



JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER  
SUMMER 2000

# QUARTERLY

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# PRESERVING NATIONAL CAPITAL OPEN SPACE

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With jurisdiction over more than 8,000 acres of public open space in the District of Columbia and more than 85,000 acres across the National Capital Region, the federal government is responsible for ensuring the environmental health and scenic beauty of some of the nation's most treasured parks and natural areas. From the National Mall and Rock Creek Park to the George Washington Parkway and the C&O Canal, federal agencies are vigilant stewards of the natural resources under their protection. Doing its part to fulfill this federal responsibility, NCPC is currently revising its policies affecting open space in the region. Undertaken as part of the Commission's ongoing two-year project to revise the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*, the Parks, Open Space, and Natural Features Element of the Comprehensive Plan will guide planning for these public lands for the next twenty years.

Beginning with the monumental open space network of the L'Enfant Plan, the federal government has a long history of acquisition and preservation of open space in the region. The McMillan Plan of 1901 created the National Mall as we know it today and grouped public buildings in expansive formal landscaped settings to create Washington's distinctive Monumental Core. In addition, the McMillan Plan carried the capital's park system into the

outlying areas beyond the District of Columbia along the Potomac River to Great Falls and Mount Vernon and reserved open space for parkways through the city and a ring of preserved Civil War fortification around it. In 1924 Congress created the National Capital Park Commission, NCPC's predecessor agency, to develop a comprehensive plan for a park, parkway, and

**Since the mid-1970s, Washington has lost more than 16 percent of its tree cover.**

**This loss has prompted the Commission to add new policies calling for restoration of Washington's urban greenery.**

playground system. The Commission's outlook was expanded in 1930 when the Capper Cramton Act authorized it to acquire lands for a regional park system. Little Falls and Cabin John Parkways, Sligo Creek and Indian Creek Parks, Rock Creek Stream Valley Park, and Oxon Run and Anacostia Parks are only a few of the public properties purchased by NCPC during the 1930s and 40s and that serve today as the crown jewels in an expansive regional open space system.

The planned revisions to the Open Space Element incorporate several important planning initiatives undertaken since the element was first published in the 1980s. For example, the provisions of the Commemorative Works Act, the legislation that guides the location and design of Washington's monuments and memorials, are now included in the Open Space Element. Likewise, many of the open space objectives articulated in the Commission's long-range planning framework, *Extending the Legacy*, are being included. In particular, the Legacy vision for the enhancement of Washington's waterfront, the improvement of East Potomac Park as an area for outdoor cultural events and celebrations, and recognition of South Capitol Street as a major gateway are all noted in the draft document. The Commission's recently adopted Commemorative Zone Policy, which further restricts memorial construction in the heart of the Monumental Core, is also reflected in the draft element. The revision anticipates the major policy proposals of the Commission's Memorials and Museums Master Plan now in preparation.

Several key revisions respond to the increasing pressures on the region's open space. The draft element notes that the "Green City" of stately trees and verdant vistas envisioned in the McMillan Plan has been seriously undermined in recent years. Since the

mid-1970s, Washington has lost more than 16 percent of its tree cover. This loss has prompted the Commission to add new policies calling for restoration of Washington's urban greenery. Reflecting growing interest in waterfront development, the Open Space Element calls for revisions to local subdivision and zoning regulations to protect shorelines within 150 to 200 feet of the water's edge and limits buildings within 200 feet of the shoreline to an average height of 65 feet. The element calls for the federal government to pursue the acquisition of land for parks and open space areas through purchase, easement, donation or other means.

The proposed revisions to the Open Space Element specify short- and long-term implementation strategies to support its policy guidance. For example, to advance its recommendation to extend waterfront parkland on Buzzard Point, the Element recommends that the Commission work with other federal agencies to make properties in the area available to the Park Service or the D.C. Department of Recreation for park and recreational uses through land transfers, land exchanges, or use agreements.

A 60-day public comment period on the draft Parks, Open Space, and Natural Features Element has recently concluded and the Commission expects to release the final version by the end of the year. Robert Cosby in the Office of Long-Range Planning can respond to questions or comments on this element. He can be contacted at 202-482-7203 or at [bobc@ncpc.gov](mailto:bobc@ncpc.gov). The next Comprehensive Plan Element to come before the public will deal with regional environmental matters.



The Enid A. Haupt Garden at the Smithsonian Institution's Castle forms part of the Capital's open space network.



Keep an eye on NCPC's website for current information and proposed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan and instructions on how to comment on them.

[www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov)

# PROCEEDINGS

This issue of the Quarterly summarizes actions taken at the Commission meetings on July 6, August 3, September 7, and September 21, 2000. Additional information on individual projects may be obtained by contacting the National Capital Planning Commission, 801 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20576 or by calling 202-482-7200. Visit [www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov) for more news about Commission activities.

## WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

*Washington, D.C.*

September 21, 2000

The Commission's approval of the final design plans for the World War II Memorial at a special meeting on September 21, 2000 cleared the way for the sponsor, the American Battle Monuments Commission, to proceed with the project that will be a major addition to Washington's Monumental Core. The Battle Monuments Commission expects to break ground for the memorial this Veterans' Day, November 11, and dedicate it on Memorial Day 2003.

The approval did not extend to several important features of the proposed design. The Commission did not approve the Light of Freedom sculptural element that is being considered for the center of the Rainbow Pool, nor did it accept the proposed night-lighting scheme for the memorial.

Commissioners also requested that the project designers provide a more subtle finish for the field of 4,000 gold stars planned for the western wall of the memorial. Action was deferred on the ancillary elements associated with the memorial, including the roadway, the contemplative area, the ranger station, and the public comfort station, and the Commission expects to consider these portions of the project at a future meeting.

In order to accommodate all members of the public who wanted to testify on the project, Chairman Harvey Gantt called the special Commission meeting in which the World War II Memorial was the only item on the agenda. More than 100 individuals registered to speak either in support of or in opposition to the project in a hearing that ran nearly nine hours.

**View of the World War II Memorial from 17th Street looking towards the Lincoln Memorial**





## WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

*City of Alexandria, VA, Prince George's County, MD, & Washington, D.C.*

August 3, 2000

The memorial will be constructed on a 7.4-acre site on the Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. It will feature a sunken stone plaza built around the Rainbow Pool, which will be reconstructed. Two 43-foot memorial arches will mark the north and south entrances to the memorial and 56 granite pillars representing the U.S. states and territories that fought in the war will surround the plaza. A sacred precinct will occupy the western side of the memorial and include two waterfalls. Project designers will preserve the existing elm trees that will flank the memorial and add to them in order to restore the original double row of elms that has long been a feature of the Mall landscape.

The Commission and its staff have examined every element of this important memorial in a review process that began in 1995 when the Commission approved the Rainbow Pool site with the stipulation that the design not intrude on the Mall's historic east/west vista. In 1997 the Commission rejected a design concept that did not sufficiently integrate the memorial into its sensitive Mall setting. The following year the Commission approved the revised design concept and a year after that, in June 1999, approved the preliminary plans. As required under the provisions of the Commemorative Works Act, the law that guides the development of new memorials, NCPC and the Commission of Fine Arts have concurred on the location and design plans for this memorial.

The Commission approved preliminary site and building plans and final foundation and Phase 1 dredging plans for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement. The approval permits the Federal Highway Administration to proceed with site preparation. This work includes dredging and removing by barge 600,000 cubic yards of river bottom material and driving steel pipe piles of varying diameters into the riverbed. In order to protect aquatic vegetation, seasonal limitations are placed on dredging activities. Therefore, the first



The new bridge will include pedestrian walkways.



Detail of the  
contemporary-looking  
Operator's Control Tower

**WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE REPLACEMENT***Continued*

phase of this work will begin immediately and conclude in February 2001; dredging will resume during the same period next year.

The replacement bridge is designed to function as a ten-lane crossing with two additional lanes that may eventually serve as High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. On the north side of the bridge, there will be a 12-foot-wide path for pedestrians and cyclists featuring connections to trails in Virginia and Maryland and overlooks with views to the Monumental Core. Other design plan elements include 18 V-shaped piers, tinted to give them a monumental white appearance; a twin-bridge draw span with a 70-foot clearance in the closed position; an Operator's Control Tower; a lighting scheme; light fixtures; and highway sign structures.

Since the Commission approved design concepts for the bridge in April 1999, the bridge's design has progressed significantly with updates that help to balance the bridge's monumental aspirations with more practical transportation concerns. The Commission particularly commended the Federal Highway Administration for its newly designed Operator's Control Tower, a contemporary-looking structure with clean lines and a glass and metal skin. In the preparation of subsequent submissions, the Commission requested that the Federal Highway Administration work with Commission staff in the continued design development of the light fixtures and sign structures to reflect the character of the overall design.

The current construction schedule calls for work to begin on the bridge's superstructure and on the I-295, US 1, and MD 210 interchanges by 2001-2002. Demolition of the existing bridge and completion of the new bridge is expected by 2006-2007.

**FEDERAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM, 2001-2005***National Capital Region*

August 3, 2000

The Commission adopted the Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP), which documents all of the public works proposed by federal agencies in the region for fiscal years 2001 through 2005. The Commission tracks and reviews these proposals to ensure that they meet federal planning objectives and that they are coordinated with one another and with the surrounding communities. The FCIP offers planning recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget and provides Congress and the Executive Branch with a context for budget analysis of federal capital investments.

The current FCIP contains 207 federally and non-federally funded projects from 16 departments and agencies, totaling \$5.5 billion over the five-year period. Of the 168 federally funded projects, nearly half are new and have increased the federally funded program by \$1.2 billion, or 29 percent since last year's (FYs 2000–2004) program.

Among the major jurisdictions, projects are distributed as follows: the District of Columbia has 69 projects costing \$2 billion, or 37 percent of the program; Maryland has 76 projects costing \$1.77 billion, or 33 percent of the program; and Virginia has 21 projects costing \$570 million, or 11 percent of the program. Two federally funded projects, accounting for 19 percent of the program's total cost, cannot be attributed to one jurisdiction: 1) new



# OTHER COMMISSION ACTIONS

headquarters for Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and 2) Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement. At the time of FCIP adoption, no site had been selected for the new Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Headquarters. The Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement, a new structure that will be designed to function as a ten-lane bridge with the potential for two additional HOV and/or express bus or rail lanes, is the only project in the current program that falls within the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.

In addition to projects proposed by federal agencies, the Commission includes projects that it believes should be considered for the future. In some instances, master plans or site and building plans related to these projects have already been prepared and favorably reviewed by the Commission; however, funds have not yet been programmed. In other cases, the improvements may have a long-range scope in which initial steps, essential to their development, must be identified prior to programming. Some of these recommendations are based on the need to preserve certain historic landmarks or features of the Nation's Capital and to achieve improvements in the quality

and character of the areas that are significant to visitors and residents.



Two projects included in the FCIP are the National Institutes of Health's clinical research center (left) and the Food and Drug Administration's White Oak consolidation (above), both in Montgomery County, MD.

## **Anacostia Naval Station, Building 92, Washington, D.C.**

The Commission approved preliminary and final building plans for nine Cellular One antennas and one equipment shelter on the rooftop of Building 92 for a period of ten years. To reduce their visibility, the antennas will be painted to match the exterior color of the building. (7/6/00)

## **Carderock Recreation Area, Potomac, Montgomery County, MD**

The Commission approved the design concept and, at a later meeting, the preliminary and final site and building plans for a U.S. Park Police Stable, Paddock, and Office Area at the Carderock Recreation Area. (7/6/00 and 8/3/00)

## **George Mason Memorial, Fountain Four, West Potomac Park, Washington, D.C.**

The Commission approved final site and building plans for the George Mason Memorial, which will honor the patriot whose 1776 Virginia Declaration of Rights became the basis for the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights. The memorial design draws from the original garden design of the site, which included fountain and trellis elements. (7/6/00)



The George Mason Memorial will feature a garden trellis.

# OTHER COMMISSION ACTIONS

## **Memorial Station Postal Facility, 2236 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA**

The Commission approved final site and building plans for the postal facility, which will replace the current structure that serves as a carrier distribution facility. The new building should improve workspace and carrier mail delivery service to the Alexandria 22314 zip code area. No postal customer services will be offered at this location except for incidental mail pick-up.

## **Orientation Map Signs and Pedestrian Directional Signs, NW and SW, Washington, D.C.**

The Commission approved preliminary and final site development plans for orientation map signs at 20 locations and pedestrian directional signs at 31 locations on National Park Service property in the vicinity of the Mall and along Pennsylvania Avenue. Should additional sites be added to the program, modifications to the location and number of signs may be made. (9/7/00)

## **Treasury Building, Washington, D.C.**

Through November 30, 2000, the Commission approved preliminary and final site plans for the temporary installation of playground equipment and a surrounding fence on the southwest lawn of the Treasury Building. It is recommended that GSA assess available sites for the long-term installation of the playground equipment. (7/6/00)

## **U.S. Food and Drug Administration Consolidation, CDER Laboratory Building, White Oak, Montgomery County, MD**

The Commission approved the conceptual design plans for the CDER laboratory at the consolidation site in White Oak and requested that, before submitting a proposal that incorporates a change to the approved site development plan or that adds new on-site parking, GSA resolve outstanding issues that were identified by the Commission in its Master Plan approval of 1997. (7/6/00)

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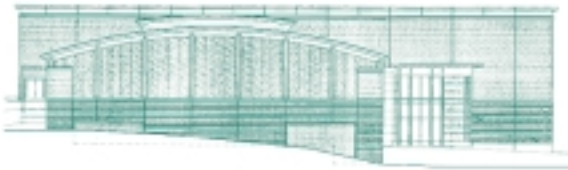
New maps and signs will help guide visitors around the Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue.







**Walter Reed physical fitness facility, west view (above) and south view (below)**



**Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Main Section, Main Drive, NW, Washington, D.C.**

The Commission approved the final site and building plans for a physical fitness facility at the medical center. Upon completion of the new facility, the Army will remove the interim multi-purpose sports structure and return the site to an outdoor recreation area. (7/6/00)

**500 C Street, NW, Square 491, Lots 826 & 831, D.C.**

In agreement with the District's determination that this property is no longer required for public purposes and may be disposed of in the best interest of the District, the Commission approved the sale of this property. As the property falls within the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Plan area, any proposed development is subject to NCPC review and approval. (9/7/00)

**1021 29th Street, NW, Washington, D.C.**

The Commission approved preliminary and final building plans for nine AT&T Wireless antennas on the upper building wall and roof of the West Heating Plant. Signs will be placed at access points on the roof to mark areas that exceed FCC limits for controlled environmental exposure. (8/3/00)

**The Commission commented on the following environmental documents:**

**Department of Transportation Headquarters, New or Renovated Building, Washington, D.C.**

The Commission reviewed GSA's Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Department of Transportation Headquarters' New or Renovated Building Space. The Commission generally agreed with the report's findings and found that, if implemented, the proposed mitigation measures would address the most short- and long-term environmental effects at the alternative site locations. The Commission recommended that GSA give further consideration to certain aspects of the project. (6/29/00)

**New York Avenue Metrorail Station, New York and Florida Avenues, NE, Washington, D.C.**

The Commission reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the New York Avenue Metrorail Station and its associated track realignment. The general findings of the EA were considered acceptable. The proposed mitigation measures address most short- and long-term environmental effects to the rail alignment area and proposed station location. As proposed, the construction practices would comply with applicable federal and state regulations pertaining to air quality, erosion, sedimentation control, and construction activity. However, the Commission found that some issues in the EA must be revised in order to clarify important project effects. (6/29/00)

**U.S. Marine Corps Heritage Center, Quantico, VA**

The Commission agreed, generally, with the findings of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Heritage Center, which would consolidate existing museum components and enhance the curation, exhibit, and accessibility of Marine Corps historical collections and archives. In its comments, the Commission identified some issues that should be addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. (9/7/00)

# DELEGATED ACTIONS

## The Acting Executive Director has reached the conclusion that:

The closing of a public alley and the establishment of an easement between 12 th, 13th, G, and H Streets, NW, will not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and will not have a negative impact on the federal establishment or other federal interests in the National Capital. (6/29/00)

## On behalf of the Commission, the Acting Executive Director approved:

- > Preliminary and final site and building plans for the rehabilitation and restoration of Building 39 at Fort Lesley J. McNair, 4th and P Streets, SW, Washington, D.C. (6/29/00)
- > Modifications to previously approved plans to renovate the Pentagon Heliport Support Building in Arlington County, VA. (6/29/00)
- > Preliminary site and building plans for the Fire Station at the Bethesda campus of the National Institutes of Health in Montgomery County, MD. (7/27/00)



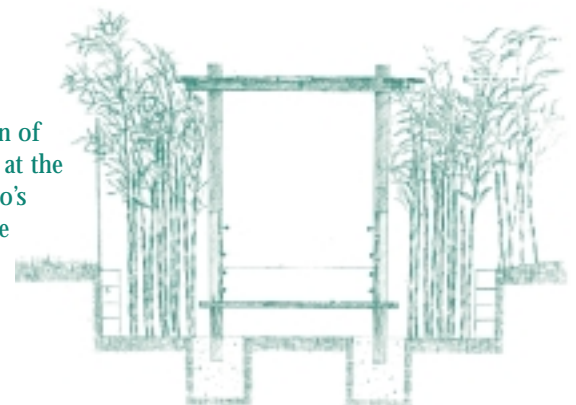
The new fire station at NIH in Bethesda

- > Preliminary and final site and building plans for a 31,000-square-foot addition to the Navy Lodge at the National Medical Center in Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD. (7/27/00)
- > Preliminary building plans for a rooftop cooling system at the Federal Trade Commission building at 7th Street and

Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. (7/27/00)

- > Preliminary and final site and building plans for a boardwalk at Dyke March Wildlife Preserve, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Fairfax County, VA. The boardwalk would replace numerous trails that are potentially harmful to the marsh's ecosystem while providing access to the march for improved wildlife viewing. (7/27/00)
- > Preliminary and final site development plans for site improvements at the Department of the Interior, South Building, 1951 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. (8/31/00)
- > Preliminary and final site and building plans for the New Power Plant at the National Institutes of Health Animal Center in Poolesville, Montgomery County, MD. (8/31/00)
- > Preliminary and final site development plans for a building identification sign—designating the building as the “Harry S Truman Building”—at the U.S. Department of State Headquarters Building, 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. (8/31/00)
- > Preliminary and final site development plans for site improvements at the National Zoo's Panda House, located in Northwest, Washington, D.C. In preparation for an increase in visitors—expected to come to see the two new pandas, which will arrive in September 2000—proposed changes will facilitate circulation around the exhibit. (7/27/00)

Cross section of the walkway at the National Zoo's Panda House



# COMMISSION NOTES

The Commission welcomes Toni Griffin who will serve as a Commission Alternate for Mayor Anthony A. Williams. A Loeb Fellow with over ten years of urban planning experience, Ms. Griffin came to the D.C. Office of Planning from New York, where she was Vice President of the Enterprise Zone. The Commission would also like to welcome back Johanna Hardy, who has resumed her role as a Commission Alternate for Senator Fred Thompson, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

On June 6, 2000, Commuter Connections held an awards ceremony at the National Press Club to honor organizations whose 1999 efforts contributed to transportation improvements in the National Capital Region. NCPC was honored for its 1999 Federal Transportation Management Workshop, which featured discussions by senior Administration officials and a hands-on workshop in which government managers learned how to prepare transportation management plans. In its most recent transportation planning work, the Commission co-sponsored a series of five training sessions in July and August 2000 to help federal agencies implement a new Executive Order that requires them to provide their employees with transit benefits. For more information on federal transportation management programs, contact Bill Dowd at 202-482-7240 or e-mail [bill@ncpc.gov](mailto:bill@ncpc.gov).

On July 10, Margaret Vanderhye, Chairman of the Joint Task Force on Memorials, spoke to members of the Heritage Tourism Coalition about the Memorials and Museums Master Plan. In this master plan, being prepared in collaboration with the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Memorial Commission, NCPC is identifying premier locations for new memorials and museums throughout the city that will appeal to sponsors, enrich local neighborhoods, and serve as a source of pride for all Americans. The draft master plan is expected to be released in December 2000, but NCPC welcomes feedback prior to the release of the draft. For more information about the master plan, please visit us at [www.ncpc.gov/planning.html](http://www.ncpc.gov/planning.html).



**The Honorable Kathryn Porter (third from left) and the Honorable Phil Mendelson (second from right) congratulated NCPC staff on their Employer Services Organization Achievement Award.**

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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.

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Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

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