

QUARTERLY

Reimagining the Federal Superblock

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The Superblock: Maybe Super in the Future?

In a futuristic vision of life in the nation's capital, the doors leading to the ground floors of government office buildings are cast open, accommodating retail stores, restaurants, and other lively mixed-use services.

Government workers occupy the main floors of a federal building during the workday, able to easily patronize businesses on the ground floor—before, during, and after hours. When the work day concludes, they can simply take the elevator home. Parking isn't an issue, transportation costs are non-existent, the environmental impact is greatly reduced; and best of all, reconfigured superblocks of government office buildings now anchor 24-hour neighborhoods.

On May 6, the National Capital Planning Commission hosted a public discussion to explore these possibilities by making the ground floors of federal office buildings more available to retail and cultural uses. The General Services Administration (GSA) co-sponsored the event.

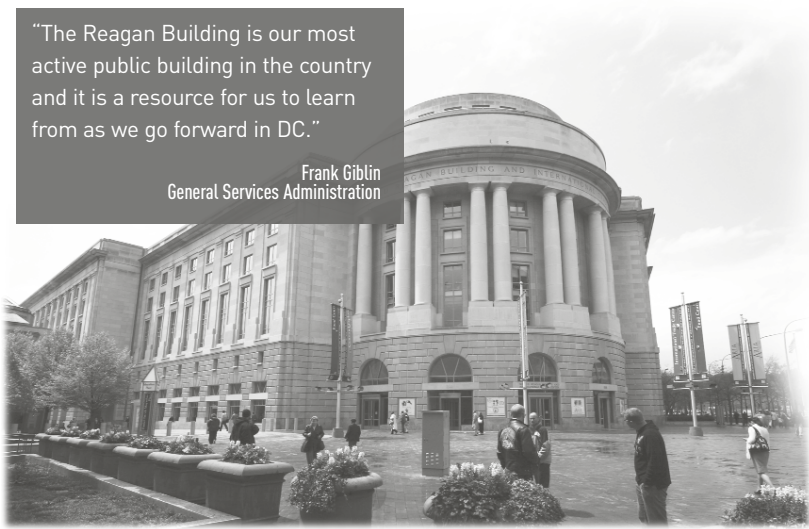
"This idea is a key component of our recently adopted *Monumental Core Framework Plan*," said NCPC's Executive Director Marcel Acosta. "Discussions like this are designed to move us from ideas toward action. The primary goal of the *Framework Plan* is to enliven the federal precincts near the National Mall. Not only will this help us preserve the Mall's open space, but it will enable us to meet the needs of those who work and live nearby."

Mr. Acosta began the proceedings by remarking on the importance and timely relevance of the topic and encouraging participants to think outside the box. "We think this is important in terms of the new administration's goal of improving the livability of cities," he stated, "and I encourage all of you to push the envelope a bit."

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"The Reagan Building is our most active public building in the country and it is a resource for us to learn from as we go forward in DC."

Frank Giblin
General Services Administration



"Having people living in the federal city is vital to this effort being successful."

Hany Hassan
Beyer Blinder Belle Architects

The lively session was kicked off by David Zaidain, urban planner and project officer with NCPC who identified the inherent flaw of designing buildings with only one purpose and placing them in the middle of a thriving city.

"Streets in the downtown core, which should be vibrant beyond five o'clock, are deserted because of the lack of active uses in the ground floors of federal buildings," commented Mr. Zaidain.

Frank Giblin, who oversees GSA's Good Neighbor Program talked about several successful examples of bringing mixed uses to government buildings elsewhere in the country including Seattle, San Francisco, and Boston. During his presentation, Mr. Giblin showed a number of federal facilities featuring retail and restaurants at the ground floor or plaza level. He said such mixed-use opportunities are currently untapped in Washington, DC.

A diverse group of attendees contributed to the conversation, ranging from members of the general public, representatives of federal and local agencies, the security industry, architects, designers, and other stakeholders.

Harriet Tregoning, director of the District's Office of Planning broached the subject of mixed use in federal buildings by suggesting additional considerations for residential possibilities. "How radical would it be to look at every federally owned property to see what potential there might be for housing?" she queried.

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Hany Hassan, partner and director of the DC office of Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners, LLP echoed Ms. Tregoning's recommendation. "Having people living in the federal city is vital to this effort being successful," he urged.

In the National Capital Region, the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center was cited as a model of what can be achieved by combining active programming and thoughtful building design.



IMF Headquarters

“Not only is it [Ronald Reagan Building] designed to create a plaza that supports public use, but it’s also actively managed by a full-time organization of four or five people that see the property is used inside and out very actively,” said GSA’s Frank Giblin. “It’s our most active public building in the country, and it is a resource for us to learn from as we go forward in DC.”

The issue of building security was of keen interest to many of those in attendance. “Is security the biggest challenge or is it the biggest excuse?” asked Bill Dowd, director of Plan and Project Implementation at NCPC. “Is it something that we can address and should address? Or do we live with the expectation that because we need security we can’t let people in the buildings?”

“Is security the biggest challenge or is it the biggest excuse?”

Mr. Dowd’s question prompted several innovative responses, including the idea of establishing perimeters around enclaves of federal buildings, as proposed by Bob Peck of Jones Lang LaSalle. “We have an opportunity to guard the Federal Triangle as a place where once you’re in the security zone, you’re in the security zone,” said Mr. Peck. “Maybe you could have a ‘Clear’ program like you can now do in the airports. It will clear people to walk through if they are nearby residents or office building occupants.”

NCPC’s David Zaidain pointed to existing models in the DC area when talking about possible solutions to the complex issue of balancing security and active uses. “One example that we found to be really relevant is the IMF Headquarters,” said Mr. Zaidain. “While this is not a federal installation, there is a significant security component to this project that we feel is equivalent to some of the federal agency challenges. Obviously, security was a major issue in their effort and yet IMF has provided two really attractive retail spaces on its ground floor.”

Food service remains an attractive addition for both the neighborhoods adjacent to federal buildings as well as the employees who populate the buildings during the work

week—a fact touched upon by Jane Freundel Levy, director of heritage programs with Cultural Tourism D.C.

“I want to throw in here that we have a mix of patrons in Washington,” said Ms. Levy. “We have federal workers, we have non-federal workers, and we have our visitors. And our visitors are just so desperate for something comfortable and something where they don’t feel like they’re forced to patronize a place where everybody around them is a tourist. Part of the attraction of Washington, believe it or not, is that the visitor wants to see what the bureaucrat looks like.”

Several examples of restaurants located adjacent to federal buildings in the District were cited, including the new ATF Headquarters, and the recently completed Department of Transportation building in Southeast. Pulling these types of businesses outside the internal structure of the facility and placing them in locations that provide access to the surrounding community is generally considered to be an attainable and useful goal.

“The idea of having federal cafeterias or cafes at the base of the building, I understand, is low hanging fruit,” said Mr. Giblin. “But low hanging fruit isn’t the whole tree. And so I wouldn’t want to ignore that and overshoot it. There are opportunities and maybe what I’m suggesting here is that there needs to be an evaluation for low hanging fruit.”

During closing remarks, participants expressed appreciation for the overarching goals of the event and the means for achieving livelier destinations throughout the area.

Architect Hany Hassan summed up the proceedings saying, “What made other cities work and renew themselves constantly is having people living in the city. And this is something that we really need to push for very hard.”

The observations and ideas emerging from the discussion are intended to help inform NCPC and its partners, as well as the public. Future meetings are planned and the ideas that are exchanged will be reflected in a summary publication identifying challenges and best practices for achieving enhanced public spaces. The summary report is expected to be released in the fall.



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Jane Freundel Levy
Director of Heritage Programs, Cultural Tourism D.C.

An Interview with Robert Peck

Managing Director
Jones Lang LaSalle



1. What do you see as the biggest challenges to bringing mixed uses to government office buildings?

4 First, security. There has become such concern about keeping all but screened-or-authorized people out of federal buildings; that the idea of including stores and restaurants within the building envelope is being dismissed out of hand. There are other challenges. Many buildings would have to undergo some minor renovation to be able to accommodate commercial or cultural uses on their ground floors. And the government does not have much experience seeking out, selecting, and managing those kinds of building tenants.

2. Would bringing mixed uses to federal buildings increase the value of GSA's properties and is that relevant for government owned buildings?

Ground floor commercial rents in good locations are usually higher than the office rents in the floors above, so GSA would be able to realize more revenue from its buildings. Local governments would also see value: in buildings otherwise tax-exempt, commercial uses would generate sales tax and business license revenue.

3. How might the federal government and private sector successfully work together to enliven federal buildings and nearby public spaces?

Mixed uses is one way. Weekly farmers or flower markets, concerts and annual Oktoberfests on federal building plazas are examples of other ways that are already routine at some federal buildings. GSA's Good Neighbor Program has been promoting these and other cooperative activities for more than a decade.

4. So much of what you hear about today in the building industry has to do with greening and sustainability. Do you think mixed-use buildings influence the incorporation of sustainable features?

Mixed uses promote sustainable practices that we often overlook: enabling building tenants and neighbors to shop or dine in a walkable environment—without having to drive—is a very green practice.

5. Who is best equipped to lead a move towards bringing mixed uses to federally controlled spaces and what factor carries the most weight for affecting a change in policy?

GSA is obviously key. But GSA needs help from local elected and planning officials in convincing federal tenant agencies to embrace mixed use. In Washington, NCPC could play a key role in explaining the advantages of mixed use. And the Federal Protective Service also has a critical part to play in helping incorporate mixed uses in ways that maintain needed security. Security-engendered fears are the first hurdle that mixed-use proposals face.

6. What would be the big advantage to implementing such a strategy? And is there a serious disadvantage to adding mixed uses to government office buildings?

Federal buildings are in many ways an economic boost to their locales. They house jobs and can literally help create a real estate submarket where none existed before. But they often go dark at night and on weekends, and even during the day do little to enliven their street environments. Successful mixed use can overcome that. Adding mixed uses can complicate building management and impose extra operating expenses, but that is not a serious disadvantage—increased ground floor rent should compensate for that.

7. Is placing retail, cultural, or restaurant business as a security buffer around federal office buildings a viable strategy? Would those businesses accept the risk to be in those locations?

Businesses already locate across the street from federal office buildings, so we have some evidence that retailers' and other business people's risk-benefit calculations favor being near the federal workforce. It's not so much making those uses be the buffer as it is that sometimes they can best be placed outside the building envelope and thus sit in a buffer zone.

Before joining Jones Lang LaSalle, Mr. Peck served as senior vice president at the Staubach Company, as president of the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and commissioner of public buildings at the U.S. General Services Administration where he managed the government's national real estate operations. He also was chief of staff to the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and served on the National Capital Planning Commission, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and as past president of the D.C. Preservation League.



Transformation on the Horizon for the Anacostia River

If the exciting changes planned for the Anacostia waterfront come to fruition, its transformation stands to greatly strengthen Washington's position as a world-class capital.

Local and federal leaders, speaking at a public forum on May 19, discussed how plans to revitalize the Anacostia River will enhance Washington, DC's status as the nation's capital and help unify the city.

The discussion was part of an ongoing series of panel discussions on the waterfront held in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

Harriet Tregoning, director of the District Office of Planning, kicked off the event with a presentation on "Waterfronts and the World's Great Capital Cities." She spoke of the legacy of urban waterfronts throughout the world and highlighted plans to transform DC's waterfront into a clean, accessible, and lively destination.

Ms. Tregoning's comments were echoed by NCPC Executive Director Marcel Acosta who served as one of the panelists. Laura M. Richards, chair of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and Uwe S. Brandes, vice president of innovation for the Urban Land Institute also spoke. Don Edwards, coordinator of the Anacostia Waterfront Civic Engagement, moderated the panel.

All of the participants supported development opportunities in the area and stressed the need for equal access to new waterfront amenities. Mr. Acosta called for better connectivity, and Ms. Richards suggested increased ancillary bus systems into the neighborhoods.

Revitalization plans include building the Washington Canal Park, which will transform three blocks in Southeast DC into the first new public park built as part of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI).

Created several years ago by more than twenty local and federal partners including NCPC, the AWI suggests increasing or establishing "walkable urbanity" in urban areas as a means of improving accessibility.

"We want to return walkability, in particular along the Anacostia."

Harriet Tregoning, Director
District of Columbia Office of Planning

"Cities need to be connoisseurs of walking," said Ms. Tregoning.

"We want to return walkability, in particular along the Anacostia, to developing areas."

In addition to walkable urbanity, the AWI also

emphasizes the importance of local community. DC's identity is predominantly that of a federal city, but the forum participants expressed a desire to see DC embrace its local culture and heritage.

By improving connections from the monumental core southeast to the waterfront, Washington could be transformed into a magnificent waterfront city. Mr. Acosta foresaw an evolution from a symbolic city to a great city, a view also shared by Ms. Tregoning.

Plans are also in place to further develop the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail. The 16-mile trail network will extend from the Potomac River to the Maryland border, enhancing recreation, transportation, and economic development in the Anacostia corridor. It is expected to be complete in 2012.



FCIP Public Review

The Commission is expected to authorize a 45-day public review and comment period for the draft Federal Capital Improvements Program FY 2010-2015 at the July 9 monthly meeting. Fourteen federal agencies have submitted budgetary proposals for future projects. Of the 162 submitted projects, 69 are in the District of Columbia, 49 are in Maryland, 42 are in Virginia, and two are in the National Capital Region.

The draft is normally released in June, but the extra time will assist federal agencies who are making capital changes in response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The draft FCIP will be available for review at www.ncpc.gov. Any additions or changes made by federal agencies to their submitted projects during the public comment period will also be available on NCPC's website.



ASLA Executive Vice President and CEO Nancy Somerville provided opening comments at a press conference at the Newseum. Somerville was joined by panel members Angela Dye and Gary Hilderbrand.

NCP C Supports Key Conclusions of Blue Ribbon Panel’s Assessment of the National Mall Plan

A blue ribbon panel led by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) praised the National Park Service for leading a heroic effort to improve the iconic landscape of the National Mall, albeit with very limited resources. Members of the panel, comprising the ASLA, the American Planning Association, and the American Institute of Architects urged that efforts to protect this national asset move forward without delay.

The panel announced its findings during a press conference at the Newseum on April 14. Panelists said that while the National Mall should be one of the top five civic spaces in the country, it is instead “a national embarrassment” due to its poor condition.

The panel commended the Park Service’s efforts to include the public in its planning for the *National Mall Plan*, to which nearly 30,000 Americans have already contributed comments. It also praised the National Capital Planning Commission and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts for partnering together on the *Monumental Core Framework Plan*.

The *Framework Plan* advances NCP C’s vision outlined in its 1997 plan, *Extending the Legacy*, by identifying ways to integrate the special civic qualities of the Mall and the dynamic vibrancy of downtown into the adjacent federal precincts. The *Framework Plan* establishes symbolically important sites for future memorials and museums as well as distinguished settings for mixed-use opportunities that are easily accessible by foot or public transit.

“We are committed to continuing our close collaboration with the Park Service to ensure that their *National Mall Plan*, and our *Monumental Core Framework Plan* work together to benefit the Mall and surrounding areas,” said NCP C Executive Director Marcel Acosta. “We hope the ASLA-led panel will stay involved, and we urge all agencies and stakeholders with an interest in the National Mall to work together during the development of this important plan for the Mall.”

NCP C Speaker Series Kicks Off Aussie Style

On the evening of May 6, Melinda Dodson, incoming president of the Australian Institute of Architects, launched NCP C’s 2009 speaker series with a presentation about sustainable design in Canberra.

Ms. Dodson addressed a diverse audience in NCP C’s Commission Chambers on the Australian capital city’s efforts to battle urban sprawl and make her homeland more green and sustainable. Mary Fitch, the executive director of the DC chapter of the American Institute of Architects introduced Ms. Dodson following welcome remarks by NCP C’s Executive Director Marcel Acosta.

“Our goal is to provide opportunities to stimulate discussion about the growth and planning of cities and we’re delighted to have you join us for our inaugural lecture,” said Mr. Acosta in welcoming attendees to NCP C’s first speakers event.

Ms. Dodson spoke primarily about the Australian capital city’s efforts to reverse years of outward growth that has increased drive times and pollution, and reduced density.

“Our cities are at a cross roads—Australian cities still grow at the edges linked to the car and to the ‘Australian Suburban Dream’ of individual homes on blocks of land,” explained Ms. Dodson. “Houses now use 60 percent more energy on average than in the 1970s and Australia’s ecological footprint, estimated at 7.7 global hectares per person, is well beyond the 1.8 global hectares considered sustainable.”

Prior to her speaking engagement, Ms. Dodson toured the new headquarters of the United States Green Building Council, which is still under construction and is seeking a LEED platinum certification for commercial interiors. She also visited a remodeled rowhouse in Georgetown that is slated for LEED certification. The visit was Ms. Dodson’s first trip to Washington, DC.

Information on future installments of NCP C’s speaker series will be provided on the agency’s website and in the monthly e-newsletter.



Guest speaker Melinda Dodson kicks off NCP C’s 2009 speaker series (pictured with NCP C Executive Director Marcel Acosta.)

STAFF REPORTS NOW ONLINE

NCPC's staff reports to the Commission, known as Executive Director's Recommendations (EDRs), are now available online prior to each Commission meeting. Staff will post the EDRs as Adobe Acrobat PDFs by noon on the Monday prior to the meeting.

If you are interested in a project, please visit www.ncpc.gov/meetings and click on the final agenda to view the full reports.

June

June 4, 2009

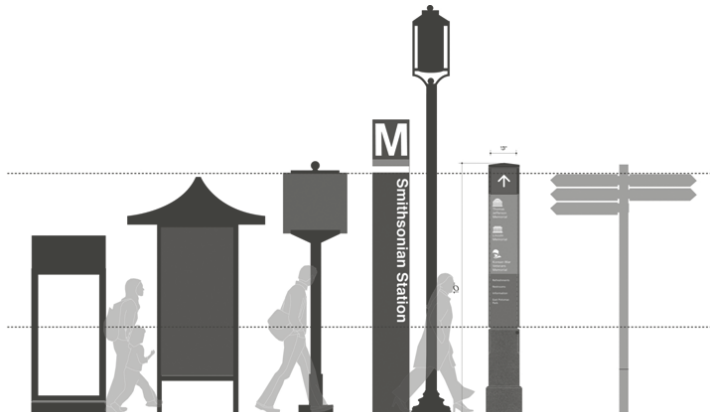
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center

(File Number 6597)

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) commented on revised concept designs submitted by the National Park Service (NPS) for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center. The Center is slated for the grounds of the Lincoln Memorial bounded by Constitution Avenue, Henry Bacon Drive, Lincoln Memorial Circle, and 23rd Street, NW, Washington, DC.

The Commission acknowledged the project's significance and the difficult challenge in designing a Visitor Center at this historically significant and sensitive site on the National Mall. The project is required to meet 14 specific design guidelines jointly developed by NCPC and the Commission of Fine Arts under the Commemorative Works Act. NCPC confirmed that the submitted design met seven of the 14 design guidelines, did not meet four of the design guidelines, and noted that the Park Service has not yet addressed three remaining design guidelines.

The Commission also noted that the National Park Service had not responded to the Commission's additional requirement for NPS to identify a site within a ½ mile of the current location for a displaced ball field. The Commission recommended three changes to the design to which the applicant agreed: eliminating the proposed walkway from Constitution Avenue, eliminating the building's skylights, and reducing the size of the building's courtyard.



National Mall and East Potomac Park Pedestrian Guide Pylons and Map Kiosks

(File Number 6910)

The Commission approved preliminary site development plans for pylons and map kiosks for the National Mall and East Potomac Park. Submitted by the National Park Service, the proposal is part of a larger sign program that also includes NPS facility identification signs, rules and regulation signs, and memorial identification signs.

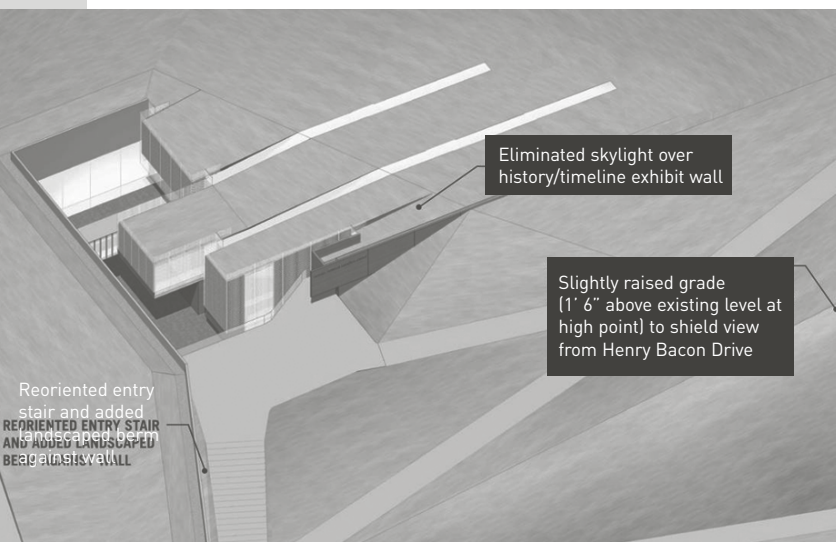
The Commission approved the request to replace approximately 100 existing map and directional signs with 113 pedestrian guide pylons and map kiosks. The approved pylons and map kiosks will each be installed in two different sizes.

The Commission recommended that in the preparation of final site development plans that the taller pylon form be simplified by eliminating the proposed granite base and fabricating it at the proposed revised height of 9 feet 2 inches. The Commission noted that the last component of the sign program, the memorial identification signs, will be reviewed at a future meeting.

Hope VI Redevelopment Project - Planned Unit Development

(File Number Z.C. 03-12/03-13 G, H)

NCPC advised the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia that proposed modifications to the second stage Consolidated Planned Unit Development Capper/Carrollsbury Hope VI Redevelopment Project in Southeast, DC would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, nor would it affect any other identified federal interests subject to the Zoning Commission including a number of conditions.





American Institute of Architects Headquarters Consolidated Planned Unit Development

(File Number Z.C. 08-27)

NCPC advised the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia that a proposed Consolidated Planned Unit Development for Square 170, lots 38 and 39 and a related map amendment to change the zoning from SP-2 to C-3-C would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital nor would it adversely affect any other identified federal interests.

In an effort to attain LEED platinum certification, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) seeks to retrofit its headquarters building by adding ventilation stacks, creating a green roof, installing cisterns and operational windows, and locating a solar thermal water heating system on the roof. The renovation plan also calls for moving an existing interior bookstore to the street front.

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JUNE INFORMATION PRESENTATION

COG Survey Reveals Priorities of Area Residents

Representatives of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) provided the Commission with highlights of a recent survey of what Washington-area residents view as top concerns or priorities.

The Greater Washington 2050's "Priorities for a Growing Region" was shaped by four focus groups and more than 1,300 telephone interviews. It concluded that area residents are both engaged and connected, with 70 percent having a "strong connection" to the region. Seventy-seven percent rated the Washington region as an "excellent or good" place to live, with 97 percent of Arlington's residents being the most satisfied.

Residents indicated that traffic/transportation (54 percent), economy/jobs (29 percent), and education/schools (23 percent) were the three most important long-term issues. The top three short-term priorities were higher quality public schools, safer streets and neighborhoods, and more good jobs. Other highly ranked items included better access to health care, assisting people in need, and a cleaner environment.

Greater Washington 2050, a coalition of public, business, civic, and environmental stakeholders, was established by COG to further the Washington area's strong quality of life over the next 50 years. The survey findings will assist in developing future policies. More detailed information may be found at www.greaterwashington2050.org.

May

May 7, 2009

Potomac Park Levee Improvements

(File Number 6885)

The National Capital Planning Commission approved Phase I of preliminary and final site development plans for an improved park levee on the National Mall near the intersection of Constitution Avenue and 17th Street, NW. The levee protects downtown Washington from Potomac River flooding.

The improved levee will provide a more secure temporary closure system consisting of a post-and-panel barrier connected to masonry walls and earthen berms. It also includes an on-site below ground storage vault for the post-and-panel elements when they are not in use. The Commission stipulated that the National Park Service and the District of Columbia must consult with NCPC, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and the DC Historic Preservation Officer on the visible components of the levee's grade beam.

Phase I will complete the work that is necessary to provide flood protection in accordance with an agreement between the District of Columbia and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Commission also commented favorably on the concept design for Phase 2 of the levee system. Phase 2 will include the storage vault for the post-and-panel system and will enhance the levee's visual elements to blend with the setting of the National Mall. Tree replanting and grading is present in both phases of construction.

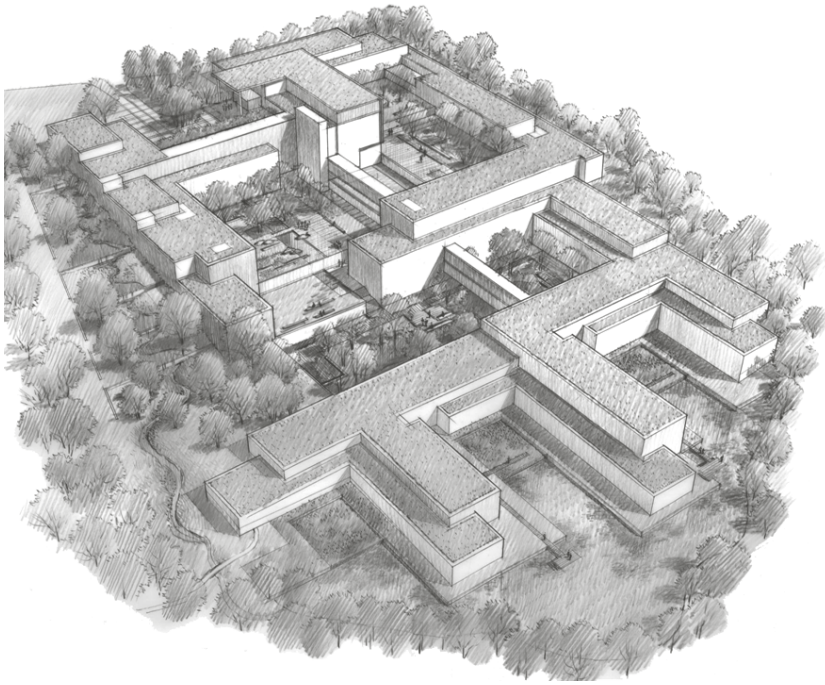
National Mall Wayfinding and Sign Program

(File Number 6910)

The Commission approved preliminary and final site development plans for a portion of a wayfinding and sign program for the National Mall and Memorial Parks submitted by the National Park Service. Included in the approval is the installation of a UniGuide standardized sign system for rules and regulation, and facility identification. The approval is contingent on the Park Service consulting with NCPC and the DC State Historic Preservation Officer about final placement and the number of signs proposed near memorials.

Approximately 162 operational signs were approved, pending field-checks with Commission staff. The facility identification signs will blend with the Mall environment with unobtrusive placement and neutral colors. The rules and regulations signs will portray international symbols to communicate with all audiences.

The Commission commended the initiative to replace the existing signs with a more cohesive system. Existing signs will be removed as the new sign program is installed.



US Coast Guard Headquarters on St. Elizabeths Campus

(File Number 6929)

The Commission commented favorably on the concept design for the US Coast Guard Headquarters (USCOG HQ) and the West Ravine Parking Garage as part of Phase 1 of the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters at the St. Elizabeths West Campus. The USCOG HQ will occupy 1.17 million square feet and accommodate 3,860 employees.

Submitted by the General Services Administration (GSA), Phase 1 construction includes core infrastructure for both utilities and security for the entire campus such as basic perimeter security, a power plant, and an access point to Firth Sterling Avenue.

The Commission recommended further study of building facades, with particular attention to the headquarters' northern facade, to add depth and detail and avoid the potential for visual monotony. Other recommendations include the retention of the variety and size of plants shown in the concept for the landscape design, and additional Section 106 consultation to evaluate the feasibility of placing the cemetery inside the secure perimeter of the West Campus. This issue must be resolved before the security fence can be submitted for approval.

In addition, the Commission strongly encouraged GSA to build additional levels of the West Ravine parking garage underground to reduce its height and bulk. According to the submission, the seven-story building will have five levels above grade and two levels below grade. The finished parking garage will accommodate about 2,000 cars.

The Commission reminded GSA that approval of the Final Master Plan for the campus is contingent upon the ability to construct an access road connecting Firth Sterling Avenue, SE to the modified Malcolm X Avenue, SE/I-295 Interchange, through the Shepherd Parkway. GSA anticipates that final approval for the USCOG HQ and parking garage will be sought in January 2010.

More Open Green for North Capitol Street

North Capitol Street could one day be transformed into a boulevard more worthy of a gateway to the capital city if local and federal partners move forward with plans to redesign the thoroughfare.

Planners presented the findings of the North Capitol Street Urban Design and Feasibility Study to members of the Commission. They are proposing several potential designs to make over a mile and a half long segment of the street. The District Department of Transportation (DDOT), District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP), NCPC, and the architectural firm EE&K collaborated to study design options to create a more pedestrian-friendly and community-oriented road. They held a series of public meetings from late 2008 through April 2009.

The North Capitol Street Corridor, between Michigan and Hawaii Avenues, suffers from high volumes of traffic and fragmented communities, exacerbated by an antiquated cloverleaf at the intersection of Irving and North Capitol Streets. The study suggests three design options for the problematic cloverleaf, all of which support parks and memorial space.

The first option, "Memorial in the Park," is the most ambitious proposal. It calls for completely rerouting the cloverleaf to allow for a 7.5 acre park featuring a site for a commemorative work. It comes with an estimated price tag of \$40-45 million. The second option, called "Center of Centers," envisions a roundabout with Irving Street traversing underground, thereby increasing east-west connectivity. The roundabout would feature a 2.6 acre park within it. The third option, "Four Corners," capitalizes on existing infrastructure and would create a plaza filled with mixed-use development or a park. It is the least expensive of the three designs.

Planners envision a smooth transition from a natural, park-like setting to a more urban environment as one proceeds south on North Capitol Street.

The proposed designs incorporate the community's feedback by allowing for accessible parklands, space for a future commemorative work, and more efficient traffic routes.

"I think [the study] is fascinating, and I think it shows also a great partnership between NCPC and the community and the city to try and look at this," praised Commissioner Arrington Dixon.



MAY INFORMATION PRESENTATION

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center

Designers from Polshek Partnership Architects provided the Commission with a progress report on the design for the underground Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center. The Center, which Congress authorized in 2003, is subject to design approval by NCPC and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. NCPC last commented on the concept design in December 2007, and CFA reviewed an updated concept design in April 2009.

The Center will be located underground on the Lincoln Memorial grounds across Henry Bacon Drive from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Congress authorized the Visitor Center to educate the public about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam War.

Andrews Air Force Base

Representatives of the Air Force provided the Commission with a presentation on efforts to update the master plan for Andrews Air Force Base. The ongoing implementation of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process created a need to review and update the facilities master plan for Andrews. Although the Air Force submitted applications for a number of projects on the base since their last master plan, those projects were focused on additions or renovations to existing buildings.

Air Force officials explained that the base is facing challenges due in part to aging infrastructure. The plan in progress addresses several key issues including pedestrian-oriented development, and space dedicated to community centers. A transportation management plan is also being updated. Air Force representatives intend to submit the draft plan to the Commission later this summer. A final submittal is expected later in the year.



April

April 2, 2009

Monumental Core Framework Plan Adopted

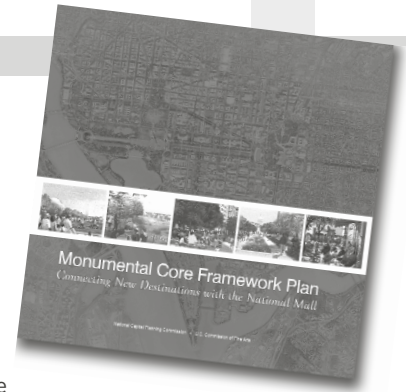
(File Number 6629)

The National Capital Planning Commission unanimously adopted the *Monumental Core Framework Plan: Connecting New Destinations with the National Mall*, a collaborative effort between NCPC and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. The *Framework Plan* seeks to revitalize the federal precincts surrounding the Mall by integrating memorials, museums, and other attractions into the urban fabric of the city.

The plan envisions the development of popular destinations close to existing attractions near the National Mall. It aims to establish new opportunities for celebration, commemoration, and recreation. By improving visual and physical connectivity, the Mall can be preserved and the District's vision of a revitalized center city can be realized.

The *Framework Plan* promotes livability and sustainability; identifies immediate and long-term opportunities to coordinate land use, urban design, public space, and transportation improvements; and lays out an action agenda for the detailed planning work that will be necessary to fully realize the plan's overall vision.

Next steps will include working on key action priorities identified in the plan, including those related to the Federal Walk, street level uses in the monumental core, and feasibility studies for the redevelopment of 10th Street, SW and Maryland Avenue, SW. Staff was asked to report back to the Commission annually on the status of the *Framework Plan's* key action priorities.



APRIL INFORMATION PRESENTATION

Staff from the National Park Service presented their preliminary preferred alternative for the National Mall Plan, a 50-year vision for the sustainable use and management of the country's preeminent gathering place. The plan, in conjunction with the *Framework Plan*, will work to benefit the National Mall and surrounding areas.

The *National Mall Plan* aims to improve the visitor experience to the Mall, as well as accommodate the needs of local residents for active recreation and open space. It includes improvements to the landscape and infrastructure, the addition of amenities such as restrooms and food vendors, and the installation of a comprehensive wayfinding system. The plan is designed to welcome and accommodate large crowds while ensuring the National Mall can recover quickly following high levels of use.

Agency News

NCPC Hosts William & Mary Students

On April 24 Executive Director Marcel Acosta and staff met with a group of students from the College of William & Mary's Washington program. The students were enrolled in a class entitled "War, Memory, and the Holocaust." The briefing was aimed at informing the students about the process of commemoration in Washington, and specifically, NCPC's role in reviewing and approving memorials in the nation's capital.

Cambridge Professor Learns About Planning in Washington

Staff members met on May 18 with a visiting professor from Cambridge, England who is conducting research on national capitals as seats of power. Professor Goran Therborn was particularly interested in learning how urban renewal plans helped to shape the National Capital Region. Staff also briefed Mr. Therborn on other topics including the commemorative works process and NCPC's participation in the Capitals Alliance organization. Mr. Therborn is meeting with planning representatives from countries around the world and plans to write a research paper on his findings.

NCPC Staff Rise to the Combined Federal Campaign Challenge

Staff members at the National Capital Planning Commission once again received the President's Award for their extraordinary support of the Combined Federal Campaign. The CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace campaign for charitable giving. Only those agencies with more than 75 percent participation qualify for the award. NCPC staff raised more than \$19,000—an increase of 3.3 percent over last year. In addition, NCPC was recognized with the Participation Achievement Award for successfully attracting new contributors.



CityVision

On May 29, thirty students from the District's Charles Hart Middle School and Howard Road Academy presented their final projects as part of the CityVision program run by the National Building Museum. NCPC planners Ken Walton and Stefanie Brown worked with the students during the semester long program as they designed development plans for the I-395 area between Penn Quarter and Union Station. The projects focused on connecting the two neighborhoods by establishing green and open space and mixed uses.

Look for a New Website in the Fall

The Office of Public Affairs is enhancing the agency's website to improve navigation and make information more easily accessible for our site's users. A new layout, colors, and images will complement streamlined content, and links will make it easy to access the most frequently requested documents. Changes are being tailored to meet the needs of a variety of audiences from project applicants to first-time visitors. The debut is slated for early fall 2009.

Earth Day 2009

To celebrate Earth Day 2009, several NCPC staff joined with other volunteers and employees from the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice to plant trees, clear trash, and pull weeds at Marvin Gaye Park. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, (pictured with NCPC staff member Carlton Hart), dedicated a



memorial in memory of Martin Luther King, Jr., who gave a speech at the park in 1961. U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and George Hawkins, director of DC's Department of the Environment, also participated in the ceremonies.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Colleen Elliott recently joined NCPC as a temporary executive assistant in the Office of the Executive Director. She previously worked with the Council on Foundations, the Association for Advanced Life Underwriting, and the National Business Group on Health. Ms. Elliott has a BA in French and a Masters of Arts in English from Salisbury University in Maryland.

The Commission also welcomes several summer interns. **Lumay Wang**, a rising junior studying Art History and International Relations at Tufts University, joined the Office of Public Affairs. Ms. Wang is assisting the division with a variety of projects including public and media outreach, international briefings, and the use of social media tools.

Tarick Walton, a rising junior participating in MIT's Washington Intern Program, is interning with NCPC's Plan and Project Implementation Division. Mr. Walton, a Civil Engineering major, will assist planners with several on-going initiatives.

Also interning with NCPC during summer 2009 is **Rachel Bland**, an Urban and Regional Studies major at Cornell University. Ms. Bland will be working in the Urban Design and Plan Review Division.

QUARTERLY

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The Honorable Edolphus Towns
Chairman, House Committee on Oversight
and Government Reform

The Honorable Adrian M. Fenty
Mayor of the District of Columbia

The Honorable Vincent C. Gray
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

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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.

