

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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COMMISSION MEETING

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OPEN SESSION

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THURSDAY,
JULY 10, 2025

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The meeting convened via Videoconference, at
1:00 p.m. EDT, William Scharf, Chair, presiding.

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS
PRESENT:

WILLIAM SCHARF, Chair,
 Presidential Appointee (At-Large)
LINDA ARGO, Mayoral Appointee
MICHAEL BLAIR, Presidential Appointee
EVAN CASH, Office of the Chairman of the Council
 of the District of Columbia
ANITA COZART, Office of the Mayor of
 the District of Columbia
ARRINGTON DIXON, Mayoral Appointee
STUART LEVENBACH, Presidential Appointee
ELLIE MCGOWAN, Committee on Oversight and
 Accountability, United States House of
 Representatives
PAUL SCHAEFER, Department of Defense
TAMMY STIDHAM, National Park Service
KRISTI TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS, General Services
 Administration

1 NCPC STAFF PRESENT:

2 MARCEL C. ACOSTA, Executive Director

TONY CHAMP, Supervisory IT Manager

3 STEPHANIE FREE, Urban Planner, Current Planning
Division

4 JAMIE HERR, Urban Planner, Current Planning
Division

5 MEGHAN HOTTEL-COX, General Counsel and
Secretariat

6 GRACE KIM, IT Specialist

DIANE SULLIVAN, Director, Current Planning
7 Division

LEE WEBB, Historic Preservation Specialist,
8 Current Planning Division

MICHAEL WEIL, Urban Planner, Current Planning
9 Division

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 1:00 p.m.

3 CHAIR SCHARF: Good afternoon, and
4 welcome to the Open Session portion of the National
5 Capital Planning Commission's July 10th, 2025,
6 meeting.

7 My name is Will Scharf. I am the new
8 chairman of the National Capital Planning
9 Commission. I was appointed by President Trump
10 last night, deeply honored by the trust he's placed
11 in me, given the importance of this Commission.
12 And I'm looking forward to getting to work.

13 I'd also like to start by just thanking
14 the professional staff here and the other
15 Commissioners for the warm welcome they've extended
16 to me since I got here this morning. I'm really
17 looking forward to working with the Commission and
18 with the professional staff here as we do the
19 important work with which this Commission is
20 charged.

21 And with that, Madam Secretary, would you
22 like to take the roll call?

1 COMMISSION ROLL CALL

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. Commissioner

3 Cozart?

4 COMMISSIONER COZART: Here.

5 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?

6 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Here.

7 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?

8 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Here.

9 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

10 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Here.

11 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Levenbach?

12 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Here.

13 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chair Scharf?

14 CHAIR SCHARF: Here.

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

16 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Here.

17 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner

18 Tunstall-Williams?

19 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Here.

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

21 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Here.

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

1 COMMISSIONER CASH: Present.

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

3 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Present.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Marcell Lacosta,
5 Executive Director, and Diane Sullivan, Director
6 of the current Planning Division are also in the
7 meeting.

8 CHAIR SCHARF: Madam Secretary is there
9 a quorum present?

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes, there is.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Noting the presence of a
12 quorum, I'd like to call this meeting to order.
13 One note, today's meeting is live streamed and will
14 be available in a few days as a video on the NCPC's
15 website. And if there is no objection, the agenda,
16 as posted, is adopted as the order of business today.

17 Pledge of Allegiance, group?

18 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

19 REPORT OF THE CHAIR

20 CHAIR SCHARF: We have four new
21 Commissioners here today. As I said at the outset,
22 my name is Will Scharf. I was appointed by the

1 President both as a Commissioner and then designated
2 as chair last night.

3 I also have the distinct honor of serving
4 as an assistant to President Trump and the current
5 White House staff secretary. I've previously been
6 a lawyer in private practice, a federal prosecutor
7 at the Department of Justice.

8 I also served as policy director to
9 the governor of Missouri in which capacity I worked
10 extensively on economic development, tax credit
11 issues, and related permitting and planning issues,
12 which is, I guess, my most relevant experience, for
13 the purposes of this Commission.

14 If you'd indulge me just to give a brief
15 further introduction, I mean it when I say that it
16 is truly a tremendous honor to be joining a
17 commission with the storied history of the National
18 Capital Planning Commission. This is a commission
19 with a history dating back a century charged with
20 a very essential purpose.

21 Washington, D.C., and indeed the broader
22 capital region, this is not just a city. Washington

1 D.C., in my view, is how America holds itself out
2 to the world. It is a symbol, a symbol comprised
3 of many lesser symbols, I suppose, of our country
4 itself.

5 And I think the beauty, the organization,
6 and indeed the planning of this great city, and the
7 broader region in which we are currently serving,
8 so it's a very important symbolic purpose for the
9 entire nation.

10 And that's why I think the work that NCPC
11 does is so vitally important. We're not just
12 planning a city for the good of its residents, I
13 believe that we're planning a region for the good
14 of the country and in full view of the entire world.

15 The President shares this view. The
16 President has spoken extensively about the need to
17 beautify Washington, D.C., to turn this city into
18 a shining beacon unto the world. He wants this city
19 and this region to really show the world what America
20 can be at its best. And I think the fact that he's
21 charged me with serving in this capacity, I'm deeply
22 honored that he's shown the faith in me to discharge

1 the duties that I've been given in this Commission.

2 The President has signed a number of
3 executive orders on this basket of issues. He
4 obviously signed an executive order in both his
5 first administration that we also signed on day one
6 of this administration with respect to his views
7 as to the appropriate sorts of architecture for
8 public buildings, classical architecture in
9 particular.

10 He also signed an executive order and has
11 formed a commission looking at issues relating to
12 the beautification and safety of Washington, D.C.
13 as a whole. And I know that those are issues that
14 he holds particularly dear.

15 As a result of all that, my intention is
16 to be an active and engaged chairman. As I said
17 before, I'm very excited to have the opportunity
18 to work with the professional staff here as we go
19 about the business of this Commission.

20 And I think that it is important to note
21 that there are some major construction projects that
22 have come under great scrutiny in recent months.

1 And those are things that we're going to have to
2 work through as a Commission together.

3 There are some major projects on the agenda
4 for today. There are major projects that I know
5 are going to be coming up in the coming months.
6 And there are also issues with past projects that
7 have unfortunately come under scrutiny both in
8 public eye in the media and also in Congress.

9 I think most notably there, the Federal
10 Reserve's ongoing construction project has come
11 under intense scrutiny. There are reports
12 obviously relating to the opulence of the project,
13 which is not necessarily germane to the work of this
14 Commission. But more pressingly for our purposes,
15 there have been reports of serious deviations from
16 approved plans.

17 I think with a commission like this, it's
18 extremely important, obviously, to get the planning
19 right on the front end. But it's also equally
20 important to ensure that when plans are duly
21 approved, that construction proceeds according to
22 plan.

1 And working with Commission staff here,
2 I'm excited to have the opportunity in the coming
3 months to look at the inventory of ongoing
4 construction projects and ensuring that those
5 construction projects are, in fact, abiding by the
6 planning and the permitting that's gone through this
7 Commission in the past.

8 We do have three other new Commissioners
9 here today as well as myself. James Blair, a
10 colleague of mine from the White House is here.
11 The President appointed him yesterday as well.
12 James, would you like to introduce yourself?

13 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Sure, I appreciate
14 it. I'm also honored to be here and to be appointed
15 by the President. I am an assistant to the
16 President and Deputy Chief of Staff in the White
17 House.

18 Obviously, as my colleague, the Chair,
19 already referenced, this is a very important mission
20 to the President. And as a builder by trade, he
21 has a particular interest in design, planning,
22 construction, and all of those things. He really

1 wants to leave D.C. better than he found it during
2 this term and be a good partner to the city.

3 As I was mentioning to my colleague, the
4 Commissioner over here, we have a good relationship
5 with the Mayor and her office and seek as much
6 opportunity to collaborate to improve the city as
7 we can.

8 In fact, I spoke to her as recently as
9 yesterday. And we look forward to using this
10 Commission to enhance the work that we've already
11 begun as a federal administration and a city
12 administration from the design planning side.

13 I'm honored to be here, look forward to
14 it, and certainly we'll do our best to faithfully
15 discharge the duties of this Commission.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, James.

17 Stuart Levenbach also joins us. He
18 currently serves at the Office of Management and
19 Budget. Stuart, would you like to introduce
20 yourself?

21 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Sure. I do want
22 to thank the Chair for your remarks and thank the

1 President for the opportunity to serve in this
2 capacity.

3 So I've been living in Gaithersburg,
4 Maryland for almost 20 years now, commuting down
5 to D.C. and working out of federal buildings. Much
6 of that time I was directly involved in the Office
7 of Management and Budget in a number of major
8 construction projects across the country in terms
9 of the budgeting of them and also a lot of the
10 policies around environmental permitting during
11 time in the Council on Environmental Quality in the
12 Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

13 So I'm looking forward to hopefully
14 bringing some of that background to the discussion
15 here at the Commission and just working together
16 to make sure the federal buildings in particular
17 are designed appropriately for the region.

18 CHAIR SCHARF: Lastly, Paul Schaefer is
19 a Commissioner who joins us from the Department of
20 Defense. Paul is currently the director of the
21 Facility Services Directorate, Washington
22 Headquarters Service of the Department of Defense.

1 Paul, would you like to introduce
2 yourself?

3 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Sure. Thank
4 you, sir. So the background with me, I guess, I've
5 been serving the Department of Defense for over 32
6 years as a civil servant, background in civil
7 engineering in terms of master planning, and
8 engineering design and construction.

9 In recent years, it's been more along the
10 lines of installation, management support, and
11 supporting the Army and Missile Defense Agency in
12 looking after their facilities and installations.

13 I'm absolutely honored to be representing
14 Secretary Hegseth on this Commission and look
15 forward to supporting the Commission in the great,
16 great area of the national capital region.

17 CHAIR SCHARF: And I see that you're a
18 native of New Orleans?

19 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: I sure am, a city
20 near and dear to my heart and one that could
21 certainly use some planning, so maybe that's
22 something for the future.

1 CHAIR SCHARF: With that, I don't have
2 anything further for my report today. I look
3 forward to continuing to work with Commission staff
4 in future meetings where hopefully I'll have more
5 to report.

6 But with that, agenda item number three
7 is the report of our executive director, Marcel
8 Acosta.

9 Marcel, would you like to proceed?

10 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

11 MR. ACOSTA: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 On behalf of the staff, I would like to welcome
13 our new Commissioners to the National Capital
14 Planning Commission. So feel free to call on us
15 if you have any questions. And we certainly want
16 to further the mission that the Chair had
17 articulated in terms of making this the most
18 beautiful capital city possible. So we look
19 forward to helping you achieve that goal.

20 We are pleased to announce the public
21 release of the Monumental Core Streetscape Guide
22 and Construction Manual. Its goal is to achieve

1 coherent, cohesive, capital city streetscapes,
2 linking the monumental core with Washington's
3 neighborhoods to create a beautiful, welcoming
4 environment for visitors, workers, and residents.

5 So, many thanks to the Monumental Core
6 Interagency Working Group, which includes both
7 federal and District stakeholder agencies, for
8 guiding this effort. I'd like to extend my
9 gratitude to Beth Miller, Ben Turpin, Jeff Jamawat,
10 and Karen Schierhold for their outstanding
11 contributions. The guidelines are available for
12 download on our website.

13 You have my full report in your packet,
14 and I'm happy to answer any questions that you might
15 have.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Do any Commissioners, I
17 guess, online first, do any Commissioners have any
18 questions for Director Acosta?

19 Hearing none, do any Commissioners present
20 have any questions for Director Acosta?

21 Seeing none, thank you so much, Marcel.

22 Agenda item number four is a legislative

1 update. Madame Secretary, would you like to
2 proceed with that?

3 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes, I don't have any
5 specific items to update the Commission on this
6 month on the legislative update, but I am happy to
7 answer any questions about pending legislation if
8 Commissioners have any.

9 CHAIR SCHARF: Do any Commissioners
10 joining us online have any questions for our
11 secretary?

12 Hearing none, do any Commissioners present
13 have any questions about the legislative update?

14 Seems like a pretty straightforward
15 legislative update to me. Thank you, Meghan.

16 Agenda item number five is the consent
17 calendar. CONSENT CALENDAR

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: There are four items on
19 this month's consent calendar. The first consent
20 calendar item is to approve preliminary and final
21 site and building plans for the St. Elizabeth's west
22 campus antenna installation.

1 The second is to approve comments to the
2 mayor on the District of Columbia Capital
3 Improvement Plan for fiscal years 2026 through 2031.

4 The third item is to approve comments on
5 the Humphreys Engineer Center draft master plan.

6 And the final consent calendar item is to
7 approve preliminary and final site development
8 plans for the Pentagon west end security fence.

9 Are there any questions or discussion
10 items on these consent calendar matters from any
11 of the Commissioners here with us online?

12 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Mr. Chairman, I
13 would move that we adopt the consent calendar.

14 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, sir. Is there
15 a second?

16 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Second.

17 CHAIR SCHARF: Madam Secretary, would you
18 like to call the vote?

19 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes, the motion was made
20 by Commissioner Dixon, and seconded by Commissioner
21 Stidham.

22 Commissioner Cozart?

1 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?

3 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Yes.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?

5 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

7 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Levenbach?

9 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Abstain.

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chair Scharf?

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Abstain.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

13 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Abstain.

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner

15 Tunstall-Williams?

16 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Yes.

17 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

18 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

19 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

20 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

22 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Abstain.

1 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Thank you, the motion
2 passes.

3 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Madam
4 Secretary. The motion has carried.

5 I would note just for the record, while
6 I have great confidence in the work performed by
7 our staff here, being appointed only last night I
8 did not have a large amount of time to review the
9 items that we're voting on today. And as a result
10 I'm abstaining.

11 But I wouldn't want anybody to think that
12 that is a reflection of my views of the work that
13 the staff does here at NCPC.

14 We have five further items on the open
15 session calendar for today, four applications and
16 then one informational presentation. Can we
17 proceed with that now?

18 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
19 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, SOUTHEAST,
20 WASHINGTON, D.C. - POPLAR POINT MASTER PLAN

21 MS. HERR: Good afternoon, Chairman, and
22 members of the Commission. The National Park

1 service, in coordination with the District of
2 Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning
3 and Economic Development, and the District of
4 Columbia Office of Planning, have submitted a
5 revised concept master plan for Poplar Point in
6 Washington, D.C., for Commission review and
7 comment.

8 Overall, staff is pleased with the updated
9 concept and recommends the Commission approve the
10 comments in the Executive Director's report and that
11 I will review in this presentation.

12 Today we are looking at the concept master
13 plan level where the Commission should be focused
14 on issues such as consistency with NCPC's
15 Comprehensive Plan and other policies,
16 appropriateness of the concept of the site, and any
17 particularly unique and/or complex issues.

18 The National Park Service initiated this
19 master plan process in February of 2025, and the
20 Commission provided comments on the conceptual
21 master plan alternatives in April.

22 This review is not an approval, as the

1 Commission's comments are intended to provide
2 feedback to the applicant and identify elements of
3 the design to consider as the applicant refines the
4 master plan. As noted here, there will be
5 additional opportunities to provide public input
6 into the plan.

7 Poplar Point is located along the eastern
8 edge of the Anacostia River in Ward 8. It is
9 adjacent to historic Anacostia and is bordered by
10 the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge to the west,
11 the Anacostia River to the north, Anacostia Park
12 to the east, and the Bridge District, the Anacostia
13 Metrorail Station, and I-295 to the south.

14 The purpose of this master plan is to meet
15 the requirements of the Federal and District of
16 Columbia Government Real Property Act of 2006,
17 otherwise referred to as the DC Lands Act. This
18 master plan is required in order to transfer the
19 land to allow for the future redevelopment of Poplar
20 Point.

21 The DC Lands Act specifically requires a
22 minimum of 70 acres of land is set aside for park

1 purposes, the relocation of existing facilities,
2 identification of at least two sites within the
3 parkland for future commemoration that would be
4 conveyed back to the National Park Service in the
5 future, and consistency with the Anacostia
6 Waterfront Initiative framework plan to the
7 greatest extent practicable.

8 Poplar Point is in close proximity to
9 several historic areas and sites on both sides of
10 the Anacostia River. The National Park Service
11 initiated Section 106 of the National Historic
12 Preservation Act for the site on January 27th, 2025.

13 The area of potential effect is shown in
14 yellow and includes several important historic
15 properties that will be evaluated as part of the
16 106 process.

17 Currently, the site has approximately 5.7
18 acres of scattered pockets of non-titled wetlands
19 and a high water table. There are also protected
20 species identified on the site including the
21 northern long-eared bat, the tri-colored bat, and
22 the monarch butterfly.

1 The site is relatively flat with
2 elevations at zero feet along the shoreline up to
3 31 feet at the eastern end adjacent to the 11th
4 Street Bridge Park, making it extremely vulnerable
5 to flooding.

6 The site contains extensive
7 infrastructure including the WMATA Metro tunnel for
8 the Green Line, the Anacostia River tunnel, the
9 Stickfoot Branch storm drain, and a variety of other
10 utilities.

11 In addition, there are three buildings on
12 the site, including the National Park Service,
13 National Capital Parks-East headquarters, the U.S.
14 Park Police Anacostia operations facility, and the
15 U.S. Park Police Anacostia aviation facility. All
16 three of these facilities are required to be
17 relocated as part of the land transfer and master
18 plan.

19 The site is accessible from several
20 locations including the traffic oval at the
21 Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, Howard Avenue
22 Southeast, and the Anacostia Metro station.

1 The site falls almost completely within
2 the 100 and 500-year floodplains. The Commission
3 previously commented that this site presented a
4 unique opportunity to connect with the shoreline
5 and model natural flood resiliency in addition to
6 creating a new neighborhood amenity.

7 The applicant has identified vistas of the
8 U.S. Capitol and Washington Monument as
9 characteristics of the site. And the Commission
10 previously encouraged the applicant to consider a
11 plan that protects as many of these important views
12 as feasible.

13 The planning principles for the master
14 plan are based on an analysis of existing conditions
15 and incorporating ideas from previous planning
16 efforts including the Anacostia Waterfront
17 Initiative framework plan.

18 Staff supports the project goals at Poplar
19 Point to expand the existing wetland, celebrate the
20 point, rediscover the shoreline, build upon
21 adjacent projects, focus on Metrorail access, and
22 connect with the Anacostia community.

1 The applicant has held several virtual and
2 in-person meetings with the public to get feedback
3 on the master plan. Additional opportunities for
4 public engagement will be available as the master
5 plan review continues.

6 During the April meeting the Commission
7 provided comments on the three previously proposed
8 alternatives. The Commission comments focused on
9 preservation of wetlands, open space, connectivity
10 and access, the view corridors, as well as the
11 appropriate location for development and the anchor
12 use. The Commission did not select a preferred
13 alternative at that time.

14 Since the April meeting, the applicant has
15 worked with stakeholders and positively translated
16 the Commission's comments into this preferred
17 alternative land use plan. The preferred plan
18 proposes open space, including expanded wetlands
19 along the Anacostia Riverfront, relocating the
20 vehicular roadway south with the development.

21 The plan includes cultural and open space
22 uses in the salmon color at the point instead of

1 development. The development areas, shown as cream
2 on the map, are connected adjacent to the existing
3 development, the Metro station, and I-295. The
4 plan includes multiple transportation connections
5 including two pedestrian only access points shown
6 in yellow.

7 As such, staff commends the applicant for
8 developing a preferred alternative that
9 successfully responds to the Commission's previous
10 comments and supports the intent to improve and
11 develop Poplar Point into a community amenity by
12 providing a publicly accessible waterfront park
13 with cultural, economic, and recreational
14 attractions and activities, spurring
15 revitalization efforts east of the river by
16 providing a mix of residential, retail, and office
17 uses around the Anacostia Metrorail Station, and
18 improving access to and expanding the recreational
19 amenities within southern Anacostia Park.

20 The preferred plan features civic and
21 cultural uses at the point as noted. This includes
22 a possible museum location that would be in

1 alignment with the U.S. Capitol viewshed and
2 includes a festival area for community gatherings
3 or events.

4 The riverfront park area would extend
5 Anacostia Park to connect with the Frederick
6 Douglass Memorial Bridge oval with a consistent
7 minimum 250-foot setback from the water to the
8 development that could include a variety of
9 waterfront recreation activities.

10 The preferred plan includes approximately
11 seven acres of wetlands and habitat including the
12 daylighting of Stickfoot Branch. Within the
13 wetlands, there could be education and recreational
14 opportunities including paths and boardwalks that
15 could provide access to the wetlands and
16 interpretation of ecological issues.

17 As such, staff supports the changes to open
18 space, the wetlands, and the point in the preferred
19 alternative as outlined in the executive director's
20 report.

21 The preferred alternative includes
22 development at the site that connects from the

1 Frederick Douglass Bridge oval near the bridge
2 district and the Anacostia Metrorail Station and
3 along 295.

4 The new development is anticipated to be
5 approximately 130 feet in height closest to the
6 Metrorail station and step down as blocks approach
7 the river. The proposed anchor use would occupy
8 a 15-acre parcel near the Metrorail station.

9 If it is determined that the anchor use
10 is not possible, the proposed anchor tenant parcel
11 would be reconfigured and incorporated into the
12 mixed use development grid of parcels and roadways.

13 As such, staff supports the changes to the
14 location and design of development in the preferred
15 alternative as outlined in the executive director's
16 report.

17 The preferred plan protects use to and from
18 the U.S. Capitol, the Washington Monument, and Cedar
19 Hill, the Frederick Douglass home. The plan
20 especially enhances the prominence of the New Jersey
21 Avenue view corridor that extends from the U.S.
22 Capitol to the Poplar Point site.

1 As such, staff supports that the plan
2 protects views of the U.S. Capitol and the
3 Washington Monument which are important viewsheds
4 that add to the uniqueness of this site.

5 The major change to the transportation
6 plan for the site is the relocation of Anacostia

7 Drive away from the waterfront and to the south
8 as a primary spine for development and access to
9 the site. It will connect from the Frederick
10 Douglass Memorial Bridge east oval and extend to
11 the existing Anacostia Drive at the northeast corner
12 of the site. The Riverwalk Trail will instead
13 accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic only.

14 The plan also includes several connections
15 to the surrounding neighborhoods including two new
16 pedestrian only connections. As such, staff
17 supports maximizing vehicular and pedestrian
18 connectivity, particularly from historic
19 Anacostia, to ensure the site is well connected to
20 the surrounding neighborhoods.

21 The overall approach to our flood
22 resilience at Poplar Point is one of living with

1 water. The wetlands and lower elevation areas
2 would connect with the Anacostia River and
3 accommodate future flooding.

4 The rest of the site would consist of
5 gentle terraces to further accommodate flood water
6 and to raise the elevation of development to
7 approximately 12.5 feet which is above the estimated
8 flood level of 10.5 feet above mean sea level.

9 Similar to other waterfront areas in
10 Washington, parking structures would be utilized
11 to raise the elevation of development. The master
12 plan process will include further coordination with
13 Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling regarding potential
14 flood issues as well.

15 As such, staff supports that the plan
16 indicates how the overall flood mitigation approach
17 will address the risk of flooding and any negative
18 impacts to plan development consisting of terraces
19 to further accommodate flood water and to raise the
20 elevation of development.

21 In conclusion, staff commends the
22 applicant for developing a preferred alternative

1 that successfully responds to the Commission's
2 previous comments.

3 As the applicant continues in the master
4 plan process, staff requests the environmental
5 assessment evaluate transportation impacts
6 including vehicular traffic and how pedestrian and
7 bicycle users will be safely accommodated, and
8 encourages the applicant to continue coordination
9 and outreach with the community in the development
10 of the master plan, including and identifying
11 opportunities for interpretation of the site's
12 history and other uses that would support local
13 needs.

14 In conclusion, staff again commends the
15 applicant and recommends the Commission approves
16 the comments in the executive director's report.

17 This concludes my presentation. I have read the
18 recommendations and included them here for your
19 reference.

20 Whit Smith, from the Deputy Mayor's Office
21 for Planning and Economic Development is here to
22 say a few words. And the rest of the design team

1 is available as well to answer any questions you
2 may have. Thank you.

3 MR. SMITH: Good afternoon. My name is
4 Whit Smith. I oversee the Poplar Point plan for
5 the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and
6 Economic Development. On behalf of the Poplar
7 Point team, we would like to thank the Commission
8 and staff for helping us evaluate and refine the
9 three initial test alternatives into a single
10 preferred alternative for Poplar Point.

11 To be specific regarding terminology, the
12 revised concept master plan that was reviewed today
13 is the preferred alternative for the corresponding
14 environmental assessment process for Poplar Point.

15 Please note that the A alternative is a
16 generalized land use plan and will need open space
17 areas and physical development areas at the parcel
18 level. It also addresses views and vistas,
19 vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and other
20 issues.

21 Subsequent to the EA process, we will
22 undertake a more detailed master plan process with

1 the D.C. Office of Planning. The master plan will
2 address park planning and urban design issues at
3 the site and building level. The master plan will
4 also include design guidelines or recommendations
5 for zoning and -- the property.

6 Again, thank you for your thoughtful
7 review and helpful recommendations.

8 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Whit. Do any
9 Commissioners online have any questions for our two
10 speakers?

11 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes, I do, Mr.
12 Chairman.

13 CHAIR SCHARF: Please proceed,
14 Commissioner.

15 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Commissioner Dixon.
16 These are comments. First of all, I appreciate
17 the work that's being done by the staff. I have
18 been in touch with them a lot on this issue because
19 my neighborhood, Anacostia River East, is this
20 park's neighborhood. I've been in that area all
21 my life, and I live two blocks from the Anacostia
22 River and played there as a child. Most people on

1 the Commission know this, but new Commissioners may
2 find this interesting, maybe.

3 I do have a few things I would like to
4 share. I'd like to ask whether or not there can
5 be a replacement of the "East of the River" comment,
6 the words for Anacostia River East. East of the
7 river is a non-locator. I'm trying to encourage
8 folks to recognize that this area is Anacostia River
9 East, not east of a river. It could be a Congo River
10 or whatever, not clear.

11 The other thing I want to stress, which
12 I've spoken to the Planning Office about, which is
13 probably important for future work, is that we try
14 to bring in the Native American theme into the
15 further development of this park, since this is the
16 area that the Native Americans who lived in this
17 community, this is where they all lived, on the
18 Anacostia River East side.

19 Bolling Air Force Base, which is now Joint
20 Base Anacostia-Bolling, was where the main location
21 for their commercial area for selling of pelts and
22 other things that they would sell along the Potomac,

1 Chesapeake Bay, River.

2 So it's a very important Native American.

3 I'm hoping that there'll be some kind of signage.

4 And when they do some of the recreational
5 facilities, et cetera, that they will have something
6 that can be symbolic of the Native Americans who
7 were there last. I've even asked that there may
8 be a lacrosse field that could be multi-purposed,
9 because lacrosse is the Native American sport.

10 I again want to thank you all for what
11 you've done. And I'm going to stay tuned, because
12 this is a very important area for me in Anacostia
13 River East. So thank you very much.

14 And by the way, I want to welcome the new
15 Commissioners and our new Chair. It's a very
16 fascinating Commission to be on, because we do have
17 a chance to see an impact on the future beauty and
18 functionality of our city. Thank you very much.

19 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
20 Commissioner. Do any of our other Commissioners
21 who are with us online have any questions or
22 comments?

1 Hearing none, I actually have just a couple
2 of questions. I appreciated the inclusion of the
3 floodplain charts. And I was interested by your
4 proposed, I guess, sort of flood mediation measures.

5 Do you know when the last time Poplar Point
6 had a significant flooding event was? And if so,
7 do you know how high the waters got?

8 MS. HERR: I actually don't. I mean --

9 CHAIR SCHARF: I didn't mean to put you
10 on the spot.

11 MS. HERR: That's okay.

12 CHAIR SCHARF: I mean, it's a 100-year
13 floodplain. Like, it can either be something that
14 happens -- it's never sort of actually just 100
15 years. And I was just curious what the actual risk
16 was to the site.

17 MS. HERR: I would assume, given the
18 location in the floodplain, and the high water
19 table, that it is generally wet most of the time.

20 CHAIR SCHARF: Fair.

21 MS. HERR: Is that a fair assessment?

22 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: I mean, it's

1 pretty low there.

2 CHAIR SCHARF: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: So we often see a
4 lot of flooding, and there's a set of flood gates
5 that were recently put into place that protect the
6 facilities that are currently located there.

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Got you. I would note that
8 I'm the at-large member from the State of Missouri,
9 so to the extent I'm less familiar with the local
10 geography, I do apologize.

11 The other question I had was one of the
12 charts included in the meeting materials that
13 there's a contaminated zone within the existing
14 site. I didn't see anything about the nature of
15 that contamination. Is that sort of a risk to the
16 ongoing redevelopment? Or what's sort of going on
17 there?

18 MS. HERR: It should not be a risk, but
19 I will actually let Tammy, Commissioner Stidham
20 answer that.

21 CHAIR SCHARF: Sorry.

22 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: No, that's okay.

1 So Poplar Point has been a site of a variety of
2 uses over the time. It was a Naval receiving
3 station for some time. There was laundry service,
4 with a big laundry service there, as well as
5 greenhouse uses, and those uses over the years
6 contaminated the site --

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Got it.

8 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: -- which has been
9 known for some time. And the Park Service, in
10 coordination with the District, has been
11 investigating the site. We are doing a remedial
12 investigation and followed by a feasibility study
13 that will have a proposed plan.

14 And, actually, this plan helps in the
15 remediation of the site. Because knowing the
16 future use is really key in the cleanup so that you
17 are doing cleanup to whatever that future use is
18 going to be so that they play hand in hand. And
19 it will not be a risk as those key processes are
20 occurring again.

21 CHAIR SCHARF: You scared me a little bit
22 with laundry. Because that's usually peek and

1 teak (phonetic), which can be terrible. But that's
2 very helpful. I appreciate it, ma'am.

3 Are there any other questions or comments
4 from Commissioners who are present?

5 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: I have one
6 question.

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Yes, ma'am?

8 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: And I may have
9 missed it. Have you guys identified what the anchor
10 use is planned to be, or are you targeting anything
11 in particular, just out of curiosity?

12 MR. SMITH: Yes, sure. So obviously the
13 environmental assessment process that we've be
14 laser-focused on to, you know, initiate the
15 conveyance. Separately we had a request for
16 expressions of interest for an anchor use at the
17 site.

18 We've conducted that; we have found an
19 anchor that we feel is compatible. But once the
20 environmental assessment's complete, we'll turn
21 back to evaluating that use.

22 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Okay. So nothing

1 confirmed yet?

2 MR. SMITH: Nothing.

3 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you.

4 CHAIR SCHARF: I have one question. So
5 I saw there are some wetlands being created in the
6 area. Is that part of a regulatory requirement for
7 mitigation, or is that another reason?

8 MS. HERR: Well, most of the wetlands
9 already exist. I mean, it's 5.7 acres of wetlands
10 are already on the site, and the plan does expand
11 the amount of wetlands on the site.

12 And I think part of the plan is to improve
13 those wetlands by daylighting the Stickfoot Branch
14 tunnel into the wetlands so that it further improves
15 the quality of those wetlands.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Any further questions from
17 Commissioners present?

18 Thank you so much, Jamie and Whit, for your
19 presentations. Speaking personally, thank you for
20 the information provided. I look forward to
21 continuing to work with you guys on this project.

22 Is there a motion to approve the comments

1 on the revised concept master plan for Poplar Point?

2 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: So moved.

3 CHAIR SCHARF: Is there a second?

4 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I second.

5 CHAIR SCHARF: Oh, I think I reversed the
6 order. We should have done -- or I guess I'll now
7 open it up to the Commission for discussion. I'll
8 start the deliberations with Commissioner Cozart?

9 COMMISSIONER COZART: Good afternoon and
10 welcome.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Sorry about that.

12 COMMISSIONER DIXON: No problem. So
13 really appreciate the work of the staff on this.

14 Just to underscore within the staff report and in
15 the presentation, this is a really important project
16 for the District.

17 In many ways this is kind of a final piece
18 of Anacostia Waterfront Initiative which we, at the
19 District, have worked with the federal government
20 on for the last 15-plus years and realized
21 significant parts of it and provided access, not
22 just for D.C. residents but for the millions of

1 visitors that we have to the nation's capital to
2 be able to access the waterfront.

3 And this is a piece that was envisioned
4 as part of that Anacostia Waterfront Initiative to
5 be revitalized and have this mix of natural and open
6 spaces, monumental places, places for recreation,
7 and also places for living as well.

8 And so we're really excited about that and
9 certainly have, in anticipation of that, the Mayor
10 has made investments in the Frederick Douglass
11 Bridge which is a remarkable piece of infrastructure
12 bordering this area, and certainly excited about
13 the advances in the 11th Street Bridge Park as well,
14 as well as investments in historic Anacostia and
15 surrounding neighborhoods.

16 So very excited about moving this forward,
17 and appreciate the work of the staff and comments
18 from Commissioners to strengthen it, and certainly
19 the partnership of the National Park Service around
20 this as well.

21 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner
22 Cozart.

1 Commissioner Schaefer?

2 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: I can't say it any
3 better, honestly. So, no, this is a great looking
4 plan. I look forward to seeing it progress. Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
7 Commissioner Stidham?

8 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: I guess to build
9 off of Commissioner Cozart, this is an important
10 project for the National Park Service. We've been
11 partnering with the District, and it's been going
12 extremely well. It's a long time coming, so to get
13 this far is really great. And I can't wait until
14 we pull it over the finish line. So that's where
15 we are.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
17 Commissioner Argo?

18 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Can you hear me?

19 CHAIR SCHARF: We can hear you.

20 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Wonderful. It's
21 working. I appreciate very much the work that's
22 been done on this. This is an exciting project.

1 And to see this, to see how far we've come on the
2 conceptual to the development of these plans, which
3 we hope you will all support, it's a great time.

4 This is an important project in a number
5 of reasons that I've -- for a number of reasons I
6 don't need to enumerate. Thank you, thanks so much
7 for taking it this far, all you guys who worked on
8 it.

9 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
10 Commissioner Levenbach?

11 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: That was an
12 informative presentation, thank you very much. I
13 have no comments at this time.

14 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
15 Commissioner Blair?

16 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: No comments, thank
17 you.

18 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
19 Commissioner Tunstall-Williams?

20 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Yes,
21 thank you for the presentation. And it's exciting
22 to see the evolution of the preferred alternative.

1 I really especially appreciate the
2 movement of the road and returning the waterfront
3 to the pedestrian, bicycle, sort of recreation use,
4 as well as the introduction of additional memorial
5 and commemoration sites that are sorely needed for
6 the city but giving it a very prominent approach,
7 how you look at it, how you view it from the other
8 side of the river.

9 And then also one of the things that we're
10 very concerned about in the first presentation was
11 the connection of connecting this part of Anacostia
12 River East, with Commissioner Dixon, across 295 back
13 to the rest of Anacostia.

14 And I think the introduction of the
15 pedestrian bridges in some of those will be really
16 important to allowing the neighborhood to enjoy this
17 part of the site, as well as the sort of smart
18 approaches to water management and locating the
19 built infrastructure out of that, and then allowing
20 the water management to be an amenity that can be
21 enjoyed when people are recreating on the site.
22 So a very nice plan, I look forward to seeing it

1 come to fruition.

2 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

3 Commissioner Dixon?

4 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes, I've said most
5 of what I wanted to say, but I would add that I've
6 been a long time waiting. I played golf on this
7 space as a kid, the first golf course I played on.

8 Now the course is gone. But it's gone through a
9 lot of changes. And I'm really hopeful that I'll
10 be able to see all of this developed.

11 And we put a lot of effort in this when
12 I chaired the Anacostia Coordinating Council. We
13 actually recommended the movement of the road and
14 a lot of the other things that are being suggested.

15 So it's really, really good to see it come forward.

16 And again, thank you.

17 And I would like to ask one question.

18 Where are the entry points that they have agreed
19 to in this plan? I thought one was going to be
20 at Shannon Place, Chicago Street, and could you
21 share with me where those two, can they answer that
22 for me, Mr. Chairman?

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Jamie, do you --

2 MS. HERR: So, I mean, I have not memorized
3 the street names, but I can say that all the
4 available ways to access the site have been included
5 in the preferred plan which was the Commission
6 encouraged the applicant to maximize those
7 connections. So the availability of a connection
8 has been incorporated into the plan.

9 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Very good, thank you
10 for that. I'll be clear later. Thank you.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Commissioner Dixon, you
12 have us all at a disadvantage with your local
13 knowledge there.

14 So Commissioner Cash?

15 COMMISSIONER CASH: Oh, thanks, I just
16 want to thank the team for their responsiveness to
17 a lot of our comments coming forth the last few
18 times. I really appreciate maximizing all those
19 connections to the site, and I really appreciate
20 kind of opening up the waterfront to more patron
21 uses. So thanks for all the progress here, and I
22 look forward to it.

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
2 And lastly, Commissioner McGowan?

3 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: I have no further
4 comments, but thank you for the presentation.

5 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you. Thank you to
6 the National Parks Service and to the District for
7 all of your work and for responding to the
8 Commission's prior inquiries. I think that was an
9 extremely informative presentation. And I
10 appreciate the time that you've obviously taken to
11 keep us in the loop and to keep the project rolling
12 forward.

13 Are there any further comments or
14 questions before we move forward?

15 Hearing or seeing none, can the secretary
16 please confirm the motion and the second and take
17 the vote by roll call?

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. Motion was made by
19 Commissioner Stidham and seconded by Commissioner
20 Dixon.

21 Commissioner Cozart?

22 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

1 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?
2 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Yes.
3 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?
4 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.
5 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?
6 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.
7 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Levenbach?
8 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Yes.
9 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chair Scharf?
10 CHAIR SCHARF: Abstain.
11 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?
12 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Abstain.
13 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner
14 Tunstall-Williams?
15 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Yes.
16 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?
17 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.
18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?
19 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.
20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?
21 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Abstain.
22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Thank you, the motion

1 carries.

2 SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, 600 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE,
3 SW, WASHINGTON, DC - NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM
4 CONSTRUCT INTEGRATED BEZOS LEARNING CENTER

5 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, with that motion
6 carrying, our next item on the agenda is Agenda Item
7 6b which is a request to approve final site and
8 building plans for the National Air and Space Museum
9 Construct Integrated Bezos Learning Center.

10 I believe we have Stephanie Free with us?

11 MS. FREE: Yes, thank you. Good
12 afternoon, Chair Scharf and Commissioners.

13 The Smithsonian Institution submitted
14 final site and building plans for the Construct
15 Integrated Bezos Learning Center, or BLC, which is
16 a proposed addition to the east end of the National
17 Air and Space Museum, or NASM, on the National Mall
18 which staff is recommending approval of.

19 For the final review stage, the Commission
20 is focused on topics such as if the comments provided
21 during the preliminary review were adequately
22 addressed, signage and lighting details, and

1 ensuring confidence that the plans will not
2 substantially change.

3 The Commission has been involved in
4 shaping this project for more than three years.
5 Following an initial information presentation in
6 March 2022, the Commission approved the comments
7 on concept plans in May 2024, and the preliminary
8 plans in December of 2024.

9 And as I mentioned today, we are reviewing
10 the final site and building plans. The project
11 anticipates commencing construction later this year
12 and opening mid-2027.

13 In its last review, the Commission
14 approved the BLC's preliminary site and building
15 plans with comments related to further study of the
16 building's upper volume terminus on the south
17 facade, the lighting approach, and development of
18 a physical mockup, open space, programming, and
19 shade, refinement to the storm water management and
20 planting plans, and wave finding and circulation.

21 Overall, staff finds the applicant has
22 addressed the Commission's preliminary plan

1 comments, and additional design refinements made
2 in the final site and building plans are a typical
3 progression expected in the design development
4 phase which I will cover in this presentation.

5 But before I dive into the updates, I'll
6 first provide a brief overview of the project.
7 As I mentioned, the BLC will be an addition to the
8 east end of the National Air and Space Museum on
9 the National Mall. It is bound by Jefferson Drive
10 to the north, 4th Street to the east, and
11 Independence Avenue to the south.

12 NASM's 1988 east-end restaurant addition
13 was demolished in 2022, and the remaining two and
14 a half acre site will be the home to the Integrated
15 Bezos Learning Center addition.

16 The proposed BLC is a three-story,
17 approximately 80,000 square foot addition. The
18 first level will contain a 600 to 700 seat restaurant
19 with BLC programming on Levels 2 and 3.

20 The addition will connect to the museum
21 via a new vestibule, provide two new outdoor
22 gathering spaces, and a permanent location for the

1 Phoebe Waterman Haas Observatory. The conceptual
2 criteria for the BLC addition uses a spiral galaxy
3 as inspiration. The building's spiral form is
4 meant to metaphorically place the individual at the
5 core of the galaxy.

6 The Commission previously found that the
7 spiral galaxy design inspiration is a strong
8 thematic element that reflects the BLC's program
9 and NASM's mission, and is eloquently expressed in
10 the proposed design.

11 And here we have a look at the illustrative
12 perspective showing the BLC addition in the larger
13 context of the National Mall and its relationship
14 to NASM where the museum solid-to-void pattern is
15 carried through in the addition's form.

16 The BLC addition takes shape as a spiral
17 form radiating outward and upward towards the
18 National Mall. A solid program bar wraps an
19 inner-glass concourse and is lifted above the ground
20 level revealing a glazed base.

21 In terms of program, the BLC activities
22 will occupy the majority of the top two floors.

1 The ground floor will house the new restaurant and
2 the vestibule connection to NASM. A new group and
3 school entrance to the museum will also be located
4 on the south side of the addition off of Independence
5 Avenue.

6 So in the next part of the presentation,
7 I will focus on the building design and lighting
8 refinements that have occurred since the
9 preliminary review followed by that of the landscape
10 design.

11 To begin, here we have a summary of the
12 building materials selected which are largely
13 unchanged from the preliminary review. The upper
14 volume which wraps the addition's south and east
15 sides is clad with the titanium aluminum panels.

16 This volume sits above a dark glass
17 first-floor base. The glass door frames and
18 mullions are proposed as a brown sugar color that
19 relates to the glazing and coloring used at NASM.

20 The BLC's interior glass concourse on the
21 north side will consist of clear glass with bird
22 frit, and aluminum accents in the preferred color

1 on the rocks, which is a light gray hue.

2 Here we have some illustrative renderings
3 that demonstrate the BLC addition materials
4 adjacent to NASM. At the preliminary review stage,
5 the Commission found that the materials pallet
6 complements the NASM revitalization building
7 materials but differentiates the BLC as a new
8 addition.

9 During the preliminary review, the
10 Commission also recommended further study of two
11 options for the terminus of the upper curved volume
12 on the south elevation.

13 A straight angle, as seen here on the left,
14 and an obtuse angle as seen here on the right, noting
15 that the straight angle option relates best to the
16 orthogonal geometry of the museum, as such the
17 applicant study of this facade with additional
18 renderings of the south elevation within the broader
19 context, including its relationship to NASM as a
20 whole along Independence Avenue.

21 Through consultation, the Section 106
22 consulting party has stated a preference for the

1 obtuse angle option as it complements NASM's block
2 form with a clear transition point between the two
3 structures and serves as a starting point for the
4 BLC addition spiral form.

5 Overall, staff supports the consulting
6 party's justification for selecting the obtuse
7 angle termination as the preferred option and finds
8 that, in the larger context of NASM, the BLC addition
9 effectively relates to the museum's facade through
10 other design cues such as the aluminum panel sizing,
11 fenestration geometry, and material coloring.

12 The applicant has also made significant
13 progress on the building's lighting design to ensure
14 it will respect the lighting hierarchy of memorials,
15 monuments, and important civic buildings and spaces
16 within the monumental core.

17 The facade lighting concept is to provide
18 a dynamic texture of light and shadow on the upper
19 volume created with strategically placed thin
20 tapered aluminum fins that align with the joints
21 in the metal panel facade material.

22 This effect is achieved by locating a

1 linear LED light within the facade and gently
2 up-lighting the custom tapered metal fin through
3 a reveal in the joint. This is intended to give
4 the impression of shooting stars further
5 reinforcing the streaking light pattern and the
6 mission of the Bezos Learning Center.

7 At the preliminary review, the Commission
8 requested further study of the lighting approach
9 to ensure it provides soft illumination as
10 illustrated in the plans and respects the
11 surrounding context.

12 In response, the applicant conducted a
13 light level survey that inventoried the lighting
14 brightness levels of five buildings or monuments
15 surrounding the project site as seen here. The
16 brightness levels on the facades immediately
17 adjacent to the BLC range from 9 to 12 candelas per
18 square meter. And as a result, the applicant
19 proposes that the BLC target a maximum brightness
20 of 10 candelas per square meter.

21 The design team also built a full scale
22 mockup of a portion of the facade to test the

1 lighting conditions of the tapered fin strategy.

2 Staff reviewed the mockup with the consulting
3 parties last month, and the mockup is in NCPC's
4 training room for your in-person review.

5 Staff notes that while there are some
6 limitations to the mockup it still provides a useful
7 tool for evaluating the lighting strategy with the
8 building materials.

9 In addition, the lighting products shall
10 be fully dimmable and the Section 106 Memorandum
11 of Agreement requires the applicant to convene the
12 consulting parties, including NCPC, to review the
13 integral facade lighting after construction is
14 complete to set the lighting levels, color,
15 temperature, and other lighting details of the
16 project.

17 And overall, staff finds the adjustable
18 nature of the lighting, the results of the light
19 level survey, and the light levels demonstrated by
20 the mockup indicate the lighting approach is
21 designed to respect the hierarchy of memorials,
22 monuments, and important civic buildings and spaces

1 in the monumental core.

2 During its review of the facade mockup and
3 lighting study, the applicant found that additional
4 detailing was required for the metal fin to prevent
5 bird nesting. In summary, the total maximum
6 horizontal depth of the tapered fins is reduced from
7 eight inches to six inches, and a tapered ledge will
8 be fabricated on the top side of the fins and
9 finished to match the rest of the facade.

10 The ledge will measure 2.25 inches at its
11 highest point which coincides with the widest
12 six-inch horizontal projection of the fin and will
13 taper down in height as the length of the fin
14 diminishes.

15 An in-depth site analysis included in the
16 submission materials indicates that the wedge will
17 be imperceivable and have no effect on the
18 appearance of the building facade, as you can see
19 here, and the renderings on the left without the
20 wedge, and the renderings on the right that include
21 the ledge.

22 So that concludes the review of the updates

1 for the building design and lighting. And in the
2 following slides I will focus on the progression
3 of the landscape design since the preliminary
4 review.

5 Here's a look at the proposed BLC site
6 plan. The project includes two public open spaces,
7 the Learning Courtyard, which fronts the National
8 Mall, and the Astronomy Park along Independence
9 Avenue and 4th Street. The design of each space
10 is intended to promote visual and spatial continuity
11 between interior and exterior spaces placing a
12 priority on continuous circulation around the BLC
13 site.

14 At the preliminary review stage, the
15 Commission was supportive of the overall approach
16 to the project landscape design and materiality;
17 however, the Commission requested additional
18 information about the amount of shade in the
19 Learning Courtyard and Astronomy Park and the
20 programmatic needs to better understand the extent
21 of the proposed paving.

22 In response, the final site and building

1 plans include a diagram that illustrates the amount
2 of BLC hardscape and green spaces are proportional
3 to the existing hardscape and green spaces on the
4 entirety of the NASM site, and another diagram
5 illustrating that the proposed amount of green space
6 is proportional to the amount of green space on the
7 former restaurant pavilion site which continues to
8 provide historic context for the BLC through its
9 retention of the perimeter planter walls.

10 In terms of the programs, the Learning
11 Courtyard is intended to be a quiet space where
12 visitors may rest and reflect with a variety of
13 seating areas and options. The space in the center
14 is designed as an outdoor room that is defined by
15 sloping benches and mounded planter beds. The
16 larger, more open space plan at the center of the
17 space allows for flexibility in programming
18 including educator-facilitated outdoor learning.

19 The Learning Courtyard will include a
20 gathering space for BLC programming, offer views
21 of the National Mall, and provide an elevated,
22 shaded viewing platform over the loading dock ramp

1 with the potential to accommodate large scale
2 audiovisual projections on the east wall of NASM.

3 The Astronomy Park will be the permanent
4 home for the Phoebe Waterman Haas Observatory near
5 the intersection of Independence Avenue and 4th
6 Street. The overall size of the Astronomy Park is
7 determined by the program area which includes
8 removable educational installations and space for
9 outdoor telescopes which must remain clear of tree
10 canopy or other obstructions to maintain
11 visibility.

12 In addition to a permanent location for
13 the observatory, Astronomy Park will provide a
14 queuing area for school groups, space for small
15 group facilitation programming and seating, and a
16 visual connection to the Dwight D. Eisenhower
17 Memorial.

18 Overall, staff finds the hardscape areas
19 in the Learning Courtyard and Astronomy Park are
20 designed to accommodate flexible programming,
21 including passive recreation, multiple educational
22 installations, and educator facilitated outdoor

1 learning, while maintaining adequate circulation
2 around the site.

3 During its last review, several
4 Commissioners asked whether the number of pathways
5 that form the spiral geometry in the Learning
6 Courtyard could be reduced.

7 The final submission indicates there are
8 two primary pedestrian routes, the BLC internal site
9 circulation and the extension of the NASM
10 perambulation path. The NASM perambulation path
11 allows visitors to circulate around the entirety
12 of the NASM block, including the BLC, without
13 interruption.

14 Egress from the BLC is also considered in
15 the circulation plan, demonstrating that on the
16 north side egress is required from the vestibule
17 where the BLC meets NASM. This egress path
18 continues north to accommodate both stair and ramp
19 users and defines the spiral form of the Learning
20 Courtyard.

21 And as such, staff finds the proposed
22 circulation is intended to extend the path which

1 encompasses the entire perimeter of the NASM block
2 and connects it with the internal BLC site
3 circulation, building entrances, and perimeter
4 streetscapes.

5 As requested, the provided shade study
6 illustrates where shade will occur during the early
7 summer, early spring, and early fall at various
8 points throughout the day.

9 Staff finds that the shade study indicates
10 that the building and proposed trees provide
11 opportunities for shade in the Learning Courtyard
12 and Astronomy Park seasonally throughout the day
13 except for the peak summer months when shade is less
14 available from the longer days and high angle of
15 sun.

16 Therefore, staff encourages the BLC to
17 consider incorporating shade features into outdoor
18 programming of the Learning Courtyard and Astronomy
19 Park during the summer months when there is a greater
20 need for respite from the afternoon sun.

21 Regarding the planting plan, the proposal
22 continues to incorporate the NASM revitalization

1 planting concept, which is a palette of mostly
2 native perennial and prairie plants, as well as
3 trees that serve to foster biodiversity and support
4 a diverse array of pollinators.

5 The location and selection of plants
6 species for the BLC site will continue the tree
7 palate of the NASM landscape and transition to
8 species selected to highlight things such as
9 night-blooming plants and prairie landscapes to
10 evoke the broader national landscape where space
11 observatories are numerous and skies are darkest.

12 In response to public comments, the
13 planting plan has been revised to eliminate nearly
14 two dozen plant species that are not native to the
15 National Capital region.

16 Overall, staff finds the proposed plant
17 palette is not inconsistent with NCPC's Pollinator
18 Best Practices Resource Guide and incorporates a
19 range of pollinator-supporting plants in a way that
20 balances the BLC's thematic design, and ecological
21 function, and the existing plant pallet to ensure
22 continuity throughout the site.

1 In this final segment of the presentation,
2 I will discuss the proposed wayfinding strategy
3 which includes building mounted signage at entrance
4 points and rectangular metal panel signs within the
5 planting beds at entrance points on Jefferson Drive,
6 Independence Avenue, and 4th Street.

7 The landscape panel signs are proposed as
8 black metal signs with white pigmented lettering
9 which contrast with the granite site walls and
10 existing building signage at NASM where the signage
11 characters are engraved into the stone itself, as
12 seen here in this image on the right.

13 While staff supports the panel signage
14 design, it encourages further study of the placement
15 of the signs within the planting beds to achieve
16 a consistent treatment that softens the transition
17 between the base of the signs and the top of the
18 planter walls without obscuring the lettering with
19 planting.

20 Building signage is located at the BLC
21 entry on the north side of the building, the museum
22 group entrance on the south side of the building,

1 and on the Phoebe Waterman Haas Observatory. Each
2 are pin-mounted lettering with legible cap height
3 and contrasting color for enhanced readability.

4 And collectively, staff finds the proposed
5 wayfinding strategy integrates signage at strategic
6 points on the building and within the landscape to
7 provide a clear distinction between the BLC and NASM
8 and to guide visitors to the appropriate
9 destination.

10 And the building mounted signage and the
11 metal signs with pin-mounted lettering in the
12 landscape beds are sympathetic to the existing
13 campus-wide signage plan.

14 So that concludes my presentation. The
15 executive director's recommendations have been
16 incorporated into my presentation. So while I will
17 not repeat them here, I would also like to note
18 that, as part of the recommendations, the applicant
19 is actively coordinating with the District
20 Department of Energy and the Environment to amend
21 the stormwater management plan to encompass the full
22 site, including the BLC. And the recommendations

1 are also listed in the first two pages of your
2 report.

3 So I would like to now introduce Tina
4 Menendez, Director of the Bezos Learning Center,
5 with the Smithsonian Institution, who would like
6 to provide some remarks.

7 Myself and several others from the
8 applicant team are available to answer your
9 questions.

10 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you so much,
11 Stephanie. Tina?

12 MS. MENENDEZ: Good afternoon, everyone.
13 Thank you, Ms. Free and members of the Commission.

14 The Bezos Learning Center will bring
15 together STEAM-related collections and experts
16 across the institution in promoting inquiry-based
17 opportunities for learners of all ages with a focus
18 on schools and community groups. On behalf of the
19 Smithsonian Institution, the National Air and Space
20 Museum, and the project team, we are pleased to
21 return to the Commission for review of the final
22 design for the Construct Integrated Bezos Learning

1 Center Project.

2 We wish to thank the Commission staff for
3 their collegial participation in the design
4 development for this project through the completion
5 of the Historic Preservation Section 106
6 consultation process and National Environmental
7 Policy Act review. Their input has been invaluable
8 and pressed the Smithsonian and design team to
9 develop alternatives which progress the project
10 design. Other members from the Smithsonian and the
11 design team, led by Perkins & Will, are here with
12 me today to address your comments and any questions.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Tina. Do any
15 Commissioners online have any questions for either
16 of our two presenters?

17 Hearing none, do any Commissioners here
18 with us in chambers have any questions?

19 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: I just have one,
20 and it's on the fin that's being installed for the
21 lighting. So, first, fantastic design. I just
22 wanted to commend you on that. And just a follow-on

1 question I had. The mechanism that's going to
2 attach it, from a wind load perspective, we get some
3 pretty high winds over here, and just curious on
4 the detail. Or has that not been sorted out yet?

5 MR. SCHABEL: Thank you for your question.

6 We have -- I can't tell you the specific details
7 personally, but we have an exterior wall consultant
8 that's been scrutinizing all those details,
9 including that, and we have taken that into account
10 certainly.

11 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Could you just state your
12 name for the record, please?

13 MR. SCHABEL: Sorry. Brian Schabel,
14 Design Director of Chicago Office, Perkins & Will.

15 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Thank you, Brian.
16 Again, fantastic design. Appreciate that.

17 CHAIR SCHARF: Do any other Commissioners
18 here with us in chambers have any questions?

19 Hearing none, we will now turn to public
20 testimony. We have one person who indicated that
21 they wanted to testify publicly on this matter.
22 Bernard Berne, I believe you're attending

1 virtually. And you have three minutes, sir.

2 Please proceed.

3 MR. BERNE: Can you hear me?

4 CHAIR SCHARF: We can hear you.

5 MR. BERNE: Thank you. The last
6 landscape plan for this project does not adequately
7 conform to the NCPC's Pollinator Best Practices
8 Resources Guide. Although the Smithsonian has
9 added common milkweed and made other changes, at
10 my request, to the plant list, other entries and
11 omissions are still not consistent with regard to
12 recommendations.

13 For example, the project's plant list
14 contains 16 species of 12 trees, shrubs, and
15 perennials that are not native to the National
16 Capital Region. Three are not native to North
17 America. Some may not provide foliage for native
18 pollinators or food for their larvae. I have
19 informed the Smithsonian about these.

20 The guide states that the use of some
21 non-native plants is acceptable in designed
22 landscapes if they are not deemed as invasive.

1 However, 16 species is too many. Years may pass
2 before some plants appear on invasive plant species
3 lists. The plant list contains Japanese shield
4 fern. This plant is native only to Asia. It is
5 on the list of non-native invasive plants for the
6 city of Alexandria, Virginia. That's right here.

7 The Smithsonian needs to remove this plant from
8 its list.

9 The NCPC guide states take care when
10 selecting plant cultivars. Some plants are
11 selected for traits attractive to humans, but not
12 pollinators, such as size, color and shape.
13 Therefore, prioritize the original native species
14 whenever possible. The plant list should not
15 contain any cultivars unless they are more resistant
16 to the season than their parents are. However, the
17 plant list contains 19 cultivars that lack such
18 increased resistance. The Smithsonian therefore
19 needs to replace all 19 cultivars with their native
20 parents, if any, or with native species that have
21 similar characteristics as the cultivars. These
22 characteristics include the size, shape and colors

1 of flowers and foliage. Thank you.

2 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Mr. Berne. I
3 appreciate your taking the time to testify today.

4 I believe that concludes the public testimony on
5 this item.

6 Is there a motion to approve final site
7 and building plans for the National Air and Space
8 Museum Construct Integrated Bezos Learning Center?

9 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: So
10 moved.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Is there a second?

12 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: I'll second.

13 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

14 I'll now open it up the Commission for discussion.

15 I'll start the deliberations with Commissioner
16 Tunstall-Williams.

17 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Thank
18 you. Thank you to Stephanie and to the design team
19 for this presentation. Really appreciate seeing
20 the development of this project. It's very
21 exciting the concept that you've had initially has
22 stayed strong all the way through. You've done

1 a great job and I think just the little elements
2 of refinement have really gone a long way,
3 particularly the lighting.

4 The only thing that I will say is what I
5 said when we looked at the mockup just to get it
6 on the record. I encourage you to look at the
7 underside of those fins to make sure that the
8 reflectivity and diffusion is right when viewed from
9 down below. We just want to avoid having some weird
10 hot spots or seeing the actual diodes that are
11 lighting up.

12 Then, the other similarly small issue.
13 In the planting signs, the one that's in the
14 landscape that was black, seemed discordant to me
15 and I might encourage you to look at the color of
16 that maybe look at what your using on the mullions
17 of the building, just to soften it a little bit.

18 Again, minor comments, excellent project and I look
19 forward moving forward.

20 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
21 Commissioner Dixon?

22 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Great project,

1 looking forward to it moving forward. Thank you.

2 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

3 Commissioner Cash?

4 COMMISSIONER CASH: No additional
5 comments, but thanks to the team. I really
6 appreciate where the project is going.

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Commissioner McGowan?

8 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Thank you, I've
9 got no additional comments, but appreciate the
10 informative presentation. Thank you.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
12 Commissioner Cozart?

13 COMMISSIONER COZART: Thanks to the staff
14 for their work on this. It's a really exciting
15 design, really exciting project in its function,
16 and look forward to it moving forward.

17 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
18 Commissioner Schaefer?

19 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Just one thing I
20 wanted to add, and we talked about it when we looked
21 at the mock-up as well. I understand a lot of work
22 has gone into the lighting, but I would like to just

1 think that we have an opportunity here from a
2 lighting perspective. And I absolutely see the
3 illustration here that shows the details. It's
4 gorgeous, but I can't help but wonder wouldn't that
5 have a little bit of a wow factor if that light was
6 in motion. Again, I know maybe that's been talked
7 about previously, as we discussed, but I just wanted
8 to get it on the record to consider that. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

11 Commissioner Stidham?

12 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: The designs, both
13 to the building and to the landscape, have really
14 progressed very nicely. I mean, I was not seeing
15 that rotation when we first started, but now you
16 see the rotation in the building, you see the
17 rotation in the landscape and it all just plays out.

18 I think the lighting is just sort of the
19 cherry on top. I think it adds that sense of motion
20 respectfully, even without the light moving, I think
21 you feel the light moving. So, really a very nice
22 job in responding to the Commission's comments and

1 other public comments that you've received.

2 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
3 Commissioner Argo?

4 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I concur with -- we've
5 had a lot of good comments from the Commissioners,
6 all of which I agree with. I particularly, to
7 reflect what some people have said, appreciate the
8 approach and the work done on the lighting. I think
9 it's going to be -- I was going to say spectacular,
10 that's probably a little over the top, but I think
11 it's really going to work and highlight this
12 exciting project. Thanks so much for your work on
13 this.

14 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
15 Commissioner Levenbach?

16 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: I have no
17 comments at this time.

18 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
19 Commissioner Blair?

20 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: No comments.

21 CHAIR SCHARF: Speaking for myself, I'd
22 like to thank the Smithsonian Institution, the

1 design team, for their diligence working on this
2 project, working through staff and stakeholder
3 comments. I think the level and degree of their
4 diligence is demonstrated by the presentation we
5 just heard today and the extensive briefing
6 materials provided as well. This certainly appears
7 to be a very exciting project and we look forward
8 to seeing how things develop moving forward.

9 Are there any further questions or
10 comments?

11 In that case, I think we have a motion on
12 the table. Madam Secretary, would you please
13 confirm the motion and second and take the vote by
14 roll call?

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes, the motion was made
16 by Commissioner Tunstall-Williams and seconded by
17 Commissioner Schaefer. Commissioner Cozart?

18 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

19 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?

20 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Yes.

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?

22 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.

1 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

2 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

3 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Levenbach?

4 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Abstain.

5 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chair Scharf?

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Abstain.

7 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

8 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Abstain, thank you.

9 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner

10 Tunstall-Williams?

11 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Yes.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

13 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

15 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

16 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

17 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Abstain.

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Thank you, the motion

19 passes.

20 DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR

21 PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 601 F STREET,

22 NW, WASHINGTON, DC - CAPITAL ONE ARENA IMPROVEMENTS

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you. With that
2 motion having carried, we now move on to Agenda Item
3 6C, which is a request to approve preliminary
4 building plans for the Capital One Arena
5 Improvements.

6 Jamie? Oh, hello again. For a second I
7 thought I moved back to the wrong item on the agenda
8 here. Jamie, great to have you back with us.

9 MS. HERR: Thank you.

10 CHAIR SCHARF: Please proceed.

11 MS. HERR: All right. Good afternoon,
12 Chairman and members of the Commission. The
13 District of Columbia Deputy Mayor for Planning and
14 Economic Development, along with Monumental Sports
15 and Entertainment and their design team, have
16 submitted preliminary site and building plans for
17 the Capital One Arena for review and approval by
18 the Commission.

19 Overall, the applicant has made positive
20 improvements to the design based on Commission
21 feedback, and staff recommends the Commission
22 approve the preliminary site and building plans of

1 the Capital One Arena.

2 The applicant initiated a consultation
3 with staff in December and then gave an information
4 presentation to the Commission at the February
5 Commission meeting. NCPC staff and the applicant
6 initiated the Section 106 process in February and
7 held consultation meetings in March, April and May.

8 The Commission provided comments to the applicant
9 on the concept plan in May and today the Commission
10 is reviewing and approving preliminary site and
11 building plans. The applicant will come back at
12 a future date for the final review.

13 As a reminder, for the preliminary review
14 stage the Commission is focused on topics such as
15 the project's consistency with the Federal Elements
16 of the Comprehensive Plan, the architectural and
17 landscape strategy, the appropriateness of the site
18 for the given context, and how the project will
19 affect views and viewsheds. The applicant has
20 indicated that their goals and objectives for the
21 project are to transform the arena with a unified
22 identity to extend the functional life. They

1 intend to improve access and circulation, improve
2 building materials, transparency, and activation
3 with a goal of being a catalyst for area renewal.

4 Staff supports the project objectives to
5 extend the functional life of the arena and
6 reinforce its urban presence within Downtown
7 Washington, D.C. by improving access, enhancing
8 wayfinding and the arrival experience, enlivening
9 the arena exterior to make it a must-see building
10 for residents and visitors, and activating the arena
11 as an entertainment venue in the heart of the city.

12 Capital One Arena is located on the block
13 bounded by 6th Street on the east, 7th Street on
14 the west, F Street on the south and Gallery Place
15 Way on the north. The arena is located in the middle
16 of Downtown, surrounded by significant National
17 Historic Landmarks, or NHLs, including the Patent
18 Office, now the Donald W. Reynolds Center for
19 American Art and Portraiture, also called the
20 Reynolds Center; the General Post Office, now called
21 Hotel Monaco; and the Pension Building, which is
22 now the National Building Museum. Immediately

1 adjacent to Capital One is the Reynolds Center,
2 originally the Patent Office Building, which is a
3 National Historic Landmark and considered one of
4 the most significant buildings in Washington, D.C.

5 The Section 106 process has been
6 evaluating the impact of the updated design on this
7 and other historic buildings, and staff request the
8 applicant continue to coordinate with consulting
9 parties in preparation of the Memorandum of
10 Agreement for the project as part of the National
11 Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process.

12 The existing building, opened in 1997, was
13 designed to appear as a series of separate facades
14 to break up the building massing. The primary
15 corner at 7th and F Streets includes a large corner
16 digital display and the main entry on 7th Street
17 is demarcated by a large awning. The applicant has
18 made several changes noted here since the Concept
19 Review in May, including lowering the upper edge
20 of the veil by 10 feet, lifting the lower edge of
21 the veil on F Street by 10 feet, updating the
22 lighting details and technical specifications,

1 adding new vertical metal framing on 6th Street,
2 removing the digital banner, lowering the digital
3 signs and integrating them with the facade and
4 updating the landscape plans. All of which
5 directly address the Commission's previous
6 comments.

7 Now I will review these changes in detail.

8 As I noted, the updating building design includes
9 raising the lower level of the veil and lowering
10 the top as well, pulling it in at the corner of 7th
11 and F Streets, removing the horizontal digital sign
12 band and integrating the facade with the digital
13 boards. In these elevations, you see that the veil
14 has been pulled back on Gallery Place Way and the
15 addition of metal frames on 6th Street.

16 Now I will review the changes through
17 visual rendered comparisons. This is the prior
18 building design from May at the corner of 7th and
19 F Streets. This is the updated design. The
20 applicant has lowered the edge of the top of the
21 veil by 10 feet and increased the transparency at
22 this main corner to reduce the perceived scale.

1 The applicant has also lowered the height of the
2 corner digital display and removed the horizontal
3 digital banner. The lower level of the veil has
4 also been raised by 10 feet.

5 The applicant has submitted some
6 additional details on the lighting specifications
7 but staff recommends the applicant continue to
8 refine the lighting plan to demonstrate the intended
9 illumination levels and aesthetic for the combined
10 lighting on the updated building.

11 This is the previous view at the corner
12 of 7th and F Streets looking east and this is the
13 updated view. You can see the lower height of the
14 veil and the digital signage. In addition, the
15 applicant has integrated the facade material to be
16 flush with the digital signs so they do not protrude
17 from the building.

18 This is the previous view of F Street
19 looking west towards the Reynolds Center and this
20 is the updated view. You can see the veil has been
21 pulled back slightly at the corner so it is not as
22 prominent adjacent to the Reynolds Center. The

1 rendering also shows the addition of two new street
2 trees and the removal of the digital band.

3 This is the previous view of the corner
4 of F and 6th Streets. This is the updated view.

5 You can see that the veil on F Street has been raised
6 exposing more of the new glazing. There is also
7 a digital sign that has been added to this facade.

8 Given the updates, staff request the applicant
9 further evaluate street level treatment of the
10 facade along 6th Street to ensure it is engaging
11 for pedestrians. This is the previous rendering
12 of 6th Street looking south and this is the new view.

13 You can see better the applicant is proposing a
14 series of metal frames attached to the facade and
15 extending north from the terminus of the veil.

16 As noted in the Executive Director's
17 Report, it is infeasible for a variety of reasons
18 to fully extend the veil due to a Metro tunnel under
19 6th Street. Instead, the applicant is proposing
20 the vertical metal frames to mimic the movement of
21 the veil. As such, staff supports conceptually
22 extending the veil on 6th Street through design

1 elements like the framing and recommends the
2 applicant continue to refine the design to reinforce
3 the sense of movement and connection to the veil.

4 Moving over to 7th Street, this is the
5 previous view looking north. In this updated view,
6 you see the removal of the horizontal digital sign
7 band and the reduction in width of the digital sign
8 at the corner. In this previous view on Gallery
9 Place Way, you see the veil extended into Gallery
10 Place Way. In the updated rendering, the veil has
11 been pulled back to the corner.

12 Overall, staff supports the design changes
13 made to date, especially the modifications to the
14 veil, the new facade treatment on 6th Street, the
15 updated lighting details, the removal of the
16 horizontal digital banner and the integration of
17 the digital screens into the facade.

18 Here, we have a view comparison between
19 the existing building and streetscape with the
20 proposed changes. This is the existing building
21 view of 7th and F Streets. This is the updated
22 design and the existing streetscape. You can see

1 the lowered veil and digital corner sign and the
2 removed digital banner.

3 In terms of street level activation, the
4 applicant has provided more information on the
5 existing activation and state of retail in the
6 immediate area. There is significant empty retail
7 space at present, so adding new retail space may
8 not create the level of activation the Commission
9 had hoped for. As noted, the applicant is proposing
10 the same amount of retail as the last iteration,
11 but evaluating different creative ways to increase
12 street level activation without retail, including
13 artwork installations and the team history wall.

14 The previous planned streetscape had less
15 screen area than existing and the updated plan adds
16 two existing trees back to the plan as requested
17 by the Commission. Staff encourages Monumental
18 Sports and Entertainment to continue collaborating
19 with the District regarding opportunities to
20 enhance the surrounding streetscape and improve the
21 public realm to support both the arena as well as
22 the neighborhood as a whole.

1 The applicant is also proposing to make
2 improvements to the entrance to the Metro Station
3 at 7th and F Streets including widening the
4 entrances and pulling the corner out as
5 architectural wayfinding. Staff requests the
6 applicant continue to coordinate with the
7 Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
8 regarding the proposed Metrorail station entrance
9 changes.

10 In conclusion, staff appreciates the
11 responsiveness of the applicant team in
12 coordination with staff to address the Commission's
13 comments including lower the upper edge of the veil,
14 raising the lower edge of the veil, lowering the
15 height and square footage of the corner digital
16 display, removing the horizontal digital banner,
17 providing additional technical lighting details and
18 adding a new design element on 6th Street to ensure
19 all the facades are cohesive. As such, staff
20 recommends the Commission approve the preliminary
21 site and building plans for the Capital One Arena
22 Improvements Project at 601 F Street, NW in

1 Washington, D.C.

2 This concludes my presentation. I have
3 incorporated the recommendations into the
4 presentation but they are also here for your
5 reference. The applicant and their design team are
6 here to answer any questions you may have and they
7 have also brought a model so you can visualize the
8 changes to the arena, though it is small. Not from
9 afar, but like up close, you can visualize the
10 changes. Thank you.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Jamie. Do any
12 of our Commissioners online have any questions?

13 Hearing none, do any Commissioners here
14 in chambers with us have any questions?

15 Hearing none, is there a motion to approve
16 preliminary building plans for the Capital One Arena
17 improvements?

18 COMMISSIONER ARGO: So moved.

19 CHAIR SCHARF: Do we have a second?

20 COMMISSIONER COZART: Second.

21 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you. I'll now open
22 things up to the Commission for discussion. I'll

1 start the deliberations with Commissioner Cozart.

2 COMMISSIONER COZART: Good afternoon.

3 And thanks again, Jamie. You've got two big
4 projects today. Appreciate the staff for their
5 work on this and certainly to the team and the team
6 designers for continuing to iterate on this. It
7 comes at a really great time where the Mayor has
8 recently, as part of the budget, really thought
9 about how to bring vibrancy to the environment
10 around the arena to really complement the investment
11 the city is making, but also the significant
12 investment the team is making and so it's really
13 this great kind of intersection of ideas coming to
14 reality to really beautify this area and again,
15 bring that right vibrancy.

16 Appreciate the staff's note related to
17 retail and the ideas of needing to bring that
18 pedestrian experience to life so that people can
19 experience that. It doesn't always have to be
20 retail, there's other creative ways of doing that
21 and we've realized a lot of that through the Gallery
22 Place-Chinatown Task Force work and appreciate all

1 of the participation in that.

2 Really excited about the evolution of the
3 design both in terms of the veil but also in terms
4 of that street level experience and looking forward
5 to moving this along.

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
7 Commissioner Schaefer?

8 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: It's a beautiful
9 design. I look forward to seeing it implemented.
10 Thank you.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
12 Commissioner Stidham?

13 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you for the
14 presentation. The design has come a long way. I
15 feel the veil is still a big question for me. I'm
16 not quite there yet, but it is starting to grow on
17 me and it does really accentuate the building. I
18 think I agree that the 6th Street work still needs
19 some work, some consideration. While the fins are
20 really good, I think they need to adjust the design
21 in such a way that they feel more incorporated as
22 part of the veil instead of, like, stuck on like

1 an afterthought, like something's missing. I would
2 just encourage thinking about that a little more.

3 You know, the Stanley Cup was not
4 successful this year, so maybe next year. And maybe
5 this motivates the team to do better, but thank you
6 for the changes in the present stages. I look
7 forward to this as it progresses.

8 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
9 Commissioner Argo?

10 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes, I appreciate --
11 I don't remember who commented, but the basic
12 evolution of the design which has been not just
13 interesting to watch and to participate in, but it's
14 turned into something I think that we can all be
15 excited about. I appreciate the attention to the
16 impact on other historic properties in the area.

17 I think that's terribly important when we're doing
18 things like this in the area that we're doing them.

19 Thank you for all your work on this. Looking
20 forward to the next stage. Thank you.

21 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
22 Commissioner Levenbach?

1 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Well, thank you
2 for the presentation, all the work that went into
3 the review. No questions.

4 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
5 Commissioner Blair?

6 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: No questions.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
9 Commissioner Tunstall-Williams?

10 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Yes, I
11 see you all cringing.

12 (Laughter.)

13 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: No,
14 like Commissioner Stidham, the veil will probably
15 never be my favorite element, but I will say I really
16 want to commend your team. While faithful to your
17 concept and your mission, you have been open to
18 constructive consideration and making tweaks and
19 it shows. I think this time you really are very,
20 very close.

21 I mean, there are a couple of things I agree
22 maybe there could be some horizontal that connect

1 those fins to make it feel all one piece, but it
2 really does feel more like a unified building as
3 opposed to something that just landed on top from
4 the wind. I think just those small tweaks that you
5 made really have gone a long way in sort of unifying
6 this building, so thank you for that.

7 I would also really like to thank the team
8 at Monumental for, if I put on my historic
9 preservation hat, the very significant and
10 meaningful mitigation that you're incorporating in
11 this project. It really is a testament to your
12 commitment to the community and to making D.C. a
13 better place and so as a D.C. resident and a fellow
14 preservationist, I really do thank you.

15 The only other thing about, and I would
16 agree with others, just to continue evolve the
17 pedestrian experience and the streetscape. It's
18 very harsh there. I know you don't have a lot of
19 curb line to work with, but things that you can do
20 to soften that and make it a little bit more pleasant
21 as you're queuing to get into all the great events
22 that happen. That's all I have to say, but

1 otherwise great project and really appreciate your
2 willingness to evolve with us.

3 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
4 Commissioner Dixon?

5 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes, I associate
6 myself with the comments of my fellow Commissioners
7 and just hope I'll get a chance to see it and also
8 be able to get tickets to go in it.

9 (Laughter.)

10 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
11 Commissioner Cash?

12 COMMISSIONER CASH: Great, thanks. I
13 just want to commend the team at Monumental and the
14 design team. I think it's one of the cases where
15 we've seen every time the design comes back, it's
16 gotten like tremendously better in some ways we
17 haven't even asked for. I know that last time I
18 geeked out about the 6th Street improvements and
19 how far it had come. Now you've added those fin
20 elements, which I actually think may need a little
21 bit more work and thought, but I think that it was
22 a very interesting piece to put on at 6th Street

1 that we hadn't even asked for.

2 My only other comment is that I would
3 encourage you to look at whatever you're doing on
4 6th Street with those fins. I think they could
5 actually be something you apply over the G Street
6 entrance as well because now that you've taken the
7 veil farther back from G Street, it seems like you
8 can do something similar just to keep that
9 cohesiveness around the entire, what was the veil.

10 (Audio interference.)

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
12 Lastly, Commissioner McGowan.

13 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: I have no
14 comments, but thank you so much for the
15 presentation.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
17 I'd just like to thank the District and Monumental
18 Sports. I think one common stream that we've heard
19 from many of the Commissioners today is how diligent
20 you've been in working to address Commission
21 comments. I know that certainly seems to be
22 appreciated. Looking forward to continuing to work

1 with you. And, again speaking personally, the
2 design really seems to have come a long way and seems
3 to be a tremendous market improvement obviously over
4 the existing structure there, so thank you.

5 Also, obviously, thanks to the staff for
6 all of their hard work that's gone into continuing
7 iterations of this design as we move farther and
8 farther down the path here.

9 With that, are there any further comments
10 or questions?

11 Hearing none, can the secretary please
12 confirm the motion and the second and then let's
13 take the vote by roll call?

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes, the motion was made
15 by Commissioner Argo and seconded by Commissioner
16 Cozart. Commissioner Cozart?

17 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?

19 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Yes.

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?

21 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

1 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Levenbach?

3 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Abstain.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chair Scharf?

5 CHAIR SCHARF: Abstain.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

7 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Abstain.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner

9 Tunstall-Williams?

10 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Yes.

11 (Audio interference.)

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

13 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Yes.

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Thank you. The motion
15 passes.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: The motion passes.

17 MS. HERR: Thank you.

18 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you very much and
19 thank you, Jamie.

20 6D UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
21 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NATIONAL MALL,
22 WASHINGTON, D.C. - ASH ROAD REHABILITATION

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Agenda item 6D is a request
2 to approve preliminary site development plans for
3 the Ash Road Rehabilitation. We have Lee Webb here
4 to discuss that. Thank you, Lee.

5 MR. WEBB: Good afternoon, Chair Scharf
6 and members of the Commission. The National Park
7 Service has submitted preliminary site development
8 plans for the rehabilitation of Ash Road which is
9 located on the National Mall. The opening of the
10 new United States Park Police Horse Stables removed
11 a significant amount of vehicular traffic from Ash
12 Road.

13 The project will transform the road into
14 a safer and more comfortable environment for
15 bicyclists and pedestrians. After the project is
16 completed, NPS proposes to rename is Ash Walk to
17 better reflect its intended use consistent with the
18 2010 National Mall Plan.

19 The short, tree-lined service road is
20 located along the western side of the National Mall
21 in Washington, D.C. and is highlighted here in red.
22 The road connects key landmarks, such as the World

1 War II Memorial and the Korean War Veterans
2 Memorial, and is used for restricted vehicle access
3 along with pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
4 Here are a few images of Ash Road showing today's
5 existing conditions with its asphalt surface.

6 The project includes replacing the
7 existing asphalt paving with exposed aggregate
8 concrete paving, installing site furnishings,
9 replacing field drains and storm piping as new storm
10 water infrastructure and planting 10 new trees.

11 Ash Road's new surface will be exposed gray
12 aggregate concrete with no edge and this will create
13 a subtle distinction while maintaining consistency
14 with its connecting paths. The exposed aggregate
15 concrete in a gray color mirrors the material of
16 the walk at the Korean War Veterans Memorial.

17 Staff recommends that the Commission
18 support the applicant's preferred approach of an
19 exposed gray aggregate concrete with no edge for
20 the new paving for Ash Road.

21 Site furnishings, including benches,
22 lighting, and bike racks, will be upgraded in

1 alignment with NPS and National Mall standards.
2 These include black finish ADA compliant benches,
3 removable bollards, water bottle filler fountains,
4 bike racks, and traditional Washington globe
5 lights. Furnishings are strategically placed to
6 support visitor needs while maintaining the site's
7 historic and visual character. The bollards allow
8 for official vehicles and emergency responders to
9 access the area while limiting vehicular use by the
10 general public. Five new black finish ADA
11 compliant bench locations are proposed and the
12 orientation of the benches will accommodate both
13 field and path views.

14 The 10 existing willow oak trees in the
15 vicinity will remain and construction activities
16 will be managed so as not to damage the critical
17 root zones. Ten additional willow oak trees will
18 be planted to help fill in the outlay of trees.

19 A change in turf grass species at the edge
20 of the JFK Hockey Fields is proposed to highlight
21 the edge of the fields and furnishing zones. NCPC
22 received public comment regarding the choice of the

1 grasses to be used for the edge; however, staff notes
2 that the turf grass is narrow strip in area and
3 returns in existing condition once Ash Road is
4 rehabilitated.

5 The area north of Ash Road is part of the
6 hockey field and serves as an active recreation and
7 play area. Given the high level of foot traffic
8 and sports-related use, NPS selected Bermuda grass
9 and tall fescue for their durability and ability
10 to withstand heavy wear. However, NPS recognizes
11 the importance of supporting pollinator habitat and
12 the benefits of incorporating native plant species
13 where appropriate and sees an opportunity to
14 introduce native perennials along some sections of
15 the southern edge of the road, particularly adjacent
16 to the stable and the World War II restroom areas.

17 NPS, as the applicant, has indicated they
18 will explore suitable native plantings in these
19 buffer zones per the public comment. As such, staff
20 recommends that the Commission approves the
21 preliminary site development plans for the Ash Road
22 Rehabilitation located on the National Mall in

1 Washington and finds the site improvements will
2 enhance the visitor experience for this part of the
3 National Mall.

4 This concludes my presentation. And I'll
5 note that Brian Flynn, a landscape architect with
6 the National Park Service, is also here virtually
7 to help answer any questions the Commission may
8 have. Thank you.

9 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Lee. Do any of
10 our Commissioners online have any questions?

11 Hearing none, do any Commissioners here
12 with us today have any questions?

13 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Sorry, I can't
14 help myself, I guess. Just a question. The
15 Bermuda grass is that what's out there right now
16 or is that part of the fields or what type of grass
17 is on the fields? The reason I'm asking, I guess,
18 is I'm not from the area, but down from Alabama,
19 we have a lot of Bermuda grass and it goes dormant,
20 like really dormant in the wintertime. And I'm just
21 curious if that's going to be part of the fields
22 that's going to get torn up. So, that's the basis

1 of my question.

2 MR. WEBB: My understanding is that there
3 is Bermuda grass already used on the fields, that
4 that was chosen back in 2016 because of its
5 durability, and also the fact that there are no
6 really good native turf grasses that can be used
7 in our region for durability for a recreation field.

8 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Okay. Great,
9 thank you. I just didn't know what the existing
10 was, so appreciate it.

11 MR. WEBB: Sure, my pleasure.

12 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
13 Do any other Commissioners have any questions?

14 Seeing none, we now turn to public
15 testimony and we have one person signed up to speak
16 today. Bernard Berne is here with us again. Sir,
17 you will have three minutes to provide your
18 testimony on this project. Please proceed when
19 you're ready.

20 MR. BERNE: Can you hear me?

21 CHAIR SCHARF: We can hear you.

22 MR. BERNE: Thank you. Again, the

1 landscape plan for this project does not adequately
2 conform to the NCPC's Pollinator Best Practices
3 Resource Guide. The guide reports that a federal
4 document, including supporting the health of
5 honeybees and other pollinators, states that the
6 use of some non-native plants in design landscapes
7 is acceptable as long as they are not considered
8 invasive. However, the National Park Service plans
9 for installing this project two turf grasses,
10 Bermuda grass and tall fescue, that are not native
11 to North America. Both have been reported outside
12 of cultivation in over 1,400 jurisdictions
13 including the District of Columbia, both are many
14 invasive plant lists.

15 In response to my comments, the Park
16 Service wrote, the area north of Ash Road is part
17 of the JFK Hockey Field and serves as an active
18 recreation play area. Given the high level of foot
19 traffic and sport-related use, we selected Bermuda
20 grass and tall fescue for their durability and
21 ability to withstand heavy wear. In contrast to
22 the staff report, these are not temporary changes.

1 Further, this does not justify these
2 plantings of two highly invasive turf grasses. The
3 Park Service repeated action that it took in 2016
4 when it installed a pair of invasive turf grasses,
5 Kentucky bluegrass and fescue, as part of a major
6 rehabilitation of the center of the National Mall.

7 You can see this now. As I have previously
8 informed the Park Service, two native plants, wood
9 sedge and lyreleaf sage, are known to form dense
10 mats and produce solid ground covers. Thus, they
11 become suitable lawn substitutes as publications
12 have stated.

13 The Park Service should install these
14 plants in at least the park of the project area.

15 This would allow the service to determine for once
16 whether they are as durable and can withstand as
17 much heavy wear as the invasive plants in intends
18 to install. The result of this comparison can guide
19 the Park Service when making plans for the hockey
20 field, the National Mall and other long-life grasses
21 through the National Capital region. Despite what
22 the person just said, these are available. They're

1 native and they should test it out to see if it really
2 has the same durability as the plants they're
3 intending to put in. Thank you.

4 CHAIR SCHARF: That concludes public
5 testimony. Thank you, Mr. Berne, for the concerns
6 that you expressed and for taking the time to join
7 us today.

8 With that, is there a motion to approve
9 preliminary site development plans for the Ash Road
10 Rehabilitation?

11 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: So moved.

12 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, ma'am. Is
13 there a second?

14 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Second.

15 CHAIR SCHARF: I'll now open things up to
16 the Commission for discussion and we will start
17 deliberations with Commissioner Cash.

18 COMMISSIONER ARGO: It seems he might have
19 disappeared.

20 CHAIR SCHARF: No?

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Maybe start with
22 Commissioner Stidham and work our way around?

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Okay. Commissioner
2 Stidham?

3 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you. Thank
4 you for the presentation. This has sort of been
5 -- you know, I've called it Ash Road for my entire
6 career. Calling it Ash Walk will be a challenge,
7 but I have to say that this has been a place of
8 confusion for visitors for a very long time because
9 while it was for limited access, it looked like a
10 road. It felt like a road. Visitors didn't know
11 if they should be there or not, but it provides a
12 great opportunity to visit the stables that were
13 recently completed, the D.C. War Memorial and a
14 variety of other memorials as they walk from Lincoln
15 or to Lincoln.

16 These improvements will greatly improve
17 that experience and will once and for all be a
18 visitor space and will feel and be a visitor space.

19 It's a very shaded area. It provides great
20 respite, especially this time of year and these
21 amenities will really just improve that overall
22 experience.

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
2 Commissioner McGowan we can go to.

3 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Yes, I don't have
4 any other comments, but thank you so much for the
5 presentation.

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Commissioner Cozart?

7 COMMISSIONER COZART: Appreciate the
8 staff's presentation and work on this project. No
9 additional comments.

10 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
11 Commissioner Schaefer?

12 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Just to echo,
13 great presentation, appreciate it and great effort.

14 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
15 Commissioner Argo?

16 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Appreciate the
17 presentation and like to align myself with
18 Commissioner Stidham's comments. Right on target,
19 very thoughtful. Thank you for your work on this.

20 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
21 Commissioner Levenbach?

22 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Thanks for the

1 staff work on the review. I have no questions or
2 comments.

3 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
4 Commissioner Blair?

5 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: No comments. Thank
6 you.

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Commissioner
8 Tunstall-Williams?

9 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Nothing
10 to say, no, just to thank the Park Service for their
11 continued stewardship of this important landscape.

12 It really -- I mean that's a heavily traversed part
13 of the Mall and I think the opportunity to provide
14 safe and clear pedestrian movement across the Mall
15 is great and obviously shade is much needed,
16 particularly in the middle of June and July when
17 all the tourists are here. Again, thank you for
18 your thoughtful stewardship of the Mall and we
19 appreciate it.

20 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
21 Commissioner Dixon?

22 COMMISSIONER DIXON: It sounds like a

1 great effort. I was hoping that they could put some
2 furniture there since it's so shady and comfortable.

3 I hope there's going to be some place that works
4 for the people to sit down and enjoy that. Thank
5 you very much. Thank you.

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
7 Oh, Commissioner Cash is back.

8 COMMISSIONER CASH: Sorry about that.

9 CHAIR SCHARF: Commissioner Cash?

10 COMMISSIONER CASH: I didn't have any
11 additional comments or questions, but thanks for
12 the presentation.

13 CHAIR SCHARF: Thanks, Commissioner. I
14 think this is obviously a very important project
15 given the centrality of the National Mall to the
16 visitor experience to Washington, D.C. and the
17 experience of so many residents who take advantage
18 of the resources on the Mall. I'd like to thank
19 the staff, who have prepared this presentation, the
20 National Park Service, for everything that they've
21 done and look forward to seeing the site continue
22 to develop. Thank you.

1 Are there any further questions or
2 comments?

3 Hearing none, Madam Secretary, would you
4 like to confirm the motion and take the vote by roll
5 call?

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. The motion was
7 made by Commissioner Stidham and seconded by
8 Commissioner Tunstall-Williams. Commissioner
9 Cozart?

10 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

11 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?

12 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Yes.

13 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?

14 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

16 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

17 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Levenbach?

18 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Abstain.

19 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chair Scharf?

20 CHAIR SCHARF: Abstain.

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

22 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Abstain.

1 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner
2 Tunstall-Williams?

3 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Yes.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

5 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

7 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

9 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Abstain.

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Thank you. The motion
11 passes.

12 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you.

13 INFORMATION PRESENTATION

14 NATIONAL MALL AND MEMORIAL PARKS

15 TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

16 CHAIR SCHARF: CHAIR SCHARF: We now move
17 onto Agenda Item 7A. So we're off of our decision
18 items now I guess. This is an informational
19 presentation on a Telecommunications
20 Infrastructure Plan and Environmental Assessment
21 that is being prepared for the National Mall and
22 memorial parks and surrounding areas by the National

1 Park Service. Stephanie Free is here with us today
2 to provide an overview and introduce the team for
3 their presentation.

4 MS. FREE: Yes, thank you. Hello again.

5 As you mentioned today, AECOM, on behalf of the
6 National Park Service, will provide an information
7 presentation on a Telecommunications
8 Infrastructure Plan and Environmental Assessment
9 being prepared for the National Mall and memorial
10 parks and surrounding areas in Washington, D.C.

11 The presentation will begin with a staff
12 overview of the Commission's role in the review of
13 antennas and the Commission's prior involvement in
14 efforts related to small cell and antenna
15 guidelines. AECOM will then present an overview
16 of the NAMA telecommunications plan and the
17 presentation will conclude with a few points to
18 prompt the Commission's discussion.

19 As a reminder, the Commission is
20 responsible for the review of antenna placements
21 and their structures on federal land in the National
22 Capital Region and on District of Columbia owned

1 land in Washington, D.C. The Commission's interest
2 focuses on protecting the capital's skyline,
3 historic resources and the scenic character of the
4 national capital. This includes preserving the
5 general appearance of federal buildings and
6 providing all users with a healthy, safe and
7 beautiful environment.

8 The potential locations of the
9 telecommunications facilities throughout the
10 National Mall and memorial parks area, which is the
11 subject of the NPS plan, are of utmost importance
12 due to the presence of nationally significant
13 historic and cultural resources. With the growing
14 demand for wireless technology across the country,
15 cell carriers are working to relieve the congestion
16 on existing networks by deploying small cell antenna
17 infrastructure.

18 The installation of small cell antennas
19 is one piece of a larger strategy to increase cell
20 capacity. Other strategies include rooftop
21 antennas and mobile antennas, like those seen in
22 the images here. In response to this growing

1 demand, NCPC developed guidelines for rooftop
2 antennas in 2020.

3 Since then, NCPC has reviewed and approved
4 dozens of applications for antenna infrastructure
5 proposed on federal buildings. Prior to that, in
6 2019, the Commission reviewed and commented on the
7 District's small cell infrastructure guidelines,
8 which included potential locations for small cells
9 within District rights of way. The Commission
10 later approved a design for the District's
11 standalone small cell pole in 2024.

12 Here we have the Federal Court Interest
13 Area Map, which was developed in coordination with
14 NCPC and other federal agencies for the District's
15 small cell guidelines. This map identifies the
16 only permissible locations for small cell
17 facilities on District rights of way and the areas
18 of highest federal interests around the National
19 Mall. This map excluded the National Mall itself
20 and Independence and Constitution Avenues as it was
21 intended that a more comprehensive evaluation of
22 coverage needs and facilities placement would be

1 developed for the Mall area. The NPS National Mall
2 and Memorial Parks Telecommunications Plan is
3 intended to fill in that gap.

4 To give you a visual, a few variations of
5 small cell antennas are shown here. Small cell
6 facilities are generally located on poles around
7 30 to 35 feet in height to accommodate signal
8 transmission along a street corridor. Small cell
9 antennas can be mounted to existing light poles or
10 other similar structures or can be attached to a
11 customized standalone pole. Antenna equipment can
12 range from 5 to 7 feet in height, while electrical
13 cabinets and other support equipment can range from
14 4 to 5 feet in height and about 3 feet in width.

15 Depending on the design and the provider, the
16 cabinets can be integrated into the pole base,
17 attached to the middle or the top of the pole,
18 installed as boxes near the pole or even located
19 in an underground vault.

20 You may recall through review of the
21 District's guidelines, that proposed small cell
22 locations in the Monumental Core were evaluated with

1 photo simulations. While the design of the poles
2 was not known at that time, they were conceptualized
3 to provide an understanding of the visual impacts.

4 This type of study was done for several streets
5 throughout the Monumental Core and led to the
6 locations approved on the Federal Court Interest
7 Area Map. The Commission later approved the
8 District's individual small cell pole in 2024.

9 Here we have some images of the approved pole design
10 placed in the approved locations throughout the F
11 Street and 8th Street corridors using augmented
12 reality.

13 So looking ahead, the NPS National Mall
14 and Memorial Parks Telecommunications Plan will
15 conceptualized proposed antenna locations on and
16 around the National Mall. Similar to the
17 District's 2019 guidelines, the NAMA plan does not
18 include a design for this infrastructure, which will
19 be developed and reviewed separately in the future.

20 Staff has included a few points for discussion in
21 your meeting materials. We will review these
22 together following the applicant's presentation.

1 I'd now like to hand this off to Michael
2 Soderman and Claire Sale of AECOM on behalf of NPS.

3 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you.

4 MR. SODERMAN: Good afternoon. Thank you
5 very much. The methodology that we used, we
6 evaluated existing conditions. The intent of the
7 study is to increase capacity by five times as far
8 as for these areas. We evaluated the most effective
9 options while minimizing resource impacts.

10 We divided the study area into five areas.

11 We have the National Mall East, the Washington
12 Monument grounds and Presidents Park South, Potomac
13 Park and Lincoln Memorial, West Potomac Park, Tidal
14 Basin and then the East Potomac Park. Next please.

15 Existing conditions. As part of our study
16 and part of the project, we actually did signal
17 testing, hopped on scooters with backpacks and we
18 took all live signal testing and were able to
19 evaluate as far as where there are inadequate
20 network coverage and capacity areas. This is all
21 live data at that time of what was deployed. Next
22 please.

1 So, existing conditions. The plans
2 needed to address the following concerns:
3 Non-conforming infrastructure, operational
4 maintenance challenges for long term planning of
5 future infrastructure. Next please.

6 Overall approach. Again, as shown
7 earlier, we have the permanent cell sites as far
8 as the macro sites which are predominantly on the
9 rooftops and then small cells which have been
10 deployed currently and then the temporary
11 solutions, COWs and COLTs, which are wheeled in for
12 planned events and so on and so forth. Next please.

13 This is just an example of me walking
14 around the Hill and the Mall area taking pictures
15 of what has been deployed as far as on the streets
16 so far. Next, please.

17 Existing small cell pole infrastructure.
18 Currently, this shows all of the small cell
19 infrastructure currently present on DDOT
20 streetlights and/or third party poles. There are
21 gaps as shown here and those coverage gaps are the
22 areas that we're including in this minimum build

1 out study. Next, please.

2 Constraints. Tree canopy, it blocks the
3 signal for many locations. The entire study area
4 contains cultural resources, viewsheds, multiple
5 historic properties. The low scale of existing
6 buildings. Existing macros located on buildings
7 limit opportunity to add new facilities and then,
8 of course, physical site properties need to be
9 accommodated antenna size, housing size, antenna
10 mounting, site coverage. Methodology we used was
11 to take a look and try to minimize impacts on
12 cultural resources, use existing non-contributing
13 architectural features when possible and then
14 reduce maintenance requirements as well as consider
15 the number of sites. Try to figure out a minimum
16 build out. Next, please.

17 The types of architectural features in the
18 study area -- we have light poles, stanchions,
19 wayfinding pylons, structures and small scale
20 features. This, I believe, is where I am going to
21 turn it over to Claire.

22 Another aspect that I want to just

1 reiterate, our study is a study. It's not a design,
2 right? So all of that will be coming in the future
3 as far as by the carriers and the third party
4 operators. Thank you.

5 MS. SALE: Here are -- we looked at the
6 types of architectural features that are within the
7 study area, these include the existing light poles.

8 I would note that all of these are contributing
9 to historic resources with the exception of the
10 cobra lights.

11 On the next slide, we will see the existing
12 stanchions. These are the large light fixtures
13 that light the memorials. They're not for
14 pedestrians, they're for the memorials and these
15 are also considered not contributing.

16 On the next slide, we'll see the wayfinding
17 pylons that are located around the National Mall.

18 On the next slide, we'll see the existing
19 structures, both the existing structures and
20 structures that are considered in the future
21 including future comfort stations. Next slide.

22 There are a number of small scale features.

1 We looked at all of these things as a way to could
2 they be incorporated. Next slide.

3 As I mentioned earlier, the existing
4 lighting stanchions for more lighting are not part
5 of the contributing resources. We kind of explored
6 initially how those could work and so here is an
7 example of an illustration of how those could be
8 incorporated. Next slide, please.

9 We looked at the potential locations for
10 the nodes throughout the study area. On the next
11 slide, you can see how we've broken that up on those
12 five subareas that Mike mentioned previously. Next
13 slide, please.

14 This shows the National Mall East
15 location. We have conceptually placed these along
16 the lawn panels of the National Mall and that is
17 primarily due to the tree cover along Jefferson and
18 Madison Drives. Next slide, please.

19 At the Washington Monument grounds and
20 Presidents Park South, we have two that are
21 conceptually located along The Ellipse as well as
22 along the Washington Monument grounds. Those would

1 be at the existing lighting stanchions for the
2 Washington Monument as well as potentially on the
3 screening facility structure that's there. Next
4 slide, please.

5 Here at West Potomac Park, around the
6 Lincoln Memorial, there are also needs for nodes
7 located throughout this area. We have a couple
8 located at the Memorial lighting stanchions for the
9 Lincoln Memorial as well as others located within
10 Constitution Gardens and along Ash Walk. Next
11 slide, please.

12 Here along the West Potomac Park Tidal
13 Basin, again using memorial stanchions at the
14 Jefferson Memorial and the FDR Memorial as well as
15 other locations would be placed throughout the site,
16 including along Ohio Drive near the Martin Luther
17 King, Jr. Memorial and elsewhere along the Tidal
18 Basin. Next slide, please.

19 Finally, we have East Potomac Park, so
20 Hains Point area. These don't have any memorial
21 lighting stanchions so these would be placed, we're
22 anticipating, along the perimeter of Hains Point

1 and East Potomac Park. Next slide, please.

2 Based on that, this is kind of how these
3 all look when put together. You can see they are
4 sort of sprinkled throughout in order to address
5 the needs. Next slide, please.

6 In terms of next steps, in the fall we
7 anticipate having a 30-day public scoping period
8 to receive comments. At that time, we would have
9 a formal review by the National Capital Planning
10 Commission and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts for
11 the concept. In the winter, we would anticipate
12 the release of an environmental assessment that
13 would serve as the plan.

14 Then in terms of the future as Pete
15 mentioned before, this is not a design, this is a
16 plan for how it could be implemented and so in the
17 future, operators would provide the location and
18 design proposals specific to their needs for
19 approval.

20 That concludes our presentation. Thank
21 you.

22 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you so much. Do any

1 Commissioners here with us online have any
2 questions?

3 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I do sir, Mr.
4 Chairman.

5 CHAIR SCHARF: Please, go ahead.

6 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes, the requirement
7 that you're looking at is strictly focused on the
8 Mall, is that correct?

9 MS. SALE: Yes, this effort is focused on
10 the National Mall and surrounding areas in East
11 Potomac Park and the Tidal Basin, as mentioned.

12 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Okay, what about the
13 space along the Anacostia Park area? Is that not
14 considered at this time?

15 MS. SALE: No, not at this time.

16 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Okay, thank you very
17 much.

18 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
19 Do we have any other questions?

20 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: I have one.
21 Just from in terms of the performance of the
22 footprint, at what point do you talk to public safety

1 officials just to see whether the design meets the
2 objectives of the project?

3 MR. SODERMAN: We have been coordinating
4 as far as with public safety and D.C. OUC, so Charlie
5 over there. It does increase in their capacity to
6 be able to use the 700 FirstNet.

7 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Yeah, FirstNet.

8 MR. SODERMAN: Yeah.

9 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: Great. Thank
10 you.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Yes, ma'am?

12 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: To the
13 capacity map, I just had a question. Because the
14 numbers seem to be increasing, but the color was
15 opposite, did red indicate good or bad on that map?

16 MR. SODERMAN: Can you pull the map back
17 up?

18 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Can you
19 pull it? I should have noted the slide.

20 MR. SODERMAN: Sorry about that.

21 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: We'll
22 pull it back up.

1 MR. SODERMAN: My impression was red was
2 slower connections?

3 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: That's
4 what I thought but then I was looking at the numbers
5 and the numbers were high, so I'm not an expert here
6 so I just want you to tell me.

7 MR. SODERMAN: And I may have my
8 co-colleague here, Michael Castle, answer that.

9 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Yeah.
10 Are those negatives that I'm seeing?

11 MR. SODERMAN: Those are negatives.

12 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Oh,
13 okay. Sorry.

14 MR. SODERMAN: That's a negative --

15 (Simultaneous speaking.)

16 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Now it
17 makes more sense to me.

18 MR. SODERMAN: So, the bigger the number,
19 the bigger negative, the worst performance.

20 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS:
21 Performance, okay. It makes more sense to me now.
22 Thank you.

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Does that resolve your
2 concern, Commissioner?

3 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: It does
4 resolve it. I was like this doesn't seem to make
5 sense.

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Are there any further
7 questions from Commissioners either present or
8 online? Hearing none, I'll now open things up to
9 the Commission for discussion. I'll start the
10 deliberation with Commissioner Tunstall-Williams.

11 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL-WILLIAMS: Me
12 again. One thing that I encourage you to consider
13 in this, as you're aware, GSA is in the process of
14 moving many of our buildings out of the inventory
15 and we have a ton of antennas on the top of a number
16 of these buildings. We've heard anecdotally from
17 the carriers that private sector buildings are less
18 interested in having the antennas on their
19 buildings. I think particularly for ones that
20 might have occupier roof terraces.

21 So, I would just encourage you to think
22 about loss of capacity as those buildings move out

1 of the inventory so you can look at our accelerated
2 disposal list. The ones that particularly jump to
3 my mind are the Forrestal Building as well as the
4 Humphrey Building. I know they have a lot on them.

5 Liberty Loan does as well and as those start to
6 move, I could see capacity getting worse south of
7 the Mall. The north side is less of an issue;
8 however, those buildings have -- we have a much
9 harder time getting antennas on the top of them
10 because of the clay tile roofs. Just something to
11 -- you don't have to address it, but just think about
12 it as you guys are evaluating capacity and planning
13 for it in the future. I think the timeline on some
14 of those buildings is relatively quick, you know,
15 two to five years they would be moving out inventory.
16 That's all.

17 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

18 Commissioner Dixon?

19 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes, thank you.

20 When will you reach a point where the carriers will
21 be engaged in the process to improve the service
22 and will the requirement for a carrier competing

1 for space, will there be a way to make sure that
2 multiple carriers have access to the same space?

3 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Maybe I can take
4 that question, Commissioner Dixon. The process
5 that will be -- there are a number of carriers who
6 obviously would have an interest here. The plan
7 serves as that baseline and the framework and
8 carriers will be asked to provide proposals on how
9 they can meet the requirements of the plan. Then,
10 the choice of the permit will result from there.

11 So, after the environmental assessment. I think
12 I missed your timing question. After the
13 environmental assessment is completed, will be the
14 opportunity for carriers to put in proposals.

15 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes, I've raised
16 this question in the past. I guess I'm a little
17 concerned about whether there will be a restriction
18 on the number of carriers that would be in an area.

19 In other words, once you do the bidding and what
20 you just suggested, which I was aware of, will there
21 be a point where only certain carriers will be in
22 areas because of the availability of the antennas?

1 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: It will surely
2 require the carriers to coordinate together and to
3 work together to develop plans that will meet
4 everybody's needs. Obviously with the sensitivity
5 of these spaces, we can't have --

6 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Exactly.

7 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Eight different
8 antennas for eight different carriers in every one
9 of these nodes, right?

10 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Exactly.

11 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: So, it will have
12 to take some coordination and frankly, some unique
13 creativity to be able to meet the capacity needs
14 and the cultural resource problems.

15 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yeah, I think
16 because the hoteling was dropped. There was an
17 option about hoteling the antennas, but I think
18 that's historical now.

19 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
20 Commissioner Cash?

21 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Commissioner Cash had
22 to leave the meeting.

1 CHAIR SCHARF: He had to drop? Okay,
2 we'll move on to Commissioner McGowan.

3 MS. COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: I have no
4 discussion, but thank you for the presentation.

5 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
6 Commissioner Cozart?

7 COMMISSIONER COZART: Appreciate this
8 work. It's not always necessarily front and
9 center, but we need the access when we need the
10 access, so appreciate you all for doing this
11 background work that sets us up for the future.

12 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
13 Commissioner Schaefer?

14 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Thank you for the
15 presentation. No further comments. Thank you.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
17 Commissioner Stidham?

18 MS. COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you for
19 the opportunity to provide the information
20 presentation. We are really just at the beginning
21 of our work, so look forward to moving this project
22 forward and getting some more feedback.

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
2 Commissioner Argo?

3 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Really important
4 work, appreciate it very much. I'm glad it was on
5 the agenda today. Thank you for your continued
6 work.

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
8 Commissioner Levenbach?

9 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: I have no
10 comments. Thank you.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.
12 Commissioner Blair?

13 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: No comments. Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIR SCHARF: Speaking for myself, I'd
16 just like to thank the National Park Service for
17 their diligence and their work on this crucial
18 issue. Obviously, our staff as well. I was
19 involved in the roll out of FirstNet services back
20 in the day in the state of Missouri. Whenever
21 you're talking about wireless connectivity, there's
22 obviously a public-facing component and also a

1 security component. And I think nowhere is that
2 more true than here in Washington, D.C. So improving
3 wireless connectivity is obviously of vital
4 importance. I look forward to seeing how plans
5 develop in the coming weeks and months. Thank you.

6 We don't have anything else on the agenda.

7 Before concluding the open session though, do any
8 other Commissioners have any comments or questions?
9 Commissioner Blair?

10 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Thank you. Here in
11 our first meeting I wanted to raise an item of
12 concern to me that will inform one of the pieces
13 of work we'd like to do here. I hope that my
14 colleagues on the Commission will not feel like I
15 am lecturing on the background of this Commission,
16 but I am going to anchor my comments in some back
17 information about the Commission for the public's
18 consumption and consideration.

19 When you look on the National Capital
20 Planning Commission's website and you look at what
21 is the NCPC all about, I'd like to quote from that
22 to frame my comments. Established by Congress in

1 1924, the NCPC is the federal government's central
2 planning agency for the National Capital Region.

3 Through planning, policymaking, and project
4 review, NCPC protects and advances the federal
5 government's interests in the region's development.

6 The Commission provides overall planning
7 guidance for federal land and buildings in the
8 region by reviewing the design of federal and
9 certain local projects overseeing long-range
10 planning for future development and monitoring
11 capital investment by federal agencies.

12 To put a finer point on that, when you look
13 at the National Capital Planning Act of 1952, I would
14 like to quote from that, that the general objective
15 of this act is to enable appropriate agencies to
16 plan for the development of the federal
17 establishment at the seat of government in a manner
18 consistent with the nature and function of the
19 National Capital and with due regard for the rights
20 and prerogatives of the adjoining states and local
21 governments who exercise control appropriate to
22 their functions and in a manner which will, in

1 accordance with present and future needs, best
2 promote public health, safety, morals, order,
3 convenience, prosperity, and the general welfare,
4 as well as efficiency and economy in the process
5 of development.

6 As the new Chair alluded to in his
7 Chairman's Report earlier, there has been quite a
8 bit of scrutiny on one of the projects here in the
9 Capital Region previously approved by this
10 Commission, and that is the Federal Reserve's
11 Renovation Project.

12 Earlier, just a few weeks ago last month,
13 the Chairman of the Board of Governors testified
14 in front of the U.S. Senate's Banking Committee,
15 where he was asked about some of the media reports
16 about opulent features. I'd like to reference
17 originally the plan submitted to this Commission,
18 looking in Section 3.41, the design principles, the
19 very first bullet, references that the new addition
20 should emphasize the Federal Reserve's civic
21 importance while being modest and restrained.

22 Chairman Scott went on to ask about the

1 cost overruns, where this project was originally
2 budgeted at, I believe, \$1.8 billion and it has
3 ballooned to at least \$2.5 billion, with many
4 reports suggesting it is heading toward \$3 billion.

5 It is hard to see anything that costs \$3 billion
6 as either modest or restrained.

7 I would like to reference some comments
8 put out earlier today publicly by Office of
9 Management and Budget Director Russ Vought that
10 references the cost per square foot at this \$2.5
11 billion figure of the Federal Reserve's Renovation
12 Project amounting to \$1,923, which is double the
13 cost for renovating an ordinary historic federal
14 building.

15 Some have started to refer to this as the
16 "Taj Mahal near the National Mall." Some have said
17 it was the palace of Versailles; I think that's what
18 Chairman Scott referred to it as. Indeed, the
19 palace of Versailles in 2025 dollars would be about
20 \$3 billion according to a study done by George Mason
21 University. The Capitol Building, in today's
22 dollars, would have cost about \$2.1 billion to

1 construct, although it houses five times the square
2 feet and five times the staff of the Federal Reserve
3 Building.

4 For all of us that I'm sure have spent time
5 at the United States Capitol, I don't think any of
6 us would suggest it is a building that is not nicely
7 designed with nice features and anything you could
8 want to offer.

9 Chairman Scharf and I had the great honor
10 a couple of months ago to travel with the President
11 to the Middle East, where we were able to dine in
12 the Qasr Al Watan in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab
13 Emirates. That palace, which is so opulent and
14 extravagant that I posted it on my Instagram,
15 because I've never been in such a building, cost
16 approximately \$600 million to construct, 20 percent
17 of the cost of the current projection of the Federal
18 Reserve Building.

19 Now, I understand it is the historical and
20 statutory role of this body to approve plans
21 pre-construction, but, as I alluded to earlier,
22 there is at least some responsibility to protect

1 the federal government's interests. I think it is
2 squarely in the federal government's interests to
3 ensure that dollars that do ultimately originate
4 from the taxpayer, whether through appropriations
5 or, in this case, the exercising of monetary policy,
6 are well spent.

7 I think that as we look at the comments
8 -- and I have the testimony here in front of the
9 Senate Banking Committee, the Chairman of the Board
10 of Governors was asked about some of the features
11 that have been mentioned, terrace gardens, water
12 features, new marble, VIP dining rooms, etc., and
13 his response was, other than that, all of these sorts
14 -- and I'm quoting from his testimony -- all of this
15 sort of inflammatory things that the media carried
16 are either not in the current plan or just
17 inaccurate.

18 What do others think about this? I will
19 quote Professor Andrew T. Levin, a Dartmouth
20 College economics professor, former Fed economist
21 and advisor for two decades, who said, "a top Fed
22 official cannot be permitted to make false

1 statements under oath at a Congressional hearing.

2 Such statements might must be promptly corrected
3 and egregious cases subject to censure by the
4 Senate." I do not think that this body -- much less
5 the U.S. Senate, but that's not why we are here --
6 this body can be made a mockery of by approving plans
7 that are not adhered to in a material way that use
8 clever words, like modest and restrained -- in fact,
9 I will even quote further from 3.42, Overall Design
10 Approach, where they connect that "the transparency
11 and the architectural expression creates a literal
12 connection to the Board's goals for more openness
13 and transparency as an organization." We should not
14 be made fools of by those that come ahead of us.

15 It is our interest to ensure, as we
16 mentioned earlier, we protect the federal
17 government's interests. And I have already
18 explained why we have an interest here, but again,
19 even in the general objective of the act which
20 establishes and governs this body, we have a
21 responsibility related to morals and prosperity and
22 general welfare.

1 I think as the monetary policymaking
2 institution of the United States, there is no body
3 that has a greater effect on the prosperity or
4 general welfare of the American public. And one
5 may have a moral question when we look at some of
6 these cost comparisons, possible allegations by
7 others, not of me at this time, of whether or not
8 they are being honest under oath in front of the
9 United States Senate.

10 Understanding these concerns, I will say
11 that I am going to request a full review of plans
12 of the Federal Reserve project. I am going to ask
13 that they send us a detailed explanation package
14 of any and all upgrades, changes, and modifications
15 to the plan that was submitted here in 2021 and
16 approved. I am going to request a site visit. I
17 welcome any of my colleagues to participate with
18 me in this endeavor.

19 I will likely circulate a letter that I
20 work on some colleagues with that I will send to
21 the Board of Governors requesting further
22 information. With that, I will turn it back over

1 to the Chair.

2 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner
3 Blair. Are there any other Commissioners that have
4 any comments or questions?

5 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: I'd like to make
6 a comment.

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Commissioner Levenbach.

8 COMMISSIONER LEVENBACH: First, I have
9 enjoyed my first meeting and I appreciate all the
10 staff work in these projects. It's really
11 fascinating and I look forward to working with you
12 all.

13 I'm glad that this point was raised. I
14 just want to add a couple of proof points that, for
15 me at least, based on what I've read, resonate with
16 the Fed Building. It expands the headquarters by
17 over 600,000 square feet, but it only adds about
18 200 additional employees, at least from what I've
19 read, and that's 523 square feet per employee, which
20 is far in excess of what the Office of Management
21 and Budget has for standard footage per employee,
22 which is about 150.

1 This is a very, very expensive project.

2 I think in my opening remarks I said that we need
3 federal buildings that are appropriate for the
4 region. This is definitely not in that category.

5 In addition to the rooftop terrace, he did
6 mention the beehives. I kept bees in the Peace
7 Corps. There is certainly a time and place to keep
8 bees. On the top of a federal building is not one
9 of them. Please count me in. I look forward to
10 working with you on this letter and in scrutinizing
11 this building. I also appreciate the Chair for
12 raising it in his remarks. Thank you.

13 CHAIR SCHARF: Are there any other
14 Commissioners that have any comments or questions
15 before we conclude for the day?

16 Well, thank you, Commissioners Blair and
17 Levenbach, for your insightful comments.
18 Commissioner Blair, I too look forward in joining
19 in your investigative and other efforts surrounding
20 this very important issue. Speaking as Chairman,
21 I would just like to thank the staff once again for
22 the extraordinary welcome they extended to us on

1 very short notice this morning.

2 I actually didn't have our Executive
3 Director's phone number and reaching out and getting
4 this all set up was a little bit complicated. I
5 apologize for that on my end, but thank you truly
6 for the welcome that you've extended to me and to
7 my new colleagues on the Board.

8 This has been absolutely fascinating.
9 The projects that we've reviewed today are obviously
10 essential to the future of Washington, D.C., to put
11 it bluntly, and the level and detail of the work
12 that your staff has put into them is truly
13 impressive. I just really looking forward to
14 working with all of you in the coming months, but
15 thank you again.

16 If there's nothing else, last opportunity,
17 would any Commissioners like to add anything?
18 Well, then, this session is now adjourned. Thank
19 you.

20 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
21 went off the record at 3:19 p.m.)
22

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings; and that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this matter was taken; and further that I am not a relative nor an employee of any of the parties nor counsel employed by the parties, and I am not financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.



Dalton Scott

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