



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
March 4, 2010

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NCPC Reviews Draft National Mall Plan and Federal Triangle Heritage Trail Assessment Study

Federal Office Building 8 and Federal Reserve Board Martin Building also on agenda

Washington, DC – At its monthly meeting today the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) commented favorably on the draft National Mall Plan submitted and developed by the National Park Service (NPS). The Commission noted that the draft plan is well-considered and equally balances two important objectives: the stewardship of the Mall’s natural and cultural resources and public access and use.

The draft plan is a comprehensive long-term stewardship and management framework that will provide an overall vision for the approximately 684-acre symbolic landscape that serves as America’s preeminent civic gathering place. The plan provides guidance for future planning, stewardship, design, and implementation efforts for the Mall’s cultural and natural resources as well as improvement of its physical condition. It provides guidance to improve the overall visitor experience, creates and improves sites for national celebrations and special events, and accommodates First Amendment demonstrations.

Improved pedestrian and cycling paths, new transit services, and other improvements will facilitate access and mobility. New signs will assist visitors with wayfinding. Other amenities include new and improved restrooms, food service, and information kiosks. The draft plan also seeks to create an overall identity for the National Mall and emphasize it as a year-round destination, and provide additional facilities for recreation and entertainment.

The Commission commended the National Park Service for developing a draft National Mall Plan that complements other current planning efforts including NCPC and CFA’s *Monumental Core Framework Plan*, the District’s Center City Action Agenda, and the U.S. Capitol Complex Master Plan developed by the Architect of the Capitol.

In its comments NCPC recommended that in the final plan, NPS add and update the maps and analysis with projects now in development, prioritize short-term and long-term projects to support the plan’s progress and implementation, incorporate findings of the National Mall turf study that will be completed in the fall, amplify the discussion for improving sustainable resource management, resume planning and development of the proposed visitor transportation system, and implement the 2003 Olin landscape plans for the Washington Monument grounds.

The National Park Service is accepting public comments on the draft plan and related draft Environmental Impact Statement through March 18, 2010. The Park Service anticipates bringing the final National Mall Plan before the Commission for final review in fall 2010.

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In other action, the Commission approved preliminary and final site development plans for site improvements and perimeter security for Federal Office Building 8 located at 200 C Street, SW. The General Services Administration (GSA) plans to convert the Modernist-style building—constructed in 1965 as laboratory space for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration—into office space primarily for staff of the Legislative Branch. At its January 2010 meeting, NCPC approved preliminary and final building plans for the building’s renovation.

The plans propose to transform an existing surface parking lot located along C Street into a landscaped plaza that would provide an entry forecourt into the building. The plans also call for using hardened street furnishings as perimeter security elements around the building’s four sides. These furnishings include benches, bike racks, bollards, streetlights, garden walls, newspaper boxes, and trash receptacles. The perimeter security plan presented today responded to previously unfavorable comments made by the Commission at its October 2007 meeting. The Commission noted that GSA worked with NCPC staff and with other federal and local agencies to ensure that the new perimeter security elements will be successfully incorporated into the urban landscape with little impact on the surrounding public space.

During review of the Federal Reserve Board’s Martin Building located at 2000 C Street, NW, the Commission commented favorably on plans for a visitor screening facility and conference center additions. The Federal Reserve proposes to build an approximately 11,000 square foot visitor screening pavilion at the Martin Building’s C Street (southern) entrance that would serve as the main entryway to both the Martin Building and the adjacent Eccles Building. In addition, the Board proposed adding an approximately 35,000 square foot conference center that will renovate existing podium level interior space on the building’s south side and add two new one-story pavilions on the east and west sides. The project will improve overall security at the two-building complex and allow visitors to attend events in the conference center without having access to the rest of the building.

The Commission required the Federal Reserve to work with NCPC staff to determine whether a proposed guard booth along 21st Street, NW could be relocated inside the building property lines, and to coordinate with NCPC staff and the District of Columbia to ensure that all proposed improvements in the public space are consistent with local standards. This project will come back before the Commission for preliminary and final approvals.

In the final project on the agenda, the Commission commented favorably on the goals and objectives of Federal Triangle Heritage Trail Assessment Study and directed NCPC staff to pursue implementation of the project. The idea for a heritage trail through the Federal Triangle was first noted in the 1982 Federal Triangle Master Plan. The concept proposed by NCPC and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts in the 2009 *Monumental Core Framework Plan* seeks to create a self-guided tour that highlights the art, architecture, history, commemoration, and government uses of the Federal Triangle and functions as a connection between downtown and the National Mall.

NCPC staff partnered with Cultural Tourism DC to examine the creation of this heritage trail. The study provides a look at the factors needed to design and implement the trail, and examines four components: content and design, agency coordination, sign fabrication, and permitting/installation. There are currently ten heritage trails in the District of Columbia.

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This month's agenda also included five consent calendar items (no presentations given) approved by the Commission:

- Preliminary and final building plans for a rooftop wireless telecommunications facility at the Forrestal Building, the U.S. Department of Energy headquarters, located at 1000 Independence Avenue, SW in Washington, DC
- Preliminary and final site development plans for new gates and traffic mitigation measures at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for a robotics test facility in Building 207 at the National Institute of Standards in Gaithersburg, Maryland
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for the restoration and rehabilitation of Peirce Mill located in Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC
- Modification of a Planned Unit Development and time extension in Square 4325 in the Fort Lincoln Gateway Village, Northeast Washington, DC

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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