

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6913



NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER CONNECTORS AND COURTYARDS

8901 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Montgomery County, Maryland

Submitted by Department of the Navy

February 26, 2009

Abstract

The United States Department of the Navy has submitted a concept design for patient connectivity corridors and courtyards at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) located at 8901 Rockville Pike in Bethesda, Maryland. The purpose of the proposed connector work is to create a clear and functional path for patient movement among the campus medical facilities. The project includes both new construction and renovation work. As a result of the new connectors, three internal courtyards will be created and the existing courtyard between the new Building A and the new parking garage will be reconfigured and relandscaped.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of comments on concept design pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Comments favorably on the concept design for the connectors and courtyards at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3101.30(38.00)42708.

Requests that the Navy submit a modified and more detailed site and landscape plan for the exterior courtyard between Buildings 3 and 5 and the circular driveway. It should consider:

- reducing the size of the circular driveway and increasing the width of the sidewalks;

- creating continuous pedestrian access in front of the garage entrance;
- relocating the covered benches to the entrance of Building A where patients will be dropped off and picked up.

Requests that the Navy submit landscape plans for the new interior courtyards created by the connectors.

Reminds the Navy that the Memorandum of Agreement with the Maryland Historical Trust must be executed prior to the applicant's final submission.

* * *

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

The National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) is located at 8901 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Maryland, just northeast of the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD). The campus is comprised of approximately 245 acres and is bounded on the west by Rockville Pike, on the northeast by I-495, and on the south by Jones Bridge Road. The land uses in the immediate area are the National Institutes of Health across Rockville Pike, Stoney Ridge School of the Sacred Heart and medium-density residential housing to the north, Rock Creek Park and North Chevy Chase Park to the east and Columbia Country Club and medium-density residential housing to the south across Jones Bridge Road.

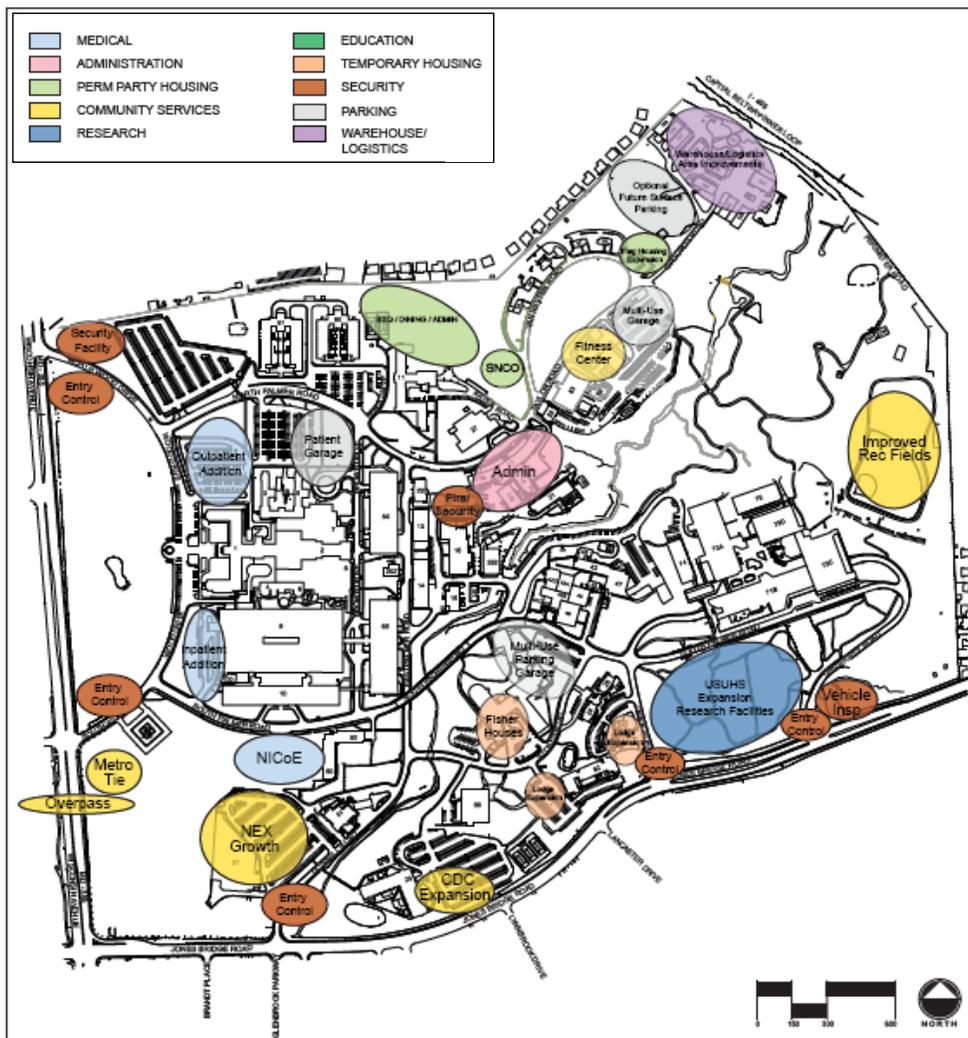
The topography of the campus includes gently sloping areas where development is concentrated, and some areas of moderately steep terrain. The campus is divided into development clusters related to medical, administrative, permanent housing, temporary housing, community services, and education. Building One, the central tower block, is the prime landmark structure of the existing National Naval Medical Center due to its architectural distinction and association with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, as well as with achievements in the practice of military medicine. Buildings 3 and 5 are slightly later ancillary structures in a similar architectural style, also designed under the supervision of the Tower Block's architect, Paul Philippe Cret and drawing significance from the same contexts. Building One is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), while the other two buildings have been determined contributing elements of the surrounding historic district eligible for the NRHP.

Prior Commission Actions

The Commission approved the Master Plan Update for the Medical Center at its February 5, 2009 meeting. The proposed update retains, and expands upon, much of the prior land use planning and general development principles; with the main difference being modifications needed to meet the requirements of the 2005 BRAC Action. The Master Plan Update provides

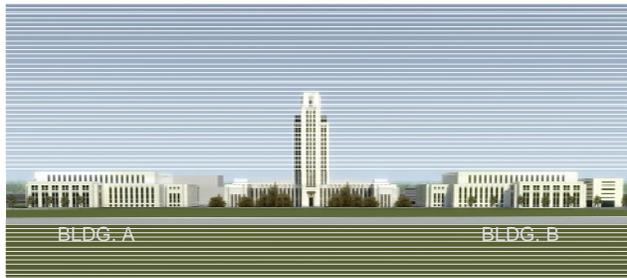
direction for long-term growth of the campus, adhering to the following planning goals and objectives:

- Support the Medical Mission. Provide a land use master plan to accommodate anticipated growth, but flexible enough that as the scopes of specific projects are developed and change, the master plan will remain viable.
- Maintain and enhance the aspect of security, both for the overall installation and individual projects.
- Recognize positive features in the built and natural environment and maintain and enhance those features.
- Preserve the historic character and value of the campus and the natural resources.
- Strive to cluster functions to facilitate a walkable campus.
- Provide compatibility with the surrounding neighbors by maintaining buffers on the perimeter.



MASTER PLAN UPDATE
Site Development Plan

Three of the largest new construction projects included in the Master Plan Update have already been reviewed and approved by the Commission (due to the stringent BRAC implementation schedule) as well. These include the Medical Facility Additions (NCPC Project 6759, approved June 5, 2008), the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NCPC Project 6849, June 5, 2008), and the Patient Parking Garage (NCPC Project 6868, approved December 4, 2008).



MEDICAL FACILITY ADDITIONS



NICoE



PATIENT PARKING GARAGE

Background

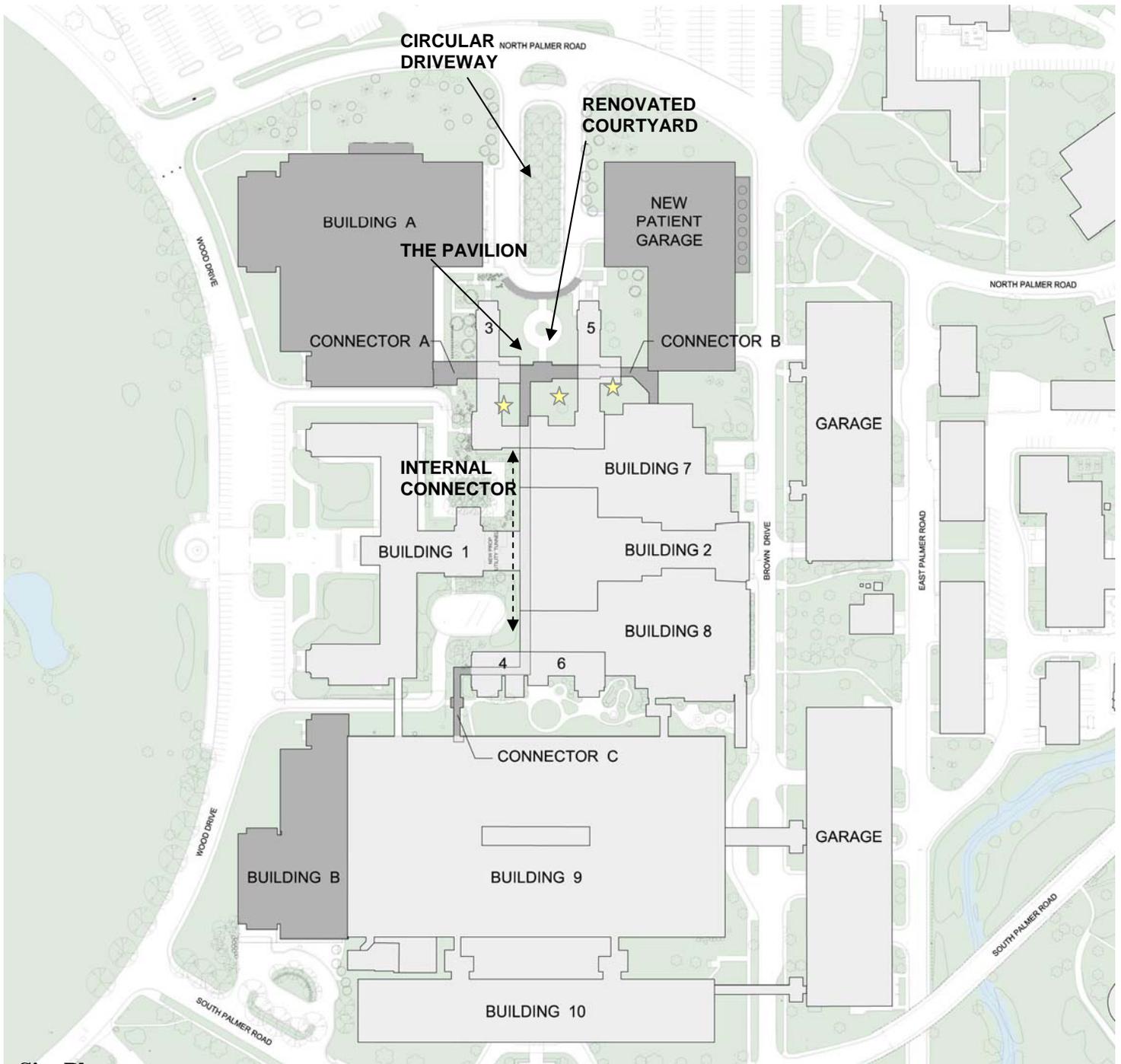
As a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations, the existing Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) located in Washington, D.C. will be closed and military medical services in the National Capital Area (NCA) will be realigned between two primary facilities serving the northern and southern portions of the NCA. The southern NCA will be served by a new hospital at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, and the existing National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in Bethesda, Maryland will be expanded and renovated to serve the northern NCA. All existing tertiary (sub-specialty and complex care) medical services currently provided at WRAMC will be relocated to Bethesda. At the time of the relocation, by September 15, 2011, the expanded NNMC will become a tri-service facility and be renamed the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda (WRNMMC).

The first phase of the BRAC action is currently under construction. This includes Buildings A and B and a new patient parking garage. Building A will house a new outpatient care facility and Building B will accommodate inpatient diagnostic and critical care functions. The Navy is now proposing to construct “connectors” among Building A, the new parking garage and the existing buildings to accommodate easy patient mobility. As a result, they will create three new

interior courtyards and renovate the existing courtyard between Buildings 3 and 5, Building A, and the new parking garage.

Proposal

The connectors and courtyards project includes both new construction and renovation work surrounding the medical care facilities on the campus.



Site Plan

★ Interior Courtyard

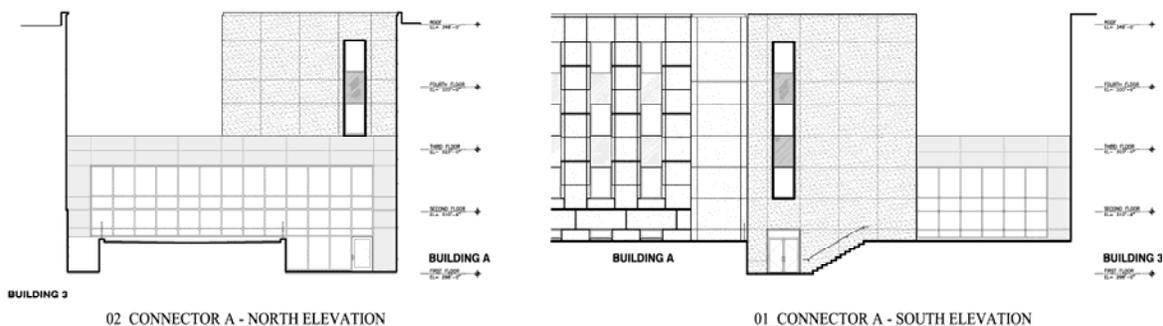
Connectors

The planning concept for the new patient connectors envisions simple, efficient, internal connections among the medical buildings. The medical facilities are located in a series of separate buildings to the east, north and south of the historic Building One, the icon of the campus. Some of the older buildings are already connected whereas Buildings A and B and the patient garage are not. The connectors will be constructed of metal and glass. The first floor will occupy a footprint of approximately 7,760 square feet. The second floor will be approximately 6,480 square feet.

The following individual connectors are proposed:

Connector A

Connector A will connect Building A and Building 3. Adjacent to Building 3 the Connector will be two stories, but as it connects with Building A, the new four story medical building, it will become four stories to enclose a stairwell.



The Pavilion

This connector, termed the Pavilion, will connect Building 3 and Building 5. While interior hallways already connect these two buildings, they are too narrow for patients in wheelchairs and gurneys. The buildings are also occupied with offices and therefore not conducive to patients passing through. The proposed Pavilion will be one-story adjacent to Building 3 and will transition to two stories as it connects with



Proposed Pavilion

Building 5. To soften the transition, the architect has proposed a large glass entryway in between the two sections that can be accessed through the newly designed courtyard and patient drop-off area.

Connector B

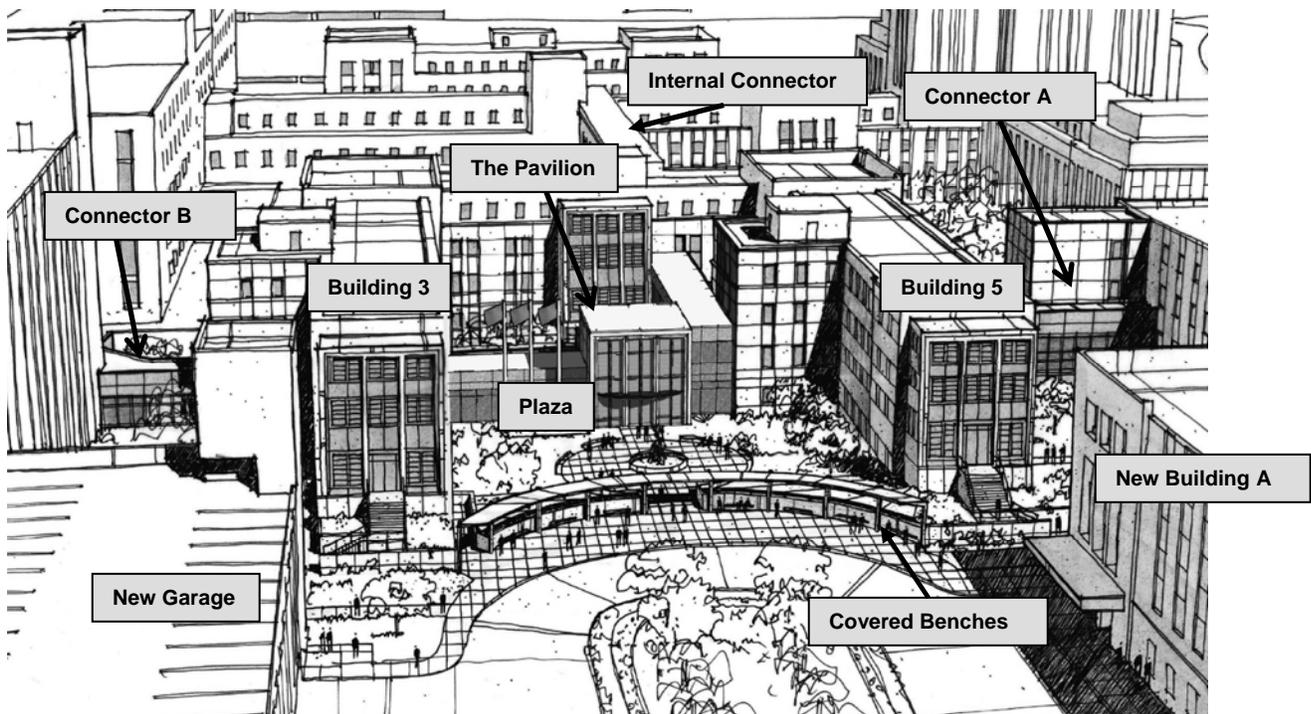
Connector B is one story and will connect the patient garage to Building 5 and Building 7.

Internal Connector

The Internal Connector, an existing two story connector that runs through Buildings 7, 2, and 8, will be renovated.

Connector C

Connector C will link Building 4 and Building 9. The first floor of this connector already exists. The project proposes to add a second floor onto the same footprint. There will not be any substantive changes to the courtyards immediately north of Building 9.



Rendering of Buildings 3 and 5 with new connectors and modified courtyard

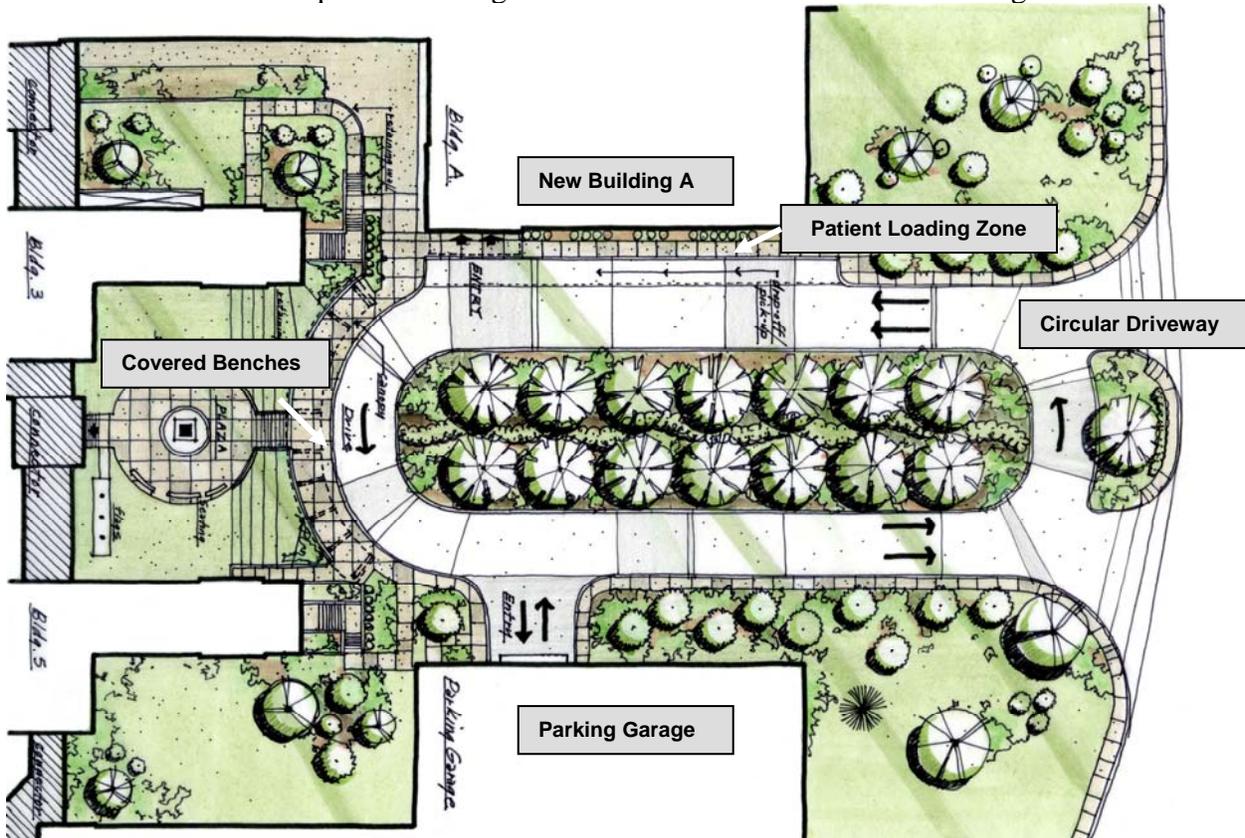
Courtyards

One of the defining attributes of the original campus is the courtyards. As a result of the new patient garage, Building A and the new system of connectors, a series of new interior courtyards will be created and the existing courtyard between Buildings 3 and 5 will be modified. The historic courtyards to the east of Building One will not be disturbed.

The three new interior courtyards between the connectors and the buildings will have tables, chairs and benches for staff and visitor use.

The larger area between Buildings 3 and 5, the patient garage, and Building A will include the modified courtyard and circular driveway. In between Buildings 3 and 5 there will be

landscaping, a fountain, circular plaza, and a row of covered benches adjacent to the circular driveway. The Pavilion Connector will have doors that open to the plaza area. The circular driveway between Building A and the new patient garage will have a double row of trees in the center island. There is a patient loading zone in front of the entrance to Building A.



Landscape plan for the exterior courtyard between Buildings 3 and 5 and the circular driveway between Building A and the parking garage.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

The Connectors

Initially, the Navy considered connecting the new patient garage to Building A through the existing hallways of Buildings 3 and 5; however, the size of the hallways and the number of required turns resulted in an impractical route for patients in wheelchairs and gurneys. Furthermore, Buildings 3 and 5 are largely comprised of offices which would not be conducive to patient traffic. The Master Plan Update for the campus proposed putting the connectors underground to limit adverse effects to the campus; however, it was determined that extensive underground utility lines would prohibit such tunnels. There were also concerns about excavation affecting the historic courtyards. As a result, the Navy has determined that the proposed system of connectors is the only feasible option.

The design of the patient connectors is simple and efficient providing internal connections among the medical buildings. The new work will not connect directly to historic Building One and the new connectors will not be visible from Wisconsin Avenue.

The appearance of the connectors is very important, particularly because several of them interface with contributing Buildings 3 and 5. The applicant originally considered using precast and punched windows similar to the vocabulary of the historic buildings as well as Buildings A and B; however, because of the differences in precast finish and because it was felt that each building should be identifiable, it has been proposed that the connectors be constructed of metal and glass. This will still relate to the vocabulary of the existing structures, but allow each building to maintain its own identity. It also allows people to see the original buildings through the glass.

The Courtyards

Staff finds that the design of the larger courtyard and circular driveway, in between Buildings 3 and 5, Building A and the patient garage, needs further consideration. Staff is concerned that too much of the space is dedicated to the circular driveway and too little space is dedicated to pedestrians. The sidewalks appear too narrow to adequately accommodate pedestrians and wheelchairs and they abruptly end at the garage entrance. The row of canopied benches also seems misplaced in that they are located away from Building A where passengers will be dropped off and picked up. As a result **staff recommends that the Commission request the applicant submit a modified and more detailed site and landscape plan for the exterior courtyard between Buildings 3 and 5 and the circular driveway.**

Finally **staff recommends that the Commission request landscape plans for the new interior courtyards created by the connectors because they were not submitted with the concept design.**

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

At its February 2009 meeting, the Commission found that the Master Plan Update for the campus is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, and particularly conforms to the goals and policies of the Federal Workplace and Transportation Elements of the Plan. The proposed project is anticipated in the Master Plan Update and therefore is also not found to be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NCPC does not have independent NEPA responsibility for federal projects outside the District of Columbia. The Department of the Navy recently completed the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the WRNMMC campus. To allow flexibility in the design process, the EIS assumes that the medical addition footprint could vary somewhat from the specific footprint shown in the EIS but would remain in the area bounded by North Palmer Road, South Palmer Road, Wood Road, and Brown Drive. While the proposed connectors were not specifically

analyzed, the EIS found that any change within the area above would not be expected to increase environmental impacts identified in the EIS.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

NCPC does not have independent Section 106 responsibility for federal projects outside the District of Columbia. The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) has reviewed the connectors and courtyards project and has determined that the project will have an adverse effect on historic resources. The removal of historic material and the alteration of features and space that characterize these contributing resources are not in keeping with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. MHT recognizes that the Navy explored alternative routes and was unable to find a way of internalizing the connectors while still maintaining a functional patient path through the buildings. In an effort to minimize the adverse effect, the Navy did make changes to the plan for the Pavilion, however these changes did not entirely avoid the adverse effect.

In order to facilitate the resolution of this adverse effect on Buildings 3 and 5, the Navy must enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with MHT. Since this project is a component of the larger BRAC RFP2 Support Facilities undertaking at the campus, MHT requests that the Navy include the connectors and courtyards project as part of a comprehensive MOA for the RFP2 undertaking. Therefore **NCPC staff recommends that the Commission request that the MOA be executed prior to the applicant's final submission.**

CONSULTATION

The following agencies have reviewed the EIS and determined that the Master Plan Update for the campus expansion is generally consistent with their plans, programs, and objectives:

- Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in Montgomery County
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Maryland Department of Planning
- Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Maryland Historical Trust

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) found that the project will have an adverse effect on Buildings 3 and 5. In order to facilitate the resolution of this adverse effect, the Navy must enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with MHT. Since this project is a component of the larger BRAC RFP2 Support Facilities undertaking at the campus, MHT requests that the Navy include the connectors and courtyards project as part of a comprehensive MOA for the RFP2 undertaking.