



**Comments on the Department of State's Proposed EIS for development of
portions of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center
August 10, 2012**

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City, established in 1923, is the oldest citizens planning organization in Washington DC. The Committee appreciates the opportunity to state some concerns relating to the intention of the Department of State (DOS) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the DOS proposal to obtain from the U.S. Army 43.5 acres of the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) to redevelop as a Foreign Missions Center (FMC).

Founded 1923

Chair

George R. Clark, Esq.

Vice-Chair

Nancy MacWood

Secretary

John W. Yago

Treasurer

Carol Aten

Trustees

Reyn Anderson

Bill Crews

Dorothy Douglas

Monte Edwards

Alma Gates

Erik Hein

Meg Maguire

Loretta Neumann

Laura M. Richards, Esq.

Lance Salonia

Marilyn J. Simon

Richard Westbrook

Dr. Beverley Wheeler

Evelyn Wrin

945 G Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20001

202.681.0225

info@committeeof100.net

Under this proposal, an unspecified number of parcels would be assigned to foreign governments, under long-term leases, for construction of embassy buildings (chanceries and potentially some residences). Because of the paucity of information about the proposal – how many countries and buildings would be involved, how many people served, how much acreage developed, the timing and other aspects of the development, etc. – it is difficult to respond. Nevertheless, the Committee of 100 wishes to make the following points.

At a minimum, any development of that site should:

- **Respect the site's history.** This includes the historical landscape and buildings, both before the WRAMC was established (e.g., pre-history and Civil War) and after. The Army plans to nominate the entire installation as an historic district, both on the DC Inventory and the National Register of Historic Places. Hence any development of the DOS portion should stress saving/reusing the historic buildings and minimizing adverse impacts on the cultural landscape.

- **Consider ALL impacts on the natural environment, including visual impacts.** The areas along 16th Street and Alaska Avenue are important green spaces, with trees and vegetation that provide respite for the surrounding community and protect the environmental health of the adjacent Rock Creek Park. As much green space as possible should be retained along these corridors and within the site.

- **Relate new developments in the FMC to its neighbors.** The height, scale, density, character and design of new buildings should respect existing neighborhoods and also the portion of WRAMC on the east that will be transferred to DC.

- **Assure that transportation issues are fully considered.** This includes all modes of both public and private transportation including pedestrian and bicycle access, the proposed streetcar on Georgia Avenue, expansion of bus routes, and links to the Takoma and Silver Spring Metrorail Stations. It is essential that the public streets within the FMC connect with the surrounding neighborhoods. The FMC should NOT be a walled off island. Adequate public access is essential.

The Committee of 100 appreciates the opportunity to comment now and looks forward to serving as a consulting party to the DOS as this proposal moves forward.

George R. Clark, Chairman