

# COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File No. MP211



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## DRAFT MASTER PLAN FOR DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY HEADQUARTERS CONSOLIDATION AT ST. ELIZABETHS WEST CAMPUS

2700 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave, SE  
Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the General Services Administration

November 1, 2007

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### *Commission Action Requested by Applicant*

Approval of comments on the Draft Master Plan for the St. Elizabeths West Campus, pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1) and (d).

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### *Commission Action*

The Commission:

**Acknowledges** that the Draft Master Plan calls for the comprehensive modernization of the infrastructure on the National Historic Landmark campus and for many of the historic buildings to be rehabilitated and occupied, even as some of the historic buildings would be demolished and much of the landscape character would be lost to new construction and an altered campus composition.

**Notes** that GSA has determined in its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS, dated September 28, 2007) that the proposed program in the St. Elizabeths Draft Master Plan would have “major, direct, long-term, adverse impacts” as well as “adverse effects” to the National Historic Landmark campus. These are due primarily to the size and nature of the construction program; the loss of historic buildings and the landscaped setting of the campus; altered or obstructed view sheds to, from, and within the campus; increased traffic in the neighborhood; and required modifications to the regional transportation and utility systems that would also result in physical alterations both on the campus and in the surrounding areas.

**Prefers** several design elements of Alternative 4 over Alternative 3, because the overall scheme has a lesser impact to the historic landscape around the Center Building and the oldest structures on the site. However, additional information with regard to access and site screening

(particularly along the west edge of the site) is required to more fully evaluate the merits and impacts of each alternative, and to state a final preference for either one. The proposed alterations to the Center Building to facilitate its re-use for office space are also needed to fully evaluate Alternative 4.

**Requires** that GSA modify the Master Plan to include one or more alternatives with less than or equal to 2.5 million gross square feet of build-out above ground and to mitigate or minimize the major, long-term, adverse impacts to the West Campus of St. Elizabeths. The following measures are consistent with NCPC's Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital (Comprehensive Plan), GSA's mission and goals for this project, as well as the purpose and need identified in the DEIS:

### **View Sheds**

The views of the campus from within the topographic bowl, the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, and the immediate area would be significantly compromised by the height, massing and location of proposed buildings.

- Reduce the visual impact of the United States Coast Guard building by modifying its massing, siting, and monolithic appearance.
- Relocate some or all of the parking structures off-campus or below the existing grade to remove them from the view shed of the topographic bowl; and analyze shared parking opportunities on the East Campus, in Historic Anacostia, and at the Anacostia and/or Congress Heights Metro Stations.
- Use landscaping and vegetation (i.e. on roofs and surrounding buildings) to minimize the appearance of all structures in the view shed.
- Relocate the delivery screening facility on-site so that it is not visible from the Point and it is out of the view shed of the topographic bowl, or reduce the scale of the building and depress it further into the slope.
- Use a lower floor-to-floor height for new construction (i.e. 10'-8", as is common in the downtown area) to reduce overall building heights.
- Minimize the effects of clear cutting and night lighting associated with the proposed perimeter fence to preserve the green slopes.

### **Transportation**

The consolidation of the Department of Homeland Security at the St. Elizabeths Campus would introduce approximately 14,000 daily employees to the campus, bearing a significant impact on the existing landscape, neighborhoods streets, and regional transportation systems.

Taking into account that 90% of employees would work during standard business hours, develop a Transportation Management Plan that conforms to the Transportation policies of NCPC's Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital:

- Meet the Comprehensive Plan goal for a parking ratio of 1 space per 4 employees to address the documented impacts of increased air pollution and traffic congestion, and take advantage of the site's proximity to public transportation.
- Identify and support alternative modes of travel using subsidies for public transportation, shuttle buses to and from nearby Metro stations, and other incentive programs.

- Complete the section of the Proposed Fort Circle Parks Trail within the Project Area (from Fort Greble to Stanton Road) to provide a route for cyclists to and from the campus.
  - Identify anticipated impacts to the transportation level of service during heightened security.
  - Work with the District of Columbia, National Park Service, and other Consulting Parties to analyze additional and/or alternative means of accessing the campus via Suitland Parkway (under the jurisdiction of the District Department of Transportation) to accommodate off-campus parking structures.
- Designate Gate 2, rather than Gate 1, as the primary access point from Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. to minimize impacts to the original section of the campus as well as the view shed radiating from the Gate 1 point of entry. Maintain the original use of Gate 1 for the historic and/or ceremonial entrance to the campus.

### **Community Benefits**

Locating the Department of Homeland Security headquarters at St. Elizabeths would create the potential for economic development beyond the campus walls that would be a catalyst for Ward 8 and provide citywide benefits. Implement the following to stimulate neighborhood growth and economic opportunities in the surrounding communities:

- Propose alternative parking solutions outside the secure campus to encourage employee patronage of businesses along Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. and in Historic Anacostia. Analyze shared parking opportunities on the East Campus, in Historic Anacostia, and at the Anacostia and/or Congress Heights Metro Stations.
- Work with the District Department of Transportation to coordinate streetscape improvements along Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. to improve the pedestrian experience into Historic Anacostia.
- Develop a shuttle system between the campus and the Anacostia and/or Congress Heights Metro Stations to promote integration of the DHS workforce into the surrounding communities and to promote patronizing of local businesses.
- Locate support facilities (e.g., fitness center, child care center, barber shop, etc.) off-site to encourage integration of the DHS workforce into the surrounding neighborhood and also to provide business and employment opportunities to local residents.
- Build the section of the Proposed Fort Circle Parks Trail within the Project Area (from Fort Greble to Stanton Road) to provide a recreational amenity for both employees and community members.
- Identify vehicular and pedestrian access to the Cemetery.
- Identify specific opportunities and means for the public to access the Point.

### **Historic Preservation – Buildings and Landscape**

The National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation for St. Elizabeths documented and established the national significance of the hospital campus for its history and association with pioneering treatment for the mentally ill, its architecture, and its designed therapeutic landscape. The significance of its setting is due in part to its siting on the bluffs of the Anacostia Hills above Washington.

GSA and NCPC have a statutory requirement under Section 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act to “to the maximum extent possible, undertake such planning and actions as may be necessary to minimize harm to any National Historic Landmark that may be directly and adversely affected by an undertaking.” GSA has determined that the proposed 6.3 million square-foot program would have an adverse effect on the significant historical, architectural, landscape, and spatial qualities of the site.

To conclude the Section 106 process and comply with Section 110(f), achieve the following:

- Modify building square footage, building footprints, and massing to be more compatible with the historic buildings, historic landscape, and the campus setting.
- Continue Section 106 consultation in order to develop a Programmatic Agreement that will respond to and resolve the adverse effects.
- Develop a Historic Preservation Plan and Cultural Landscape Report to identify the required treatments to appropriately preserve and rehabilitate the historic buildings and the historic landscape.
- Rehabilitate the historic buildings and historic landscape according to the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standard’s for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
- Develop Design Guidelines for new construction aimed to minimize harm to the historic buildings and their setting.
- Plan and document construction and staging impacts to avoid damage to and loss of historic buildings and landscape features.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

The proposed environmental activities included in the Master Plan seek to incorporate a variety of innovative environmental technologies into the development and to achieve a Silver LEED rating. As the plan is further developed, the applicant is encouraged to use innovative and environmentally friendly “Best Management Practices” in site and building design and construction practice.

Include in the Final Master Plan:

- Mitigation for the loss of tree canopy and habitat on-site.
- Planning for stormwater management / low impact development techniques such as bioswales, green roofs, and retention wells to manage stormwater on site. Also indicate how stormwater quantity and quality would be managed during construction.
- Planning for hazardous materials abatement and waste disposal, construction materials selection, energy sources and emissions.

**Requires** that GSA include the following information prior to the Final Master Plan submission:

- A detailed analysis of the relationship of the Master Plan to the Federal and District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.
- A *Transportation Management Plan* that implements a 1:4 parking ratio and identifies transportation improvement projects needed to serve future population levels and anticipated growth; establishes staffing and operation of transportation demand management programs; and outlines the resources needed to fund the improvements and maintenance expenses.

- Additional *View Shed Analysis* of the impacts of campus development on views from the site, particularly views within the historic campus and those to the north and west.
- An *Historic Preservation Plan* and a *Cultural Landscape Report* that discusses the significance, treatment, and ongoing preservation of the historic buildings and landscape.
- A *Discussion of the Anticipated Economic Impacts and Opportunities* that the proposed project will have on the community.
- A *Summary of Public Access Provisions* that outlines how the public would be able to access the Cemetery and the specific times when the public would be permitted to access the Point.
- A *Stormwater Management Plan* that describes the amount, location and process in which stormwater would be managed on-site.
- A *Tree Removal and Replacement Plan* that illustrates which trees would need to be removed and where they would be replaced on-site.
- A *Construction Staging Plan* that describes the timing, location, and impacts of construction staging areas.

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Deborah B. Young  
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission