

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

NCPC File No. 6704



**WHITE OAK FEDERAL RESEARCH CENTER
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
SOUTHWEST PARKING GARAGE
Montgomery County, Maryland**

Submitted by the General Services Administration

October 26, 2006

Abstract

The General Services Administration (GSA) has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for a 1,229 space parking garage and a 32 space surface parking lot at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) consolidated campus at White Oak Federal Research Center (WOFRC) in Montgomery County, Maryland. The 397,800-square-foot parking structure will complete Phase IIIB of the campus build-out, for which GSA has included a phasing modification with this submittal.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site and building plans, and Phasing Plan IIIB of the 2006 approved campus master plan pursuant to Section 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves the final site and building plans for the Southwest Parking Garage and surface parking lot at the FDA consolidated campus at White Oak Federal Research Center (WOFRC) in Montgomery County, Maryland, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3104.10(38.00)42118, including landscape design in this submittal and planting at completion of garage construction.

Approves a modification to Phasing Plan IIIB of the 2006 approved master plan and transportation management plan, but requires resubmittal of Phasing Plan IV prior to submitting any future projects, and reiterates the following stipulations and recommendations that accompanied master plan approval:

Stipulates:

- A parking ratio of 1:1.5 through 2011, limiting the number of employee parking spaces to 5,141.
 - With no new parking spaces added to those in the current master plan to accommodate any future expansion of population or buildings, except to serve the proposed on-site transit facility.

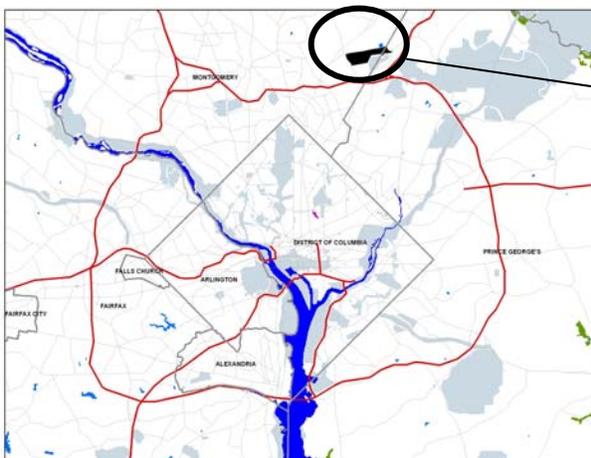
- An updated transportation management plan (TMP) submission in 2008 reflecting current conditions, in accordance with the policies of the Commission's Transportation Element in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.

Recommends that FDA and GSA continue working with Montgomery County and relevant transit agencies to improve service from Metrorail stations to the site as soon as possible, preferably to coincide with occupancy of the next major office building, focusing on:

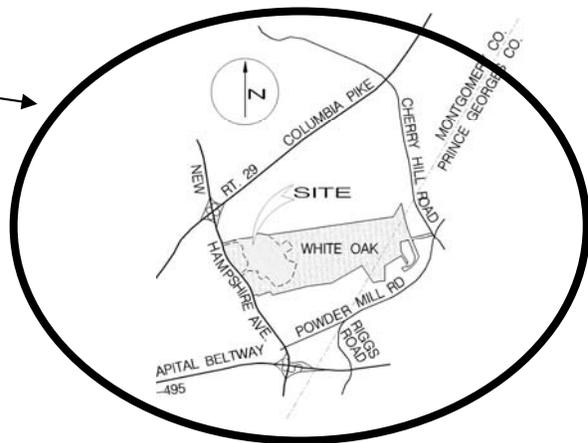
- Improving Ride-On Bus and Metrobus headways or augmenting Ride-On service with FDA shuttles.
- Accommodating Metrobus and Ride-On routes at an FDA on-campus transit facility.
- Supporting initiating cross-county public express bus service between Montgomery County and the White Oak site.

Reminds the applicant of the requirement to submit detailed designs for specific perimeter security projects conforming to the master plan for Commission review when developed.

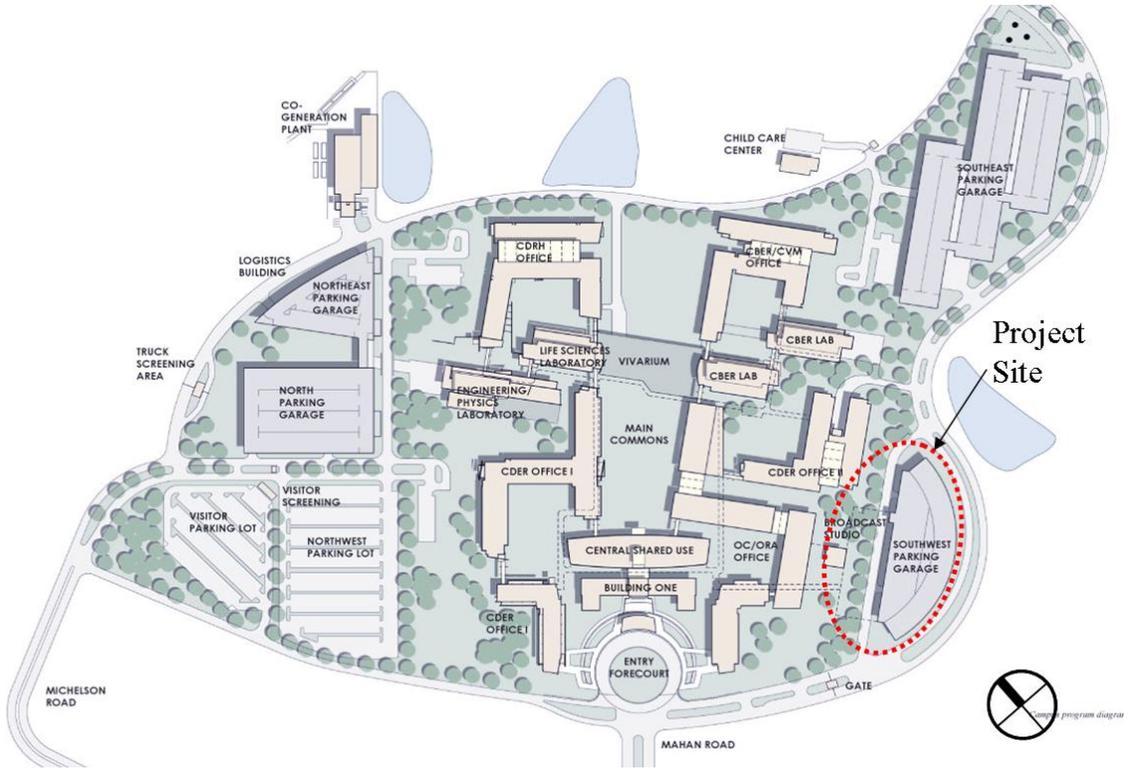
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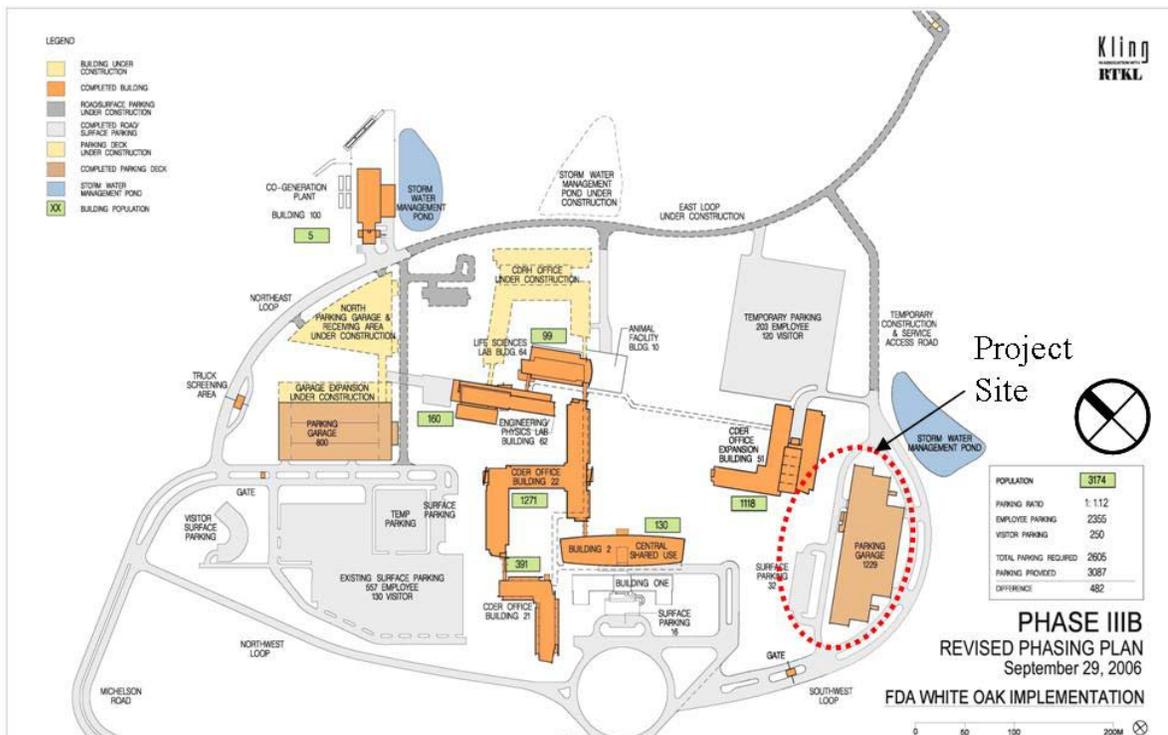
REGIONAL LOCATION



VICINITY MAP
PROJECT VICINITY



APPROVED 20 MASTER PLAN



REVISED PHASING PLAN III B

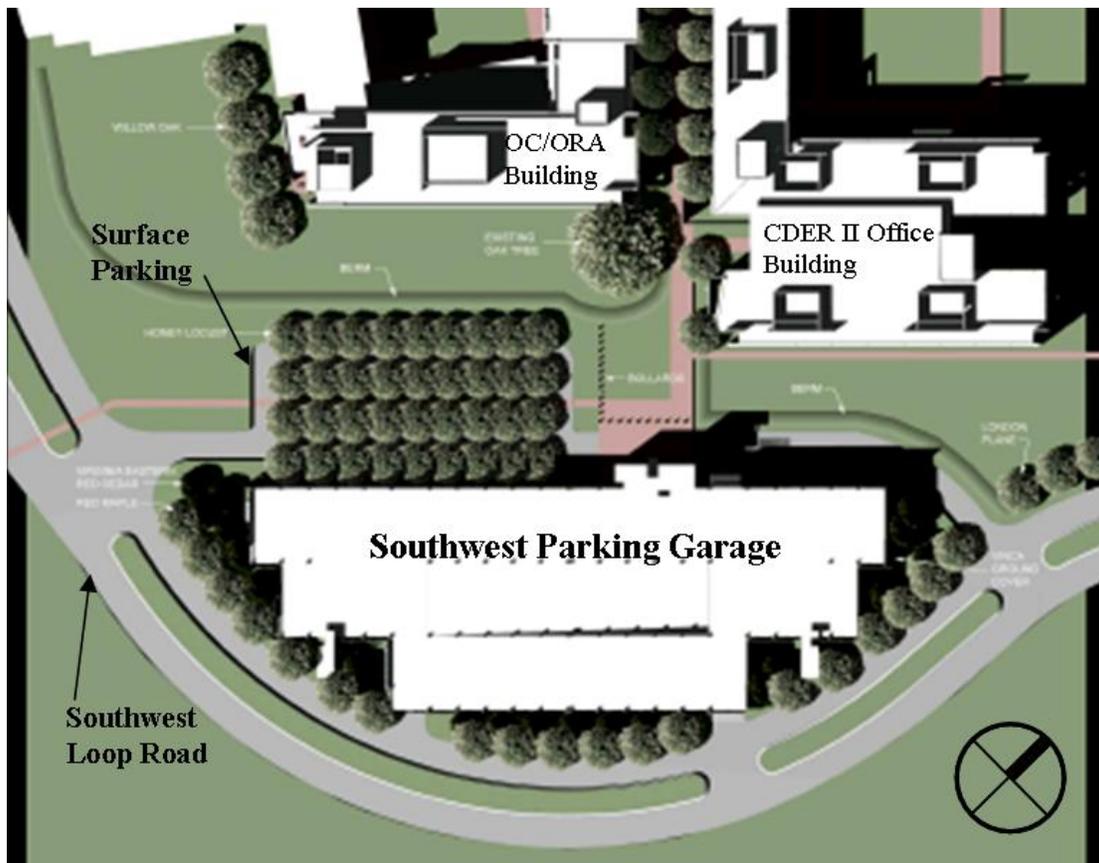
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

The project is located within the FDA consolidated campus of the White Oak Federal Research Center (WOFRC), a 660-acre federal facility located primarily in Montgomery County, near the intersection of Columbia Pike (Route 29) and New Hampshire Avenue (Route 650), with a portion at the eastern edge of the installation in Prince George's County. The FDA campus occupies 130 acres in the western portion of the WOFRC, fronting on New Hampshire Avenue, where a nine-hole public golf course operated by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) fills the foreground in front of the FDA site. The primarily wooded campus slopes gradually downward to the east from New Hampshire Avenue. The proposed Southwest Parking Garage will be the eighth building and second parking garage at the campus. It will be located south of the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) II Office Building and southeast of the future Office of the Commissioner/Office of Regulatory Affairs (OC/ORR) Building, and will border a portion of the Loop Road and campus perimeter. Approximately 5.3 acres of the larger 130-acre site will be devoted to the proposed garage.

Background

At its March 3, 2005 meeting, the Commission approved final site and building plans for the North Garage, as revised to include river birch trees planted along the west facade, and eastern red cedar trees along the north facade. At its July 6, 2006 meeting, the Commission approved the 2006 master plan update for the FDA consolidation at White Oak and its transportation management plan (TMP), with stipulations regarding parking ratio (1:1.5 through 2011) and limits to the overall number of employee parking spaces (to 5,141), and recommendations for improving transit service from Metrorail stations to the site to coincide with occupancy of the next major office building. In the approved master plan, Phases IIIA through VI had been modified to reflect FDA's changing needs and funding. The Commission approval included the phased parking ratios that resulted from net parking spaces added due to construction and demolition for each phase. Based on funding, the Southwest Parking Garage was to be constructed in two phases, providing 800 employee spaces in an above ground structure in Phase IIIB and an additional 554 spaces in a connected structure partially underground in Phase V. Since that time, funding became available to construct the entire garage in one phase, but not the significantly higher cost to build the garage in two phases, nor, according to GSA, to build the underground parking within the project's budget constraints. Therefore, in response to a staff request for consistency with the master plan, GSA has included a modification to the master plan's Phasing Plan IIIB with this submittal. As submitted, the building is designed to be constructed in one phase above ground, scheduled to coincide with the completion and occupancy of the CDER II Office by spring 2008. Those spaces that would have been located underground will be colocated in another planned above ground structure at the campus.

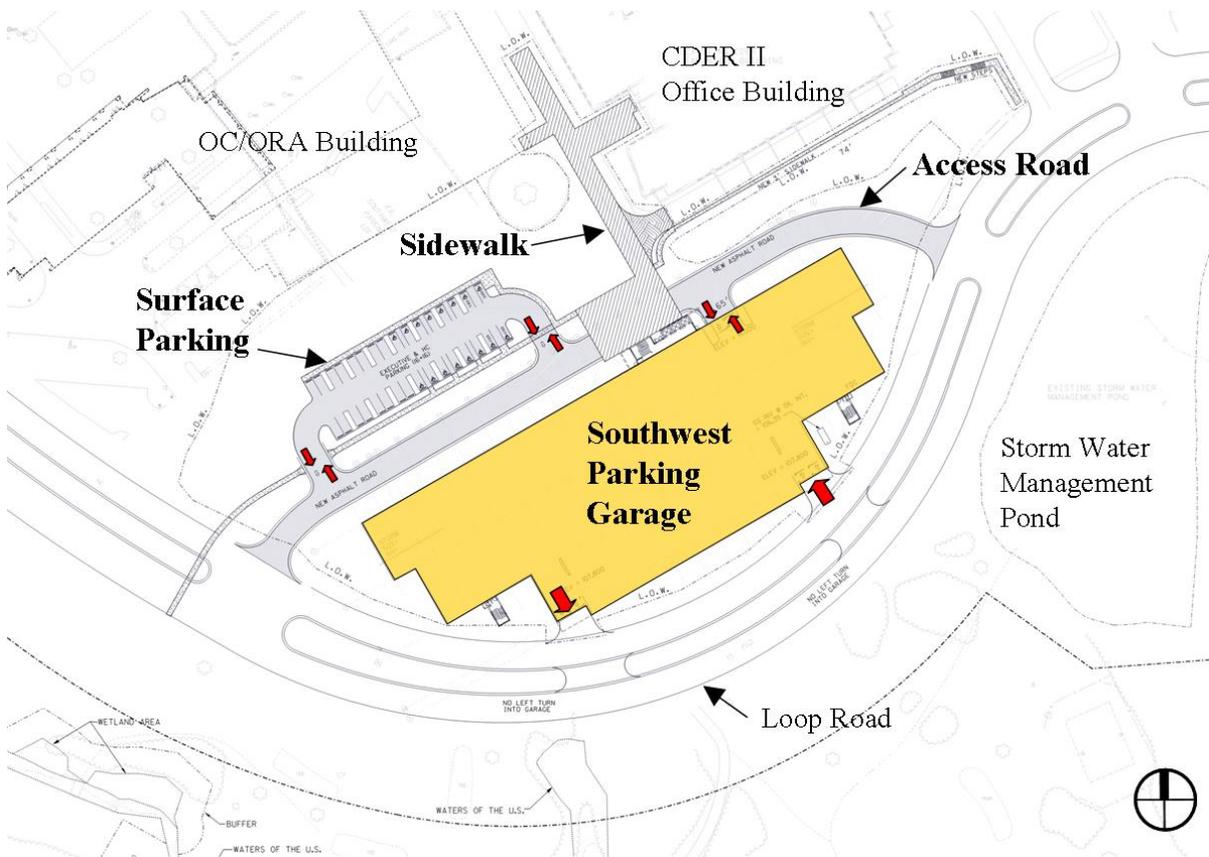


PROJECT SITE PLAN SHOWN LANDSCAPED

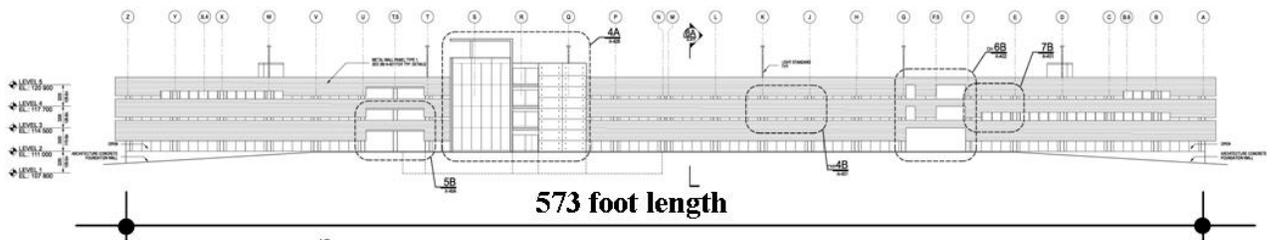
Proposal

Building Design

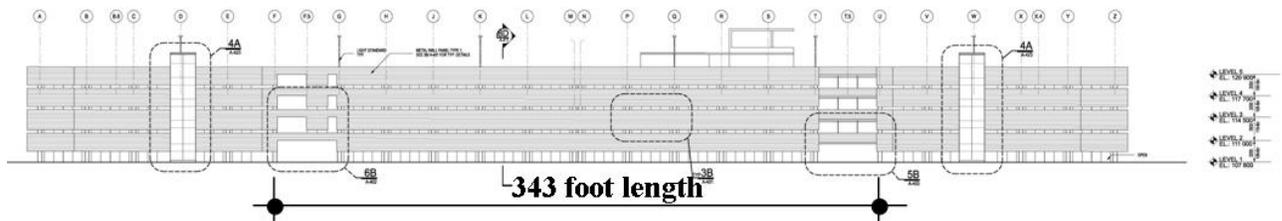
The Southwest Parking Garage footprint will have an irregular saw-tooth shape composed of three rectangular bays, each measuring 61 feet wide with lengths varying from 343 to 573 feet. The cast-in-place, post-tensioned concrete structure will have 397,800 gross square feet (GSF). Four levels of parking will be exposed in the far northwestern bay and retained by a concrete wall, with five of the levels exposed in the two bays closest to the Loop Road to the southeast where the natural grade slopes down. The building height will be 32 feet six inches above grade on the northwest and 43 feet from the southeast. The 1229 spaces in the garage and 32 surface parking spaces will accommodate parking for 1,118 FDA employees relocating to the evolving campus in CDER II Office Building as well as employees already at the campus. An at-grade entry plaza and sidewalk will connect the garage from its primary stair and elevator tower on the northwest facade, as well as from the surface parking, to the west lobby of the CDER II Office Building, and will extend to the west as a stub in anticipation of a future security pavilion to be located north of the garage and west of CDER II. Vehicles will enter via Mahan Road, stopping at a future security booth on the Southwest Loop Road before turning left onto an access road proposed northwest of the garage, passing the proposed surface parking lot and slightly raised entry plaza to enter the garage near its northeast corner. The garage will have two access points along the Loop Road, currently shown as one-way in and one-way out.



SITE LAYOUT & PAVING PLAN

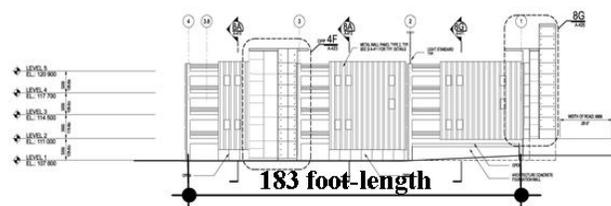


NORTHWEST ELEVATION



SOUTHEAST ELEVATION

The exterior facades will feature the palette of materials identified in the North Parking Garage, laboratory, and office buildings previously approved by the Commission. The northwest and southeast facades will be perforated corrugated metal panel with galvanized steel tube supports. The paint color of the panels will match the grey titanium color of the panels on the North Garage. The northeast and southwest facades will adapt a variation of the ribbed metal panel used on the laboratory buildings, with ribs running vertically rather than horizontally, and color will be similar. Stair and elevator towers will be enclosed in concrete and will have the aluminum curtain wall with glass on the outer facing portions. The applicant has indicated that lighting on the top tier of parking will also be the same type low cut-off fixtures as those used on the North Garage.



NORTHEAST ELEVATION

Site and Landscape Design

The site slopes from a high point to the northwest down towards the Loop Road which borders wetlands to the southwest. An existing storm water management pond is east of the Loop Road. The building's site is defined by three constraints: the Loop Road to the southeast, and 75 foot set-backs from both the OC/ORAs and the CDER II Office Buildings. The proposed garage will be an above ground structure with one of its three bays benched into the naturally sloping grade. A surface parking lot is proposed northwest of a proposed access road.

Typically landscape design has not been included as part of individual building projects at the FDA campus, but is expected to be completed towards the end of the campus buildout in 2011. In its place, grass seeding or sod is specified in areas disturbed during construction to prevent erosion and sidewalks are provided from building entrances to parking lots and garage stair and elevator lobbies. To that end, the applicant has identified paving material for the entrance plaza and sidewalk leading to the CDER II Office and the OC/ORAs Buildings as concrete pavers for use as a fire lane, and the proposed access road northwest of the garage as narrowing and rising slightly at a paved plaza.

In addition, the applicant provided a landscape plan to supplement the submittal. Landscape design is now included in the project submittal and will be planted at the completion of building construction, according to the FDA project executive. It consists of: red maples lining the Loop Road and following its curve, eastern red cedars as infill between the angled corners of the building and the curving line of red maples along the road, and a bosque of honey locusts to the building's northwest for the length of the surface parking lot to its northwest edge. A narrow bed of periwinkle groundcover is shown hugging the building along its northern exposure. Tulip poplars are shown flanking the sidewalk leading to the office building entrances, except where a large existing oak tree is shown as existing. A surface bio-retention area for the surface parking lot is proposed to its northwest, where a future security pavilion is also anticipated.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

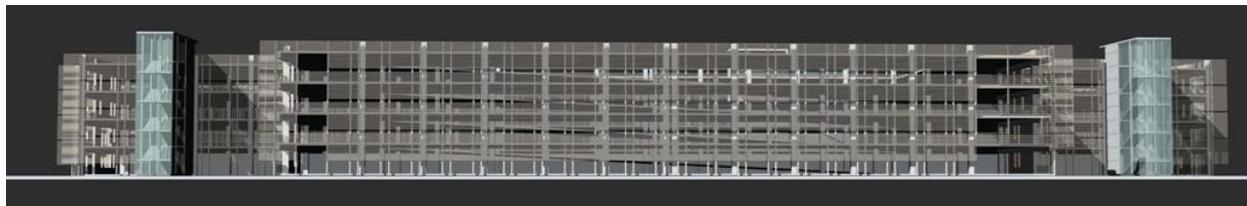
Issues raised by NCPC staff early in the review process have been addressed. In response, the applicant has supplemented the submittal to include a design for a landscape plan and a revised Phasing Plan IIIB of the Master Plan to reflect parking spaces and parking ratio for that phase. In addition, aspects of the parking garage design and site layout that have evolved since master plan approval are discussed within that context. While not shown on project drawings, the narrative refers to future security elements, which are discussed in the analysis.

Building Design

The building's rectangular footprint is a deviation from the curvilinear plan shown in the master plan following the curve of the Loop Road. The applicant has explained this change in geometry in the narrative, stating that "All other garages on site are rectangular in plan.", and that the shape of the garage has changed so that "the language of all garages on the campus are related in much the same way as the buildings relate to each other." While the earlier 2002 master plan showed all three planned garages (North, Southwest, and Southeast) as curved shapes defined by the perimeter loop road surrounding them, it is true that as vision has evolved towards reality, footprints for the other 2 garages have become more rectangular in the 2006 master plan. In it, the North Garage has been separated into two distinct but connected buildings and phases. The first phase, still called North Garage, appears as a rectangle connected to a later phased triangular Northeast Parking Garage which retains only an outer curved edge to conform to the road.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW FROM THE SOUTH ALONG THE LOOP ROAD



RENDERED VIEW FROM THE SOUTHEAST ALONG THE LOOP ROAD

In discussions, the applicant has acknowledged that the decision to straighten the curved form was also based at least partly on construction economics and the cost benefit to taxpayers after earlier iterations of the Southwest Garage designed with the curve did not conform to budget restrictions. However, stepping the three bays at different lengths in plan along the curve creates tension between the forms of the building and the curved loop road. Staff believes that

landscape planting between the building and the road will help re-establish the curved form. While the proposed design shows the garage in the same location as in the master plan, it includes a surface parking lot in an area where the master plan indicated underground parking. In this aspect, the applicant acknowledged an even greater basis in construction economics for eliminating the underground structure. The narrative states “GSA has determined that underground parking is not feasible within the budget constraint of the project”. The 140 underground parking spaces will be relocated to one of the planned above ground structures that remain to be constructed in future phases.” Although the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital’s Transportation Element states a preference for below ground rather than above ground parking structures, staff does not believe that replacing underground structured parking with above ground structured parking will be as detrimental to the urban design in this location as it would be in a more dense urban area.

Based on the apparent “no left turn” traffic pattern on the Loop Road, and discussions with the applicant, staff supports the anticipated move towards a one-way traffic loop around the garage with entrance from the proposed access road and exit onto the Loop Road. Further, staff suggests that the applicant study designating the surface parking lot as a one way loop as well, rather than the two two-way access points shown. The security booth on Southwest Loop Road is mentioned only as a future feature and not part of this project. Staff therefore reminds the applicant of the requirement to submit detailed designs for specific perimeter security projects conforming to the master plan for Commission review when developed.

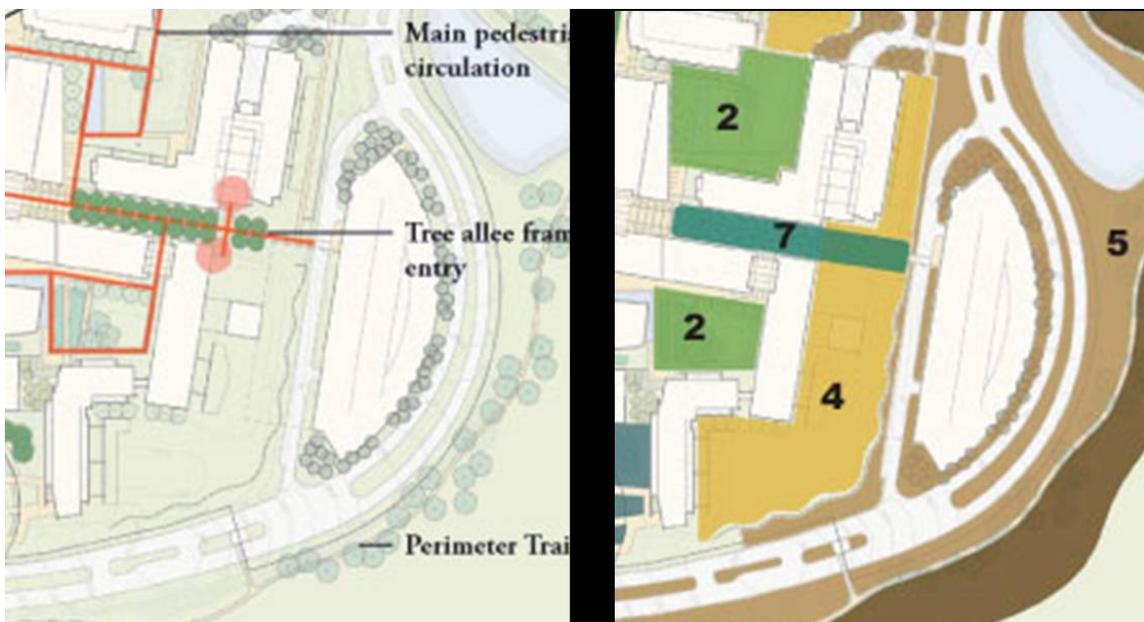
Landscape Design

The landscape is a significant feature of this project’s integration into the campus plan because the building perimeter has been straightened from a curve to a series of rectangular shapes. Landscaping is therefore seen as essential for this project because it will define the campus edge and perimeter Loop Road, and help to reestablish the curve, which has been removed from the building configuration, by filling in the space between the angles of the building and the curve of the road. It is staff’s view that the landscape plan submitted accomplishes the goal of reestablishing the curve along the Loop Road. It also frames the entries of the two office buildings that it supports in a way that is consistent with the landscape component of the master plan. This aspect of the design, shown in images from the landscape plan including Landscape Zones and Pedestrian Circulation, shows an entry zone where allees of trees frame entries to buildings. In addition, the bosque of honey locusts to be planted northwest of the garage canopy will partially soften and shade the surface parking lot and break down the visual mass of the length of the garage.

Staff commends the FDA Project Executive for making the commitment to obtain funding for and to plant the trees on all sides of the building as soon as the building is complete. Staff recommends approval of the landscape design in this submittal and planting at completion of garage construction.



2006 MASTER PLAN LANDSCAPE PLAN



PEDESTRAIN CIRCULATION AND LANDSCAPE ZONES: 2006 MASTER PLAN



RENDERED VIEW OF NORTHWEST FACADE WITHOUT FULL LANDSCAPE

Phasing Plan Phase IIIB

Although Staff commends the applicant for submitting both the illustrative plan and the TMP portions of the revised Phasing Plan IIIB, the revision to the master plan is not yet complete because the remaining phases will be effected but have not been revised and resubmitted. Although the applicant states that this modification will be fully reconciled with the master plan at the conclusion of the next phase (Phase IV), this has not been demonstrated. Because 359 of the 552 spaces that would have been added in Phase V are being moved up two phases to Phase IIIB, it is unclear when the modification would be reconciled without analyzing Phases IV & V to demonstrate when the reconciliation of parking ratio will occur. In fact, the applicant's calculation of parking results in 1400 spaces rather than 1352. This is because Phase V designates 48 of the spaces in the Southwest Garage as visitor spaces, and that number increases to 78 in Phase VI. In addition, the applicant points out that 140 spaces will be relocated from a proposed underground structure to another future above ground structure, but has not specified which structure or which phase. The underground portion of the garage still appears in later phases of the master plan, and therefore needs to be revised for accuracy and consistency. Based on analysis, staff recommends revision and resubmittal of Phasing Plan IV prior to submitting any future projects.

PROJECT CONFORMANCE

Federal Capital Improvements Program

The entire FDA campus build-out at WOFRC is included in the Federal Capital Improvements Program fiscal Years 2007 – 2012, adopted by the Commission on September 7, 2006. The overall project cost at the campus during FY 2007 – 2012 is estimated as \$479,300,000. The estimated total project cost is \$814,149,000 and has received \$332,849,000 in prior funding.

Facility Master Plan

The Commission approved a master plan update for the FDA consolidation at White Oak during its July 6, 2006 meeting with stipulations regarding parking ratio (1:1.5 through 2011) and limits to the overall number of employee parking spaces (to 5,141), and recommendations for improving transit service from Metrorail stations to the site to coincide with occupancy of the next major office building. The Commission approved the parking ratio for each phase that resulted from net parking spaces added due to construction and demolition during each phase.

According to the approved master plan, the Southwest Parking Garage was to be constructed in two phases, providing 800 employee spaces in an above ground structure in Phase IIIB and an additional 554 spaces in a connected structure partially underground in Phase V. In this submittal, the proposed phasing has been revised such that 1261 spaces would be provided in Phase IIIB, and 140 spaces would be provided in a later phase, for a total of 1401. In addition, GSA determined that underground parking is not feasible within the project's budget constraints. Therefore, GSA has included a modification to the master plan's Phase IIIB phasing plan with this submittal. As submitted, the building is designed to be constructed in one phase above ground, with completion scheduled to coincide with the completion and occupancy of the CDER II Office by spring 2008. Those spaces that would have been located underground will be relocated to another portion of the campus in a future planned above ground structure.

Staff notes that the change in footprint configuration was reconciled in the discussion contained in the Building Design Section of the Analysis in this report. The proposed parking garage has one additional parking tier (4 and 5 exposed tiers) than the previously approved North Garage which has 3 and 4 exposed tiers of parking. While this deviates from the prior approved 2002 master plan which called for 3 and 4 level garages, the 2006 approved master plan does not limit the number of levels. In addition, proposed structure will be sited at an elevation almost a full level lower than the North Garage.

National Environmental Policy Act

Staff has reviewed this proposal in accordance with 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and notes that GSA's NEPA analysis demonstrates appropriate mitigation and no unresolved significant adverse environmental impacts from the planned action. Staff has evaluated the December 8, 2005 GSA Record of Decision (ROD) and finds the planning and implementation actions acceptable. Modifications included with this submittal are not significant enough to change the conclusions reached in the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and ROD.

Leading up to the ROD, The General Services Administration and the Food and Drug Administration had completed, in March 2005, a SEIS to address potential environmental impacts involving the update and modifications of the FDA master plan. The prepared SEIS conformed to the Commission's submission requirements of its Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures for project review, and in late March of 2005 the Commission staff commented to GSA on a number of transportation issues in the SEIS, including the following:

- SEIS transportation data fell short in addressing the issues of the future transportation impacts of the revised Master Plan; in particular, the full evaluation of potential transit use and carpooling efforts in conjunction with the eventual existence of the ICC in the project vicinity.
- Staff noted the importance of the timing of the functioning assignment of the necessary employee transportation coordinator and the establishment of discussions and agreement for bus service to the Federal Research Center at White Oak.

All of the transportation issues that staff noted were addressed by the revised TMP developed in 2006, submitted, and approved by the Commission with the 2006 Master Plan

National Historic Preservation Act

GSA completed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for future review of development phases at White Oak in 2002. Under the agreement, GSA is to circulate the design plans for each phase to the Maryland Historical Trust (MD SHPO) for comment. In staff's judgment, the proposed parking garage is similar in plan and location to the scheme shown in the Master Plan and does not affect the fabric or setting of historic Building 1. The MOA stipulated that only those buildings directly behind Historic Building I could be no higher than Building 1. The proposed parking garage is offset from Building I. GSA is complying with the MOA terms.

Comprehensive Plan

As continuation of the ongoing consolidation, the proposed building is consistent with applicable policies for Locating Federal Workplaces under the Federal Workplace Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, which specify that the federal government should:

- Utilize available federally owned land or space before purchasing or leasing land or building space.
- Locate employees near other federal agencies and departments with which they regularly interact.

Within the Transportation Element, the following Parking policies also apply, which specify that the federal government should:

- Provide parking only for those federal employees who are unable to use other travel modes.
- Give priority to carpool and vanpool parking over that for single-occupant vehicles.
- Place parking in structures, preferably below ground, in the interest of efficient land use and good urban design

CONSULTATION

The requirement for consultation and coordination with affected local and state governments and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) has been satisfied for the building project, located outside of the District since the project generally conforms to an approved master plan. However, during development of the master plan and the phase four project, the GSA and FDA, met regularly with various community organizations including LABQUEST.