



Commission Action

May 2, 2019

PROJECT Foreign Missions Center Master Plan at the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center 16th Street, NW, between Aspen Street and Alaska Avenue, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER MP305-7393
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of State	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 62.10(05.00)44909
REVIEW AUTHORITY Advisory per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(a) and (b)(1)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of final master plan
	ACTION TAKEN Approved final master plan with comments

The Commission:

Approves the Foreign Missions Center Final Master Plan.

Supports the Department of State (DOS) vision for the Foreign Mission Center (FMC) to develop the northwestern portion of the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) site as a campus with designated lots leased to foreign missions for individual chancery development, in a manner similar to the existing International Chancery Center.

Supports the final master plan that allows for three to four story chancery development in scale with the surrounding neighborhood, provides foreign missions with suitable development sites, and protects existing historic resources by repurposing existing historic buildings, where feasible.

Notes that while NCPC is reviewing this master plan under 40 USC 8722 (a) and (b)(1) of the Planning Act of 1952, NCPC will review related infrastructure and open space in accordance with 40 USC 8722 (b)(1) and (d), and individual sites at the FMC in accordance with the criteria in the Foreign Missions Act.

Notes that NCPC executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with DOS, on February 27, 2017, that describes the review process NCPC will use for individual lots at the FMC.

Notes that DOS, the Commission, the DC State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation executed a Programmatic Agreement in December 2018 that advances historic preservation goals for the campus while addressing DOS' need to develop the campus with new foreign missions to secure funding for campus-wide infrastructure.

Adopts its Record of Decision for the Foreign Missions Center Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Requires that when DOS submits a future infrastructure project at the FMC, it includes with the submittal an update to the Commission on any related mitigation identified in NCPC's Record of Decision.

Finds that DOS has responded to the concerns raised by the Commission at its March 2017 including those related to historic preservation, transportation, security, and the development guidelines as follows:

Historic Preservation

Notes that DOS has, pursuant to the Programmatic Agreement, acknowledged it will do the following:

- Develop promotional materials that summarize the historic significance, architectural features and other desirable qualities of the buildings...and distribute to every foreign country that expresses an interest in establishing a chancery at the FMC.
- Not consider any proposal to demolish Buildings 40 or 41 until all other lots similar in size, street frontage, and vehicular access within the FMC have been leased.
- Follow the process in the agreement to determine appropriate mitigation with the consulting parties if the demolition of either building is proposed.

Transportation

Notes that DOS has provided the rationale for maintaining the cul-de-sac at 14th Street for vehicles – as its removal does not demonstrably improve vehicular circulation. DOS is proposing a publicly-accessible connection to Alaska Avenue to the north which supports both the District's and NCPC's pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and connectivity goals.

Notes that DOS provided responses to DDOT's Comprehensive Transportation Review comments within the Record of Decision regarding: maintaining 14th Street ROW clear of buildings up to Alaska Avenue; increasing bike lanes on FMC streets from 4 feet to 5 feet; limiting curb cuts on Main Drive which is under joint DOS/DDOT control; preserving heritage trees where possible; providing access/easement information; committing to adding turning lanes to several intersections to improve level of service, and adding a 19 dock Capital Bikeshare Station at the intersection of Dahlia and 14th Streets and an off-site location to be determined after 25% buildout.

Notes that DOS is encouraging foreign missions to use alternative modes of transportation by installing bike lanes on FMC streets, funding a Capital Bikeshare Station, creating a multiuse path connection to Alaska Avenue, and providing sidewalks for pedestrians.

Security

Notes that the final FMC Master Plan design guidelines state that foreign missions should refer to policies contained within the Urban Design Element, Foreign Mission, and International Organization Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the design of security elements and private lot frontage.

Design Guidelines

Notes that the design guidelines encourage foreign missions to provide employee parking below grade and a limited number of spaces for visitors above grade in the side or rear yard.

Supports the guidelines for strongly encouraging foreign missions to preserve trees identified as “special” or “heritage” as defined by the DC Municipal Regulations, and when not possible, obtain a Heritage Tree Removal Permit and replace in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Notes that the building frontage along Dahlia Street and northern portion of 14th Street, NW have been realigned in the final master plan to provide a consistent building wall.

Notes that DOS did not make any changes to Lots 12 and 14 as requested by the Commission in March 2017 because the building location on Lot 12 is dictated by existing heritage/special trees, and Lot 14 is the only lot of such size that provides a viable alternative to demolishing Building 40.

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