

# FINAL FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DECISION NOTICE FOR ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY SOUTHERN EXPANSION

## TITLE OF ACTION

Environmental Assessment for Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion and Associated Roadway Realignment.

## PROPOSED ACTION

Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), a Direct Report Unit of the Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), proposes to establish a single, contiguous parcel of land south of the cemetery by closing, relocating, and realigning local roadways and develop the parcel to increase interment capacity. The project creates an opportunity to increase multimodal transportation while upgrading safety and capacity levels along this portion of Columbia Pike. The Environmental Assessment (EA) simultaneously addressed the establishment and development components of this action with the Federal Highway Administration Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-EFLHD), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the National Capitol Planning Commission (NCPC), and Arlington County as cooperating agencies. The realignment of Columbia Pike and the Route 27 (Washington Boulevard)/Columbia Pike interchange is integral to a successful ANC expansion. The EA assessed the potential impacts of the realignment to ensure that the cumulative effects of the collective federal actions – roadways and cemetery expansion – were considered.

The Proposed Action includes: the closure and removal of Southgate Road; the construction of a new access road for traffic to/from Joint Base Meyer-Henderson Hall (JBMHH); the realignment of Columbia Pike; the modification of the Route 27 interchange at Columbia Pike; the development of the space for cemetery use, including integration of the Air Force Memorial (AFM); and the conversion of Patton Drive – from South Gate to Eisenhower Drive – to a pedestrian trail. The new access road would include traffic control – signage, speed limits, etc. – to meet Arlington County and VDOT design standards. The undertaking also involves land acquisitions to accomplish the project.

The EA, incorporated by reference into this finding, analyzed the potential environmental consequences of activities associated with the proposed improvements needed to address the purpose and need. The EA also discussed avoidance and minimization of environmental impacts, and considered cumulative environmental impacts with other reasonably foreseeable future actions, including cumulative environmental impacts with other projects at ANC and the surrounding area.

This EA is tiered<sup>1</sup> from the 2014 ANC Real Property Master Plan Programmatic Environmental Assessment (RPMP PEA) and contains references to and summaries of that document. The earlier document contained development alternatives of the Southern Expansion site including “Alternative 4 – Southern Expansion Site with Realigned Roadways.” This EA contains a robust analysis of Alternative 4 from the PEA.

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<sup>1</sup> Agencies are encouraged to tier their environmental impact statements to eliminate repetitive discussions of the same issues and to focus on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review. (40 CFR §1502.20 *Tiering*.)

## PURPOSE AND NEED

The Proposed Action is needed to meet the forecasted interment/inurnment demands of eligible veterans and to preserve ANC as an active military cemetery. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to establish a single contiguous parcel burial space for ANC through the realignment of roadways allowing several noncontiguous parcels to merge and the redevelopment of the resulting area. The Proposed Action also would create the opportunity to maintain adequate multimodal access, levels of service, and safety for the affected roadway network and interchange ramps, and transit, including this portion of the Columbia Pike Corridor.

The U.S. Army and ANC assessed the potential environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action pursuant to provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 United States Code (USC) 4321 to 4270d, implementing Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations, 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508.

## ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED

Three action alternatives – the Preferred Alternative and two others – and the No Action Alternative were reviewed in accordance with NEPA as implemented by the regulations of the CEQ. The No Action Alternative represented the baseline to compare the remainder of the alternatives analyses. Alternatives 1-3 each include all of the actions listed under “Proposed Action;” the differences among the alternatives are as noted below. The alternatives included:

1. Relocate Operations Complex Alternative with an Underpass Alternative (*Preferred*). This alternative follows the guidance provided in ANC’s Real Property Master Plan – develop in a manner that represents the best use of the land. This alternative proposed the best land use opportunity to support the ANC mission by relocating the Operations Complex from its current location to the area south of Columbia Pike, and to connect it to the Southern Expansion area of the cemetery by an underpass.
2. Maintain Operations Complex with an Underpass Alternative. This alternative would maintain the Operations Complex in its current location and would have an underpass for maintenance vehicle access to the parcel south of Columbia Pike. The parcel south of Columbia Pike would be utilized for contractor support services such as spoils stockpiling.
3. Maintain Operations Complex without an Underpass Alternative. This alternative would maintain the Operations Complex in its current location and would not have an underpass to access the parcel south of Columbia Pike.
4. No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative is defined as no comprehensive development, including no realigned roadway network, and no additional contiguous land available for burials. Choosing no action would result in the loss of 40,000-60,000 potential interment opportunities and not extending the life of the cemetery. This alternative also would not comply with the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2000 (Subtitle F Section 2881) and subsequent amendments, and the NDAA of 2017. NDAA 2000 and amendments required the Secretary of Defense to transfer the Navy Annex property to the Secretary of the Army and to incorporate the Navy Annex property into the cemetery, and to develop a master plan for it. NDAA 2017 further specified that the Secretary shall acquire and remove existing barriers and realign

roadways and the interchange “for purposes of ensuring maximization of interment sites and compatible use of adjacent properties, including any appropriate cemetery or memorial parking.”

The three action alternatives provided similar development plans and identical roadway realignments, but differed in the amount of contiguous acreage available to increase burial capacity. The Preferred Alternative created a 49-acre contiguous parcel; the two other action alternatives each created 38-acre contiguous parcels.

## **DECISION**

ANC’s decision for the Proposed Action is to implement the Preferred Alternative for cemetery development including relocation of the ANC Operations Complex and roadway closure and realignment of Southgate Road and Columbia Pike. The anticipated construction could begin as early as 2021, pending environmental review, design and land acquisition, with completion as early as 2025.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The EA finds that no significant adverse effects would result from implementing the Preferred Alternative.

1. Land Use and Sustainability – The impacts in the short term would be the transition from unimproved to improved condition. The expansion site and surrounding area would experience a large construction project – noise, heavy equipment, earth moving, etc. Redevelopment in the long-term would improve the character of the site; improvements would be compatible with surrounding land uses. In the long-term, the change from unused Army-owned land to cemetery use would preclude the possibility of widening the Columbia Pike corridor, if needed. The Preferred Alternative supports the Army’s sustainability policies by: reducing the amount of impervious surface and increasing the amount of open space when compared to the 2006 conditions, which included the Navy Annex facilities; reusing previously developed land; using Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction; and, using a location that provides multimodal transportation options.
2. Air Quality – There would be temporary impacts resulting from construction vehicle air emissions and fugitive dust; however, the short-term impact would not have local or regional significance. Emissions associated with construction were compared to the Clean Air Act (CAA) *de minimis* values with respect to General Conformity, the estimated emissions were below these values and therefore the Proposed Action is presumed to conform to the State Implementation Plan. The use of BMPs during construction, e.g. spraying water on disturbed/exposed soil areas, would minimize impacts from fugitive dust. Minimizing equipment idling during construction would reduce temporary air quality impacts. In the long-term, a multimodal transportation corridor may help reduce vehicular traffic thereby reducing air emissions.
3. Noise – There would be temporary impacts from construction noise, primarily heavy equipment. The construction project would adhere to VDOT’s construction noise limits and Arlington County’s local noise ordinance. Long-term impacts would include an increase in noise due to honor salutes, but the audible impact would be negligible or minor. Other long-term impacts would include vehicular traffic on the proposed South Nash Street; based on traffic modeling, the potential noise would not exceed VDOT’s noise abatement criteria or its substantial noise increase criteria.

Once operational, maintenance and cemetery operational noise would be minor. Potential noise emanating from the relocated Operations Complex would be similar to the neighboring VDOT maintenance facility. Specialized vehicles at the Operations Complex include mowers, off-road utility vehicles, backhoe loaders, mini off-road dump trucks, etc. for daily operations and maintenance. The proposed design elevation of the relocated Operation Complex would be lower than Columbia Pike which would act as a buffer to further reduce potential noise impacts.

4. Topography, Soils, and Geology – The final cemetery and roadway designs would be based on geotechnical investigations. Potential impacts would be minor and effects would be mitigated by adherence to stormwater management plans and use of BMPs. The change in topography of the cemetery expansion would have a positive impact as it would reflect the image and character of ANC. The cemetery design would eliminate the need for slope stabilization for the slope on the east side of the AFM.
5. Water Resources – Potential temporary stormwater impacts during construction would be avoided or minimized using BMPs and following the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) requirements for preparing an erosion and sedimentation control plan. All development would be planned and designed to avoid sensitive areas and would be consistent with the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program to the maximum extent practicable. There would be no direct impacts to surface water bodies, groundwater, floodplains, or wetlands. There would be a significant reduction in impervious surfaces from the 2006 condition, resulting in a reduction of stormwater runoff and pollutant loads.
6. Biological Resources – There would be no impact on any federally- or state-listed threatened or endangered species. The site was disturbed previously and does not contain natural habitat. Regardless, there would be a temporary disruption to wildlife inhabiting the Southern Expansion site. Upon the start of construction, wildlife species instinctively would move to adjacent areas. The temporary impact would be offset at the project completion by providing permanent positive impacts with new landscaping including turf, trees, shrubs, and other plant material in planting beds that will be native to and compatible with the geographic region. There would be a net increase in vegetation as native wildlife species re-inhabit the site upon completion.
7. Cultural Resources – Adverse effects to properties listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) have been identified. The adverse effects will be resolved through mitigation measures stipulated in a Memorandum of Agreement, which has been finalized. The impacts include the removal of the boundary wall along Southgate Road, conversion of part of Patton Drive to a pedestrian trail and relocation of the Operations Complex, all contributing to the ANC NRHP-listed historic district; and modification of the Air Force Memorial site, which has been determined NRHP eligible. The Memorandum of Agreement between the State Historic Preservation Officer, Air Force District of Washington, and ANC, resolves adverse effects to cultural and historical resources. This Memorandum of Agreement includes the mitigation necessary to offset the adverse effects, and is located in the Appendices of the EA. With the conclusion of this agreement there will be no significant impacts to cultural resources.
8. Visitor Use and Experience – Temporary impacts from dust and noise may be experienced due to increased construction traffic and other activities during the project's construction. Any impacts would cease upon completion of the construction activities. These impacts would be isolated to families with loved ones directly adjacent to the construction area. Family members wishing to visit one of these gravesites would be provided either escorted or pre-arranged access, to minimize

interruptions/intrusion of construction activities during the visit. The proposed construction would not preclude any family member from visiting a gravesite. While vehicular access to and parking at the AFM would be eliminated, a larger parking lot across Columbia Pike will provide nearby access. In addition, pedestrian access would be enhanced from both Columbia Pike and ANC. When Patton Drive is converted to a pedestrian trail, it will no longer be open to vehicular traffic; however, it will remain within the circulation routes. Gravesites along Patton Drive will still be accessible to pedestrians. New vehicular circulation roadways also will be available in the expansion area. There would be beneficial long-term impacts provided by new amenities including pedestrian gate(s) along the new boundary wall, thereby enhancing access to the Air Force Memorial, ANC, and 9/11 Pentagon Memorial Visitor's Education Center; and, separate trails to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles, among others. The beneficial impacts would include expanding the footprint of the Cemetery to allow additional area for visitors to experience the history, heritage, honor, and sacrifice of our military service members.

9. Socioeconomic/Environmental Justice – The EA complies with EO 12898 – *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* by identifying and evaluating potential impacts and avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating them to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. Although the Foxcroft Heights community may have a population greater than 50% minority, there are no disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on this community. The project would not induce growth on a local or regional level; the area is already highly developed. The beneficial impacts include providing a visually attractive land use and creating the opportunity for improving multimodal transportation capacity to the general population. ANC provided public participation early in the NEPA process beginning with a public scoping meeting on April 27, 2016 to allow the public to give feedback on the Proposed Action and to discuss the scope of the NEPA document. Interim meetings were held with the Foxcroft Heights Neighborhood Association to provide a forum for discussion and update of the project. Most recently, a public open-house meeting was conducted on August 22, 2018 to disseminate information from the Draft EA and to gather comments.
10. Traffic and Transportation – There would be short-term traffic delays due to construction activities. Construction contractors would be responsible for minimizing delays by following an approved traffic management plan. The proposed redevelopment, including the realigned roadways and interchange, would maintain or extend routes for pedestrian and bicycle movements and would not sever any existing connections for these modes of transportation. According to the “Columbia Pike/Washington Boulevard Interchange Modification Report (2017), prepared by Kimley-Horn on behalf of the County, there would be no significant impacts to traffic or transportation due to the road realignment. There would be a positive effect on transportation through the opportunity to upgrade Columbia Pike into a multimodal facility as well as an improved level of service at the new tight diamond interchange and the Joyce Street/Columbia Pike intersection. HNTB Corporation, ANC's consultant, has subsequently completed a traffic study and described the results in the Arlington National Cemetery – Southern Expansion Traffic Technical Memorandum – Future Conditions, dated April 15, 2019. It further validated the Interchange Modification Report's results and included additional traffic counts along Columbia Pike corridor in October 2018. Its results will be used to inform roadway design improvements needed, due to this project. FHWA-EFLHD's participation in this project has included assistance with the EA as a cooperating agency. In addition, FHWA-EFLHD will be designing the roadways that would be relocated as a result of the ANC expansion. Recently, FHWA-EFLHD, at the request of the County and VDOT, agreed to further traffic studies to consider the impact of Amazon HQ2, the 9/11 Visitor Center, changing development along Columbia Pike and access to Arlington National Cemetery on the

modified access to Route 27 (Washington Boulevard) with Columbia Pike. All roadways and trails will be constructed in accordance with American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), VDOT, and National Association of City Transportation Officials safety (NACTO) standards.

11. Utilities – No currently used utility services or functions are being eliminated or scaled back as part of these projects. There would be potential short-term interruptions to utility service during construction. Utility providers would inform customers of extended interruptions or any change in current utility line locations. The current or future land use would not create a new burden on consumption of local or regional utility services. There would be no long-term disruptions to local utility customers after construction. Although concern has been expressed about potential constraint of the underpass on the utility corridor along the proposed realignment of Columbia Pike, the underpass will be buried to a depth sufficient to accommodate the utility corridor. In addition, utility capacity upgrades will be made during construction to address the need for future expansion. In addition, because water-, sanitary sewer- and stormwater-related utilities would otherwise require the most space in the corridor, those utilities would remain within the Cemetery avoiding the possibility of constraining the corridor. A beneficial long-term effect would be realized by the upgrading of aging utility infrastructure.
12. Solid Waste – Construction activities would generate solid waste. The contractors would be responsible for following acceptable protocol for avoiding or minimizing impacts from generating solid waste at the site. In the long term, there would be no noticeable increase in the amount of solid waste produced from daily operations and no changes to ANC's diversion rate or its adherence to the Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (ISWMP).
13. Hazardous Waste and Materials – The Preferred Alternative would not cause a significant increase in the amount of hazardous waste generated at ANC in either the short- or long term. The incremental increase in the Cemetery's area and the maintenance required would not increase generation of hazardous waste. Earth disturbance during construction may create a risk of exposure to Asbestos Containing Material (ACM), residue from the FOB2 demolition and clean-up. Designing to avoid ACM-contaminated soil and developing a construction-phase pollution prevention plan minimizes the risk. Documentation of a recent investigation would follow the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) requirements for achieving "No Further Action" status with VDEQ and USEPA. The quantity of hazardous materials used at the Operations Complex is not expected to increase due to the relocation. A full inventory of hazardous materials would be completed prior to demolition of the Operations Complex.
14. Visual and Aesthetic Resources – There would be temporary impacts during construction due to presence of heavy equipment and construction activities for both utility and road relocation. In the long-term, the redevelopment of the site would provide a visual improvement to the land. The relocation of the Operations Complex to an area on the edge of the proposed expansion area would benefit the viewshed, making the expansion seamless. The centrally located AFM, coupled with proposed landscaping and earth moving, would act as visual barriers to shield the relocated Operations Complex from most of the Southern Expansion site. The AFM would be incorporated into and connected to the Cemetery. There would be a long-term positive impact on the viewsheds.

The project will comply with all federal, state, and local laws.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Early agency coordination was accomplished in accordance with the NEPA process through invitations to five agencies – FHWA, USEPA, NCPC, VDOT, and Arlington County, VA – to become cooperating agencies. All five agencies accepted and participated as such. A cooperating agency kick-off meeting was held on March 9, 2016, and coordination was conducted at key points in the process. Throughout the NEPA process and development of the EA, ANC coordinated with the cooperating agencies and considered their input.

Further outreach efforts included 42 invitations to a variety of organizations including governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and federally-recognized Native American tribes. They all received invitations to consult on the project.

A Notice of Intent to prepare an EA was published in the Federal Register on April 20, 2016. ANC issued a press release, and public notices were also published in the Washington Post, the Washington Times and the El Tiempo Latino newspapers, and on ANC's and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) websites. Brochures regarding the project were mailed to approximately 250 property owners, agencies, and civic leagues located near the project site and Columbia Pike. ANC and USACE also posted information on its websites for the expansion project during the NEPA process.

On April 27, 2016, a press conference and an open-house-style NEPA public scoping meeting were held at the Sheraton Pentagon City, Arlington, Virginia. Storyboards describing the project and the NEPA process were displayed. USACE, ANC, representatives from all five cooperating agencies, and consultant's staff, as well as a Spanish-language interpreter were available to answer questions and obtain comments. Project brochures were also available. More than 75 people attended the scoping meeting. The public had an opportunity to provide written comments during the meeting, as well as throughout the comment period from April 20 through May 31, 2016.

A Notice of Availability of the Draft EA and notice of a public meeting was published on August 16, 2018, for a 30-day public comment period. The second public meeting was held on August 22, 2018 to disseminate information from the Draft EA and to gather comments on the Proposed Action. This was an open-house type meeting with approximately 51 people attending.

Numerous comments/suggestions were received from the public regarding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along the Columbia Pike corridor in response to the Draft EA. These comments previously were addressed in the EA Appendix. Additional public comments were submitted in response to the Draft FONSI/Final EA.

ANC is sensitive to the public's concerns; however, the conceptual realigned roadway and trail corridor widths are not unlimited. The conceptual roadway design presented in the Draft EA is a generic depiction. It is in keeping with state and local policies for "complete streets," and will preserve the bicycle and pedestrian trail link between Southgate Road and South Joyce Street via the proposed South Nash Street and Columbia Pike. Based on comments received, separate bicycle and pedestrian trails – to connect with Arlington County's existing trails to the Pentagon – are proposed. The public's specific design suggestions were passed on to the design team.

The roadway and trails are still under design at this time. The design, including actual widths of the

realigned Columbia Pike right-of-way, is outside the scope of the EA and this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). However, FHWA-EFLHD is planning to release its 40% designs for public comment early next year. The realigned roadway will include the appropriate level of bike/pedestrian infrastructure that is consistent with Virginia Department of Transportation/American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials/National Association of City Transportation Officials (VDOT/AASHTO/NACTO) standards and Arlington County's Columbia Pike design standard. The comments received in response to the Draft FONSI/Final EA are addressed in the attached matrix.

Two comment letters were received in response to the Draft FONSI/Final EA: one from the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), and one from Arlington County.

The NCPC stated that the EA should better describe the land transfer and provide an expanded discussion of long-term impacts on the setting of the AFM. The proposed land acquisitions and transfers are described in Section 2.3.2. It is worth noting that a long-term impact of this federal undertaking will be the permanent loss of the County and Commonwealth land from their respective property inventories when it is transferred to the federal government. As described in Section 3.7.1.3 of the Final EA, a study entitled, "*Air Force Memorial: Physical Description, Background Research, and Evaluation of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places*," was completed to determine eligibility of the AFM for the NRHP. The adverse effects on eligible properties, including the AFM are acknowledged and addressed in the Section 106 MOA. In addition, ANC is currently in the process of seeking NCPC approval for the Southern Expansion project, per the National Capital Planning Act Project Review Requirements for Federal Agencies (40 U.S.C. §§ 8722(a), (b)(1) and (d)).

Arlington County stated concerns about the adequacy of the EA analysis, the No Action Alternative, impacts on utilities, the roadway corridor, the timing of the ANC and FHWA-EFLHD FONSI, and just compensation for the County's property. ANC previously has addressed the comments regarding the EA analysis, the No Action Alternative, and impacts on utilities and the roadway corridor, both in previous correspondence and in the Final EA. FHWA-EFLHD has indicated to ANC that all decision-making to-date concerning the EA is agreeable to them, and that FHWA-EFLHD intends to adopt the ANC Southern Expansion EA and issue its own FONSI, if appropriate, following the completion of the traffic studies. The estimated timing for completion of the FHWA-EFLHD's review is February 2020. The determination of just compensation is made and executed during the real estate acquisition process and is outside the scope of the EA. These issues are all addressed in a new response letter to the County.

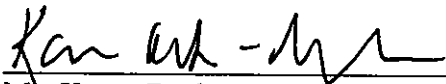
Both comment letters and ANC's responses are attached to this Final FONSI.

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based on the information and analyses contained in the EA as well as the discussion contained herein, I find that the implementation of the Preferred Alternative – Relocate Operations Complex – to establish a single contiguous parcel of land south of the cemetery by closing, relocating, and realigning local roadways, develop the parcel to increase interment capacity, and create an opportunity to increase the capacity for multimodal transportation while upgrading safety standards and capacity levels on this portion of Columbia Pike will have no significant impact on the human environment. Pursuant to 40



CFR Part 1501.4 – regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act – an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. The signing of this Finding of No Significant Impact completes the ANC's NEPA process.



Ms. Karen Durham-Aguilera  
Executive Director  
Army National Military Cemeteries and  
Arlington National Cemetery

DEC 09 2019

Date

## Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion Environmental Assessment

### Comments on the Draft FONSI/Final EA\*

Comment #	Name	Comment	Response
1	Amy Van Hines	<p>I am pleased to see that the ANC acknowledges the numerous comments about the inadequacy of the initially proposed shared bike-pedestrian 10' sidewalk on the north side of Columbia Pike. In several places in the new EA, the ANC indicates that, in response to these comments, they will now provide separate bike and pedestrian pathways. However, nowhere in either new document are the exact locations or dimensions given. In addition, the streetviews for Nash and Columbia Pike (Figures 2-2 and 2-3) in the new EA have lost all dimensions, no pedestrian is shown on the north side of Columbia Pike, and no cyclists are shown on Nash.</p> <p>Some of the missing bike-pedestrian route information can be found in the August 27, 2019 ANC response to the County's September 17, 2018 letter: <b>"We received numerous comments/suggestions regarding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along the Columbia Pike corridor. ANC is sensitive to the public's concerns and desires for the project to provide a safe corridor for all users. The conceptual corridor is in keeping with state and local policies for "complete streets." The conceptual corridor will preserve the bicycle and pedestrian trail link between Southgate Road and South Joyce Street via the proposed South Nash Street and Columbia Pike using separated bicycle and pedestrian trails, which would connect with Arlington County's existing trail to the Pentagon. The roadway and trails are still under design at this time, but ANC and Arlington County have agreed in good faith to a right-of-way cross section that provides a separate 10-foot wide bike path along the north side of Columbia Pike in addition to sidewalks on both the north and south sides of Columbia Pike. The final design of the Columbia Pike realignment and trails is outside the scope of this EA; however, design will include the appropriate level of bike/pedestrian infrastructure that is consistent with VDOT/AASHTO/NACTO standards and Arlington County's Columbia Pike</b></p>	<p>Please see the full response to Comments 2-42 below, with respect to the bicycle-pedestrian trails.</p> <p>* Most of this bolded language is already included in the "Update Notice" at the beginning of the EA. However,</p> <p>*No dimensions, landscaping, or lighting details will be provided in the EA or FONSI for reasons described in the response to Comments 2-42 below.</p> <p>* Consistent with AASHTO/NACTO standards, the sidewalks will be fully accessible to the public.</p> <p>* FHWA-EFLHD draft plans will be available for public comment at the 40% design stage, very soon, as described in Comment 2-42 below.</p> <p>*The new pedestrian and bicycle route connections are not being severed by the elimination of Southgate Road; rather they are being relocated to S Nash Street and Columbia Pike.</p>

	<p><b>design standard. Please see Section 3.10 of the Final EA for additional information.”</b> (Source Appendix A <a href="https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utis/getfile/collection/p16021coll7/id/12184">https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utis/getfile/collection/p16021coll7/id/12184</a>&gt; – County letter/comments/PAC letter starts on p. 33; ANC response is pp. 56-61, including above response to PAC letter on p. 61) I suggest including the following points to clarify the bike-pedestrian trails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* That the bolded language in the ANC response to the Arlington County letter be added to both the EA and FONSI documents.</li> <li>* That the text should also state a minimum of a 6' clear zone for the sidewalks on both sides of Columbia Pike and minimum of a 10' bike path.</li> <li>* That the streetviews be updated with dimensions for each section and populated with users (e.g. cyclists on Nash, pedestrians on north side of Columbia Pike).</li> <li>* That the sidewalks on both sides of Columbia Pike be fully and easily accessible to pedestrians of all ages and all abilities.</li> <li>* That the landscaping zone include shade trees, effective street lighting, and periodic benches.</li> <li>* That FHWA-EFLHD draft plans be available for public comment, including from County transportation committees/commission and local community organizations.</li> <li>* Finally, I disagree with the statement: "The proposed redevelopment, including the realigned roadways and interchange, would maintain or extend routes for pedestrian and bicycle movements and would not sever any existing connections for these modes of transportation." Removing Southgate Road severs the current travel route preferred by many pedestrians and cyclists traveling in the area.</li> </ul> <p>I am also concerned about the following issues mentioned in the FONSI and updated EA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Logistics of construction/removal of Southgate Road/rebuilding of Columbia Pike/building new Nash Street: I am concerned that the ANC proposed construction and deconstruction projects may severely limit</li> </ul>	<p>*A temporary transportation plan to address traffic, bicycle, and pedestrian movements will be developed by FHWA-EFLHD and the County to address transportation logistics during construction. The roadway construction, including the bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways, will be complete before Arlington Cemetery expansion project begins. *Although 7- and 14-second intervals were mentioned for the pedestrian signal at the AFM, the EA does not intend to specify signal timing; it may be adjusted as needed.</p>
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		<p>pedestrian, cyclist, and transit user access to current streets by the ANC. The EA states "Short term impacts due to traffic diversions, reduced travel lanes, etc., would occur during construction." However the FONSI document states that "anticipated construction could begin as early as 2020...with completion as early as 2025." That is not short term. How will our transportation needs be accommodated?</p> <p>* New HAWK light is recommended by the Air Force Memorial: The FONSI report states: The pedestrian signal warrant analysis for the crosswalk at Columbia Pike and the AFM established the need of a "pedestrian hybrid beacon" signal to improve safety and to better serve pedestrians crossing to and from the new Operations Complex. Pedestrians would be provided a 7-second walk interval and a 14-second flash-don't-walk interval followed by clearance interval to cross four lanes of traffic. "Many visitors crossing with the HAWK light will be from out of town and possibly unfamiliar with how HAWK lights work and hesitant to cross. Other pedestrians crossing here will include the elderly, the frail, the very young, and those with mobility and perceptual impairments. All of these pedestrians may need extra time to cross safely. Please increase the 7-second walk interval to accommodate their needs.</p>	
2-42	Chris Slatt (Sustainable Mobility for Arlington County) and individuals concurring	<p>We strongly object to the notion that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) can be issued for this project when the Cemetery still will not commit to a full multimodal design for Columbia Pike. Degrading the only bicycle and pedestrian connection between the Columbia Pike Corridor and Pentagon City is NOT an insignificant impact. The next nearest safe connections require a 5+ mile detour up to the Arlington Blvd Trail or down to the Four Mile Run trail.</p> <p>This Environmental Assessment devotes over 150 pages to a traffic report to demonstrate that it won't have a significant impact on automobile traffic, while devoting less than a paragraph of explanation and providing ZERO analysis to demonstrate that it won't impact bicycle and pedestrian traffic, our only means of travel that don't negatively impact the surrounding environment.</p>	FHWA-EFLHD is conducting further study of traffic, pedestrian and bicycle use to capture the full effects of the proposed Amazon HQ2. FHWA-EFLHD will consider the results of the study prior to finalizing its FONSI. EAs are not intended to be detailed design documents; we will not include dimensions and design details of the facilities in the EA or FONSI as these will continue to evolve through the design process. Instead, FHWA-EFLHD will hold

	<p>In order to credibly declare that this action won't significantly impact the bicycle and pedestrian experience, this action must commit to a 92' Columbia Pike cross section so that it can provide separated infrastructure for all users and meet NACTO design guidance. The EA should then DEMONSTRATE that the new Columbia Pike cross-section will improve, not degrade, both bicycle and pedestrian Level of Service in the corridor rather than asking us to just trust that FHWA-EFLHD has the expertise to build a top-notch multimodal street when a perusal of its recent projects includes no urban streets.</p> <p>Suggested Design  We appreciate that this action commits to separate facilities for bicycles and pedestrians. A facility that is dedicated entirely to bicycles though, is not a shared-use path or a trail, it is a two-way protected bike lane or a cycle track. It may be built at street-level or it may be built at sidewalk level. It should follow NACTO guidance for two-way cycletracks  <a href="https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/cycle-tracks/two-way-cycle-tracks/">https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/cycle-tracks/two-way-cycle-tracks/</a> - a 12' design width for 2-way bicycle traffic and a 3' buffer from cars. We would suggest that the tree pits and furniture / amenity zone be located between the sidewalk and the cycle track. This way, shade will be cast on both the sidewalk and the cycle track, and it will help ensure separation between modes.</p> <p>Care and thoughtfulness will be needed to ensure a clear and smooth transition between the existing bike facilities (or lack thereof) at either end of the project.</p> <p>It is vital that an agreement between the various entities coordinating this project clearly resolve who will be responsible for snow removal on this vital bicycle and pedestrian facility.</p> <p>This cross-section would provide a low-stress, all-ages and abilities facility for both bicycles and pedestrians, reduce bike / ped conflicts and ensure that</p>	<p>a public meeting very soon in which the public may comment on its 40% design plans for the roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. In the interim, we have passed on your comments regarding design to the FHWA-EFLHD. The public will be notified of the date and time of the meeting.</p> <p>The Final EA and ANC's Final FONSI indicate that the bicycle and pedestrian facilities are being designed by the FHWA-EFLHD, to be consistent with NACTO and AASHTO requirements. The design will be consistent with safety standards as well as with other such facilities in the County. Once constructed, the maintenance of the facilities, including snow removal, will be the responsibility of the County.</p>
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		<p>there is sufficient curb-to-curb distance for supporting automotive and transit operations. [Recommended cross section schematic provided]</p> <p>Cross-section Notes: The transit shelter area could be an additional area for trees in areas that don't have a transit stop.</p> <p>The depicted turn lane should be a tree-filled median or a pedestrian refuge in areas that don't need a turn lane.</p> <p>The tree area shown on the south side of the pike would also house transit shelters for that side of the Pike as well as a necessary infrastructure / amenities such as benches, fire hydrants, etc.</p>	
43	Grant Mandsager	I am the father of three young children who regularly bikes around Arlington and the removal of Southgate road has a significant impact on my ability to transit between northwest Arlington and southeast Arlington comfortably by bicycle.	Please see the response to Comments 2-42 above.
44	Darren Buck	I do not think that committing to a cross section that illustrates the quality of the walking and biking conditions that we can expect to see in the future is too high of a bar to commit to in this FONSI. Agencies routinely document with great specificity the roadway facilities that drivers can expect. This cross section is what we should expect from a brand new roadway.	Please see the response to Comments 2-42 above.
45	Frank Bruno	<p>You're probably seeing a form e-mail from some people supporting the Sustainable Mobility for Arlington County 92' cross section plan. As a bike commuter in this area, I would very much encroached you to adopt this plan or one very close to it, including sidewalks on both sides and protected lanes in both directions.</p> <p>Using just the sidewalk on the side that DOES have it can be difficult for cyclists &amp; scooter users to do safely while allowing the sidewalk for pedestrians on that steep hill. Going downhill, a sidewalk all the way down without requiring an unnecessary crossing would also be a great and safe</p>	Please see the response to Comments 2-42 above.

		<p>addition. I also think it still allows adequate room for the automobile traffic that drives that section of the Pike at all times of day.</p> <p>As a regular traveler of that stretch, I see Pentagon employees, commuters traveling to Pentagon City, and even tourists walking down from the Sheraton. It can be confusing and dangerous even to those of us who do regularly travel.</p> <p>I do hope you'll strongly consider Sustainable Mobility for Arlington County plan, or at least its core intents as this plan moves forward.</p>	
46	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	No further comments	No response necessary
47	Virginia Department of Transportation	<p>The sentence below (in item #10, Traffic &amp; Transportation) should be modified to clarify the reasoning behind our recent request: As written: "Recently, FHWA-EFLHD, at the request of the County and VDOT, agreed to further traffic studies to further analyze the modified access to Route 27 (Washington Boulevard) with Columbia Pike."</p> <p>Suggested: "Recently, FHWA-EFLHD, at the request of the County and VDOT, agreed to further traffic studies to consider the impact of Amazon HQ2, the 9/11 Visitor Center, changing development along Columbia Pike and access to Arlington National Cemetery on the modified access to Route 27 (Washington Boulevard) with Columbia Pike."</p>	This change will be made to the Update Notice and in the Final FONSI.
48	Joan Duryee	<p>I understand there may be changes to the burial availability to veterans, and I am upset and disappointed. My husband was in the USCG for 22 years. We have had to move from coast to coast, been apart when a new baby arrived, lived without any family around, and have lived below the poverty level due to low pay. I could certainly go on...</p> <p>However, my husband's loyalty to this nation was firm.</p>	This comment is a separate, unrelated matter and does not have any relation to this undertaking.

		<p>I am angry about the possibility of only allowing cremated remains in the cemetery for us. We are staunch Catholics, and our religion does not allow this. What about us?</p> <p>We have proudly stated that is to be our final burial place. And now what? Yes, Catholic cemetery may be an option, but is extremely hard to find and quite costly.</p> <p>I cannot believe how diplomats have been allowed there, along with others who never served in the military. Yet, this cemetery was made FOR SERVICE MEMBERS.</p> <p>Please reconsider this change and truly honor those who have EARNED it.</p>	
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**\*Comment letters from Arlington County and National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) are not included herein and will be answered in separate response letters.**



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
NCPC File No. 8009

September 30, 2019

Kathy Perdue  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District  
803 Front Street  
Norfolk, VA 23510

Re: Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion and Associated Roadway Alignment  
Environmental Assessment – NCPC Comments

Dear Ms. Perdue:

Thank you for providing an opportunity to review the Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion and Associated Roadway Alignment Environmental Assessment (EA) dated August 2019. As a cooperating agency in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) is providing comments in anticipation of the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) submission to the Commission in the future. The comments provided below are based on the NCPC's role as the central planning agency for the federal government in the National Capital Region (NCR). NCPC coordinates all federal planning activities within the NCR pursuant to the National Capital Planning Act, and would have an advisory role in the review of this project since it is a federal project located outside of Washington, DC.

We understand and support the project's purpose "...to meet forecasted interment/inurnment demands of eligible veterans, to preserve ANC as an active military cemetery and to improve multimodal transportation options for the Columbia Pike corridor." Columbia Pike runs through the cemetery property and is a significant connection to Pentagon City, a regional retail and office center in this part of Arlington, Virginia. The project's purpose is consistent with several of NCPC's Comprehensive Plan policies including those that relate to protecting views of the topographic bowl (which includes ANC); improving access for visitors to federal memorials and destinations; and enhancing roadways with pedestrian and bike facilities.

NCPC staff support ANC's preferred alternative which relocates the entire operations complex to an area south of Columbia Pike and includes a tunnel for maintenance vehicle access. This alternative would allow the greatest contiguous land area for burial space, separates the back-office operations complex from interment functions, and results in minimal impacts to traffic movement on Columbia Pike. It is our understanding that the land transfers necessary for this project are still under negotiation and we encourage ANC and the U.S. Army Corps to continue working with local and state agencies to ensure their concerns are addressed.

With regard to the Draft EA, we offer the following comments on individual sections:

- Land Use and Sustainability section: the EA should describe that both Arlington County and Virginia will transfer land under their jurisdiction to the federal government as part of this project. It should be noted as a long-term impact that both will permanently lose this land from their inventory.
- Visual and Aesthetic Resources and Cultural Resources sections: there should be an expanded discussion regarding potential long-term impacts to the setting of the U.S. Air Force Memorial. While there is some mention about the integration of this memorial with the overall cemetery, this is a national memorial with a landscape designed as an integral element of the memorial and the EA should analyze any impacts this project may have.

We look forward to continuing working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on this important cemetery expansion and associated roadway realignment project when it is submitted to NCPC for review and comment in the future. If you have any questions regarding our comments, plans/policies, or our project submission requirements, please refer to our agency website at [www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov). Also, please use Mr. Carlton Hart as the point of contact for the project at 202-482-7252 or [carlton.hart@ncpc.gov](mailto:carlton.hart@ncpc.gov).

Sincerely,



Diane Sullivan  
Director, Urban Design and Plan Review



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
ARMY NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERIES  
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22211-5003

December 9, 2019

Ms. Diane Sullivan  
Director, Urban Design and Review  
National Capital Planning Commission  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Thank you for your letter dated September 30, 2019 providing comments on the Final Environmental Assessment/Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (Final EA/Draft FONSI) for the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) Southern Expansion, prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA). ANC greatly appreciates your support of the project as a cooperating agency.

ANC is currently working towards approval of the FONSI and completion of the NEPA process. Responses to comments received on the Final EA/Draft FONSI will be included with the Final FONSI. The following provides responses to your comments:

a. NCPC Comment: Land Use and Sustainability section: the EA should describe that both Arlington County and Virginia will transfer land under their jurisdiction to the federal government as part of this project. It should be noted as a long-term impact that both will permanently lose this land from their inventory.

ANC Response: The Final EA describes proposed land acquisitions and transfers in Section 2.3.2. The Land Use and Sustainability (Section 3.1) describes the long-term benefit of the roadway realignment in increasing multimodal capacity along Columbia Pike. The Final FONSI notes the permanent loss of the transferred County and Commonwealth land from their respective property inventories as a long-term impact of this federal undertaking.

b. NCPC Comment: Visual and Aesthetic Resources and Cultural Resources sections: there should be an expanded discussion regarding potential long-term impacts to the setting of the U.S. Air Force Memorial. While there is some mention about the integration of this memorial with the overall cemetery, this is a national memorial with a landscape designed as an integral element of the memorial and the EA should analyze any impact this project may have.

ANC Response: As described in Section 3.7.1.3 of the Final EA, a study entitled, "*Air Force Memorial: Physical Description, Background Research, and Evaluation of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places*," was completed to determine eligibility of the AFM for the NRHP. ANC agrees that the integration of the

AFM with the cemetery will result in long-term visual impacts to this national memorial. Impacts to the AFM will be resolved through mitigation measures stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) (*Appendix G of the Final EA*), between the State Historic Preservation Officer, Air Force District of Washington, and ANC. The Final MOA has now been signed by these three parties. ANC will continue to consult with the Air Force District of Washington through the design process to ensure the integration compliments the symbolism and original design of the AFM.

ANC is currently in the process of seeking NCPA approval for the Southern Expansion project, per the National Capital Planning Act Project Review Requirements for Federal Agencies (40 U.S.C. §§ 8722(a), (b)(1) and (d)). NCPA comments on the Draft FONSI above will be considered in future submissions for NCPA project approval.

Please feel free to contact me directly at 703-614-0052 or [michael.d.peloquin.mil@mail.mil](mailto:michael.d.peloquin.mil@mail.mil). After December 20, 2019, please contact my successor, Colonel Tom Austin at 703-614-0169 or [thomas.e.austin14.mil@mail.mil](mailto:thomas.e.austin14.mil@mail.mil).

Sincerely,

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Michael D. Peloquin  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Program Manager for Cemetery Expansion



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER

2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 302, Arlington, VA 22201  
TEL 703-228-3120 FAX 703-228-3218 TTY 703-228-4611 [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us)

September 27, 2019

Ms. Kathy Perdue  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District  
803 Front Street  
Norfolk, VA 23510

Sent via email: [SouthernExpansion@usace.army.mil](mailto:SouthernExpansion@usace.army.mil)

Re: Arlington County Comments on Draft Finding of No Significant Impact ("FONSI") and Final Environmental Assessment ("EA") for Arlington National Cemetery Proposed Southern Expansion Project and Associated Roadway Alignment

Dear Ms. Perdue,

Arlington County appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-referenced Draft FONSI and EA. As you know, Arlington County has participated as a cooperating agency throughout this NEPA process and has previously submitted comments, including on the Draft EA that was published over a year ago. The County has carefully reviewed the latest published documents as well as the Army's responses to the County's prior comments in Appendix A of the Final EA. The County, of course, supports the importance of the Cemetery and its expansion objectives. The County also appreciates the Army's efforts to date to, for example, collaborate on and optimally design improvements to Columbia Pike and the commitments made on related utility relocations. However, the impacts of the Cemetery expansion, including transportation and utility work have a disproportionate impact on the County and its residents. Further, the County continues to have concerns with the adequacy of the analysis in the EA and the conclusions in the Draft FONSI.

First, several of the shortcomings identified in the Draft EA persist in the latest documents. While generally highlighting the County's collaborative approach with the Army throughout this NEPA process, the Final EA's published responses fail in many instances to address the County's comments. For example, as previously pointed out, the stated purpose and need presumes that intermodal and safety improvements on existing County roadways depend on the proposed expansion of the Cemetery. However, the opposite is true, as the County has planned for and continues to implement such projects in the proposed Cemetery expansion area.

The defined No Action Alternative again incorrectly treats Cemetery expansion as a quid pro quo for local roadway improvements. While the Final EA's comment responses state that the EA "provided a thorough alternatives analysis," the only variables among all of the EA's discussed build alternatives are the location of and roadway connection to the Operations Complex on the site. The 2014 Programmatic EA's studied build alternatives also were substantially similar to each other, and they all included the removal of the County-owned Southgate Road and purported substitution of a new South Nash Street. Additionally, the EA fails to sufficiently

analyze impacts to future County multimodal transportation and utility planning throughout the project area due to the constraints imposed by the project, in particular, the acquisition of Southgate Road and the inclusion of a tunnel under Columbia Pike.

Second, the Final EA and Draft FONSI improperly bifurcate the project into two federal actions: (1) the Army's expansion of the Cemetery, including all associated land acquisition, and (2) the Federal Highway Administration's ("FHWA") approval and funding of all reconstruction and realignment of local roadways and associated utility relocation. The Final EA treats these actions as "separate but related projects," purports to analyze their "cumulative effects," and states that FHWA "has indicated that all decision-making to-date concerning the Environmental Assessment is agreeable" and that FHWA intends to adopt the EA with its own FONSI "if appropriate." *E.g.*, 84 Fed. Reg. 45743-45744. Yet, nowhere does the EA or FONSI explain a commitment to, timing of, or uncertainty regarding the deferred federal actions.

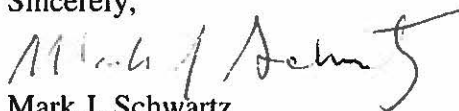
Instead, the Army's approach allows for its acquisition of all County-owned property in the project area and closure of existing roadways (including Southgate Road) to create a "single, contiguous parcel of land" owned by the Army, but fails to simultaneously guarantee adequate and timely replacement infrastructure. Indeed, the Final EA walks back text in the Draft EA, and now repeatedly states that the proposed action merely provides "an opportunity" to realize these transportation benefits. The uncertainty of this language is underscored by the reduction in detail of the proposed roadway improvements provided for in the Final EA compared to the Draft EA. The EA and Draft FONSI also are silent on what impacts would occur if the subsequent federal actions, by a separate federal Department, fail to materialize as the Army anticipates. For example, what happens if FHWA does not authorize or sufficiently fund any or all of the proposed Columbia Pike, South Nash Street, Route 27/Columbia Pike interchange, bicycle/pedestrian trails, or utility work? What happens if FHWA approval or implementation of this work takes significantly more time, whether due to agency decision-making, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement in lieu of a FONSI, availability of funding, or litigation?

It would be irresponsible for the Army to approve and frontload its own Cemetery expansion work prior to completion of FHWA's decision-making, with identified scheduling and funding, for the County's displaced transportation and utility functions in the project area. To address these concerns, the Army, at a minimum, should defer issuing a final FONSI until FHWA completes its NEPA analysis and decision-making on the "related projects" and adequately assures the County of the forthcoming and necessary improvements to the County's impacted infrastructure. Without the requisite level of detail and analysis, it is difficult to fully understand the potential impacts of the proposed road realignment and thus premature to make a finding of no significant impact for this portion of the proposed project. Moreover, while the County appreciates the Army's commitment in the Final EA to identify and fund utility relocation, the timing and practicability of such efforts are unclear. This uncertainty is of significant concern notwithstanding the fact that the County and Army concur at a conceptual level regarding the general alignment and cross-section of the proposed relocated portion of Columbia Pike.

Third, and finally, the County continues to stress the need for payment of just compensation to the County for the Army's proposed taking of Southgate Road. The County continues to have deep concerns with the inadequacy of the Army's proposal to provide a South Nash Street right-of-way as a "substitute facility" for the existing Southgate Road owned by the County. The EA oversimplifies the functions of the road, which include traffic flow, parking, utility placement, neighborhood access, bicycle and pedestrian connections, and flexibility for future transportation planning. The proposed South Nash Street offers little value beyond access to Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall. Though recent statutory changes authorize the Army to take Southgate Road in lieu of a land swap, the legal obligation of just compensation remains. The County encourages the Army to reconsider and promptly propose to the County sufficient financial compensation, in addition to the South Nash Street right-of-way, to compensate for the acquisition of Southgate Road.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark J. Schwartz", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark J. Schwartz  
County Manager



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
ARMY NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERIES  
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22211-5003

December 9, 2019

Mr. Mark Schwartz  
County Manager, County of Arlington  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 302  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

Thank you for your letter dated September 27, 2019, providing comments the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) Southern Expansion Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (Draft FONSI) and Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA). The enclosed document provides responses to your comments.

We have fully considered all comments received to-date and determined that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment; therefore it is our decision to release a final FONSI. Please note that Federal Highway Administration-Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-EFLHD) is currently analyzing updated transportation data, but anticipates adopting our EA and issuing its own Final FONSI in the next couple months. We have heard the preliminary results of the traffic analysis, which seems to indicate there are no significant issues that would prevent ANC or FHWA from issuing FONSI's to close out this project's NEPA process.

We appreciate the County's participation as a cooperating agency in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. We look forward to working with you and your staff throughout the completion of the design and construction phases of the project. Thank you for your comments.

Please feel free to contact me directly at 703-614-0052 or [michael.d.peloquin.mil@mail.mil](mailto:michael.d.peloquin.mil@mail.mil). After December 20, 2019, please contact my successor, Colonel Tom Austin at 703-614-0169 or [thomas.e.austin14.mil@mail.mil](mailto:thomas.e.austin14.mil@mail.mil).

Sincerely,

PELOQUIN.MICH  
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Michael D. Peloquin  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Program Manager for Cemetery Expansion

Enclosure



## Arlington National Cemetery—Response to Arlington County Comments

### Southern Expansion Draft FONSI/Final EA

- 1) **County Comment:** The County appreciates the Army's efforts to date to, for example, collaborate on and optimally design improvements to Columbia Pike and the commitments made on related utility relocations. However, the impacts of the Cemetery expansion, including transportation and utility work have a disproportionate impact on the County and its residents.

**ANC Response:** We have acknowledged, assessed, and explained in the EA and the FONSI the effects of the project and the ways in which the adverse but non-significant impacts, including transportation and utility effects, will be minimized. As the EA, the FONSI, and this response letter describe, the project also includes beneficial effects for transportation and utilities.

- 2) **County Comment:** The County continues to have concerns with the adequacy of the analysis in the EA and the conclusions in the Draft FONSI. First, several of the shortcomings identified in the Draft EA persist in the latest documents. While generally highlighting the County's collaborative approach with the Army throughout this NEPA process, the Final EA's published responses fail in many instances to address the County's concerns. For example, as previously pointed out, the stated purpose and need presumes that intermodal and safety improvements on existing County roadways depend on the proposed expansion of the Cemetery. However, the opposite is true, as the County has planned for and continues to implement such projects in the proposed Cemetery expansion area. The defined No Action Alternative again incorrectly treats Cemetery expansion as a *quid pro quo* for local roadway improvements.

**ANC Response:** The purpose and need statement was revised to reflect more precisely the authorities of the underlying federal actions while recognizing an opportunity for intermodal and safety improvements that will be incorporated during execution of the federal actions. Sections 1.2 and 1.3.3 address the opportunity for improvements, but nothing in the discussion of the purpose and need statement implies that *no* local roadway improvements would occur but for the federal actions. The defined No Action Alternative does not treat the Cemetery expansion as a *quid pro quo* for local roadway improvements. Rather, the No Action Alternative is defined as "no comprehensive development, including no *realigned* roadway network, and no additional contiguous land available for burials."

While the County may have planned future transportation improvements as it states in this comment, it could not implement them in the DAR/SE project section of Columbia Pike (Segment A) without the County acquiring federal land to enable the realignment and widening of Columbia Pike. The County's 2012 Transportation Study claims that "multimodal street improvements are needed" to address "competing demands within the very limited right-of-way." It envisions a concept that includes "wider sidewalks, minimized pedestrian crossing distances, bicycle accommodations, and good accessibility to transit, as well as landscaping, lighting and public amenities." The County's current right-of-way ranges from a minimum of 41' west of the AFM entrance to approximately 65' along the sweeping curve east of the AFM where the road is divided by a turfed median. In all locations, the right-of-way runs from the back of the curb to the back of the opposite curb, so there is no room to incorporate the amenities included in the County's plan for the Pike's renovation. In short, neither those described improvements, nor the currently proposed improvements, could have been constructed within the County's current right-of-way. Therefore, it is inaccurate to suggest that the same level of multimodal roadway improvement would have occurred with or without the proposed action.

- 3) County Comment:** While the Final EA's comment responses state that the EA "provided a thorough alternatives analysis," the only variables among all of the EA's discussed build alternatives are the location of and roadway connection to the Operations Complex on the site. The 2014 Programmatic EA's studied build alternatives also were substantially similar to each other, and they all included the removal of the County-owned Southgate Road and purported substitution of a new South Nash Street. Additionally, the EA fails to sufficiently analyze impacts to future County multi-modal transportation and utility planning throughout the project area, due to the constraints imposed by the project, in particular, the acquisition of Southgate Road and the inclusion of a tunnel under Columbia Pike.

**ANC's response:** It is unclear what other alternatives that the County feels should have been examined for this EA. First, the National Defense Authorization Acts of 2000 and 2017 (NDAAs) specifically directed that the Navy Annex land be vacated and turned over to ANC for the Southern Expansion project, for the purpose of burial space expansion for the Cemetery. Section 1.4.2. of the EA states that the EA is tiered from the Cemetery's 2014 ANC Real Property Master Plan (RPMP) Programmatic EA (PEA). The PEA analysis considered but eliminated from further consideration variations that were in conflict with the purpose and need for the federal actions. PEA Alternative 1 considered expansion without the alteration of any existing roadways including without the closure of Southgate Road. PEA Alternative 2 considered closure of Southgate Road without a new connector to Joint

Base Myer-Henderson Hall; and PEA Alternative 3 considered closure of Southgate Road with a new connector.

The discussion of PEA Alternative 1 stated that burial ceremonies would have had to cross a public street which was considered not desirable for safe and efficient cemetery operations. Furthermore, requiring grieving families to cross the street would trigger a feeling of separation – not inclusiveness – from the rest of the cemetery. PEA 1 was screened out because the Southern Expansion land could not have been used for burial space expansion. The discussion of PEA Alternative 2 stated that closing Southgate Road without providing an alternative access would have created the potential for adverse traffic impacts in the adjacent Foxcroft Heights neighborhood. PEA 2 and 3 also would have substantially limited burial space. In addition to these alternatives, Section 2.4.2. describes five sub-alternatives for roadway and interchange realignment; and Section 2.5.1. describes three different design options for crossing Columbia Pike (at-grade, bridge connection, and underpass). The EA explains why those were further screened, to result in the three build alternatives that were examined in detail.

The County alleges that the EA failed to sufficiently analyze impacts to the County's need for future planning for multimodal transportation and utilities due to constraints that it asserts would result from the federal action. However, the Cemetery has consulted with the County extensively throughout the development of the EA, consistent with the regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) that point to the need for early consultation with local stakeholders. The County played an active and corroborative role, along with FHWA, VDOT, and ANC, on the conceptual roadway and interchange realignment and configuration. However, the CEQ regulations do not place a boundless requirement to integrate federal decision-making into local planning processes. Specifically, 40 C.F.R. Section 1506.2(d) requires the need to discuss inconsistencies of the proposed action with any approved local plan. It also makes clear that perceived inconsistencies between the proposed federal action and future local planning is beyond the scope of the NEPA mandate.

Nevertheless, sensitive to the County's concerns, in Section 3.11.3.1 the EA states, for example, that the future design of the utility corridor would include input from the County as well as VDOT and FHWA. A robust utility study was completed for the project. Section 3.11.3.1. of the EA states that no existing utilities in use will be eliminated or scaled back; and the water-, sanitary sewer-, and stormwater-related utilities which would otherwise require the most space in the corridor would remain within the Cemetery or relocated at the Army's expense to avoid the possibility of constraining the utility corridor.

The County completed the project's original Interchange Modification Report (IMR) in 2017, and a supplemental traffic study was prepared in April 2019 to update that IMR and reflect the changes to the ANCSE development plan (including the location of access points and parking facilities). In 2018, at the County's and VDOT's request to consider the impact of Amazon HQ2, the 9/11 Visitor Center and changing development along Columbia Pike, FHWA-EFLHD agreed to prepare an update to the IMR, to further analyze the modified access to Route 27 (Washington Boulevard) with Columbia Pike. The primary purpose of this IMR update, as identified in EFLHD's statement of work, is "to interpret how the proposed alternative will perform operationally with respect to potential future year traffic and future year multimodal travel behavior related to anticipated increased private vehicle (SOV and HOV), public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle/scooter traffic demands, which may be generated by future land developments and future transportation infrastructure actions within the defined IMR study area." FHWA-EFLHD has agreed to consider the results of these studies in its decision document and design for the project. In short, an extremely robust analysis of utility and transportation effects has been, and continues to be, conducted for this project.

- 4) **County Comment:** The Final EA and Draft FONSI improperly bifurcate the project into two federal actions: (1) the Army's expansion of the Cemetery, including all associated land acquisition, and (2) the Federal Highway Administration's ("FHWA") approval and funding of all reconstruction and realignment of local roadways and associated utility relocation. The Final EA treats these actions as "separate but related projects," purports to analyze their "cumulative effects," and states that FHWA "has indicated that all decision-making to-date concerning the Environmental Assessment is agreeable" and that FHWA intends to adopt the EA with its own FONSI "if appropriate." *E.g.*, 84 Fed. Reg. 45743-45744. Yet, nowhere does the EA or FONSI explain a commitment to, timing of, or uncertainty regarding the deferred federal actions. Instead, the Army's approach allows for its acquisition of all County-owned property in the project area and closure of existing roadways (including Southgate Road) to create a "single, contiguous parcel of land" owned by the Army, but fails to simultaneously guarantee adequate and timely replacement infrastructure. Indeed, the Final EA walks back text in the Draft EA, and now repeatedly states that the proposed action merely provides "an opportunity" to realize these transportation benefits. The uncertainty of this language is underscored by the reduction in detail of the proposed roadway improvements provided for in the Final EA compared to the Draft EA. The EA and Draft FONSI also are silent on what impacts would occur if the subsequent federal actions, by a separate federal Department, fail to materialize as the Army anticipates. For example, what happens if FHWA does not authorize or sufficiently fund any or all of the proposed Columbia Pike, South Nash Street, Route 27/Columbia Pike

interchange, bicycle/pedestrian trails, or utility work? What happens if FHWA approval or implementation of this work takes significantly more time, whether due to agency decision-making, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement in lieu of a FONSI, availability of funding, or litigation? It would be irresponsible for the Army to approve and frontload its own Cemetery expansion work prior to completion of FHWA's decision-making, with identified scheduling and funding, for the County's displaced transportation and utility functions in the project area. To address these concerns, the Army, at a minimum, should defer issuing a final FONSI until FHWA completes its NEPA analysis and decision-making on the "related projects" and adequately assures the County of the forthcoming and necessary improvements to the County's impacted infrastructure. Without the requisite level of detail and analysis, it is difficult to fully understand the potential impacts of the proposed road realignment and thus premature to make a finding of no significant impact for this portion of the proposed project. Moreover, while the County appreciates the Army's commitment in the Final EA to identify and fund utility relocation, the timing and practicability of such efforts are unclear. This uncertainty is of significant concern notwithstanding the fact that the County and Army concur at a conceptual level regarding the general alignment and cross-section of the proposed relocated portion of Columbia Pike.

**ANC Response:** As the EA states in Section 1.5, federal actions are considered "connected" and must be reviewed under the same NEPA document, if they "(i) Automatically trigger other actions which may require NEPA documents, (ii) cannot or will not proceed unless other actions are taken previously or simultaneously, or (iii) are interdependent parts of a larger action and depend on the larger action for their justification." Therefore, the EA evaluates both federal actions in one NEPA document. However, each agency must issue its own decision document to complete the NEPA process. The EA fully describes the proposed project with respect to NEPA. The County's comments suggest that because the Army and FHWA agree to tie their NEPA processes to the same EA, their respective processes will be flawed if the FONSI for each is not issued simultaneously. To the contrary, each agency has a connected but separate action for which it is responsible to complete the requirements of NEPA. Although the projects are connected, the nature and characteristics of each project differ and each agency decision-maker has discretion to determine that point in time when a NEPA decision relative to its unique project is ripe. The County points to no legal requirements to the contrary.

Regarding the synchronization of the two projects, the Army must provide a replacement facility for Southgate Road before the latter can be taken out of service. That language is written into the relocation agreement the Army presented the County in Feb 2019. Likewise it would be addressed during Condemnation

proceedings because the replacement facility (i.e. South Nash St.) is the compensation for the taking. The Army is willing to work with the County on the most efficient way to operationalize these actions. In the County's example where the DAR project is delayed, the Army would not be able to move forward with the SE project due to the requirement to provide the replacement facility before taking Southgate Road out of service. Similarly, the utilities under Southgate Road would not be impacted until the DAR project moves forward and constructs the replacement facilities for those. Lastly, EAs and FONSI's generally do not include a specified construction timing schedule, because that cannot be determined until design is complete. DAR and SE construction are not anticipated to begin until 2021 and 2023, respectively, at the earliest for each.

- 5) **County Comment:** Third, and finally, the county continues to stress the need for payment of just compensation to the County for the army's proposed taking of Southgate road. The County continues to have deep concerns with the inadequacy of the army's proposal to provide a south Nash street right of way as a substitute facility for the existing Southgate road. The EA oversimplifies the functions of the road, which include traffic flow, parking, utility placement, neighborhood access, bicycle and pedestrian connections, and flexibility for future transportation planning. The proposed South Nash Street offers little value beyond access to Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall. Though recent statutory changes authorize the army to take Southgate Road in lieu of a land swap, the legal obligation of just compensation remains. The county encourages the Army to reconsider and promptly proposed to the county sufficient financial compensation, in addition to the South Nash Street right of way, to compensate for the acquisition of Southgate Road.

**ANC Response:** The EA fully acknowledges, explains, and assesses the effects of the project on the functions of the road, including traffic flow, parking, utility placement, neighborhood access, bicycle and pedestrian connections, and flexibility for future transportation planning. It also explains the ways in which the effects have been minimized. Financial compensation is a real estate acquisition and negotiation process separate from the NEPA process and is therefore beyond the scope of the EA.

After fully considering all impacts on the human and natural environment, including all public and agency comments, the Army has decided to issue a FONSI for the Proposed Action. FHWA-EFLHD, in turn, plans to complete their analysis and issue their decision document in the near future.