### Executive Director's Recommendation
Commission Meeting: October 6, 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>NCPC FILE NUMBER</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>George Washington Memorial Parkway North Rehabilitation</strong></td>
<td>7806</td>
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<td>Fairfax County and Arlington County, Virginia</td>
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<th>SUBMITTED BY</th>
<th>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</th>
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<td>United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service</td>
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<tr>
<th>REVIEW AUTHORITY</th>
<th>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</th>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Projects in the Environs per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)</td>
<td>Approval of preliminary and final site development plans</td>
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<tr>
<th>PROPOSED ACTION</th>
<th>ACTION ITEM TYPE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve preliminary and final site development plans</td>
<td>Consent Calendar</td>
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### PROJECT SUMMARY
The United States National Park Service (NPS) has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for rehabilitation improvements to the northern section (7.6 miles between I-495/Capital Beltway and Spout Run Parkway) of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The project would repair and restore the Parkway with safety improvements that comply with current standards, and with the sensitivity of preserving the Parkway’s historic and natural character. Specific project elements include roadway repaving; reconstruction of unpaved shoulders; drainage infrastructure repair; guard wall improvements; stormwater management facilities repair; overlook improvements; lengthening acceleration/deceleration lanes; and a partial ramp configuration at the Parkway/Route 123 interchange.

### KEY INFORMATION
- The NPS would undertake the Parkway rehabilitation in multiple phases, and potential adverse construction impacts to traffic would be minimized through a detailed maintenance and operations plan.
- The George Washington Memorial Parkway was established as a recreation and environmental conservation area to serve pleasure traffic, and this project would ensure the Parkway remains a viable, critical link in the regional transportation network, as well as a national park.

### RECOMMENDATION
The Commission:
Approves the preliminary and final site development plans for improvements to the northern section (7.6-miles) of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, extending between the Interstate-495 Capital Beltway to the Spout Run Parkway in Fairfax County and Arlington County, Virginia.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

<table>
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<th>Previous actions</th>
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<td>Remaining actions (anticipated)</td>
<td>None.</td>
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PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The National Park Service (NPS) has submitted preliminary and final site development plans to rehabilitate and improve the George Washington Memorial Parkway’s (7.6 miles) northern section within the context of its historic and natural setting. As described below, staff finds the project to be consistent with a number of Comprehensive Plan policies that pertain to transportation and historic parkways. In addition, NPS developed the project plans after many years of study, with a final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) issued in 2018. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission approve the preliminary and final site development plans for improvements to the northern section (7.6-miles) of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, extending between the Interstate-495 Capital Beltway to the Spout Run Parkway in Fairfax County and Arlington County, Virginia.

Background / Project Description

The George Washington Memorial Parkway was designed as both a transportation route and a means to preserve and enhance the natural scenic qualities and cultural attributes along the Potomac River. The Parkway concept arose from a number of influences at the time of its development (in phases from 1929-1970) including the popularity of automobile travel, increasing suburbanization, the City Beautiful Movement, and a societal focus on conservation. Today, the Parkway serves as a major commuter route through northern Virginia, between the I-495/Beltway and Mount Vernon, Virginia (through Fairfax County, Arlington County, City Alexandria, and immediately across the Potomac River from the District of Columbia), with an average daily traffic volume that ranges from 57,000 to 85,000 vehicles. The Parkway’s prolonged period of heavy use has led to its deterioration and the need for the NPS to restore the route so that it can continue to serve travelers and maintain its historically significant features.

The need for the project arises from a number of immediate safety, appearance, and environmental issues with the Parkway including:
• Deteriorated pavement (with frequent cracking, potholes, and settlement) and poor roadway drainage (which causes hazardous driving conditions due to water ponding);
• Damaged roadway shoulders due to improper drainage, plowing, and frequent vehicle pull-offs;
• Inadequate stone masonry guard walls that do not meet current safety standards;
• Inadequate acceleration/deceleration lanes; and
• Eroded drainage outfalls (with deep gullies along steep slopes) that present safety concerns and resource-related impacts.

The project would undertake the following key improvements, both to restore the Parkway’s condition as a functional and safe roadway, and in a manner that successfully preserves its historic and natural character. Specific elements would include:

• Full pavement reconstruction along the northbound and southbound lanes between Spout Run to the I-495/Capital Beltway;
• Unpaved shoulder reconstruction (6-10 feet on outside and 6-8 feet on the median side (with 3-foot-wide shoulders in more environmentally sensitive areas)) with an aggregate-top oil mixture and either seeded or laid with sod;
• Drainage infrastructure replacement, including curbs and existing inlets, as well as the installation of additional inlets and curb cuts at select locations;
• Selective replacement of historic guard walls with 27-inch-high stone masonry walls based on a NPS and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 2018 Wall Safety Risk Assessment;
• Acceleration/deceleration lane extensions at different locations including the George Washington Memorial Parkway Headquarters/US Park Police (USPP) entrance and the Central Intelligence Agency campus/Parkway interchange;
• Drainage outfall rehabilitation with a combination of compacted soils, partial vegetative stabilization techniques, existing or new pipes, and facility consolidation/abandonment; and
• Route 123/Parkway interchange ramp reconfiguration.

The project would also construct an emergency turnaround; implement minor rehabilitation improvements to the scenic North and South Donaldson Run Overlooks; install conduits and manholes for future Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS); and install stormwater management facilities that are consistent with Virginia state (Virginia Department of Environmental Quality) requirements.

Analysis

The project would rehabilitate the northern section (7.6 miles) of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, which is currently in poor condition, with damaged pavement, frequent flooding and stormwater ponding, and features that do not comply with modern roadway standards. Project plans show the Parkway restoration in a manner that preserves its natural and historic character. The project was the subject of multiple studies, starting in 2006, concluding with an Environmental Assessment (EA) and FONSI in 2018.
In particular, staff finds the project complies with Comprehensive Plan policies that pertain to transportation and historic parkways including:

- T.A.13 - Support improvements that increase safety and reliability and preserves the historic character and cultural and national significance of the parkways; and

- T.A.14 - Coordinate with local, federal, and other stakeholders to accommodate safety improvements consistent with industry standards in a manner that minimizes impacts on natural and cultural resources.

The project would result in several limited impacts to the natural environment (including some tree removal); however, NPS would mitigate these impacts to the extent feasible. Planned tree replacement would occur on-site per NPS and NCPC policies; disturbed soils would be revegetated according to NPS and VDEQ requirements for soil stabilization and revegetation; and archeological monitoring would be implemented during ground disturbing activities near culturally sensitive resources. These and other specific mitigation were identified through a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), which was completed in 2018.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff finds the project to be consistent with a number of Comprehensive Plan policies that pertain to transportation and historic parkways as previously described above.

National Environmental Policy Act

The National Park Service (NPS), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD) and NCPC, prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to examine the environmental impacts associated with two potential alternative actions (a no action and an action alternative.) NPS selected the action alternative (B) that consists of multiple site improvements to the Parkway to correct drainage, erosion, and safety deficiencies as previously described above. The EA was concluded with a signed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in 2018. The FONSI outlines mitigation measures that NPS will undertake to minimize any project-related adverse impacts to vegetation, historic structures, archeological resources, surface waters, wildlife, and visual/aesthetic resources. NCPC does not have a formal environmental (NEPA) responsibility for the project based on its location outside of the District of Columbia.

National Historic Preservation Act

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, NPS consulted with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), DC State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO), Maryland Historical Trust, and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. NPS concluded the process through a signed Programmatic Agreement (PA), which outlines a context
sensitive approach for continuing design development to help minimize potential adverse impacts to the Parkway as a historic property. The NPS will continue to coordinate with VDHR and other consulting parties and coordinating agencies under the PA. NCPC does not have a formal Section 106 responsibility for the project based on its location outside of the District of Columbia.

CONSULTATION

The project underwent extensive consultation with multiple neighborhood groups, federal agencies, state agencies, county agencies, and interest groups as part of the project’s NEPA process, which concluded with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in 2018. The National Park Service also continues to meet regularly with transportation planners from Fairfax County, Arlington County, and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to establish a plan to manage traffic during the anticipated multi-year project construction. Finally, as part of the project’s Section 106 process, NPS has been coordinating its project plan development with NCPC and VDHR staff to ensure compliance with the project’s Programmatic Agreement (PA).

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at www.ncpc.gov:

- NCPC Staff Summary Presentation

Prepared by Michael Weil
09/28/2022

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)
George Washington Memorial Parkway
North Rehabilitation

George Washington Memorial Parkway
Fairfax County, Virginia

Approval of Preliminary and Final Site Development Plans

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service
Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: October 6, 2022
Applicant Request: Approval of Preliminary and Final Site Development Plans
Session: Consent Calendar
NCPC Review Officer: Michael Weil
NCPC File Number: 7806

The United States National Park Service (NPS) has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for multiple improvements to the northern section (7.6 miles between I-495/Capital Beltway and Spout Run) of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The project purpose is to 1) rehabilitate and repair the roadway, and 2) to improve existing roadway geometry and install safety features within the project limits, including at the Route 123/GWMP interchange, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) interchange, and GWMP Headquarters/United States Park Police (USPP) entrance. This project would not increase the existing Parkway capacity, and would be a multi-year, phased construction project, to be implemented based on available funding.

Specific project elements would include:

- Full pavement reconstruction on the northbound and southbound sides of the Parkway from Spout Run to I-495/Capital Beltway;
- Reconstruction of existing unpaved shoulders (6-10 feet on outside and 6-8 feet on median side; sensitive areas may be reduced to 3 feet) with an aggregate-top oil mixture and either seeded or laid with sod;
- Replacement of drainage infrastructure, including curbs and existing inlets, as well as the addition of inlets and curb cut at selective locations;
Project Summary

- Selective replacement of historic guard walls with 27-inch-high stone masonry walls based on a NPS and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 2018 Wall Safety Risk Assessment;
- Extension of acceleration/deceleration lanes at different locations along the north section of the Parkway, including the GWMP Headquarters/US Park Police (USPP). entrance and the CIA/GWMP interchange;
- Rehabilitation of 80 drainage outfalls, which could include pipe resetting and installation of a concrete cradle, use of compacted soils and partial vegetative stabilization techniques, use of existing or new pipes, and consolidation or abandonment; and
- Reconfiguring the Route 123/GWMP interchange.

In addition, the project would construct emergency turnarounds; complete minor rehabilitation improvements to the scenic North and South Donaldson Run Overlooks; install conduits and manholes for future Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS); and install SWM facilities consistent with VDEQ requirements. The project would require some tree removal; however, these trees would be replaced to the extent feasible based on NPS policies.

NPS completed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (for the project) with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) that defines various mitigation measures. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the NPS sent a package of information to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), DC State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO.), Maryland Historical Trust, and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on May 25, 2016, to reinitiate the consultation process for the project. With the re-initiation of the Section 106 process, a new project Programmatic Agreement (PA) was developed in consultation with the VDHR and consulting parties. In this 2018 PA, the NPS outlines the approach to further consultation under Section 106, which includes a context sensitive design approach to further minimize impacts once more design details are available. The NPS will continue to coordinate with VDHR and other consulting parties under the new PA that will be executed with stipulations for mitigation.
Project Location
Project Purpose & Need

Purpose:
- The purpose of this proposal is to 1) rehabilitate and repair the roadway and related transportation assets and implement safety improvements along the 7.6 miles of the Parkway between Spout Run and I-495/ Capital Beltway, and 2) improve existing roadway geometry and safety features along the entire roadway within the project limits, including at the Route 123/GWMP interchange, Central Intelligence Agency Interchange, and GWMP Headquarters/US Park Police entrance. This rehabilitation project would not increase the existing Parkway traffic capacity, and would be a multi-year, phased construction project implemented based on available funding.

Need:
- Pavement contains potholes, cracks, and settlement
- Existing shoulders are damaged as a result of improper drainage, plowing, and frequent pull offs by vehicles
- Existing drainage system cannot drain road surface during severe weather events causing unsafe ponding in roadway
- Existing historic stone walls need to be assessed for safety
- Erosion and bank failure at outfall causing safety and environmental impacts
- Acceleration/deceleration lanes are inadequate
- Route 123/GWMP interchange has tight geometry and inadequate deceleration lane length
- Parkway lacks turn around for Park Police and maintenance vehicles to safely and efficiently respond to incidents on the Parkway

Project History

- 2005 Project Planning Began
- 2006 Initial Public Scoping
- 2008 EA Released for Public Comment
- 2009 Project Put on Hold for Comment Analysis and Additional Studies
- 2009 Cultural Landscape Inventory
- 2010 FHWA Safety Risk Analysis
- 2014-2015 Visual Resources Inventory and Assessment
- 2015 Updated Cultural Landscape Inventory
- 2016 Re-initiation Planning Process/Public Scoping
- 2017-2018 NPS/FHWA Refined Approach to Achieve Safety While Minimizing Impacts to Historic Walls
- 2018 EA Released for Public Comment
Existing Conditions

Typical Parkway Cross Section

Figure 2. Examples of the project need (left photo – drop inlet in roadway, middle photo – stone wall in need of repair, and right photo – collapsed drainage pipe)
Existing Conditions

Figure 12. Photographs of Existing Stone Masonry Walls
Project Improvements

Roadway Repairs and Reconstruction

- **Pavement** – Full pavement reconstruction
- **Shoulders** – Reconstruct existing unpaved shoulders (6 to 10 feet on outside and 6 to 8 feet on median side; sensitive areas may be reduced to 3 feet)
- **Curb/Inlets** – Replace curb and inlets as well as add additional inlets and curb cuts
Project Improvements

Roadside Barrier Modifications

- Used 2018 Wall Safety Risk Assessment to determine treatment for each wall segment (i.e., raised to 27 inches or repaired including safety countermeasures)
- Rebuild historic stone walls at high, medium-high, and medium-medium* risk locations with a concrete core and raise to 27 inches to enhance safety
- Medium-low and low walls to be repaired and include safety countermeasures
- Replace w-beam with steel-backed timber where median width is minimal
- Approach balances safety requirements while protecting scenic views to Potomac River gorge and historic character of the parkway

*Eight walls with superior and/or high views under high, medium-high, or medium-medium categories were addressed based on additional FHWA visual analyses and were not uniformly raised to 27 inches.

FHWA Design Visualizations (wall raised to 27 inches)
Project Improvements

**Outfall Repairs**
- 80 outfalls identified in need of repair
- Repair pipes and outfalls to minimize erosion
- Stabilization of outfall erosion
- Careful consideration how to access outfalls for repair work

**Other Elements**
- Acceleration/deceleration lanes at the Park Police/GWMP Headquarters
- Improvements to the Central Intelligence Agency/GWMP interchange
- Repairs to the walls and pavement reconstruction at the existing north and south scenic overlooks
- Stormwater management facilities (bioswales and bioretention areas)
- Turn-arounds for incident management
- ITS backbone infrastructure (housing for future conduit)
Project Improvements

Route 123/GWMP Interchange

- Reconfiguration of the ramps on the west side of the interchange to improve safety along the southbound side of the Parkway.

- Acceleration/deceleration lanes would be extended to allow safer merging and diverging.

- Other improvements would address drainage, signing, pavement markings, curbs, and rehabilitating or resurfacing existing ramps on the east side of the interchange and Route 123.
Environmental Impacts

Surface Waters
- Minor short-term adverse impact due to outfall repairs
- Long-term beneficial impact from stream/drainage channel stabilization

Vegetation
- Removal of vegetation due to outfall repairs; minimal disturbance from other project elements
- Minor long-term adverse impacts

Wildlife
- Slight loss of habitat and noise generation during construction
- In context of Parkway, only minor and short-term

Historic Structures
- Moderate long-term adverse impact due to changes in original design elements
- No adverse impact on other nearby historic resources eligible for or listed in the NRHP

Archaeological Resources
- Negligible long-term adverse impact due to avoidance and mitigation

Cultural Landscapes
- Moderate long-term adverse impact because of change in feeling, location, and spatial organization of the barrier walls and other changes to the historically-designed landscape

Visual and Aesthetic Resources
- Minor short-term adverse impact due to construction equipment and signage
- Moderate long-term adverse impact from noticeable changes to original design landscape/addition of new elements

Transportation
- Moderate short-term adverse impact associated with construction and lane closures
- Long-term beneficial impacts on Route 123/GWMP interchange
- TMP, interagency coordination, and public outreach would minimize cumulative impacts on traffic

Visitor Use and Experience
- Short-term/long-term minor adverse impact from change to viewsheds and wall appearance
- Short-term moderate adverse impact due to traffic
- Long-term beneficial impact due to sense of protection and comfort from roadway improvements
Mitigation Measures*

Cultural Resources
- Prior to construction, the contractor would implement an education program that informs their staff of the sensitive resources in the area and protocols to follow for protection as well as new discovery.
- If archeological resources are uncovered during construction, all excavation work in that area would cease and archeological resources would be investigated by archeologists of the park’s cultural resources staff meeting the Secretary of Interior’s Qualification Standards.

Surface Waters
- The preferred alternative would be constructed in such a manner as to avoid degrading water quality to the maximum extent possible. During construction, measures would be employed to prevent or control spills of fuels, lubricants, or other contaminants from entering waterways or wetlands.

Wildlife
- For species of concern, areas with high potential or known resources would be surveyed at the approved time of year before construction for each phase of work.
- If any species is discovered during the survey, the area would be fenced and included as a no impact zone.

Vegetation
- Restored areas would be monitored by the responsible party identified in the construction specification for up to three years after construction to determine if reclamation efforts are successful or if additional remedial actions are necessary.
- Perform work near sensitive area during the winter months to prevent the likelihood of herbaceous exotic and invasive species establishment.

Outfall Repair
- Prior to any drainage outfall construction activities (including clearing and grubbing, stockpiling of materials or equipment, and construction access routes), biological monitors and cultural resources staff would stake, flag, or mark construction limits and resource protection zones around cultural resource areas and natural resource areas.

Public Outreach
- Variable message boards on the Parkway would be posted two weeks in advance of construction and public notices would be placed in local newspapers or other sources.

Transportation and Traffic (see next Board)

*See EA for full list of Mitigation Measures.
Transportation and Traffic Mitigation

- Traffic Control and Management
  - Detailed Transportation Management Plans will be prepared during design
  - Construction phasing considers ways to minimize delays and duration of construction
  - Public Outreach, Notifications, and Signage before and during construction
- Future coordination with FHWA, DDOT, VDOT, WMATA, and local agencies
- Coordination with Regional Projects during Construction
- Trail Protection and Provisions
Construction Maintenance of Traffic

Implementation of Traffic Control Plan in Phases
- Construction of temporary pavement
- Temporary median crossovers
- Installation of concrete barriers to maintain flow of traffic
- Maintain two lanes of traffic during AM/PM rush hours to extent possible
- One lane open in each direction at all other times