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NCPC Comments on Draft Master Plans for Nebraska Avenue Complex and Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling

Also Reviewed Final Plans for Fort Belvoir Post Exchange Shopping Center

Washington – Members of the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) today provided comments on the draft Master Plan for the Nebraska Avenue Complex (NAC) in northwest Washington, DC. The NAC Master Plan is designed to accommodate the growth and future needs of the Department of Homeland Security, as part of an overall strategy to consolidate DHS' operations at 8-10 facilities across the region. The NAC currently houses approximately 2,390 DHS employees in 653,400 gross square feet of building space; the Master Plan proposes to accommodate 4,200 employees in 1.12 million gross square feet over the next 10 years.

The draft plan addresses future land use, open space, historic preservation, transportation and density within different sub-areas of the 38-acre campus. The Commission's comments will guide the continuing development of the master plan, which will return for final Commission approval at a future date. Comments included the following:

- Reevaluate the pedestrian and bicycle access on Nebraska Avenue, NW into the NAC to allow for greater accessibility to Tenleytown and the Metrorail station;
- Continue to coordinate with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation on the Transportation Management Plan's proposed modal split, goals, and strategies and proposed access points for the NAC;
- Evaluate the potential to lower the security level in order to minimize views of security from public space, allow for more options for vehicular access into the NAC, and allow for the consideration of community amenities at the site;
- Develop specific landscape design guidelines and/or a concept landscaping plan for the areas of the campus viewed from public space;
- Work with the Department of the Navy so that the Navy's Gatesly House and the NAC visually appear as a single entity;
- Evaluate the potential to further increase the tree canopy;
- Work with the District of Columbia Office of Planning on its concerns regarding economic benefits and transportation impacts to the surrounding community;
- Develop a phasing plan, which should also include a parking evaluation to ensure that the parking ratio is met for each phase; and
- Continue to work with the National Park Service to assure that impacts to the adjacent Glover-Archbold Park are minimized and mitigated.

In other action, the Commission reviewed the draft Master Plan for Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling (JBAB). The draft plan is in response to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure action to unify Naval Support Facility Anacostia and Bolling Air Force Base. The JBAB master plan is intended to provide land use, transportation and design guidance to develop the facility as a single unified installation and accommodate future growth of up to 5,000 people in the next decade.

The Commission commented favorably on the inclusion of development strategies that limit the visual impacts of future base development on surrounding communities, on landscaping standards that help preserve the character of existing base neighborhoods, and sustainability-oriented strategies to guide base development. However, the Commission directed the Navy to provide additional information, respond to requests made by the Department of Homeland Security that may impact development of the St Elizabeths West Campus, including transportation-related issues before the plan returns for final approval:

- Provide justification to support the proposed 1:24 parking ratio rather than the 1:4 parking ratio stipulated in the NCPC Comprehensive Plan.
- Consider the cumulative impacts of growth at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling when considered with other planned development, such as that at St Elizabeths and Poplar Point.
- Work with the Department of Homeland Security and the General Services Administration to explore the possibility of developing and managing a coordinated Transportation Management Plan for Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling and the St. Elizabeths campus.
- Consider possible future realignments of South Capitol Street and the Frederick Douglass Bridge.

As a concluding agenda item, the Commission reviewed final site and building plans for Fort Belvoir's Post Exchange (PX) shopping center. The proposed one-story 263,438 square-foot facility is designed to replace three existing retail buildings. The new building would contain Army and Air Force post exchanges, a food court, and a military clothing store. At its April meeting the Commission disapproved the preliminary site and building plans, noting concerns regarding tree loss, connections to adjacent development, parking, and lack of an updated master plan providing appropriate context. The Commission noted that despite receiving additional information from the Army the final plan does not fully address its earlier concerns and disapproved the final plan.

Additionally, while recognizing that a master plan update for Fort Belvoir was underway, the Commission noted that the lack of an approved master plan impairs its ability to ensure the comprehensive planning and orderly development of the National Capital. The Commission reiterated earlier requirements for the applicant to submit an updated master plan, stating that it may find it difficult to approve any future proposals for the base until such time as an updated master plan is submitted.

The Commission also approved five consent calendar items on the agenda (no presentations given):

- Review of University of the District of Columbia Draft Master Plan for the Van Ness Campus, Washington, DC.
- Comments on concept designs for University of the District of Columbia Student Center at the Van Ness Campus, Washington, DC.
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority, Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan, Anacostia River Projects – Anacostia Park, Washington, DC.
- Comments on concept designs for the new Dunbar Senior High School, 1301 New Jersey, NW, Washington, DC.
- Review of First Stage and Consolidated Planned Unit Development and related amendment to the Zoning Map of the District of Columbia in Squares 564, 566 and 568 (Center Place Holdings, LLC), Washington, DC.

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 projects and memorials, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.