

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC LIBRARIES**  
**BENNING BRANCH LIBRARY REPLACEMENT**  
3935 Benning Road, NE  
Washington, DC

**Delegated Action of the Executive Director**

December 23, 2004

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, I approve the preliminary and final design plans for the proposed replacement of the Benning Branch Library of the District of Columbia Public Libraries, located in Northeast Washington, DC, to include demolition and new construction within the footprint of the existing building, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 81.00(38.00)41522, and urge the applicant to work with the owner of the adjacent retail center, to develop a pedestrian connection between the library and the center.

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As one of the first libraries to be replaced under its capital construction program, the District of Columbia Public Libraries (DCPL) proposes to demolish the aging Benning Branch Library, in operation since 1962, and to construct a new one in the existing footprint. To realize the library's vision as "a recognized force in the community for engaging the mind, expanding opportunities, and elevating the quality of life," libraries will be designed and reconstructed to be safe, comfortable, and to inspire reading, learning and personal growth.

The DCPL proposes to construct a library of approximately 14,800 square feet designed with an open floor plan to allow more useable floor space on the main level than in the existing building, with stairs and an elevator to a rear lobby and parking below. Twelve head-in parking spaces, including two that are accessible, would be located at the rear of the library, accessed by a two-way drive-aisle sloping twelve-feet from front to back and continuing underneath the building overhang. The main entrance would be on the northwest side of the building facing a shopping center, accessed by a side promenade; two flights of stairs from parking in the rear, and a gently

upward sloping sidewalk from Benning Road. Locating the entrance away from the main street was the result of input from a series of focus group sessions and community meetings.

The proposed building facade would be faced with brick at the main level, accented with a contrasting checker-patterned brick to reflect the library's chess program. At the lower parking level, split faced concrete masonry units (CMU) would be used with contrasting coursing to highlight building corners for driver safety. The proposed roof would be divided in three sections; lower in middle. Outer sections would slope upward from the center, creating vertical surface for glazed clerestory at southern exposure and at northern corner to light the interior from above. Aluminum curtain wall glazed with evergreen glass and butted at corners, chosen for transparency day and night, would make pedestrians feel safe, while contributing to a contemporary feeling and building image.

The Coordinating Committee coordinated the proposal at its meeting on December 8, 2004. As a District of Columbia agency project, outside of the central area of the District on non-federal property, the National Environmental Policy Act does not apply to the proposed construction. The District of Columbia has reviewed the action and determined that it qualifies as an exempted action in accordance with the implementing rules of the District of Columbia Environmental Policy Act of 1989. The library is not historic or located within a historic district. Since it is outside the Central Area, it is not subject to Section 106 review.

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Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP  
Executive Director