

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Washington 25, D. C.

Honorable Richard M. Nixon
President of the Senate
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

There is enclosed a draft of a proposed Joint Resolution "Reserving as public open space the area in the District of Columbia between E Street and Constitution Avenue and 23rd and 25th Streets, Northwest."

It is suggested that the joint resolution be submitted to the appropriate committee for consideration and its enactment is recommended.

The purpose of the legislation is to reserve as public open space that area in the District of Columbia between E Street and Constitution Avenue and 23rd and 25th Streets, Northwest. The land is now occupied by the Department of the Navy and other agencies and it is not intended that this reservation would interfere with present uses. However, the resolution would preclude further construction of buildings and would require the abandonment and removal of existing buildings and structures as soon as reasonably feasible. The resolution would also permit the use of the area, or portions thereof, as a national monument or memorial site consistent with its function as public open space and provided vistas and existing monuments and memorials in the vicinity are adequately protected.

The area includes one of the highest points of land within the original city as contemplated by Pierre Charles L'Enfant and consists of a rather high outcropping of rock. Because of its height it affords an unexcelled view of the Washington Monument and Potomac Park to the southeast and of the Potomac River and surrounding hills in Virginia to the south and west. All of the earlier plans of the city, including the Ellicott Plan of 1800, designated this area as an open space of considerable prominence.

In recent months several proposals have been made for the construction of a Federal office building on the site. Any construction of this nature unquestionably would detract materially from the

Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. It is probable that a structure on this site also would interfere with the vistas along the Potomac Parkway, the Memorial Bridge and even Key Bridge. This Commission has proposed for many years and has recommended to the Congress that future construction of office buildings and similar facilities for the government be confined to the area designated as the East Mall, that is, the area between the Capitol and the Anacostia River. No further substantial structure should be included in the Federal development area between the Capitol and the Potomac River to the west.

It will be noted that adequate provision has been made for the use of some portions of the area for approaches to the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge and the West Leg of the Inner Loop, both of which will require limited amounts of the area but will not detract from its use as public open space.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that there is no objection to the submission of this legislation to the Congress.

Respectfully yours,

Harland Bartholomew
Chairman