



Fort McHenry Initiates Project Planning Activities for Education and Administration Facilities

Project Overview

First established in the late 18th century as part of a national system of coastal fortifications, Fort McHenry's role in the defense of the city of Baltimore during a British attack during the War of 1812 inspired Francis Scott Key to pen the words that would become "The Star-Spangled Banner." The 43-acre park is located in Locust Point, just two miles from the Inner Harbor area of Baltimore, which is booming with industrial and economic growth.

Much of the park's infrastructure dates to the early 1960s and can no longer support the park's activities and growing visitation. Over the past four decades visitation at the park has grown to more than 600,000 annually, creating an overflow of people at both the visitor center and parking areas. The overflow has reduced visitors' enjoyment of the park as well as the park's ability to carry out its



Clockwise from upper left: The Fort McHenry Visitor Center, flag flying over Fort McHenry, picnic area adjacent to the parking lot, a bus passes through the main gate

mission. This has motivated the park to consider conceptual planning for both site access/ circulation and visitor facilities. The park is proposing to replace the existing visitor center with a new education/ administration facility that

would accommodate current and future visitation needs as well as allow space for educational facilities, consolidated park operations, and partner offices. The site access and circulation planning would build off this design.

Send comments to:

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine
2400 East Fort Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Project Components

There are three main components to this project: a cultural landscape report (CLR), an alternative transportation plan (ATP), and the design of the new facility.

Cultural Landscape Report

The NPS's Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation is producing a CLR for Fort McHenry. The report will provide critical baseline

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information for this project. The CLR will provide the park with an up to date study on its resources and history. This information will also outline specific resources, sites, and viewsheds that require protection and preservation — information that will be used to plan transportation and design concepts that avoid impacts to park resources and fulfill requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Alternative Transportation Plan

The Department of Transportation's Volpe Center is currently conducting an Alternative Transportation Plan study for Fort McHenry. This study will enable the park to more closely coordinate and participate with federal, state, and local transportation planners to develop and improve public access to Fort McHenry. The Fort McHenry alternative transportation study aims to improve the current alternative transportation services — public transit, school bus, private tour operator, and water taxi service — through new or enhanced transportation services, improved partnerships with local stakeholders, and better presentation of traveler information.

This study will also assist the project team in determining the best location for the new education/administration facility. Other benefits from the ATP include improved visitor experience and safety, reduction of traffic in and around the park, improved community relations, and economic opportunities in city neighborhoods outside the park.

Education/Administration Facility and Onsite Parking Design

The project team is currently developing building and site combinations for the new education/administration facility. These combinations will be evaluated to determine the best alternative for the new facility. Sites under consideration include several sites inside the park's boundary.

In addition, current and future parking demand are being evaluated to determine options for parking layouts that minimize the need to take additional green space. Finally, the design will also introduce new site access options and circulation patterns to better accommodate visitors.

What is the NEPA Process?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is our basic national charter for protection of the environment and is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on understanding of environmental consequences and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. NEPA requires consideration of environmental effects of proposed federal actions. Prior to making a recommendation or report on proposals that would affect the quality of the environment, federal agencies, including the NPS, must prepare a statement that includes the environmental impact of the action, any adverse effects that cannot be avoided, alternatives to the proposed action, short-term uses of the environment in comparison to long-term productivity, and

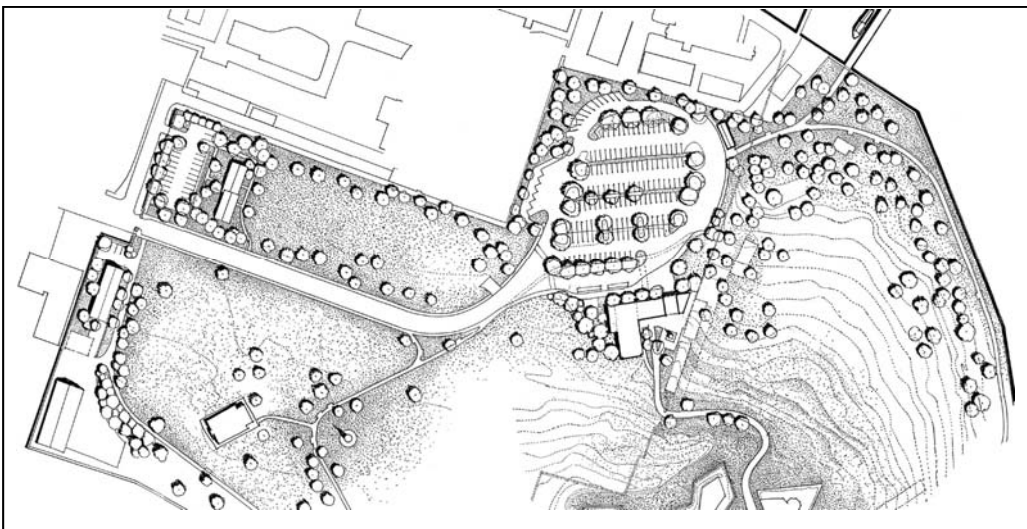
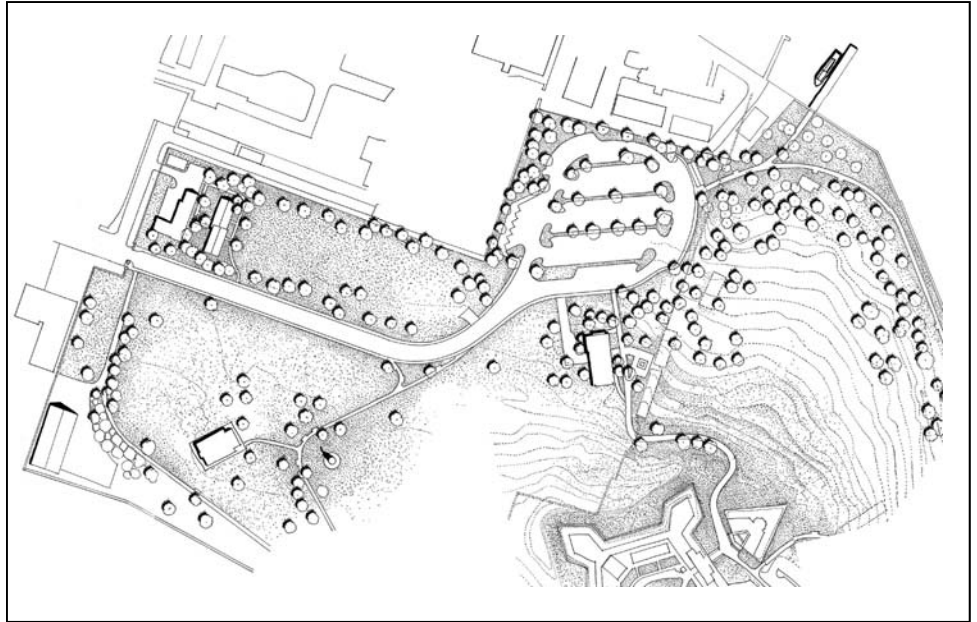
Fort McHenry encompasses a significant amount of green space in an otherwise gray environment. It is a prime destination for those seeking historic, aesthetic, or recreational resources. However, its location at the tip of Locust Point has made transportation, site access, and parking a challenge. This project seeks to overcome these challenges while improving the park's ability to meet the needs of its visitors.



Preliminary Concepts and the DCP/EA

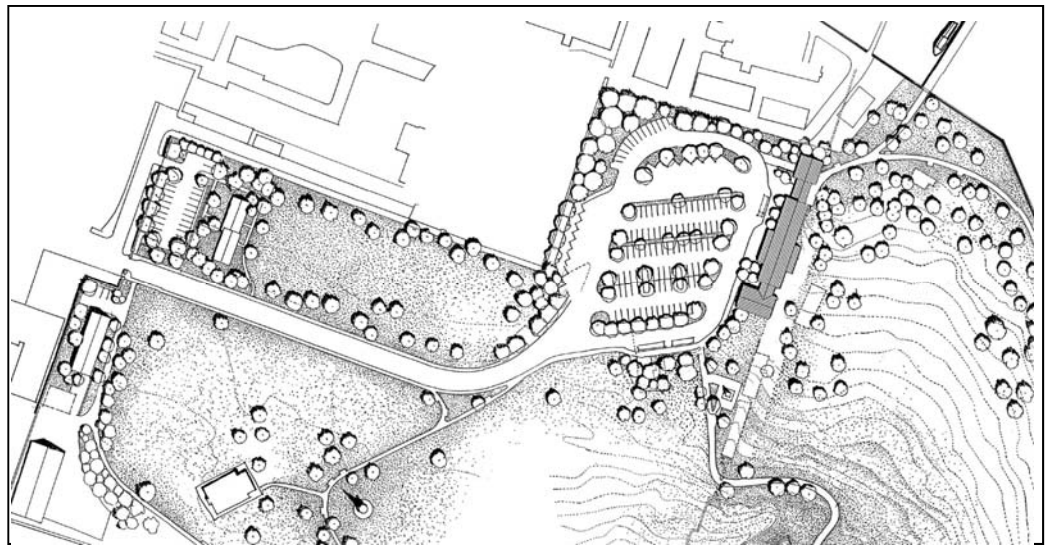
The team of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. and Carlton Abbott and Partners was hired to assist the NPS in developing concepts for visitor services improvements as well as to manage production of a Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment (DCP/EA). The DCP/EA will analyze the impacts of each of the chosen alternatives on the natural, cultural, and human environments, in accordance with NEPA.

Concept A: No Action represents the existing condition of Fort McHenry and will serve as a baseline for comparing other concepts.



In Concept B: Campus Plan with Rehabilitated/Expanded Visitor Center (right), the existing Visitor Center would be renovated and expanded. In addition, a new administration building would be constructed adjacent to the main gate.

Concept C: Campus Plan (left) makes use of an important cultural landscape feature, the minor axis. A new education facility would be constructed east of the minor axis, allowing for interpretation of the historic road trace and other historic structures along this axis. The existing Visitor Center would be demolished, and administrative functions would be moved to a new facility adjacent to the entrance gate.



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In Concept D: Single Education/Administration Building (left) all visitor and administrative services would be consolidated into a new single, large structure. This building would be constructed west of the minor axis, partially in the existing parking area. The facility would include area for partner offices and education rooms.

How You Can Be Involved

Public participation is essential to the success of the planning process. Your input will help the NPS learn about the concerns, issues, expectations, and desires of visitors, neighbors, interested citizens, interest groups, and others. We will share information and seek your response at key points in the process. We will communicate through news releases, public open houses, meetings, and posts on the park's web site. The schedule below summarizes the major steps in the planning process and opportunities for you to get involved. We are in step 2 of the process.



Public Open House

Wednesday, November 17, 2004
 3 to 5 pm or 6 to 8 pm
 Visitor Center
 2400 East Fort Avenue
 Baltimore, MD

For future notices and project updates, check the park's website
www.nps.gov/fomc

Step	Stage	Planning Activity	Dates	Public Involvement Opportunities
1	Complete	Collect data, assess resources, determine issues and concerns	Fall 2003	Write to the park to share goals and concerns
2	Complete	Develop concepts	Winter 2003	Attend public open house and/or write to the park to provide comments
3	Underway	Develop and publish Draft DCP/EA	Fall 2004	Attend public open house and/or write to the park to provide comments on the Draft DCP/EA
4	Underway	Publish Final DCP/EA and decision document	Fall 2004	