



Commission Action

May 1, 2025

PROJECT Capital One Arena Improvements 601 F Street, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 8617
SUBMITTED BY District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 21.10(38.00)46006
REVIEW AUTHORITY District Projects in the Central Area per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (e)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of preliminary site and building plans
	ACTION TAKEN Approved comments on concept plans

The Commission:

Supports the project objectives to extend the functional life of the arena and reinforce its urban presence within downtown Washington, DC by improving access, enhancing wayfinding and the arrival experience, enlivening the arena exterior to make it a must-see building for residents and visitors, and activating the arena as an entertainment venue in the heart of the city.

Notes that Capital One Arena is in a central location of the historic L'Enfant City Plan; is surrounded by L'Enfant streets including 7th, F, and 6th Streets, NW; adjacent to the Pennsylvania Avenue Historic District, the Downtown Historic District and two National Historic Landmark buildings: the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture (the Reynolds Building) and the General Post Office (the Hotel Monaco).

Notes the Reynolds Building (originally the Patent Office Building) is considered one of the most significant buildings in Washington with its porticoes modeled after the Parthenon in Athens. It sits prominently within the 8th Street axis anchored by the Carnegie Library to the north and the National Archives and the National Gallery Sculpture Garden to the south.

Notes the setting of the Reynolds Building is unique in that the block in which it sits extends beyond adjacent blocks and allows for more public space, elevating the building's significance, especially on F and G Streets. This allows for more expansive views of the building and its setting.

Finds the redesigned arena will appear prominently in this setting, especially the wrapped veil and new entrances at the corner of 7th and F Streets, and if designed well, can positively impact how people view the Reynolds Building and experience the public space.

Finds that while there is ample opportunity for a modern approach that unifies and elevates the design of the arena, it must also be complementary of both the Reynolds Building and the General Post Office Building, and be deferential at key viewpoints to preserve the settings of these National Historic Landmarks.

Building and Site Design

Finds that since the Information Presentation in February and the initial Section 106 Consulting Parties meeting in March, the applicant has made the following changes to the building design:

- Increased the transparency of wall areas on 7th Street, 6th Street with new glazing that provides greater views into the building, as well as opportunities to experience the veil from the interior.
- Updated the materials to include a limestone base, glazing, composite wood and articulated metal panels that better define the horizontal and vertical massing.
- Added new street level elements such as integrated artwork on 7th Street, and the Team History Wall on F Street, and additional street-oriented retail space.
- Improved integration between the veil and the base façade.
- Replaced the reflective glass tile around the base of the Metro station entrance with a continuous limestone material around the base of the façade.
- Added a new information board adjacent to the new main entrance on F Street.
- Increased the transparency of the proposed veil element and scaled back the veil at Gallery Place Way.

Supports the design changes made to-date, especially the increased glazing, improved streetscape engagement elements, updated materials, and the additional viewshed studies.

Notes the project seeks to reduce congestion and queuing during events by enhancing the arena entrances and incorporating modern ticketing/screening capabilities.

Encourages the applicant to continue to explore opportunities for additional street-facing uses, including retail, to help activate the pedestrian realm particularly when the arena is not in use.

Notes the proposed design includes a veil which is intended to unify the building's varied facades and establish a singular architectural identity, replacing the fragmented and visually inconsistent existing façade.

Finds that while the veil provides a singular architectural identity for the building, the overall composition of the design (including the building, large LED display boards, newly-introduced LED band, and veil) could be further integrated, elevating the overall design and reflecting the arena's importance within downtown, and its prominent location adjacent to two National Historic Landmarks.

Requests the applicant continue to refine and unify the composition of all elements (building, display screens, and veil) to better respect the setting of the National Historic Landmark buildings.

Notes the proposed design reduces the number of LED screens, but consolidates them into larger LED displays, specifically at the corner of 7th and F Streets which reflect upon the National Historic Landmarks buildings.


Recommends eliminating or reducing the proposed LED band, particularly at the corner of 7th and F Streets to minimize visual and lighting impacts on the setting of the National Historic Landmarks.

Finds the existing streetscape lacks tree canopy and greenery and the proposed plan further reduces vegetation that could impact pedestrian comfort.

Requests the applicant submit as part of the next review the following:

- A complete lighting plan with the location and specification of building lighting including foot candles, lumens, color temperature, and hours of operation, including all elements that create exterior light including but not limited to the digital boards and bands, the information board, the veil, the interior lighting inside the large glazing walls, the pedestrian level lighting, and any exterior uplighting.
- A daytime street view from the area around F and 9th Street, NW to better understand the impact of the veil on the surrounding area.
- A plan that shows additional landscaping on F Street, NW where there currently appears to be none.
- Additional details on how the new building design combined with pedestrian management will improve pedestrian safety and the user experience at the entry points.

Requests the applicant continue to coordinate with consulting parties in preparation of the Memorandum of Agreement for the project, as part of the Section 106 process.

 5/1/25

Meghan Hottel-Cox
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

