

## PRESS RELEASE



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### **NCPC Comments on Concept Plans for Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and Federal Office Building 8**

*Commission also hears plans for St. Elizabeths West Campus*

**Washington, DC** – The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), at its October meeting, commented favorably on the concept designs for two new medical facility additions to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center located in Bethesda, Maryland. The plan, submitted by the U.S. Department of the Navy, includes a new outpatient facility, an expansion of critical care functions, and provisions for the renovation of existing facilities.

The proposed plans accommodate the 2005 BRAC recommendations that call for the closure of the existing Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC and the expansion of military medical services across the region. Once complete, the new facilities will distribute services between two primary locations. The existing National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in Bethesda, Maryland will be renamed the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and will be expanded and renovated to serve the north region. A new hospital will be constructed at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia to accommodate the southern region. This Commission action relates only to the Bethesda, Maryland site.

The plan includes renovating 261,000 square feet of the existing medical facility, constructing a four-story addition of 157,000 square feet, and building a new six-story building of 533,000 square feet. The project will incorporate a number of sustainable design features and energy efficient systems into all new construction and the buildings will be certified according to the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.

Another key element in the plan is the preservation of the historically significant NNMC site. In 1978, the hospital was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in commemoration of its design originator, President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Inspired by the Nebraska State Capitol, President Roosevelt used White House stationery to sketch a rough plan of his vision for the new Naval Hospital. The plan as presented protects the historic elements of the facility.

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The next formal review by the Commission is expected later this year and involves the preliminary design of the facility additions. In preparation for the review, the Commission is requesting information on specific elements including revisions to the planned elevations, a summary of planned staffing and related parking, and samples of the proposed building materials. The Commission noted that its action on the preliminary design will take into account the completed Environmental Impact Statement, Master Plan, and Transportation Management Plan that are currently under development.

The Commission also approved comments on the concept site and building plans for Federal Office Building 8, located at 200 C Street in Southwest Washington, DC. Presented by the General Services Administration (GSA), the plan will modernize the facility and convert its use from laboratory to office space. The building's interior and existing façade will be renovated and a paved parking area along C Street will be transformed into a public plaza with green space and public art.

Featured prominently in the design are a variety of window elements and a reconfiguration of the lobby and atria to maximize the amount of natural daylight into the building.

The Commission commented favorably on the concept design with the exception of a proposed security pavilion and perimeter security elements. The Commission noted that the security features do not conform to NCPC's Urban Design and Security Objectives and Policies (Adopted May 5, 2005), which discourage perimeter security measures in public space. The Commission required GSA to submit an analysis of the security required for this facility. If the security pavilion remains a part of the project, the Commission requires the applicant to reduce the size and minimize its impact on the nearby public plaza.

The Commission also required GSA to submit for Commission review the Third and C Streets Southwest Master Plan for Urban Improvements, before submitting the preliminary phase of this project. The Commission reminded the applicant that the scope of the project does not fall within NCPC's criteria for categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); and that therefore GSA must submit an environmental assessment before submitting the preliminary phase of this project.

Finally, the Commission reminded GSA that it must consult on the full effects of the project, including the perimeter security, under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Section 106 requires the establishment of an area of potential effect, and the Commission noted that GSA had not considered the L'Enfant Plan or the adjacent buildings at 3<sup>rd</sup> and C Streets, SW.

Yesterday's meeting concluded with an informational presentation on the planned conversion of the St. Elizabeths Hospital West Campus. GSA gave a status report on the draft Master Plan for the site, which included two different development alternatives, both of which consist of 4.5 million gross square feet of development plus 1.8 million gross square feet of parking.

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Upon completion, it is anticipated that the historic site will become home to the Department of Homeland Security. The Commission does not act on informational presentations, but will comment when GSA submits the Preliminary Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for formal review, which is expected by the end of this year.

In addition to the action items and informational presentation reviewed in this month's public meeting, the Commission approved six consent calendar items (no presentations given) that included the restoration of Marvin Gaye Park in Northeast, security upgrades to the Department of Homeland Security's Nebraska Avenue Complex, and a new U.S. Postal Carrier Annex in Loudon County, Virginia.

Information about actions taken at today's Commission meeting can be accessed on [www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov).

*The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central planning agency in the District of Columbia and surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall planning guidance for federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal projects and memorials, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.*

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