessary, the ACHP in accordance with 36 CFR 800.6(b).

*Major:* The impact would alter character-defining feature(s) of the historic district or structure and severely diminish the integrity of that feature(s) and the overall integrity of the historic property. For purposes of Section 106 the determination of effect would be *adverse effect* and would present serious difficulty to avoid, minimize, or mitigate through an Agreement Document.

*Duration:* Short-term impacts are equivalent to the period of construction; Long-term impacts last beyond the period of construction.

### ***No Action Alternative***

#### Analysis

Under the no action alternative, jurisdictional responsibility would stay with the District, NPS would retain ownership, and the development of the approximately 50 stacked townhomes would not occur. The entire parcel would remain in the Fort Circle Park System and the characteristics that render Fort Circle Park System eligible for the NRHP would not be diminished. Long-term, negligible, adverse impacts to cultural resources inside the APE would result from the no action alternative, specifically to the Fort Circle Park System. Historical signage would not be placed in this area and the open space parcel that is remaining under NPS ownership and the District's jurisdiction would not be connected to CWDW trail system by signage. There would be no effect to cultural resources outside of the APE.

#### Cumulative Impacts

Past construction of retail centers or dwelling units have compromised the viewshed integrity of the cultural resources found within the APE. Bladensburg Road is lined with modern commercial structures, overhead utilities, large signage, and large swaths of pavement. Little green space can be found along the corridor in general, with the exception of the NPS-owned land, and the integrity of setting, feeling, and association has all been diminished through decades of

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development. Present and future construction projects could diminish the viewshed further, but they would not diminish the characteristics that render these sites eligible for listing in the NRHP. Cumulative Impacts under this alternative would be long-term and negligible to minor. Future projects would have to comply with the NHPA and consultation would take place with the DC SHPO.

### Conclusion

This alternative would result in long-term negligible adverse impacts to cultural resources found within the APE. Changes would be at the lowest level of detection with neither adverse nor beneficial consequences. There would be no effect to cultural resources outside of the APE. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long-term minor adverse impacts.

### ***Alternative 2– NPS Preferred Alternative***

#### Analysis

Transferring the land parcel out of federal ownership would have a long-term minor adverse impact on historical proprieties within the APE and the proposed project would constitute a no adverse effect under Section 106 of the NHPA. The construction of approximately 50 stacked townhomes on a portion of the project area would alter the property's integrity of setting and feeling, but as described in Chapter 3, the viewshed of this area has already been diminished through decades of development. Late-twentieth century residential properties with similar scale and massing are located south of the development lot, and additional multifamily dwelling units have been built across the Fort Lincoln Area. Though the construction of approximately 50 stacked townhomes would alter the property's integrity of setting and feeling, it is not expected that the undertaking would diminish the characteristics that render Fort Circle Park System eligible for the NRHP.

The property was acquired with the intention of creating a scenic drive which evolved into a hiker-biker trail concept. This location near the Anacostia River was to be the northeastern most "stop" along the trail (Handly, 1996). To minimize any adverse effects to cultural resources, a portion of the Project Area closest to Bladensburg Road would remain under NPS ownership and the District's jurisdiction and would remain as green space. This would maintain a visual connection between the green space on this lot and the NPS-owned land on the west side of Bladensburg Road. In addition, historical signage would be erected in this area highlighting several aspects of local historical importance, including the War of 1812 Battle of Bladensburg, the Civil War Fort Lincoln, the postbellum National Training School for Boys, and the evolution of 1960s–1970s FLNT. Given these parameters, a portion of the property would continue to be used in the manner for which it was purchased in 1934 by the NPS. Such a use also follows the NPS's Fort Circle Parks Management Plan, calling for a "Connecting Corridor Zone" to be "made up mainly of small parcels of manicured lawn and trees maintained as green space" (NPS, 2004).

The Boundary Stones of Washington, D.C. are located just outside of the project APE. Neither stone is visible from the Project Area, as the area between the two stones and the development parcel contains modern homes, recent commercial buildings, and vegetation. The proposed action would not alter the characteristics that render this resource eligible for the NRHP and the

proposed project would have no effect on these resources. The DC SHPO concurred with the finding of no adverse effect on historic properties on May 10, 2013 (Appendix A).

### Cumulative Impacts

Past construction of retail centers or dwelling units have compromised the viewshed integrity of the cultural resources found within the APE. Bladensburg Road is lined with modern commercial structures, overhead utilities, large signage, and large swaths of pavement. Little green space can be found along the corridor in general, with the exception of the NPS-owned land, and the integrity of setting, feeling, and association has all been diminished through decades of development. Present and future construction projects within the APE could diminish the viewshed further, but they would not diminish the characteristics that render these sites eligible under the NHPA. The portion of the Project Area closest to Bladensburg Road would remain under NPS ownership and the District's jurisdiction. This land would remain as open space which would maintain a visual connection between the green space on this lot and the NPS-owned land. Cumulative Impacts under this alternative would be long-term and minor. Future projects would have to comply with the NHPA and consultation would take place with the DC SHPO.

### Conclusion

This alternative would result in long-term minor adverse impacts to cultural resources found within the APE. There would be no effect to cultural resources outside of the APE. Impacts would alter the feature(s) of a historic district or structure listed the NRHP but the proposed project would not diminish the integrity of a character-defining feature(s) or the overall integrity of the historic property. In addition, historical signage would be erected in this area highlighting several aspects of local historical importance as described above. For purposes of Section 106, the determination would be a *no adverse* effect. Cumulatively, this alternative would contribute to long-term minor adverse impacts.

## **4.4.5 SOCIOECONOMICS**

### ***Methodology and Assumptions***

Impacts to socioeconomics were determined by considering the effect of the proposed development's construction and operation on existing and future socioeconomic conditions. It presents an analysis of existing conditions (no action) and future conditions with the proposed development (proposed alternative). Because the origin of the proposed townhome buyers are not currently known, the analysis assumed all would move to the Fort Lincoln neighborhood from other parts of the District or further. This serves as a high estimate of the socioeconomic impact scenario.

### ***Study Area***

The geographic study area for socioeconomics is the Fort Lincoln neighborhood.

### ***Impact Thresholds***

*Negligible:* Effects to the socioeconomic environment would be below or at the level of detection.

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*Minor:* Effects to the socioeconomic environment would be small but measurable. Mitigation measures may be necessary to offset potential adverse impacts, and any such measures would be relatively simple and would likely be successful.

*Moderate:* Effects to the socioeconomic environment would be readily apparent. Mitigation measures may be necessary to offset potential adverse impacts, and any such measures may be extensive but likely successful.

*Major:* Effects to the socioeconomic environment would be apparent. Extensive mitigation would be necessary to offset any adverse impacts, and the success of which could not be guaranteed.

*Duration:* Short-term impacts would extend less than two years beyond the time of the project implementation. Long-term impacts would likely last more than two years after implementation of the alternative.

### ***No Action Alternative***

#### Analysis

Under the no action alternative, jurisdictional responsibility would stay with the District, NPS would retain ownership, and the development of the 50 stacked townhomes would not occur. There would be no increase in opportunities for residents to find affordable communities. The no action alternative would result in negligible impacts on the socioeconomics of the area.

#### Cumulative Impacts

The past, present, and future construction of retail centers and dwelling units near the Study Area would affect the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. Retail development would affect the local economy by providing local residents with a possibility for jobs. Housing developments could increase the population of the Fort Lincoln neighborhood if the residents migrate from another area, which could impact the economic and demographic composition of the neighborhood. As shown in Table 4, other affordable housing developments are at various stages of implementation. The cumulative socioeconomic impacts would be long-term and beneficial as surrounding areas increase housing and employment opportunities in the region.

#### Conclusion

This alternative would have negligible impacts. Long-term and beneficial cumulative impacts would occur from past, present, and future activities in the neighborhood that would contribute to the local economy and the economic composition of the area.

### ***Alternative 2– NPS Preferred Alternative***

#### Analysis

The construction of approximately 50 stacked townhomes would represent employment and money spent in the community. However, even if all of the labor and materials were local, this beneficial impact would not likely be noticeable because of the low unemployment in the community and the short construction period. Further, it is unlikely that a substantial amount of

the materials purchased or newly hired labor would be available from the Fort Lincoln neighborhood given its size and industries. The suppliers of materials and labor would likely be able to accommodate the project's demand without major expansions or hiring given the project size. Further, the workers would likely live in the area or commute to work for such a short duration project instead of moving to the area. Therefore, while the proposed action's construction would have beneficial socioeconomic impacts, these impacts would not likely be felt throughout the community or the region at large.

The new residents of the 50 stacked townhomes would result in some money spent in the community on everything from plumbers to paint. However, the proposed project would only add approximately 50 housing units, which represents a three percent increase in housing units in Census Tract 90. Also, this project would be completed rapidly. The projected increase in residents would likely have some beneficial impacts, depending on the portion of maintenance services and supplies purchased within the community. The economic benefits of the new residents would likely be spread throughout the region rather than focused within the immediate area.

This impact analysis assumes that all of the new residents would move from outside the Fort Lincoln neighborhood and that each housing unit would have 3 people per household. Under this scenario, the project would represent an increase of 150 people, or a five percent increase in population for Census Tract 90. The actual impacts would be less as some portion of the new residents is expected to be from the local area. However, the increase in population would be accompanied by an increase in tax revenue, and this tax revenue should help offset the potential strain on community services from the increased population.

The proposed housing development includes workforce affordable housing as determined by the Inclusionary Zoning Regulations, which is designed to be affordable to certain income levels regardless of type of employment, with definitions ranging from 50% to 120% of Area Median Income (AMI). The proposed development would be affordable to those making 80 to 120 percent of area's existing median income. As such, the economic composition of the community would not be expected to change substantially. The Village at Dakota Crossing is another new housing community in the Fort Lincoln neighborhood (see Table 4), and it can provide an indication of what may occur with the proposed project. This impact analysis assumes the proposed project's new residents have the same average income as the Village at Dakota Crossing's condominium buyers, which is \$95,763 (Collins, 2012). Most of the Dakota Crossing buyers were single, so this impact analysis uses the District's 2006 to 2010 average household income of \$91,778 for the estimation of impacts (U.S. Census, 2010c). With all of these assumptions, the expected residents of the additional 50 stacked townhomes would change the average household income by less than a dollar. Utilizing Census Tract 90's average of \$61,644, this would represent less than a one percent increase in average household income (U.S. Census, 2010c). Therefore, the proposed action would not be expected to substantially change the economic composition of the area.

The increased supply of housing may change average neighborhood housing prices, but since a portion of the proposed houses are only available to a qualified segment of the population based on income, the impact should be reduced. Moreover, the site is located in an urban neighborhood

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with multiple nearby housing developments. Consequently, the proposed development would have long-term beneficial impacts on the economic composition of the area.

### Cumulative Impacts

The past, present, and future construction of retail centers and dwelling units within or near the Project Area would affect the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. Retail development would affect the local economy by providing the possibility of jobs for local residents. Housing developments could increase the population of the Fort Lincoln neighborhood, which may affect the racial, age, and economic composition of the area. Development in the area would have short-term beneficial and long-term beneficial impacts, with level of impact depending on the percent of local labor and materials used in the construction and operation of the development. The planned developments listed in Table 4 would create beneficial long-term cumulative impacts as the housing units would increase by approximately 60 percent and provide the possibility of additional jobs for local residents and goods and services bought throughout the community.

### Conclusion

Overall, this alternative would result in long-term beneficial impacts to socioeconomics. Long-term beneficial impacts would occur from the addition affordable housing. Cumulatively, this alternative would have short-term beneficial and long-term beneficial impacts, with level of impact depending on the percent of local labor and materials used in the construction and operation of the development. This project along with past, present, and future projects would contribute to the local economy and the economic composition of the area.

## 5.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

### District of Columbia and Federal Agency Coordination and Consultation

Coordination with D.C. and Federal agencies was conducted during the NEPA process to identify issues and/or concerns related to natural and cultural resources found within the Project Area, an administrative unit of the Rock Creek Park.

All consultations with the SHPO for D.C., as mandated in Section 106 of the NHPA, are occurring as part of the development of this EA. There are no structures or cultural landscape features listed on the NRHP located within the Project Area. The Project Area is a previously disturbed vacant lot and has little potential for archeological resources. The NPS initiated the Section 106 consultation process and briefly explained the project to the D.C. SHPO. The SHPO responded on May 10, 2013 and determined that the proposed project would have no “adverse effect” on historic properties and no further D.C. SHPO review or comment would be necessary (Appendix A).

In accordance with Section 7 of the ESA, the NPS accessed the USFWS IPaC website on August 29, 2013. The IPaC website confirmed that no federally proposed or listed threatened or endangered species are known to exist within the Project Area (See Appendix B).

### Public Outreach

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the NPS and FLNT Corporation held a public scoping meeting to initiate public involvement and solicit community feedback on the proposed action to transfer NPS property to HUD. The meeting was held from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Mount Horeb Baptist Church, 2914 Bladensburg Road NE, Washington, DC 20018. This location was chosen based on its proximity to the site and availability. Approximately 14 people attended.

The NPS and FLNT Corporation sent out 13 scoping letters to interested parties. A letter was also sent to the ANC on September 30, 2012 for distribution via email to residents of the Fort Lincoln neighborhood. In addition, notification of the meeting was posted at New Canaan Baptist Church, Unity Church, and Second New St. Paul Baptist Church. The public scoping meeting was also announced on the NPS’s PEPC website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ROCR>).

The public scoping meeting provided numerous methods by which the public could comment on the proposed action. At the meeting, NPS and FLNT Corporation engaged in open dialog with the public. Written comment forms were provided to be completed and returned at the meeting. If the attendee chose not to complete the form at the meeting, a return address was provided on the sheet to mail back to NPS at a later date. Interested parties could also send project comments through NPS’s PEPC website. Additionally, there were two drop-off locations for local residents at Fort Lincoln Realty and the Wesley House Apartments.

The public scoping comment period began on September 30, 2012 with the email notification of the public scoping meeting. The public scoping period concluded on December 3, 2012.

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## **6.0 LIST OF PREPARERS**

### National Park Service

Joel Gorder, Regional Environmental Coordinator and Lands Liaison National Capital Region

### APEX Companies, LLC

Jason Franti, Project Manager/Soil Scientist

Amanda Hren, Staff Scientist

### Dovetail Cultural Resource Group I, Inc.

Kerri S. Barile, Cultural Resource Specialist

### Mangi Environmental Group

George Hoddinott, Project Manager/Environmental Analyst

Carrie Oberholtzer, Project Manager/Environmental Analyst

Meghan Morse, Editor/Environmental Analyst

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## 8.0 ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

ACE	Army Corps of Engineers
AMI	Area Median Income
ANC	Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner
APE	Area of Potential Affect
APEX	APEX Companies, LLC
BMP	Best Management Practices
BZA	Board of Zoning Adjustments
CAA	Clean Air Act
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
DCRA	Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
District	District of Columbia
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWDW	Civil War Defenses of Washington
D.C.	District of Columbia
DMPED	Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
DO	Director's Order
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESIF	Environmental Screening form
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
FLM	Federal Land Manger

## *Acronyms and Glossary*

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FNLT	Fort Lincoln New Town
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
IPaC	Information, Planning, and Conservation System
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
mph	Miles Per Hour
msl	Mean Sea Level
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NCPC	National Capital Planning Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NO <sub>2</sub>	Nitrogen Dioxide
NPS	National Park Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O <sub>3</sub>	Ozone
OSHA	Occupational Health and Safety Administration
Park	Rock Creek Park
Pb	Lead
PEPC	Planning, Environment, and Public Comment
PM <sub>10</sub>	Particulate Matter Less than 10 Micrometers
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Particulate Matter Less than 2.5 Micrometers
RLA	Redevelopment Land Agency
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SO <sub>2</sub>	Sulfur Dioxide
TCP	Traditional Cultural Property
URP	Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Plan
USC	United States Code
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WPA                      Works Progress Administration

**Affected Environment** — The existing environment to be affected by a proposed action and alternatives.

**Workforce Affordable Housing** – Affordable housing for households with earned incomes between 80 -120 percent of the median income.

**Best Management Practices** — Methods that have been determined to be the most effective, practical means of preventing or reducing pollution or other adverse environmental impacts.

**Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)** — Established by Congress within the Executive Office of the President with passage of the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969*. CEQ coordinates federal environmental efforts and works closely with agencies and other White House offices in the development of environmental policies and initiatives.

**Cultural Resources** —Historic districts, sites, buildings, objects, or any other physical evidence of human activity considered important to a culture, subculture, or community for scientific, traditional, religious, or any other reason.

**Cumulative Impacts** — Under NEPA regulations, the incremental environmental impact or effect of an action together with the effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions (40 CFR 1508.7).

**Endangered Species** — “...any species (including subspecies or qualifying distinct population segment) that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range (ESA Section 3(6)).” The lead federal agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for the listing of a species as endangered is responsible for reviewing the status of the species on a five-year basis.

**Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 USC 1531 et seq.)** — An Act to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved and to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species.

**Environmental Assessment (EA)** — An environmental analysis prepared pursuant to the *National Environmental Policy Act* to determine whether a federal action would significantly affect the environment and thus require a more detailed environmental impact statement (EIS).

**Executive Order** — Official proclamation issued by the President that may set forth policy or direction or establish specific duties in connection with the execution of federal laws and programs.

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)** — A document prepared by a federal agency showing why a proposed action would not have a significant impact on the environment and thus would not require preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. A FONSI is based on the results of an Environmental Assessment.

**Floodplain** — The flat or nearly flat land along a river or stream or in a tidal area that is covered by water during a flood.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** — The Act as amended articulates the federal law that mandates protecting the quality of the human environment. It requires federal agencies to systematically assess the environmental impacts of their proposed activities, programs, and projects including the “no action” alternative of not pursuing the proposed action. NEPA requires agencies to consider alternative ways of accomplishing their missions in ways which are less damaging to the environment.

**National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 USC 470 et seq.)** — An Act to establish a program for the preservation of historic properties throughout the nation, and for other purposes, approved October 15, 1966 [Public Law 89-665; 80 STAT.915; 16 USC 470 as amended by Public Law 91-243, Public Law 93- 54, Public Law 94-422, Public Law 94-458, Public Law 96-199, Public Law 96-244, Public Law 96-515, Public Law 98-483, Public Law 99-514, Public Law 100-127, and Public Law 102-575].

**National Register of Historic Places (National Register)** — A register of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects important in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture, maintained by the Secretary of the Interior under authority of Section 2(b) of the *Historic Sites Act of 1935* and Section 101(a)(1) of the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*, as amended.

**Organic Act** — Enacted in 1916, this Act commits the National Park Service to making informed decisions that perpetuate the conservation and protection of park resources unimpaired for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

**Scoping** — Scoping, as part of NEPA, requires examining a proposed action and its possible effects; establishing the depth of environmental analysis needed; determining analysis procedures, data needed, and task assignments. The public is encouraged to participate and submit comments on proposed projects during the scoping period.

**Topography** — The physical features of a surface area including relative elevations and the position of natural and man-made (anthropogenic) features.

**Wetlands** — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Federal Register, 1982) and the Environmental Protection Agency (Federal Register, 1980) jointly define wetlands as: Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

