

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

NCPC File No. 0348



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN FISCAL YEARS 2005-2010

Submitted by the Mayor of the District of Columbia

May 27, 2004

Abstract

The Commission is providing comments to the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia on the District's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for Fiscal Years (FY) 2005-2010. The Commission's federal-interest recommendations note that: many of DC's proposed and ongoing capital expenditures support federal interests; some projects require further submissions to NCPC, or should be coordinated with NCPC and other federal agencies; and more detailed information on many transportation projects is scheduled for later release, and should be referred to the Commission for further comment.

Commission Action Requested

Approval of comments to the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8723 (b).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Commends the inclusion of many projects that support federal interests such as:

- Contributing to the overall image of the nation's capital.
- Preserving the historic features of the built environment as well as historical artifacts and data, which preserve and convey the history of the nation's capital.
- Improving databases covering real property.
- Undertaking long-range planning efforts, particularly the update to the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Enhancing the transportation system, particularly transit.

Requests further coordination with federal agencies on projects involving locations and topics of special shared interest, pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b) (1) and/or § 8722 (e)), including:

- St. Elizabeths Hospital (NCPC, General Services Administration (GSA)).
- The area covered by the Anacostia Waterfront initiative, particularly in the vicinity of South Capitol Street (NCPC, GSA, National Park Service (NPS), Department of Defense).
- The site of the former Convention Center (NCPC, NPS).
- Projects involving sites currently used or proposed for park, open space, or recreational uses (NCPC, NPS).
- Geographic information system (GIS) and real property databases for the District of Columbia (NCPC).

Notes the requirement for Commission review of several categories of projects, including:

- Acquisition or disposition of land or buildings by the DC government (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b) (1) and § 8734 (a)).
- Land and building development projects by the DC government, including park projects and alterations that affect the exterior of a structure or its grounds (40 U.S.C. §8722 (b) (1) and § 8722(e)).
- District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital (40 U.S.C. § 8721).

Requires the submission for Commission review of the Highway Trust Fund Program component of the CIP, when it becomes available, pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8723 (b).

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CIP is part of the Mayor's FY 2005 Proposed Budget and Financial Plan (FYs 2005-2010), which is sent to the Council of the District of Columbia for review and adoption, and then to Congress for review and enactment through federal legislation. The Commission's review is pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8723 (b), which specifies that "...each year, the Mayor of the District of Columbia shall submit to the Commission a copy of the multiyear capital improvements plan for the District of Columbia.... The Commission has 30 days in which to comment on the plan but may not change or disapprove of the plan."

The CIP defines capital improvements as "those that, because of expected long-term useful lives and high costs, require large amounts of capital funding. These funds are spent over a multi-year period and result in a fixed asset. ... Such assets generally have a useful life of more than three years and cost more than \$250,000." The CIP covers capital expenses anticipated for the next six budget years, including near-term expenses for FY 2005 that are part of the currently proposed FY 2005

budget. The range of CIP projects includes renovation, major repair, and maintenance of existing facilities; new construction and equipment; building and land purchases; long-range planning studies; and various technology and database projects.

The CIP contains 97 ongoing projects and 114 new projects, from agencies throughout the DC government. The total six-year cost is proposed at \$1.96 billion. The proposed spending for capital projects in FY 2005 is \$555.6 million (within an overall FY 2005 proposed budget of \$6.2 billion). The capital funds will be significantly supplemented by money from the Highway Trust Fund, administered by the Federal Highway Administration through a program that provides 80 percent federal money to match 20 percent local contributions for transportation projects. The Mayor has not included the Highway Trust Fund Program in this year's CIP, but will release this information in June. Additionally, projects for the DC court system are not part of the CIP.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Most of the projects contained in the District's proposed budget and financial plan are rehabilitation projects or projects to address deficiencies in, or improve the safety of, existing infrastructure; most such projects do not appear to have any adverse impacts on the federal establishment. Many projects will serve to promote a variety of federal interests. A number of projects will require coordination with the Commission and the appropriate federal department or agency.

A large portion of the CIP projects involve the rehabilitation and improvement of public buildings and public space throughout the District of Columbia. Many such projects involve prominent locations, where such improvements -- in addition to their local impact -- will also enhance the overall image of the nation's capital. Additionally, many such facilities were originally constructed by the federal government and convey the history of federal involvement in the development of the District of Columbia. Examples (noted with the relevant DC agencies) include several categories of buildings that form networks of facilities that define the civic character of the capital city:

- Schools (DC Public Schools)
- Libraries (DC Public Library)
- Park fieldhouses (Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Firehouses (Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department)

NCPC is initiating a study of parks and open spaces in DC and the region, which will consider the combined impact of federal and other publicly and privately controlled parks and open space properties. It will be important for DC to coordinate plans and projects involving current or potential parks and open spaces with NCPC, as well as NPS.

Additional enhancements to the capital's image include the investment in public art (Commission on the Arts and Humanities), and the maintenance and planting of street trees (Department of Transportation). The DC government's continued investment in these capital projects helps to assure their continued role in defining the capital's image, as well as their local benefits.

Since many of the rehabilitation projects involve historic structures, it is important that their historic character be respected and enhanced as part of the capital investments. The CIP notes that "approximately half of the District-owned buildings under the purview of Property Management were constructed prior to 1945." In particular, the projects for improving accessibility (in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act) should be carefully designed to minimize any adverse impact on the historic character of public facilities.

Several projects relate to particular historic structures that are listed as federal landmarks on the National Register of Historic Places, or are located within federally recognized Historic Districts. The continued investment in these properties helps to preserve and promote their recognized federal significance. Examples include:

- Old Naval Hospital (Office of Property Management; owned by federal government, administered by DC).
- Eastern Market (Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development).
- LeDroit Park (streetscape improvements) (Department of Transportation).

The CIP also includes investment in the DC archives, through renovation of the existing archives building (at 1300 Naylor Court NW), and eventual construction of a new state-of-the-art facility at an undetermined location. The DC archives contain records and artifacts that supplement the federally-owned records of the National Archives, Library of Congress, Smithsonian Institution, and other agencies. Collectively, these federal and local archival collections, along with historic structures and landscapes, convey the history of the nation's capital. The DC government's investment in preserving and protecting its share of these resources is therefore supportive of federal interests.

Several projects in the CIP relate to areas of special shared interest for DC and federal planning efforts, and would benefit from continued coordination with federal agencies. These include:

- St. Elizabeths Hospital (Office of Property Management).
CIP projects at St. Elizabeths include the relocation of remaining DC operations on the West Campus to the East Campus. When the relocation is complete, these surplus West Campus facilities will be transferred to federal control through the General Services Administration (GSA). The relocation process should be coordinated with GSA to ensure the ongoing maintenance and protection of these facilities, which are part of a Historic District listed on the National Register. NCPC is also participating in planning for the future use of the West Campus, so DC should coordinate St. Elizabeths projects with the Commission.
- The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative area, and particularly the South Capitol Street corridor.
The Commission and the DC Office of Planning (DC-OP) have been cooperating in the planning of this area, and projects in this vicinity should be coordinated with both agencies. Examples include the proposed Government Center in Anacostia (Office

of Property Management) and any transportation projects that may be identified with the Highway Trust Fund Program. Projects in this area should be coordinated with NCPC, and with the federal agencies managing land within this area, including the General Services Administration, National Park Service, and Department of Defense.

- The site of the former Convention Center, bounded by 9th, 11th, and H Streets and New York Avenue, NW (Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development).
The CIP project is for demolition of the former Convention Center. The Commission maintains an interest in planning for the redevelopment of this site, and continues to expect that DC will re-open 10th and I streets along their historic rights-of-way through the site, as required in the 1995 Memorandum of Agreement for the [MCI] Arena, whose signatories include NCPC and DC. This site also includes a small parcel under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS), so projects on this site should be coordinated with both NPS and NCPC.
- Park and open space projects (Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Planning, and Department of Transportation).
As noted above, these projects should be coordinated with NCPC and NPS as the Commission undertakes a special study of open space in DC and throughout the region.

In addition to these projects affecting buildings and open space, several other types of initiatives relate to federal interests:

- Geographic Information Systems and real property records (Office of the Chief Technology Officer)
The CIP calls for further investment in creating and maintaining DC's Geographic Information System (GIS). This effort should be coordinated with NCPC to assure compatibility with federal GIS systems, particularly the Washington Geographic Information System (WGIS) project, and efficiency of data collection. In addition, DC's investment in improving its databases of property District-wide, and of DC government real property (totaling approximately 2,400 properties), should be coordinated with NCPC to support planning efforts of federal as well as local agencies.
- Metro (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA))
The CIP includes \$694 million over six years for DC's "local match to WMATA's capital plan." (Operating funds are not included in the CIP.) This will support acquisition of new buses and rail cars, rehabilitation of the Metrorail system, and construction and rehabilitation of bus garage facilities. These ongoing investments in transit are supportive of federal efforts to rely on transit for the effective operation of the region's transportation system, serving the commuting needs of the federal workforce, and additional needs for visitors and major special events. This capital

investment also furthers the Commission's desire, expressed in its resolution in April 2004, to encourage state and local funding for WMATA's urgent capital priorities.

The Office of Property Management has also coordinated with WMATA in locating a new headquarters for the DC Departments of Employment Services and Human Services adjacent to the Minnesota Avenue Metrorail station, including construction of a replacement WMATA garage structure. This project is consistent with the Commission's Comprehensive Plan policy and Federal Capital Improvement Program (FCIP) recommendations that encourage employment concentrations to be located near Metrorail stations.

- Other transportation projects (Department of Transportation)

The projects listed in the CIP are mostly for general area-wide improvements to roads, alleys, streetlights, curbs, culverts, and other parts of the transportation infrastructure. These projects serve federal interests by contributing to the operation and character of the nation's capital and enhancing its historic street system. Specific projects noted above include streetscape improvements in historic LeDroit Park, and the planting and maintenance of street trees. However, most of the specific project descriptions will be included in the forthcoming Highway Trust Fund Program. The Commission should have the opportunity to review this document for federal interests, as an extension of its CIP review role.

- Long-range and comprehensive planning (Office of Planning (OP))

The CIP includes funds for OP's project to update the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The Commission strongly supports this project, which is linked to NCPC's current update of the Federal Elements, expected for adoption this August. The project would benefit from ongoing coordination with NCPC, as well as the required formal Commission review of the updated District Elements when they are adopted.

The CIP also includes funds for "planning activities associated with major capital projects undertaken ... in FY 2003 and 2004." Such projects should be coordinated with NCPC or other appropriate federal agencies, where relevant. Additionally, OP is requesting funds "to develop a comprehensive report on public facilities, ... propose standards for location of facilities, recommend the number of facilities the District should maintain, [and] recommend capital priorities." This project should be coordinated with the planning efforts of NCPC, GSA, and the National Park Service.

The Commission's existing authority covers many of the projects listed in the CIP, and the appropriate DC agencies should submit these projects to the Commission at the appropriate stage of detailed siting and design work. NCPC's authority for DC government projects covers: acquisition or disposition of land or buildings; land and building development projects (including park projects); and alterations affecting parks or the exterior of buildings or their grounds. The Commission also

reviews the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. DC agencies should consult with Commission staff to determine the submission requirements for particular projects.

Additionally, the Highway Trust Fund Program is normally included as part of the CIP submission for NCPC review. Although DC is placing this program on a different schedule this year, it is important that the Commission have an opportunity to review this document for federal interests, including coordination with recommendations listed in the FCIP. For example, the Commission is particularly interested in the major infrastructure investments anticipated in the South Capitol Street and Anacostia River areas, including work on the Frederick Douglass Bridge; and in supporting light rail projects that complement the existing regional transit system.

PROJECT CONFORMANCE

National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act is not applicable to this submission, due to the Commission's limited role in providing comments, and the general nature of the CIP proposals.

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act is not applicable to this submission, due to the Commission's limited role in providing comments, and the general nature of the CIP proposals.