Smithsonian Institution

May 4, 2020

Marcel Acosta, Executive Director
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, NW, Suite 500N
Washington, DC 20004

VIA Submission Portal

RE: Suitland Collections Center – Final Master Plan Submission

Dear Mr. Acosta:

At the Commission's February 2020 meeting, changes to the Smithsonian's Draft Master Plan were requested prior to submission for final review. The requested changes and our responses are included below. We have indicated pages in the Draft Master Plan (DMP) impacted by the changes and pages in the Final Master Plan (FMP) submission booklet where changes have been made. We also note changes made in response to further internal stakeholder review and comments from the Prince George's County Planning Commission and their staff. We would like to thank the Commission and its staff for assisting us in planning for the future housing and care of national collections within a sustainable campus workplace.

Site Plan

1. Based on input from Prince George's County and Smithsonian Gardens, we have removed the overly specific plant list in favor of strengthening the description of the character sought for various areas of the campus. (DMP pages 128-137, FMP pages 129-138).

2. The existing curving ornamental security fence along Silver Hill Road south of the NMAI Cultural Resources Center will be retained as long as it can be maintained in good repair and is included in its current location, in lieu of the more diagrammatic straight fence layout previously illustrated. (DMP pages 79, Fig. 3-14; p. 81 Fig. 3-16; p 92, Fig 3-30. FMP pages 80, 82 and 93).

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Security

Requests the Smithsonian submit a security threat analysis with the next submission to address the need for the clearance area and lighting for the woodland fence and the 10-foot fence on Silver Hill Road.

The Smithsonian has shared this information with the staff. If further discussion is needed, our security leadership may be available to meet with the Commission in executive session. The quantity and irreplaceable nature of the national collections stored at the SCC, as well as the outdoor storage of other federal property such as fleet vehicles and construction and landscape supplies and equipment, warrants a higher fence that would incrementally discourage and delay intruders at this large and sparsely populated facility. The ornamental fence along Silver Hill Road would be set back from the road and future walk and bike path location to the extent feasible (see FMP page 85, Fig. 3-19). The specific design of replacement fencing will be reviewed by NCPC as part of the main entrance relocation project.

Requests the Smithsonian submit additional information regarding tree and vegetation removal and the proposed lighting in the 25-foot clearance zone.

Detailed plans and surveys for tree and vegetation removal and lighting will be submitted to NCPC as part of future design projects when the exact placement of the fence and cleared area are determined. At the master plan level, we are able to state the following:

- Replacement of trees would focus on adding appropriate trees, including evergreens, to the wooded area between our buildings and the Suitland Parkway to increase year round masking of structures and enhancement of habitat.
- Specific layout of the fence and cleared area will endeavor to avoid the most mature trees.
- Dark Sky lighting would avoid spill beyond the surveillance area and would be at the levels necessary for use with the selected security cameras and their mounting – but not more than that. Motion activation of the lighting will be considered based on assessment of then-available lighting and electronic surveillance technology.

Requests that if the clearance zone in the woods and the 10-foot fence on Silver Hill Road are warranted, the Smithsonian submit a robust landscape plan to mitigate for any loss of contiguous habitat in the wooded area and the impacts of the night-time lighting, and to improve the streetscape aesthetic along Silver Hill Road.

Detailed landscape plans for fences in the woods and along Silver Hill Road will be submitted for review as projects when their design and construction are funded. As shown in the plan, the sidewalk will be widened and set back from the edge of the road along with an additional bike trail (see page 85, Fig. 3-19 FMP). There will be opportunities to add trees to other areas of the campus both along the street frontage, and in the wooded area as well as within the campus, including in locations where we remove existing pavement and buildings. As with our landscapes on the National Mall, the SCC campus is managed by Smithsonian Gardens. At the time of design, we will seek input from Smithsonian scientists and horticulturalists regarding mitigation of any harm to habitat from the fence installation and cleared zone in the wooded area. There is a desire to keep deer outside of the fenced campus where many plants at our greenhouses are outdoors in warmer months.

Parking and Access

Requests the Smithsonian develop a detailed plan to reduce employee parking with clear milestones and strategies for attaining the 1:3 goal over the next 20 years. The Commission will assess the need for a deviation from the targets on a project by project basis, recognizing a near term reduction may not be possible given the current infrastructure challenges.

The Smithsonian proposes to make reductions in parking in conjunction with specific projects as the current Ten Year Capital Plan and the Master Plan years 1-10 are implemented Increased Smithsonian employee use of Metro is also dependent on improvements that would make it safer and easier for Smithsonian employees to use Metro. These include federal funding for additional and more frequent Smithsonian and/or interagency shuttle service and improved pedestrian and bicyclist safety, including construction of safe crossings at the Suitland Parkway ramps and NPS maintenance yard access road by those with jurisdiction. Clearing of snow from the Silver Hill Road sidewalk will also be requested from neighboring agencies.

We propose the following steps over a twenty year period to reduce the amount of personal vehicle parking for Smithsonian employees based at Suitland to meet the requested ratio of 1:3, or 1 employee parking space to every 3 SCC-based employees, plus additional visitor and SI official vehicle spaces. The timing of projects is based on funding capital projects currently in the Smithsonian's Ten Year Capital Plan and the necessary sequencing of Suitland projects with other collections space construction as well as with extensions or terminations of leases. The list also includes operational actions to facilitate increased transit use.

Observed occupancy of SI parking lots in October 2019 and the results of the earlier employee transportation survey included in the TMP were inconsistent. A more detailed survey is needed and will be conducted in FY21. We will use this more detailed survey as a baseline for charting progress and will revise the TMP according to the more detailed and recent data. For purposed of this final master plan submission, we are assuming that a somewhat higher proportion of employees are driving and that the total number of employees based at SCC is higher (350 rather than 300). Some employees whose jobs are partly or entirely based at the Mall may be utilizing the SCC lots as a park and ride, a practice that may have increased with the closing of most employee parking at the Mall for construction projects. Voluntary surveys conducted before the closing of those lots would not have fully picked up this group of parkers, particularly since it is not an encouraged use of the Smithsonian shuttle.

<u>In the next 10 Years (FY21-FY30)</u>

This list includes the "Pre-Master Plan Projects" described in the SCC plan implementation rather than the "Years 1-10 projects". The former are in the current Ten Year Capital Plan.

1. FY 20-21: The Smithsonian will undertake additional employee and visitor surveys and parking counts to refine the information included in the plan. We will more clearly differentiate between visitors and employees and between employees who regularly commute to their job at Suitland, those who occasionally visit, and those who may park at Suitland but take our Shuttle bus to a job based at the Mall or another Smithsonian location. The survey will gather additional information regarding Smithsonian official vehicles and those of other agencies who may regularly visit, including distinguishing between vehicles visiting vs. vehicles whose home base is Suitland. Accessible parking will be reviewed to confirm code compliance and need. Parking needs for National Gallery of Art official vehicles and visiting staff at Pod 6 will be assessed. This

survey will include the data in the formats that will be required when NCPC implements the final version of the form for its "Transportation Management Program – Monitoring and Evaluation" which was not available when our TMP survey was conducted. We will share results with NCPC staff as a baseline for future reports.

2. FY 20-21: The Smithsonian will further explore opportunities to partner with other agencies located at the Suitland Federal Center to share Shuttle Bus service to and from the Metro, and, if appropriate, to the Mall/ Monumental Core area. Previous efforts along these lines were not productive, but increasing numbers of federal employees based at Suitland warrant reaching out again as do the persistent dangers to employees who walk to the Metro.

3. The Smithsonian will continue to advocate with NPS and MD agencies for safer pedestrian and bike route along NPS property crossings, as well as the need for NPS to plow sidewalks along their property.

4. FY 21- FY 25: In connection with the MSC Pod 6 and the associated Botany Greenhouse relocation, we propose the following:

    a. Current greenhouse employee personal vehicle parking at the NMNH Botany Greenhouse (2 spaces) will not be replaced. These staff, as well as visitors will use available parking at the Smithsonian Gardens parking lot. New parking would be limited to 1 delivery and service vehicle spot in proximity to the loading area for the new greenhouse.

    b. Existing MSC loading and Resident engineer parking (60 spots) displaced by the construction of Pod 6, would be replaced by 1/3 of the current number or 20 spaces, with a preference for identified visitor spaces and official vehicle spaces for both SI and for the National Gallery of Art. The Gallery will be a co-tenant of Pod 6 but does not expect to have staff based at Suitland on a full time basis – at least, not after their collections have been moved in and unpacked, a process that would be expected to take months if not a year or more after completion of construction and the installation of cabinets and racks. Temporary parking may be needed during the move-in period and would be identified in the design submission when we know more about the expected move process for SI and NGA. Once settled in, the NGA will have 3-4 staff visiting on a daily basis. These visiting staff would be based elsewhere. The Smithsonian and NGA are investigating the feasibility of security badging at least some

NGA staff for use of the SI shuttle from the Mall. NGA may also have other visitors coming in official vehicles and personal vehicles who would be part of the total counts provided for estimated visitor and SI/Official vehicle parking spots provided in the replacement of 20 of the 60 spaces.

5. The proposed addition to CRC may include shared pan-institutional space for additional collections from other museums and their related staff. A feasibility study this year will determine if portions of the expanded space not immediately needed by NMAI could be shared with another unit. An estimated 15-20 additional employees based at CRC plus part time visitors could be added to the current CRC population. Their parking needs would be accommodated in the existing NMAI lot. A few SI official vehicle, accessible parking and service vehicle spaces may be needed immediately adjacent to the addition. This project would be subject to NCPC review.

6. Improve pedestrian connections between facilities and parking lots as part of the Pod 6 and CRC addition projects.

7. The construction of additional collections space at the Dulles Collections Center as well as the move of some objects from Garber buildings to Pod 6 will require additional SI staff and contractors working on site for periods of months, if not years to inventory, photograph, assess and pack for transfer, including partial dismantling of aircraft etc. Any additional parking for this would be in existing lots.

8. The Smithsonian will consider implementation of paid parking across the Smithsonian's DC, VA and MD locations adequately and safely served by transit and SI shuttles. In the past, employees have only paid for parking at the Mall (most of which is not currently available due to NASM and NMNH construction). Any SI implementation of paid parking would take into consideration the 24/7 and early morning work hours and other situations where staff have no viable transit options as well as the current dangerous path and long walking distances to their buildings from the Suitland Metro.

In the following 10 Years (FY31-FY40)

1. New Garber Main Entrance: This project will eliminate current employee parking which will be replaced by a smaller visitor and SI vehicle only parking lot. This will eliminate 40 spaces.

2. New OPS and OFMR Building: Parking at this new facility will be limited to SI vehicles, accessible spaces and visitors, with no added SCC-based employee parking. We anticipate adding approximately 10 spaces for ADA, visitor and

SI/Official vehicle parking. This facility is expected to include relocation of OPS's central security staff training center so will house more employees and visitors than a typical collections storage building.

3. Smithsonian Gardens Equipment Building: No employee parking. Five spaces to be provided for parking SI vehicles, plus any required accessible spots.
4. Osteo Prep Lab relocation: Replace SI and service vehicle and visitor parking only. No FT employee commuter parking. This represents a change from 5 existing spaces to 3 future spaces.
5. CRC parking renovation: Results in elimination of the eastern section of spaces in favor of shared vehicle, scooter and bike spaces. This represents a change from 137 existing spaces to 104 future spaces.
6. Build new parking north of CRC to replace MSC circle and main parking. No change in quantity of 68 total spaces. The overflow parking that now regularly occurs on the roads in the vicinity of MSC would not be provided for in the new design.

Summary

Please see the attached Chart with above numbered steps and existing and future parking space amounts and ratios achieved. Assuming that the current full time employee count is 350 and that the ratio of spaces to employees is 1:1.2 based on spaces available and 1:1.4 based on actual occupancy of lots, we propose to achieve a 1:1.7 ratio in the first ten years and 1:3 in twenty years, when the SCC-based employee count would be assumed to grow to 450. While spaces available to employees will decrease, there will be increases in parking for official vehicles and visitors, with some of that increase associated with increased shuttle service, additional visitors and official vehicles belonging to the National Gallery and related to relocation of the OPS security training facility, as well as increased research visits to a larger volume of collections.

Requests that the Smithsonian submit timing information on the bicycle and pedestrian improvements for the portion of Silver Hill Road that is within their jurisdiction.

These are most likely to be built sometime after 2030. The Smithsonian's current ten-year federal capital plan includes only design and construction for projects identified as "pre-Master Plan" in the submission, including the Botany Greenhouse and Pod 6, as

well as the second Dulles Collection Center module and hanger which represent only a portion of the construction needed at Dulles in order to vacate the substandard Garber buildings.

Projects in the SCC plan identified as Year 1-10 are expected to be included in the 10 year capital plan for FY 31-40. Therefore, planning, design and construction of the pedestrian and bicycle improvement would not occur until after 2030. In the event other agencies such as NPS, Maryland Highway Administration or PG County are able to join in a proposal to fund the entire path to the Metro station at an earlier date, it may be possible for SI to secure additional capital funding or to prioritize this project based on matching funding. A path along our section of the road only would not be a priority for the Smithsonian until the primary physical obstacles to walking and biking to the Metro that occur on NPS property can also be addressed.

Sincerely,

Ann Trowbridge

cc: Bill Tompkins, Director, National Collections Program
Wall Ennaco, Deputy Director, Smithsonian Facilities
Doug Hall, Deputy Director, Smithsonian Office of Protection Services
Jeff Schneider, Acting Director, Smithsonian Gardens
Jud McIntire, Associate Director, Program Management
Ted Wisniewski, Program Manager, OPDC
Jane Passman, Senior Facilities Master Planner, OPDC

Suitland Collections Center -- Proposed path to reduced employee parking ratios 2021-2040.	**5/4/2020**						
* Estimated - to be updated with FY21 Detailed Baseline Survey	Change to total parking space count	Tot # of Parking Spaces at end of project	# of SCC-based SI Employees (incl FT embedded contractors, badged FT research fellows)	# of SCC-based Employee spaces	Ratio SCC-based FT Employee: SCC employee parking spaces	# SI/ Official Vehlcle Spaces, incl. future NGA	# Visitor Parking Spaces (researchers, tribal delegations, interns, volunteers, vendors, maintenance and construction contractors, VIPs, SI staff based elsewhere)
EXISTING CONDITIONS - CURRENT*		**430**	**350**	**300**	**1:1.2**	**50**	**80**
Parking Spaces utilized (based on Oct 2019 survey)		361		244	1:1.4	50	67
YEARS FY 21-30 PROJECTS AND ACTIONS							
Detailed Baseline User Transportation Survey/ initiate SI-wide transportation coordination		430	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Interagency Shuttle Partnering Outreach	NA	430					
Advocate for offsite pedestrian safety improvements w/ NPS, MD agencies	NA	430					
Botany Greenhouse relocation	-2	428					
MSC Pod 6	-38	390					
CRC west addition and renovation	0	390					
Improve pedestrian connections between buildings entries and parking lots	NA	390					
Temporary Staff/Contractor increase for Collection inventories, packing and moves to DCC, Pod 6 etc	(use temp constr space)	390					
Consider implementation of paid parking across SI campuses with transit access		390	400	235		65	90
Subtotals at end of first 10 years		**390**	**400**	**235**	1:1.7	**65**	**90**
YEARS FY 31-40 PROJECTS AND ACTIONS							
New Garber Entrance and visitor only parking	-40	350					
New OPS/ OFMR building (new spots to be SI veh, ADA, Vis only)	10	360					
SG Equipment Building (new spots to be SI veh, ADA only)	5	365					
Osteo Prep Lab relocation	-3	362					
CRC Parking Renovation	-32	330					
Replace MSC east lot w new lot N of CRC	0	330	450	150		80	100
Target at end of 20 years		**330**	**450**	**150**	**1:3**	**80**	**100**
TOTAL NET CHANGE	**-100**	**-100**	**+100**	**-150**		**+30**	**+20**