

E&R-2011-03

Resolution on the National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan for Fort Hunt Park

WHEREAS, the National Park Service (NPS) has issued a draft *Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan, George Washington Memorial Parkway: Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect* (EA) on options for restructuring Fort Hunt Park facilities and grounds to help preserve its history and enhance the historical interpretation of its features for the public, and has requested public comment on the draft EA before November 6, 2011;

WHEREAS, the draft EA offers four alternatives, including a “no action” alternative (A);

WHEREAS, the three alternatives (B, C, and D) to the “no action” alternative (A) would all eliminate multiple pavilions, a restroom, and recreation fields; and

WHEREAS, alternatives B, C, and D would all add a visitor’s center and chronological interpretive trail and would realign existing roads and bicycle trails, with the result that (to varying degrees) existing mature woods would be removed (especially under the NPS-preferred alternative C, but also under alternative D) and impervious surfaces would be added;

WHEREAS, the land disturbance required by alternatives B, C, and D will lead to the further spread of the already large number of exotic invasive plants and vines in Fort Hunt Park;

WHEREAS, while preserving the history and providing enhanced interpretation of the park are important and valuable objectives for this NPS park, the current recreational facilities of the park are highly valued by park visitors;

WHEREAS, thousands of visitors every year are attracted to Fort Hunt Park because of its spacious recreational facilities and wide roadways;

WHEREAS, Fort Hunt Park is one of only two parks with reservable picnic tables in the Mount Vernon area north of the Occoquan River, and is a popular destination for local residents;

WHEREAS, management of the large number of park visitors by the National Park Service can be accomplished by means other than removing all but one of the picnic pavilions and restrooms;

WHEREAS, the historical interpretation of Fort Hunt Park can be enhanced without eliminating the current recreational facilities;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens’ Associations (MVCCA) asks the National Park Service to develop one or more additional alternative designs for Fort Hunt Park that would:

- Create enhanced facilities and programs for interpreting the long and rich history of Fort Hunt Park, whether in the form of interpretive trails, signage, and/or a visitors’ center,

- Consider restoring the historical viewshed down the Potomac River and across to Fort Washington from one of the batteries in the park,
- Preserve the picnic pavilions and restroom facilities,
- Preserve mature woodlands by not placing new trails and facilities there, or replace any trees destroyed with native trees,
- Employ Low Impact Development practices (e.g., pervious concrete) in order to not increase, and preferably to reduce, the amount of impervious surface in the park,
- Conduct a complete biological survey of the park,
- Avoid impacts to any state or federally-listed endangered or threatened species,
- Include as part of the overall plan a natural resources management plan to eliminate the large number of exotic invasive plants currently in the park, to restore invaded areas with native plants, and to prevent the further spread of exotic invasives, especially on land disturbed by new construction or removal of old roadbed,
- Give priority to preservation and restoration of existing historic buildings (e.g., the NCO Quarters, the batteries) over the construction of new buildings, and use the old buildings as interpretive facilities, if such use is consistent with their preservation,
- Conduct archaeological fieldwork, and incorporate it into a new “living historical park” design, so that visitors can see and learn on a continuing basis what is being discovered about Fort Hunt’s history from 14,000 years ago to the present, and
- Work with the county to create a bus stop at the park to avoid an increase in traffic.
- Retain the current one-way traffic around the park.