

**U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine
Baltimore, Maryland**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Education/Administration Facility**

Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) is proposing to construct a new Education/Administration facility and realign the current Park road and parking area at Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine (Fort McHenry) to improve visitor services, provide more opportunities for interpretation and education, as well as improve the efficiency of Park operations. The proposed action would improve visitor experience, transportation and circulation, and rehabilitate the cultural landscape and historic structures. This work will include removing the current Visitor Center from an important cultural landscape and viewsheds; constructing a new facility capable of supporting the necessary education, interpretation, and operation activities; and improving access and parking throughout Fort McHenry.

While Fort McHenry represents an important time and place in the history of the United States, its facilities have become outdated and do not offer the space necessary to provide equal educational and recreational opportunities for its growing visitor base. For example, on busy days, Fort McHenry's theater cannot support the number of visitors who wish to view the introductory film, one of the Park's most popular programs. The Park must then turn away visitors who must either wait for the next film or tour the site without the appropriate orientation. Anecdotal evidence suggests that based on the small size of the current Visitor Center, many visitors who wish to wait for the next film must do so outside. This evidence also suggests that many visitors leave the Park, rather than waiting for the next showing. This inability to educate the visiting population has become a problem at other areas within Fort McHenry as well.

Along with the loss of proper interpretation, the Park has been forced to use the historic structures in the Fort area for administrative uses. Neither the current Visitor Center nor the Mission 66 duplex (also used for administrative functions) has enough space to support Park operations. Therefore, the Park has been forced to use the second floor in several of the historic structures in the Star Fort for offices and other support services. The additional weight imposed on the historic structures threatens their integrity and sustainability. Furthermore, the use of the Fort structures for administrative uses has taken away from the Park's ability to enhance interpretation within the Fort area itself. If this action continues, visitors will lose their appreciation of the historic nature of the Fort, and the Fort area itself could become unsafe.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was released on November 1, 2004 for a 30-day public comment period in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NPS Director's Order 12 (DO 12) *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making*. The EA described the goals of the project, analyzed the effects of each alternative on the human environment, and solicited public comment on the proposed action.

NPS Selected Action

The National Park Service's Selected Action is Alternative D, the Preferred Alternative in the EA, and is described in detail on pages 53-54 of the EA. The Selected Action involves three components: (1) constructing a new Education/Administration facility outside the Park's central viewshed; (2) realigning the Park road and parking area to better serve the new building and growing number of visitors; and (3) other safety and interpretive improvements throughout the Park. Currently, the Visitor Center is located in the center of important viewsheds and the cultural landscape. Also, as noted above, it does not provide enough space for interpretation, education, or other visitor support activities. Under the Selected Action (Preferred Alternative), the current visitor center will be demolished and historic viewsheds and the cultural landscape will be restored. To compensate for the loss of the current Visitor Center, an appropriately sized Education/Administration facility capable of handling the Park's administration and visitor support needs will be constructed. This will allow the Park to remove administrative functions from the Fort and the Mission 66 duplex and locate them all in the new building along the northeast edge of the property away from the Park's historic setting. Although this new building will be larger than the current Visitor Center, its design and location adjacent to neighboring buildings will avoid intrusions into the Park setting. Additional landscaping and circulation design will further minimize the intrusion of this new building and provide visitors safe and direct access.

The proximity of Fort McHenry's parking lot, combined with its heavy use, has created unsafe and congested conditions. Buses, many of them carrying school children, must navigate the same parking areas as private automobiles. Often times, buses must drop off their passengers far from the Visitor Center, forcing visitors to walk through the parking lot and moving traffic to reach the rest of the Park. This situation will only worsen as more visitors arrive at Fort McHenry. Not only does this threaten visitor safety, but takes away from the Park atmosphere as more cars and buses line the parking area and surrounding neighborhood. Under this alternative, the parking lot will be realigned to provide more direct access to the new Education/ Administration facility, while creating bus aprons for safe drop-off and pick-up of passengers. Additional parking would be available through an option to improve the current grass overflow parking area. The park may select to pave the grassed area, or construct a grass-roofed parking terrace in its place. Both of these options are described in more detail in the EA on pages 46 and 54, respectively.

A variety of other actions will occur at various locations across the Park to improve interpretation and safety. The front gate, a site of high congestion and safety concerns, will receive a new STOP sign and a speed table (traffic calming measure). These additions will reduce the speed of incoming and outgoing vehicles and create safer conditions for pedestrians around the front gate. Bicycle access to the Park will also be improved by delineating bike lanes along the Park road. This will separate bikers from automobiles and also direct bicyclists to a designated point where they can park their bikes and explore the rest of the site on foot. Once onsite, visitors will have access to increased interpretation outside of the new facility. A historic road trace will be delineated between the new Education/Administration facility and the Fort. The road trace marks the site of a road that led from the wharf area to the Fort in 1814. The outlines of several historic structures along this road have been marked for sometime; however, without the road trace, these outlines lacked context. Under the NPS Selected Action, the road trace will be delineated to provide context to these outlines and provide the visitor with a better understanding of the landscape that surrounded the Fort in 1814.

Other Alternatives Considered

The EA prepared for this project analyzed the NPS Selected Action described above, a No Action Alternative, as well as two other action alternatives.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

The No Action Alternative would continue the present management, operations, and conditions throughout Fort McHenry. The Visitor Center would continue to lack the space to provide adequate visitor services, education, and interpretation. Buildings within the walls of the Fort would continue to house Park administrative activities. Not only would this take away from the Park's ability to interpret the Fort, but also threaten the structural integrity of the buildings. Parking and site access would remain congested and unsafe. Historically critical viewsheds would not be restored, further hindering an overall interpretation of the Park. The Park would be unable to convey the complete history of the site.

Action Alternatives

The other two action alternatives provide varied levels of improvement in current conditions. The first, Alternative B, would expand the current Visitor Center. This would provide more room for interpretation, education, and visitor support. It would, however, leave the building in the Park's central viewshed and landscape. The other action alternative, Alternative C, would create a new building in close proximity to the location of the NPS Selected Action. This building would be smaller than the preferred but would provide increased space for administrative activities, as well as improved education and interpretation. Both of these alternatives would be accompanied by a new administration building constructed adjacent to the Boundary wall just inside the entrance to the park. This building would allow the Park to remove administrative functions from the Fort and the Mission 66 duplex. These alternatives would also be accompanied by the circulation, safety, and interpretation improvements described in the NPS Selected Action.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

In accordance with NPS DO-12, the National Park Service is required to identify the "Environmentally Preferred Alternative" in all environmental documents, including environmental assessments. The Environmentally Preferred Alternative is determined by applying the criteria suggested in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 which is guided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ provides direction that "[t]he environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in Section 101 of NEPA," which considers:

- (1) "Fulfilling the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
- (2) Assuring for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
- (3) Attaining the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;

- (4) Preserving important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintaining, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
- (5) Achieving a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
- (6) Enhancing the quality of renewable resources and approaching the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources."

Fort McHenry is located in the Locust Point area of Baltimore City and sits along the heavily developed Baltimore Harbor. The Park is one of the most consolidated green spaces in the region and preserving this green space is a desire of the Park staff, the project team, and the surrounding community. All the proposed alternatives would meet **Criterion 1** by minimizing loss of green space and maintaining recreational areas along the waterfront.

In conjunction with preserving green space, the build alternatives also seek to ensure healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings (**Criterion 2**). All of the proposed alternatives seek to achieve this balance in varying ways. The No Build (No Action) Alternative would maintain the Park as it is, continuing to provide aesthetic and cultural resources. Under this alternative, Park offices would remain in the Star Fort, infringing upon the historic surroundings. In addition, this alternative does not provide universally accessible restrooms in the Visitor Center, further limiting the visitor experience. Alternative B would seek to enhance the Park's ability to interpret its cultural resources in a safe and productive manner by increasing the size of the current Visitor Center and enhancing its universal accessibility. While this may increase interpretation of cultural resources, it may decrease the aesthetics and cultural landscape within the Park with the larger facility existing in important viewsheds and the cultural landscape. Alternative C would enhance interpretation of cultural resources within the Park, as done in Alternative B. However, Alternative C would further enhance aesthetics and the cultural landscape in the Park by removing the current Visitor Center from important viewsheds and aligning it with the developed adjacent properties. Alternative D, the NPS Selected Action, will provide similar enhancements as Alternative C. This alternative, however, will require a larger facility to be constructed. Such a facility may impose on the Park's aesthetics more than Alternative C, but will not infringe upon important viewsheds. By consolidating Park operations in this building, the overall aesthetics of the Park will be improved, as other buildings and development will be limited.

The No Build Alternative would not attempt to enhance the Park's ability to attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment (**Criterion 3**) nor would it provide universally accessible restrooms in the Visitor Center or space for educational programs. Alternative B would seek to do this by enhancing the current Visitor Center. It would, however, impact the Park's cultural landscape and important viewsheds by increasing the size of the Visitor Center at its present location. Alternative C would avoid this undesirable impact by locating the new facility adjacent to the existing parking lot. Although this area is currently undisturbed, the surrounding built-up properties have been altered to such an extent that the impact would seem minimal and fitting to that portion of the property. A number of unearched archeological resources exist in the area of new construction, so it would require investigation prior to development. Some of these impacts will be avoided by Alternative D. By consolidating all of the Park's resources in one facility and enhancing alternative transportation methods, the Park will be better equipped to attain the widest range of benefits.

Currently, the Park works to preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and provide a wide variety of choices to its visitors (**Criterion 4**). All of the build alternatives would enhance the Park's ability to preserve these resources and provide the visitors with improved services. Alternative B would do so by providing greater space for interpretation of resources within the Visitor Center. It would also improve interpretive and educational opportunities within the Fort by removing Park offices from this area. Alternative C would meet the criterion by providing even more space for interpretation and educational activities, while opening up the Park's viewshed and cultural landscape for better understanding and appreciation. Alternative D will do the same as Alternative C but will also consolidate all of the project development in one place.

It is the goal of the Park, and this project, to maintain the green space and variety of opportunities at Fort McHenry. As part of that goal, all of the proposed alternatives would maintain a balance between population and resources that would maintain high standards of living (**Criterion 5**). An example of this effort comes through enhancing multimodal transportation as a means of reaching visitors, rather than relying on extensive paved areas in or around the Park.

Renewable resources, those that are naturally replaced, would not be impacted under any of the proposed alternatives (**Criterion 6**). However, some depletable resources would be impacted. All three of the build alternatives would result in the loss of grass, trees, and/or shrubs. While the loss of the trees and shrubs could be mitigated with new plantings, they would still constitute a loss of a resource. The new plantings would work to buffer the development from the surrounding water resources. Design techniques for mitigating stormwater runoff, best management practices (BMPs), would also be installed to further protect the surrounding water resources, which are another important depletable resource. While the loss of vegetation at the site can be mitigated, the continual loss of water quality cannot. Currently, the Park does not have BMPs to reduce stormwater. The build alternatives would install BMPs and vegetative buffers to mitigate stormwater discharge and thus reduce pollutant loads entering the surrounding waterways. The loss of some grass in the Park is outweighed by the vast benefits that stormwater management would provide.

As the NPS Selected Action, Alternative D best meets the purpose and need of this project. As the Environmentally Preferred Alternative, it will best meet the criteria listed above. The size of the facility will provide the most space for interpretation and education to continue to convey the Fort McHenry story to future generations. It will also consolidate development within the Park to provide the most opportunities for the future of the site, as well as allowing the remaining portions of the Park to be maintained in an aesthetically pleasing manner. By consolidating development in a corner of the Park, near other offsite development, Alternative D does the most to preserve historic, cultural, and natural resources throughout the Park. Avoiding these resources and providing ample space for interpretation and education will allow Fort McHenry to find the best balance between a high standard of living and sharing of the Park's resources. Finally, Alternative D does the best at protecting depletable resources by creating the most sustainable and successful stormwater management. Therefore, the Environmentally Preferred Alternative is Alternative D.

Mitigation

Mitigation measures described in the EA and incorporated into the Selected Action are generally required by laws, regulations, or NPS policies and are adopted by this decision. These mitigation

efforts include new tree, shrub, and grass plantings, enhanced stormwater management, and further archeological investigation and monitoring. Plantings would be a mixture of deciduous and evergreen trees, preferably species native to Maryland and or species already present and flourishing at Fort McHenry. Evergreen shrubs would be used to soften the building and maintain green throughout the year. Plantings would be designed to be low maintenance and would occur upon completion of development. Stormwater management at Fort McHenry would be focused on BMPs for collecting and treating roof and pavement runoff, as well as the use of green spaces around buildings and parking lot islands for water infiltration and treatment. The BMPs would be located to carefully avoid any known or potential archeological resources. Initial locations would be proposed, and then undergo archeological investigations to ensure no resources would be impacted. If any resources were identified, a new location for the BMPs would be suggested. This process would continue until a location was selected that suited the site's stormwater management needs while avoiding archeological resources. BMPs will be coordinated with the archeological staff. Additional archeological coordination will be coordinated with the Maryland Historical Trust (SHPO) to more precisely the locations and condition of archeological resources prior to construction to inform the project design. In addition, a qualified archeologist will monitor construction activities to assess any known or unknown resources that may be uncovered.

Why the Selected Action (NPS Preferred Alternative) will not have a Significant Effect on the Human Environment

Context

This measure of significance considers the setting within which an impact was analyzed in the EA, such as the affected region, society as a whole, affected interests, and/or locality. In the EA, the intensity of impacts was evaluated within a local (i.e., project area) context, while the intensity of the contribution of effects to cumulative impacts was evaluated in a regional context, or in the case of special status species, within the context of species range. The Selected Action would affect only the immediate local area in terms of resources, employees, local residents, and visitors. Any possible impact would be negligible, minor, or moderate and would be held below the significance threshold, as identified below.

Intensity

This measure of significance refers to the severity of impacts, which may be both beneficial and adverse, and considers measures that would be applied to minimize or avoid impacts. Impact thresholds are defined specifically for each impact topic in the EA and are generally presented as Negligible, Minor, Moderate or Major.

As defined in 40 CFR Section 1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

Impacts that may have both beneficial and adverse aspects and which on balance may be beneficial, but that may still have significant adverse impacts which require analysis in an EIS.

No major adverse or beneficial impacts were identified that would require analysis in an environmental impact statement.

The NPS Selected Action would have long-term, negligible to moderate, adverse impacts on soils and topography, vegetation, floodplains, and archeological resources.

With mitigation as described in the EA on page 32 and again on 54, the overall effect of the NPS Selected Action would result in no major impacts to any natural resources, individual species or populations of animals or plants, or any biotic communities as a whole. The National Park Service finds that implementation of the selected alternative would have an effect on historic properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but that this effect **would not be adverse**. The NPS finding of no adverse effect was shared with the Maryland Historical Trust on October 28, 2004 (SHPO log number 200403477). The Trust does not disagree with the NPS determination of no adverse effect, and stating “While the document states that NPS will be negotiating and executing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Trust for this undertaking, development of such an agreement is premature at this time and may in fact be unnecessary for this project. Once NPS has completed its archeological survey efforts, developed preliminary plans for the new construction, and provided those items to the Trust for review, we will be able to make an informed assessment of the project’s effects, if any, on historic properties and make appropriate recommendations. If the project results in a no adverse effect determination, then development of the MOA is not warranted. We look forward to working with NPS staff to complete the Section 106 review of this undertaking as project planning proceeds for this undertaking.” The NPS will continue to consult with the Maryland Historical Trust and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and will send archeological survey results and construction plans to the Trust when these documents are available.

Degree of effect on public health or safety.

The NPS Selected Action will have a long-term, moderate, beneficial impact on overall public health and safety. Asbestos-containing material currently exists in the Visitor Center theater soundproofing, and lead based paint exists on the Mission 66 maintenance building. These buildings have been determined ineligible for the National Register and under the NPS Selected Action; both of these structures will be demolished. Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that these materials are not disturbed and will not pose a greater threat during demolition. Once they are removed, the only remaining hazardous materials within the site will be confined to the metal maintenance building and protected by the Park’s management and spill prevention practices. During active construction, the NPS will restrict access to the project areas to reduce potential injury to visitors.

Improved parking and site access around the front gate will reduce and/or eliminate unsafe interactions between moving vehicles and pedestrians. It will also improve vehicle circulation in and around the Park. All of these improvements will greatly reduce threats to visitor, employee, and neighborhood safety.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

As described in the EA on pages 79-88, Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine is a site of significant historic importance. In 1999, the Park's National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) documentation was updated. Fort McHenry itself is listed on the NRHP; however, none of its individual resources are listed. There are currently 36 resources identified on the List of Classified Structures (LCS). The List of Classified Structures is a computerized, evaluated inventory of all historic and prehistoric structures having historical, architectural, or engineering significance in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. Included are structures that individually meet the criteria of the National Register or are contributing elements of sites and districts that meet the Register criteria. Although the project area includes a number of these structures, no adverse impacts are anticipated. The NPS will conduct archeological surveys prior to construction and will provide the results of these surveys to the Maryland Historical Trust for review and comment.

No Native American graves are anticipated within the project area. In the unlikely event that human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (25 USC 3002) will be followed. Long-term, minor, beneficial impacts to the cultural landscape within the project area will result from removing the current Visitor Center from the landscape.

No prime farmlands, prime farmland soils, or wild and scenic rivers exist within Fort McHenry. Wetlands are located adjacent to the Park but far from the project area. The project will have negligible impacts on floodplains.

Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

As measured by public comment, this project is not likely to be highly controversial. During the 30-day public review and comment period, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council and four individuals commented on the project. These comments expressed viewpoints on the alternatives, but did not raise any controversial issues.

Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

No highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks were identified during preparation of the EA or the public review period. On January 18, 2005, the Maryland Historical Trust commented on the undertaking, asking that archeological survey results and developed plans for new construction be sent to the Trust for review and comment. The NPS will continue to consult with the Trust and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and will provide the results of any archeological surveys and developed plans to the Maryland Historical Trust when they are available.

Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The NPS Selected Action neither establishes NPS precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. Future projects would be

evaluated through additional, project-specific planning processes that incorporate requirements of NEPA and NPS policies.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

Impacts to soils and topography, vegetation, floodplains, Chesapeake Bay resources and surface waters, hazardous materials, archeological resources, historic structures, cultural landscape, museum collection, visual resources, visitor use and experience, park operations and infrastructure, transportation and site access, and local economy and land use were identified in the NPS Preferred Alternative in the EA. As described in the EA, cumulative impacts were determined by combining the impacts of the NPS Selected Action with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. The negligible, minor, and moderate impacts of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions on natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources, in conjunction with the impacts of the NPS Selected Action, would result in both beneficial and adverse cumulative impacts ranging in intensity from negligible to moderate. However, based on the relative size of Fort McHenry, the NPS Selected Action would contribute an imperceptible increment to the overall cumulative effect.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

As described in the EA, the selected action will have an effect on historic properties that meet National Register of Historic Places criteria, but the NPS finds that this effect will *not be adverse*. The finding of *no adverse effect* was shared with the Maryland Historical Trust on October 28, 2004 (SHPO log number 200403477). The Trust responded to this undertaking on January 18, 2005. The Trust does not disagree with the NPS determination of no adverse effect, and stating “While the document states that NPS will be negotiating and executing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Trust for this undertaking, development of such an agreement is premature at this time and may in fact be unnecessary for this project. Once NPS has completed its archeological survey efforts, developed preliminary plans for the new construction, and provided those items to the Trust for review, we will be able to make an informed assessment of the project’s effects, if any, on historic properties and make appropriate recommendations. If the project results in a no adverse effect determination, then development of the MOA is not warranted. We look forward to working with NPS staff to complete the Section 106 review of this undertaking as project planning proceeds for this undertaking.” The NPS will continue to consult with the Maryland Historical Trust and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and will send archeological survey results and construction plans to the Trust when these documents are available.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and information in NPS documents and files, no special status species or critical habitat would be affected by the actions proposed in the EA.

Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law

The NPS Selected Action violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

Impairment of Park Resources or Values

In addition to reviewing the list of significance criteria, the NPS has determined that implementing the NPS Selected Action will not constitute an impairment of park resources and values. This conclusion is based on a thorough analysis of the impacts described in the EA, agency and public comments received, and the professional judgment of the decision-makers in accordance with *NPS Management Policies 2001*. As described in the EA, implementation of the NPS Selected Action would not result in major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of Fort McHenry; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park; or (3) identified as a goal by the park.

Public Involvement

The EA, prepared in accordance with NEPA and CEQ regulations, was made available for public review and comment beginning November 1, 2004. A press release announcing the document's availability was published in local newspapers and copies of the EA were placed in local libraries, the Visitor Center, and the Park's web site. The EA was distributed to state and local regulatory agencies, local businesses, and interested individuals. The NPS received written comment from the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, as well as four individuals.

In addition, four public meetings were held during the planning process to inform and involve the public. The first was a pair of open house events held on January 13, 2004 at the Fort McHenry Visitor Center. At this time, the NPS presented its four alternatives for the project and had subject matter experts on hand to address specific issues dealing with transportation, cultural resources, and building design. During this time, there was a question and answer session and an opportunity for the public to leave written comments which were used in the planning process. Comments received expressed interest in different pieces of the alternatives, preserving views from the visitor center and other areas of the park, circulation and access issues, as well as interest in identifying space for specific park programs.

The NPS held another series of open house events on November 17, 2004. At this time, the EA was presented through a narrated presentation, updated visual aids, and discussions with subject matter experts. The public was given an opportunity to ask questions about the proposal and submit written comments. Only a few written comments were received, and reflected approval of the NPS Selected Action.

On December 8, 2004, representatives from Fort McHenry presented the project to the Baltimore City Planning Department. At this meeting, the presentation that had been displayed during the open houses was viewed. There was some general discussion about the project, but no formal comments or criticism was received.

On the same day, representatives from Fort McHenry attended the Locust Point Civic Association meeting. At the meeting, the park representatives gave an oral presentation on the project and passed out materials outlining the project development and proposed alternatives. No official comments were received as a result of this meeting.

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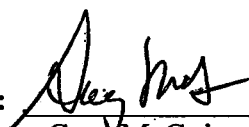
Finding of No Significant Impact

The NPS Selected Action does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an EIS and will not have a significant effect on the natural, cultural, or human environment. Adverse environmental impacts that could occur are negligible, minor, or moderate in intensity. There are no significant impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, historic properties either listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified during the impact assessment. Implementing the action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection laws. Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an EIS is not required for this project and thus will not be prepared.

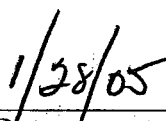
Decision

With guidance from NPS Management Policies; natural and cultural resources information, professional judgment, and considering public comments, the NPS plans to construct a new Education/Administration facility and realign the current Park road and parking area at Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine as presented in Alternative D (NPS Preferred Alternative) of the Fort McHenry Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect.

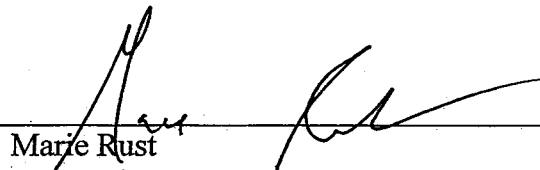
Recommended:


Greg McGuire

Acting Superintendent, Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine


Date

Approved:


Marie Rust
Regional Director, Northeast Region


Date