



MEDIA RELEASE

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NCPC Adopts Resolution on District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

Commission also approves report on District Zoning Regulations Rewrite for Height and Use and Defers Action on Georgetown Waterfront Park Phase III

Washington, DC – At its monthly meeting today the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) issued a resolution noting that proposed amendments to the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital will not adversely affect the federal interest. NCPC also commended the District for a successful public planning process in updating its elements.

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital contains thirteen District and seven Federal Elements. In 2008 the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) began a process to update the District Elements, last updated in 2006. DCOP proposed more than 100 amendments that will modify existing policy statements or the city's land use map. Pursuant to the National Capital Planning Act, NCPC is required within 60 days of receiving proposed amendments to determine the impact of the amendments on the interests or functions of the federal establishment in the National Capital. Amendments that the Commission determines to negatively impact federal interests cannot be implemented by the District.

In its action the Commission also noted its appreciation of the cooperative relationship between the local District government and the federal government in supporting development at the Saint Elizabeths campus in a manner that will promote economic development for the city in general, and Ward 8 in particular.

“NCPC supports the development of retail and other mixed-uses adjacent to the new campus for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS),” said NCPC Executive Director Marcel Acosta. “Such amenities will benefit the thousands of federal employees who will work at DHS as well as the local residents of the surrounding community.”

In a previous action, the Commission deferred consideration of final site development plans for Phase III of the Georgetown Waterfront Park until its February meeting. The Commission took the action to allow time for the National Park Service to research the feasibility and appropriateness of replacing Sycamore trees planted in the park with another size and/or species of tree. The National Park Service submitted plans for the portion of the park that stretches from the Thompson Boat Center to the Kennedy Center. The project includes a resurfaced asphalt bikeway, a new asphalt-tile pedestrian promenade, new tree plantings, and other site enhancements.

Before adjourning the Commission approved a report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia regarding proposed text changes to the city's zoning regulations on permitted uses and building heights. In 2007 the District undertook a comprehensive review of its zoning regulations, last updated in 1958. Numerous changes are proposed to reflect current ideas and technology.

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The new regulations propose creating 29 “use” categories from the existing 650. The Commission noted that proposed language creating a set of use categories would not adversely affect the federal interest.

The second category of changes before the Commission dealt with proposed text changes to the zoning regulations that regulate building height limits within the maximum heights allowed by the Height of Buildings Act of 1910. The Commission noted three text sections where it requested slight text modifications. The first modification would clarify that no setback relief is available for penthouses when the building roof is at the building height limit under the Height Act. The second modification would clarify that both public and private streets be used to measure the height of buildings. The third modification requests that the text clarify that measurements of height be taken from natural grade, rather than from elevated structures.

NCPC also noted that all District of Columbia interpretations of Height Act provisions will be located in a new section of the District’s Municipal Code referenced as Subtitle M. Because the District did not provide NCPC with a copy of Subtitle M, the Commission requested that the District’s Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs provide a draft of the document for NCPC review as soon as it is available.

There are no consent calendar items this month. There were six items the Commission [delegated](#) to the Executive Director for review.

The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government’s central 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.

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