



MEDIA RELEASE

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NCPC Provides Favorable Comments on Concept Designs for the National Museum of African American History and Culture

Commission also reviews Mark Center Transportation Management Plan, the Capital Bikeshare system, and the Federal Capital Improvements Program

Washington, DC – At its monthly meeting today the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) provided favorable comments on concept designs for the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The proposed 315,000 square foot facility will be located on a five-acre tract of land bounded by Constitution Avenue and Madison Drive, NW and 14th and 15th Streets, NW.

The museum, designed by Freelon Adjaye Bond/SmithGroup and submitted for review by the Smithsonian Institution, will house state-of-the-art galleries, program and administrative offices, a café, and support spaces. It will feature two distinct design elements: the “Porch,” which will function as the entry portico for the main museum entrance on Madison Drive, NW; and the “Corona,” which will rise above the “Porch” and serve as the building’s predominant focal point. The entire building will be clad in a porous, bronze-like material.

NCPC commended the Smithsonian for coordinating extensively on the museum’s design with NCPC staff and other stakeholder agencies, an effort members said resulted in a better scaled and more efficient museum. The Smithsonian and design team started with three different design concepts and blended and modified them to develop the current design. The most noticeable changes include a reduction in the size of the Corona and a change in the museum’s placement on the site. These improvements helped to retain views of the Washington Monument from Constitution Avenue and improve access across the museum site.

“The National Museum of African American History and Culture will be a significant addition to the National Mall,” said NCPC Chairman L. Preston Bryant, Jr. “This design, although still in concept phase, is a positive example of how modern architecture can be successfully integrated into the landscape of a historic setting. As stewards of many of the most treasured places in the nation’s capital, NCPC looks forward to guiding the project through its subsequent design phases. Upon completion, I’ve no doubt this project will enable current and future generations to celebrate the important contributions of African Americans to the nation.”

Also today, the Commission approved the final Transportation Management Plan (TMP) submitted by the Department of the Army for the BRAC 133 project under construction at the Mark Center. The project is located west of the intersection of I-395 and Seminary Road in Alexandria, Virginia.

The BRAC site adds two office towers with space for 6,409 employees, two parking garages with approximately 3,800 spaces, a transit center, and a remote inspection facility on approximately 16-acres. The TMP includes details as to how the Army will implement its proposed transportation modal split between single occupancy automobiles and other transport modes.

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In its approval the Commission required the Army to submit quarterly reports demonstrating whether changes to the TMP are necessary, and to submit within six months an update on progress of discussions with bus providers on possible bus route alternatives to better increase service to the Mark Center.

The Commission also noted that legislation currently in the Fiscal Year 2011 Defense Budget Authorization includes language inserted by Congressman James Moran that limits the Mark Center to 1,000 parking spaces unless the Army can maintain current levels of service for adjacent streets and intersections. If this legislation passes, a new Transportation Management Plan will be required.

The Commission also approved preliminary and final site development plans for two bicycle-related projects. The first is for the installation of Capital Bikeshare stations in the District of Columbia. Currently there are 100 SmartBikes in the city, and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) proposes to increase this number to 1,000 at 85 different locations. The goal is to have all locations installed by November 2010. The new system will be part of a cooperative effort with Arlington County. The Commission approved all the proposed locations except for two – one located at the intersection of New York Avenue and 15th Street, NW, and another on the National Mall. The Commission delegated approval for those two locations to NCPC's Executive Director following further coordination with the National Park Service and other stakeholders.

Also approved was a proposal to install a 10-foot wide, two-way bike lane on the west side of 15th Street from Euclid Street (in Columbia Heights) to Pennsylvania Avenue, NW near the White House. Excepted from this approval is the portion of the bike lane south of H Street, NW including Madison Place, Pennsylvania Avenue, and a portion of 15th Street, NW pending further consultation between NCPC and DDOT regarding outstanding planning issues here. The bike lane will be separated by vehicular traffic by a continuous line of plastic flexposts (6' apart) and a two-foot wide painted buffer.

The Commission commented favorably on concept designs for a temporary modular office trailer to be located at the National Park Service's (NPS) National Mall and Memorial Parks Headquarters in East Potomac Park. This new temporary facility will provide office space for NPS staff. The 128 foot by 32 foot modular office trailer is expected to be in use for about four years.

In reviewing a second project submitted by the National Park Service, the Commission approved NPS's final site and building plans for improvements to Jones Point Park in Alexandria, Virginia. An elevated portion of I-495 leading up to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge crosses through the middle of the 65-acre park, which is located adjacent to the Potomac River. The proposed improvements, mitigation for construction of the bridge, will include a new athletic field, basketball courts, piers, signage, and a community garden.

In the last item on the agenda the Commission adopted the Federal Capital Improvements Program for the National Capital, Fiscal Years 2011-2016 (FCIP), and directed staff to provide it to the Office of Management and Budget, regional jurisdictions, and other interested parties. This year's FCIP contains 146 projects submitted by 14 different federal agencies with an estimated total cost of \$8.6 billion. The General Services Administration has the most projects with 39 and the Army is second with 20. Of the projects, 70 are in the District of Columbia, 45 in Maryland, 30 in Virginia, and one is elsewhere in the National Capital Region. NCPC also submitted 18 projects.

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

- Preliminary and final site and building plans for the replacement of Gates 1 and 2 at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for the installation of an interior security fence at the United States Naval Observatory at 3450 Massachusetts Avenue, NW.
- Comments on concept designs for a new boiler plant at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center at 50 Irving Street, NW.
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for a new commons and health care center at the Armed Forces Retirement Home at 3700 North Capitol Street, NW.
- Final site and building plans for a Verizon Wireless Communications Facility at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland.
- Comments on concept designs for a temporary screening facility at the Pentagon Metro station entrance in Arlington, Virginia.

The final agenda, along with staff recommendations for each project reviewed, can be found here:
http://www.ncpc.gov/DocumentDepot/Final_Agendas/FinalAgenda_September2010.pdf

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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