

COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File No. 6375



**TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION OF A PORTION OF U.S. RESERVATION 357
WHITEHAVEN PARKWAY, LOT 804, SQUARE 1346, FROM THE NATIONAL PARK
SERVICE TO THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR ACCESS PURPOSES TO THE
PLANNED MAYOR'S RESIDENCE
1801 Foxhall Road, NW, Washington, DC**

Submission by the National Park Service

September 4, 2003

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of proposed transfer of jurisdiction pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8124(a).

Commission Action

The Commission:

- Approves the transfer of jurisdiction for a portion of Reservation 357 from the National Park Service to the District of Columbia, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 74(63.00)41223.
- Requires that the National Park Service work with the District of Columbia to avoid impacts to native vegetation on Lot 804 to the fullest extent possible (noting all of this area lies within U.S. Reservation 357), and to assure that all future work, if any, is conducted outside the "no development area," as described in the Park Service Environmental Assessment.

Deborah B. Young
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

STAFF REPORT

Project Manager: Eugene Keller

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**TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION OF A PORTION OF U.S. RESERVATION 357,
WHITEHAVEN PARKWAY, LOT 804, SQUARE 1346, FROM THE NATIONAL PARK
SERVICE TO THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR ACCESS PURPOSES TO THE
PLANNED MAYOR'S RESIDENCE
1801 Foxhall Road, NW, Washington, DC**

Submission by the National Park Service

August 28, 2003

Abstract

The National Park Service (NPS) has submitted an application for the transfer of jurisdiction of a portion of Reservation 357, Whitehaven Parkway, Lot 804, Square 1346, from the NPS to the District of Columbia for access purposes to the proposed mayor's residence at 1801 Foxhall Road, NW, Washington, DC. The property is currently under the jurisdiction of the NPS. The application includes an original copy of the jurisdiction plat, signed by the Park Service. The portion of land to be transferred is 1.8 acres, and would be leased by the District of Columbia government to the Casey Mansion Foundation (Foundation) in establishing an official mayoral residence. The conditions imposed by NPS on the land transfer would limit the parcel improvements to: fencing consistent with the current Casey Foundation fence located on the adjacent property; a vegetation control program to manage the land; and a gate, guardhouse and driveway for access to and from the adjacent Casey property to Foxhall Road, which would be constructed on the District controlled parcel.

Commission Action Requested by the Applicant

Approval of proposed transfer of jurisdiction pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8124(a))

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

- **Approves** the transfer of jurisdiction for a portion of Reservation 357 from the National Park Service to the District of Columbia, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 74(63.00)-41223.

- **Requires** the National Park Service work with the District of Columbia to avoid impacts to native vegetation on Lot 804 to the fullest extent possible (noting all of this area lies within U.S. Reservation 357), and to assure that all future work, if any, is conducted outside the “no development area”, as described in the Park Service Environmental Assessment.

* * *

BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The submitted proposal identifies a 1.8-acre land transfer to the District of Columbia. The transfer would convey a portion of an NPS land holding in U.S. Reservation 357, in the Palisades area of the District of Columbia on Foxhall Road, from NPS to the District of Columbia, Department of Parks and Recreation. That entity would then lease the use of transferred land, which would remain under jurisdiction of the District of Columbia government. The land would be used by the Foundation for limited improvements associated with a proposed mayoral mansion and grounds.

The National Park Service and the District of Columbia anticipate signing a declaration of covenants (see attached draft) to protect the land and adjacent park interests. That document, to be completed in early September would require conditions that include:

- Limitation of parcel improvements to a fence consistent with the current Casey Foundation fence located on the adjacent property
- Provision for a gate, guardhouse and driveway for access to and from the Casey property through the District controlled parcel to Foxhall Road;
- Implementation of a vegetation control program for invasive and or exotic plant species on the District Parcel;
- Surveying for raptor nests before removing any tree from the transferred property identified by the plat. The disturbance of any tree wherein a nest(s) is present would be avoided between February 15 and September 15. In addition, construction activities would not be conducted on the parcel if any adjoining portion of Lot 804 is found to contain active nests, during the time period described above.

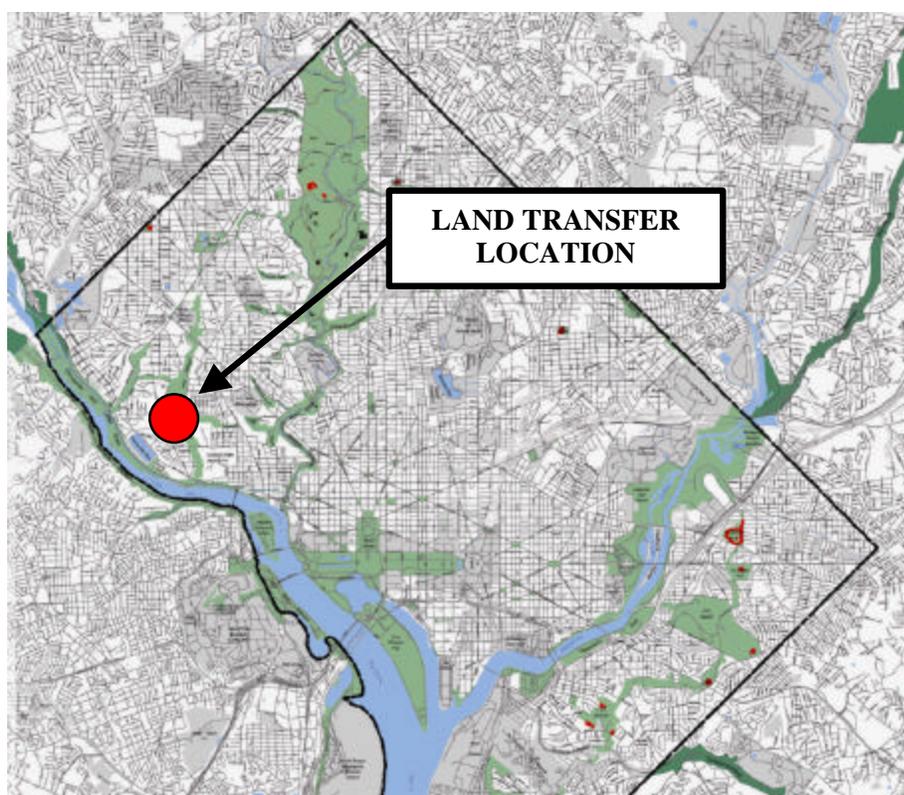
The last condition has been implemented by NPS after NCPC staff reviewed the data and conclusions of the biological assessment provided in the Environmental Assessment of the proposal.

EVALUATION

The proposal for the land transfer has been sought by both the District of Columbia and the Park Service to provide additional access to the Foundation mayoral residence site, while protecting adjacent park land and responding to adjacent neighborhood community concerns. The details of the proposal’s conditions and covenants on the land transfer were identified to the Commission

staff, as requested, in August 2003 (see attached). The proposal assigns control of the land to the District of Columbia and results in the 1.8-acre parcel transferred with three conditions that specify the intended use, an environmental condition, and a limit to improvements to be provided.

The property may be further reviewed by the Commission should the construction permitting process for the small guardhouse require the creation of a land zoning designation for the transferred parcel. That review would be a federal interest review referral from the District of Columbia on the proposed zoning under Section 8 of the Planning Act.



**LAND TRANSFER LOCATION WITHIN THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Staff concludes the land transfer is a reasonable action by the Park Service and is justified in achieving the following, when compared to the goals of the NCPC Comprehensive Plan that includes:

- Maintaining the property in public ownership as open space.

- Providing a trail corridor from Glover-Archbold Park to Foxhall Road that is preserved on the adjacent NPS property.
- Allowing the development of a District government mayoral residence, a public use, on a hill at the northern edge of the existing Foundation property with minimal effects to NPS property, should that location be utilized.
- Maintaining review of any development on the transferred property under regulation of federal government (property title remains with the federal government).
- Requiring the District to maintain an invasive and exotic plant species control program that would assist NPS in establishing native shrubs in the general area of Glover-Archbold Park.
- Ensuring compatibility with the historic and cultural character of the area by restoring the Mansion property to a state reflecting the original configuration of the Brady Estate.
- Completing a public comment process on the land transfer that has provided opportunity for comment from the adjacent neighborhoods, landowners, and interested general public.



AERIAL PHOTO SHOWING GENERAL VICINITY OF PROPERTY

The requested transfer provides a secondary access road intersection point with Foxhall Road that meets the approval of the District Department of Transportation (due to better alignment with an existing intersection), while providing the least disruption to the land and vegetation of the nearby site as evidence in the information of the EA. When the signalized intersection is developed at the junction of Foxhall Road and Whitehaven Parkway, as planned by the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) and now under construction, the minor amount of controlled daily traffic associated with the use of the proposed drive and guardhouse would result in limited impacts to traffic flow in the vicinity of the properties.

Staff recommends approval of the jurisdictional transfer with one stipulation. As the transfer does impose covenants to the land, staff believes federal interest issues regarding any adverse outcome would be addressed, particularly with regard to Glover-Archbold Park. Nevertheless, staff finds an additional issue to the use of the property, originally considered by NPS, is valid and should be fully monitored by the Park Service. This provision applies to the remaining portion of Lot 804 and its sensitive lowlands.

The NPS Environmental Assessment clearly defines the ecological importance of the “no development area” that exists within Lot 804 at the extreme eastern edge, sufficiently removed from the transfer area, but nonetheless within the drainage and sub-watershed. Because of its importance, and the native vegetation that is present there, staff recommends the Park Service work with the District of Columbia to avoid impacts to native vegetation on Lot 804 to the fullest extent possible (noting all of this area lies within U.S. Reservation 357), and assure that all future work, if any, is conducted outside the “no development area”, as described in the NPS Environmental Assessment.

Staff examined the action for extraordinary circumstances and **recommended adoption of the prepared Environmental Assessment to the Executive Director finding no major or significant environmental effects from the transfer.** The NPS Environmental Assessment reviewed the effects of any potential land transfer, sale or exchange. The preferred alternative of the NPS, after review of public comments during an extended document review period, is the transfer of jurisdiction of a reduced size land parcel (1.8 acres) to the District of Columbia for mayor’s residence purposes. The NCPC Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on August 11, 2003.

PUBLIC COMMENT TO THE COMMISSION

Several members of the public have inquired to staff concerning the review of the proposed jurisdictional transfer. Staff fully anticipates the Commission will hear direct comment from various interested parties on the consideration of the transfer at the Commission meeting.

To date eight individuals and one organization (see attached) have provided written comment indicating the following regarding the transfer:

- Lack of specific detail as to the exact location of the planned Mayor’s residence
- No justification for the additional land

- Violation of the mission of NPS
- Environmental destruction

Staff has reviewed the expressed concerns and believes the evaluation above, the environmental section of this report, and the August 20th meeting of NPS, noted on page eight, address the matters. With regard to the issue of NPS mission, the Park Service had concluded, in July 2003, that the transfer would not result in any major adverse impact to a park resource or value in conservation toward:

- The necessity to fulfill the specific purpose of Whithaven Parkway, Glover-Archbold Park or the Park System of the National Capital.
- Being key to any aspect of the national or recreational integrity of the Parkway, Park or Park System.
- Any identified goal in the Park’s general management plan or other Park Service planning document.

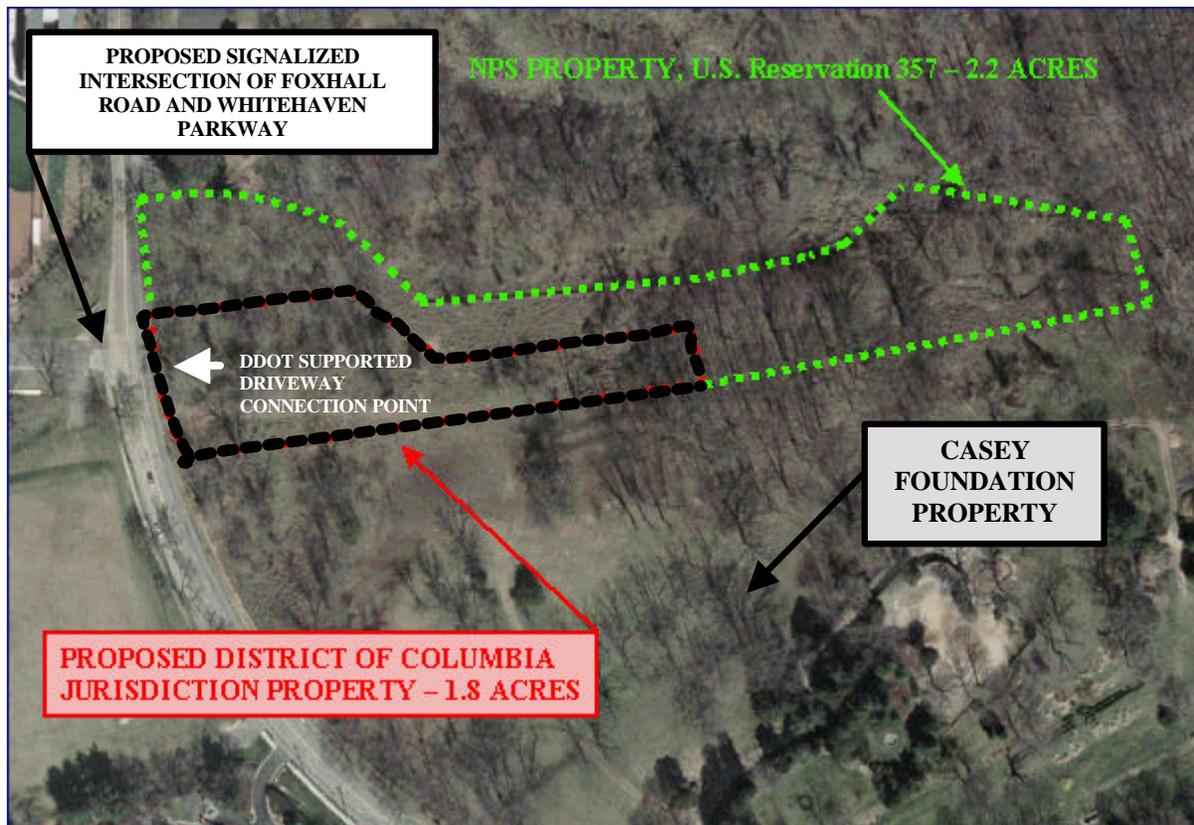
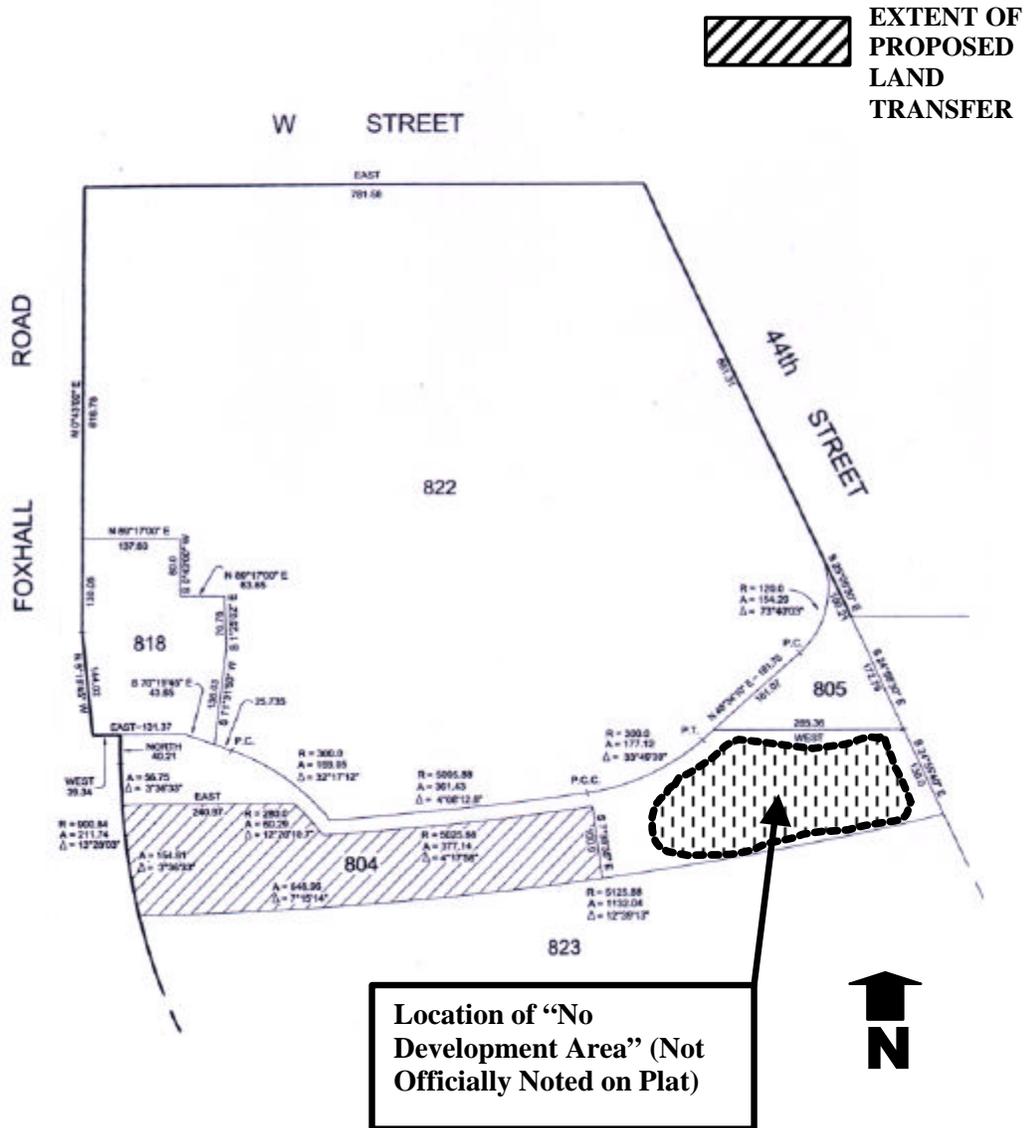


PHOTO OF GENERAL LAND BOUNDARY CONFIGURATIONS

As to the issue of alternative access to Foxhall Road, the EA and FONSI developed by NPS specify that current road conditions and a planned traffic signal dictate the connection point. The EA clearly indicates surrounding existing traffic conditions have developed traffic congestion that will necessitate a signal at Whitehaven Parkway and Foxhall Road. The District is now constructing that signal. Since the signal is placed at that intersection, the new drive access location at that point is the alternative supported by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) as indicated by a June 2003 memorandum by the Director of the Department (see attached).

PLAT OF TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION OF A PORTION OF LOT 804 IN SQUARE 1346



Finally, staff recognizes that many comments have been expressed regarding the view that parkland has been “lost” because of the proposed transfer. Staff does not conclude this is the case.

The submitted transfer would allow the District to manage and operate facilities on land still dedicated as open space and parkland titled to the federal government. While the activity on the land parcel may be changed, the parkland is no more or less “developed” than any federal reservation with established District of Columbia recreation or community centers. Additionally, while much is made of the removal of unrestricted public access to the 1.8 acres, the federal government in the District of Columbia has controlled or limited access to the general public on many parkland areas such as portions of Rock Creek Park, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, and golf courses on the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. Nevertheless, these parkland parcels serve an important green space and open space function.

Lastly, as noted in the Comprehensive Plan, “...the narrow threads of natural green areas throughout the District...like Whitehaven Parkway should be protected and maintained to provide green background and open space amenity for the residential areas of the city. These natural areas should be protected from border development that would adversely impact their natural resources and visual quality.” Staff concludes the reduced acreage, the proposed reconfigured transfer boundary, and the proposed covenants achieve the intended objective to protect the land from incompatible consequences.

COORDINATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on August 13, 2003, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Fire Department; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

NPS NEPA Review Coordination

In response to the NPS FONSI, several requests were made to NPS to meet with interested neighborhood parties regarding public comments on the FONSI and other land transfer issues. On August 20, 2003, NPS held a meeting at its headquarters’ office of the National Capital Region with approximately seven individuals representing interested citizens, members of the Foxhall Community Citizens Association, and other neighborhood representatives. NCPC staff was also invited to the meeting to observe the concerns discussed.

At the meeting, issues that were expressed by the citizens about the land transfer included:

- Any security fence, gatehouse, and driveway to be located on or adjacent to the 1.8 acres should be set back, away from the designated transfer boundary, and that the placement of the fence would be consistent with balancing public access to parkland and consistent with the results of detailed security and design studies.
- The land lease agreement between the Foundation and District of Columbia should specify that only a Mayoral Mansion and necessary support buildings would be developed on the property. Any future residential or commercial development beyond those activities would be beyond the lease agreement and would result in the return of the transferred property to the NPS.
- The belief that the transfer is significantly adverse to the environment and affects important environmental attributes such as wetlands, slopes, and a substantial number of trees.

NPS noted that portions of the concerns might be appropriate for negotiation in the lease conditions with reference to the property use by the Foundation. However, the lease arrangement is only within the providence of the District of Columbia once the transfer is accomplished subject to the proposed covenants. NPS emphasized the developed covenant for the specific intended use of the transferred land would be triggered by any attempt to accomplish an alternative activity that was not specific to “mayoral purposes” only.

CONFORMANCE

National Historic Preservation Act

NPS has determined that no further Section 106 review is required, since the parkland in the “NPS” and proposed “District” parcels is not part of the historic park system. Further, National Capital Regional Archaeologist Dr. Stephen Potter determined during a 2002 field visit that the property is not expected to contain archeological or historic resources eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, the transfer would have no effect on historic properties. Mitigation measures would include monitoring and, if necessary, cultural resource recovery consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards on the District Parcel and on the Foundation Property as development occurred.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the NPS prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) produced by the National Park Service (NPS), which was completed in November 2002. A final determination by NPS of the environmental effects of the proposed transfer was published in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) completed in July 2003. Staff adopted the EA and issued a FONSI in accordance with the Commission’s procedures on August 11, 2003.

The EA reviews four alternatives for addressing the effects of any potential land transfer, sale or exchange. The preferred alternative of the NPS, after review of public comments during an extended document review period, is the transfer of jurisdiction of a reduced size land parcel (1.8 acres) to the District of Columbia for mayoral residence purposes. The EA addresses the

potential environmental impacts of land use changes, construction, and operational ramifications in terms of the future siting, design, and construction of new facilities. The document also reviews potential natural environment effects, vegetation impacts, endangered species, wetland and surface water impacts, and vehicle traffic effects.

The details of the initial proposal's conditions and covenants on the land transfer are contained in the submittal materials provided on August 1, 2003. The proposal would result in the 1.8-acre parcel transfer to the District of Columbia with certain conditions maintained. The principal result of the transfer would be the conveyance of a portion of NPS land in the Palisades area from Park Service to the District of Columbia, Department of Parks and Recreation. That entity would then lease the use of the land, which would remain under jurisdiction of the District of Columbia government. The land would be used by the Foundation for limited improvements associated with a proposed mayoral mansion and grounds.

Findings of the EA involved several resource areas that included:

- Water Resources
- Geophysical and land form issues
- Vegetation and Wildlife habitat
- Air quality issues
- Noise levels
- Hazardous materials
- Cultural and Archeological resources
- Visual resource effects
- Land Use impacts
- Transportation effects
- Demographics and Environmental Justice issues

Water Resource effects

Relative to water resources under the transfer alternative, the amount of impervious surface and surface water runoff would slightly increase on the NPS property due to the driveway and guardhouse proposed in the foundation's use of the acquired property. Assuming two-thirds of a 600-foot driveway that is 15 feet in width is on the transferred property, the increase would be less than 6,000 square feet. In accordance with District of Columbia regulations, Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control erosion and sediment effects would be implemented to manage stormwater quantity and quality on the property. Stormwater discharge rates from the property would be retained at predevelopment levels to meet compliance purposes.

Development under the land transfer alternative would not directly disturb the minimal stream present in the No Development Area on the eastern portion of the retained NPS property that lies outside the boundaries of the transfer area. BMPs that could be implemented to control stormwater include maintaining a natural buffer along the stream and would avoid effects on the stream from increased runoff on the property. The lowlands associated with the stream would be similarly protected by the implementation of BMPs. No floodplains are present on the NPS

property or Mansion property and thus floodplains would not be affected by implementation of the proposal.

Groundwater flow at the NPS Property would not be significantly affected by implementation of the transfer. Development of the planned secured driveway at the northwest area of the Mansion site and guardhouse would slightly increase impervious surface on the property, thereby resulting in very minor reduction of recharge area for groundwater on the properties. On the Mansion property, the amount of impervious surface and surface water runoff would slightly increase under the Proposed Action alternative due to the addition of the mayoral mansion and associated facilities including vehicular access and parking. These proposed facilities would be slightly larger than previous Brady Mansion elements. Therefore, the slight increase in impervious surface would result in a minimal reduction of recharge area for groundwater on the Mansion property. In accordance with District of Columbia regulations, BMPs would be implemented to control stormwater quantity and quality on the Mansion property and stormwater discharge rates from the property would be retained at predevelopment levels.

Implementation of stormwater management in accordance with District regulations would avoid potential impacts to water resources in the vicinity of the Mansion and NPS properties due to runoff, erosion and sedimentation. Development of the proposed secure entrance road to the mayoral mansion would possibly require the improvement of the stormwater intake system currently in place east of the intersection of Foxhall Road and Whitehaven Parkway. The features required are dependent on the final intersection design. In addition, positive changes such as the addition of curb and gutter drainage have been proposed along Foxhall Road under alternative transportation programs of the District of Columbia Department of Transportation and would be implemented with the development of the Mansion property. Overall, development under the transfer alternative would contribute to positive changes regarding water resources in the vicinity of the NPS properties.

As described in the NPS FONSI, to avoid impacts to water resources associated with increased impervious surfaces area and runoff, erosion and sediment control measures would be implemented (in compliance with the District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) permitting regulations) to minimize the potential for erosion, sedimentation and contamination due to development of the proposed project.

In compliance with the District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs permitting regulations, and the *1987 Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control*, erosion and sediment control measures will be implemented to avoid or minimize the potential for sedimentation and contamination impacts to surface waters due to development of the proposed project.

Geophysical effects

The geologic materials located beneath (and in the vicinity of) the NPS property would not be significantly affected by implementation of the transfer.

Under the proposed land transfer action, grading and site work during development of the new access roadway for the mayoral mansion would slightly alter the topography of a portion of the transferred property. Grading activities would alter the specific composition of soils on the property. However, the character of the existing urban soil associations on the property would not be adversely affected by such change. On the Mansion property, the grading and site work necessary for the development of the mayoral mansion facilities and grounds would alter the topography of the property. However, the property would not be adversely or significantly affected by such change.

The potential for soil erosion during grading activities would be heightened by the addition of impervious surfaces on the NPS property and the Mansion property. However, BMPs implemented to control stormwater quantity and quality would mitigate the potential for erosion.

Vegetation and Wildlife impacts

The planned land transfer would require the removal of a relatively small amount of vegetation and wildlife habitat outside of the identified “no development area” which lies beyond the boundary of the proposed transferred acreage. The construction of the driveway and gatehouse would be regulated with BMPs implemented to control stormwater quantity and quality on the property. Thus, the remaining vegetation and habitat would be negligibly affected by the slightly altered topography, water drainage patterns, and increased impervious surfaces under the planned action.

The obstructions consisting of the existing roadways and development that limit wildlife movement within the NPS property next to Foxhall Road, and the proposed perimeter fencing on the transfer parcel, would likely result in minimal effects to corridor value biological connectivity. Moreover, vines and other invasive plant species would be required to be removed from the property, and thus potentially improving the health of vegetation remaining in the vicinity of the overall area. Implementation of the alternative would also require the removal of a proportionally small amount of vegetation from the Mansion property. With implementation of BMPs to control stormwater quantity and quality on the property, the remaining vegetation would be negligibly affected by the altered physical conditions.

In total, a relatively small amount of vegetation and habitat on the NPS property and the Mansion property would be affected by development of the proposed mayoral mansion facilities and grounds. There are large amounts of vegetation and habitat that would remain on the NPS property and in the adjacent Glover-Archbold Park. Therefore, the alternative would have a negligible overall affect on vegetation and habitat in the vicinity of the properties.

Mitigation for these attributes would be achieved by the transfer’s accompanying conditions to reduce the population of invasive exotic plant species in the forested areas of the transferred parcel. During construction, heavy equipment will be strictly confined to areas of proposed development to limit the disturbance of vegetation to the minimum necessary to meet project objectives.

Air quality impacts

Under the proposal to transfer jurisdiction to the District, construction at the NPS property and Mansion Property may have short-term effects on air quality as a result of heavy equipment emissions, fugitive dust, and emissions of vehicles driven to the sites by workers. The emissions produced during construction and demolition activities would vary depending on the activities. The specific types of equipment that would be used for demolition, grading, utility installation, paving, and building construction are not known. When specific plans for the activities are developed, emissions can be estimated using techniques compiled. The standard factors to be used for estimating emissions are based on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Compilation of Air Quality Emission Factors (commonly referred to as AP-42). For the proposed action, the estimated emissions, including emissions from personal vehicle travel to and from the sites, are predicted to be less than the *de minimis* thresholds and less than 10 percent of the projected area emissions.

Implementation of the transfer and leased-use of the property by the District government to the Foundation would result in minimal long term impacts to local air-quality at the NPS property and Mansion property due to a negligible increase in localized emissions of criteria pollutants by motor vehicles used by residents, employees and visitors of the proposed mayoral facilities. Localized CO levels could be elevated temporarily during times of high volume ingress or egress at the facilities. The transfer could lead to minimal long-term air-quality impacts associated with activities of the proposed facilities at the Mansion. The short-term and long-term affects would be localized and diminish rapidly in areas further removed from the Mansion.

As described in the NPS FONSI, during construction and demolition, implementing dust control measures such as the application of soil stabilizers would mitigate fugitive dust production. Additionally, watering of exposed soils, covering soil stockpiles, and cleaning equipment would be implemented.

Noise Impact

The effects of the transfer alternative on noise levels would primarily be associated with short-term construction and demolition activities. Noise generated by equipment during all phases of construction and demolition activities would result in intermittent short-term noise effects for the duration of these activities. The noise produced during construction or demolition would vary depending on particular scheduled activities. The specific types of equipment that would be used for demolition and construction under the alternatives have not been specified at this time but typical types of construction noise were reviewed in the EA. Construction and demolition activity would be required to comply with the District of Columbia noise control regulations. Between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Noise generated by equipment (except for pile drivers) may not exceed 80 dB(A) at a distance 25 feet outside of the subject site. Additionally, between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m., noise generated by equipment may not exceed 55 dB(A) at a distance of 25 feet from the subject site.

The development of the mayoral facilities would also result in long-term increases in perceived noise levels on and in the vicinity of the NPS property and Mansion property by increasing

traffic on or near the properties. Heating, ventilating, air conditioning, and facilities maintenance equipment associated with operations of the Mansion complex could also increase minor intermittent noise levels in the vicinity of the Mansion property.

No mitigation regarding noise levels would be necessary under the proposed transfer. Lease conditions by the District of Columbia may impose requirements for future development of the guardhouse planned for the property.

Hazardous materials effects

Since there are no known records or indications of existing hazardous materials on the NPS property, no impacts associated with hazardous materials are expected. There are also no known records or indications of existing hazardous materials on the Mansion property. Consequently, no impacts associated with hazardous materials are expected. No mitigation regarding hazardous materials would be necessary.

Cultural and Historic resource effects

In the context of the proposed land transfer of jurisdiction, there are no known archaeological resources on the NPS property, although its proximity to known prehistoric sites in Glover-Archbold Park makes it possible that prehistoric sites might be located on the NPS property. However, late 19th and 20th century activities, such as old estate pond construction, utilities lines, and fill, have disturbed the subject property to the degree that there is a very low probability of any remaining intact archaeological resources eligible for listing on the National Register. In addition to the evidence of prehistoric activities observed on the Mansion property, its proximity to known prehistoric sites in Glover-Archbold Park also increases the possibility for prehistoric sites on the Mansion land. Since construction of the mansion would involve ground-disturbing activities, the proposed action may generate adverse effects on archaeological resources present on the Foundation's property only. The District of Columbia construction development review process requires the consideration of historic effects of private development proposals and would be adhered to in the Mansion construction process.

Mitigation would consist of archaeological monitoring and resource recovery, as specified under the conditions of the transfer indicated in the NPS FONSI. These requirements would be sought to be consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards. Should artifacts be encountered during the construction process, activities will cease while appropriate studies, consultation, and mitigation steps are conducted.

Visual resource impacts

With the land transfer action, vines and other invasive plant species would be removed from the transferred property as a condition of the transfer of jurisdiction to improve the appearance of the surrounding areas and its vegetation. Overall, the Mansion property would become more managed as woodland open space through ground maintenance activity. Along with the invasive

plant species control, the change would be generally compatible with the settings of the surrounding residential and institutional uses.

A requirement exists in the transfer conditions that would be implemented to reduce the population of invasive exotic plant species on the transferred parcel.

Land use impacts

The land transfer would change the land use of the NPS property from transitional forest land to land with minor improvements on a portion of the grounds and would be under the jurisdiction of the District of Columbia to be maintained with conditions established by NPS. The thick growth of vines on the vegetation would be removed to improve appearances of the property and the health of existing vegetation. This would result in controlled vegetation management contiguous with other public land of the immediate area. The proposed low-density use is compatible with the nearby large residential properties and institutional campuses.

A significant “no development” zone exists within the nearby NPS property that will limit and mitigate stormwater quantity and quality on that portion of property. Thus, the remaining vegetation and habitat would be negligibly affected by the slightly altered topography, water drainage patterns, and increased impervious surfaces that would result from the transfer action of the 1.8 acres. Additionally, covenants on the transferred property would limit new improvements on the parcel to perimeter fencing consistent with the existing Casey Mansion property; a gate and guardhouse; a paved drive connection from Foxhall Road; and implementation of a vegetative control program for invasive and exotic plant species on the proposed transferred property.

Demographics and Environmental Justice

Since there are no environmental justice communities in the study areas, there are no environmental justice impacts.

The proposed land transfer would result ultimately in the construction of one building unit (a guardhouse) on the transferred property. This change would have a negligible effect on the demographic composition of the area but may require a change in the land-use zoning to allow the small structure on currently un-zoned land.

Community facility effects

The Proposed Action alternative could generate short-term construction-related traffic impacts, which could affect access to nearby schools and other community facilities.

Construction activities carried out as a result of the transfer would be planned to minimize interference with traffic associated with nearby schools and other community facilities near the NPS property. The District of Columbia construction permitting process would regulate these activities.

Transportation and traffic impacts

The land transfer of jurisdiction would result in the development of a new secure driveway extending from the intersection of Foxhall Road and Whitehaven Parkway through the transferred property to the proposed mayoral mansion property. Parking associated with the proposed mansion would be located entirely within the Mansion property. Expected daily vehicular trips associated with the new mansion access drive would include the ingress and egress of the mayor and security guards. Use of the proposed secure driveway would therefore result in minimal daily traffic when operated in conjunction with the other main entry drive further south on the Mansion property.

The installation of perimeter fencing on the property could potentially reduce the occurrence of collisions between automobiles on Foxhall Road and deer or other animals. In the context of operational effects from the transfer, daily traffic onto the Mansion property would increase minimally over existing conditions at the currently unoccupied property and would generally be utilizing the south main entrance road. With the signalized intersection developed at the intersection of Foxhall Road and Whitehaven Parkway, as planned by DDOT, the minor amount of controlled daily traffic associated with the use of the secondary drive would result in no long-term impacts to traffic flow in the vicinity of the properties. This alignment has been confirmed by DDOT as the preferred access from Foxhall Road (DDOT June 2003, see attached). When occasional high-attendance events are conducted at the mayoral grounds, the signal-controlled traffic associated with the event using the secondary entrance would not likely result in inadequate traffic flow on Foxhall Road. However, with the appropriately installed traffic signalization, the proposed action would not result in long-term changes to automobile transportation at, or in the vicinity of, the properties. Under the land transfer alternative, the movement of construction vehicles would result in short-term impacts to traffic flow on Foxhall Road in the vicinity of the NPS property and Mansion property.

The transfer would not directly affect transit and pedestrian transportation at the NPS Property and Mansion property. During development of the proposed Mansion, coordination with DDOT to facilitate the development of sidewalks adjacent to the Mansion property would improve alternative transportation along Foxhall Road in the vicinity of the property.

Construction activities resulting in the eventual property construction would be planned to minimize interference with traffic near the NPS parcels. When the traffic signals were added at the intersection of Foxhall Road and Whitehaven Parkway, no long-term mitigation would be required. Mitigation would potentially be necessary to control heavy traffic during heavily attended events at the proposed mayoral grounds. Possible mitigation to address such circumstances would include police traffic control at the intersection of the mayoral driveway and Foxhall Road and are the responsibility of the District government.

During development of the mansion, coordination with District of Columbia authorities to facilitate the development of sidewalks adjacent to the Mansion property would improve pedestrian access along Foxhall Road in the vicinity of the property.

Utility effects

In the context of the land transfer, applicable regulatory requirements would require a stormwater management system be developed in association with the proposed secure driveway and guardhouse on the transferred property. A stormwater management system would also be developed on the Mansion property to accommodate the impervious surfaces of the new mansion and the associated driveway, parking areas, and facilities.

Development of new stormwater management systems would potentially improve the function of stormwater management in the vicinity of the properties. Stormwater currently flows off of the curb less portions of Foxhall Road adjacent to the properties, resulting in erosion at the edge of the road and the collection of deep stormwater in depressions near the edge of the road. District authorities have also proposed to remedy the problem of runoff from Foxhall Road by installing curb and gutter stormwater management along the Road. No mitigation regarding utilities would be required.

Conclusion

Staff finds the minor environmental effects and their mitigation supportable and fully defined by the EA evaluation. Staff believes the NPS determination is an ample review of the requirements of the proposed transfer and supports its implementation of the mitigation actions identified.