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NCPC Approves VA Medical Center Master Plan, Street Closings in Southeast DC, and a Resolution Supporting MWCOG

Washington, DC – At its May 6 meeting the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) approved the master plan for the 35-acre Veterans Affairs Medical Center Campus located at the intersection of North Capitol Street and Michigan Avenue in Northwest Washington, DC.

Submitted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the master plan proposes to expand and modernize the existing 900,000 square foot medical center building with 818,000 gross square feet of additional space that will improve medical care for veterans in the National Capital Region and transform the complex into the VA's flagship medical center.

The proposed development will take place in four phases during a 20 year period. The plan will increase inpatient and outpatient areas, add a new long-term living facility space, add medical research space, consolidate administrative functions, and improve site utilities. Green space will increase from 19 to 33 percent of the campus acreage. Each of the components will be submitted to NCPC for approval.

In other action, the Commission supported a request by the District of Columbia to close sections of Virginia Avenue, M, and 14th Streets in Southeast Washington, DC, provided that the development plan is modified to respect the viewsheds. The streets are adjacent to Square 1048-S and Reservations 129, 130, and 299. The closure would allow for the construction of a mixed-use development that would contain approximately 815,000 gross square feet of space and be used for office, hotel, retail, and commercial purposes.

Today's action supports the recommendation of the District's own Historic Preservation Review Board that any encroachment on L'Enfant views and vistas be completely avoided or minimized to the maximum extent possible. The Commission advised the Council of the District of Columbia that the proposed street closings and associated development plan would not have a negative impact on the federal interest provided that no development takes place within rights-of-way of L'Enfant streets. NCPC recommended that the development plan be modified to respect the Virginia Avenue, M, and 14th Streets, SE viewsheds. The street closure is part of a settlement for a case involving the District of Columbia government and the Cohen Companies, majority owner of 1333 M Street, SE, LLC, to resolve a lawsuit.

The Commission today also adopted a resolution in support of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's (COG) *Region Forward* Report and Greater Washington 2050 Compact.

In its resolution the Commission reaffirmed its commitment to work with COG to strengthen federal/local collaboration on regional projects of joint interest and to help advance these important initiatives. Commission members heard from COG's Executive Director Dave Robertson who thanked NCPC for its collaborative work to enhance the quality of life in the National Capital Region.

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

- Preliminary and final site development plans for perimeter security at the U.S. Marine Corps Barracks' Commandant's Residence (Quarters 6) in Southeast, Washington, DC;
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for improvements to the Russell Gate at the U.S. Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Virginia;
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for a new aircraft maintenance hangar type II (Greenside) at the U.S. Marine Corps Base, Marine Corps Air Facility in Quantico, Virginia;
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for the adaptive reuse Phase 1B, including buildings 31, 33, 34, 37, 49, 56, and 71 at the St. Elizabeths West Campus in Southeast, Washington, DC;
- A highway plan amendment for West Virginia Avenue, NE between Fenwick Street, NE and Mount Olivet Road, NE in Squares 4045 and 4046, in Washington, DC;
- A highway plan amendment for removal of a portion of 30th Place, NE, Square, 4376 in 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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