

QUARTERLY

JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER | 2004

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

A New Way on K

Design Charrette Unveils Plan to Transform the K Street Corridor

Traveling along the congested K Street corridor can be an exercise in frustration for workers, residents, and visitors in Northwest Washington. Traffic along this major east-west thoroughfare has greatly increased over the past few years as other east-west arteries have closed due to security concerns. In a downtown that is growing by leaps and bounds, the shortcomings of K Street between 11th and 21st Streets are becoming more readily apparent. To help rectify the situation, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and the Downtown Business Improvement District (DBID) convened a K Street design charrette this summer.

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A New Way on K STREET

The session brought together some of the nation's best planners, architects, landscape architects, and transportation engineers to devise a plan to transform this special boulevard.

During the three-day event, held July 21 to July 23, the distinguished panel attended briefings, took walking and driving tours of the area, and interviewed various K Street stakeholders. Noting that the street—although lined with many of the city's most prestigious firms, restaurants, and shops—lacked a strong urban presence, the panel set out to create a design that would allow K Street to be more than just a bland commercial center.

After three days, the design team unveiled its concept to NCPC, DBID, District agencies, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and other stakeholders. The team's

design combined public and vehicular traffic proposals with amenities befitting a prominent business corridor. "K Street presents a very important opportunity to create a true main street for this area of the city," said Philip Enquist, chair of the design charrette panel. "Our vision for K Street presents a bold, green, and transit-oriented plan. It is a balanced view but a bold concept with a clear vision and a community focus."

The new concept calls for: a two-lane section for westbound traffic; a two-lane section for eastbound traffic; and, in the center of the roadway, a 24-foot-wide public transitway. Service and parking lanes currently in place would be removed; trees and landscaping would be added to the medians; and the sidewalks would be widened to 25 feet, allowing for outdoor cafes and a more pleasant pedestrian environment. The center transitway would initially provide dedicated bus lanes and accommodate the new Downtown Circulator, and it could later be converted to light rail use.

Executing these ideas will require the participation of community groups and the creation of a conservancy to manage the K Street corridor in its entirety.

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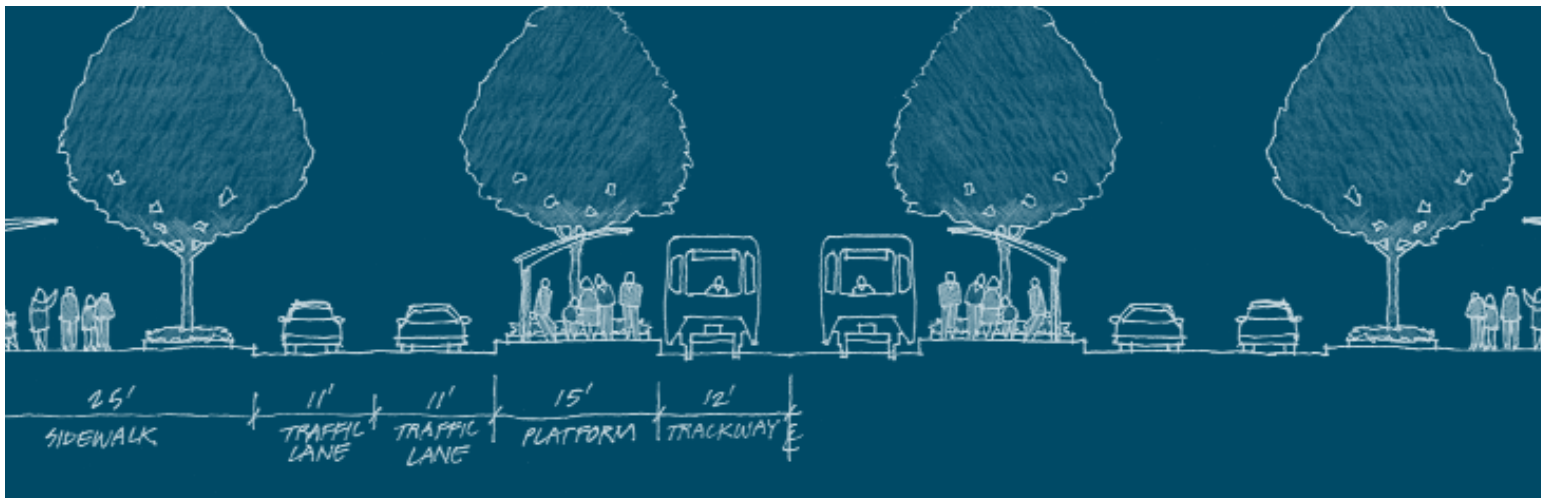
"The charrette team introduced some exciting design opportunities for this important thoroughfare. The panelists did an outstanding job in a short period of time."

NCPC Executive Director
Patti Gallagher

NCPC and DBID convened the charrette with four goals in mind:

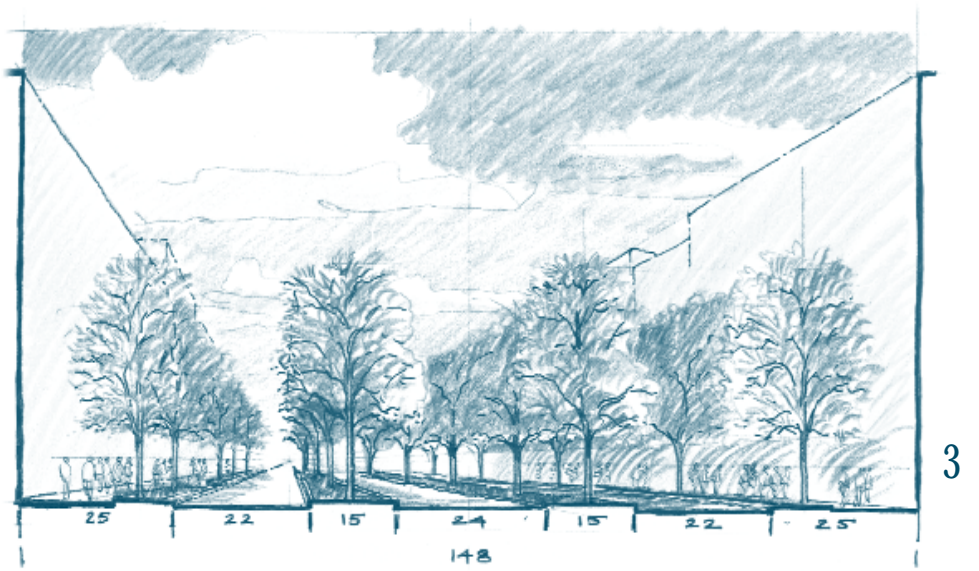
1. Assess potential transportation alternatives from an urban design perspective.
2. Strengthen K Street's image to better reflect its stature and importance to the city.
3. Identify public amenities and other features that would benefit the corridor's workers, transit customers, residents, and visitors.
4. Incorporate a transitway into the existing road and create a more pedestrian- and business-friendly environment.





K Street cross sections

Upon the completion of its redesign, K Street should better resemble the tree-lined neighborhoods that give the nation's capital its character and provide a strong link in the city's transit system. The new K Street can rival the great urban corridors of other American cities, including New York's Fifth Avenue and Chicago's Michigan Avenue, while reflecting a distinctly Washington style.



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Design and transportation experts who contributed to the K Street charrette included panel chair Philip Enquist of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill; Linda Fuller of the Chicago Transit Authority; Lou Slade of Gorove/Slade Associates, Inc.; Alistair McIntosh of Sasaki Associates, Inc.; Don Miles of Zimmer, Gunsul, and Frasca Partnership; and Theodore Wolff of Wolff Clements & Associates.

“The city’s goal is to put in place a system of transit, roadway, and infrastructure enhancements that would improve the transit situation and pedestrian mobility, and promote a great street.”

Dan Tangherlini, Director
District Department of Transportation



New Comprehensive Plan Guides Planning in the Nation's Capital

NCPC establishes new goals and policies for future federal development

The nation's capital is a unique region with special needs. Unlike any other city in the nation, Washington, D.C. serves as the center of the federal government, a hub for foreign missions and international organizations, and a prime visitor attraction. Supporting these special functions while also setting the standard for universal issues such as transportation, preservation, and open space, requires a sound and forward-thinking comprehensive plan. After reviewing comments from federal and local governments, professional organizations, and the public, the Commission adopted the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* in August 2004. This new planning document addresses changes in the nation's capital since the plan's last publication in the 1980s and provides a strong blueprint for planning and development for the next 20 years.

The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of seven elements representing the most significant factors in national capital planning:

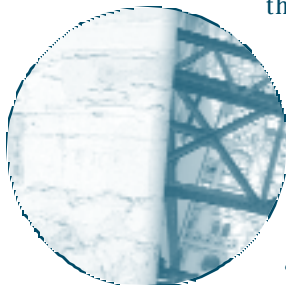
- The **Federal Workplace Element** analyzes the growing importance of federal contracting and procurement; encourages federal development that is compatible with local and regional plans; addresses the regional distribution of the federal workforce; and outlines guidelines for installing perimeter security at federal facilities and monuments, as recommended in NCPC's *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan*.
- The **Parks and Open Space Element** establishes policies to protect federal parks and open space in the National Capital Region and encourages approaches that ensure an adequate supply of parkland and open space to meet the needs of a growing population and to fill gaps in the existing system.
- The **Federal Environment Element** provides guidance for evaluating the environmental implications of federal development proposals and for managing the region's environmental resources.

- The **Preservation and Historic Features Element** provides guidance for preserving and enhancing the image and identity of the nation's capital; offers a framework for the federal government's treatment of historic properties; and calls for coordinated federal-local efforts to identify, designate, and protect landmarks.
- The **Visitors Element** responds to the growth in tourism and continuing interest in creating new federal visitor attractions and encourages locating new tourist sites away from the Mall, in keeping with NCPC's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*.

Through these elements, NCPC establishes new goals and policies for future federal development in the National Capital Region. Although each element can stand alone, the full collection creates a planning framework connected by three central goals: accommodating federal and national activities, reinforcing smart growth, and supporting coordination with local and regional governments.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a broad vision of how the nation's capital should develop over the coming years, but it also details how to accomplish that broad vision through an achievable action plan that outlines implementation strategies, identifies action partners, and offers a time frame for completion. This is not a plan that will sit on shelves collecting dust. Upon its approval, the Comprehensive Plan took immediate effect as the basis for NCPC's decisions on whether to approve or disapprove certain aspects of federal projects, ranging from security proposals to parking plans at federal facilities. The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* is supporting NCPC's mission to continue planning for a capital that is worthy of the nation.

The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* can be accessed through the Publications page of NCPC's website, and hard copies of the document will soon be available. The District Elements are currently being developed under the Mayor's auspices and are targeted for release in March 2006. They will be subject to NCPC review prior to adoption by the Council of the District of Columbia.



NCPC Approves Plan to Secure National Air and Space Museum

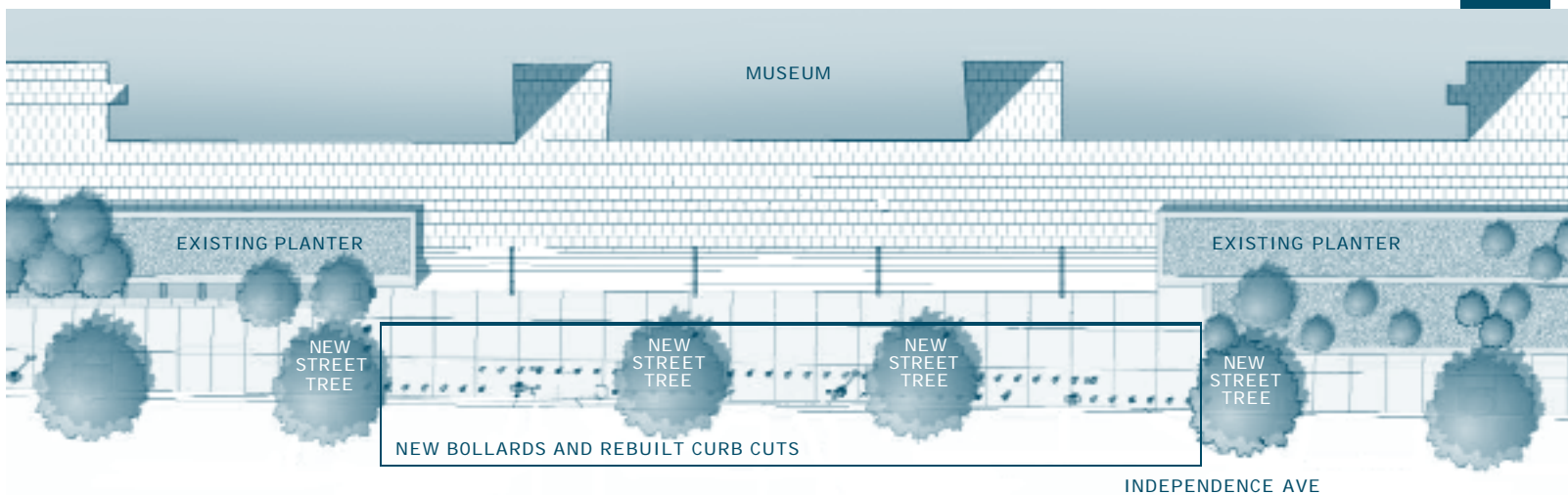
A security proposal for the National Air and Space Museum is the first project to be undertaken as part of the Smithsonian Institution's Mall-wide security program approved in concept by the Commission in February 2004. The Mall-wide program is based on principles established in NCPC's National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan, which encourages federal agencies to coordinate security projects along blocks and streetscapes and to integrate perimeter security into the architectural and landscape settings in which they reside.

The Commission approved preliminary and final plans for the National Air and Space Museum's security proposal—with the exception of one security element, specially designed granite plinths. Plans include reusing and hardening terrace planters that already surround the building perimeter and protecting building entrances and other access locations with custom-designed stainless steel bollards and four-foot by four-foot granite plinths. The plinths will be topped with sculptural elements that relate to museum exhibits. Because this aspect of the proposal has not been fully designed, the Commission excepted the sculptural elements from approval and delegated NCPC's executive director to approve the final design plans for these features. When complete, visitors also will notice two new accessible entrance ramps and two new guard booths near the east garage entrance.

The Commission commends the Smithsonian Institution for implementing concepts described in the National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan and for tailoring its security solutions to the varied settings of Smithsonian facilities along the National Mall.



Existing temporary security measures at the National Air and Space Museum



Rendering of proposed security measures at the National Air and Space Museum on Independence Avenue

Security Design for Prettyman Courthouse Requires Further Development

The Commission in September instructed the General Services Administration (GSA) to revise its perimeter security proposal for the E. Barrett Prettyman Courthouse Annex. Several of the Commission members expressed concern about the number of bollards and the absence of trees. They did, however, approve the relocation of the secure perimeter to a distance within two feet of the curb as recommended by the Federal Protective Service.

The Commission first reviewed plans for the Annex in 2001—approving its design but withholding approval of perimeter security pending completion of NCPC’s National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan.

GSA returned to the Commission in March 2004 with a perimeter security proposal featuring a variety of design elements. On Third Street, NW, GSA proposed several types of bollards, a new post-and-rail element, and street trees. In addition, the applicant proposed a circle of bollards around the base of the rotunda on Constitution Avenue. The Commission approved the plans for Third Street, NW but asked GSA to revise the security design for the rotunda to better integrate perimeter security into the building architecture.

The most recent design scheme, presented in September, included a combination of bollards and post-and-rail fences along with planting beds containing seasonally blooming plants. The bollard and fence elements would be finished to match the Washington Globe street light fixtures used in the surrounding public space. The Commission expects to review a new scheme, incorporating street trees and featuring fewer bollards within the next few months.

New Barracks Complex at Fort Myer Moves Ahead

The Commission approved the concept site and building plans for the Phase I Barracks Complex at Fort Myer in Arlington and recommended that the Department of the Army seek early consultation with NCPC staff in updating the master plan for Fort Myer. Phase I of the project includes the construction of two new barracks buildings, a consolidated operations facility, and an underground chiller plant as well as the demolition of three buildings.

Federal Capital Improvements Program for the National Capital Region, Fiscal Years 2005-2010

The Commission adopted the Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP) for fiscal years 2005 to 2010 at its meeting on September 9, 2004. The FCIP is a summary of federal agencies’ planned capital projects for the coming six years. The Commission reviews these projects and makes recommendations that assist the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in making federal spending decisions.

In the FCIP, the Commission identifies projects that are important to federal development as well as projects that have potential adverse impacts or problems that require resolution. Using the FCIP, local, regional, state, and federal agencies can become informed about planned projects and determine which projects need coordination.

The program for fiscal years 2005 to 2010 contains 214 proposed projects. Of these, the Commission recommended 175 for funding and suggested that the remaining 39 projects be considered for future programming. The total cost of the 175 recommended projects over the six-year period is estimated at \$9.3 billion.

The Commission circulated the FCIP for a 45-day public comment period, beginning July 8. In response to comments, NCPC adjusted the document to reflect changes in project status and budget estimates and schedules. The FCIP is available online at www.ncpc.gov.

Land Transfer for Civil War Memorial

The Commission approved a transfer of jurisdiction between the National Park Service and the District of Columbia at the site of the African–American Civil War Soldiers Memorial, located on Vermont Avenue and 10th Street, NW. The approval formalizes changes in jurisdiction that were initiated in 1985 to allow the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority to build the U Street-Cardoza Metro entrance and later allowed for the construction of the African–American Civil War Soldiers Memorial. With the Commission’s approval, a portion of the U.S. Reservation currently being used for highway purposes will be transferred from the National Park Service to the District of Columbia. In addition, a portion of 10th Street that includes the memorial and Metro entrance will be transferred from the District of Columbia to the National Park Service. The transfer will help to address management and maintenance of the memorial site.



Barracks Complex at Fort Myer

National Foreign Affairs Training Center To Receive Upgrades

Under a revised master plan approved by the Commission, the National Foreign Affairs Training Center will add administrative offices, classrooms, a dining center, and a childcare center as well as expand its visitor center.

In an effort to enforce the transportation goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements, the Commission did not approve additional surface parking and asked that the Department of State designate an Employee Transportation Coordinator and prepare an action plan detailing how the appropriate employee parking ratio of one space per four employees will be met. When submitting a revised parking plan for approval, the Commission requested that the Department of State include an updated employee survey and a commitment to undertake transportation management strategies.

Commission Approves Antenna Submissions

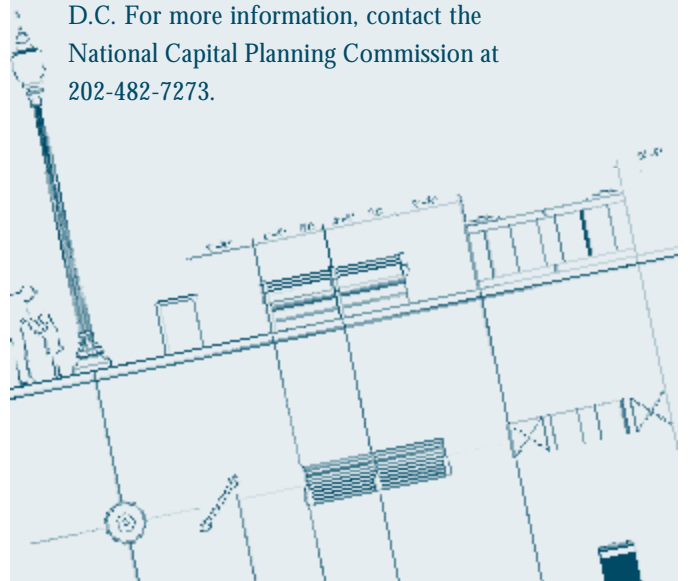
At its September meeting, the Commission approved the following antenna projects:

1. A renewal, for a period not exceeding five years, for wireless telecommunications facilities at the maintenance yard and the Fitzgerald Tennis Center in Rock Creek Park.
2. Preliminary and final plans to add antennas to the water tower at the Carderock Division of the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Bethesda, Maryland.
3. Preliminary and final building plans, for a period not exceeding five years, for the installation of antennas at the Little Falls Pumping Station, located west of the Clara Barton Parkway, and at Interconnection #3, located in Glen Echo, Maryland.
4. Preliminary and final building plans for a period not exceeding five years, for the installation of antennas and associated equipment cabinets at the EPA building on Constitution Avenue in Northwest Washington, D.C.
5. Preliminary and final building plans for the installation of antennas at First High Service Reservoir, Second High Service Reservoir, Third High Service Reservoir, Georgetown Reservoir, and Dalecarlia Water Treatment Plant, all in Northwest Washington, D.C.



Workshop To Examine Security's Impact on Region

On Monday, November 8 NCPC, along with the Federal Facilities Council, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments will sponsor *Surviving Security: Building Federal/Local Partnerships in the Region*. This day-long workshop will examine how security measures affect local economic development, urban design, transportation systems, and Smart Growth initiatives. Panel sessions include, "The Impact of Security on Federal Spending and Facility Leasing and Location Choices," "Security, Design, and the Public Realm," and "Mobility and Security." The workshop will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the National Academy of Sciences, 2100 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. For more information, contact the National Capital Planning Commission at 202-482-7273.



August

August 5, 2004

U.S. Air Force Memorial Gains NCPC's Final Approval

At its August meeting, the Commission approved preliminary and final site and building plans for the United States Air Force Memorial. Located at the Arlington Navy Annex, the memorial will be constructed on a three-acre site that overlooks the Pentagon and provides views of Arlington National Cemetery and the monumental core.

The central design feature, which is intended to impart a sense of soaring height, comprises three stainless steel spires of varying height, the tallest of which reaches 270 feet. The spires rise out of a triangular podium decorated with a star. The memorial site also includes a chapel-like space with glass panels, a bronze honor guard statue, inscribed granite backdrop walls, stone seating and steps, and landscaping. A small structure for restrooms, administrative space, an information kiosk, and mechanical equipment also will be constructed.

The National Capital Planning Commission recognizes the U.S. Air Force Memorial as a project that advances the Memorials and Museums Master Plan goals of establishing a new gateway in the nation's capital and memorializing major achievements.

Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement Spawns New Park at Rosalie Island

At its August meeting, the Commission approved preliminary and final site development plans for Potomac River Waterfront Community Park, a new park on Rosalie Island that lies at the east end of the Woodrow Wilson replacement bridge. Because of the park's proximity to the bridge, this project is part of the Federal Highway Administration's overall plan for the replacement span.

The four-acre site on Rosalie Island in Prince George's County includes several overlooks along a pedestrian and bicycle trail. A landscaped overpass will carry the pedestrian and bicycle trail over the Woodrow Wilson Replacement Bridge and continue on its north side. Special features in the park include stone-like veneers on piers and retaining walls, custom metal railings, special paving, sculptural seat boulders, interpretive signage, benches, pedestrian lighting, an amphitheater, and a pavilion site.

In its review, NCPC staff commended the Federal Highway Administration on the park's overall conception and, in particular, on the landscape design, the preservation of wildlife habitat on Rosalie Island, and the conservation of the aquatic habitat within nearby Smoot's Cove and Fox Ferry Cove. When complete, the park will serve as a wonderful amenity to residents and visitors.

Rendering of Potomac River Waterfront Community Park



Old District of Columbia Courthouse

The Commission approved final site and building plans for the entrance pavilion to the Old District of Columbia Courthouse and for permanent and interim features of the entrance plaza and other site modifications. The Commission made recommendations during its review of concept plans in April and preliminary plans in May that led to the simplification of the site plan, which includes central stairs and ramps, small flanking courtyards with water pools, and retaining walls surrounded by grass panels at the north end of the plaza at E Street. The Commission determined that the Court's proposal is consistent with the historic setting of Judiciary Square and with the principles of the square's draft master plan.

GW Parkway's Boundary Channel Bridge To Be Replaced

The Commission approved preliminary and final site development plans to replace the Boundary Channel Bridge, located along the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The project will widen and flatten the bridge, which connects Washington, D.C. and Virginia, and include safety improvements for vehicles and for the bicycle and pedestrian trail. The new bridge will carry five travel lanes, including a new merge lane, two five-foot-wide shoulders, and a widened section of trail with a new stone and steel guardrail. Improvements also include the removal of a seven-space parking lot near the Navy-Marine Memorial that often causes queuing along the parkway. A parking lot at Columbia Island Marina will provide adequate parking for those visiting the memorial or taking the trail.

Commission Comments on D.C. Capital Improvements Plan

The Commission reviewed the Highway Trust Fund component of D.C.'s Capital Improvements Plan for fiscal years 2005 to 2010. The Commission commented to the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia that the overall program supports federal interests. The Commission also named several projects that require further coordination with NCPC and other federal agencies, including access to the Southeast Federal Center, bridge and tunnel studies at South Capitol Street, and access improvements at the Kennedy Center.

Security Fence Surrounds U.S. National Arboretum

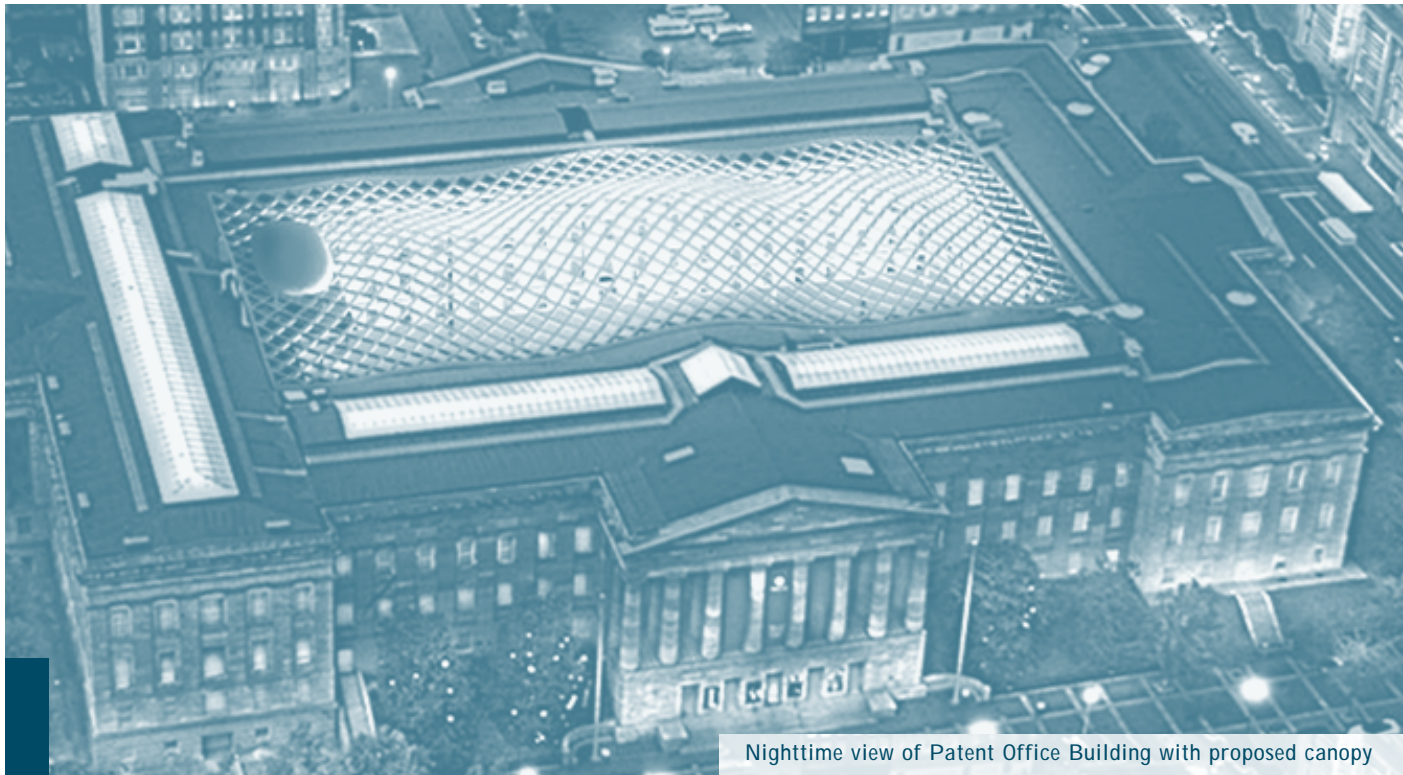
At its July meeting, the Commission approved preliminary and final plans for a temporary security fence at the National Arboretum. The 2000-foot chain-link fence, which extends the perimeter fence that already existed on the north, west, and south boundaries of the property, mostly lies within a wooded area at the bottom of a steep slope near the Anacostia River. Although the fence is temporary, the Commission noted that the project should have been submitted for Commission review and approval prior to installation.

To diminish the appearance of the fence, NCPC required the Arboretum to replace the barbed wire extension with a single strand of wire and to paint all current posts and fencing black. Because the Arboretum borders National Park Service (NPS) property, the Commission recommended that the Arboretum work with NPS to ensure its access through the fence's service vehicle gate. In its approval, the Commission stated that, once the Anacostia Riverwalk has been constructed near the Arboretum, a new fence—designed to be compatible with the new pathway—will need to be installed.

Commission Approves Revisions to Georgetown Waterfront Project

Plans for a new waterfront park in Georgetown will transform the area into a lively public space featuring new walkways, water features, and other amenities. At its July meeting, the Commission approved revised concept plans for the project's Wisconsin Avenue terminus. The latest proposal incorporated the Commission's direction to better integrate the central water feature with the focal point of the Wisconsin Avenue terminus and to improve the transition between the park's water features and the open spaces of the promenade and steps.

As part of the revised concept, the National Park Service enlarged the plaza at the river's edge and realigned the promenade. Other aspects of the revised concept plan include eliminating a pergola that had been planned for the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and K Street; altering the pavement to reflect a consistent treatment with granite pavers; and providing connectivity to the regional trail network by maintaining the alignment of the Crescent Trail through the park. An interactive water feature, which consists of vertical jets that visitors can walk through or around, has been relocated to the park entrance. As currently envisioned, the plaza at the foot of Wisconsin Avenue will serve as a public gathering place.



Nighttime view of Patent Office Building with proposed canopy

Glass Canopy to Enclose Courtyard of Patent Office Building

The Commission approved the concept of enclosing the courtyard of the Patent Office Building with a glass canopy but asked that the canopy be refined to minimize the profile and complement the existing building's facade in order to preserve its appearance in the 8th Street viewshed. The Commission also requested that the rooftop mechanical equipment element be lowered below the roofline of the original building. The Patent Office Building, which dates back to 1836 and houses the National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, is undergoing a complete renovation. In its next submission, the Smithsonian must provide additional details about the project, including proposed materials, plans for other courtyard alterations, completed environmental documentation, and documentation of substantial progress in the Section 106 consultation. The building is scheduled to reopen on July 4, 2006.

Union Station Will Gain Parking

The Commission approved preliminary and final site and building plans for a parking garage extension at Union Station with the condition that the cladding on the south facade be consistent with the stainless steel and precast concrete panels of the north. The extension of the current parking garage over the Amtrak and Metrorail tracks on the north side of Union Station will provide 791 new parking spots. Enhancements to the existing garage include altering the current west elevation, making it lighter and more modulated in appearance. New entrances for pedestrians and vehicles will be added on H Street, NE.

Commission Approves Security Plans for Walter Reed

The Commission approved a master plan modification and final plans for security upgrades to the entrances of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, located at 14th and Dahlia Streets in Northwest. To better protect the facility, the Department of the Army will install guard houses at three separate entrances and add two new visitor registration buildings. Each entrance will incorporate several changes that boost security, including vehicle search areas and reconfigured fencing and gates. Improvements at the 16th Street gate necessitated a modification to the master plan.

Commission Approves Antenna Pole for Naval Annex in Arlington

The Commission approved final plans for the installation of an antenna pole and corresponding antenna devices at the Naval Annex in Arlington. The antennas provide essential communication for the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, which must be in touch with state and local public safety agencies in the event of an emergency. The pole and operating antennas must be in place prior to the Presidential Inauguration in January 2005.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

NCPC Chairman John V. Cogbill, III moderated a panel discussion entitled “Building Security—It Doesn’t Have to be Ugly” at the Virginia Engineers Conference in Williamsburg on September 22. Mr. Cogbill opened the session with a presentation on NCPC’s National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan and shared principles for combining security and attractive design. Panel members included NCPC Commission member Jerry Shiplett from the Department of Defense and the General Services Administration’s Les Shepherd.

NCPC Executive Director Patricia Gallagher gave a presentation at the July 14 Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors’ meeting. Ms. Gallagher discussed NCPC’s role and responsibilities, major agency initiatives, and the Commission’s desire to strengthen its partnership with COG on regional issues. The November 8 symposium, *Surviving Security* (see page 7), is the latest initiative of this partnership.

Ms. Gallagher and Senior Urban Designer Elizabeth Miller presented NCPC’s National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan at the American Society of Landscape Architect’s Security Design Symposium, held July 25 to 27 in Chicago. Ms. Gallagher and Ms. Miller addressed some 200 landscape architects in the closing plenary session entitled, “Tensions Between Building Perimeter Security, Open Space, and the Public Realm.” NCPC—considered to be a pioneer in the field of security design—has presented its plan to planning officials in cities across the country and to international audiences.

NCPC and four other federal agencies joined forces on July 21 to host the first Perimeter Security Symposium for Federal Facilities at the National Academy of Sciences. The symposium, attended by more than 400 security providers and designers, provided a venue for federal representatives to examine current security needs for federal facilities and discuss ways to partner with private firms to develop innovative perimeter security solutions. NCPC Senior Urban Designer Elizabeth Miller detailed how NCPC’s security plan guides perimeter security solutions for federal facilities in the National Capital Region. The symposium was hosted by the Federal Facilities Council and sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security.

NCPC and the Washington Geographic Information System Consortium (WGIS) hosted the annual Historically Black College and University Geographic Information System (GIS) Workshop July 19 to 22 at NCPC. Faculty, staff, and graduate students from historically black colleges and universities participated in numerous training sessions conducted by NCPC staff and other GIS experts.

RECOGNITION

The National Capital Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) awarded NCPC’s Office of Public Affairs its top award in multicultural public relations. The 2004 Thoth award recognizes outstanding communications programs that exhibit quality, creativity, and resourcefulness.

NCPC’s Office of Public Affairs won for its planning and execution of the 2003 Capitals Alliance Conference. Held in October, the event attracted more than 30 representatives from nine capital cities for five days of meetings, sight visits, sessions with senior Washington planners and policy makers, and other activities. NCPC, along with planning officials from the capitals of Australia, Brazil, and Canada, formed the Alliance in 2001 as a means for capital cities to share experiences.



STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

NCPC’s Urban Design and Plan Review Division welcomes Architect Jonathan McIntyre. Mr. McIntyre previously spent more than three years with the U.S. Navy’s Engineering Field Activity Chesapeake, located in the Washington Navy Yard. The Washington native has 19 years’ experience with various architectural and engineering firms in the D.C. metropolitan area.

Urban Design and Plan Review Director Hillary Altman resigned from NCPC in July. During her time on staff, Ms. Altman contributed greatly to improving the quality of NCPC’s plan review process. Christine Saum, who served as acting director during Mrs. Altman’s maternity leave, has been named director. Before joining NCPC as a senior urban designer, Ms. Saum served as director of the Mayor’s Institute of City Design in Washington and was an architect at several private-sector firms.

Ramona Taylor, who served as project manager of the Commission’s Comprehensive Plan update and worked at NCPC for more than three years, has relocated to Würzburg, Germany where she will be working with the Department of Defense. Lula Howard leaves NCPC after six years to join the Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Howard served as a planning technician in the Plan and Project Implementation Division and, most recently, supported the agency’s update of the Comprehensive Plan. After more than four years as a project officer in the Urban Design and Plan Review Division, Stephanie Sechrist has resigned her position. Ms. Sechrist worked on a number of important federal projects, including the National Institutes of Health, Smithsonian, Suitland Federal Center, and NASA Goddard Space Flight 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.

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