Beatrice Camp Testimony

The proposed arch is unwanted, unnecessary, and unappealing. It would be a monstrous obstacle, both physically and visually, between Arlington National Cemetery and the Lincoln Memorial. I regularly bike past Memorial Circle on my way into DC from my home in Arlington and can easily foresee the kind of traffic problems such an arch would cause.

I am very much opposed to this project for a variety of reasons. A recent analysis by the Washington Post noted the shadows the arch would cast on graves at the Cemetery and the bright lighting that would disrupt the sacred calm there at night. Plus the on-off-on-again plan to make the arch a military defense installation is insane and totally out of keeping with this area.

But as an Arlington resident, I want to concentrate my comments on the traffic and pedestrian safety concerns raised by Arlington County staff in a project review that flagged numerous practical concerns.

The review questioned likely impacts on roads, pedestrians, historic views and air traffic that would be caused by a 250-foot arch in the middle of the Memorial Circle roundabout. Concerns include pedestrian passage near the busy traffic circle, where visitors would have to cross multiple travel lanes in order to reach the monument.

In addition, the arch would cause major transportation disruption by delaying thousands of commuters who pass through the roundabout every day including potential impacts to the connected network, such as George Washington Memorial Parkway and Richmond Highway (Virginia State Route 110) for vehicles and the Mount Vernon Trail and Washington Boulevard Trail for pedestrians and bicyclists. And, as many have warned, building a structure over 200 feet high could disrupt flight patterns over the roundabout, potentially affecting operations at Reagan National Airport and land use planning in Arlington.

As many comments have noted, a structure of this size would disrupt the “feeling, setting and design” of historic resources in the area of Arlington National Cemetery. The scale and mass of the arch is inappropriate in the context of its historic setting and would have massive negative impacts on impact traffic in the area. It should never be built. ##