



1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

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1.1 Introduction

The Air Force Memorial Foundation (the Foundation) proposes to establish an Air Force Memorial (AFM) at the Naval Annex site, in Arlington County, Virginia. The Foundation is a non-profit entity, authorized by Congress in Public Law 103-163 (107 Stat.1973; 40 U.S.C. 1003 note) “to establish a memorial in the District of Columbia or its environs to honor the men and women who have served in the United States Air Force and its predecessors”.

The Naval Annex, also referred to as the Navy Annex, Arlington Annex and Federal Office Building #2 (FOB #2), is part of the Pentagon Reservation, an office facility operating under the control of the Department of Defense (DOD). It is located to the southwest of the Washington D.C. monumental core, and north of Pentagon City in Arlington County (see Figure 1-1). The site is bordered by Interstate 395 to the south, Washington Boulevard (Route 27) and the Pentagon to the east, Southgate Road and the Arlington National Cemetery to the north, and Fort Myer, Henderson Hall and some residences and commercial development to the west. Other roadways in the immediate vicinity include Columbia Pike (Route 244) and Joyce Street.

The Naval Annex site totals 42 acres in size and consists of three parcels. The largest parcel, approximately 23 acres in size, is located to the north of Columbia Pike. The second parcel is located to the south of Columbia Pike and is 15 acres in size. The third parcel is located to the east of Joyce Street and is approximately four acres in size (see Figure 1-2). FOB #2 sits on the largest parcel and consists of eight wings aligned in a north/south direction. The remainder of the north parcel is mostly developed as a parking area. The other two parcels are primarily developed as parking lots, with the smallest parcel also home to a fuel service station for military personnel. The AFM would occupy three acres towards the eastern end of the northern parcel, in an area commonly known as the promontory area. The proposed establishment of the AFM would require the removal of Wing 8 of FOB #2 and adjacent parking to the east. The three-acre promontory area where the Memorial would be constructed will hereafter be referred to as the AFM “precinct”. The AFM precinct is located entirely within the Naval Annex site (see Figure 1-3).

DOD, the federal agency that controls the Naval Annex site, and the Foundation have prepared this EA in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) and the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA [40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508]. This EA seeks to identify the potential impacts and recommended mitigation measures related to the proposed action and a No Action Alternative as required by CEQ. The EA addresses short-term construction related impacts and long-term effects from the proposed action, as well as cumulative impacts that would result from this and other development projects that have been completed recently, are currently under development, and are proposed within the study area.

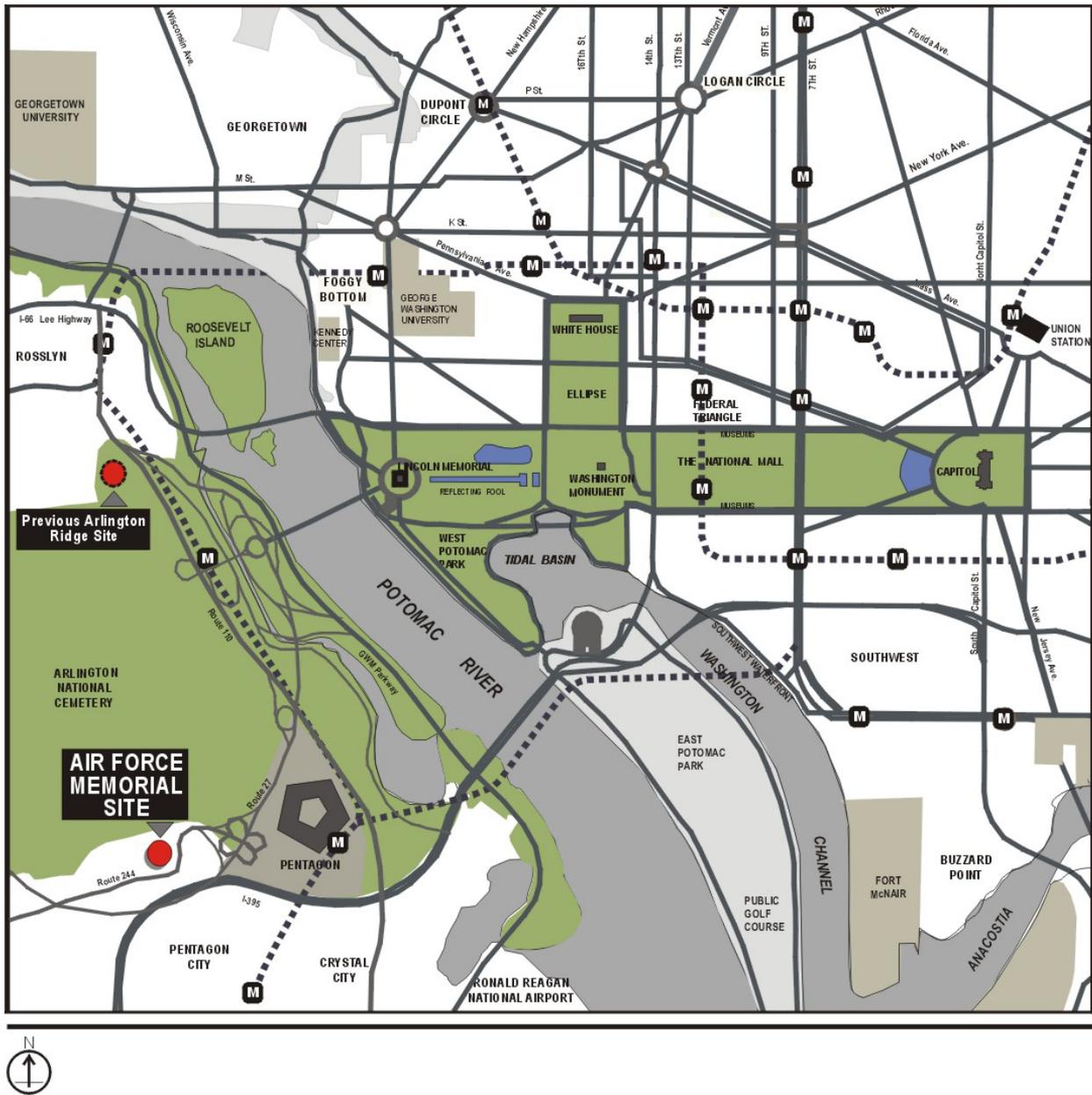


Figure 1-1: Site Location Map

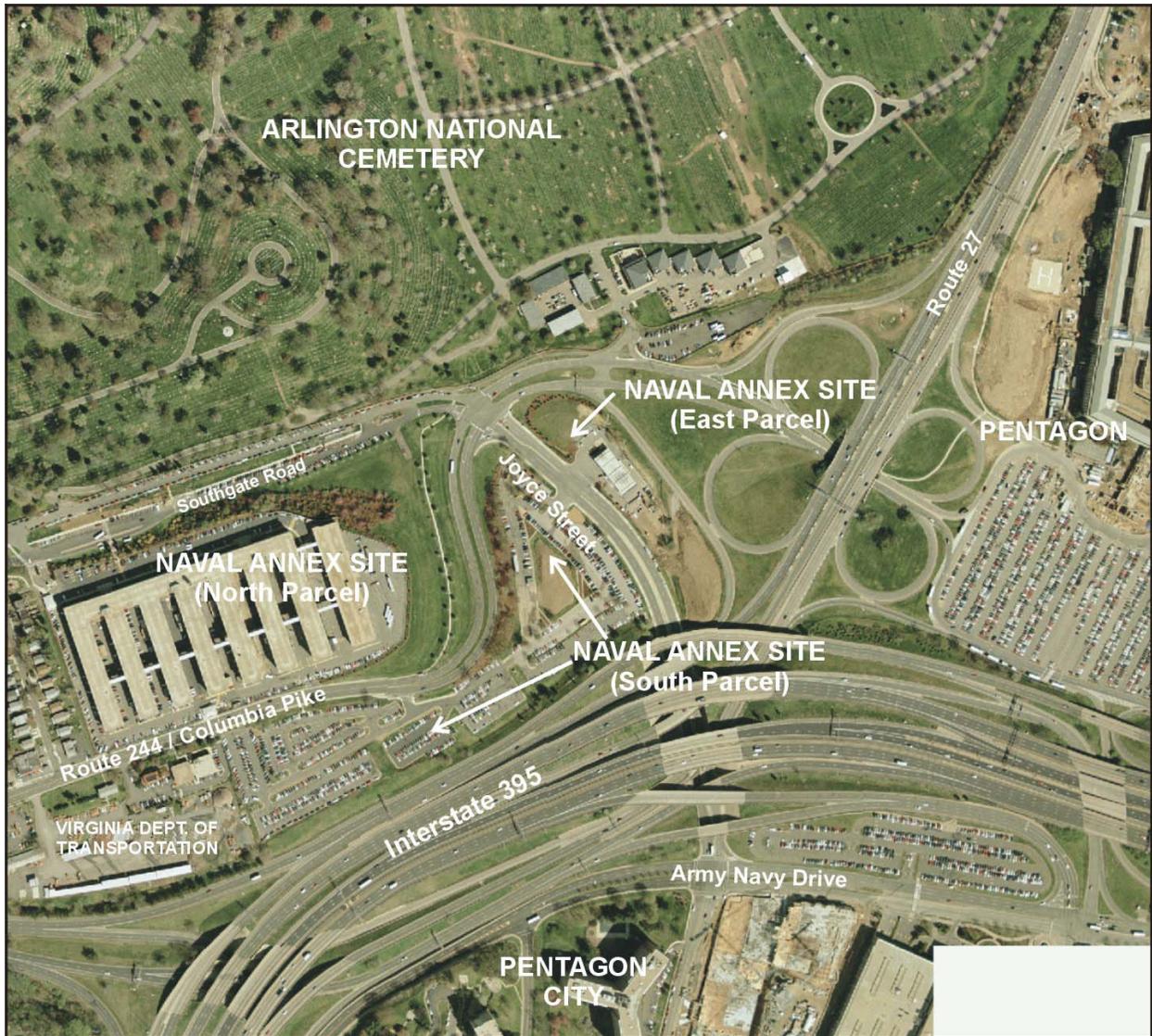
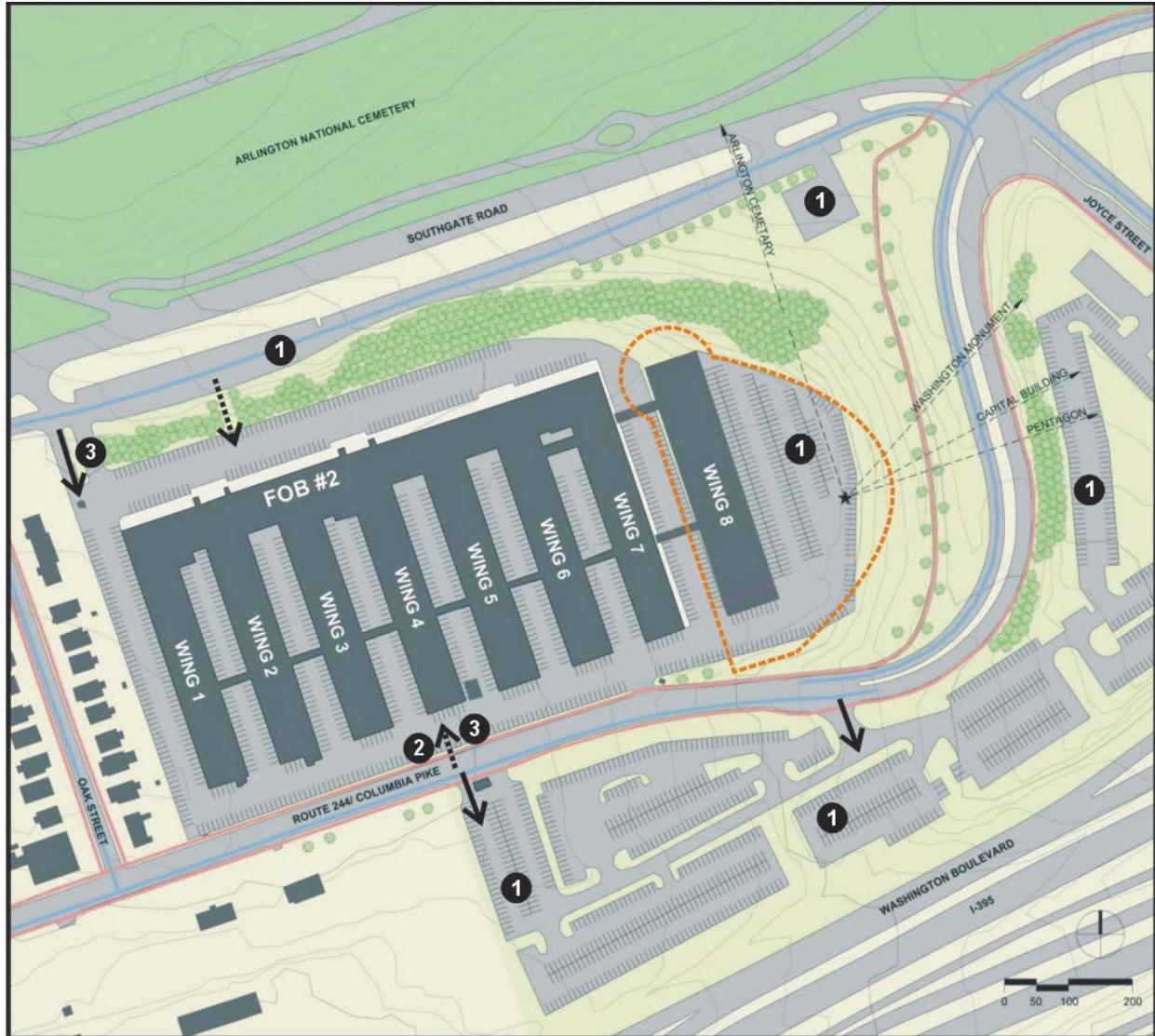


Figure 1-2: Aerial Photo



Source: Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, Architects LLP



LEGEND

- 1. Existing Parking
- 2. Existing Bus Stop
- 3. Security Check Point

- Air Force Memorial Precinct Boundary
- Existing Vehicular Access Locations
- - - Existing Pedestrian Access
- · · Existing Vistas
- Existing Vegetation

Figure 1-3: Air Force Memorial Precinct

1.2 Purpose and Need for Proposed Action

As mandated by Congress, the proposed Memorial would honor the men and women who have served in the United States Air Force and its predecessors. Currently, there is no such commemorative monument or memorial in the Washington, D.C. area. The establishment of a memorial to the U.S. Air Force is intended to also:

- Serve as a tribute to the more than 54,000 Air Force personnel, including all its predecessor organizations, who have given their lives in service to their country;
- Recognize the aviation pioneers of yesterday;
- Serve as a tribute and source of pride for those serving their country today;
- Help inspire future generations to serve the nation proudly in the Air Force “blue”;
- Ensure that the airpower lessons of the 20th century and beyond are not forgotten; and
- Salute the nation’s military industrial base for the vast technological achievements they have achieved in making American airpower the most formidable on earth.

The history of the United States Air Force began in 1907 when the Aeronautical Division of the U.S. Signal Corps was established. The Air Force remained a subordinate element of the U.S. Army through World War II. In 1947, the National Security Act authorized the Air Force to become an autonomous military force. By 1965, the responsibilities of the Air Force were extended to include the research and development of satellites, space probes, and associated systems used by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Since 1907, approximately 3 million men and women have served in the United States Air Force and its predecessors and have participated in every major military engagement since that time. The purpose of establishing an AFM in the Nation’s Capital is to honor these men and women, and to celebrate the traditions, experiences and accomplishments of air and space power. The Memorial is intended to be a solemn place of contemplation and inspiration for Air Force personnel, family, friends, and all Americans.

1.3 Regulatory Framework and Agency Coordination

1.3.1 Regulatory Framework

In December 2001, Congress enacted Public Law 107-107 also called the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (hereafter referred to as the Act), which directed the Secretary of Defense to “make available to the (Air Force Memorial) Foundation, without reimbursement, up to three acres of the Arlington Naval Annex, which the Foundation shall use as the location for the Air Force Memorial” (see appendix). The Act states that the Secretary of Defense would be responsible for preparing the site for construction of the Memorial. Such site preparation would include demolition and removal of Wing 8 of the FOB #2 and other site remediation and improvement measures that may be required.

The Act grants exclusive oversight authority in all matters relating to the approval of the siting and design of the AFM on the Naval Annex site to the Secretary of Defense. The Act further states that the siting, design and construction of the Memorial on this site will not be subject to the requirements of the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.). The Secretary of

Defense may revoke the authority of the Foundation to use the site as a location for the Memorial if, within five years of the enactment of the Act, the Foundation has not commenced construction of the Memorial on the subject site.

Since the Naval Annex site is under the control of the DOD, DOD is the lead agency for this EA, consistent with NEPA regulations. The Defense Authorization Act exempts the proposed Memorial from the requirements of the Commemorative Works Act, however, NCPC is being consulted in its capacity as the central planning agency for the Federal government in the National Capital Region and CFA is being consulted in its capacity as an advisory body to the Federal and District of Columbia governments on matters of art and architecture that affect the appearance of the nation's capital and surrounding environs.

1.3.2 Agency Coordination/Scoping

The CEQ guidelines for the implementation of NEPA recommend that federal agencies that have made a decision to prepare an EA engage in a scoping process. To solicit input on the scope of the EA, the following agencies were contacted:

- National Capital Planning Commission
- Commission of Fine Arts
- Federal Aviation Administration
- National Park Service
- Arlington National Cemetery
- Department of Defense, Legacy Resource Management Program, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations & Environment)
- Department of Defense, Pentagon Renovation Program Office
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources (State Historic Preservation Office for Virginia)
- Arlington County Department of Public Works
- Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (Historic Preservation office for Arlington County)

Summary of Scoping Comments

Several comments were received during the scoping process. The majority of the comments focused on the Memorial design and the future of the Naval Annex area. Visual quality (looking towards the site from the Monumental core, I-395, Pentagon, Route 27 and George Washington Memorial Parkway), the preservation of historic resources, and aviation considerations were also identified as key issues.

1.3.3 Comments on the Environmental Assessment

Agencies and the public are encouraged to review and comment on this EA. This EA will be available for 30 days before DOD makes its determinations pursuant to NEPA. The EA will be available for review on the Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services' website

(www.dtic.mil/ref/Safety/index.htm), the Air Force Memorial Foundation website (www.airforcememorial.org) and in paper copies upon request. Comments on the EA must be submitted during this official public review period concluding on April 28, 2003. Comments should be mailed to:

Department of Defense
Attn: Dr. Brian Higgins, PhD, PE
Special Assistant for Environmental & Safety Policy
Washington Headquarters Services, Real Estate & Facilities Directorate
1155 Defense Pentagon, Room 3B200
Washington, D.C. 20301-1155

Following publication and review of the EA, DOD will issue a Finding of No Significance Impact (FONSI) or prepare an Environmental Impact Statement that ensures the necessary environmental documentation is prepared and integrated with the decision-making process.

1.3.4 Section 106 Consultation

DOD expects to fulfill its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and its regulations. DOD has initiated consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and with the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office. Other agencies that are anticipated to be consulted through the Section 106 process include Arlington County's Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development.

1.3.5 List of Permits/Approvals

The following is a preliminary list of permits and approvals that could be required by various federal, state, and local agencies for the proposed AFM.

Federal

- National Capital Planning Commission – Review for comments
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation – Section 106 consultation regarding potential effects on historic properties

State of Virginia

- Virginia Department of Historic Resources – review of potential effects on historic properties.
- Virginia Department of Transportation – Land Use Permit for a potential new curb-cut off Columbia Pike. Also, consultation on establishment of a pedestrian crossing across Columbia Pike.