

# MEDIA RELEASE



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For Immediate Release  
May 7, 2009

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## **NCPC to Review Potomac Park Levee, New Signs for the Mall, and Concept Design for the United States Coast Guard Headquarters**

*Information briefings on Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center, North Capitol Street  
Urban Design Feasibility Study, and Andrews Air Force Base Master Plan also on the agenda*

**Washington, DC** – At its May meeting at 12:30 p.m. today, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) will consider a National Park Service (NPS) proposal for improvements to the Potomac Park levee near Constitution Avenue and 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW. The Park Service is requesting approval of preliminary and final site development plans for phase one of the project, and is seeking comments on the concept design for phase two.

Phase one improvements address FEMA requirements for a more reliable and effective means of flood protection. They call for an approximately 120-foot long removable post and panel system that will cross 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The improvements also include two concrete flood walls and tree replacement that is necessary for mitigation. The second phase will include stone cladding for the flood walls, a vault for storage of the post and panel system, and additional site work.

The second item on the agenda is a National Park Service submission for approval of preliminary and final site development plans for proposed new signs for the National Mall and neighboring memorial parks. The Park Service proposes to replace 327 existing signs on the National Mall and East Potomac Park with approximately 305 new ones.

The proposed signs will identify locations at National Park Service facilities and communicate Park Service rules and regulations. The signs will follow the Park Service's UniGuide Sign system that establishes standards for outdoor signs at nationwide NPS locations. Future reviews will include proposed wayfinding pylons and maps designed for the unique landscape of the National Mall, in addition to proposed identification signs at memorials.

The final action item on the agenda is a submission by the General Services Administration for concept review of the United States Coast Guard Headquarters to be located on the St. Elizabeths west campus in southeast Washington, DC. The concept design includes plans for the Coast Guard headquarters and the West Ravine parking garage. Both projects will be constructed in phase one of the St. Elizabeths Campus Master Plan.

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The 1.17 million square foot Coast Guard headquarters building will be home to approximately 3,900 employees and will be built on a steep embankment overlooking the Anacostia River. The building's entry will be at the top of a plateau, across from the historic Center Building's west wing. The building will be designed to blend into the city's green topographic bowl. Its façades—to be constructed from materials including brick, native stone, glass, metal and vegetation—will be designed to recall the site's historic buildings in a more modern and abstract way.

The seven-level parking garage, with two underground levels, will be built in two phases and will accommodate nearly 2,000 cars when completed. Both the headquarters and the garage will have green roofs. A power plant, security fence, Gate 4, and a proposed access road between Gate 4 and Firth Sterling Avenue—other elements of the first phase of the St. Elizabeths master plan—are not included in this submission.

The Commission also will hear three information presentations (no action taken). The National Park Service will provide an update on design plans for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center. The Commission last provided comments on the concept design for the Center in December of 2007. The second presentation will discuss gateway streetscapes for North Capitol Street between Michigan and Hawaii Avenues and three alternative scenarios and design options for replacing the existing cloverleaf interchange at North Capitol Street and Irving Street, NW. In the final information presentation, the Commission will hear the current status of the Air Force's efforts to update the master plan for Andrews Air Force Base located in Prince George's County, Maryland.

This month's agenda also includes five consent calendar items (no presentation given): garage infill at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History for museum support space and the Smithsonian early enrichment center; plans for the renewal of a permit for an existing telecommunications tower and the addition of new antennas at the Turner Fairbank Highway Research Center in Fairfax County, Virginia; plans for the modernization of Building W-200 at the Washington Navy Yard; plans for improvements to Columbus Circle and Columbus Plaza in front of Union Station; and approval of comments to the mayor and city council on the District of Columbia FY2010 Proposed Budget and Financial Plan, FY2010-FY2015 Capital Appendices.

Information regarding actions taken at the Commission meeting can be accessed at [www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov).

*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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