

STAFF RECOMMENDATION



K.Anderson

NCPC File No. 0348

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN FISCAL YEARS 2011-2016

Submitted by the Mayor of the District of Columbia

June 24, 2010

Abstract

The Commission is providing comments to the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia on the District's capital improvements plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2011-2016. The Commission reviews the District of Columbia Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8723 (b). Historically NCPC has undertaken that review to assure that the District's proposed capital improvements comply with the federal interest as expressed in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*, and other NCPC plans. This year, NCPC's review encompasses how the CIP meets and furthers the Comprehensive Plan, as well as such-sub-plans as the *Monumental Core Framework Plan*, the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*, and *CapitalSpace*. This review is based on the *FY 2011-2016 Capital Appendices* and *FY 2011-2016 Highway Trust Fund*, submitted as Volumes 6 and 7 respectively of the *District of Columbia's FY 2011 Proposed Budget and Financial Plan*. It also notes the need for further NCPC review, including review of components of the CIP not yet submitted, and review pursuant to NCPC's statutory authority of projects in the CIP as they are further developed.

Commission Action Requested

Approval of comments to the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8723 (b).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Commends the District of Columbia on the inclusion of projects that support and implement the federal interest set forth in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*, such as:

- Projects to improve the public transportation system through continued mass transit investments.
- Projects to develop new parks and recreation centers and to enhance existing parks and open spaces throughout the city.

- Projects that rehabilitate and/or reuse historic buildings to preserve and promote the historic identity of the nation’s capital through its historic structures.
- Funding of long-term planning efforts linked to important capital projects of federal interest.

Requests that the District of Columbia further coordinate projects as appropriate with the Commission and with federal agencies whose property or operations may be affected, pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b) (1) and/or § 8722 (e)), along with regional agencies, as follows:

- Many projects and studies will require coordination with the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service, the General Services Administration, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, as well as review by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. The submitting District agencies should coordinate with these identified entities to determine submission requirements and schedules.
- The following general areas and topics are of special interest to the Commission, and should be coordinated with NCPC on an ongoing basis:
 - Streetcar Development
 - Public Plans and Studies
 - Park and Open Space improvements
 - Metro (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority)
- The following specific transportation projects should be coordinated with the Commission and other federal agencies, as noted:

Agencies, with abbreviations and relevant facilities:

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) - National Arboretum
 Department of the Air Force (DAF) - Bolling Air Force Base
 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) - Florida/NY Avenue headquarters
 Architect of the Capitol (AOC) - Capitol Grounds, including power plant
 Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) – agency facility at North Capitol Street
 Department of the Army (DOA) - Corps of Engineers (rivers and reservoirs);
 Fort McNair
 Department of Energy (DOE) - L'Enfant Plaza headquarters
 General Services Administration (GSA) - various facilities
 National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)
 National Park Service (NPS) - various parks throughout DC
 Department of the Navy (DON) - Washington Navy Yard, Anacostia Annex,
 Potomac Annex
 U.S. Postal Service (USPS) - headquarters (L'Enfant Plaza)
 Department of Transportation (DOT) – railroad facilities

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Project site/name</u>	<u>Coordinating Agency</u>
12,13,21,27,34	South Capitol Street improvements	AOC, NCPC, NPS
30,33	14 th Street Bridge rehabilitation	NCPC, DOA, NPS
33,80(2)	11 th Street Bridge replacement	NCPC, DOA, NPS
33	Rehabilitation of L'Enfant Promenade	DOE, NCPC, NPS, USPS
13,14,31	Riverwalk projects	USDA, DOA, GSA, NCPC, NPS, DON
5,63,72,76,104(2)	Bicycle improvements	NCPC
56	Reconstruction of Columbus Circle	NCPC
90	Reconstruction of Washington Circle	NCPC
32,57,95,102	Central City street improvements	NPS, NCPC
58	Historic streets and alleys	NCPC
94	Federal road rehabilitation	NCPC, NPS
69,70,71,76,78	Great streets initiatives	NCPC, NPS
75	Garfield Park	NCPC, NPS
7	Metropolitan Branch Trail	NCPC, DOT
60	Downtown Circulator	NCPC, NPS
69	Boundary Stones	NCPC, NPS
79	Union Station Intermodal Center	GSA, NCPC
95	Pennsylvania & Potomac Ave Intersection	NCPC, NPS
97	Klinge Rd EA	NCPC, NPS
103	South Capitol Street EIS	AOC, NCPC, NPS
98	East Capitol Street Corridor Plan	NCPC, NPS
10	Freight Rail Plan	DOT, NCPC, NPS

- The following specific projects should be coordinated with other federal agencies, as noted:

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Project site/name</u>	<u>Coordinating Agency</u>
9	Marvin Gaye Park	NPS, NCPC
27	Risk Assessment-Bridge / Tunnel Security	DOT, NCPC, GSA
22(2)24,29,41	Potomac River bridge rehabilitations	NCPC, DOA, NPS
4,30,89	Rock Creek Park trail & street improvements	NPS, NCPC
4	Dalecarlia Parkway streetlight improvements	NPS, NCPC
37,55	New York and Florida Ave. intersection	ATF, NPS, NCPC
39,40,58,101	Military Road / 16th Street NW projects	NPS
57,92	18th Street. NW reconstruction	NPS
91,93	South Dakota Avenue reconstruction	NCPC
59(2)	Benning Road NE reconstruction	NPS
95,96,100(2),101	Central City street reconstruction	NPS, NCPC
22,24,41	Bridge reconstructions	NPS, NCPC
67	Central City streetscape improvements	NPS
67,68,74,78	Neighborhood transportation studies	NPS, NCPC

73(2),74	Public art installations	NPS, NCPC
36	C&O Canal Bridge reconstruction	NPS
7,72,76	Heritage Trails	NPS
12,32,39,93,94	Kenilworth Avenue improvements	NPS, NCPC
34,38,40	SW-SE Freeway reconstruction	NPS, NCPC
18,38,68,98	Eastern, Western, Southern Ave. improvements	NPS, NCPC
31	Anacostia Freeway	NPS, NCPC

Notes the statutory requirement mandating the District’s submission for Commission review of a number of CIP projects, such as:

- Acquisition or disposition of land or buildings by the District of Columbia government (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b) (1) and § 8734 (a)).
- Development projects undertaken by the District of Columbia government, including park projects and alterations that affect the exterior of a structure or its grounds (40 U.S.C. §8722 (b) (1) and § 8722(e)).

Reminds the District that by statute it is required to submit its entire capital improvement program to NCPC for review and comment by February of each year, and that in future years NCPC’s comments will be more helpful if they can be based on a comprehensive review completed and considered before the District submits the CIP to the Council of the District of Columbia. Additionally the District still must submit for NCPC review its capital projects for the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (WASA).

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CIP is part of the Mayor’s FY 2011 Proposed Budget and Financial Plan that is sent to the Council of the District of Columbia for review and adoption, and then to Congress for review and approval. NCPC reviews the District CIP pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8723(b), which specifies: “Submission of Multiyear Capital Improvement Plan.—By February 1 of each year, the Mayor of the District of Columbia shall submit to the Commission a copy of the multiyear capital improvements plan for the District of Columbia that the Mayor develops” under [a provision of the Home Rule Act]. The Commission has 30 days in which to comment on the plan but may not change or disapprove of the plan.

The Commission review of the CIP is an important tool to ensure federal and local coordination and cooperation in the ongoing development of Washington to assure that it is a great capital city. The Commission's review of the CIP may provide the District with valuable feedback about proposed developments and projects well before individual projects in the CIP move forward. This approach may facilitate effective cooperation between the District and NCPC, and smooth Commission review of

specified projects under its normal project-by-project review procedures. The CIP typically describes projects in much broader terms, providing an opportunity for the Commission's comments before projects enter the more detailed stages of implementation.

As the District describes in its CIP document, "(t)he CIP consists of the appropriated budget authority request for the upcoming fiscal year and projected funding ... for the next five years. ... The CIP is used as the basis for formulating the District's annual capital budget." The range of CIP projects for the coming six years includes renovation, major repair, and maintenance of existing facilities; new construction and equipment; building and land purchases; long-range planning studies; transportation projects; and various technology and database projects.

In terms of projects and expenditures, the District of Columbia is proposing 136 ongoing projects and 6 new projects from agencies throughout the District government. The total six-year proposed project spending, not including the Highway Trust fund, judicial courts and WASA projects, that are accounted for separately is \$3.44 billion (compared to a CIP total of \$3.30 billion for FYs 2010-2015). The District notes that it's faced with developing a capital budget within the context of the continuing challenge of an economic downturn. The current economic forecast assumes a continued weakness in economic conditions resulting in diminished employment and wages, relatively high commercial property vacancies and continued delays in construction project starts. The proposed plan incorporates revenue adjustments designed to compensate for the current economic factors, and revenue losses.

While the purpose of NCPC's review and comment on the CIP is to take a comprehensive look over a six year period, NCPC notes that this CIP emphasizes expenditures only for FY 2011. The District notes that, in response to funding constraints and competing demands for capital funding, it is prioritizing projects to meet the most pressing infrastructure needs, and in particular, is focusing on addressing aging infrastructure. Within the CIP, \$260 million is allocated to school modernization; \$111 million is proposed for WMATA as the District's contribution to its capital campaign; and \$58.8 million is allocated to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), primarily for modernizing recreational facilities. The capital budget includes \$56.7 million for general citywide transportation improvements and repairs, including lighting, trees, bicycle and pedestrian improvements and bridge repairs and \$339 million in major transportation projects as part of the Highway Trust Fund program. Proposed allocations for improvements to police, fire and library facilities and related needs comprise \$56.1 million. The 2011 budget proposes \$25.6 million for the University of the District of Columbia for the complete renovation and modernization of University facilities. In addition, the District proposes allocation of capital dollars in FY2011 to develop and upgrade information technology, communications and response systems.

Two capital funding categories that are part of the CIP have not yet been submitted by the Mayor to NCPC or to the Council of the District of Columbia:

- The District has not included capital projects for the District of Columbia court system in the CIP because funding authority for the Courts was transferred in 1997 to OMB and should appear as part

of the FCIP.

- Capital projects for the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) are noted in the CIP but not included in the above totals. The District notes that WASA uses a 10-year capital program due to the long-term nature of many of its projects. WASA's most recent capital improvement program, for FYs 2009-2018, totals \$3.2 billion. However, this 10-year plan has not been submitted to NCPC for comment.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Many of the CIP projects outlined in the District's proposal support the federal interest outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and other NCPC planning initiatives. The outlined projects do not appear to have any adverse impact on the federal interest.

A large number of the CIP projects involve the rehabilitation and improvement of District public buildings and public space throughout the District of Columbia. Many of these projects are in prominent locations, where such improvements -- in addition to their local impact -- will enhance the overall image of the nation's capital, if designed well. Additionally, many of these facilities were originally constructed by the federal government and convey the history of federal involvement in the development of the District of Columbia. Examples (noted by the relevant District agencies) include buildings that form networks of facilities that define the civic character of the capital city:

- Schools (District of Columbia Public Schools and Office (DCPS) of Public Education Facilities Management (OPEFM))
- Libraries (District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL))
- Parks and recreational centers (DPR)
- Firehouses (Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (Fire and EMS))

Several projects seek to reuse District-owned sites for new purposes and to co-locate public uses. Using CapitalSpace approaches as guidance, NCPC encourages the District to incorporate publicly accessible green space into these projects and to consider establishing new park space and recreational amenities, particularly for reuse of school buildings and in areas of the District that are growing or have less access to park resources.

The CIP submission includes proposals for new and rehabilitated facilities that are designed to meet sustainability standards. NCPC supports these efforts, consistent with Executive Order 13514, which calls for integrated planning that promotes environmental sustainability, energy security and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The CIP also includes additional enhancements to the capital's image such as investments in public art (Commission on the Arts and Humanities), and the maintenance and planting of street trees (D.C. Department of Transportation (DDOT)). The District government's continued investment in these capital projects is consistent with many NCPC initiatives and helps to benefit the city's image, as the Nation's Capital. They effectively support the federal interest that is outlined in the Comprehensive

Plan.

Many of the rehabilitation projects outlined in the CIP involve historic structures., To further both District and federal interests, it is important that the District respect and enhance their historic character as part of the capital investments as these projects move forward. The projects for improving accessibility (in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act) in these historic structures should be carefully designed to accommodate both ADA requirements and historic preservation of these public facilities.

Several projects relate to particular historic structures that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or are located within federally recognized Historic Districts. The continued investment in these properties helps to preserve and promote their recognized federal significance.

The Commission supports the District's efforts in several projects in the CIP related to areas of special shared interest for District and federal planning efforts. NCPC requests that the District coordinate with NCPC and other federal agencies, and NCPC notes that some projects may be subject to NCPC review. These projects that reflect special shared interests include:

- Streetcar Development, including the Anacostia and H Street corridor projects (DDOT). NCPC supports the expansion of transportation options that will benefit residents, workers, and visitors. However NCPC is concerned with the visual impacts of the proposed streetcar technology, which operates on overhead wires as described by DDOT, at least within the initial segments to be built. Washington, and particularly the part of the District in the L'Enfant City, is built on a plan of open space and views and vistas. These urban design elements are supported by longstanding laws prohibiting overhead wires, including electricity and streetcar wires, in the L'Enfant City and in Georgetown. The Anacostia Streetcar Initial Line corridor is outside of the L'Enfant City and Georgetown, and while the Commission has supported the project, it has noted the existence of laws that prohibit overhead wires in the L'Enfant City and Georgetown. As the District prepares detailed streetcar plans in areas where open vistas are protected by prohibitions against overhead wires, it is strongly recommended that an alternative streetcar propulsion technology be utilized, such as has been initially discussed by DDOT. However, it is important to recognize the streetcar segments presently specified affect larger corridor viewshed resources than just avenue and street intersections or the limited road portions DDOT continues to reference. Finally, District of Columbia streetcar projects are recommended to be submitted for review to NCPC under section 5 of the Planning Act to ensure a fully coordinated transit system that successfully addresses mobility, urban design, open views and vistas, and economic and community objectives. The District is also encouraged to coordinate with other federal agencies that may be served by this system or manage land that may be affected by these projects, including GSA, NPS, and DOD.
- Public Plans and Studies (D.C. Office of Municipal Planning (DCOP)). The CIP includes funding for planning studies for large-scale capital projects that the District proposes to undertake, and for efforts of DCOP to rewrite the zoning regulations and undertake

various planning studies. NCPC and the District have coordinated planning initiatives that have resulted in capital projects that successfully address federal and local interests. NCPC supports the inclusion of funds for planning in the CIP, and looks forward to continued cooperation and coordination with the District and other federal agencies on planning and zoning studies within the District.

- **Park and Open Space Projects (DPR and OPEFM).**
NCPC, in coordination with NPS, DPR, DCOP, and other D.C. agencies recently released the CapitalSpace Plan, a study of federal and local parks and open spaces in the District. Findings from this study identify the importance of improving the quality of existing parkland and facilities, note the importance of the District's public schools in providing outdoor recreational facilities, and identify the need to address park demands created by growth. The District is encouraged to include schoolyard improvements as a component of school modernization projects. NCPC notes the capital funding identified for District parks and park facilities and looks forward to continued coordination with District agencies to identify and implement strategies to improve Washington's park system.
- **Metro (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA))**
The CIP includes \$397 million over six years for the District's local contribution to WMATA's capital program (operating funds are not included in the District of Columbia's CIP). This funding will support acquisition of new buses and rail cars, rehabilitation of the Metrorail system, and construction and rehabilitation of bus garage facilities. These ongoing investments in transit are consistent with the federal interest in relying on transit to effectively manage region's mobility demands, in particular the needs of the federal workforce and visitors and for special events.

NCPC also notes:

Many of the projects outlined in the CIP must by law be reviewed by NCPC, and NCPC urges the appropriate District agencies to work early and cooperatively with NCPC staff to facilitate that review, which serves the interests of both the District and the federal government. The projects should be submitted to the Commission at the appropriate stage of detailed siting and design work. NCPC's authority for review of District government projects includes review of: acquisition or disposition of land or buildings; land and building development projects (including park projects); and alterations affecting parks or the exterior of buildings or their grounds. District agencies should consult with Commission staff to determine the submission requirements for particular projects.

Finally, NCPC reiterates that its staff and Commission may more effectively carry out its role of commenting on the CIP if the District promptly submits all components of the CIP simultaneously (including WASA's improvement plans) and early enough for NCPC to comment and have its comments taken into account before the District transmits that year's multi-year CIP plan to the Council of the District of Columbia.

PROJECT CONFORMANCE

National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act is not applicable to NCPC's review of this submission, because the Commission does not approve the District CIP.

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act is not applicable to NCPC's review of this submission, because the Commission does not approve the District CIP.