

NCPC File # 7997

Elephant Yard 1 Expansion

National Zoological Park
Northwest, Washington DC

Smithsonian Institution

Preliminary and Final

Commission meeting date: July 12, 2018

NCPC review authority: Federal Projects in the District 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

Applicant request: Preliminary and final approval of site development plans

Delegated / consent / open / executive session: Delegated

NCPC Review Officer: V. Lee

NCPC File number: 7997

Project summary:

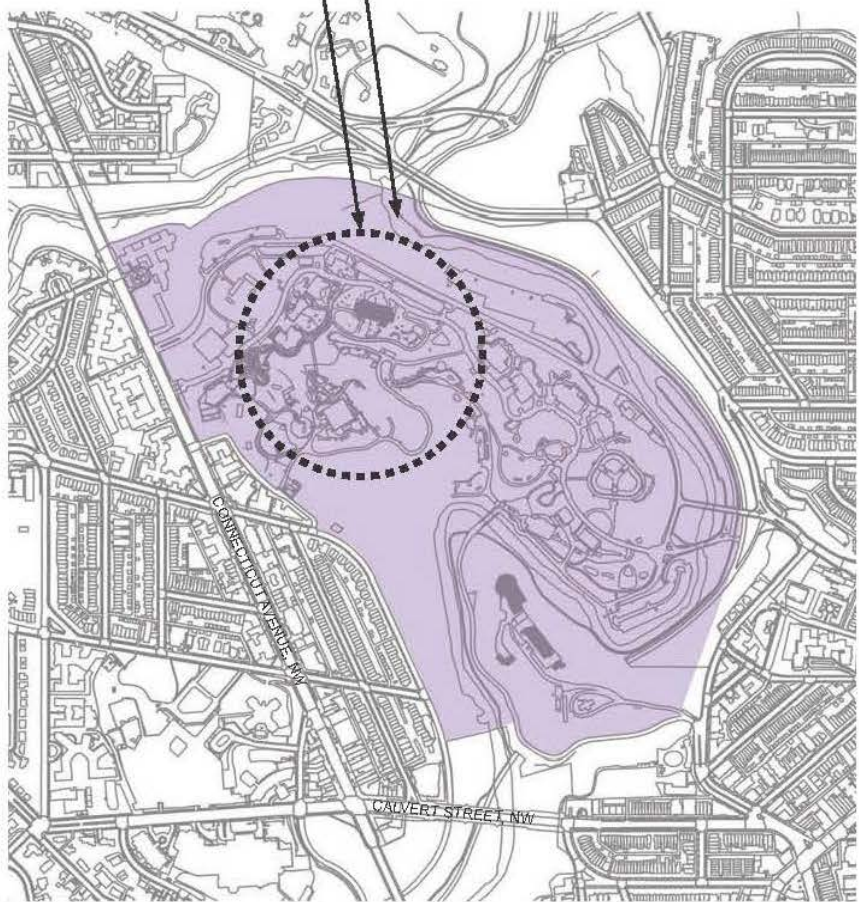
The Smithsonian Institution has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for the elephant yard 1 expansion at the National Zoo. The National Zoo recently expanded the size of its Asian elephant herd, which consist of six females and one adult male. In order to accommodate the new herd, the Smithsonian is planning to expand the existing elephant outdoor space by incorporating an small vacant area, formerly the Hippo Yard, immediately adjacent to the Elephant House and surrounded by the existing Elephant Yard 1. The project also entails providing an enrichment/training area as part of the outdoor exhibit to create a unique visitor experience at the Zoo.

Currently, there are two enrichment/training areas located inside the Elephant House, which are not accessible to the public. In order to provide an opportunity for the public to observe special interactions with the elephants, the project includes an enrichment/training area integrated into the expanded yard adjacent to the Elephant Trail Visitor Path. This area will provide the elephants an opportunity to socialize with a keeper during training sessions and allow keepers to closely monitor the health of the animals. During training sessions, keepers cue the elephants to present their trunks, feet, ears, shoulders and rear ends for a close inspection. The keepers use positive reinforcement training by rewarding the elephants with their favorite treats every time the elephants follow directions. Elephants have a choice to participate, but most of them seem to enjoy the challenge of the routine. The project includes the following minor changes:

1. Removing existing elephant containment (steel bollards and cable barrier fence) between Elephant Yard 1 and the vacant yard.
2. Installing elephant containment (steel bollards and cable barrier) along the north and east perimeter of the vacant yard.
3. Adding Elephant Enrichment/Training Area (steel and steel mesh) within the new containment barrier adjacent to the Visitor Path.
4. Removing and replacing trees that are toxic to elephants, within reach of elephants, or are in poor health within and adjacent to the expanded elephant yard.
5. Providing storm water management.

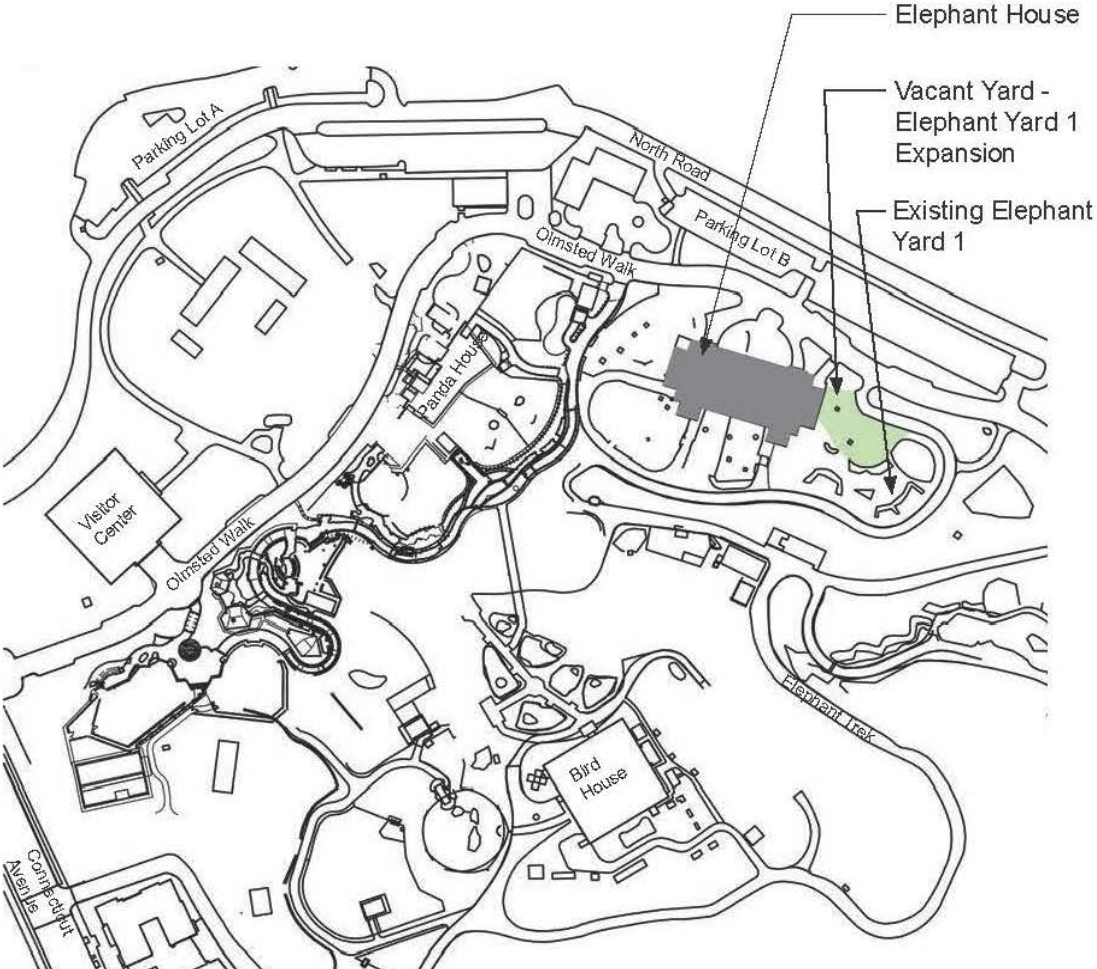
National Zoological Park

Plan Area Enlargement



VICINITY MAP

N.T.S.



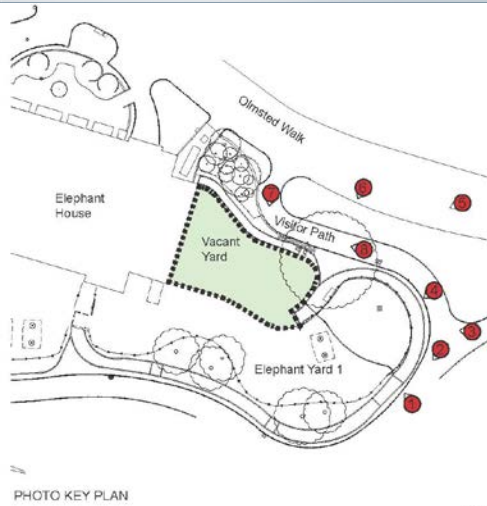
NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK - PLAN AREA ENLARGEMENT

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AERIAL PHOTO OF EXISTING SITE



View into Elephant Pool from Visitor Path



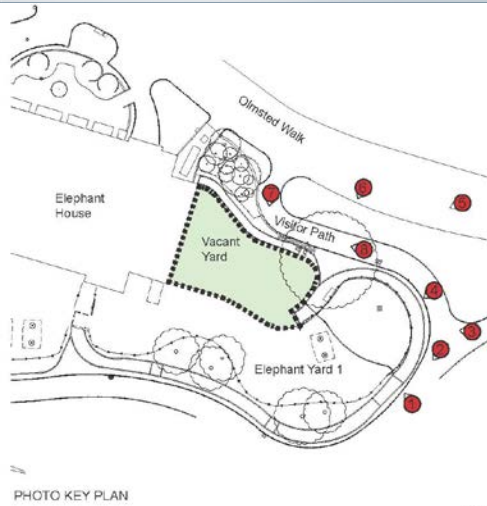
Elephant Trails Visitor Path



View of Yard 1 with Elephant House



View into Elephant Pool with Shade Structures



View towards Elephant Yard 1 and Hippo Yard from Olmsted Walk



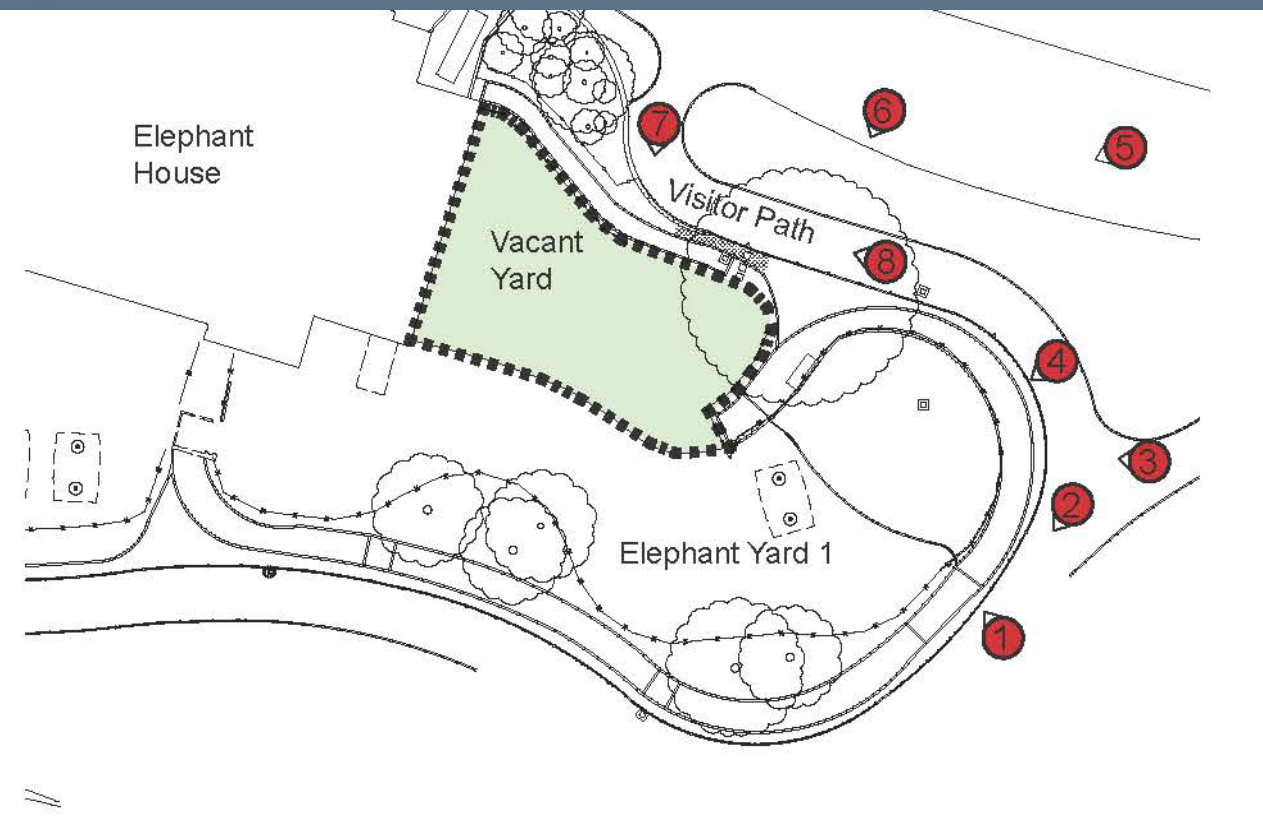
View towards Hippo Yard from Olmsted Walk



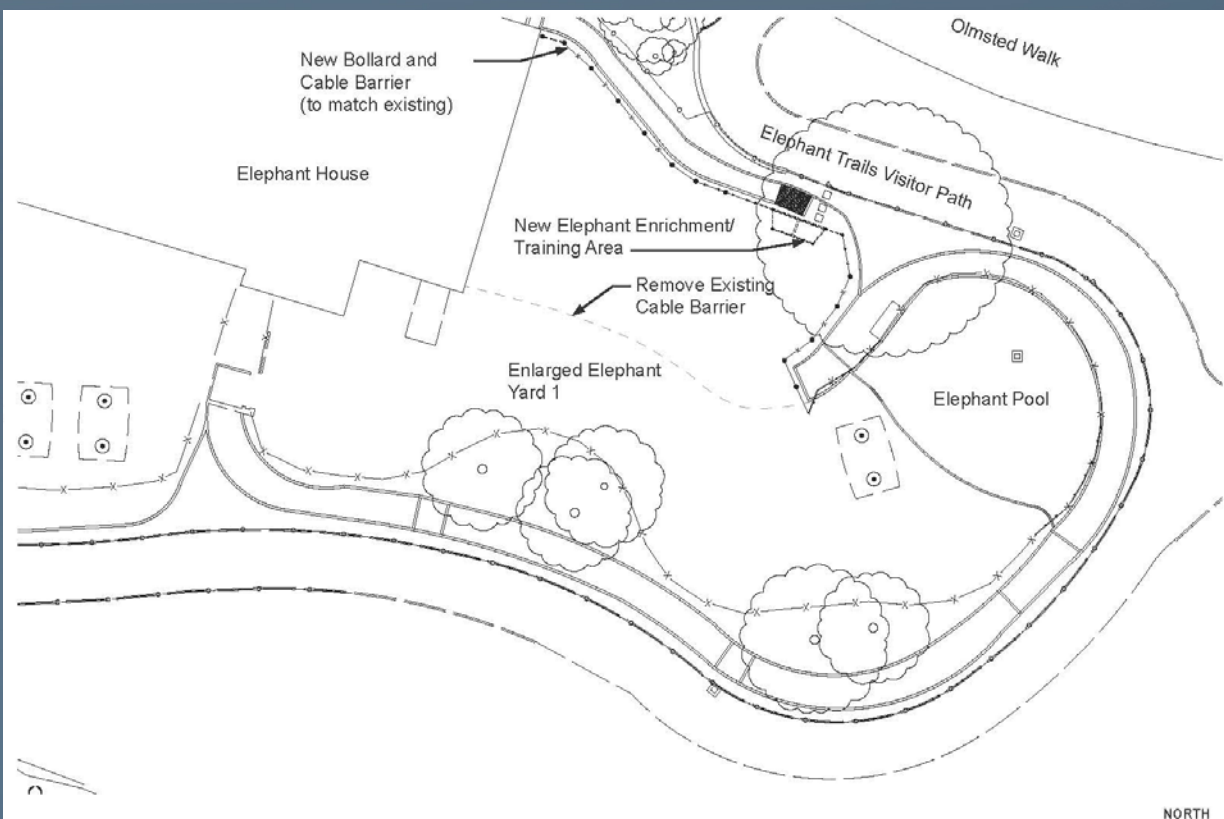
View into Hippo Yard (Elephant Yard 1 in background) from Visitor Path



View from Visitor Path towards Elephant House and Hippo Yard



Existing



Proposed



EXISTING



Visitor Path
Approach from
North

PROPOSED



Visitor Path
Approach from
South



Elephant Enrichment/Training Area Precedents From US Zoos

