

QUARTERLY

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER | 2004

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

First Lady Welcomes Pedestrians to Pennsylvania Avenue



A dignified new civic space featuring pedestrian-friendly amenities and site furnishings now graces the famous stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House. The site, one of the most symbolically important destinations in the nation, officially reopened to pedestrians on November 9, 2004 during a ceremony with First Lady Laura Bush. Joining Mrs. Bush were NCPC Chairman John V. Cogbill, III, Federal Highway Administrator Mary Peters, landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh, and D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams. Also in attendance were representatives of the many federal and local agencies that collaborated on the effort.

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The First Lady welcomed pedestrians to the redesigned Pennsylvania Avenue. She was joined by Federal Highway Administrator Mary Peters, D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams, NCPD Chairman John V. Cogbill, III, and landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh (shown left to right).

The project, which is one of several key security schemes outlined in NCPD's 2002 *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan*, is the first one from the plan to be completed. The redesign has transformed the avenue from one cluttered with ad-hoc security measures to a dignified civic area befitting the White House and its neighbors.

Twin-headed streetlights originally designed for Washington by Henry Bacon in 1923 now line the precinct, and granite benches placed along the open walkways on the

south side of the avenue provide welcome spots for visitors to sit and enjoy the historic scenery. A rustic paving helps unify the White House grounds with Lafayette Park, and large granite pavers at the ends of the street and along the sidewalk reconnect the avenue to the city's urban fabric.

The bulky planter pots and jersey barriers are gone. In their place, specially designed bollards—some that are retractable or removable—ensure a visually open setting. New guard booths complement the classical

“ We have taken a big step toward our goal to rid the city of the ugly cement barriers that jeopardize the freedom and openness that define a democratic society. The success of Pennsylvania Avenue strengthens our resolve to secure federal facilities and commemorative works in ways that do not compromise Washington's beauty and historic urban design. ”

Interagency Security Task Force Chairman
Richard L. Friedman





“Surviving Security” Conference Examines Security Status in the National Capital Region

With the abundance of street closings, color-coded alerts, and barricaded buildings, efforts to secure greater Washington need to move beyond discussions of bollards and jersey barriers. To address the need for regional dialogue on security issues, NCPC joined forces with the Federal Facilities Council, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in holding the November 8 conference, “Surviving Security: Building Federal/Local Partnerships.”

The day-long symposium held at the National Academy of Sciences attracted public- and private-sector decision makers from around the region. George Mason University Economist Stephen Fuller opened the event with a presentation on the federal government’s major impact on the region’s economic health. Panel participants then explored how haphazard and uncoordinated security measures impact the vitality of local communities, negatively affect the overall quality of life in the region, and impact economic development, transportation, and urban design. Panel topics included: Leasing and Location Choices in a Secure Environment; The Challenge of Developing Vibrant and Secure Communities; Coordinating Regional Mobility; and Forging a Regional Agenda.

Several key themes that emerged from these panels were:

- ▶ Washington is unique and faces special challenges due to its larger concentration of government facilities and employees.
- ▶ While federal facilities have developed similar temporary security measures over the past few years, not every agency needs to have the same level of security measures.
- ▶ Security measures need to be developed with a cohesive area plan, not building by building.
- ▶ It is vital not to underestimate the impact of security measures on tourism. A heightened perception that Washington has become a fortress could dampen tourists’ interest in visiting the nation’s capital.

The panelists agreed that an unprecedented level of cooperation is needed to ensure the best possible security solutions. NCPC staff is developing a white paper that analyzes the day’s proceedings.

“The success of this effort resonates far beyond this avenue and marks a turning point in the nation’s capital. It reaffirms that public spaces can be both secure and welcoming.”

NCPC Chairman
John V. Cogbill, III

architecture found along the avenue, and 88 new American elm trees—to be planted in spring 2005—will provide a welcoming canopy for pedestrians.

The project’s design can accommodate the new Downtown Circulator, a hop-on, hop-off shuttle service that will provide convenient transportation to the city’s national treasures. The design is also reversible and does not preclude the reopening of the avenue in the future, if and when the security environment permits.

The project is the result of the effort of dozens of federal, local, and civic agencies that worked with the National Capital Planning Commission, including the National Park Service, the United States Secret Service, the District of Columbia, and the Federal Highway Administration, which managed construction of the project. NCPC is grateful to the First Lady for her steadfast commitment to this project. The end result is a design that incorporates necessary security measures while respecting the avenue’s historical character.



Brasilia Hosts Fourth Annual Capitals Alliance Meeting

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“The dream was smaller than the reality,” wrote Lucio Costa, Latin America’s foremost urban designer in 1984, nearly 25 years after his extraordinary capital city first appeared on the isolated high plateau of central Brazil. Brasilia, the dream city of mid-century modernists, was the venue for this year’s meeting of the Capitals Alliance. Commission member Jerry Shiplett and staff members Julia Koster and Denise Liebowitz composed the NCPC delegation to Brasilia during the week of November 15 to 19, 2004. In addition to Washington, the capital cities of Seoul, Ottawa, Canberra, and Buenos Aires also sent representatives.

The program featured working sessions on topics of shared interest such as security and urban design, national commemoration, relationships between the capital city and its surrounding region, and the impact of historic preservation on urban development. Meetings with faculty members at the University of Brasilia’s School of Architecture and with members of Brazil’s Institutes of Architects and Engineers provided additional opportunities for exchange as did discussions with the state secretaries of culture and tourism and the Chairman of Brazil’s Agency for Airport Infrastructure.

Brasilia’s JK Bridge, named in honor of former President Juscelino Kubitschek



Brazilian architectural historians led site visits to some of the city’s most notable public buildings and urban design features that have become icons of the modernist movement. The utopian vision of Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek, modern architect Oscar Niemeyer, and urban planner Lucio Costa, Brasilia was inaugurated in 1960, only three years after the new capital’s master plan was unveiled.

NCPC is one of the founding members of the Capitals Alliance, an international forum for senior planning officials on the unique symbolic and functional role of capital cities. The Commission hosted the 2003 Capitals Alliance meeting in Washington and looks forward to continuing the exchange when the Alliance next meets in Ottawa in September 2005.

The National Congress, seat of the Brazilian legislative branch, designed by Oscar Niemeyer





Rendering of entry pavilions for the new National Law Enforcement Museum at Judiciary Square

Perimeter Security Will Improve Pedestrian Environment at Department of State Headquarters

Using NCPC's National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan as a guide, the Department of State developed an exemplary perimeter security plan for the Harry S Truman Building in Northwest Washington, D.C. The Commission approved the department's design concept plans at its December meeting.

As part of its proposal, the Department of State will widen the sidewalks along 21st and 23rd Streets, adding street trees and amenities that will transform the sidewalk into a pedestrian friendly environment. New benches, light fixtures, flagpoles, and other elements will be integrated into the streetscape along with a hardened rail and bollard component.

The Department will install pavilions at its five building entrances to oversee employee entry, visitor screening, and ceremonial entry for dignitaries. To ensure compatibility with the Truman Building, the new pavilions will use architectural elements that are featured in the existing structure.

The Commission provided the Department of State with further guidance as it continues to refine its security plans, but generally commended the Department for its cohesive use of perimeter security elements and its attention to improving the streetscape.

Concept Design for National Law Enforcement Museum Moves Forward

A new museum honoring the service and sacrifice of American law enforcement officers is moving forward near the existing National Law Enforcement Memorial at Judiciary Square in Northwest Washington, D.C. In its review of this project, the Commission approved revised design concept plans for two entrance pavilions that will provide access to an underground museum; however, the Commission did not approve the proposed plaza design, ramps leading to the Old D.C. Courthouse entry plaza, or curb location and drop-off areas.

In response to previous recommendations by the Commission, the architect refined the pavilion design, maximizing its transparency through the use of glass vaulted roofs, glass walls, glass railings within the lobby, and translucent glazing materials. Each pavilion, which will comprise approximately 4,000 square feet and rise to 25 feet at its highest point, will provide access to the lower level facility containing exhibits, a hall of remembrance, collections storage, a gift shop, administrative offices, support space, restrooms, and mechanical equipment.

As the design evolves, the Commission asked that the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund continue to coordinate with the D.C. Courts, the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department, the U.S. Court of Military Appeals, and adjacent property owners.



Entrance to proposed St. Elizabeths hospital



Secured wing of new St. Elizabeths hospital

New Hospital Proposed at St. Elizabeths

The Commission concluded that the Planned Unit Development proposal to build a new St. Elizabeths Hospital on the eastern portion of St. Elizabeths campus would not adversely impact federal interests. According to the proposal, the existing five-story John Howard Forensic Pavilion will be demolished and replaced by a new 293-bed mental health facility for both secured and non-secured patients. The Commission recommended that the hospital prepare a Transportation Management Plan to encourage the use of public transit. Given the existing and future public transportation that serves the campus, the Commission suggested that the hospital provide a minimum amount of surface parking.

New Development Will Bring Residential and Retail Space to Tenleytown

The Commission concluded that a proposal to replace a commercial property at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Brandywine Street in Northwest Washington, D.C. with residential and retail space would not adversely impact federal interests. The proposal includes 42 condominium units, 44 below-grade parking spaces, 4,600 square feet of residential recreation space, and 1,650 square feet of retail space. Due to the development's close proximity to Metrorail, the project fosters transit-oriented housing and retail development goals.

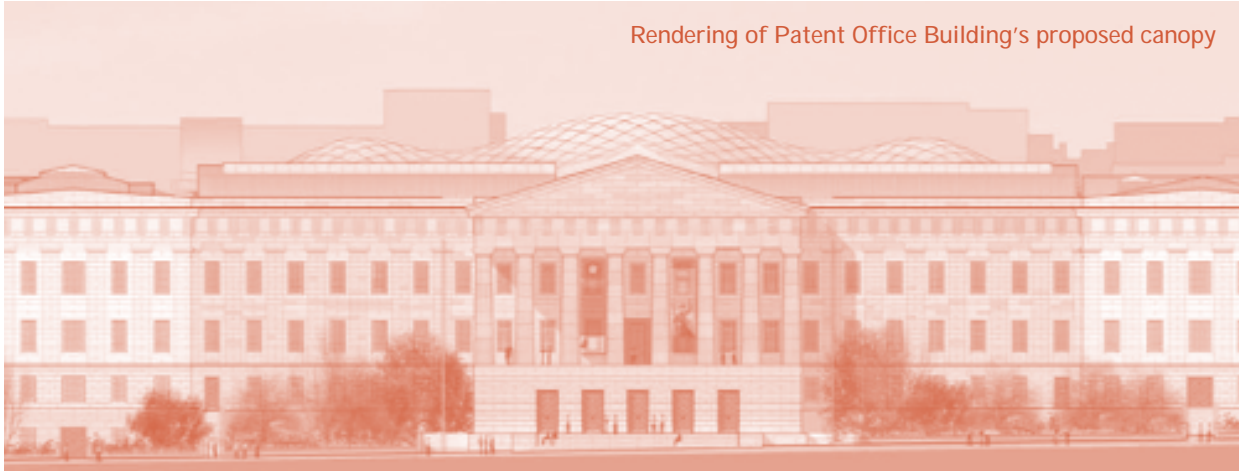
National Defense University to Expand

The Commission approved concept building plans for an expansion of the National Defense University at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C. The project includes a new three-level brick and stone building that will serve as a freestanding addition to Marshall Hall and reflect a similar exterior wall style. The concept also includes a central courtyard and a shared atrium between the two buildings. The new facility will include classrooms, a formal auditorium, conference rooms, dining facilities, study areas, and an interior courtyard. The Commission required several adjustments to the project as part of its approval, including modifying the connection between the buildings, providing a skylight or vaulted roof on the new structure, and establishing defined setbacks along the east and west elevations.



Rendering of National Defense University's planned addition

Rendering of Patent Office Building's proposed canopy



Glass Canopy Approved for Patent Office Building

The Commission approved preliminary site and building plans for a revised canopy design to enclose the courtyard at the Patent Office Building, located between 7th and 9th Streets and F and G Streets in Downtown Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian revised the canopy design according to the direction that the Commission offered when it last reviewed the project in July 2004.

The Smithsonian Institution envisions that the courtyard enclosure will add space to the museum for ceremonial and public events. The revised design minimizes the profile of the canopy by removing projecting sun fins from the exterior, adjusting the slope of the vault, and slightly reducing the overall height of the canopy. The glass panels of the canopy will be arranged in a faceted configuration that reflects sunlight, but the contrast between the canopy and the Greek Revival-style building will be less pronounced than in the previous design due to the removal of the sun fins.

While the Commission approved the canopy, it did not approve the proposed cooling tower or the protrusion of HVAC equipment into the courtyard and deferred action on other elements of the Smithsonian's proposal pending historic preservation consultation. Also in its review, the Commission determined that reconstructing the stairs that historically existed on the south facade, which were removed in 1935, would strengthen the presence of the Patent Office Building at the street level and alleviate the canopy's visual impact on the building. The Commission asked the Smithsonian to submit a design concept for the south stair reconstruction before submitting further plans for the courtyard enclosure.

Commission Approves Perimeter Security for Prettyman Courthouse Annex

After working closely with the General Services Administration to refine security plans for the rotunda of the E. Barrett Prettyman Courthouse Annex, the Commission approved preliminary and final site development plans for the overall Annex project.

The Commission reviewed two designs and chose a scheme that retains perimeter security near the curb line and incorporates street trees and other landscape elements. As requested by the Commission, the project will include planters reinforced with hidden bollards that will also serve as seating along the sidewalk.

In its review, the Commission determined that the proposed use of bollards at the west end of the project and the arrangement of bollards at the corner of 3rd Street and Constitution Avenue were not optimal. Instead, the Commission asked that a raised landscape planter be incorporated into the existing landscaping at the west end of the project and that a bollard arrangement—depicted in an alternate design scheme—be used for the corner of 3rd Street and Constitution Avenue.

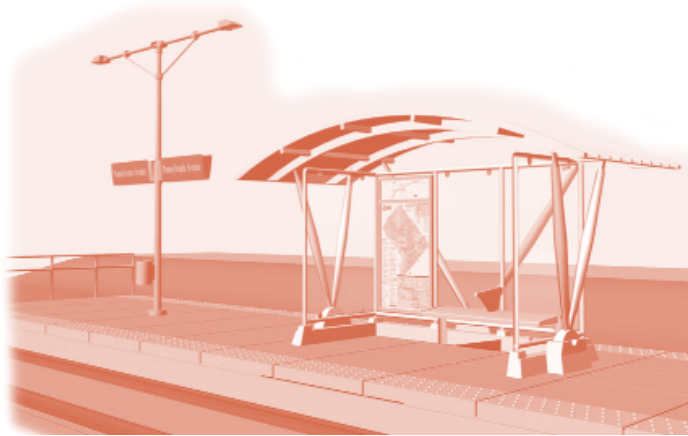
Light Rail Transit Will Serve Anacostia

The Commission approved concept design plans for the Anacostia Light Rail Transit, a 2.7-mile system with six station stops that will serve residential areas and employment centers along the line.

Located within the existing CSX Railroad right-of-way on the east side of the Anacostia River, the proposed rail line will extend from Pennsylvania Avenue, SE on the north to the main gate of the Anacostia Naval Annex/Bolling Air Force Base on the south. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority will operate 45-foot-long light rail cars, each with capacity for 100 passengers.

In addition to supporting the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, which proposes to bring new life to one of Washington’s most neglected resources, the D.C. Department of Transportation envisions the Anacostia Light Rail Transit as the first phase of a potential citywide light rail service to complement Metrorail and Metrobus.

In its review, the Commission requested that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority provide additional details, including those that relate to the pedestrian connections, platform and shelter materials, and landscaping.



Potential design of an Anacostia Light Rail station

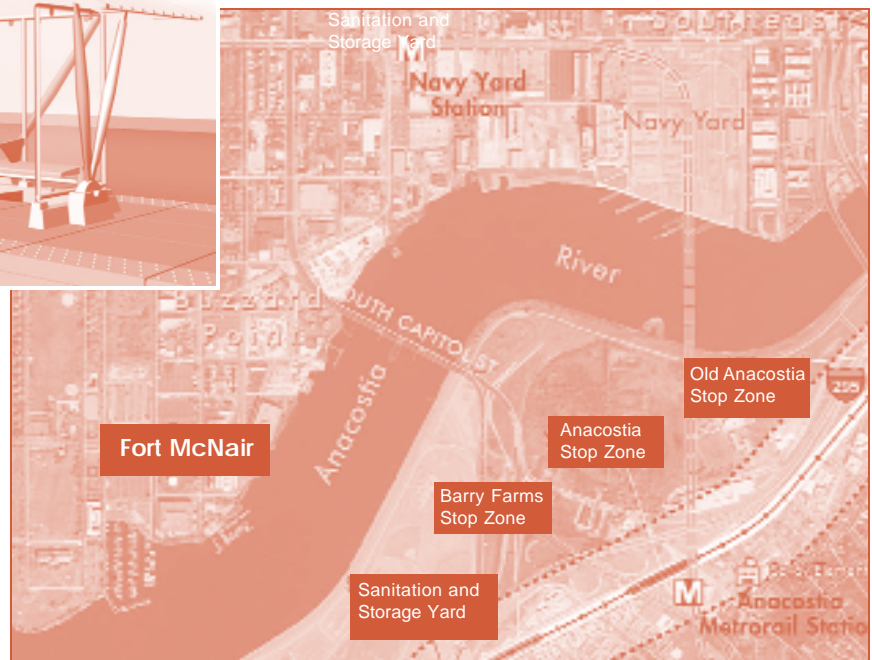
Library and Conference Center to Undergo Renovation at the Pentagon

The Commission approved preliminary site and building plans for the renovation and construction of a library and conference center on the Pentagon Reservation. The new space will be achieved by using an existing underground facility and making above-ground additions to provide natural light and access. In its review, the Commission commended the Department of Defense for integrating the above-ground elements with the formal grass panels and the path of the existing landscape. For any future proposals, the Commission advised the Department to submit an updated master plan for the Pentagon.

Historic Building at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to Undergo Renovation

The Commission approved preliminary site and building plans to renovate and add to Building 40, which was constructed in the early 20th century and is part of Walter Reed’s Institute of Research at the Medical Center. Planned improvements involve mostly internal renovation with some external repair. The Department of the Army also plans to place a skylight over the existing courtyard and expand the building into this space. The Commission determined that the renovations and new construction would retain the historic character of the existing site and building while improving the quality of life for building occupants.

A portion of the route planned for the Anacostia Light Rail



October

October 7, 2004

Rendering of perimeter security design for the Smithsonian Castle



Commission Approves Smithsonian's Mall-Wide Security Plan

In conjunction with NCPD's National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan, the Smithsonian Institution prepared perimeter security plans for nine of its museums on the National Mall. The Commission approved these preliminary security plans with the exception of specific applications to the National Museum of American History, the Freer Gallery, and the Arts and Industries Building.

The Smithsonian's security plans will replace current temporary measures with a variety of landscape elements and site amenities that will restore beauty and dignity to the setting of the National Mall and to the museums included in the proposal: the National Museum of American History; the National Museum of Natural History; the Smithsonian Castle; the S. Dillon Ripley Center; the Freer Gallery of Art; the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of Art; the Museum of African Art; the Arts and Industries Building; and the Hirshhorn Museum.

The Smithsonian's security plans are tailored to each building, responding to differences in architecture, streetscape elements, and site conditions. Along Independence Avenue, SW, for example, existing walls will be hardened and custom-designed bollards will be used to secure pedestrian and vehicular entrances. Along Constitution Avenue, NW, the design calls for new freestanding walls on the inside edge of the sidewalk. Custom-designed benches, light poles, and urns will complement the historic fabric of the Mall precinct.

While recommending that the Smithsonian refine certain aspects of its plans before returning for final approval, the Commission expressed its appreciation for the Smithsonian's adherence to many tenets of NCPD's National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan.

Census Bureau's New Headquarters Begins to Take Shape

Using a sustainable design intended to minimize impacts on the natural environment, the Census Bureau has begun construction on Phase 1 of its new headquarters in Suitland, Maryland. The Commission approved final plans for Phase 1 in March 2004 and, at its October 2004 meeting, approved final site and building plans for Phase 2. This second phase completes all building elements for the new headquarters, which will house more than 6,000 employees.

Phase 2 of the project features a curving, eight-story building and parking garage near the facility's main entrance. The building's concourse level will contain common space, including a fitness center, health unit, and food service. This phase of construction also features a library, which will protrude from the main building and be accessible to the public.

Three landscaped zones are planned as part of Phase 2—an urban garden, a natural garden, and a manufactured garden. With its street trees, plantings, and site furniture, the urban garden will be experienced en route from the neighboring Suitland Metro Station and serve as a plaza and forecourt to the main entrance. The natural garden is designed as an extension of the woodland preserve, located in the southwestern edge of the site. The manufactured garden will be part of an internal courtyard that features a terraced landscape and public art.

The Census Bureau envisions a headquarters complex that will blend into the landscape, create outdoor gathering spaces, and maximize access to daylight.



Mixed-use development planned for E Street, NW between 8th and 9th Streets

Pennsylvania Avenue Plan of 1974 Amended

The Pennsylvania Avenue Plan of 1974 was revised to accommodate a new private development planned for 9th and E Street, NW, where a surface parking lot currently operates.

The proposed development is a 10-story building with office, retail, and theater uses and four levels of underground parking. The developer requested an amendment that would allow a building height of 65 feet on the 8th Street facade with a five-foot setback above it. Concluding that the amendment was consistent with the intent of the Pennsylvania Avenue Plan, the Commission approved the change for this particular project.

As planned, the new mixed-use building will respect the appearance of the neighboring historic structures: the Patent Office Building, the Tariff Commission Building (Hotel Monaco), and the LeDroit Building (Spy Museum).

Antennas Approved for Beltsville Agricultural Research Center

The Commission approved preliminary and final site and building plans to install antennas at the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC). Located in Prince George's County, Maryland, BARC occupies more than 1,000 acres near the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and the Capital Beltway. The antennas, which will be mounted on an existing water tower and painted to blend into the structure, were approved for a period not to exceed five years.



NCPC Releases Annual Report

NCPC released its first Annual Report in early November. The 36-page color document highlights the progress of several major initiatives during the 2004 fiscal year, describes significant projects that the Commission reviewed and influenced during that time, and offers a preview of the year ahead. Featured projects include

the redesign of Pennsylvania Avenue, a K Street design charrette sponsored by NCPC and the Downtown Business Improvement District, and the release of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements. Visit NCPC's website at www.ncpc.gov to download the annual report, or call 202-482-7200 to obtain a hard copy.

Comprehensive Plan Available

Hard copies of NCPC's Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements will be available upon request in January. The Comprehensive Plan offers a blueprint for long-term planning and development in the national capital region. To request a copy of the plan, call 202-482-7200. The plan is also available on NCPC's website at www.ncpc.gov on the publications page.

Impact of Federal Employment on Housing and Commuting

In October, NCPC hosted housing and planning experts to discuss the preliminary findings of an Urban Institute study sponsored by NCPC. The study explored the relationship among federal employment, housing choices, and commuting patterns. Panelists included representatives from the Brookings Institution, the Urban Land Institute, the Fannie Mae Foundation, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the D.C. Office of Planning, the Washington Regional Network, and the National Capital Planning Commission. NCPC expects to issue a report on the study's findings in February 2005.

International Outreach

In addition to participating in the annual international Capitals Alliance forum, NCPC met with several foreign delegations this fall. In October, Executive Director Patricia Gallagher served as a guest lecturer for the American Planning Association event, "Politics, Capital Planning, Comprehensive Planning, and Sustainability." In her lecture, Ms. Gallagher explained NCPC's role in capital city planning to a delegation of mayors from numerous cities in China. Also in October, Ms. Gallagher presented NCPC activities to The Hospitality and Information Service, a non-profit organization associated with international diplomats. On November 9, NCPC staff met with architects and planners from the Republic of Georgia to provide an overview of the Commission's activities and to describe the federal versus local planning jurisdictions in Washington, D.C. The Department of State sponsored the Georgian delegates as part of its International Visitor Program.

Awards

At an awards ceremony on October 14, 2004, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Transportation recognized NCPC as one of the Best Workplaces for Commuters. The award honors NCPC's efforts to provide federal employees with outstanding commuter benefits that help reduce the region's traffic and air pollution.

Staff Changes

Community Planner Marjorie Marcus recently joined NCPC's Urban Design and Plan Review Division. A registered architect with more than 20 years of experience in architecture and urban planning, Ms. Marcus came to NCPC from Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where she served as Senior Master Planner for five years.

In November, Administrative Officer Sharon Banks left NCPC to accept a position with the General Services Administration. NCPC wishes Ms. Banks all the best in her new position as Deputy Director of the Metropolitan Service Center.

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The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's planning agency in the District of Columbia and surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall planning guidance for federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal construction projects, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.

National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, NW
North Lobby, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20576
Telephone | 202.482.7200
Fax | 202.482.7272
www.ncpc.gov
info@ncpc.gov

Commission Members

John V. Cogbill, III, Chairman

Richard L. Friedman

José L. Galvez, III

Arrington L. Dixon

Patricia Elwood, Vice Chair

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Gale A. Norton
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The Honorable Anthony A. Williams
Mayor of the District of Columbia

The Honorable Linda W. Cropp
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

Executive Director
Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP



NCPC

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION
401 9TH STREET, NW, NORTH LOBBY, SUITE 500
WASHINGTON, DC 20576