

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **NCPC Approves Plans for National Zoo and Watha T. Daniel Library**

*Commission hears information presentations on Eisenhower Memorial and Potomac Park Levee*

**Washington, DC** – At its November monthly meeting, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) reviewed and approved a submission from the Smithsonian Institution to update its 1988 Master Plan for the 163-acre National Zoological Park. The National Zoo is located on Connecticut Avenue, NW adjacent to Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC.

The master plan lays out proposals to upgrade facilities and infrastructure, and to provide flexibility for future exhibits and collections. The Zoo's primary pedestrian pathway, the Olmsted Walk, will be flanked by large, multi-species exhibits. Current exhibits will be revitalized and flat land now being used as parking lots will be converted to exhibit space.

“This is a historic day for us because what we have done is put together a plan which will essentially allow us to renovate the zoo top to bottom, and that’s what we need to do,” said National Zoo Director John Berry.

As part of the plan, the Zoo's three main entry points at Connecticut Avenue, North Road, and Harvard Street would be refurbished and they would feature improved visitor facilities. In addition, the Connecticut Avenue entry point would feature a plaza for events. The plan includes a new structured parking facility, improved accessibility for disabled patrons, new shuttle services, and an aerial tram. The tram will connect the zoo entry points and offer visitors a unique experience of viewing and traversing the zoo.

Founded by Congress in 1889, the National Zoo is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It has been part of the Smithsonian Institution since 1890.

The Commission also approved preliminary and final site and building plans for the new Watha T. Daniel (Shaw) Neighborhood Library to be located at 1701 8<sup>th</sup> Street, NW in Washington, DC. The three-story 8,164-square-foot library will replace an older building at the same site that has already been demolished. Two of the three stories will sit aboveground. The LEED Silver designed building will be of a contemporary design with translucent panels, structural glass, and a metal sunscreen. The Commission approved the concept design in April of this year.

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The meeting concluded with two information presentations. The first was a status report on the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial honoring America's 34<sup>th</sup> president. The memorial will be located at a four-acre site on the south side of Independence Avenue, SW across from the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. A representative of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission provided the Commission with an overview of several objectives for the memorial design. They also discussed design elements that they will require a chosen designer to incorporate.

The second informational item was an update on plans to improve the Potomac Park levee on the National Mall in the area of 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW. A new, temporary design solution is required to be in place by November 2009. The Commission's alternate member who represents the National Park Service, Commissioner Peter May, outlined the purpose and need for an improved levee and provided an analysis of five potential alternative designs. The National Park Service anticipates coming to the Commission for review of concept design in January 2009.

This month's agenda also included three consent calendar items (no presentation given): Master Plan modification and preliminary and final site and building plans for the Marine Corps Base Quantico Wounded Warrior Regimental Headquarters in Prince William County, Virginia; approval of a land exchange and modification of the general development plan for the Paint Branch Valley Park, Unit No 2 in College Park, Maryland; and approval of comments on concept design for the Court Nine Columbarium at the Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

Information about actions taken at today's Commission meeting can be accessed at [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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