



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER

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January 30, 2017

Ms. Katharine Kelley
Superintendent
Arlington National Cemetery
1 Memorial Drive
Arlington, VA 22211

Dear Superintendent Kelley:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Southern Expansion and Associated Roadway Realignment (EA). Attached please find a copy of our comments, which have been submitted electronically as requested.

Arlington County is pleased to serve as a cooperating agency on this important project and we look forward to continuing to work together towards its successful completion. Staff of the Corps of Engineers and your consultants have followed through on all of the commitments that were made to Arlington County and the other consulting parties at the outset of this process nearly a year ago.

Importantly, the Army is for the first time publicly, through this draft EA, identifying a preferred alternative that serves the interests of all parties. For the first time since the previous Navy Annex land exchange agreement between the County and the United States was terminated, the Army is publicly advocating for roadway realignments that meet local, regional and state transportation needs and cooperative land exchanges with Arlington County and the Commonwealth of Virginia that provide fair compensation. Specifically, the preferred alternative calls for a land exchange with Arlington County whereby the County would convey the Southgate Road right-of-way and a portion of the Columbia Pike right-of-way in exchange for a parcel south of a realigned Columbia Pike.

While we are pleased to see the Army's support for the preferred alternative, we remain concerned that discussions between the three parties – the Army, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and Arlington County – regarding the cooperative land exchange agreements remain stalled. We note that on page 1-7 of the EA, both "land-exchange agreements" and "a finalized Memorandum of Agreement among ANC, FHWA, VDOT and Arlington County for execution of the DAR project" are included as required agreements or consultations. As has been communicated in our various meetings, the Arlington County Board will not become a signatory to an MOA for the execution of the roadway realignment project until such time as a land exchange agreement has been executed between the parties. Arlington County remains ready to finalize these negotiations at any time.

Arlington County fully understands, appreciates and supports the Army's desire to maintain an appropriate setting within Arlington National Cemetery for family members and visitors. We have demonstrated our interest by assisting in that effort. To that end, the County has worked

over the last few years to address concerns raised by the Army regarding future development in the area of the Navy Annex property in a reasonable and responsible way – through a land exchange agreement, through a cooperative planning process, through a Memorandum of Agreement, and most recently through a restrictive covenant. The County's latest proposal, transmitted in October 2016, would have both prohibited the use of the property for a transit vehicle maintenance, repair and storage facility; heavy industrial uses; or waste-related service uses and at the same time would have made commitments to mitigate against visual and acoustic impacts. Despite providing all of the assurances the Army has sought since our negotiations began over three years ago, this proposal was rejected.

I look forward to working with you closely to take the necessary steps to make sure the vision outlined in this EA, namely a roadway realignment and associated land exchanges that support maximizing ANC's interment space, is realized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark J. Schwartz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being the most prominent.

Mark J. Schwartz
County Manager

Enclosure

CC: The Honorable Mark Warner, United States Senate
The Honorable Tim Kaine, United States Senate
The Honorable Don Beyer, United States House of Representatives
Mr. Robert M. Speer, Acting Secretary of the United States Army
Ms. Melisa L. Ridenour, Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division
Commissioner Charles Kilpatrick, Virginia Department of Transportation