

March 5, 2021

Stephen Staudigl  
[stephen@ncpc.gov](mailto:stephen@ncpc.gov) or 202-482-7279

Julia Koster  
[julia@ncpc.gov](mailto:julia@ncpc.gov) or 202-482-7211

## **NCPC Approves Final Plans for Second Division Memorial Modification** *Commission Adopts Central Employment Area Change in Federal Workplace Element*

**Washington, DC**—At its [March 4, 2021 meeting](#) the National Capital Planning Commission unanimously approved preliminary and final site development plans submitted by the National Park Service, in cooperation with the Second Indianhead Division Association Memorials Foundation, to modify the Second Division Memorial located at the corner of Constitution Avenue and 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW in President's Park. The memorial honors service members who lost their lives fighting with the United States Army's Second Division during World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. New inscriptions would honor those fallen in Korea on the Demilitarized Zone (1965-1991), Iraq (2003-2010), and Afghanistan (2009-2013), and would not include names of individuals.

Modifications include the addition of two stone plinths at the memorial's southern end to accommodate panels for future inscriptions and to create a central space for visitors; a new curvilinear walkway to the memorial from Constitution Avenue (none exists today, and visitors must walk across the grass to reach it); accessibility upgrades; new interpretive elements; and upgraded lighting. Existing features include an eighteen-foot-high sculpture of a hand grasping a flaming sword that is framed by an architectural granite block.

Commissioners thought that the modification was sensitively and beautifully designed, and a wonderful example of how to add to an existing memorial in a meaningful way. They appreciated the new walkways that would make the memorial more accessible.

Sculptor James Earle Fraser and architect John Russell Pope designed the original memorial which was dedicated on July 18, 1936. On August 15, 1957, Congress authorized a two-wing wall addition to honor Second Division members lost in World War II and the Korean War, and on August 13, 2018 authorized the current modification. Construction will begin this spring and is anticipated to be completed fall 2021.

The Commission authorized an update to the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital's* 2016 Federal Workplace Element that changes the Central Employment Area (CEA) description, boundary, and policy. NCPC prioritizes the location of federal offices within this area. NCPC also approved two action items to explore alternative CEA approaches and to collaborate with federal, regional, and local jurisdictions to identify appropriate federal locations in the region beyond the CEA. The action items will be included in the Comprehensive Plan's 2016 Action Plan.

A draft update of the element was released in July 2019 for public review. Several comments were related to the CEA's boundary and limits, noting the differences between the CEA in the Federal Workplace Element prepared by NCPC, and the Land Use Element prepared by the DC Office of Planning (DCOP) that is currently under review by the Council of the District of Columbia. To fix these differences, NCPC and DCOP staff worked with the General Services Administration and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development.

—MORE—

Commissioners expressed appreciation that the federal and local boundaries will now match, and that the CEA will extend east of the Anacostia River. NCPC encouraged the General Services Administration to use the amended CEA as part of their site selection and leasing solicitation process for federal offices.

The revised CEA and policy FW.A.2 in Section A of the 2016 Federal Workplace Element will go into effect 60-days after the publication of a notice in the Federal Register. A full update of the element is on hold due to the unknown long-term implications of the pandemic. NCPC staff will study potential long-term impacts to the planning, location, and design of federal workplaces post-COVID and then update the element.

The Commission reluctantly approved final site and building plans for a nine-story Surgery, Radiology and Lab Medicine addition to the existing Clinical Research Center on the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) campus in Bethesda, Maryland. The 547,290 gross square foot addition would house several relocated clinical research programming departments. As part of the project, 82,150 gross square feet of the existing building will be renovated. Commissioners expressed their respect for NIH's mission and their recognition of the importance of this new addition to the agency's work.

While several design components were changed based upon previous Commission feedback, Commissioners found the design changes underwhelming and were disappointed with the final results presented to them, believing that the addition remained too big for the site. Design changes included lowering the height of the stair towers and west-wing parapet wall; reconfiguring seven vertical punched windows at the top into three horizontal punched windows; and replacing a section of metal panel cladding on the top of the east stair tower with a glass curtainwall.

Other project components include a relocated playground; pedestrian tunnel between the building and nearby MLP-15 Garage; new bio-retention areas, sidewalks, and landscaping; a new perimeter security retaining wall around the site; and realignment of a section of Center Drive along the building's northside into a narrower two-lane street with a separate access roadway for drop-off/pick-up traffic.

Before adjourning, NCPC heard an information presentation presented by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on proposed projects and a new master plan for the Humphreys Engineer Center Campus in Fairfax County, Virginia. The presentation helped Commissioners better understand the proposed location of a new maintenance supply facility that they will review at the April 1, 2021 meeting and the status of a campus master plan. The Commission does not take official action on information presentations.

Established in early 1980's, the 583-acre campus is overseen by the Humphreys Engineer Center Support Activity, a distinct field operating agency of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It currently contains four main buildings and various support structures clustered at the campus' center. The majority of the rest of the site is woods. None of the anticipated projects will add to the center's existing population.

Current planning efforts seek to maintain or improve the campus' beautiful setting with mature trees and a well-maintained landscape. Future plans call for the relocation of industrial uses (warehouses, mail receiving, grounds maintenance) to the campus' northwest corner so that new administration and training space can be created in their current central location.

—MORE—

The Army Corps submitted a draft master plan in the summer of 2020, but NCPC staff determined that it was missing too many critical elements for Commission review and advised the Army Corps to revise it. As part of this initial master plan work, a campus flood plain analysis was conducted for the first time. As a result, the proposed location for the new maintenance supply facility was relocated to the site's northwest corner.

The master plan process will address the missing components. These include continued flooding and stormwater analysis, a traffic study, and a tree reforestation plan. Work will begin later this year with an anticipated conclusion by the end of 2023 and a submission to NCPC for initial review in January 2024.

*The Executive Director approved two items under authority delegated by the Commission:*

1. Preliminary and final site development plans for Trail Improvements at Fort Reno, 4000 Chesapeake Street, NW. (8250)
2. Preliminary and final site and building plans for Phase 3 of the Data Storage Center, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. (8233)

***Commission actions and related materials will be available [online](#).***

*The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central planning agency in Washington, DC and surrounding counties of Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall guidance for federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal projects and memorials, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.*