



Information Presentation

Commission Meeting: July 12, 2012

PROJECT Memorial Trends and Practice in Washington, DC Study	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7392
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PRESENTER Lucy Kempf	REVIEW AUTHORITY Preparation of the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan 40 U.S.C. § 8721

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), in consultation with the National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), is developing a draft report to look exclusively at key trends associated with commemoration planning and practice in the nation's capital. Staff is presenting a status of the report in advance of a public release. Staff presented the report during the research phases at commission meetings in February 2010 and November 2010.

Memorials are often located in historic national parks and among high-profile structures, viewsheds, and promontories in the nation's capital. This civic art form reflects many important aspects of American history and culture. The agencies involved in the process work with sponsors to ensure that each memorial is located and designed in a manner that supports its commemorative purpose and enhances its surroundings. In Washington, memorial projects are balanced with other important park uses, with a long-term goal of preserving the limited open space available to residents and visitors.

The Commemorative Works Acts (CWA) governs the establishment of memorials in Washington. Given the importance of memorials to the American people and their permanent place in Washington's public realm, the process is designed to be deliberative, public and consensus-oriented. It involves a sequence of steps that incorporates the input of several federal agencies and an advisory body, the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission.

The report is primarily an analytical document, designed to take a snapshot of current trends associated with memorials and key aspects of the existing memorial landscape. It also includes:

- a summary of major plans shaping commemoration in Washington
- roles of various agencies in the commemorative process
- information from the practices of other capital cities
- an exploration of issues facing future commemorative proposals, including ideas for next steps by the involved agencies
- appendices containing the detailed research and findings underpinning the summary

The report is based on a two-year research project conducted by NCPC and NPS (2009-2011). As part of this research, the agencies created a publicly accessible catalog of the 113 memorials on NPS land, classified by attributes such as theme, key dates and location. Users can map and analyze the data using Geographic Information System (GIS) software. The data is also available to the public as an online interactive map. Most memorials in Washington, D.C. and all projects subject to the CWA are in the catalog. The agencies continue to invite the public to submit additional commemorative works for a Phase II catalog, which includes memorials in Virginia and on lands under the jurisdiction of other federal agencies.

This research enabled a structured way of identifying how memorial content and locations have changed over time – and highlights trends such as:

- the predominance of memorials located in the Monumental Core
- a shift from commemoration of individuals towards the commemoration of groups and shared experiences and events
- the expanding size and scope of memorial landscapes

Using the research, the participating agencies also identified several opportunities for improvement and clarification within the existing framework of the CWA, including:

- improve agency guidance on memorial content and historical significance of proposed memorials to sponsors and lawmakers through the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC)
- develop siting guidance for international gifts from foreign countries in an update to the Memorials and Museums Master Plan and/or the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan
- identify opportunities other than permanent commemoration for sponsors to explore subjects of interest including, but not limited to commemorative coins, exhibits for lobbies or cultural facilities, and ceremonies
- jointly author a manual that clearly explains the memorial process and agency roles and expectations

Research

In addition to the catalog, research referenced in this report includes:

- Case studies of commemoration practices and policies in selected state and international capital cities (Appendix C). The case studies present some of the common challenges other capitals share with Washington, and some of the strategies employed to address these challenges. While some actions used in other cities may not be appropriate for Washington others merit further assessment.
- Case studies of selected memorials built in Washington, which tracked each project's progress from authorization to completion.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Previous actions	February 2010 – Information Presentation November 2010 – Information Presentation
Remaining actions (anticipated)	Release report for public comment