



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **NCPC Adopts CapitalSpace Plan and Approves Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool/Grounds Rehabilitation and St. Elizabeths West Campus Perimeter Security**

*Commission provides comments on Hirshhorn Seasonal Inflatable Pavilion and Naval Support Facility Anacostia Building*

**Washington, DC** – At its monthly meeting today the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) adopted the CapitalSpace Plan. A joint initiative among NCPC, the National Park Service, and the District of Columbia, CapitalSpace seeks to provide a vision for a beautiful, high-quality, and unified park system in the nation's capital through six big action ideas. The draft plan had been made available for a 60-day public comment period that closed in December.

As part of its approval the Commission directed NCPC staff to begin working immediately on the plan's priority action items and to incorporate CapitalSpace's recommendations when developing agency plans and reports. The Commission also directed staff to use the plan as a guide when reviewing development projects, evaluating and making recommendations for park and open space proposals in Washington, and when providing input on other federal, local, or private planning studies. The partner agencies will continue working together to implement the plan's recommendations and coordinate on shared park issues and projects.

In other action, the Commission approved preliminary and final site and building plans for a comprehensive rehabilitation of the grounds on the east side of the Lincoln Memorial and adjacent areas in West Potomac Park. The National Park Service (NPS) plans to reconstruct the Reflecting Pool and replace the current system that uses potable city water to replenish the Pool with one that draws water from the Tidal Basin. The NPS plans to add paved 13' 4"-wide paths on the north and south sides of the Reflecting Pool where the turf is worn from heavy pedestrian traffic. The Elm Walks, which extend past the World War II Memorial to 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, would be repaved and refurbished. Benches, trash receptacles, and new low-level lighting would be located on the walks' outer sides.

The NPS proposes integrating security elements—including 30" high retaining walls and 36" tall bollards—into the design. The historic central stairs would not be altered because the west edge of the Reflecting Pool will serve as part of the barrier. Two new ADA accessible curved paths would connect the Reflecting Pool with Lincoln Memorial Circle.

NCPC commended the Park Service for proposing a comprehensive approach that addresses needed improvements in West Potomac Park, for developing a perimeter security plan that puts most of the visible barriers outside the National Mall's monumental east-west axis while removing bollards and temporary vehicle barriers, and for creating a more sustainable system for managing the Reflecting Pool's water source and quality. The Commission delegated to NCPC's executive director final approval of the color and texture of the exposed aggregate for the Reflecting Pool paths. This project is the largest one undertaken by NPS with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

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The Commission commented favorably on concept plans submitted by the Smithsonian Institution for a seasonal, inflatable pavilion at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden located on the National Mall. NCPC found that the semi-annual (May and October) transformation of the Hirshhorn's central courtyard would provide an exciting attraction on the National Mall and the 8th Street axis.

"We very much applaud this effort and would love to get the opportunity to see more exciting and daring architecture in this city," said Commission Alternate Harriet Tregoning who represents Mayor Adrian Fenty on the Commission.

The Smithsonian's submission included two design alternatives. Both call for an asymmetrical egg-shaped dome to cover the museum's existing open-air center courtyard and an enclosed café space situated west of the museum building. The first alternative ("Soufflé")—preferred by the Smithsonian—would be 14,000 square feet and fully enclose the museum's courtyard with occupiable space. The second ("Cork") would extend above the courtyard, but would leave the sides open and exposed. Both concepts would transform the courtyard plaza for the months of May and October into an expanded public venue for art, films, lectures, and debates. The inflatable pavilion would be stored off-site for the rest of the year. It has an expected life-span of 25 years, at which time the pavilion can be recycled.

While noting the Smithsonian's preferred alternative, the Commission encouraged further study of both options prior to making a final decision. The Commission asked the Smithsonian to provide additional information prior to returning to the Commission for preliminary and final review. Items requested include analysis of views along/to/from the Mall, information on pedestrian circulation and ADA accessibility, proposed lighting, mechanical equipment, pavilion anchoring, and local fire and life safety code compliance.

The Commission also approved preliminary and final site and building plans for perimeter security and six entry control gates at the future Department of Homeland Security Headquarters on the St. Elizabeths West Campus. The perimeter security plan submitted by the General Services Administration consists of outer and inner barriers with a 20-foot clearance zone in between and related surveillance equipment. The project will renovate or replace six entry gates: three that open onto Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE and three that will open onto a new access road that parallels Interstate 295. The historic masonry wall on Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue will be rehabilitated and modified. These plans are part of the implementation of the St. Elizabeths Master Plan first phase.

As part of its approval the Commission noted that the design of a proposed access road—and related interchange improvements—has not been completed. The Commission required the General Services Administration to submit for review any changes to the approved perimeter security design that may result from the access road's proposed design and interchange improvements. The access road will run parallel to I-295 along the site's western boundary, and was not part of today's approval.

Before adjourning the Commission commented favorably on preliminary and final site and building plans for a 160,000-gross-square-foot Naval Systems Management Activity office building with a 23,000 gross square foot warehouse at the Naval Support Facility Anacostia in Southwest Washington, DC, with the exception of a remote parking lot.

The Commission advised the Navy that the proposed parking lot should not be constructed because the Naval Support Facility Anacostia exceeds the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital's 1:4 parking ratio for the site. The Commission also required the Navy to submit a master plan for the facility before submitting any future projects. The Commission also requested that the Department of the Navy negotiate with NCPC for approval of a Memorandum of Understanding that gives NCPC a more significant role in the design of the Bolling Anacostia Tract. As part of this BRAC-related project 816 Navy personnel will relocate from Arlington, Virginia.

This month's agenda also included seven consent calendar items (no presentations given):

- Comments on concept designs for perimeter security for the Commandant's Residence at the U.S. Marine Barracks located on G Street between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets, SE in Washington, DC.
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for restoration and rehabilitation of the District of Columbia World War I Memorial located on the National Mall near the intersection of Independence Avenue and West Basin Drive, SW.
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for Building 62 at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for renovation and an addition to Building 17 at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.
- Comments on concept designs for replacement of the Scott Building, a New Commons and Health Center at the Armed Forces Retirement Home located at Rock Creek Church Road and Upshur Street, NW in Washington, DC.
- Preliminary building plans for roof and window replacement at the Arts and Industries Building located on the National Mall at 900 Jefferson Drive, SW in Washington, DC.
- Comments on a District of Columbia Zoning Commission text amendment that would make it easier for developers to construct affordable housing in five receiving zones in and around downtown.

*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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