

U.S. RESERVATION 78
THE MEMORIAL TO VICTIMS OF UKRAINIAN MANMADE FAMINE OF 1932-1933

Massachusetts Avenue and F Street, NW
Washington, DC

Finding of No Significant Impact

AUG 31 2012

Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR, Parts 1500-1508), and NCPC's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures, I have evaluated the preliminary and final site development plans for the Memorial to the Victims of Ukrainian Manmade Famine of 1932-1933 at U.S. Reservation 78, located in northwest Washington, DC, the 2012 Environmental Assessment (EA), and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) prepared by the National Park Service (NPS) and have determined that the proposal will not have a significant impact on the human environment. The NPS is the lead federal agency for the EA, with NCPC as a cooperating agency, and is incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact. The EA evaluated the potential impacts related to the design of the memorial and is a supplemental document to the 2008 Memorial to Ukrainian Victims of Manmade Famine site selection EA.

Background

The Memorial to Victims of the Ukrainian Manmade Famine is authorized by Public Law 109-340, which authorizes the Government of the Ukraine to establish a memorial under the Commemorative Works Act.¹ Pursuant to the Commemorative Works Act, 40 U.S.C. 8905, the National Capital Planning Commission must approve memorials on NPS or General Services Administration land in the District of Columbia.

According to the Government of the Ukraine, the project goal is to establish a memorial in Washington, DC that brings “focus of the Ukrainian Famine to the world’s attention...Today this gesture of goodwill to the American people will signify the relevance of Ukraine’s tragedy 75 years ago.”

In 2008, The National Park Service completed an EA for the site selection phase for the memorial. In the EA, the NPS considered three alternatives: two action alternatives and a no action alternative. NCPC was a cooperating agency on the EA and the Executive Director issued a FONSI for the approval of Reservation 78 as the site for the memorial. The FONSI included six design guidelines to protect park and visual resources and the socio-economic environment.

¹ The law requires the memorial to be established in accordance with the “Commemorative Works Act” (40 U.S.C 8900 et seq.), with exception to the following sections: 8902(a)(1), 8906(b)(1), 8908(b)(2), and 8909(b).

Proposed Action

The NPS initiated the EA for the design of the memorial in November 2011. A public scoping period was announced and took place November 22, 2011 through December 23, 2011. An open house for the scoping was held at the Martin Luther King Jr. Library in northwest, Washington, DC on December 7, 2011. Members of the public were invited to submit comments on the project electronically, at the public meeting, and by mailing written comments. The draft EA was released for public review on May 24, 2012 and the public review and comment period closed on June 27, 2012. The public was afforded the opportunity to submit comments electronically or through the mail. The NPS made the EA available to the public on its Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website, and sent hard copies to those that requested them. A hardcopy was also available at NCPC's offices.

The design EA evaluated two action alternatives and the no action alternative. Upon evaluating the EA, public comments to the EA, and the NPS' responses to the comments, I adopt the EA as adequate to assess the environmental impacts of the proposed action.

The design EA analyzes the potential environmental impacts that could result from the proposed construction of the NPS preferred alternative, which includes: the "Field of Wheat" sculpture, a plaza area, and landscaping. The main element of the memorial is the "Field of Wheat" sculpture, which is a six-foot-tall sculpture that extends approximately 35 feet in length. The memorial sculpture transitions from a high bas relief on the east end to a deep negative relief on the west and symbolizes depicts the fading of wheat. The words "HOLODOMOR 1932-1933" transition from a negative relief on the east to a high bas relief on the west. The sculpture will be placed on a granite plinth approximately 1.5 feet in height for a combined height of 7.5 feet.

The remainder of the site design includes:

- A 1,155 square foot plaza in front of the memorial sculpture that is paved with slate that will run in an linear pattern to be reminiscent of a wheat field;
- A bench on the western edge of the site;
- A 430 square foot planting area to the west of the bench; and
- A 965 square foot planting area behind the sculpture along F Street, NW, which will include 7 redbud trees and nandina as lower plantings.
- Extension of the sidewalk along Massachusetts Avenue, NW. The NPS will use brick pavers to extend the Massachusetts Avenue sidewalk to the U.S. Reservation 78 property line.

Standard for evaluation

Under NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and NCPC Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures, an environmental assessment is sufficient and an Environmental Impact Statement need not be prepared if the environmental assessment supports a finding that the federal action will not significantly affect the human environment. The regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality define "significantly" as used in NEPA as requiring consideration of both context and intensity of impacts as noted by 40 CFR §1508.27.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The design EA analyzed the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the project on cultural resources and visitor uses and experience and found that the project could result in short-term and long-term minor adverse impacts to historic resources and could have short-term moderate adverse impacts and long-term beneficial impacts on visitor uses and experience.

Regarding cultural resources, in particular historic resources, the design EA found that the proposed action may result in long-term minor adverse impacts. Changes to views through the site could result in long-term minor adverse impacts on the Gales School, the Old City Post Office, and the former Childs Restaurant and negligible impacts on Union Station and Plaza and Columbus Fountain. There could be short-term minor adverse impacts on the L'Enfant Plan, Gales School, Old City Post Office, Union Station and Plaza, and Columbus Fountain, and the former Childs Restaurant building as a result of construction. Cumulative impacts would be minor.

To mitigate any potential impacts to historic resources, the NPS has agreed to use tree plantings that allow filtered views and to place the trees in such a manner that would not block views of the former Childs Restaurant building entry from Union Station, and from adjacent streets. If during construction, archeological resources are discovered, all work will stop until resources can be identified and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy is developed in consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer and the NPS Regional Archeologist.

Regarding visitor use and experience, the design EA found that the proposed alternative could result in long-term beneficial impacts by providing education opportunities and visitor amenities. Short-term moderate adverse impacts could occur during construction.

To mitigate any potential impacts to visitor use and experience, the NPS has agreed to provide signage in appropriate locations to redirect visitors around the site if sidewalks and travel lanes are closed during construction. If construction obscures the visibility of the Capital Bikeshare station on F Street, NW, west of the project site, signs will be placed to help direct people to the station.

I have reviewed the potential impacts and the mitigation outlined by the NPS and find that the construction of the proposed alternative would not have a significant impact on the human environment.



Marcel C. Acosta
Executive Director