



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Mall and Memorial Parks
900 Ohio Drive SW
Washington, DC 20024



January 30, 2018

From: Karen L. Cucurullo, Acting Superintendent
To: Interested Parties and Government Agencies
Subject: Lincoln Memorial Rehabilitation—Public Scoping and EA Release

The National Park Service (NPS), as lead responsible federal agency for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the rehabilitation of the Lincoln Memorial, a site administered by the National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA). The EA includes an assessment of cultural resources potentially affected by the proposed action consistent with provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended), as applicable. Compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA is being conducted by the NPS separately from but concurrent with the EA. This letter serves as notification that the NPS has an EA available for public and regulatory review.

The purpose of this project is to improve accessibility, enhance the chamber experience, improve visitor services, and improve the efficiency of operations at NAMA. In addition, this project would introduce the experience of the undercroft in order to expand the overall interpretive and educational visitor experience of the Lincoln Memorial. This project would provide a new experience to visitors at one of the most heavily visited sites on the National Mall and would allow the park to tell new and expanded stories related to the Memorial and its construction, while respecting the historic character and intended solemnity of the Memorial.

This project is needed because the undercroft is a valuable interpretive resource of the Lincoln Memorial that is unknown by the general public. The public's ability to experience the cathedral-like space is not being realized. Additionally, the current configuration of visitor services and park support facilities within the memorial is insufficient for the heavily visited site. Currently, the existing egress to the restrooms and exhibit space are not current with life safety code. The restrooms are outdated and require frequent repairs. There is only one elevator to the chamber level, and it is unreliable. The bookstore located on the chamber level is too small for the large crowds, offers poor visitor circulation, creates a congestion point, and conflicts with the intended solemnity of the memorial at the chamber level.

The EA evaluates three alternatives: a no-action alternative (alternative A), the proposed action and NPS preferred alternative (alternative B), and another action alternative (alternative C). Alternative A would continue the current management of the Memorial and would result in continued undesirable impacts on visitor use and experience associated with high visitation. Alternative B would rehabilitate the undercroft to optimize visitor services, improve accessibility, remove the bookstore from the chamber level, and create an interpretive space that highlights expansive views of the undercroft. Alternative C would improve the existing visitor services and NPS operations spaces in the Memorial by reconfiguring the restrooms and creating more public space in the exhibit level while retaining the existing retail space and accessible route. Both action alternatives would result in adverse impacts on the historic structure and potentially the cultural landscapes due to changes to the structure as well as beneficial impacts to visitor use and experience due to the improvements.

The National Park Service encourages your participation throughout the planning process. Between February 5 and March 7, 2018 the National Park Service is soliciting comments on the EA from interested agencies, groups, and individuals. During the comment period, the public and agencies are invited to identify any issues or concerns they might have with the proposed project so the National Park Service can consider them in preparing their decision. Comments related to historic properties will also be gathered for the purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

You can submit your comments and find more information via the park's NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/LincolnMemorialRehab>.