

# COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File No. 6686



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**ANACOSTIA STREETCAR INITIAL LINE SEGMENT**  
South Capitol Street and Firth Sterling Avenue, SE,  
between Bolling Air Force Base and Anacostia Metro Station  
Washington, DC

District of Columbia Department of Transportation

February 1, 2007

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***Commission Action Requested by Applicant***

Approval of preliminary and final site and building plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C. §8722(b)(1)

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***Commission Action***

The Commission:

**Approves** the final site and building plans for the Anacostia Streetcar Initial Line Segment, a demonstration project for streetcar service in the District of Columbia.

**Finds** that:

- The Commission recognizes the value of a seamless transit system and supports the District's investigation of transit that will complement Metrorail and Metrobus operations throughout the city. The Anacostia segment will complement transit operations near the Anacostia Metro Station.
- DDOT intends the Anacostia segment as a demonstration project, with the possibility of route expansion elsewhere in Washington, including routes within the City of Washington (the original L'Enfant Plan area of the city).
- The use of streetcars with overhead wires entails the installation of infrastructure to support the wires--including regularly spaced posts with support arms cantilevered over traffic lanes--that would change the historically open character and appearance of Washington's streets.
- Since the late nineteenth century, there has been a legal prohibition against overhead wires within the City of Washington (L'Enfant city) and Georgetown, resulting in rights-of-way that are free of electric wires and that were free of overhead wires when streetcars were previously in use.

- The Commission has a federal interest in retaining and protecting the nationally recognized and significant open vistas of the rights-of-way of the L'Enfant Plan, which is protected by listing in the National Register of Historic Places and in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites.
- The recommended approval of the demonstration project does not connote the Commission's acceptance of a future streetcar system that uses an overhead contact system within the L'Enfant City and Georgetown.
- DDOT should return to the Commission for review of every segment of a streetcar system.
- Both the District of Columbia government and the National Capital Planning Commission share the goals of protecting the integrity of Washington's characteristic open streets and of meeting public transit service needs. These goals should be weighed together and a streetcar system should be considered as a whole before irrevocable decisions are made concerning one segment.

**Requests that DDOT:**

- Return to the Commission for review of the elements associated with a city-wide streetcar system, such as pylons, signs, and passenger shelters, prior to DDOT's making a final decision about the design of these elements.
- With the collaboration of other relevant District of Columbia and federal agencies, including the Commission, continue to investigate transit alternatives to a streetcar system that uses overhead wires with supporting infrastructure before it proceeds with plans to expand the route beyond the Anacostia Initial Line Segment. Transit modes and technologies should meet the transit goals of both the District of Columbia government and the Commission, as well as our mutual mandates to protect Washington's historically open right-of-way vistas and to comply with federal laws.

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Deborah B. Young  
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission