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NCPC Approves Revised U.S. Air Force Memorial Entrance at Arlington National Cemetery
Commission Updated on Plans for Proposed New Bureau of Engraving and Printing Currency Production Facility and Food and Drug Administration Muirkirk Road Campus Master Plan

Washington, DC—At its [Thursday, February 4, 2021](#) meeting, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) approved final site and building plans submitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a revised entrance to the U.S. Air Force Memorial that will be constructed as part of Arlington National Cemetery’s Southern Expansion project. The new vehicular entrance gate will be at the intersection of Columbia Pike and Air Force Memorial Drive. The updated design includes additional landscaping, three new bollards, a new knee wall, and refinements to the gate design. This approval concludes NCPC’s review of the Southern Expansion project.

Commissioners appreciated that the Army Corps looked at various gate design options before choosing the one that NCPC approved. Commissioners encouraged Arlington National Cemetery to continue to monitor tour bus operations and to work with Arlington County and other stakeholders to explore future tour bus pickup and drop-off solutions, including the accessibility needs of visitors.

The Commission then heard two information presentations (no official Commission action is taken on information presentations). In the first, representatives from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) discussed plans for a currency production facility that would be located on a 100-acre parcel in Beltsville, Maryland on the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center Campus. The new facility would replace one located in downtown Washington, DC. The existing two-building facility was built in 1914 and is no longer able to efficiently support manufacturing needs. 300-400 staff will remain at the main building downtown, where public tours will continue. BEP plans to present concept plans to NCPC for review in April 2021.

To determine a site, BEP went through an exhaustive review process that examined 81 different sites in the National Capital Region. Criteria included 100-acre sites owned by the federal government that did not have any major environmental issues, were located within a 30-mile radius of the existing downtown facility, were within 10 miles of a major interstate highway, and were near the region’s major airports.

The proposed new facility was described as a “currency production machine in a pastoral setting.” Plans call for a one-story, secure building located on 20 acres of the site with approximately 1,200 surface parking spots for staff and visitors (in two lots). An ornamental fence will surround the perimeter. Approximately 1,400 people will work at the new building over three shifts. BEP plans to partner with the U.S Department of Agriculture to expand its existing shuttle service to the Greenbelt Metro and MARC station for day shift workers.

Plans call for exhibitions on the site’s historic nature (it used to house a poultry research facility) and on the building. Limited tours will be offered to groups. The building and site will have several environmental components, including a 50% green roof, rainwater harvesting, permeable pavement in the parking lots, and bio-grass swales along the access roads. It is anticipated that 36% of the building’s energy requirements will be provided through photovoltaic cells.

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In the second information presentation, the General Services Administration (GSA) provided an update on the master plan for the Food and Drug Administration's 247-acre Muirkirk Road Campus located in Laurel, Maryland. The campus is 6.6 miles east of the FDA's headquarters at White Oak. The previous master plan dates from the 1980s. GSA plans to submit a draft master plan for NCPC review in the fall of 2021.

The new master plan will allow FDA to consolidate its employees on a federal campus, streamline operations, and foster scientific interaction. The draft master plan will present four alternatives: a no build and three build alternatives (a compact campus that integrates old and new construction; a dual campus that distributes new development to two sites; and a northeast campus that would reimagine the campus' research facility). All three alternatives propose the same amount of new development. They would each balance new construction with the site's pastoral landscape, preserve open space, enhance the campus' natural features, and embody the highest principals of sustainable design. Plans call for creation of an on-site transit hub and continued subsidizing of van and carpools.

The campus currently has approximately 480,000 gross square feet (gsf) of laboratory and office space, 300 employees, and 310 parking spaces. The two-pronged expansion plans call for an additional 458,00 gsf of new office and special use space (217,000 gsf phase 1 and 241,000 gsf in phase 2). Up to 1,800 employees will be added (700 in phase 1 and 800 in future phases). Total parking at final buildout will be 950 spaces.

This month's agenda included two consent calendar items (no presentations were given):

1. Preliminary site and building plans for the Joy Evans Therapeutic Recreation Center, 3030 G Street, SE. (8244)
2. Final site and building plans for the National Institute of Health's Vaccine Research Center Laboratory Expansion Building 40A North Tower, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Maryland. (8193)

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

1. Preliminary and final site and building plans for expansion of the United Arab Emirates Chancery's Rear Guard Booth and Pergola, 3522 International Court, NW. (8239)
2. Final site and building plans for the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center New Wildlife Staff Office, Beaver Dam Road and Soil Conservation Road, Beltsville, Maryland. (8184)
3. Final site and building plans for renovation and expansion of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center Building 434, 6900 Powder Mill Road, Beltsville, Maryland. (8185)
4. A report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for a Text Amendment to Subtitle A, Section 209.2, Construction of Playing Fields & Accessory Structures at the RFK Campus, 2400 East Capitol Street, SE. (ZC 18-04A)
5. A report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for a Text Amendment to Subtitles B, D, E, and F - Accessory Building Requirements. (ZC 20-19)

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.