



## Delegated Action of the Executive Director

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**PROJECT**  
**Chevy Chase Circle Fountain Lighting**  
NW, Washington, DC

**SUBMITTED BY**  
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NCPC FILE NUMBER**  
8162

**NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER**  
3101.00(00.00)45106

**ACTION TAKEN**  
Approved Preliminary and Final Site  
Development Plans

**REVIEW AUTHORITY**  
Federal Projects in the District  
Per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

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The National Park Service (NPS) has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for lighting improvements at Chevy Chase Circle (Circle) located on the border of Chevy Chase, Maryland and Washington, DC. The Circle is a 240-foot diameter, 1.05-acre park partially located on NPS Reservation 335A and is managed by NPS's Rock Creek Park unit. The Circle is entirely bounded by a traffic rotary with several roadways that radiate from the rotary. The Circle's central feature is the Francis G. Newlands Memorial Fountain (Fountain), which was constructed in 1933 to honor the founder of Chevy Chase. The Fountain can project water 30 feet into the air and is situated in a 60-foot diameter fountain basin constructed of Aquia sandstone and concrete.

The purpose of the proposed lighting is to illuminate the Fountain and its immediate surroundings and offer a visual cue to nighttime drivers to stay on the surrounding roadways. The Circle does not currently have direct lighting and several vehicles have attempted to drive through it at night, resulting in significant damage to the Fountain, the benches, and the landscape. Damage by vehicles is the greatest threat to the Circle's integrity. Otherwise, the Circle has been well maintained, with particular attention to the Fountain which was restored in 1990 and 2003, in addition to periodic repairs due to automobile damage.

The proposed lighting plan includes nine submersible lights and six bollard lights that are intended to highlight the Fountain while also protecting park resources from errant vehicles. The nine submersible lights will be arrayed within the fountain basin, beneath the water surface to illuminate the Fountain's water display on a seasonal basis from mid-April to mid-November. The six bollard lights will be evenly spaced around the circumference of the circular flagstone plaza that surrounds the Fountain to provide all-season illumination for the basin and plaza. Both the submersible fixtures and bollard lights will be Light-emitting Diode (LED) light fixtures with a color temperature of no more than 3000K (Kelvins) to provide warm white illumination.

NPS used a combination of on-site mock-ups and computer modeling to study the color temperature and intensity of illumination from the proposed light fixtures. The model imagery included in the submission materials indicate the proposed lighting scheme will create a brightly lit fountain plume and evenly light the plaza area with a lower intensity. Although the submersible

fixtures will be located beneath the water surface, they will be visible in the off-season when the Fountain is not in use between mid-November and mid-April. These stainless-steel fixtures have a circular lens that measures 8-inches in diameter mounted to a 6-inch height adjustable base. One 8-inch square junction box will be required to supply power to all nine fixtures and will be installed flush with the surface of the fountain basin. The proposed bollard lights measure approximately 39-inches in height with an integrated flood light and will be made of powder-coated aluminum with a black finish.



*Figure 1 Proposed Fountain Lighting Simulation*

The proposal advances the general objectives of the Federal Environment, Historic Preservation and Parks and Open Space Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan* including policies related to light pollution, protection and maintenance of historic properties, and protection of cultural landscapes.

The Circle and Fountain are historically and culturally significant. In 2017, NPS completed a Cultural Landscape Inventory for Chevy Chase Circle. The Fountain was also listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2007, noting significance at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Community Planning and Development and under Criteria Consideration F as a commemorative property.

Both NPS and NCPC have compliance responsibilities under both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). As part of the consultation process required under Section 106 of NHPA, NPS initiated consultation with both the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) and the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO). MHT concurred with a finding of “No Adverse Effect” on historic properties for the project. The DC SHPO determined the project will have “No Adverse

Effect” on historic resources, including archaeological sites, conditioned on submission of the results of the excavation of the shovel testing to the District Archaeologist. Noting that the data is needed to update the archaeological geographic information system (GIS). NCPC is designating NPS as the lead agency for compliance with NHPA.

Pursuant to § 601.12 of NCPC’s NEPA Regulations, NCPC has determined that the project can be categorically excluded from further environmental analysis based on categorical exclusion #2, which pertains to the “approval of the installation or restoration of minor site elements...” Prior to applying this categorical exclusion, NCPC staff determined that no extraordinary circumstances were present as required by the Commission’s NEPA Regulations under § 601.11. NPS determined on May 14, 2020 that no circumstances would require an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under NEPA, and as such, the proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion per NPS’s environmental review criteria. NPS identified Categorical Exclusion Citation C.6 – “Installation of navigation aids.”

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) approved the proposal at its April 16, 2020 meeting with no objection to the lighting design as proposed.

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its May 13, 2020 meeting. The participating agencies were NCPC; District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) via email; District Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE), District Office of Planning (DCOP), District Department of Transportation (DDOT), General Service Administration (GSA), National Park Service (NPS), and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary and final site development plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies.

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Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996 and per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d), I approve the preliminary and final site development plans for the Chevy Chase Circle Fountain Lighting located in Chevy Chase Circle, NW, Washington, DC.



Marcel Acosta



Date