

# STAFF RECOMMENDATION



K. Anderson  
NCPC File No. 0348

---

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN FISCAL YEARS 2012-2017

Submitted by the Mayor of the District of Columbia

May 26, 2011

---

### *Abstract*

The Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia have provided the District's capital improvements plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2012-2017 for review and comment by the Commission. The Commission reviews the District of Columbia Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8723 (b). NCPC has undertaken that review to assure that the District's proposed capital improvements comply with federal interests as expressed in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* and other NCPC plans including the *Monumental Core Framework Plan*, the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*, and *CapitalSpace*. This review is based on the *FY 2012-2017 Capital Improvement Plan* (including *Highway Trust Fund*), submitted as Volume 6 of the *District of Columbia's FY 2012 Proposed Budget and Financial Plan*.

### *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 District of Columbia on the inclusion of projects that support federal interests set forth in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and other planning documents*, such as:

- Investments in the transportation system, including transit improvements, vehicular rehabilitation and other modal system enhancements.
- Projects that will develop new parks and recreation centers and enhance existing parks and open spaces throughout the city.
- Projects that rehabilitate and/or reuse historic buildings, thereby preserving and enhancing the historic identity of the National Capital.
- Funding of long-term planning efforts linked to important capital projects of federal interest.

**Requests** that the District of Columbia coordinate projects as appropriate with the Commission and with federal agencies whose property or operations may be affected, pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b) (1) and/or § 8722 (e)) and with regional agencies, as follows:

- The following general areas and topics are of special interest to the Commission, and should be coordinated with NCPC on an ongoing basis:
  - Streetcar Development
  - Public Plans and Studies
  - Park and Open Space improvements
  - Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
  
- Many projects and studies will require coordination with the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service, the General Services Administration, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, as well as review by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. The submitting District agencies should coordinate with these identified entities to determine submission requirements and schedules.
  
- The following specific transportation projects will affect federal interests under the jurisdiction of specific federal government agencies, and therefore should be coordinated with the Commission and with those agencies as noted:

Agencies, with abbreviations:

- Architect of the Capitol (AOC)
- Department of the Navy (DON)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)
- National Park Service (NPS)

<u>Page #</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Coordinating Agency</u>
EB0-3	McMillan Site Redevelopment	NCPC
CE0-7	MLK Jr. Memorial Central (Library)	NCPC
KA0-6	Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Enhancements	NCPC, NPS, FHWA
GF0-3	Renovation of University (of D.C.) Facilities	NCPC
H-11	South Capitol Street Corridor	NCPC, AOC, NPS, DON, FHWA
EB0-5	St. Elizabeths E Campus Infrastructure	NCPC, NPS
H-18	Streetcars	NCPC, NPS, FHWA
KA0-31	Streetcars	NCPC, NPS, FHWA
H-19	Transit Operations and Dedicated Facilities	NCPC, NPS, FHWA
H-13	11 <sup>th</sup> Street Bridge	NCPC, NPS, DON, FHWA

**Notes** the statutory requirement mandating the District’s submission for Commission review of a number of CIP projects, such as:

- 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 undertaken by the District of Columbia government that affect District of Columbia public buildings and grounds, including parks (40 U.S.C. §8722 (b) (1) and § 8722(e)).

\* \* \*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CIP is part of the Mayor’s FY 2012 Proposed Budget and Financial Plan that is sent to the Council of the District of Columbia for review and adoption, and then to Congress for review and approval. NCPC reviews the District CIP pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8723(b), which specifies: “Submission of Multiyear Capital Improvement Plan.—By February 1 of 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 that the Mayor develops” under [a provision of the Home Rule Act]. The Commission has 30 days in which to comment on the plan but may not change or disapprove it.

The Commission review of the CIP is an important tool to ensure federal and local coordination and cooperation in the ongoing development of Washington. The Commission’s review of the CIP may provide the District with valuable feedback about proposed developments and projects well before they move forward. This is intended to facilitate effective cooperation between the District and NCPC and smooth Commission review of specified projects under the Commission’s normal project-by-project review procedures.

As the District describes in its 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 for the coming six years includes renovation, major repair, and maintenance of existing facilities; new construction and equipment; building and land purchases; long-range planning studies; transportation projects; and various technology and database projects.

The District of Columbia is proposing 214 ongoing projects and 13 new projects from agencies throughout the District government. The total six-year proposed project spending—not including the Highway Trust fund, judicial courts and WASA projects, which are accounted for separately—is \$845 million (compared to a CIP total of \$3.44 billion for FYs 2011-2016.) The District notes that it is “limited by funding constraints as well as multiple competing demands on capital and is not able to fund all identified capital needs.” This is partly in recognition of an increased need to reinvest in aging infrastructure.

While the purpose of NCPC’s review and comment on the CIP is to take a comprehensive look over a

six year period, NCPC notes that the CIP particularly emphasizes expenditures for the following year. The CIP highlights several major capital efforts including \$267 million for school modernization, \$43.2 million for the University of the District of Columbia renovation, \$99.3 million for streetcars, \$14.4 million for the *New Communities* revitalization initiative, \$7.05 million for the 11<sup>th</sup> Street SE Bridge, and \$50.0 million for WMATA as the District's contribution to its capital campaign. Additional major investments proposed for FY 2012 that affect federal interests include \$381 million for police, fire and library improvements; \$84.9 million for general citywide transportation improvements and repairs—including lighting, trees, bicycle and pedestrian improvements and bridge repairs; and \$7.07 million for park and recreation facilities. Also proposed for FY 2012 are \$170 million of major transportation improvements through the Highway Trust Fund program, and \$555 million in sewer improvements through the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority.

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

Many of the CIP projects outlined in the District's proposal support federal interests as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and other NCPC planning documents. None of the proposed projects appear to have any adverse impact on the federal interest.

A large number of the CIP projects involve the rehabilitation and improvement of District public buildings and public space throughout the District of Columbia. Many of these projects are in prominent locations, where such improvements—in addition to their local impact—will, if designed well, enhance the overall image of the National Capital. In fact, many of these facilities were originally constructed by the federal government and thereby extend the legacy of federal involvement in the development of the District of Columbia. Examples (noted by the relevant District agencies) include buildings within networks of facilities that define the civic character of the Capital City:

- Schools (District of Columbia Public Schools and Office (DCPS))
- Libraries (District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL))
- Transportation facilities (DDOT)
- Firehouses (Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (Fire and EMS))

The CIP submission includes proposals for new and rehabilitated facilities that are designed to meet sustainability standards. NCPC supports these efforts, noting that they are consistent with Executive Order 13514, which calls for integrated planning that promotes environmental sustainability, energy security and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The CIP includes enhancements to the capital's image through investments in public art (Commission on the Arts and Humanities) and the maintenance and planting of street trees (D.C. Department of Transportation (DDOT)). The District government's continued investment in these capital projects is consistent with many NCPC initiatives and helps to benefit the city's image, and thus support the federal interest.

Many of the rehabilitation projects outlined in the CIP involve historic structures. To further both

District and federal interests, it is important that the District respect and enhance their historic character as these projects move forward. The projects for improving accessibility (in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act) in these historic structures should be carefully designed to accommodate both ADA requirements and historic preservation goals.

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 includes funding for public plans and studies that the District proposes to undertake. NCPC and the District have coordinated planning initiatives that have resulted in capital projects that successfully address federal and local interests. NCPC therefore supports the inclusion of funds for planning in the CIP, and looks forward to continued cooperation and coordination with the District and other federal agencies on planning and zoning studies within the District.

Several projects in the CIP are of special interest for federal planning efforts. NCPC requests that the District coordinate with NCPC and other federal agencies, and notes that some projects may be subject to NCPC review. These projects that are special federal interest include:

- Streetcar Development, including the Anacostia and H Street corridor projects (DDOT): NCPC supports the expansion of transportation options that will benefit residents, workers, and visitors. However, the potential visual impact of streetcars using technology that requires overhead wires, as currently proposed by DDOT, on defining features of the L'Enfant Plan represents a significant federal interest. That interest is currently protected by longstanding federal laws prohibiting overhead wires, including electricity and streetcar wires, in the L'Enfant City and in Georgetown. The Commission has noted its concern in its comments regarding the installation of streetcar infrastructure on H Street NE, the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, and in Anacostia; and staff has informed DDOT that protected resources are more extensive than those that have been identified by DDOT. Staff therefore recommends that as the District prepares detailed streetcar plans in areas where overhead wires are prohibited by federal law, an alternative streetcar propulsion technology be utilized. Finally, staff recommends that District of Columbia streetcar projects be submitted for review to NCPC under section 5 of the Planning Act to ensure a fully coordinated transit system that successfully addresses mobility, urban design, open views and vistas, and economic and community objectives. The District is also encouraged to coordinate with other federal agencies that may be served by this system or manage land that may be affected by these projects, including GSA, NPS, and DOD.
- Public Plans and Studies (D.C. Office of Municipal Planning (DCOP): The CIP includes funding for public plans and studies that the District proposes to undertake. NCPC and the District have coordinated planning initiatives that have resulted in capital projects that successfully address federal and local interests. NCPC therefore supports the inclusion of funds for planning in the CIP, and looks forward to continued cooperation and coordination with the District and other federal agencies on planning and zoning studies within the District.

- Park and Open Space Projects (DPR and DCPS): NCPC, in coordination with NPS, DPR, DCOP, and other D.C. agencies, recently released the CapitalSpace Plan, a study of federal and local parks and open spaces in the District. The study documents the need for improvements to existing parkland and facilities, notes the importance of the District's public schools in providing outdoor recreational facilities, and calls for steps to address park demands created by growth. Staff is encouraged by the District's proposal to include schoolyard improvements as a component of school modernization projects and notes the capital funding identified for District parks and park facilities. Staff looks forward to continued coordination with District agencies as we identify and implement strategies to improve Washington's park system.
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA): The CIP includes \$254 million over six years for the District's local contribution to WMATA's capital program (operating funds are included in separate volume of the District of Columbia Proposed Budget and Financial Plan). This funding 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 consistent with the federal interest in using transit to help fulfill the region's mobility demands, in particular the needs of the federal workforce and visitors and for special events.

Finally, staff notes that many of the projects outlined in the CIP must, by law, be reviewed by NCPC. Staff urges District agencies to work early and cooperatively with NCPC staff to facilitate that review, which serves the interests of both the District and the federal government. The projects should be submitted to the Commission at the appropriate stage of detailed siting and design work. NCPC's authority for review of District government projects includes review of: acquisition or disposition of land or buildings; land and building development projects (including park projects); and projects that affect District of Columbia public buildings and grounds, including parks. District agencies should consult with Commission staff to determine the submission requirements for particular projects.

## 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.