



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: July 7, 2016

PROJECT

Transfer of Jurisdiction from the National Park Service to the Kennedy Center for the Expansion Connection Project along Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway

Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
2700 F St, NW
Washington, DC

SUBMITTED BY

Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

REVIEW AUTHORITY

Transfer of Jurisdiction Approvals
per 40 U.S.C. § 8124(a)

NCPC FILE NUMBER

7802

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER

23.00(63.00)44382

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

Approval of Transfer of Jurisdiction

PROPOSED ACTION

Approve as requested

ACTION ITEM TYPE

Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Kennedy Center) in coordination with the National Park Service (NPS) submitted a transfer of jurisdiction from the NPS to the Kennedy Center for approximately 3,900 square feet of land and additional air rights to build a pedestrian ramp and bridge. The ramp and bridge will connect the Kennedy Center Expansion Project and the Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail. The Kennedy Center, one of the country's preeminent cultural institutions and a major feature in the city's urban design framework, is constrained on several sides by transportation infrastructure, with limited pedestrian access from several critical points. A key project goal is to link the Kennedy Center, the National Mall, the Potomac River waterfront, and the surrounding vicinity.

The proposed transfer of jurisdiction is integral to the Connection Project which is linked to the Kennedy Center's broader expansion, currently under construction, which adds approximately 72,000 square feet of space to the existing building and grounds. The Kennedy Center states that the Expansion Project will allow it to provide opportunities for enhanced public engagement and interaction with the arts, while simultaneously increasing rehearsal, education, and public access areas in the decades to come.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Commission approved the Kennedy Center Expansion project in July 2015 with the expectation that the Kennedy Center would propose a connection to the Potomac riverfront in the near future. Since that time the connection project design has continued to evolve, resulting in multiple alternatives that were under consideration as part of the environmental assessment.

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- Edward Durell Stone designed the Kennedy Center in 1959, and the building was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.
 - The Monumental Core Framework Plan (2009) envisioned a connection from the Kennedy Center to the riverfront and explored linking federal facilities and cultural institutions to adjacent communities. The Kennedy Center Expansion Project (July 2016) provides an opportunity for such a connection, including pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
 - The proposed preliminary and final site and building plans for the Expansion Connection Project is also before the Commission in July 2016.
 - NCPC and NPS are co-leads under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) NPS issued its finding of no significant impact (FONSI) on June 17, 2016 and NCPC issued its FONSI on June 21, 2016.
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RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the transfer of jurisdiction of approximately 1,800 square feet of land and 2,100 square feet of air rights from the National Park Service to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for it to construct a pedestrian bridge between the Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail and the Kennedy Center and improve accessibility for visitors.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	July 2015 – Approved final site and building plans for the Kennedy Center Expansion project. April 2016 – Approval of comments on concept design for the connection project.
Remaining actions (anticipated)	July 2016 – Approval of preliminary and final site and building plans.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Staff supports the Kennedy Center's efforts to develop a connection between the Kennedy Center and the Potomac riverfront to increase public accessibility to this prominent cultural resource. Improving public access to the Kennedy Center is an important proposal envisioned in both the Extending the Legacy Plan (1996) and in the Monumental Core Framework Plan (2010). Staff used these documents, the Assessment of Effects report under Section 106, and the recently updated Comprehensive Plan (2016) to evaluate this transfer of jurisdiction. Staff recommends that the Commission **approve the transfer of jurisdiction of approximately 1,800 square feet of land and 2,100 square feet of air rights from the National Park Service to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for it to construct a pedestrian bridge between the Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail and the Kennedy Center and improve accessibility for visitors.**

Analysis

Staff supports the transfer of a small portion of federal land from NPS to the Kennedy Center. Staff notes that the Monumental Core Framework Plan envisioned a direct connection between the Kennedy Center building and the riverfront. Staff understands that the Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail will be minimally affected by the introduction of this ramp and bridge and that the long term benefit of improved access will provide a needed connection to this national memorial and cultural institution.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff has determined this project is consistent with several policies in the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements (2016), in particular the Historic Preservation Element and the Parks and Open Space Elements.

National Historic Preservation Act

NCPC and NPS are co-leads for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which was initiated with the DC State Historic Preservation Office on November 9, 2015, and with the Virginia SHPO on February 17, 2016. A joint NEPA/Section 106 public scoping meeting was held at the Kennedy Center on September 29, 2015, during which the consulting parties were introduced to the project, presented with a draft area of potential effects, and invited to comment on the proposal.

NCPC and NPS held a total of three consulting party meetings including the one on September 29, 2015, and the signatories submitted a draft Assessment of Effects report to the Virginia and DC

State Historic Preservation Offices for review. The agencies have agreed that this project will result in an adverse effect determination. On June 17, 2017, the signatories executed a Memorandum of Agreement to minimize and mitigate the adverse effects. The minimization included reducing the width of the bridge structure, replacing the frosted glass railing with less visible cable railing and reduced the bridge light levels. Mitigation is for the Kennedy Center to provide up to \$45,000 to NPS for the development of a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the portion of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway between Constitution Avenue and Virginia Avenue.

National Environmental Policy Act

NCPC and NPS are co-leading the environmental assessment (EA) in cooperation with the Kennedy Center to identify alternatives and assess the potential impacts of the project. There are four action alternatives and one no action alternative included in the EA. One alternative connects directly to the Kennedy Center building, while two connects directly with the expansion project. A fourth alternative is an at grade connection next to the parking garage entrance. We held a joint NEPA/Section 106 public scoping meeting at the Kennedy Center on September 29, 2015, during which we introduced the public to the project and invited the public to comment on the proposal.

The EA was available for public review and comment from March 23 through April 25, 2016. The EA is currently located on the NPS's Planning Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website and a press release was issued on the Kennedy Center, and NPS websites on March 23, 2016. The NPS issued its finding of no significant impact (FONSI) on June 16, 2016 and NCPC issued a FONSI on June 21, 2016.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

Coordinating Committee meeting was held on June 15, 2016 and the Committee forwarded the proposed land transfer to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies were: NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District of Columbia Department of Transportation; the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer; the General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts does not approve transfers of jurisdiction. However, the associated bridge project was reviewed by the Commission of Fine Arts at its May and June 2016 meetings. At its May 19, 2016 meeting CFA "...commended the project team for an elegant and well-detailed bridge connecting to the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway..." but also noted a few changes that needed to be addressed. The Kennedy Center addressed these issues and CFA approved the final design at its June 16, 2016 meeting.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online:

- Submission Drawings
- Environmental Assessment
- Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement
- NPS FONSI
- NCPC FONSI

Prepared by Carlton Hart
06/30/2016

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

Transfer of Jurisdiction from the National Park Service to the Kennedy Center for the Expansion Connection Project along Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway

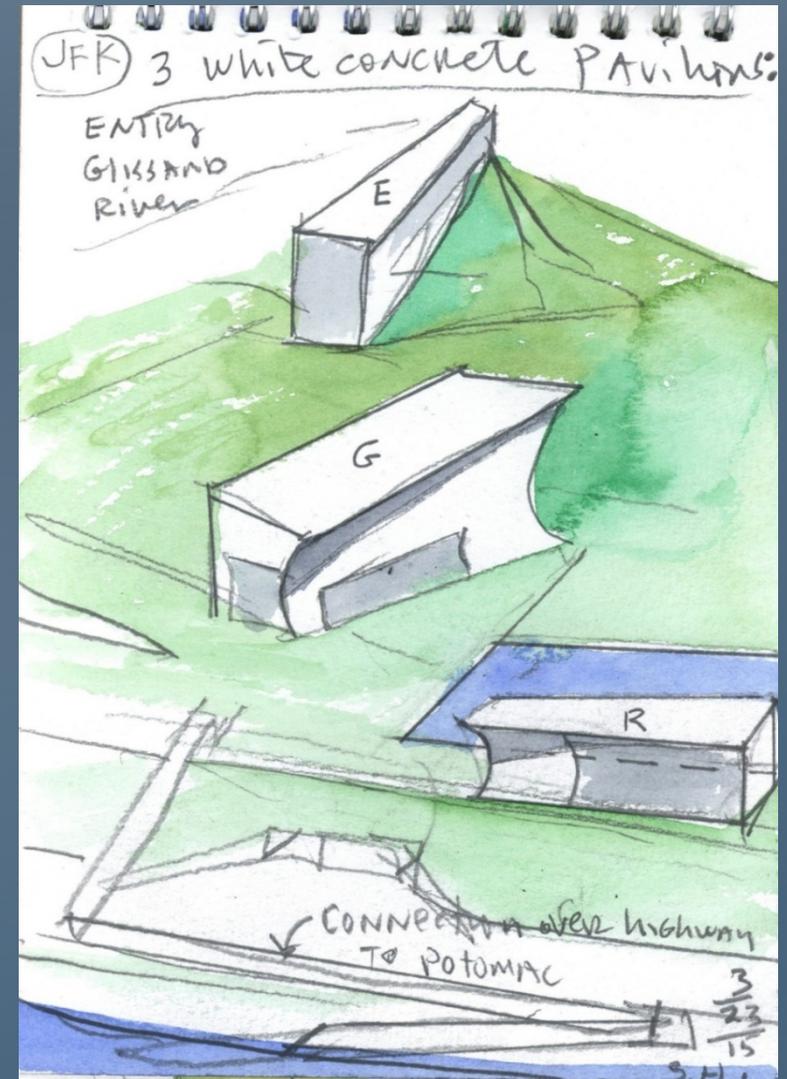
2700 F Street, NW
Washington, DC

Submitted by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in coordination
with the National Park Service

Transfer of Jurisdiction

July 7, 2016





Final Proposal – Bridge with ramp and stairs (July 2016)



