

William J. Guerin
Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Construction Programs
Public Buildings Service, U.S. General Services Administration

Testimony on the Proposed Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial
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Good morning Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Grijalva, and members of the Subcommittee. My name is Bill Guerin, and I am the Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Construction Programs at the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Public Buildings Service (PBS). Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the proposed Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial.

GSA is honored to play a role in helping the Eisenhower Memorial Commission (EMC) to create a memorial to President Dwight D. Eisenhower. His long career of noble service to our country is and should be a source of inspiration to the American people.

Establishing the Commission –

The EMC was created in statute on October 25, 1999, and tasked with creating “an appropriate permanent memorial to Dwight D. Eisenhower [...] to perpetuate his memory and his contributions to the United States.”¹ Further, Public Law 110-229 directed that “[t]he Commission shall obtain administrative and support services from the General Services Administration on a reimbursable basis. The Commission may use all contracts, schedules, and acquisition vehicles allowed to external clients through the General Services Administration.”²

Pursuant to Public Law 110-229, GSA has assisted the EMC with issues related to the acquisition of office space, human resources and payroll services, financial and accounting services, and legal and contracting support. The role of GSA also expanded as the Commission’s vision became clearer and the time approached for the selection of a design firm. Given our experience and expertise, the EMC asked GSA to assist in selecting both a design firm and a construction contractor for the Memorial. To select the design firm, GSA, at the request of the EMC, used our established and proven Design Excellence process.

¹ Public Law 106-79

² Public Law 110-229

Design Excellence –

GSA's Design Excellence process seeks to commission the nation's most talented architects, landscape architects, and engineers to design projects of outstanding quality and value. We use the Design Excellence process to select Architect/Engineer firms for our new construction and major modernization projects. These projects aim to demonstrate the value of truly integrated design that balances aesthetics, function, cost, constructability, reliability, reduced energy consumption, and gives form and meaning to our democratic values.

The Design Excellence program provides a competitive and streamlined process for identifying qualified firms, and then asking a short list of highly qualified firms for design proposals that allow us to select the firm representing the best value to the government. As part of this process, GSA utilizes the expertise of private sector peers to assist in evaluating the firms, ensuring that we benefit from the knowledge of a wide variety of individuals.

Selection of a Design Firm for the Eisenhower Memorial –

For the Eisenhower Memorial, at the request of the EMC, GSA worked with the EMC to develop a highly qualified A/E Evaluation Board of 12 members from the Commission, GSA, the Eisenhower family, and private sector design peers in the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, lighting design, information exhibit/design, as well as an architectural critic.

The Board employed a three-stage process to make its selection. In Stage I, the interested firms submitted portfolios of past work that established their qualifications and capabilities. Based on this, the Board established a short-list of firms that advanced to Stage II. In Stage II, these firms were interviewed after submission of a preliminary vision. In Stage III, selected designers from Stage II were asked to submit a detailed design vision for the memorial.

On August 15, 2008, GSA issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for design firms to submit portfolios of their work. There were 44 responses to this request. The panel convened in October of 2008 to review these submissions and selected seven highly qualified firms based on the evaluation criteria outlined in the RFQ: Lead Designer Portfolio, Philosophy and Design Intent, Past Performance on Design, and Lead Designer Profile. In December of 2008, the selection panel convened to interview these seven firms. The evaluation criteria for Stage II were: Professional Qualifications and

Specialized Experience of Key Personnel, Team Design Performance with Consultants, Team Organization and Management Plan, Preliminary Site and Program Analysis, Geographic Location, and Subcontracting Plan. From those interviews, the panel chose four firms to submit design visions based on guidance provided by the panel. These four firms were Krueck & Sexton Architects; Gehry Partners, LLP; Rogers Marvels Architects, PLLC; and PWP Landscape Architecture.

All four firms were asked to provide a Design Vision for the project based on the site and urban context, Eisenhower Memorial requirements and criteria, and the Eisenhower Memorial philosophy and aspirations. Each competing firm was given 45 days to respond. In March 2009, a jury composed of design peers evaluated the quality, originality, and appropriateness of the Design Visions. The jury composed a written report containing its findings and recommendations.

The A/E Evaluation Board received this report and was briefed on the jury's findings. The Board then independently evaluated the Design Vision concepts. The scores from the Stage II interviews and the Stage III Design Vision Competition constituted the final overall scoring, and the Board recommended that Gehry Partners be selected as the architect. The Selection Official then concurred with this recommendation of the Board and selected Gehry Partners.

From March 2009 through January 2010, GSA negotiated a scope of work and on January 8, 2010, a design contract with Gehry Partners was signed.

Since that time, Gehry Partners has worked on the design of the memorial and the design is currently in process.

Memorial Approval Process –

It is worth noting that the process for approving such an important memorial in such a prominent location by necessity is a deliberate process that engages a variety of consulting bodies. While GSA administered the process that helped select a highly qualified design firm, the actual concept itself must go through review processes of several Federal and local agencies which include the opportunity for public review and comment. Per the Commemorative Works Act, the National Park Service (NPS) is generally the sponsoring agency that facilitates these processes.

All memorials proposed to be placed on GSA or NPS lands in the District of Columbia are initially reviewed by the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC), established under the Commemorative Works Act of 1986, which holds public meetings

a minimum of two times per year. NCMAC reviews proposed locations and designs for memorials and recommends to the Secretary of the Interior or the Administrator of GSA, as appropriate, the location of the memorial.

Once the actual design of a memorial commences, it is subject to review by the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). CFA and NCPC are required to review the proposed memorial in accordance with review criteria contained in the Commemorative Works Act. As part of the NCPC and CFA review process, a project has to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). CFA and NCPC both hold meetings open to the public on a monthly basis, and they review projects through several design phases. NEPA mandates that all potentially adverse impacts a project could have on the natural and man-made environment must be considered, while NHPA requires that any potentially negative impacts a project may have on historic sites nearby must be mitigated. The District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer must sign off on whatever mitigation measures are proposed.

In sum, any proposed monument or memorial to be located on federally owned land under the custody and accountability of NPS or GSA in the District of Columbia must undergo a rigorous review process with ample opportunity for public input and involvement. This process is ongoing and GSA, by virtue of our management of the design contract for the Memorial, has provided information as requested.

GSA's Other Activities with EMC –

In addition to providing staff and support services on a reimbursable basis and administering the selection of a design firm for the Memorial, GSA also is involved with a few other ongoing activities of the EMC.

Beyond assisting in the selection of the design firm, EMC also has asked for our assistance in administering the construction contract. GSA is using a two-stage source selection process. In Stage I, potential offerors will provide information regarding their technical qualifications. We will evaluate these submissions to identify offerors with the potential to be viable competitors. In Stage II, a Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued to viable competitors identified in Stage I, though non-viable competitors are still allowed to participate if they choose. The RFP will include construction documents and will request additional technical information and pricing. These proposals will be evaluated by a Source Selection Board and a report will be issued to the Source Selection Authority for award.

The RFQ was posted on Federal Business Opportunities (fbo.gov) on March 6, 2012, and we plan to identify viable competitors this summer.

We are also working in partnership with the NPS to provide a portion of the land that will eventually house the Memorial itself. Public Law 109-220 authorized the EMC to consider sites for the memorial within certain areas of the District of Columbia. The site selection was conducted in consultation with affected agencies including GSA, the U.S. Department of Education, and the District of Columbia. The CFA and the NCPC approved the site for the Eisenhower Memorial in 2006.

GSA is currently working to report a portion of this site as excess so that NPS can acquire it and facilitate the full assemblage of the site for the memorial. In addition to these efforts, GSA is happy to assist with any other issues that may arise as the project moves forward.

Conclusion –

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, GSA is proud of our efforts to assist the EMC in its charge of memorializing President Eisenhower. Whether through staff and support services, administering design and construction contracts, or providing land upon which to build, GSA looks forward to assisting in bringing this project to fruition.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I welcome any questions you may have.