

For Immediate Release  
October 26, 2009

Lisa MacSpadden  
202-482-7263 or [lisa@ncpc.gov](mailto:lisa@ncpc.gov)  
Stephen Staudigl  
202-482-7279 or [stephen@ncpc.gov](mailto:stephen@ncpc.gov)

## **NCPC Approves Perimeter Security at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial**

**Washington, DC** – At a special meeting today the National Capital Planning Commission approved a revised perimeter security plan for the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial. The project will be located on the National Mall on a four-acre site near the Tidal Basin. NCPC scheduled today's meeting at the request of the Secretary of the Interior.

The Commission had approved preliminary and final site and building plans for the memorial in September 2008, except for a proposed donor wall and perimeter security elements. The Commission concluded at that time that the applicant's submitted threat assessment was inconclusive in supporting the need for perimeter security. The donor wall was subsequently removed from the project.

For the revised plan reviewed today, the National Park Service (NPS) integrated the proposed security elements into the overall design of the memorial and provided supplemental threat assessment materials to justify its proposal.

The Park Service worked in conjunction with the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, Inc. on the new submission and developed it in accordance with NCPC's *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan Objectives and Policies*.

The revised plan features a depressed planter situated at the main entrance near the intersection of Independence Avenue and West Basin Drive, SW. The planter would rise to a maximum height of 2-feet 3-inches above grade and contain low-lying plants and two American elm trees. Bollards would be located across the memorial's pedestrian entryways on either side of the planter and at the two side entrances. The memorial's existing retaining walls would provide the bulk of the perimeter security. The original design featured a line of eight bollards located in the memorial's forecourt with additional bollards located at the memorial's two side entrances.

Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Thomas Strickland, and National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis attended today's meeting and spoke in support of the revised plan on behalf of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar.

"We recognize the historic nature of this project and how important it is to the citizens of this country," said Assistant Secretary Strickland. "We greatly appreciate the courtesy that the Commission has extended to the process and to the Department to accommodate this."

In offering a motion to accept the Executive Director's Recommendation to approve the revised plan, Commissioner Arrington Dixon spoke about the importance of the memorial to Dr. King. "I think that it is particularly significant that the fragile nature of peace and nonviolence be commemorated on our National Mall," said Mr. Dixon. "We've done a lot about war there, but this is clearly one about peace and nonviolence, which is a very fragile component of our society world-wide."

“The revised proposal better respects the values and ideals of Dr. King and it improves the design of the memorial’s entrance,” said Dr. Ed Jackson, executive architect of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation. “With NCPC’s approval we now look forward to having the National Park Service issue the necessary construction permit so that we can break ground on this important monument to America’s preeminent civil rights leader.”

“Martin Luther King, Jr. devoted his life to seeking openness and accessibility for all,” said NCPC Chairman L. Preston Bryant. “I appreciate the National Park Service’s efforts to develop a security scheme that respects the legacy of Dr. King and his family. It is only fitting that a memorial in Dr. King’s honor be inclusive and open and that it represent the principles he so strongly advocated throughout his lifetime.”

When completed, the memorial will feature three main design elements, including the *Mountain of Despair*, a curved *Inscription Wall*, and the *Stone of Hope* featuring the likeness of Dr. King.

*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.*

###