

MEDIA RELEASE



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NCPC Approves Security Improvements to the Lincoln Memorial and Mall-Wide Security Enhancements to Smithsonian Buildings

Washington, DC – The National Capital Planning Commission today approved proposed security enhancements at the Lincoln Memorial and Smithsonian Institution buildings along the Mall during its monthly public meeting.

The Commission reviewed preliminary site and building plans submitted by the National Park Service for two concession buildings near the Lincoln Memorial, in addition to final site and building plans for a retaining wall along three sides of the monument facing Memorial Circle. The Commission last reviewed plans for visitor and security improvements at the Lincoln Memorial in December, when it asked the Park Service to return with alternative drawings for the concession buildings due to concerns about the roof design. The revised design has a lower roof height and is consistent with the style of other concession stands already located on the Mall. Following a staff presentation and public testimony, the Commission voted to grant preliminary approval to the revised design, and to final plans to construct a 35-inch-high granite retaining wall around the north, west, and south sides of the Memorial Circle.

The Commission today also approved a concept plan for Mall-wide perimeter security proposed by the Smithsonian Institution for ten of its institutions located on the Mall. NCPC staff commended the Smithsonian for following the guidelines established in NCPC's National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan and recommended that the Commission approve the Smithsonian's concept design.

"We believe the Smithsonian's concept design is creative, thoughtful and well executed," said Patricia Gallagher, executive director of NCPC. "They submitted a wide range of quality, custom-designed elements such as benches, light poles, and urns that are in context with the historic fabric of the mall precinct. It's an extremely well designed plan that will provide adequate security, while at the same time enhancing and respecting the architecture and landscape setting along the Mall."

The Smithsonian plan will rid the facilities of temporary security measures, which currently include planter pots and industrial looking vehicular controls that were erected following the events of September 11, 2001. The plan encompasses the area on the Mall between Constitution Avenue and Independence Avenue, and 4th Street, NW and 14th Street, NW.

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NCPC's urban design and security plan recommends a variety of perimeter security solutions for the Monumental Core. Adopted by the Commission in October 2002, the plan offers creative measures for providing security while preserving the historic beauty and urban design fabric of Washington. Since the adoption of the plan, the Commission reviews both temporary and permanent security upgrades for monuments and federal facilities in the nation's capital.

In addition to the Lincoln Memorial and Smithsonian security improvements, the Commission heard several presentations for informational purposes. Representatives of The Trust for the National Mall, a new private nonprofit foundation that recently formed a public/private partnership with the National Park Service, discussed their plans to refurbish the National Mall. Similar partnerships are credited with restoring other great parcels of land in the country, including the Golden Gate Parks in San Francisco, and Central Park in New York City.

"The National Capital Planning Commission shares the National Park Service's desire to preserve the historic integrity and urban design of the National Mall," said John V. Cogbill, III, chairman of the Commission. "As our national gathering place, the Mall serves as the stage for some of the country's most important political and social gatherings. We believe a public/private partnership can bring together a variety of vital resources, including a broad constituency of regional and national public support to help restore the Mall to a world-class urban space."

Prior to adjourning, NCPC staff presented an update of the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, the planning document that establishes goals and policies for future federal development in the region. Staff has completed work on the Federal Elements and in anticipation of its public release, presented a draft to the Commissioners. The seven Federal Elements that will be included in the final Comp Plan are the federal environment, federal facilities, foreign missions, parks and open space, transportation, historic preservation, and visitors.

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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