



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **NCPC Comments on Draft Master Plans for National Institutes of Health and Naval Support Activity Bethesda**

*Commission Approves National Museum of African American History and Culture Final Site and Building Plans and Releases Comp Plan Urban Design and Historic Features Elements for Comment*

**Washington, DC** – At its monthly meeting on November 1 the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) provided comments on two draft master plans. While submitted independently, the facilities covered by the master plans are adjacent and staff evaluations have been coordinated. The first draft master plan and Transportation Management Plan is for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)-Bethesda Campus, located at 9000 Rockville Pike in Bethesda, Maryland. The facility houses 27 different institutes and centers in approximately 90 buildings. The draft master plan will update one completed in 2003 and guide future development on the 310-acre campus for the next 20 years. It would oversee the addition of 1.6 million square feet of development (28 different projects), organize future development into nine clusters, provide for the addition of 3,200 new employees and 1,500 parking spaces, and increase open green space while reducing surface level parking.

The Commission commended NIH for developing a plan that will transform the campus into a more environmentally sustainable place, while providing comments focused on more ambitious parking and transportation management strategies. The Commission did not support adding 1,500 parking spaces until the required 1:3 parking ratio (parking spaces to employees) called for in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* is achieved. Additional recommendations included calling for NIH to revise its draft Transportation Management Plan by incorporating several items that NCPC calls for in its master plan submission guidelines. Items include providing a description of existing and peak hour traffic by mode, a description of NIH's strategies for assisting employees' commute to work, and stated goals and objectives for the Transportation Management Plan.

The second draft master plan reviewed was for the Naval Support Activity Bethesda (formerly known as the National Naval Medical Center), located on an approximately 245 acre campus at 8901 Rockville Pike in Bethesda, across the street from NIH. The draft installation master plan seeks to improve facilities, standards, and quality of life on campus over the next ten years. It proposes several short-term (through 2018) and long-term (through 2022) projects that will enhance existing land uses while anticipating future growth. It anticipates the addition of 925 employees. The draft master plan updates a previous 2008 plan.

The Commission provided comments on the draft plan to the Department of the Navy, noting that it supports the plan's goals and objectives and commended the Navy for meeting the *Comprehensive Plan's* 1:3 parking ratio. NCPC recommended that the Navy further study mitigation and potential adverse impacts on existing landscape and views if an underground parking garage was built in front of the historic Building 1 (the tower visible from Rockville Pike).

Both applicants were advised to include stormwater management, forest conservation, historic resources, and energy conservation elements in their draft plans.

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The Commission released two elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* for a 90-day public comment period. The first is a new Urban Design Element, which will provide guidance for the design of federal facilities and promote more active public space. The second is an updated Preservation and Historic Features Element that was renamed the Historic Features Element. Its updated policies focus on preserving core features of the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans and historic federal assets in the region, in addition to promoting sustainable features when historic properties are rehabilitated.

The Commission also approved final site and building plans for the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The 401,447 square-foot museum will be located on an approximately five acre site on Constitution Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets, NW. The museum, scheduled to open in 2015, will contain state-of-the art galleries, an education center, and program and administrative staff offices. Previous Commission actions approved the foundation work for the museum, allowing construction activities to begin on-site.

The final plans reflect several small changes from preliminary design. These include lowering the top corner of the building by two feet so that it is in alignment with the Commerce Building's parapet; eliminating the sawtooth skylights; and realigning the building's main entrances. In its approval the Commission noted that the treatment of the corona, an important design feature, was not finalized and delegated a future review of this item to NCPC's Executive Director.

Before adjourning, the Commission heard an information presentation about *Memorial Trends and Practice in Washington, DC*. This report, prepared by NCPC in consultation with the National Park Service and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, examines the commemorative landscape in the nation's capital since enactment of the Commemorative Works Act in 1986 with a focus on key trends in commemorative planning and practice. The report is available [online](#). No action is taken on information presentations.

This month's agenda also included two consent calendar items (no presentations given):

- Preliminary and final site development plans for electric generating equipment and utility yard improvements at Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC;
- Preliminary and final site development plans for Japanese Lantern site enhancements at West Potomac Park, Washington, DC.

In addition, the Executive Director approved eight items under authorities delegated by the Commission. The final agenda, staff recommendations, project materials, and meeting video are available on [NCPC's website](#).

*The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central planning agency in the District of Columbia and surrounding counties of Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall 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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