

MEDIA RELEASE



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NCPC Receives Briefing on Preliminary FEMA Floodplain Maps and Improvements to the National Mall Levee

*Commission also reviews plans for a waterfront park, Walker Jones School,
and the CapitalSpace Initiative*

Washington, DC – The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) at its meeting today was briefed by representatives from the Baltimore District of the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regarding recently proposed floodplain maps. The modified maps now include much of downtown Washington—including the Federal Triangle—in the 100-year flood area. FEMA modified the maps after ACOE failed to certify three levees in Washington, DC, including one that is located on the National Mall.

The representatives provided information on the flood map modernization process, the status of the preliminary map modifications, and the status of the levees. They also responded to questions from the Commissioners regarding next steps, potential solutions, and estimated costs.

Today's briefing is a follow-up to the release of an NCPC flood report at the January Commission meeting. At that time, staff notified the Commission of the modified floodplain maps and recommended that a request be made to FEMA to extend a public comment period scheduled to expire on January 3, 2008. FEMA has since extended the comment period to March 26, 2008.

Also during today's meeting, the Commission approved preliminary design plans for a new waterfront park on the north bank of the Anacostia River. The site for the new park is part of The Yards development at the former Southeast Federal Center, a mixed-use development south of M Street, SE. Covering just over 5.5 acres, with 1,100 linear feet fronting the Anacostia River, the park will serve active and passive recreation and allow for entertainment programming.

Signature features of the waterfront park include a terraced lawn providing views of the marina and river, a pedestrian bridge, a canal basin and waterfall, paved and landscaped plazas, a boardwalk, public piers, a marina, and a river garden designed for quieter activities. The Commission commended the applicant, the General Services Administration, the developer and the designers for the quality of design, the range of activities the park will support, its visual and physical connections, and for creatively adapting the design to the site's ground elevation constraints.

With its approval, the Commission recommended further design development of the pedestrian bridge, the addition of an accessible path below the lawn, and inclusion of a site for a commemorative work.

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The Commission also approved today preliminary and final site and building plans for construction of the Walker Jones School at 100 L Street, NW in the Sursum Corda neighborhood of Washington, DC. Submitted by the District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, the new facility is the first major project to be implemented as part of the District's Northwest One Master Plan. The new school will accommodate approximately 850 students and replaces the existing Walker Jones Elementary and Terrell Junior High. In addition to the new school, the facility will also house a shared gymnasium/community recreation center and a public library.

The project includes a total building area of 125,000 gross square feet as well as new playing fields, surface parking, and landscaping. The facility will be jointly managed by the District of Columbia Public Schools, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Public Library. With its approval, the Commission commended the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and the development team on a well-planned design that respects the historic L'Enfant streets of the District of Columbia.

The Commission concluded this month's meeting with an information presentation on the status of CapitalSpace, a collaborative effort by NCPC, the National Park Service, and the District of Columbia government to improve the coordination and quality of the city's parks. The plan identifies six major goals for parks and opens space. The Commission was briefed today on one goal: developing a work plan to link the city's Fort Circle Parks.

The CapitalSpace partners are developing specific recommendations on connecting the Fort Circle Parks, creating a greenway around much of the city, and transforming the parks into destinations known for historic, cultural, and natural resources. The plan also will offer recommendations for integrating the Fort Circle Park trail into the region's network of trails and bikeways. Two key forts, Fort Stanton and Fort Mahan, will serve as models for improving the other Fort Circle Parks and their surrounding neighborhoods.

This month the Commission also approved three consent calendar items (no presentations given): preliminary and final site development plans for Dulles Access Road median landscaping renovation; preliminary and final building plans for the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency main building and transportation management plan; and a proposed partial closing of G Street, SE within Congressional Cemetery.

Information about actions taken at today's Commission meeting can be accessed at www.ncpc.gov.

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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