



MEDIA RELEASE

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Lisa MacSpadden
202-482-7263 or lisa@ncpc.gov
Stephen Staudigl
202-482-7279 or stephen@ncpc.gov

Statement of NCPC Executive Director Marcel Acosta *On today's action by the Council of the District of Columbia on St. Elizabeths*

Washington, DC – “I am very appreciative of action taken today by the Council of the District of Columbia following a motion by Councilman Barry, to amend provisions to the District Comprehensive Plan as it relates to mixed-use development on the Saint Elizabeths West Campus. Today’s decision is consistent with plans for the new headquarters for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approved by both District and federal members of the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) in January 2009, and is also reflective of the spirit of local and federal collaboration for this important project.

NCPC, the General Services Administration, and District officials have collaborated diligently during all planning phases for DHS, the largest federal campus to be built since construction of the Pentagon in the 1940s. Our mutual goal has been to enable—to the fullest extent possible—the revitalization of Ward 8, an important neighborhood in the nation’s capital. All parties, however, have had to balance this desire while simultaneously meeting the provisions required by DHS for a highly secure federal campus on federal land.

Today the Council voluntarily voted to strike language that would have encouraged mixed-use development on the west side of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue saying, “it is inconsistent with the plans approved by both the District and National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) for the Saint Elizabeths Campus, which require all of the retail in this area to be located on the District’s east campus side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue.”

Although we understand this must be a closed campus, NCPC continues to work with DHS, other federal agencies, and the District of Columbia to look for opportunities to leverage this project’s significant federal investment. For example, locating the headquarters for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on the more accessible District-owned East Campus, rather than the West Campus, will provide another important anchor for revitalization. NCPC fully supports efforts to promote accessible, mixed-use development on the properties adjacent to the campus that will create linkages between the surrounding neighborhoods and DHS and FEMA. We also will continue to take steps to spur private industry in the easternmost portions of the region through such efforts as short- and long-term employment prospects, contracting opportunities, and new commercial businesses.

In response to today’s action by the District Council, NCPC’s staff recommendation on *Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: District Elements—Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2010*, will be revised prior to this week’s meeting of the Commission on January 6, 2011.”

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