

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

SSechrist

NCPC File No. 6390



**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
PERIMETER SECURITY
PRELIMINARY AND FINAL SITE DEVELOPMENT PLANS
Rockville, Maryland**

Submission by the General Services Administration

September 25, 2003

Abstract

The General Services Administration (GSA) has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for perimeter security enhancements at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Headquarters in Rockville, Montgomery County, Maryland. The project would add a variety of landscape features and vehicular access controls. Like most federal facilities, prior to September 11, 2001, the NRC was open to the public; however, temporary vehicular barriers have been installed since that time. The proposed security project has developed significantly since it was first presented to Commission staff and now meets the general objectives of the Commission's *Urban Design and Security Plan* by enhancing existing site features where feasible to provide the necessary security.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site development plans pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission **approves** the preliminary and final site development plans for perimeter security enhancements at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Headquarters in Rockville, Montgomery County, Maryland campus, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3106(05.17)-41241.

* * *

BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The General Services Administration, on behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for enhanced perimeter security at the NRC facility in Rockville, Maryland. The proposed improvements will replace temporary vehicle restrictions – jersey barriers – put in place after September 11, 2001.

Site

The NRC headquarters facility is located in two modern office buildings – one government owned and one leased – on Rockville Pike and Marinelli Road in Rockville, Maryland. Approximately 2,400 employees work at the facility. In addition to its two street frontages, NRC is adjacent to a stormwater retention pond and a vacant lot to the east and a restaurant and commercial development to the south. GSA is in the process of acquiring the adjacent, residentially-zoned property to the east (Lot #4) which is located between the retention pond and Marinelli Road.

Proposed Perimeter Security Measures

The proposed perimeter security enhancements are intended to provide the necessary vehicular stand off distances, while still maintaining a visually open campus. (See page 7 for overall site improvements and page 8 for details on the proposed new entrance/exit on Marinelli Road). This is accomplished through the use of a variety of landscape solutions and vehicular access controls, including:

Rockville Pike

Along Rockville Pike, and portions of Marinelli Road, both boulders and trees will be added within the existing planted and bermed areas, and some slopes will be regraded to provide the necessary security. The existing entrance to the facility from Rockville Pike will become an employee-only exit. A small guard house and retractable bollards will be installed at this exit.

Marinelli Road

Along Marinelli Road an existing concrete planter will be strengthened with additional landscaping and boulders. The existing vehicular entrance will be closed to vehicular traffic and retractable bollards will be installed. This entrance will be used for emergency access and for additional employee passenger screening under elevated threat levels.

New Passenger and Truck Entrance – Marinelli Road

The Marinelli Road parcel (Lot #4) – which the government is in the process of obtaining – will become the new main passenger and truck entrance to the facility. There will be a dedicated commercial vehicle lane in addition to a two-way employee entrance. There will be a four-person guard booth and a second facility which will house restrooms and storage space. The new entrance will be covered with a truss canopy in the same design vocabulary as the guard

booths. A concrete knee wall with a mesh fence will contain the perimeter of the new property. Landscaping, including vines, will be planted to obscure the face of the new wall and fence.

Southern Perimeter

On the south property line, NRC proposes to install a cable barrier hidden within shrubbery.

Eastern Perimeter

The existing eight-foot metal fence will remain next to the stormwater management pond because the existing steep grade and the pond provide effective vehicular standoff. Additional landscaping will be planted on the slope of the stormwater management pond.

Guard Booths

The proposed guard booths would be constructed of stainless steel panels, with a curved standing seam steel roof. The single person guard booth will measure six-and-a-half feet by four-and-a-half feet, and the larger, four person guard booth will measure seven feet by nine-and-a-half feet. All of the guard booths will be eleven feet in height.

Bollards

Simple stainless steel bollards are proposed at the NRC. The 10-inch diameter bollards will be located four feet on-center and would be 36 inches in height. At some of the vehicular entrances the bollards will be hydraulically operated.

EVALUATION

As the federal government's central planning agency for the National Capital Region, NCPC reviews projects for both the individual and cumulative impacts that a proposed project will have throughout the region, as well as evaluates a project in the context of planning principles established by the Commission. In a post-September 11, 2001 climate, NCPC's consideration of how buildings and environments are designed and modified in response to security needs is one of its most significant responsibilities. Throughout the region, the Commission seeks an appropriate balance between providing secure environments and maintaining openness and an attractive public face to the communities in which they are located.

The NRC met with Commission staff in the spring of 2003 and staff made a number of recommendations which have been integrated into the current proposal. While staff recognizes that the facility is located outside of the adopted *The National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* area, the general objectives of the plan were used in evaluating the proposal. In particular, the project meets the following two objectives of the Plan:

- Provide security in the context of the streetscape enhancement and public realm beautification, rather than as a separate or redundant system of components whose only purpose is security.
- Expand the palette of elements that can gracefully provide perimeter security in a manner that does not clutter the public realm, while avoiding the monotony of endless lines of jersey barriers or bollards, which only evoke defensiveness.

Staff recommends approval of the preliminary and final site development plans.

CONSULTATION

Montgomery County Planning Board

GSA and NRC have consulted with the Chairman of the Montgomery County Planning Board, as well as County planning staff, on the purchase of the adjacent parcel on Marinelli Road and the zoning restriction on the property which limits use on the parcel to residential purposes. A Planning Hearing will not be necessary to address the future use of this parcel as a non-residential use.

CONFORMANCE

National Historic Preservation Act

The NRC complex is not listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and is therefore not subject to further review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), GSA review of the proposed security action has determined that the project plans are a categorical exclusion under its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance procedures and the GSA NEPA Compliance Guide. Staff finds, under NCPC's project review process, the determination is recognized and accepted given there are no outstanding or unusual circumstances regarding the proposal.

Federal Capital Improvements Program

The federal acquisition of the adjacent property is included in the Federal Capital Improvements Program for Fiscal Years 2003-2008.