

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN FISCAL YEARS 2009-2014

Submitted by the Mayor of the District of Columbia

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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) 2009-2014. The Commission's federal-interest recommendations note that: many of the District's proposed and ongoing capital expenditures support federal interests; some projects require further submissions to NCPC or coordination with NCPC and other federal agencies; and more detailed information on many transportation and other projects is scheduled for later release, and must be submitted 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.
- Enhancing the transportation system.
- Undertaking funding for long-term planning efforts linked to important capital projects of federal interest.
- Investing in park and recreation facilities.

Requests that the District of Columbia coordinate with NCPC and other federal agencies on projects of

special shared interest, including:

- Properties associated with the transfer of federal land to the District (NCPC, GSA, NPS).
- St. Elizabeths Hospital (NCPC, General Services Administration (GSA)).
- The area covered by the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (NCPC, GSA, National Park Service (NPS), Department of Defense (DOD)).
- Updates to zoning codes and other long-term planning resulting in capital project funding.
- Development of a streetcar system (NCPC, CFA).
- Renovation of the DC Armory (NCPC, GSA)
- Park and open space improvements (NCPC, NPS, CFA, GSA)

Reminds the District to submit the remaining components of their capital improvement program for Commission review when they become available, including the Highway Trust Fund Program; capital projects for the District of Columbia court system; and capital projects for the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority, pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8723 (b).

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

- Acquisition or disposition of land or buildings by the District of Columbia government (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b) (1) and § 8734 (a)).
- Development projects by the District of Columbia 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)).

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CIP is part of the Mayor’s FY 2009 Proposed Budget and Financial Plan 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 must 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 Commission's review of the CIP is a precursor to the Commission's review of the individual projects in the CIP implemented by the District of Columbia government. Such projects will be submitted by the appropriate District agency in accordance with the Commission's normal project review procedures, covering location, program, and site and building plans, as appropriate. The CIP typically describes projects in much broader terms, providing an opportunity for the Commission's comments before projects enter the more detailed stages of implementation.

As the District describes in their CIP document, "(t)he CIP consists of the appropriated budget authority

request for the upcoming fiscal year and projected funding ... for the next five years. ... The CIP is used as the basis for formulating the District's annual capital 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. While the majority of transportation-related capital projects will be submitted later, this District CIP does contain several transportation projects.

The CIP contains 146 ongoing projects and 29 new projects from agencies throughout the District of Columbia government. The proposed spending for capital projects in FY 2009 is \$567 million (compared to \$581 million budgeted in FY 2008). The total six-year project spending is proposed at \$3.21 billion (compared to the previous year's CIP total of \$3.24 billion for FY 2008-2013). Several other capital funding categories relate to the CIP prepared by the Mayor:

- 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 the CIP document, but will release this information in the coming months.
- Capital projects for the District of Columbia court system are not part of the CIP.
- Capital projects for the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) are noted in the CIP but not included in the above totals. WASA uses a 10-year capital program, due to the long-term nature of many of its projects. WASA's most recent capital improvement program, for FYs 2007-2016, totals \$3.1 billion. WASA's proposed capital spending in FY 2009 is \$586 million.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

The CIP projects do not appear to have any adverse impacts on the federal interest, and, indeed, many of the projects will promote a variety of federal interests. A number of projects will require coordination with the Commission and appropriate federal departments or agencies.

A large number 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 by the relevant District agencies) include several categories of buildings that form networks of facilities that define the civic character of the capital city:

- Schools (District of Columbia Public Schools)
- Libraries (District of Columbia Public Library)
- Parks and recreational centers (Department of Parks and Recreation)
- Firehouses (Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department)

Several projects seek to reuse publicly-owned sites for new purposes, and to co-locate public uses. NCPC encourages the District to incorporate publicly accessible green space into these projects, and to

consider establishing new park space and recreational amenities, particularly in areas of the District that are growing or have less access to park resources. The CIP includes proposals for new and rehabilitated facilities that are designed to meet LEED standards. NCPC supports the District's efforts to provide sustainable, green public facilities.

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 District government's continued investment in these capital projects helps to assure their 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 projects for improving accessibility (in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act) should be carefully designed to minimize any harm to the historic character of public facilities.

Several projects relate to particular historic structures that are listed in 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.

The CIP also includes renovation of the District of Columbia Archives and Recorder of Deeds buildings. These facilities 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 District's investment in preserving and protecting its share of these resources is therefore supportive of federal interests.

The Commission supports the District's efforts regarding several projects in the CIP related to areas of special shared interest for District and federal planning efforts. The District is requested to coordinate with NCPC and other federal agencies, and NCPC notes that some projects may be subject to NCPC review. These projects include:

- Federal Lands Transfers

The CIP includes funding for the planning studies associated with the transfer of federal land to the District. Projects in this area must be coordinated with NCPC, and with the federal agencies managing land within this area, including GSA, and NPS.

- St. Elizabeths Hospital (Office of Property Management).

The CIP includes the relocation of remaining District of Columbia operations at St. Elizabeths from the West Campus to the East Campus. When the relocation is complete, the West Campus facilities, currently under the control of the District of Columbia, will be transferred to federal control through GSA. The relocation process must be coordinated with GSA to ensure the ongoing maintenance and protection of these facilities, which are part of a National Historic landmark. NCPC is also

participating in planning for the future use of the West Campus, and the District must coordinate its plans for the East Campus with the Commission.

- The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative area and particularly the South Capitol Street corridor (Office of the Deputy Mayor, DDOT).

The Commission and several District agencies have been cooperating in the planning of this area, and projects in this vicinity must be coordinated with NCPC and other federal agencies.

- Street Car Development, including the Anacostia light rail demonstration project (DDOT).

NCPC supports the expansion throughout DC of transportation options that will benefit residents, workers, and visitors. However NCPC is concerned with the visual impacts of the proposed streetcar technology, which operates on overhead wires. Washington, and particularly the part of the District in the L'Enfant City, is built on a plan of open space and views and vistas. These urban design elements are supported by longstanding laws prohibiting overhead wires, including electricity and trolley wires, in the L'Enfant City and in Georgetown. The Anacostia Demonstration Project is outside of the L'Enfant City and Georgetown, and NCPC has not objected to it. However, future streetcar corridors may be planned in areas where open vistas are protected by prohibitions against overhead wires. District of Columbia trolley projects must be submitted for review to NCPC, and NCPC encourages the District to coordinate as well with other federal agencies managing land that may be affected by these projects, including GSA, NPS, and DOD.

- Public Planning-Initial Project Development

The CIP includes funding for the planning studies for large-scale capital projects undertaken by the District, and the Office of Planning's effort to rewrite the zoning regulations and implement inclusionary zoning. The District must coordinate with NCPC on zoning updates, and is requested to coordinate with NCPC and other federal agencies on other studies.

- Renovation of the DC Armory

The CIP includes renovation improvements for the DC Armory to permit its continued use. Projects in this area must be reviewed by NCPC, and coordinated with the federal agencies managing land within this area, including GSA, NPS, and DOD.

- Park and open space projects (Department of Parks and Recreation).

NCPC, in coordination with the District Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Planning, and the National Park Service, has initiated a study of parks and open spaces in the District. Early findings from this study identify the importance of improving the quality of existing parkland and facilities, note the importance of the District's public schools in providing outdoor active recreational facilities, and identify the need to address park demands created by growth. NCPC notes the

capital funding identified for District parks and park facilities and looks forward to continued coordination with District agencies to identify strategies to improve Washington's park system.

- The site of the former Convention Center (Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development).

The Commission maintains an interest in planning for the redevelopment of the former convention center site, bounded by 9th, 11th, and H Streets and New York Avenue, NW. The Commission has reviewed the development proposals for this area, and anticipates that the District 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 [Verizon Center] Arena and recorded covenant, and specified in the Commission action.

- Metro (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA))

The CIP includes \$492 million over six years for the District's local contribution to Mass Transit (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. Also included in this CIP are continued investments for expansion of the Circulator service into neighborhoods such as Georgetown and Adams Morgan.

- Other transportation projects (Department of Transportation)

The projects listed in the CIP are mostly for general improvements to roads, alleys, streetlights, curbs, culverts, street trees, 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. Many additional projects will be included in the forthcoming Highway Trust Fund Program.

The Commission's authority covers review of many of the projects listed in the CIP, and the appropriate District agencies are required by federal and District of Columbia law to submit these projects to the Commission at the appropriate stage of detailed siting and design work. NCPC's authority for review of District 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. District agencies should consult with Commission staff to determine the submission requirements for particular projects.

Additionally, the Commission normally reviews the Highway Trust Fund Program as part of the CIP. Although the District has placed this program on a different schedule, it is important that the Commission have an opportunity to review this document for federal interests, along with the capital improvement programs for the District of Columbia court system and the District of Columbia Water

and Sewer Authority, as part of the statutory requirement for submission of the CIP. The District must supplement its CIP submission with the additional capital improvements programs provided to NCPC for review as they become available during the year.

While not listed in the District's CIP submission, the District is continuing to coordinate with NCPC and other federal agencies to rapidly address flood control infrastructure needs in the Monumental Core, and the Commission commends the District for this activity.

PROJECT CONFORMANCE

National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act is not applicable to NCPC's review of this submission, because the Commission does not approve the District CIP.

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act is not applicable to NCPC's review of this submission, because the Commission does not approve the District CIP.