

Meeting Minutes

FROM: EHT Traceries
SUBJECT: Smithsonian South Mall Campus Master Plan
 Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting #9
DATE: July 26, 2017

The following minutes represent comments received during the July 2017 Section 106 consulting parties meeting for the Smithsonian South Mall Campus Master Plan.

Consulting Parties

Name	Organization
Charlene Dwin Vaughn	ACHP
Chris Wilson	ACHP
John Tinpe	ANC 2C
David Maloney	DC HPO
Andrew Lewis	DC HPO
Thomas Luebke	CFA
Sarah Batcheler	CFA
D.P. Tiller	Committee of 100
Kate Perry	Committee of 100
Rebecca Miller	DC Preservation League
Will Cook	NTHP
Emily Choi	NTHP
Megan Kanagy	DDOT
Joyce Saginaw*	US DOJ
Peggy McGlone	<i>Washington Post</i>
Maribeth Oakes	Guild of Professional
Ellen Malasky	Tour Guides
Sophie Felder	

Neil Flanagan	
David Maxfield*	

Lead/Cooperating Agencies & Project Team

Sharon Park	SI
Ann Trowbridge	SI
Michelle Spofford	SI
Carly Bond	SI
Mike Carrancho	SI
Linda St. Thomas	SI
Diane Sullivan	NCPC
Matthew Flis	NCPC
Lee Webb	NCPC
Kathryn Smith	NPS
Aran Coakley	BIG
Alvaro Velosa	BIG
Emily Chen	BIG
Laura Hughes	EHT Traceries
Bill Marzella	EHT Traceries
Liz Estes	Stantec

**Participated via webcast*

Introduction

1. Mike Carrancho (MC), Deputy Director for Engineering and Design Division, SI, opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
 - a. MC clarified his role as meeting facilitator and outlined the general meeting structure and protocol for providing comments and questions.

- b. MC noted that the meeting would focus on the Assessment of Effects for each alternative for the South Mall Campus Master Plan. After the conclusion of each session of the presentation, there would be an opportunity for questions and comments.
 - c. MC noted that NCPC/SI were webcasting the event on the South Mall Campus website.
- 2. Sharon Park (SP), Associate Director of Architectural History and Historic Preservation, welcomed attendees, outlined the meeting agenda, and presented an overview of the project’s place in the Section 106 process.
 - a. SP provided a definition of “adverse effect” according to the Section 106 implementing regulations and presented the historic properties and districts identified within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) and project area.
 - b. SP noted that SI would be preparing a National Register nomination for the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, which had been previously determined eligible for listing.
 - c. SP noted that SI had submitted a determination of eligibility for the Quadrangle as an individual listing in the National Register. The National Register program concurred with SI findings, that the Quadrangle failed to meet the test of “exceptional importance” required for individual National Register listing.
 - d. SP outlined the three definitions that would be presented for each action—No Adverse Effect, Adverse Effect, and Effect to Be Determined (TBD).
 - e. SP presented an overview of the six alternatives under consideration through the NEPA/Section 106 process. She noted that Alternatives C and E were not evaluated for their effects on historic properties and would not be carried forward for consideration in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
 - f. She noted that effects related to five Action Alternatives, in addition to the No Action Alternative, would be presented today.
 - g. SP reiterated the goals and objectives of the South Mall Campus Master Plan.
- 3. Questions/Discussion
 - a. Charlene Dwin Vaughn (CDV), ACHP, asked how cumulative effects would be considered in the assessment of effects. SP responded that cumulative effects would be addressed in the NEPA document.
 - b. Andrew Lewis (AL), DC HPO, asked if SI could clarify these definitions in light of the complexity of some of the proposals. He noted that any comments or findings made today are preliminary in nature; more information will be needed to fully evaluate effects in the future, despite current project findings. SP responded that a protocol for future evaluation would be provided in the Programmatic Agreement (PA).

Assessment of Effects

- 1. No Action Alternative
 - a. Carly Bond (CB), Historic Preservation Specialist, presented the scope of the No Action Alternative, describing how it falls short of Master Plan objectives.
 - b. CB outlined adverse effects associated with the No Action Alternative.
 - c. Kathryn Smith, (KS), NPS, observed that some identified effects don’t seem to meet the level of “adverse” for Section 106 purposes. Tom Luebke (TL), CFA, and AL concurred.
 - d. CDV responded that she partially concurred with SI’s findings, although these effects should be recast as resulting from budgetary limitations or deferred maintenance rather than directly related to the implementation of the Master Plan.
- 2. Effects Common to All Alternatives
 - a. CB presented adverse effects that SI found were common to all alternatives.
 - b. AL asked for additional information regarding the extent of the Quad roof membrane replacement under all alternatives. CB responded that the scope varies under each Action Alternative. KS followed up with a similar question for the Quad museum pavilions. CB responded in kind.

- c. AL noted that previous presentations have shown the bracing to be more intrusive than it is currently being shown.
 - d. TL noted that both base isolation of Castle and sub-basement excavation create an extensive amount of change. He felt that not enough information is available at this point to determine the effect. He suggested SI move into the TBD category. KS echoed this sentiment for the basement floor lowering, questioning the significance and integrity of those spaces.
 - e. CDV asked if the Master Plan would be implemented as a design-building project. Ann Trowbridge (AT), Associate Director for Planning, responded that it would not; each project would be brought forward through the agency and Section 106 process at the design stage, with the Castle being the first.
3. Alternative A
- a. CB presented the scope of Alternative A, noting how it meets or doesn't meet Master Plan objectives. Beyond those common to all alternatives, Alternative A creates no additional adverse effects. After evaluating how ineffectively the Alternative does not meet the objectives, SI has determined it will not be carried forward in the NEPA process.
 - b. Will Cook, NTHP, requested information on the perception that campus circulation is confusing. In his opinion, it was not. AT responded that better circulation and visibility was a driving goal of the Master Plan, as developed by former Secretary Clough and the Quad museum directors.
 - c. Megan Kanagy, DDOT, requested that SI not drop Alternative A as it is the only alternative that does not have a new loading drive (which has not been approved by the DDOT public space committee). She noted that the timing of other loading docks is also a consideration.
 - i. AT responded that SI understands the ongoing process of driveway relocation. She noted that a final decision would be made at time of determination and SI would generate a new alternative rather than returning to Alternative A. She noted that consideration of phasing of loading dock closure would be addressed.
4. Alternative B (modified)
- a. CB presented the scope of Alternative B (including modifications made per CP comments at the May 2017 meeting), noting how it meets or doesn't meet Master Plan objectives.
 - b. CB presented SI's determination of effect for the various components of Alternative B.
 - c. AL stated that they felt the new loading ramp on the west side of the Freer Gallery would create an adverse effect. They also felt the Castle sub-basement expansion would likely be adverse, and they required additional information to determine the effect to the Quad museum pavilions.
 - d. David Maloney (DM), DC HPO, noted that there are existing skylights in the Quadrangle that could be reopened to create the natural light that is a goal of the Master Plan.
 - e. TL noted that certain sets of work are being addressed separately, although they are related actions (like the replacement of the Quad roof membrane and changes to the Haupt Garden in some alternatives). CB responded that this was done for graphic clarity and also to reduce the number of slides.
 - f. TL stated that any excavation beneath the Castle should be, in his opinion, TBD.
 - g. D.P. Tiller, Committee of 100, asked for clarification why the Ripley pavilion must be removed in Alternative B. SP responded that its internal circulation comes down where the future loading ramps will run. Enhancing views between the Quad and the Mall is a secondary benefit. AT added that the current Ripley pavilion connects with the below-grade education spaces, which may be moved under the Master Plan. All noted that the Ripley pavilion could theoretically be left in place with a new use above-grade.
 - h. KS asked if the new entrances to the visitor center would be a monumental stair. SP responded that some modifications would be required to meet egress requirements, but the exact treatment is unclear.
5. Alternative D
- a. CB presented the scope of Alternative D, noting how it meets or doesn't meet Master Plan objectives.
 - b. CB presented SI's determination of effect for the various components of Alternative D.

- c. AL asked if the effect determination for excavation (slide 54 in the presentation), was consistent with what had been presented in the past. CB responded that it was, but the axon drawing made it appear to be in a different location. DM added that the removal of various Quad/Haupt Garden elements would represent an adverse effect.
 - d. D.P. Tiller stated that the proposed Alternative would remove a significant portion of Lester Collins's (landscape architect who contributed to the design of the Haupt and Hirshhorn Sculpture gardens) from the National Mall, and asked for rationale behind that decision.
 - i. SP responded that SI was aware of this contribution, but that there were a number of factors that contributed to the development of the Master Plan beyond garden design. She noted that an incredible amount of planning has gone into the alternatives, reflecting impacts of security, mechanical systems, and the variety of functional elements that feed into the Master Plan.
6. Alternative F
- a. SP presented the scope of Alternative F, noting that it meets all of SI's Master Plan objectives. Alternative F was developed in response to consulting party comments.
 - b. SP presented SI's determination of effect for the various components of Alternative F.
 - c. TL and AL noted that the May 2017 presentation showed Alternative F as having small building forms for the new Quad pavilions, with folded corners as an alternative. They asked if the design had changed since then to prefer the sloping forms.
 - i. AT responded that the sloping forms were preferred by the SI steering committee.
 - ii. DM responded that these forms may not be compatible with the historic setting of the Castle, Freer, and AIB, which may contribute to the cumulative adverse effect.
 - d. DM stated that the sunken stair court would be an adverse effect.
 - i. KS later agreed that the stairs and grade change would have an adverse effect on the Castle and AIB.
 - e. Sophie Felder stated that she had heard SI was considering removing the IMAX theater in the National Museum of National History. She stated that this would be detrimental for education and science programs.
 - i. SI responded that they are still studying that action, but that it had no bearing on the determination of effect for the South Mall master plan.
 - f. Sarah Batcheler (SB), CFA, noted that there were significant ways to minimize adverse effects in the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden given its configuration. SP responded that she agreed, but that it was difficult to address in detail at the Master Plan level.
 - g. AL stated that the direct and indirect effects on the Mall were not clear. He added that the cumulative effects of Alternative F may be more than the chart suggests.
 - i. CDV requested that SI focus on cumulative effects on historic properties in addition to NEPA.
 - h. Kate Perry, Committee of 100, asked if SI was still considering depressing the fountain in the Hirshhorn Plaza. SP responded that they no longer were.
 - i. D.P. Tiller and TL asked for clarification regarding base isolation vs. seismic bracing of Castle. They had previously been presented as binary options. SP responded that, based on the current Castle study, some traditional bracing would be required even if base isolation were implemented—for vulnerable elements like towers and chimneys.
 - i. Rebecca Miller, DCPL, asked when the study would be ready. Aran Coakley, BIG, responded that it was a 32-week study, which commenced this summer, and not directly relevant to the Master Plan design.
 - ii. Peggy McGlone, *The Washington Post*, later asked for clarification how the Castle seismic study was not relevant to the Master Plan. SI clarified that it is a more in-depth study and is more specific than will be needed at a planning level. Also, it would not be completed by the time the Master Plan is finalized.
 - iii. SI added that this approach was consistent with NCPC requirements, which do not specify specific structural approaches to the design of buildings. It is necessary to establish a

break between Master Plan and building design—Master Plan identifies importance of Castle protection and options to explore further in design.

- iv. D.P. Tiller later asked for additional clarification regarding the either/or approach for internal bracing and base isolation. SP clarified that base isolation would allow for very limited internal bracing and much less than would be required under a traditional approach. For example, the internal bracing of the Great Hall columns would not be necessary under a base isolation approach.

7. Indirect Effects

- a. SP presented indirect effects across all Action Alternatives.
- b. SB asked how SI identified which views are contributing to the Mall. Bill Marzella, EHT Tracerics, responded that these were identified in the recent National Register historic district documentation.
- c. DM asked how much SI had considered Independence Avenue and Tenth Street in the design, noting the future SW Ecodistrict project. He noted that the current proposal faces new pavilions toward the Mall.
 - i. AT responded the original Quad design tried to wall off area to the south. The proposed design exposes more of Castle and opens gardens to SW Ecodistrict.
- d. DM reiterated that the Quad buildings are contributing to the Mall HD. He proposed that SI is valuing aesthetic argument/views over contributing buildings.

Continued Questions/Discussion

1. TL asked what are the next steps, and how effects TBD would be addressed.
 - a. SP responded that the PA—which SI is currently drafting—would work out a formula to fully understand those effects and make the future process logical.
 - i. Matt Flis, NCPC, added that the NEPA process is ongoing.
 - ii. Chris Wilson, ACHP, asked if it would be necessary to have PA signed for inclusion in the EIS Record of Decision?
 - iii. SI asked if ACHP could provide examples of successful PAs. CDV responded yes, but that they would also rely on DC HPO to provide examples. She noted that BRAC projects may be a useful example, including Ft. Monroe.
 - iv. AL noted that the PA will not answer all questions, but rather used as a guide for future evaluation for complex projects.
2. Neil Flanagan reminded attendees of the tangible material benefit to the project, and stated that some of the historic properties being affected are “not as spectacular as we’d like to think.”
 - a. SB agreed that the project had many positive benefits and that a Master Plan approach is broadly supported.
 - b. AL responded that they appreciate the comment and point of view. Responsibility of SI is to acknowledge and resolve adverse effects. DC HPO is not arguing that the historic properties are perfect or cannot be changed.
3. SP outlined the continued process and summarized comments received, including the need to integrate cumulative effects, emphasis on TBD projects, and what are critical elements and priorities.
 - a. SP outlined schedule for continued consultation and agency review.

Conclusion and Next Steps

1. SI requested that consulting parties provide written comments on the project website, www.southmallcampus.si.edu, by August 9, 2017.

Minutes prepared by Bill Marzella, EHT Tracerics, August 9, 2017 (Revised August 16, 2017).