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## **NCPC Comments Favorably on Concept Plans for Lincoln Memorial** *Proposed Plans for 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridges also Reviewed*

**Washington, DC** – At its September meeting today the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) commented favorably on the National Park Service’s (NPS) concept plans to rehabilitate the grounds on the east side of the Lincoln Memorial and adjacent areas in West Potomac Park. Included in the proposal are plans to rehabilitate the Reflecting Pool and nearby Elm Walks. The NPS would add concrete pathways on both sides of the Reflecting Pool. The Elm Walks, which extend past the World War II Memorial to 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, would be refurbished with new lighting, benches, and trash receptacles. The project is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The NPS is also proposing to integrate security elements into the design. Two new ADA accessible curved paths would connect Lincoln Memorial Circle with the Reflecting Pool without altering the historic central stairs. Retaining walls and bollards would be incorporated into the landscape near these new paths. NCPC recommended that the Park Service use security-barrier walls that are lower in height than the 36 inch walls proposed in the concept plan so that they can be used as seating walls and be compatibly integrated into the historic landscape.

“They are pulling back the concrete and steel barriers and opening the vista,” said NCPC Chairman John V. Cogbill, III. “The changes will allow for an unobstructed view between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument...two of the most recognized iconic structures in the nation.”

The project will also address the source and quality of the water in the Reflecting Pool. This is still under study and will be submitted to NCPC for review at a later date.

The second item reviewed by the Commission was a concept design submission by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) for replacement of the 40-year-old 11<sup>th</sup> Street bridges that cross the Anacostia River. DDOT plans to construct two new bridges, one for freeway traffic and one for local traffic. In order to accommodate new ramp configurations, the Commission today approved the transfer of land of approximately 1.5 acres of Reservation 343D (Anacostia Park) from the National Park Service to the District of Columbia.

The proposed bridge replacement project seeks to improve connections between I-695 (the Southeast/Southwest Freeway) and I-295 (the Anacostia Freeway). It would eliminate structural deficiencies and provide needed enhancements to the bridge and approach ramp structures. It is designed to reduce congestion, improve traffic mobility, increase traffic safety, and provide alternative emergency routes.

The local bridge would provide a 14’ wide shared-use path for walking, jogging, and bicycling and be built with tracks to permit a streetcar route in the future. The proposal includes components to accommodate overhead wires.

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In addition to approving the land transfer, NCPC voiced support for the replacement of the existing bridges as well as for the city's streetcar initiative. However, it noted concern about the use of an overhead wire system within the historic Washington City (L'Enfant City) and Georgetown because of its conflict with a federal law that maintains the unobstructed views to important landmarks along city streets and avenues that are integral to the capital's unique character. The Commission action also reflected the District's commitment to study the potential environmental impacts of the proposed city-wide streetcar system in an Environmental Impact Statement.

In other action, the Commission adopted the Fiscal Years 2010-2015 Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP) for the National Capital Region. In its adoption, the Commission directed NCPC staff to provide the approved FCIP to the Office of Management and Budget, to National Capital Region jurisdictions, and to other interested parties. The plan contains 182 proposed projects submitted by 16 federal agencies with an estimated total cost of \$10.3 billion. The General Services Administration has the most projects with 42, and the Army is second with 35. Of these projects, 82 are in the District of Columbia, 54 are in Maryland, 44 are in Virginia, and two are elsewhere in the NCR. In addition, NCPC submitted 32 additional projects for future programming.

The Commission also reviewed two reports to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia. The first was a Consolidated Planned Unit Development (PUD), First Stage PUD, and related map amendment to construct a mixed-use development featuring a hotel and conference center, restaurant, retail, and residential uses at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Irving Street, NE. The map amendment would change the zoning from unzoned to C-3-A, which would allow for mixed-use development and the requested building heights.

NCPC advised the Zoning Commission that the Consolidated PUD and related map amendment would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, nor would it adversely affect any other federal interest. However, NCPC found that the proposed First Stage PUD would have an adverse impact on an identified federal interest. The proposed inclusion of residential units is inconsistent with acceptable uses outlined in a March 7, 1990 Statement of Non-Disturbance between the General Services Administration and the District of Columbia government.

In the second project, NCPC noted that a proposed Consolidated PUD for construction of 34 new row houses on a three-acre site at 4460 MacArthur Boulevard, NW (Square 1356), and a related map amendment to change the zoning from R-1-B to R-5-A to allow for higher density, would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, nor would it adversely affect any other federal interest.

This month's agenda included two consent calendar items (no presentations given):

- Preliminary and final site development plans for a public art project in the median of New York Avenue, NW between 9th and 13th Streets, NW.
- Preliminary and final site development plans for road improvements at Fort Belvoir in Fairfax County, Virginia.

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