Commission Action

November 5, 2026

PROJECT
New Monumental Arch
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Memorial Avenue
Washington, DC

SUBMITTED BY
United States Department of the Interior

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

NCPC FILE NUMBER
8778

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER
1.45(73.10)46287

APPLICANT'S REQUEST
Approval of final site and building plans

ACTION TAKEN
Approved final site and building plans with comments

The Commission:

Approves the final site and building plans for the proposed Monumental Arch, located at Memorial Circle on Columbia Island in Washington, DC.

Supports the purpose of the project to celebrate America's Semiquincentennial.

Notes the general site was identified as a location for potential design features as part of the McMillan Commission (1902) and Arlington Bridge Commission (1925); and

Notes that, in response to the Commission's requests at preliminary review, the applicant has provided additional information regarding various topics as outlined in this report and further detailed in the analysis.

Arch Height

Notes that the Commission requested a justification for the project's height at the preliminary review and the applicant has provided a justification.

Notes that while the Commission previously considered the question of applicability of the Height of Buildings Act to the federal government, a conclusion to that question is not needed for the project here before the Commission.

Notes that, upon consideration of the supplemental materials submitted by the applicant and deliberated among the Commissioners, the Commission agrees that in 1925 Congress authorized a plan submitted by the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission in 1924 that included elements above the limit prescribed by the 1910 Height of Buildings Act and gave the Arlington Bridge Commission the discretion to revise the design, which discretion is now exercised by the Department of the Interior.

Finds that, based on the submitted materials and deliberations by the Commission, because Congress implicitly waived the Height of Buildings Act in its 1925 action, the revised design is not required to comply with the Height of Buildings Act.

Approves the final height of the project as proposed by the applicant.

Pedestrian Accessibility

Notes the applicant has submitted an updated traffic study that evaluates the proposed pedestrian access to ensure that visitors can avoid pedestrian and vehicular conflicts and reduces the number of individual traffic signal poles from 32 to 17 as requested by the Commission.

Supports the reduction of the number of signal poles which helps remove visual clutter and maintain pedestrian and vehicular safety.

Vehicular Network

Notes that the applicant has prepared an updated traffic study that identifies potential impacts from the project on the road network and level of service, identifies potential traffic delays and alternate routes from the removal of northbound and westbound movements around Memorial Circle, and the broader impacts of the long-term traffic modifications as requested by the Commission.

Finds that while the project may alter overall vehicular traffic movement around the circle and increase delays on Washington Boulevard from the south, the design will improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and circulation around Memorial Circle as compared to current conditions.

Notes that the applicant has stated that further refinement of traffic signal timing will occur as visitation to the arch is better understood.

Encourages the applicant to continue to work with the Federal Highway Administration, District Department of Transportation, Arlington County, and other agencies as appropriate, regarding the proposed changes and impacts to the surface transportation network through construction and project implementation.

Loading/Unloading

Notes that the Commission requested the applicant provided details regarding pick-up, drop-off, and loading locations, and coordinate with Arlington National Cemetery regarding the use of Memorial Avenue and the cemetery parking garage for visitor parking.

Notes that the applicant has submitted updated information regarding parking and loading/unloading for visitors to the arch that proposes utilizing the Arlington National Cemetery Garage for visitor parking and Memorial Avenue for visitor pick up and drop off.

Encourages the applicant to continue coordination with Arlington National Cemetery regarding the use of the Memorial Avenue and the cemetery parking garage for arch visitor parking as the project is implemented.

Aviation Safety

Notes the Commission requested the final plans include any navigational or safety lighting as required by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Notes the Federal Aviation Administration provided the applicant with a *Determination of no hazard to air navigation* finding for the proposed arch with a condition for safety lighting that includes a non-standard eternal flame and continuous floodlighting by searchlight projectors installed at three or more equidistant points to provide illumination to the top one-third of the structure which are included in the final submission.

Project Design and Materials

Notes that the Commission previously requested the applicant provide a narrative describing the proposed lighting concept and its relationship to the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery that includes relevant details on the proposed lighting stanchions and any other site lighting, including illumination levels proposed (foot lambers, or other measure) to understand the relative brightness of the monument as compared to other national monuments and memorials, and to protect the lighting hierarchy of the National Mall.

Notes that the applicant submitted the final lighting plan that includes architectural accent lighting at the building crown and underside of the arch, and to up-light the statuary, six ground-mounted light stanchions around the circle to ensure the arch is brilliantly illuminated and to meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements.

Notes the proposed lighting levels have been designed to maintain approximately 15 footcandles at elevations of 150 feet and higher to eliminate the need for FAA aircraft warning lights.

Notes the applicant will utilize either Sierra White granite, Bethel White granite, Barre Granite, or Carrara Marble based on availability and the procurement process.

Encourages the applicant to monitor and refine the proposed lighting plan after implementation to ensure a balance between required lighting and the project's setting.

Encourages the applicant to continuously monitor the noise level of construction activities to minimize impacts to Arlington National Cemetery.

Project Coordination

Notes the applicant is lead federal agency for the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, and NCPC utilized the applicant's EA for purposes of compliance with the Act.

Notes the applicant submitted a final Environmental Assessment and final Finding of No Significant Impact.

Adopts the Environmental Assessment prepared by the National Park Service, dated October 2026 for use by the Commission.

Notes the National Park Service initiated the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act on June 5, 2026, with a draft Assessment of Effects and Programmatic Agreement and held consulting parties meetings on June 15 and September 9, 2026. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation advised that it was terminating consultation for the project on September 24, 2026 and provided final comments to the applicant on October 9, 2026, which the applicant acknowledged as received on October 9, 2026, which concluded the Section 106 process.

Notes NCPC designated the National Park Service as lead federal agency for the purpose of compliance with the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act on June 10, 2026.

11/5/2026

Meghan Hottel-Cox
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission