

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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COMMISSION MEETING

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OPEN SESSION

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THURSDAY,  
JANUARY 8, 2026

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The meeting convened in the Commission Hearing Room at 401 9th Street NW, Washington, D.C., and via videoconference, at 1:00 p.m., William Scharf, Chair, presiding.

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS  
PRESENT:

WILLIAM SCHARF, Chair  
    Presidential Appointee (At-Large)  
STUART LEVENBACH, Vice Chair  
    Mayoral Appointee  
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  
ED FORST, Administrator, General Services  
    Administration  
WILLIAM HENDERSON, U.S. Senate Committee on  
    Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
ELLIE MCGOWAN, U.S. House of Representatives  
    Committee on Oversight and Accountability  
PHIL MENDELSON, Chairman, Council of the District  
    of Columbia

1 PAUL J. SCHAEFER, Department of Defense  
2 TAMMY STIDHAM, Department of the Interior

3  
4 NCPC STAFF PRESENT:

5 MARCEL C. ACOSTA, Executive Director  
6 MEGHAN HOTTEL-COX, General Counsel & Secretariat  
7 DIANE SULLIVAN, Director, Current Planning  
8 Division  
9 MATTHEW FLIS, Supervisory Urban Designer  
10 STEPHANIE FREE, Urban Planner  
11 LAURA SHIPMAN, Urban Planner  
12 MICHAEL WEIL, Urban Planner  
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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (1:03 p.m.)

3 (Off-microphone comments.)

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. Commissioner  
5 Cozart?

6 COMMISSIONER COZART: Here.

7 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?

8 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Here.

9 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?

10 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Here.

11 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

12 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Here.

13 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Vice Chairman Levenbach?

14 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Here.

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Present.

17 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

18 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Here.

19 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Administrator Forst?

20 COMMISSIONER FORST: Here.

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

22 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Here.

1 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

2 COMMISSIONER CASH: Present.

3 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Henderson?

4 Commissioner McGowan?

5 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Here.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Marcel Acosta, Executive  
7 Director, and Diane Sullivan, current planning  
8 director, are also in the meeting.

9 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Meghan. Noting  
10 the presence of a quorum, I'd like to call this  
11 meeting to order. Today's meeting is lived  
12 streamed, as usual, and will be available in archive  
13 video form on our website within a few days.

14 If there is no objection from any  
15 Commissioner present, the agenda as posted is hereby  
16 adopted, or as posted, is hereby adopted as the order  
17 of business. And let's stand for the Pledge of  
18 Allegiance.

19 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

20 REPORT OF THE CHAIR

21 CHAIR SCHARF: Agenda Item 2 is the Report  
22 of the Chair. I'd like to note a few things. First

1 of all, there are a fair number of people here who  
2 are not regulars to the National Capital Planning  
3 Commission. And to you I would just say welcome.

4 The NCPC is a body that was founded over  
5 a hundred years ago, initially as the National  
6 Capital Park Commission. The 1952 National Capital  
7 Planning Act is sort of our Bible and charter. And  
8 we also have statutory authority relating to a  
9 number of other crucial statutes, including the  
10 Height of Buildings Act, Commemorative Works Act.

11 It's a very long way of saying that this is an  
12 important commission that does very important,  
13 serious work, the results of which are visible  
14 really everywhere we go in this region.

15 When you look at the planning of  
16 Washington, D.C., when you look at the projects that  
17 really define this city, many, if not all of them  
18 that have occurred in the last century, this  
19 commission has been involved in. So I would say  
20 welcome. We have a busy agenda today. It's not  
21 our busiest meeting, but it's not our quietest  
22 either.

1 I would also say that there is an item on  
2 the agenda today, the ballroom, for which, about  
3 which we've heard, I'd say, passionate comments on  
4 both sides. We do have rules. We do operate this  
5 commission according to those rules. While there  
6 will be opportunities for public comment on the  
7 ballroom project in the future, we would ask that  
8 you not disrupt the Commission meeting today. And  
9 if you do make an out-of-order disruption of the  
10 Commission we will unfortunately have to ask you  
11 to leave the room.

12 With that having been said, I'd like to  
13 wish everybody here a very Happy New Year. This  
14 is our first meeting of what promises to be a very  
15 important, busy year for this Commission.

16 To those of you who have made New Year's  
17 resolutions, I quit nicotine eight days ago. So  
18 far, we're going strong. If I am irritable or less  
19 enthusiastic or energetic as I normally would be,  
20 that's the reason.

21 But this year obviously being America's  
22 250th anniversary, our semiquincentennial, there

1 is a lot going on in the Capital Region. And we  
2 have a lot of very exciting projects that have either  
3 already come before this commission or will be in  
4 the coming weeks and months. And I'm very excited  
5 for the role that NCPC will play as the capital  
6 really pulls out all the stops to celebrate this  
7 momentous milestone in American history.

8 I'd also like to welcome Ed Forst to the  
9 Commission. Ed is the Administrator of GSA. As  
10 such, he serves as an ex-officio member of this  
11 commission. Oftentimes, and there is nothing wrong  
12 with this, ex-officio members of this commission  
13 send designees or representatives to commission  
14 meetings here. It's a great honor for us to have  
15 Ed with us. Ed is really a real estate eminence.  
16 Former head, I believe, of Cushman & Wakefield.

17 We're really excited to have you at GSA.  
18 GSA and NCPC are going to be working together on  
19 some very important projects in the coming months,  
20 most notably, potentially, redevelopment plans in  
21 Southwest D.C. I know you and I have already spoken  
22 about that, Ed, but really just welcome to the



1 Commission. Thank you for being here. It's truly  
2 an honor.

3 Lastly before I conclude, with respect to  
4 the ballroom project, which is on the agenda for  
5 today, I view today's presentation really as the  
6 start of a process as the ballroom project moves  
7 through the overall NCPC, overall NCPC process.  
8 We're going to be hearing from the project team  
9 today. This is an informational presentation.  
10 We'll have opportunities for questions and comments  
11 from Commissioners.

12 My objective, from the start, has been for  
13 the NCPC to play a productive role as this ballroom  
14 project moves ahead. NCPC, and our professional  
15 staff, has an incredible amount of expertise and  
16 experience dealing with complex construction  
17 projects and monumental construction projects in  
18 the D.C. area. And I have great confidence that  
19 NCPC will be able to play a productive role in this  
20 project as well in the months ahead.

21 So I'm excited for the presentation today.  
22 And I'm excited to continue the consultations that

1 have already begun at the staff level between NCPC  
2 staff and the White House and the ballroom project  
3 team more generally. All that having been said,  
4 that's my report.

5 We can move on to Agenda Item 3, which is  
6 the report of our Executive Director, Marcel Acosta.  
7 Marcel?

8 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

9 MR. ACOSTA: Thank you, Chair Scharf.  
10 And Happy New Year, everyone. I'd also like to take  
11 this opportunity to welcome Administrator Forst to  
12 today's meeting. We do look forward to working with  
13 you and your team over the coming years. So,  
14 welcome aboard.

15 Given today's busy agenda, I only have one  
16 item of interest for the Commission. Last month,  
17 NCPC released its 2025 year in review, which looks  
18 back at the agency's work advancing efforts to  
19 revitalize some of the Capital's most visible and  
20 important public places and its role in shaping the  
21 design of several very important federal projects.

22 This report can be found on our website at [ncpc.gov](http://ncpc.gov).

1           This concludes my update. My full report  
2 is in your packet. I'm happy to answer any  
3 questions that you might have.

4           CHAIR SCHARF: Do any Commissioners have  
5 questions or comments for Marcel?

6           Seeing none, Meghan, can you provide us  
7 with our legislative update?

8                   LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

9           MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. I have two  
10 legislative items to report on this month. Both  
11 are bills that passed in the House of  
12 Representatives on December 9th, 2025, and are now  
13 being considered in the Senate.

14           The first is H.2290, the World War II  
15 Women's Memorial Location Act, which authorizes a  
16 memorial to commemorate the sacrifice and service  
17 of women who work on the home front to support the  
18 military efforts during World Word II. And that  
19 bill is to be located on the National Mall in Area  
20 1 or in the Reserve.

21           The second bill is H.2306, the Adams  
22 Memorial-Great American Heroes Act. This bill

1 would extend the Adams Memorial Commission through  
2 2032 to establish the Adams Memorial south of the  
3 White House, adjacent to Ellipse Road or, if that  
4 location ends up being not feasible, within the  
5 Reserve.

6 That concludes my legislative report and  
7 I'm happy to answer any questions.

8 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Meghan. Do any  
9 Commissioners have questions or comments about our  
10 legislative update? I look forward to seeing if  
11 we do get a new memorial within the Reserve or in  
12 Area 1.

#### 13 CONSENT CALENDAR

14 Agenda Item 5 is the consent calendar.  
15 There are four items on this month's consent  
16 calendar. The first is to approve preliminary and  
17 final site development plans for the Smithsonian  
18 Gardens Street Tree Fence Design. The second is  
19 to adopt the final updated Comprehensive Plan for  
20 the National Capital: the Federal Elements proposed  
21 by NCPC staff. The third is to approve the final  
22 submission guidelines updated by NCPC staff. And

1 both those two items, those changes primarily  
2 reflect changes dictated by executive orders since  
3 the start of this administration, I believe.

4 And the final item is to approve  
5 preliminary site and building plans for the New  
6 District of Columbia Engine Company 7. That was  
7 originally a delegated item. I asked for that to  
8 be moved to the consent calendar. I apologize for  
9 doing that; it could have easily been a delegated  
10 item. But that is now Item Number 4 on the consent  
11 calendar this month.

12 Are there any questions or comments from  
13 any Commissioner? Yes, sir?

14 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I move that we adopt  
15 the consent calendar.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Hearing a motion from  
17 Commissioner Dixon, is there a second?

18 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Second.

19 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.  
20 Can the Secretary please confirm the motion and  
21 second and take the vote by roll, please?

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. The motion was

1 made by Commissioner Dixon and seconded by  
2 Commissioner Argo. Commissioner Cozart?

3 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?

5 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Yes.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?

7 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

9 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Vice Chairman Levenbach?

11 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Yes.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

13 CHAIR SCHARF: Yes.

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

15 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Yes.

16 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Administrator Forst?

17 COMMISSIONER FORST: Yes.

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

19 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

21 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Henderson?

1 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Yes.

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

3 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Yes.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: The motion passes.

5 CHAIR SCHARF: Unanimously. Which is  
6 always a good thing.

7 Moving on, we have three voting items and  
8 an informational presentation and open session  
9 today.

10 Agenda Item 6A is a request to approve  
11 comments on concept plans for the National Mall and  
12 Memorial Parks Telecommunications Infrastructure  
13 Improvements.

14 And, Stephanie, do you want to proceed?

15 MS. FREE: Yes. Thank you.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you.

17 NATIONAL MALL AND MEMORIAL PARKS  
18 TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

19 MS. FREE: Good afternoon, Chairman  
20 Scharf and Commissioners. The National Park  
21 Service has submitted concept plans for the National  
22 Mall and Memorial Parks, or NAMA, Telecommunication

1 Infrastructure Improvements.

2           The concept plans provide a planning and  
3 technical framework to guide improvements to  
4 wireless telecommunications across the National  
5 Mall, with the primary goal to inform the minimum  
6 build-out necessary to achieve a fivefold increase  
7 in daily network capacity.

8           At the concept stage the Commission should  
9 be focused on the issues such as consistency with  
10 the Comprehensive Plan and other policies,  
11 appropriateness of the concept plan for the site,  
12 or if there are any particularly unique issues --  
13 unique or complex issues.

14           The Commission received an informational  
15 presentation on this proposal in July 2025. As I  
16 mentioned, we are currently at the concept plan  
17 review stage. By this spring, NPS will use the  
18 concept plans, along with comments from the  
19 Commission, the public, and other stakeholders, to  
20 develop a request for proposals and evaluation  
21 criteria under which network providers will submit  
22 their proposals. The proposal selected by NPS will



1 then be submitted to the Commission for preliminary  
2 and final review.

3 For today's presentation I will first  
4 provide an overview of the purpose of this effort.

5 Then I will discuss the antenna typologies and the  
6 conceptual approach to their application, the  
7 sub-area recommendations, and then conclude with  
8 coordination and implementation.

9 As a reminder, the Commission is  
10 responsible for the review of antenna placement and  
11 their structures on federal land in the National  
12 Capital Region, and on District land -- and on  
13 District of Columbia-owned land within Washington,  
14 D.C. The Commission's primary interest in  
15 telecommunications infrastructure improvements on  
16 the Mall is the potential to impact the visual  
17 quality of this unique setting and its  
18 nationally-significant viewsheds. These  
19 improvements also have the potential to impact the  
20 status of the National Mall, the White House and  
21 President's Park, and the L'Enfant Plan on the  
22 National Register of Historic Places.

1           Here we have some examples of  
2 telecommunications infrastructure installations on  
3 buildings and streetscapes throughout the District.

4       This infrastructure is typically mounted to light  
5 poles, pylons, buildings, or similar vertical  
6 structures, like standalone poles.

7           And here we have a map of those existing  
8 installations, indicated here by the red dots. You  
9 can see there is an intentional gap in the  
10 installations across the National Mall area.

11           In 2019, the Commission approved the  
12 Federal Core Interest Area Map as part of the  
13 District of Columbia Small Cell Guidelines. This  
14 map identifies the only permissible locations for  
15 small cell facilities on District rights-of-way in  
16 the area of highest federal interests around the  
17 National Mall.

18           The map excluded the National Mall itself,  
19 as it was intended at that time that a more  
20 comprehensive evaluation of coverage needs and  
21 facilities placement would be developed for this  
22 area. The proposed NAMA Telecommunications

1 Infrastructure Improvements provide this  
2 evaluation as intended for NPS land on the National  
3 Mall.

4 As part of this evaluation, NPS completed  
5 a cellular coverage report to establish a baseline  
6 for existing wireless network performance in the  
7 study area. This study concluded, as seen here on  
8 the map, that while there are few coverage gaps,  
9 the overall quality of the signal is consistently  
10 inadequate across the study area due to high user  
11 demand.

12 Staff recognizes the growing demand to  
13 improve wireless network telecommunications  
14 infrastructure and, more importantly, that  
15 improving coverage and capacity on existing  
16 networks is essential to ensure public safety and  
17 enhance the visitor experience on the National Mall.

18 There are several constraints to  
19 implementing these improvements, including tree  
20 canopy interference, below-grade limitations  
21 within the flood plain, and visually integrating  
22 physical properties of the antennas and their

1 equipment with the many cultural resources  
2 throughout the Mall area.

3 Overall, staff finds that the fundamental  
4 challenge is how to integrate this infrastructure  
5 into this unique area in a way that allows modern  
6 technology to meet current needs while preserving  
7 the beauty and dignity of the nation's most  
8 important public realm and buildings in the symbolic  
9 heart of the nation.

10 Therefore, staff supports the intent of  
11 the concept plans to provide a general framework  
12 to achieve network capacity goals through an  
13 evaluation of potentially acceptable  
14 telecommunications infrastructure typologies in a  
15 way that minimizes impacts to the public realm.

16 As this is just a framework, the  
17 infrastructure design is not included. Design is  
18 the responsibility of the network providers;  
19 therefore, NPS has included area-wide design  
20 criteria to guide their proposals.

21 Staff supports the criteria, as it  
22 includes strong preference for proposals that limit

1 the quantity of nodes, share nodes between two or  
2 more network providers, scale the nodes and  
3 equipment appropriately within their context,  
4 closely reproduce existing architectural elements,  
5 integrate nodes with the architectural landscape,  
6 and also meet capacity goals.

7           So in this next section of the presentation  
8 I will discuss the antenna typologies evaluated in  
9 the concept plans and the conceptual approach to  
10 their application. The four antenna types  
11 evaluated in the concept plans are standalone small  
12 cells; dual-MNO DRANs, or DRAN-2; four-MNO DRAN,  
13 or DRAN-4; and neutral host. The concept plans do  
14 not recommend specific typology approaches and the  
15 ultimate solution will likely include a combination  
16 of typologies.

17           Overall, staff finds that there are  
18 tradeoffs between the size and quantity of antennas  
19 and their associated equipment across typologies.

20       For example, typologies that accommodate more than  
21 one network provider will require fewer sites, but  
22 typically have larger equipment cabinetry than

1 another typology that supports fewer network  
2 providers but has more sites and smaller equipment.

3           The concept plans divide the study area  
4 into five sub-areas: the National Mall East,  
5 Washington Monument Grounds and President's Park  
6 South, West Potomac Park/Lincoln Memorial, West  
7 Potomac Park/Tidal Basin, and East Potomac Park.

8       For purposes of this presentation we have labeled  
9 them, from east to west, Sub-Areas 1 through 5.

10           Given the unique context of the National  
11 Mall, staff finds the antenna typologies with large  
12 equipment enclosures that are difficult to conceal  
13 are unfavorable, especially adjacent to monuments  
14 and memorials, and recommends that, where possible,  
15 equipment should be creatively sealed by  
16 co-locating with other facilities or existing  
17 small-scale architectural features, vaulted below  
18 grade, or integrated with new developments.

19           To minimize impacts on cultural resources,  
20 the concept plans recommend integrating  
21 telecommunications infrastructure with existing  
22 light poles, memorial lighting stanchions, and

1 building structures. In addition, new standalone  
2 poles with a shrouded antenna at the top or a  
3 yet-to-be-developed method may be necessary where  
4 architectural features do not currently exist.

5           Staff finds that antenna installations on  
6 multiple poles of varying designs from different  
7 network providers may look disjointed or cluttered,  
8 particularly when inserted into a  
9 cohesively-designed landscape such as that of the  
10 National Mall. Therefore, staff requests that NPS  
11 work with the carriers and industrial designers to  
12 develop unified designs for new standalone poles,  
13 adapted or replicated light fixtures, any  
14 yet-to-be-developed solutions, and related  
15 equipment cabinetry, in consultation with NCPC, the  
16 U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and the District's  
17 State Historic Preservation Office.

18           The three light pole types considered for  
19 integration in the study area are the Washington  
20 Globe, Washington Twin Globe, and Olmsted fixtures,  
21 which are contributing features of historic  
22 properties. The concept plans indicate that these

1 light poles could be adapted or replaced with close  
2 replicas to seamlessly incorporate  
3 telecommunications infrastructure while also  
4 offering lighting.

5 Overall, staff finds this approach may  
6 have fewer visual impacts than more commonly used  
7 methods and supports its further development.  
8 However, if such an approach is proposed, a balance  
9 must be reached between the quantity of historic  
10 light fixtures that are altered or replaced, which  
11 may vary between sub-areas.

12 Many of the memorials and commemorative  
13 works within the study area currently utilize  
14 special lighting stanchions, as seen here on the  
15 left, which are not contributing features of  
16 historic properties. The concept plans indicate  
17 the light stanchions could be redesigned to  
18 incorporate all existing functionality and house  
19 antenna infrastructure with a similar visual  
20 character as those in place today, as seen here on  
21 the illustrative examples on the right.

22 Overall, staff supports this approach, as



1 the stanchions currently exist as utilitarian  
2 elements in the National Mall landscape; therefore  
3 they will be less noticeable than antenna  
4 installations on other existing architectural  
5 features.

6           The study area also contains multiple  
7 types of buildings, including non-contributing  
8 standalone comfortable stations and multiple food,  
9 information, and souvenir kiosks, which would be  
10 considered on a case-by-case basis as needed for  
11 mounting antennas. Staff will utilize the antenna  
12 installation practices and policies of the  
13 Comprehensive Plan and NCPD's Antenna Submission  
14 Guidelines' criteria in the review of antennas  
15 attached to structures on the National Mall.

16           As noted earlier, the concept plans divide  
17 the study area into five sub-areas. For staff's  
18 analysis, Sub-Area 1, the National Mall East, and  
19 Sub-Area 5, East Potomac Park, are analyzed  
20 individually, as they have the highest and lowest  
21 potential for visual impacts, respectively.  
22 Sub-Areas 2, 3, and 4 are discussed collectively,

1 as they contain similar features, such as nationally  
2 significant monuments and memorial sites and  
3 preeminent viewsheds.

4 I'll begin with Sub-Area 1, National Mall  
5 East. This sub-area contains the  
6 nationally-significant formal landscape defined by  
7 central lawn panels lined with historic Olmsted  
8 light fixtures and multiple rows of trees that frame  
9 the preeminent reciprocal viewshed between the U.S.  
10 Capitol and the Washington Monument. Staff also  
11 finds that proposed telecommunications in this  
12 sub-area will have the highest potential for visual  
13 impacts due to its rectilinear form, symmetrical  
14 features, and overall formal character that define  
15 this viewshed.

16 The concept plans identify potential  
17 locations for new telecommunications  
18 infrastructure along the outside edge of the center  
19 lawn panels, as indicated by the green and yellow  
20 dots here on the plan, roughly aligned with the  
21 existing Olmsted light poles. The plans also  
22 suggest replacing the existing Olmsted light poles

1 with close replicas that seamlessly incorporate  
2 telecommunications infrastructure while also  
3 offering lighting, or a yet-to-be-developed method.

4           Next I will discuss Sub-Area 5, East  
5 Potomac Park. This sub-area includes Hains Point,  
6 the East Potomac Park Golf Course, the U.S. Park  
7 Police, and NPS National Capital Region  
8 Headquarters. Network service is currently  
9 limited in this area to traditional macro sites at  
10 the north end where the NPS and U.S. Park Police  
11 buildings are located. However, capacity demand  
12 is less here than in other sub-areas.

13           Overall, staff finds that the proposed  
14 telecommunications in this sub-area have the least  
15 potential for visual impacts, as this is a less  
16 formal landscape located outside of significant  
17 viewsheds.

18           The concept plans identify locations for  
19 new telecommunications infrastructure in line with  
20 the existing Washington Globe light poles along Ohio  
21 Drive. These would likely be standalone poles,  
22 Washington Globe replicas, or a yet-to-be-developed

1 method.

2           The remaining sub-areas include the  
3 Washington Monument Grounds and President Park  
4 South, the West Potomac Park-Lincoln Memorial, and  
5 the West Potomac Park-Tidal Basin.

6 Telecommunications infrastructure in these  
7 sub-areas would likely take shape as standalone  
8 poles, Washington Twin Globe, or Washington Globe  
9 replicas, a yet-to-be-developed method, or placed  
10 on memorial lighting stanchions.

11           In Sub-Area 2, at President's Park South,  
12 the concept plans indicate that two  
13 telecommunications nodes would be placed along the  
14 roadway encircling the Ellipse, in line with the  
15 Washington Globe light poles. Within the  
16 Washington Monument Grounds, the  
17 telecommunications infrastructure would be located  
18 on light stanchions and the monument screening  
19 facility.

20           However, staff finds it will be difficult  
21 to fully conceal or architecturally integrate any  
22 antenna typology on the Washington Monument

1 screening facility due to the building's symmetry,  
2 rectilinear form, glass facade, horizontal roof  
3 line, and immediate adjacency to the Washington  
4 Monument. Therefore, staff requests the applicant  
5 consider alternatives to placing the  
6 telecommunications infrastructure on the screening  
7 facility that would improve capacity without  
8 altering the appearance of the facility and,  
9 therefore, the view of the monument.

10 In Sub-Area 3, West Potomac Park-Lincoln  
11 Memorial, the concept plans identify locations for  
12 new telecommunications infrastructure along 17th  
13 Street, Parkway Drive, Ash Road, through  
14 Constitution Gardens and around the Lincoln  
15 Memorial, including on the lighting stanchions.

16 And in Sub-Area 4, West Potomac Park-Tidal  
17 Basin, the concept plans identify new  
18 telecommunication infrastructure locations along  
19 sidewalks and paths around the Tidal Basin and Ohio  
20 Drive. Light stanchions at the Jefferson and FDR  
21 Memorials would also be utilized.

22 So, in summary, staff supports further

1 development of the approach to closely replicate  
2 the historic light fixtures to accommodate  
3 telecommunications in all of the sub-areas, but  
4 there must be a balance between the number of light  
5 fixtures retained and those altered or replaced,  
6 which may vary between sub-area.

7           Staff also supports utilizing the light  
8 stanchions where available, and further development  
9 of a yet-to-be-developed method that minimizes  
10 visual impacts. Staff finds that standalone poles  
11 may be acceptable outside of preeminent viewsheds  
12 in Sub-Areas 2 through 5, but would not be  
13 appropriate at all in Sub-Area 1.

14           In addition, antennas externally attached  
15 to the light fixtures would not be appropriate  
16 anywhere in the study area. And while the  
17 building-mounted antennas throughout the study area  
18 are expected to comply with NCPC's antenna  
19 guidelines, staff requests the applicant explore  
20 alternatives to mounting antennas on the Washington  
21 Monument screening facility.

22           And in all sub-areas staff also supports

1 equipment cabinetry that can be creatively  
2 concealed, but recognizes there may be additional  
3 flexibility for larger equipment in Sub-Area 5, East  
4 Potomac Park, that means fewer historic light  
5 fixtures are impacted.

6           So, now we will move on to the last segment  
7 of the presentation, which addresses additional  
8 coordination and implementation. It is worth  
9 noting that the telecommunications infrastructure  
10 improvements on the National Mall landscape and the  
11 macro antenna sites on the adjacent rooftops  
12 ultimately create a network of wireless systems that  
13 work together to reach coverage and capacity goals.

14           Therefore, staff finds that the amount of  
15 antenna infrastructure needed in the National Mall  
16 landscape may be less if macro sites on the adjacent  
17 building rooftops are added or upgraded. However,  
18 antenna installations on these buildings also have  
19 historic preservation and viewshed implications.

20           Therefore, staff recommends the telecommunication  
21 providers continue to explore, in consultation with  
22 the Section 106 consulting parties, how additional

1 or upgraded rooftop antenna macro sites surrounding  
2 the study area, when designed sensitively, could  
3 help to reduce the quantity of telecommunications  
4 infrastructure on the National Mall.

5           The RFP is another opportunity to ensure  
6 stakeholders are coordinated throughout the design  
7 and implementation processes. Therefore, staff  
8 request the RFP include requests for eye-level,  
9 photorealistic simulations of the proposed  
10 infrastructure within significant viewsheds and  
11 from primary approaches, reference to NCPC's  
12 Comprehensive Plan and Antenna Submission  
13 Guidelines, a coordinating phasing strategy that  
14 outlines the methodology and timeline for how  
15 antennas will be installed, and expectations for  
16 network provider maintenance of the installations  
17 and restoration, should they be removed in the  
18 future.

19           So, this concludes my presentation. I've  
20 incorporated the Executive Report's  
21 recommendations into my presentation. Also have  
22 them listed here, as well as in the Staff Report.



1 And I would now like to introduce Krista Sherwood,  
2 Chief of Staff for the National Mall and Memorial  
3 Parks, who would like to say a few words. Thank  
4 you.

5 (Off-microphone comment.)

6 MS. FREE: She is online. Yeah.

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Oh, okay.

8 MS. FREE: Yes.

9 (Off-microphone comment.)

10 (Pause.)

11 MS. SHERWOOD: Okay. Good afternoon.  
12 Can you hear me?

13 CHAIR SCHARF: Yes.

14 MS. SHERWOOD: Okay. Let me turn my  
15 camera on. Great. Wonderful. Sorry for the  
16 delay. Good afternoon, everyone. I am Krista  
17 Sherwood, Chief of Staff for the National Mall and  
18 Memorial Parks. Thank you to NCPC staff for that  
19 great, comprehensive overview of the effort. And  
20 thank you all for the opportunity to speak today.  
21 The National Park Service is finalizing  
22 this telecommunications concept plan for the

1 National Mall and surrounding NPS park areas in  
2 Washington, D.C. The NPS submitted the concept  
3 plan for NCPC review and comments, and appreciates  
4 the Commission's input on this plan.

5 The plan identifies opportunities to  
6 improve wireless coverage and capacity in this area  
7 while protecting the views, the character, and  
8 historic resources of the park. We do recognize  
9 the need and urgency for these improvements, and  
10 are aiming to finalize the plan and implement  
11 opportunities to enhance public safety,  
12 connectivity, and the overall visitor experience  
13 as quickly as possible.

14 So, in the coming weeks the NPS will issue  
15 a request for proposals for mobile network operators  
16 and neutral host providers to submit formal  
17 proposals. And this RFP will describe the limited  
18 opportunities for improvements that are identified  
19 in the plan and the applicable siting and design  
20 criteria.

21 These proposals will be evaluated in a  
22 transparent, equitable, and technically

1 coordinated manner that's consistent with the  
2 National Park Service policy and the Department of  
3 the Interior guidance for issuance of right-of-way  
4 permits for telecommunications infrastructure  
5 improvements. We plan to incorporate the comments  
6 that are received from NCPC and incorporate these  
7 into the RFP and, if applicable, the value in which  
8 we review the proposals.

9 The NPS will return to NCPC once we have  
10 selected a proposal and have the proposed  
11 preliminary design to submit for NCPC's  
12 consideration. We will also provide the final  
13 design to NCPC for further review and consideration.

14 Again, I want to thank you for your time.

15 And when it's appropriate I'll be happy to answer  
16 any questions.

17 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Krista. And  
18 thank you again, Stephanie.

19 Do any Commissioners have any questions  
20 for either of our two presenters on this --

21 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Chairman?

22 CHAIR SCHARF: Yes, sir.

1                   COMMISSIONER DIXON: I have some  
2 questions and discussion at my turn, when you get  
3 to us, but I'd also like to move that we move it  
4 for consideration and discussion so we'll have  
5 something before us.

6                   CHAIR SCHARF: Okay. Is there a second?

7                   COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Second.

8                   CHAIR SCHARF: Hearing a motion and a  
9 second, I will now open this item up to the  
10 Commission for discussion.

11                  COMMISSIONER DIXON: All right.

12                  CHAIR SCHARF: You're short-circuiting  
13 our whole system here, Arrington.

14                  (Laughter.)

15                  CHAIR SCHARF: With that, Commissioner  
16 Stidham?

17                  COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you. And  
18 thank you for the great presentation and overview  
19 of the plan. This plan has been a long time coming  
20 and we're really thankful to be at this part of the  
21 process. It really does set a framework for how  
22 telecommunication infrastructure can be

1 implemented on the National Mall and the Ellipse  
2 and the President's Park, in a way that is respectful  
3 of the historic character, but yet provides the  
4 character, the necessary capacity and coverage  
5 needed for wide-scale events and frankly just every  
6 day visitor use.

7 So, we're looking forward to our continued  
8 work with the carrier in developing this beyond the  
9 framework to actually have a proposal and a design  
10 to bring back to the Commission.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Thanks, Commissioner  
12 Stidham. Commissioner Argo?

13 COMMISSIONER ARGO: No additional  
14 comments (audio interference) presentation (audio  
15 interference) where we are on this. And hoping it  
16 move forward as quickly as possible. Thank you.

17 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.  
18 Vice Chairman Levenbach?

19 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: So, I thought the  
20 data were pretty compelling that there is a need  
21 for coverage in the Mall. And so this is an  
22 important project. It's an important project for

1 public safety. It's important this year given the  
2 amount of use we're going to see of the area.

3 And so I think my only comment is that it's  
4 important to manage it in a way where it can move  
5 forward in an expeditious way. Obviously,  
6 reporting all the comments in the very, it seems,  
7 eminently reasonable strategy trying to incorporate  
8 the infrastructure into existing lighting and so  
9 forth. But setting it up where you have performance  
10 standards, and then you let the vendors meet the  
11 standards, as opposed to getting into a lot of touch  
12 points and a lot of friction with the project as  
13 it's being implemented.

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

16 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: I would just echo  
17 Commissioner Levenbach's comments.

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

20 COMMISSIONER FORST: Thank you very much  
21 for the presentation. I thought it was very  
22 comprehensive. And it's, again, not a question of

1 whether we need it, but how to go about it. And  
2 I think you show great respect for the different  
3 territories there and how we might address it  
4 locally. But I was most persuaded by the fact that  
5 you are very open to looking for yet-to-be-developed  
6 models. So I look forward being sensitive to that  
7 design aesthetic and appreciate the time.

8 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Administrator  
9 Forst. Commissioner Dixon?

10 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yeah, I didn't mean  
11 to pull a rank on you here, but I've always kind  
12 of believed that we ought to have something before  
13 us before we discuss it.

14 CHAIR SCHARF: Got you.

15 COMMISSIONER DIXON: That's kind of --  
16 but, anyhow, I don't always win on that one, but  
17 --

18 CHAIR SCHARF: I usually open things up  
19 for questions for the presenters before shifting  
20 to the discussion section. But you've been here  
21 longer than I have.

22 (Simultaneous speaking.)

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Yes, sir.

2 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I do have a couple  
3 of questions, though. One, is this going to be a  
4 single or multi-vendor opportunity? Because we've  
5 had discussion before and the question is, let's  
6 supposed to X company gets it, and Y and Z company  
7 telephone be used in that environment. And that's  
8 of interest to me. And it also gets us into hoteling  
9 and whether we can have multiple carriers on one  
10 device.

11 I also was interested in whether or not  
12 it's possible, when you look at East Potomac Park,  
13 there has always been a lighting issue there because  
14 we've restricted the use of it to night -- restricted  
15 nighttime use of it. I would like to think that  
16 maybe we can figure out, redo these things, and put  
17 some lighting in that is manageable that will allow  
18 that to be available evening sometime when some  
19 event is appropriate for it, rather than having the  
20 dark areas that -- the limited lighted areas that  
21 exist now.

22 I also was concerned about the -- it was



1 a multi-host provision that they're looking at?  
2 I don't know if that addresses my issue about the  
3 multi-carriers, because I've been concerned about  
4 that with all of those wi-fi kind of services. You  
5 know, if you have a certain carrier on your phone  
6 can you get in? That's important for me to know.

7 So maybe that can be answered by someone, I don't  
8 know.

9 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Sure, I can hit  
10 those questions.

11 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: So, let's start  
13 with the easy one, the lighting piece for East  
14 Potomac Park. As we continue to move forward with  
15 a variety of projects, we'll start with that as part  
16 of the discussion.

17 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Good, good.

18 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: As for carriers  
19 and hoteling and multiple carriers, we are -- by  
20 using the prospectus model for carriers to provide  
21 proposals to the National Park Service for  
22 consideration, that gives everyone the same

1 opportunity to develop proposals and come to meet  
2 the criteria. But it also gives the carriers a  
3 great opportunity to coordinate together and work  
4 together to develop the solution that not only meets  
5 our needs and criteria and the needs of the public  
6 and safety needs, but also the needs of the carriers  
7 together. Not competing them against each other,  
8 but having them work together.

9 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: So we're strongly  
11 encouraging that approach. And we'll have to see  
12 where we end up.

13 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yeah. I know that  
14 with the Metro system, for many years, we were unable  
15 to use our cell phones if we didn't have the right  
16 carrier. And there was heavy lobby to keep the  
17 single carrier there. But now that has changed.

18 And I think it's beneficial to the public to be  
19 able to have multiple carriers who can access the  
20 system. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: You're welcome.

22 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

1 Commissioner Cash?

2 COMMISSIONER CASH: Oh, thanks. I just  
3 want to thank the staff. I just want to point out,  
4 on all these telecom, the 5G antennas and all that,  
5 I think the Commission, and the staff especially,  
6 is really a leader in this because they kind of push  
7 the envelope and say this is how it should be done.

8 And it's a lot of kicking and screaming  
9 on the front end, but I think it's always resulted  
10 in installations that look nice that don't clutter  
11 things. And it's really been kind of the Commission  
12 taking the lead on this and kind of pushing the  
13 envelope and getting the carriers to follow suit.

14 So I thank the staff for all the work they've done  
15 on this, and thanks for the presentation.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Thanks, Commissioner Cash.  
17 Commissioner Henderson?

18 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Nothing to add  
19 on this one. Thank you.

20 CHAIR SCHARF: Thanks, Commissioner. Do  
21 we have Commissioner McGowan with us?

22 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Yes. I don't any

1 comments or questions to add, but would just thank  
2 staff for the time and the presentation.

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

5 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes. Thanks to the  
6 staff for their presentation. And I'll associate  
7 myself with Commissioner Cash's comments.

8 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.  
9 And Commissioner Schaefer?

10 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Nothing.  
11 Nothing that no one else has already said. So,  
12 great job.

13 CHAIR SCHARF: Well, speaking personally,  
14 looking at the bandwidth demands, I think it's  
15 somewhat sad that people are on their phones  
16 streaming video and putting up Snapchats and  
17 Instagrams instead of enjoying some of the most  
18 beautiful monuments and living in the moment. But,  
19 being that that's where we are, I commend our staff  
20 and NPS on working through a difficult problem.  
21 I think, particularly, the idea of essentially  
22 repurposing the Olmsted and Washington Globe light

1 fixtures makes a lot of sense.

2 And I remember when this came before us  
3 in July, and it's great to see the progress that's  
4 been made since then. And, again, speaking for  
5 myself, and I think probably most the Commission,  
6 I'm excited to see how things develop in the months  
7 ahead, especially given the bandwidth demands that  
8 are going to be present because of America 250  
9 celebrations, and really just going forward into  
10 the future.

11 So, with that, I guess we need to vote to  
12 approve comments. So, Meghan, can you please  
13 confirm the motion and the second, and then we'll  
14 take the vote by roll call?

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. The motion was  
16 made by Commissioner Dixon and seconded by  
17 Commissioner Stidham. 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: Vice Chairman Levenbach?

4 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Yes.

5 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Yes.

7 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

8 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Yes.

9 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Administrator Forst?

10 COMMISSIONER FORST: Yes.

11 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

12 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

13 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

14 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Henderson?

16 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Yes.

17 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

18 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Yes.

19 MS. HOTTEL-COX: The motion carries

20 unanimously.

21 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you. With that, we

22 will move to Agenda Item 6B, which is a request to

1 approve final site development plans for the Long  
2 Bridge Corridor Project, South Section. Michael  
3 Weil, I believe, is with us.

4 Hey, Michael.

5 MR. WEIL: Thank you.

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Do you want to proceed?

7 LONG BRIDGE CORRIDOR PROJECT -

8 SOUTH SECTION

9 MR. WEIL: Yes. Thank you very much.

10 Okay. Good afternoon, again, Chairman  
11 Scharf and members of the Commission. The National  
12 Park Service, on behalf of the Virginia Passenger  
13 Rail Authority, or VPRA, has submitted plans to  
14 improve a half-mile-long section of the Long Bridge  
15 Railway Corridor crossing over the George  
16 Washington Memorial Parkway and Mount Vernon Trail  
17 in Arlington, Virginia, and across the Potomac River  
18 to East Potomac Park in the District of Columbia.

19 As background, the project would add two  
20 new tracks to the Long Bridge Corridor, for a total  
21 of four tracks, with the purpose of provided  
22 additional rail capacity and improving travel

1 reliability into the city and through the region  
2 with the direct benefit of passenger train service.

3 And this project is part of a larger plan by VPRA  
4 to improve passenger rail service throughout the  
5 state of Virginia.

6 The current Long Bridge Project is the  
7 product of a multi-year alternates analysis and NEPA  
8 study process which started back in 2011. And the  
9 process concluded with a signed Federal Railroad  
10 Administration record of decision and programmatic  
11 agreement in 2020, with additional supplemental  
12 NEPA analysis by the Park Service in 2024.

13 And then, finally, NCPC has written a  
14 record of decision in order to conclude our NEPA  
15 review responsibility as part of our final review  
16 action here today. And we reflect this in our  
17 Executive Director's recommendation comments.

18 The project would construct one new  
19 separate, two-track rail bridge approximately 40  
20 feet to the north of the existing Long Bridge, which  
21 is outlined here in white, as well as a new separate  
22 pedestrian and bicycle bridge to the north of that,



1 which is highlighted here in orange.

2 Previously, our Commission approved  
3 previous preliminary plans for the full length of  
4 the corridor improvements across federal National  
5 Park Service land, back in July of 2022. And, more  
6 recently, NCPC approved the final plans for the  
7 North part of the corridor in April of 2025. And  
8 today we are reviewing the final plans for the  
9 remainder of the corridor, known as the South  
10 Section, to complete our review process under the  
11 National Capital Planning Act.

12 As a final submission package we are  
13 considering issues like the project's final  
14 landscape plans, its overall architectural  
15 aesthetic, and how VPRA has responded to the  
16 Commission's previous preliminary approval  
17 comments.

18 Today, the South Section project area  
19 extends from the western boundary of the National  
20 Park Service property along the western side of the  
21 George Washington Memorial Parkway, which is shown  
22 here. And then, panning across the parkway, the

1 study area would extend along the north side of the  
2 existing CSX Transportation railway bridge that you  
3 can see here in this slide. And then extending to  
4 the east toward the Potomac River, as seen here.

5 The new tracks will bridge over the Mount  
6 Vernon Trail closer to the river. And then,  
7 finally, over the Potomac River to the western side  
8 of East Potomac Park.

9 The historic Long Bridge, which exists  
10 today, was originally constructed in 1904 as a  
11 through-girder structure for both passenger and  
12 freight rail trains. And here we can see the Long  
13 Bridge's distinctive swing truss section which was  
14 once used to allow larger watercraft to move along  
15 the river past the bridge. However, this section  
16 is no longer operational and necessary for water  
17 traffic today.

18 Here is some closer-up views of the  
19 historic Long Bridge with its granite block piers,  
20 ten-foot-high weathered steel parapet walls, and  
21 girders today.

22 The Long Bridge is listed on the National

1 Register as a contributing element to both the East  
2 and West Potomac Parks and George Washington  
3 Memorial Parkway historic districts. And as such,  
4 VPRA adopted the overarching design goal to  
5 approximate the historic features of the existing  
6 bridge in the design of the new bridge. And this  
7 includes its structure, material, and form, thereby  
8 minimizing future adverse effects to the area's  
9 surrounding historic resources and character that  
10 would arise from a different type of bridge here.

11           So, with that, I will now walk you through  
12 the proposed South Section widening project  
13 submission that is before our Commission here today  
14 for review. Basic elements of the project are a  
15 new separate half-mile-long through-girder rail  
16 bridge that would span over the Parkway, Mount  
17 Vernon Trail, and Potomac River; a new separate  
18 pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the parkway and  
19 river; and new landscaping and lighting.

20           Starting with the new rail bridge, the new  
21 Long Bridge would be owned by VPRA and used to  
22 prioritize passenger rail service, although either

1 bridge could be used for passenger or freight rail  
2 service, as needed. The new Long Bridge would  
3 resemble the existing historic Long Bridge, with  
4 weathering steel parapet walls. However, the new  
5 bridge would not include a swing span section, which  
6 is unnecessary for river travel today.

7           The new bridge would have 25  
8 granite-stone-cladded piers with cladding that  
9 resembles the existing granite block piers. And  
10 these specs remain largely unchanged since NCPC's  
11 2022 preliminary design review.

12           To the west, the new rail bridge would  
13 cross over the Mount Vernon Trail with the same  
14 through-girder design, but with one notable  
15 difference. The new bridge would have two  
16 reinforced concrete multipoint piers located  
17 adjacent to either side of the trail in order to  
18 increase user visibility and safety along the trail.

19           And the rail bridge over the Parkway would  
20 have broken Ashlar stone-cladded piers and slightly  
21 arched spans in order to resemble the existing rail  
22 bridge and to reflect the parkways rustic-looking

1 appearance and materials. And we expressed our  
2 support for incorporating these features into the  
3 new bridge over the parkway here as part of our  
4 Executive Director's recommendation's comments.

5 In addition, we include a finding in the  
6 Executive Director's recommendation comments that  
7 the new bridge meets the VPRA goal of approximating  
8 the design of the existing historic Long Bridge,  
9 which was supported by our Commission as part of  
10 its 2022 design review action comments.

11 Moving onto the new pedestrian and bicycle  
12 bridge, VPRA would construct the new bridge  
13 approximately 25 feet to the north of the new Long  
14 Rail Bridge, with a prefabricated truss design that  
15 is based on its necessary length, required  
16 clearances, and intended use.

17 The new crossing would extend between Long  
18 Bridge Park in Arlington, Virginia, and East Potomac  
19 Park in the District of Columbia. And the bridge  
20 was developed as mitigation for the project's need  
21 to use federal parkland as part of the wider railway  
22 corridor.

1           The new bike/ped bridge would be the only  
2 freestanding crossing of its kind over the Potomac  
3 River in the area and would serve as a valuable  
4 connection within the larger Arlington District and  
5 regional trail networks in the future.

6           The new bridge would extend over the  
7 Parkway as a single-span with an arched truss for  
8 support along the north side of the new rail bridge,  
9 as shown here. The bridge would have direct ramp  
10 and stair connections to the existing Mount Vernon  
11 Trail. And the project would widen the trail to  
12 the east and the west in order to create a larger  
13 landing and plaza area here, so the trail users would  
14 be able to make that connection out of the way of  
15 faster-moving bicycle traffic traveling along the  
16 Mount Vernon Trail.

17           The new bridge would measure 20-feet  
18 across with an overlook area, as shown here on the  
19 left, with circular reinforced concrete piers for  
20 support, as shown on the right side of the slide.

21           And then the new bridge would land on the western  
22 side of East Potomac Park, as shown here, adjacent

1 to Ohio Drive West.

2 Since NCPC's 2022 preliminary review, VPRA  
3 has made several beneficial changes to the bridge  
4 design, including widening the bridge deck to  
5 facilitate bidirectional travel and passing  
6 movements. And this was based on previous public  
7 testimony and guidance by the Park Service, NCPC,  
8 and other stakeholder agencies.

9 VPRA has simplified the bridge design,  
10 both to reduce its visual appearance in the area  
11 and to improve outward viewing opportunities for  
12 the bridge users, as illustrated here in these  
13 renderings.

14 And, finally, VPRA proposes to paint the  
15 bridge truss in a Federal Standard brown, which is  
16 the same color as other bridges in the Park Service  
17 inventory. And the brown would also help blend the  
18 bridge in with the other nearby railway bridges  
19 visually.

20 And we support the wider bridge deck in  
21 the Executive Director's recommendation comments,  
22 and we also include a finding related to the proposed

1 changes to the bridge design, which were made in  
2 response to our Commission's previous preliminary  
3 review comments.

4           At night, the new bridge, which would be  
5 maintained by DDOT, would use embedded lights within  
6 the handrails in order to illuminate the bridge deck  
7 and minimize light spillage from the bridge. The  
8 applicant includes two different alternatives in  
9 the project submission with lights spaced at either  
10 four-foot or eight-foot intervals. Between the  
11 two, staff recommends that VPRA use an eight-foot  
12 spacing in order to lessen the future bridge  
13 lighting.

14           In terms of landscaping, VPRA has  
15 developed a plan that accomplishes several  
16 different design goals, which include restoring the  
17 corridor's natural look once the project  
18 construction is complete, with filtered views and  
19 preserving several critical viewsheds.

20           Plans show a wide mix of canopy,  
21 ornamental, and evergreen trees, with mostly native  
22 species used. But the plans also show some



1 non-native species, based on the Park's historic  
2 planting plan, which NCPC guidance does allow as  
3 long as the species are not invasive.

4 Here, you can see the new mix of trees on  
5 the western side of the river in Virginia. And then  
6 here is the proposed new landscaping on the east  
7 side of the river and East Potomac Park. The new  
8 trees would be different heights and positioned in  
9 such a way that there would be filtered views of  
10 the new retaining walls and bridges, with periodic  
11 gaps in the new vegetation, as shown here in these  
12 renderings in this elevation.

13 And staff comments include support for the  
14 project's proposed planting palette, as well as a  
15 note that the plans accomplish the project's design  
16 goals of achieving a naturalized looking,  
17 maintaining views of the corridor and river, and  
18 integrating both pollinator and native plant  
19 species into the future landscape in these areas.

20 So, that concludes my presentation. And,  
21 before I conclude, I have incorporated many of these  
22 comments into today's presentation, and they are

1 also included in our staff reports. And I also want  
2 to note that we have drafted a record of decision  
3 that applies to the portion of the project that is  
4 located within the District of Columbia, as per the  
5 National Capital Planning Act. And we are  
6 recommending adoption of the ROD here today as part  
7 of the final Commission review action.

8 And I would also like to note that, in  
9 addition to Park Service representatives here at  
10 today's meeting, we also have two consultants who  
11 are in the meeting today virtually: the project's  
12 landscape architect and project manager for the  
13 design-build team. And we also have two  
14 representatives here today in-person from VPRA: Ms.  
15 Shirlene Cleveland and Ms. Naomi Klein. And they  
16 are all available now to answer any questions  
17 related to the project that you may have. Thank  
18 you.

19 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Michael. Do  
20 any Commissioners have any questions, comments, or  
21 is there a motion on the floor? Ed?

22 COMMISSIONER FORST: Thank you very much

1 for the presentation. And I'm late to this, so I  
2 apologize if you have handled these questions  
3 before.

4 One comment. I think it's a great idea,  
5 particularly with the return-to-office mandate that  
6 the Federal Government has, to have more ways for  
7 people to get to and from work and to get a little  
8 bit of exercise I think is outstanding. So that's  
9 Comment 1.

10 Question 2. Over that span, had you and  
11 the consultants considered the inclusion of any  
12 security cameras or anything over that 1.8 stretch?

13 MR. WEIL: Not to my knowledge. But I can  
14 -- I'm happy to let VPRA speak to that.

15 MS. CLEVELAND: Yes, it's definitely been  
16 discussed, though right now we don't have any plans  
17 to install those. I mean, that would come in the  
18 future, potentially, not in the current plan.

19 COMMISSIONER FORST: Was that just -- was  
20 that decision reached in consultation with security  
21 professionals?

22 MS. CLEVELAND: Oh, no, it's not like

1 we're not going to do it; we just haven't come to  
2 that. I'm sorry if I wasn't clear. Yeah,  
3 definitely a great idea.

4 COMMISSIONER FORST: What might be the  
5 forcing function to include that in the future?

6 MS. CLEVELAND: Oh, forcing function?  
7 Oh, we would be happy to do it. We would discuss  
8 that with DDOT and we'd have to look -- I mean, we  
9 already do have cameras in the corridor that are  
10 tracking the construction, so it would be very easy  
11 to convert those over to, you know, full-time  
12 security surveillance in the future.

13 COMMISSIONER FORST: Made my point.  
14 Thank you.

15 MS. CLEVELAND: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Good point.

17 COMMISSIONER FORST: Thank you.

18 CHAIR SCHARF: Anything else?  
19 Commissioner?

20 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Yeah, just a  
21 question. First, fantastic lay-down. I guess the  
22 only question I had, and I can't tell from the

1 charts, on the pedestrian bridge, on the overlook,  
2 what exactly are you overlooking? Because it looks  
3 like you're looking at the side of the bridge.  
4 Maybe it's the way it's presenting.

5 CHAIR SCHARF: The historic Long Bridge.

6 (Laughter.)

7 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: No, no, I don't  
8 think it's the historic Long Bridge.

9 CHAIR SCHARF: Right. It's actually the  
10 new bridge. I stand corrected.

11 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: I'm not sure.  
12 35. Yes, go back one. So I just can't tell.

13 MR. WEIL: So you're in the looking in the  
14 direction of the Metrorail bridge, which is upstream  
15 on the right. And I believe you can see, you know,  
16 along the river, you know, under the spans. But  
17 it's --

18 MS. CLEVELAND: It's not really meant to  
19 be an overlook, but is really the ramp down to the  
20 Mount Vernon Trail.

21 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Oh, is that --  
22 okay.

1 MR. WEIL: Oh, sorry.

2 (Simultaneous speaking.)

3 MS. CLEVELAND: We were fairly limited  
4 about how high we can make this bridge, because you  
5 have to have, for ADA purposes, it can only slope  
6 so much. We needed to get it high enough to clear  
7 the navigation channel. So we're really kind of  
8 boxed in about how high we can make this bridge.

9 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Okay.

10 MR. WEIL: Yeah, I apologize, I didn't  
11 mean to make it sound like it was a separate -- it  
12 was kind of the overlook --

13 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Got it.

14 MR. WEIL: It could also be used --

15 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Sorry.

16 MR. WEIL: -- as an overlook. Yes.

17 Sorry.

18 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Thank you.

19 That's helpful. Anything else?

20 COMMISSIONER CASH: Mr. Chairman?

21 CHAIR SCHARF: Yes, sir.

22 COMMISSIONER CASH: So one thing that kind

1 of jumped out to me, folks who have been around for  
2 a while remember this, but I thought Ashlar stone  
3 cladding, that's not formed stone, that's actual  
4 stone?

5 MS. CLEVELAND: Actual stone.

6 COMMISSIONER CASH: Okay. Okay, that was  
7 my question. Thanks.

8 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

9 Any other questions?

10 Seeing none, is there a motion to approve  
11 final site development plans for the Long Bridge  
12 Corridor Project South Section?

13 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: So moved.

14 CHAIR SCHARF: Is there a second?

15 COMMISSIONER FORST: Second.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Madam Secretary, can you  
17 confirm the motion and the second and -- or sorry,  
18 let's open things up for formal discussion. We went  
19 so far down questions that I lost myself again.  
20 Let's start deliberations with Commissioner Cozart.

21 COMMISSIONER COZART: Thank you to the  
22 Staff for their presentation. Glad to see the

1 project moving. No other questions or comments.

2 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

3 Commissioner Schaefer?

4 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Nothing further.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

7 Commissioner Stidham?

8 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: We are very  
9 thankful for this project and our work with VPRA  
10 over many, many, many years --

11 (Laughter.)

12 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: -- to get to this  
13 point. So we're really excited for this project  
14 to move forward. The addition of a pedestrian  
15 bridge will be a real change for everyone in the  
16 area. So we appreciate all of the work from NCPC  
17 and our work with VPRA to get us where we are.

18 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

19 Commissioner Argo?

20 COMMISSIONER ARGO: No additional  
21 comments other than (audio interference). Thank  
22 you very much.



1 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.  
2 Vice Chairman Levenbach?

3 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: I have no comments.  
4 Thanks for the great presentation, Mike.

5 MR. WEIL: Thank you.

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Commissioner Blair?

7 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: No comments. Thank  
8 you.

9 CHAIR SCHARF: Commissioner -- or, excuse  
10 me, Administrator Forst?

11 COMMISSIONER FORST: Satisfied,  
12 Chairman.

13 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.  
14 Administrator. Commissioner Dixon?

15 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I'm very happy with  
16 this. I would comment that, historically, off of  
17 bridges, I think one of these bridges, there used  
18 to be a swimming meet. And people would dive into  
19 the river and swim. And now that the river is going  
20 to become, hopefully, clean enough to swim in, who  
21 knows, maybe we'll have another swimming meet from  
22 these bridges. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

2 I, too, one day hope that the Potomac River is clean  
3 enough for such activities. And hopefully it will  
4 be warm enough for such activities.

5 (Laughter.)

6 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Commissioner Cash?

8 COMMISSIONER CASH: Thank you so much.

9 I did just want to make one comment. And this kind  
10 of struck me at preliminary, too. So, the footings  
11 that are over the Mount Vernon Trail, it does  
12 actually kind of strike me that they're just the  
13 piers, when everything else along there is the stone  
14 cladding. It actually seems like, when you're  
15 going along there, you're going to go from feeling  
16 kind of historic, all the sudden see these very  
17 modern piers that almost feel like a Metro pier.

18 So I know that you said it's for security,  
19 or something like that. I didn't quite get that.

20 But I wouldn't object or anything, I just -- I  
21 noticed in the photos that it's very striking, that  
22 it's a very different style from everything else.

1       So I just wanted to put that out there. If there  
2       is any opportunity to maybe add some other cladding  
3       or something like that at some point. But, yeah,  
4       thanks.

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

7               COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: No further  
8       questions or discussion.

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

11              COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: I don't have any  
12       further comments or questions, but thank you so much  
13       for the presentation.

14              CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you. I'd just like  
15       to thank VPRA, NPS, obviously, our Commission staff.  
16       I think this is one of those projects where when  
17       you look at the earlier renderings compared to where  
18       we're at now you see a real noticeable improvement.

19       I think this is in a great place.

20              I'm also excited about both increased rail  
21       access, given the return-to-office, as  
22       Administrator Forst said, I think that's a vital

1 need. And also the pedestrian access. I'm not  
2 much of a biker, but if I were, that might be a nice  
3 route to have, and nice connectivity with other bike  
4 trails.

5 So, with that having been said, I think  
6 we can, if there are no further questions or comments  
7 from any other Commissioners, Madam Secretary, can  
8 you please confirm the motion and second, and take  
9 the vote by roll call?

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. The motion was  
11 made by Commissioner Stidham and seconded by  
12 Administrator Forst. Commissioner Cozart?

13 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?

15 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Yes.

16 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?

17 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

19 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Vice Chairman Levenbach?

21 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Yes.

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Yes.

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

3 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Yes.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Administrator Forst?

5 COMMISSIONER FORST: Yes.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

7 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

9 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Henderson?

11 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Yes.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

13 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Yes.

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Carries unanimously.

15 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Madam

16 Secretary. With that, thank you very much,

17 Michael. And I'm sorry, from --

18 MS. CLEVELAND: Shirlene.

19 CHAIR SCHARF: -- VPRA, Shirlene, thank  
20 you.

21 And we'll proceed to Agenda Item 6C, which  
22 I'm particularly excited about. This is a request

1 to approve comments on concept plans for the  
2 National Zoological Park, Construct New Arabian  
3 Leopard habitat. Laura Shipman is with us.

4 Laura, do you want to proceed?

5 NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK CONSTRUCT

6 NEW ARABIAN LEOPARD HABITAT

7 MS. SHIPMAN: Yes. Thank you. Great.

8 Good afternoon, Chairman Scharf and members of the  
9 Commission. I will be presenting on behalf of the  
10 project officer, Jamie Herr.

11 The Smithsonian Institution has submitted  
12 concept plans to construct an Arabian leopard  
13 habitat at the National Zoological Park in Northwest  
14 Washington, D.C., for Commission comment. As this  
15 is a concept review the focus of today's  
16 presentation is to receive Commission comments and  
17 feedback prior to preparing the next submission.

18 In this case, the focus of the review is  
19 understanding the appropriateness of the project  
20 for the context, and understanding any particularly  
21 unique or complex issues that may need to be  
22 addressed. As such, in today's presentation staff

1 has prepared comments on the concept plan for the  
2 Commission consider and give the applicant guidance  
3 for further project development.

4           The proposed project is located at the  
5 northern end of the National Zoological Park  
6 complex, close to the main entry on Connecticut  
7 Avenue. Founded in 1889, the National Zoo is part  
8 of the Smithsonian Institution and the National Zoo  
9 and Conservation Biology Institute. The two  
10 campuses are home to more than 2,200 animals,  
11 including some of the planet's most critically  
12 endangered species.

13           To that end, the Smithsonian Institution  
14 has entered into a partnership to advance  
15 conservation efforts for the critically endangered  
16 Arabian Leopard. The proposed facility will  
17 provide year-round public viewing of adult and cub  
18 leopards that will support education around  
19 conservation of this unique species.

20           The goals of the project are to include  
21 a large open-air habitat, designed with the  
22 flexibility to accommodate future species, and with

1 opportunities for the cats to display their natural  
2 climbing behaviors; a new animal care facility with  
3 day room, dens, and staff support space; and  
4 accessible public viewing areas, including a VIP  
5 viewing area designed within the context of the  
6 existing site that will reuse the bison structures,  
7 if possible.

8           In addition, the habitat needs to be  
9 designed with the influence of the arid, rocky  
10 mountain of the Arabian Peninsula, while taking into  
11 consideration the historic environment of the  
12 National Zoological Park Historic District and  
13 Olmsted Walk. Staff supports these goals for the  
14 new Arabian leopard habitat.

15           The project site is approximately 3/4 of  
16 an acre and is prominently located at a north bend  
17 in the Olmsted Walk. Situated between the Panda  
18 habitat and the Elephant House exhibit, it is close  
19 to the Connecticut Avenue entrance and across from  
20 the bus group entry, the restroom facility, and the  
21 Panda Plaza concessions area, all of which are  
22 heavily used by visitors.



1           Two existing exhibits currently occupy the  
2 site. The former bison habitat, closed since 2024,  
3 and the Zoo in Your Backyard exhibit, which features  
4 plants native to the Washington, D.C. area. The  
5 site contains several facilities in support of the  
6 two existing exhibits. None of these structures  
7 are historic, and most will not be retained.

8           The site also includes a variety of  
9 vegetation, as well as existing trees. Some trees  
10 may need to be replaced if they cannot be preserved.

11          In addition, there is varied topography across the  
12 site that must be addressed in the proposed design,  
13 as shown in this existing site section.

14          The National Zoo is mostly covered by the  
15 National Zoological Park Historic District, as  
16 noted here. The map shown notes both the Olmsted  
17 Walk and the other contributing resources in the  
18 district. The proposed habitat site is adjacent  
19 to the Olmsted Walk and Elephant House, which are  
20 both contributing resources to the historic  
21 district. The applicant has initiated the Section  
22 106 process and more information will be included

1 with the next submission.

2 Pictured here are site elements that are  
3 considered contributing to the historic district.

4 On the left is the historic Elephant House  
5 building, and on the right are examples of Olmsted  
6 Walk features, including the use of buffers and  
7 berms at the edge, the primary and secondary pavers  
8 and paving systems, and the large, mature tree  
9 canopy. In addition, the use of stone, low-profile  
10 roof lines, and consistent furnishings are other  
11 examples.

12 The guiding principle at the creation of  
13 the park was that architecture should empower the  
14 landscape, subtly supporting the visitor's  
15 encounters with nature. This helps outline the  
16 goals of any new additions at the park to balance  
17 the natural setting with the needs of contemporary  
18 zoological care, conversation, and visitor  
19 engagement.

20 In designing the new habitat, the  
21 applicant wanted to reflect this through the  
22 architectural language, with buildings designed as

1 part of the topography, framed by tree canopies and  
2 woven into the context. Specifically, the  
3 applicant has taken elements, such as the stone,  
4 green-colored roofing, and brick as inspiration for  
5 the new habitat building, as well as the shapes and  
6 materials of the Arabian Peninsula.

7           There are three main elements of the  
8 habitat that the applicant studied, including the  
9 habitat, care building, and the enclosure. At the  
10 beginning of the design process the applicant  
11 evaluated three habitat concepts: oasis, wadi, and  
12 oasis-wadi hybrid.

13           The oasis concept, on the left, had a  
14 single point of entry from Olmsted Walk into a looped  
15 accessible circulation path built around a central  
16 pool, like you would find in the Arabia Desert.

17           The wadi concept, in the center, included  
18 an accessible path through the exhibit from west  
19 to east as a more linear experience, similar to the  
20 meandering of a wadi riverbed.

21           The oasis-wadi hybrid, on the right,  
22 combines both schemes to offer a meandering

1 accessible path organized around a central pool  
2 oasis, creating multiple vantage points for  
3 visitors as they proceed through the exhibit.

4           The oasis-wadi hybrid has been chosen as  
5 the preferred scheme for this concept report, as  
6 it provides multiple points of entry off the Olmsted  
7 Walk at a very busy section. Visitors can view the  
8 exhibit from multiple points throughout the exhibit  
9 itself, as well as directly off of Olmsted Walk,  
10 creating a variety of viewing experiences. The  
11 developed building mass concepts the applicant  
12 developed are based on the oasis-wadi hybrid as the  
13 preferred site design.

14           As part of the design process, it was  
15 necessary to add an enclosure, as Arabia leopards  
16 are excellent climbers and use trees to escape  
17 predators and scan their hunting territory. These  
18 are existing precedents for such enclosures at the  
19 National Zoo, that include the Great Flight Aviary  
20 masted tensile structure with mesh and arches, the  
21 Gibbon Enclosure with masted tensile mesh  
22 structure, and the Orangutan O-Line exhibit.

1           The applicant studied options for the mesh  
2 enclosure. The first option is an arched mesh,  
3 shown here. An arched mesh would have no supports  
4 within the habitat and allow for more flexibility  
5 when changing the habitat later. I will note that  
6 the applicant also is studying the exact form of  
7 the arch, which may include something with a more  
8 vertical or peaked form. These details will be  
9 further developed for the next submission.

10           The applicant also studied a mast tensile  
11 mesh structure for the habitat. This option wasn't  
12 preferred due to the multi-planar nature of the  
13 system and two separate forms, which call undue  
14 attention in the setting. This type of structure  
15 would also create visual clutter adjacent to Olmsted  
16 Walk and would limit the flexibility to modify the  
17 exhibit elements in the future.

18           The proposed concept combines the oasis  
19 and wadi hybrid habitat with a gabled sweep care  
20 building and an arched mesh enclosure to meet the  
21 goals for the habitat. As such, staff recommends  
22 the Commission support the applicant's preferred

1 concept design, referred to as the oasis-wadi hybrid  
2 concept, and, in particular, the arched clear span  
3 form of the screen enclosure which will help  
4 minimize its overall visibility; the simple low  
5 massing for the leopard building, including the use  
6 of curvilinear forms to integrate the building into  
7 the landscape and reflect the architectural  
8 heritage of the Arabian Peninsula; integrating the  
9 use of stone and other natural materials that are  
10 found throughout the zoo, which provide a sense of  
11 continuity across the campus; providing areas for  
12 landscaping and screening along Olmsted Walk; and  
13 a circulation approach that avoids conflicts with  
14 adjacent exhibits.

15           The applicant has included several  
16 rendered views of the concept. The first view is  
17 from the Olmsted Walk, where you can see some of  
18 the recognizable features, including the tree  
19 canopy and pavers, as you approach the habitat.

20           This view shows the west entry into the  
21 habitat and the proposed arched mesh. The tree  
22 canopy of the Olmsted Walk opens up here at the east

1 entry so visitors can see into the habitat, with  
2 the upturned building roof drawing them into the  
3 viewing area.

4           Staff recommends the applicant continue  
5 to refine the preferred design to extend the  
6 curvilinear language to other portions of the  
7 building and simplify or lower the building roof  
8 line where feasible, and explore alternative  
9 profiles, such as thinner or rounded, for the main  
10 structural members of the mesh enclosure to reduce  
11 visual impacts.

12           From this view into the east entry you can  
13 see the bridge that allows the animals to cross from  
14 one side of the habitat to the other and over  
15 visitors. This final rendered view shows the  
16 eastern corner of the animal care facility, with  
17 the service entrance on the left-hand side.

18           Staff recommends the Commission request  
19 the applicant provide, as part of the next  
20 submission, a landscape plan and further details  
21 on the screening approach along the Olmsted Walk,  
22 proposed signage and wayfinding that will help

1 identify the exhibit and guide visitors, and updated  
2 site and building plans, along with renderings, that  
3 are aligned with the preferred concept.

4 This concludes the presentation. The  
5 recommendations have been integrated throughout the  
6 presentation and are included here for your  
7 reference. Overall, staff finds the proposed  
8 concept design is consistent with the policies set  
9 forth in the federal elements of the Comprehensive  
10 Plan and meets the stated project goals. We look  
11 forward to working with the applicant to refine the  
12 application so this important project can be  
13 implemented in a timely manner.

14 At this time, Brandie Smith, the National  
15 Zoo and Conversation Biology Institute Director,  
16 would like to say a few words about the project.

17 And the design team is here to help answer any  
18 questions the Commission may have. Thank you.

19 CHAIR SCHARF: Thanks a lot, Laura.

20 Brandie, are you with us online or in  
21 person? Online.

22 MS. SMITH: I'm here online. So, thank



1 you, Ms. Shipman, for your presentation. And,  
2 thank you, Chairman Scharf and members of the  
3 Commission.

4 On behalf of the Smithsonian National Zoo  
5 and Conversation Biology Institute, we are pleased  
6 to present the Construct Arabian Leopard Habitat  
7 Project to the Commission. This project will  
8 transform an empty animal habitat into a dynamic  
9 public exhibit for the critically-endangered  
10 Arabian leopard.

11 The Smithsonian's National Zoo is a global  
12 leader in saving species from extinction. Our  
13 scientists and animal care experts work across six  
14 continents to protect wildlife, restore habitats,  
15 and translate science into real-world conservation  
16 action.

17 With fewer than an estimated 120  
18 individuals remaining on the planet, the Arabian  
19 leopard faces an extremely high risk of extinction.

20 And this exhibit is part of a broader conservation  
21 and research program to help save one of the world's  
22 most threatened big cats. Our expertise is

1 urgently needed.

2           As the nation's zoo, visitors travel from  
3 across the region, the United States, and the world  
4 to see animals, experience appreciation and awe,  
5 and leave with a deeper understanding of the  
6 challenges these species face. Through this  
7 exhibit and conversation program, the public will  
8 gain insight into the threats driving Arabian  
9 leopard toward extinction and the role science plays  
10 in preventing it.

11           We look forward to continuing design  
12 develop on this project in coordination with NCPC  
13 staff and through Section 106 consultation process.

14       This project as a compressed schedule, with  
15 construction completion anticipated by late fall,  
16 early winter of 2028, to allow time for the leopards  
17 to adjust to their habitat prior to the public  
18 opening. We will return to the Commission multiple  
19 times throughout the year as we work collaboratively  
20 on design development.

21           I'm joined today by the project team, with  
22 design professionals from the Smith Group and the

1 Smithsonian's Office of Planning, Design, and  
2 Construction, to address your comments and  
3 questions. Thank you.

4 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Brandie. Do  
5 any Commissioners have any questions?

6 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Mr. Chairman?

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Oh, yes, sir.

8 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I can't wait for this  
9 to happen. And I have several reasons as well.

10 (Laughter.)

11 COMMISSIONER DIXON: First of all, you  
12 know, we've had some breakouts on occasion, but I  
13 feel this is being planned well enough that that  
14 will not happen.

15 CHAIR SCHARF: If it does happen, the  
16 pandas are in real danger. They just sit around  
17 all day.

18 (Laughter.)

19 CHAIR SCHARF: These leopards, we're  
20 building a whole structure to keep them in; it's  
21 kind of crazy.

22 COMMISSIONER DIXON: So I'm going to make

1 a motion, I'll jump ahead, so we can vote and discuss  
2 on it, on this issue. But I'd like to move that  
3 we adopt this presentation.

4 CHAIR SCHARF: Okay. Is there a second  
5 to Commissioner Dixon's motion?

6 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: I'll second.

7 CHAIR SCHARF: All right. Hearing a  
8 motion and a second, let's proceed to discussion.

9 Commissioner Dixon, would you like to lead  
10 things off, given your excitement of the project?

11 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I just -- I can't --  
12 I just can't wait. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, sir.  
14 Commissioner Cash?

15 COMMISSIONER CASH: Well, I just want to  
16 say, I hope that we'll, obviously, hear a little  
17 bit more about the mesh, because I'm not a big fan  
18 of cats, but I've seen enough screen doors to know  
19 that we need to make sure we have the right materials  
20 --

21 (Laughter.)

22 COMMISSIONER CASH: -- not just the right

1 colors to save the pandas. So, thanks. I think  
2 is actually a good project. I appreciate the  
3 massing studies and everything else going into this,  
4 especially since it's moving so quickly. I think  
5 it gives us the information we need. So, thanks.

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Hopefully we'll have more  
7 details on the mesh when they come back for prelim.

8 (Laughter.)

9 CHAIR SCHARF: But thank you, Commissioner.  
10 Commissioner Henderson?

11 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: I associate  
12 myself with those remarks.

13 (Laughter.)

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

16 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: I don't have any  
17 additional comments or questions, but thank you so  
18 much for the presentation. It was awesome.

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

21 COMMISSIONER COZART: I appreciate the  
22 staff's work on this project and the presentation.

1 No additional questions.

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

4 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: This is exciting.  
5 Just the whole concept. And I look forward to the  
6 next stage. Thank you.

7 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you. Commissioner  
8 Stidham?

9 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you. I  
10 think you've been really thoughtful about the  
11 design. The hybrid approach definitely is the  
12 right approach, looking at it in terms of its ability  
13 to both have a great space for the leopard, but also  
14 how it fits into the zoo as it exists now. So, a  
15 really nice concept design. Look forward to seeing  
16 it through.

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

19 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes. I echo your  
20 comments. And this is thoughtful, this is  
21 exciting. I've got nine grandchildren, which has  
22 nothing to do with this, except, you know, we go

1     there all the time, because they all come at  
2     different times.

3             And, you know, it's a challenge, and it  
4     is so exciting to see something like this come --  
5     we haven't seen anything really dramatic like this  
6     come to the zoo that has changed the whole landscape  
7     of the zoo for a long time. So, yay. Thank you.

8             CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

9     Commissioner Blair? Or sorry, excuse me, Vice  
10    Chairman Levenbach? I'm looking right at you.

11            VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Walking underneath  
12    Arabian leopards is an experience you get in the  
13    wild. And if you do it, you don't typically get  
14    a second, I'm guessing.

15            (Laughter.)

16            VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: So I'm looking  
17    forward to enjoying this when it gets built.

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

20            COMMISSIONER BLAIR: I will speak on  
21    behalf of the three Blair children that were very  
22    excited about this project and look forward to it.

1 (Laughter.)

2 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.  
3 Administrator Forst?

4 COMMISSIONER FORST: I feel compelled to  
5 bring some balance to the conversation.

6 (Laughter.)

7 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: And I'm very  
8 disappointed we don't have an Arabia leopard here.  
9 But other than that, thank you very much.

10 (Laughter.)

11 CHAIR SCHARF: So, speaking for myself,  
12 I was with the President, James was as well, when  
13 we went to Saudi Arabia and these leopards were  
14 promised. There is actually a long history of great  
15 cats and presidents and the National Zoo. I was  
16 interested to discovery that President Martin Van  
17 Buren was gifted two tigers by the Sultan of Oman  
18 and Muscat. And that those were gifted to the  
19 National Zoo, the predecessor to the current  
20 Smithsonian Zoo. So there is a long history for  
21 this.

22 I think it's incredibly exciting. I think



1 the location is perfect. That bison exhibit, or  
2 the previous bison exhibit, what's now going to be  
3 the leopard exhibit, you enter off Connecticut and  
4 it's right there. I think it has the potential to  
5 draw traffic away from the pandas, which is -- the  
6 pandas, it's always overcrowded there. And the  
7 pandas don't do much.

8 I think the leopard are going to be great.

9 And I love the design principles that we've seen  
10 so far. So I think I share the excitement of the  
11 rest of the Commission. I'm really excited to see  
12 how this project develops; hopefully, quickly in  
13 the next few months. And I'm excited to have you  
14 all back again soon.

15 Thanks, as always, to our Commission staff  
16 for their careful review, and to everybody involved  
17 in this exciting project. I think it's going to  
18 be really incredible.

19 With that, we have a motion on the floor.

20 Madam Secretary, can you confirm the motion and  
21 second, and proceed to a roll call?

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. The motion was

1 made by Commissioner Dixon and seconded by  
2 Commissioner Schaefer. Commissioner Cozart?

3 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?

5 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Yes.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?

7 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

9 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Vice Chairman Levenbach?

11 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Yes.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

13 CHAIR SCHARF: Yes.

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

15 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Yes.

16 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Administrator Forst?

17 COMMISSIONER FORST: Yes.

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

19 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

21 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Henderson?

1 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Yes.

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

3 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Yes.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Thank you. The motion  
5 carries unanimously.

6 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you very much, Madam  
7 Secretary. We're now moving on to Agenda Item 7A,  
8 which is an informational presentation on the East  
9 Wing Modernization Project.

10 Quick logistical item. My impression was  
11 that Commissioner Cash was going to be leaving us  
12 and that Commissioner Mendelson was going to be  
13 taking his place virtually. Is he with us online  
14 right now?

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Yes, I am.

17 CHAIR SCHARF: Okay, perfect. Thank you,  
18 sir. With that, do you want to proceed?

19 INFORMATION PRESENTATION

20 EAST WING MODERNIZATION PROJECT

21 MR. FLIS: Hello. Thank you. Good  
22 afternoon, members of the Commission. As was

1 mentioned, this is an informational presentation  
2 and overview of the proposed White House East Wing  
3 Modernization Project.

4 Before I turn it over to the applicant team  
5 I'm just going to provide you a brief background.

6 The purpose of the project is to establish a  
7 permanent secure event space within the White House  
8 grounds that provides increased capacity for  
9 official state functions.

10 I think everybody is familiar with the  
11 location of the White House, but here on the screen  
12 is a map view showing President's Park and the  
13 surrounding context. The National Mall is located  
14 here at the bottom of the screen. Pennsylvania  
15 Avenue is located to the north of the White House.

16 And E Street is located to the south, just north  
17 of the Ellipse. The project is proposed to be  
18 located between the Executive Mansion and the  
19 Treasury Building.

20 In addition to the Executive Residence,  
21 the vicinity of President's Park obviously also  
22 includes a number of significant buildings,

1 including the Eisenhower Executive Office Building,  
2 which is to the west, shown on the image on the left,  
3 and the main Treasury Building, which is located  
4 to the east. Mixed used development frames the  
5 entire area, as it is located within the central  
6 core of Washington, D.C.

7           The project is located on federal land  
8 within the District of Columbia. The National  
9 Capital Planning Act requires Commission approval  
10 for all federal buildings and open space around such  
11 buildings within the District.

12           As you know, NCPC has reviewed several  
13 other projects at the White House. Most recently,  
14 the White House fence in 2016 and 2017, and the  
15 tennis pavilion in 2019.

16           In terms of the review of projects, NCPC  
17 uses guidance from the federal elements of the  
18 Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital,  
19 including policies related to urban design, parks,  
20 and open space, as well as visitor experience, among  
21 others. As you're aware, the Commission takes a  
22 holistic approach when applying the Comprehensive

1 Plan policies in the context of each project's needs  
2 and objectives.

3 One of the primary areas of interest for  
4 the review of this project is how the public will  
5 see and experience the Modernization Project from  
6 the surrounding public spaces. Most notably, from  
7 Pennsylvania Avenue to the North, as shown here on  
8 this image, or from E Street to the south, as shown  
9 here. These are really the only publicly  
10 accessible streets in the vicinity, as others are  
11 located within a secure perimeter.

12 The public experience extends to several  
13 aspects of the proposed project, which will be  
14 helpful to understand as the design advances,  
15 including how the pedestrian level-views from the  
16 north and the south may or may not change from  
17 current conditions; how the connector or colonnade  
18 between the Executive Mansion and the new East Wing  
19 Modernization Project will be designed; how the  
20 landscape will be designed, restored, or improved;  
21 and how perimeter security and the associated  
22 infrastructure might be beautified for the public

1 and guests to the White House and grounds.

2 As the design proceeds for review, NCPC  
3 staff will work with the applicant to understand  
4 these components, as well as any other comments  
5 raised by the Commission today.

6 And so, with that, I am going to now turn  
7 it over to Josh Fisher with the White House, who  
8 will begin their presentation. Thank you.

9 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you.

10 MR. FISHER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman  
11 and Commission staff. My name is Josh Fisher. I'm  
12 the Director of Management and Administration for  
13 the White House. We appreciate y'all allowing us  
14 the opportunity to discuss the East Wing  
15 Modernization Project and the reason we believe it  
16 to be so vitally important.

17 Every day, people from across the country  
18 and around the globe visit the White House and  
19 surrounding grounds. They look to it as a  
20 representation of the values that we, as Americans,  
21 stand for. It is our responsibility to ensure that  
22 the guests, those given the opportunity to come

1 inside the fence and those viewing from Lafayette  
2 Park or the Ellipse, experience the pride and the  
3 powerful symbol of American democracy, leadership,  
4 and history.

5 While we are only discussing the ballroom  
6 today, our efforts extend beyond the 18 acres so  
7 that every school group, family trip, marriage  
8 proposal, or birthday photo allow people to enjoy  
9 the beautiful pride of our nation's capital and the  
10 White House complex.

11 As you all know, U.S. presidents have been  
12 renovating, expanding, and modernizing the White  
13 House to meet the needs of the present day, including  
14 terraces built in the 1800s, the Truman Balcony in  
15 1948, the original East Wing built in 1902 and  
16 rebuilt in 1942, as well as numerous other projects.

17 When President Trump decided to build a  
18 grand ballroom and modernize other aspects of the  
19 East Wing, we began researching. After careful  
20 study and consultation with engineers, architects,  
21 historians, and other experts, we determined that  
22 modifying or renovating the colonnade in the



1 existing East Wing was not feasible for many  
2 reasons. We found significant deficiencies and  
3 overall poor structural design and construction.

4 The colonnade was structurally unstable, the roof  
5 systems had exceeded their service life, and the  
6 underpinnings were not sufficient to support the  
7 necessary upgrades.

8 In the East Wing, there was chronic water  
9 intrusion, accelerated deterioration, and mold  
10 contamination. The electrical infrastructure was  
11 obsolete, deemed undersized and noncompliant with  
12 current code. Facilities were also noncompliant  
13 with both ADA and Secret Service requirements.

14 Because of this and other factors, the cost  
15 analysis proved that demolition and reconstruction  
16 provided the lowest total cost ownership and most  
17 effective long-term strategy. As part of this  
18 overall process, we also took great steps to ensure  
19 that we preserved extraordinary history features,  
20 including parts of the original colonnade, the  
21 Kennedy Gardens, and the movie theater, amongst  
22 other items.

1           In choosing to carry out the East Wing  
2 Modernization Project, we are achieving life  
3 safety, ADA, environmental, and federal compliance.

4       We are enhancing mission-critical functionality  
5 and eliminating systematic infrastructure  
6 failures. We are making necessary security  
7 enhancements and delivering resilient, adaptative  
8 infrastructure aligned with future mission needs.

9           Importantly, the addition of the  
10 modernized facility also significant reduces  
11 negative impacts on the truly historic Executive  
12 Mansion and South Lawn. The hosting of large  
13 events, the size of which were not contemplated when  
14 it was designed and reconstructed, drastically  
15 increases the rate of deterioration on the East Room  
16 and the State Dining Rooms, stressing the aging  
17 structural components of that specific building.

18           In addition to consequential structural  
19 and safety considerations, the East Wing  
20 Modernization Project will significantly improve  
21 the experience of the American people and foreign  
22 dignitaries when they visit the White House.

1           As I'm sure you're aware, historically,  
2 when visitors come to the White House for events,  
3 that tour begins at passing through temporary  
4 double-wide trailers to gain entry onto complex.

5       State dinners or events with world leaders would  
6 take place in a tent on the South Lawn. These tents  
7 affected more than just the world leaders; their  
8 use destroyed large portions of the South Lawn,  
9 degrading its appearance for overall visitors and  
10 creating a reoccurring expense to replace and  
11 cultivate new grass.

12           Beyond the ballroom, we have plans for  
13 beautifying visitors' experience in the area, such  
14 as Lafayette Park, and creating a superior, more  
15 efficient visitor security screening center. In  
16 the coming weeks and month, both NPS and Secret  
17 Service will be submitting their plans on those two  
18 topics.

19           Inside the White Houses, spaces such as  
20 the ballroom, are just as important as the grounds  
21 outside. The ballroom is where leaders will  
22 gather, important decisions will be discussed, and

1 history will be made. It is a place that will bring  
2 people together for diplomacy, celebration, and  
3 unity. A beautiful, well-maintained, and  
4 historically-designed ballroom will show respect  
5 for these moments and emphasize the significance  
6 of collaboration and tradition in our government.

7 Now I will turn it over to Shalom, the  
8 architect on this project, to discuss the ballroom.

9 As you guys know, Shalom is no stranger to this  
10 Commission. His work has been transformative  
11 across the D.C. region. So, we're excited to see  
12 what he can bring to the table.

13 MR. BARANES: So, good afternoon. And  
14 thank you for the opportunity to appear before the  
15 Commission. Today I'll provide a very high-level  
16 overview of the White House East Wing project. A  
17 more detailed and fully developed submission will  
18 be presented in one of your subsequent hearings.

19 And I'd like to begin here with a brief  
20 discussion of the evolution of the current design  
21 approach. I joined the project team approximately  
22 60 days ago, in early November, following the

1 schematic design work that had been undertaken by  
2 McCrery Architects.

3 That earlier phase, which spanned most of  
4 2025, involved a fairly comprehensive evaluation  
5 of programmatic needs and design alternatives,  
6 including multiple massing configurations, and, of  
7 course, a whole series of elevational studies.

8 Following the transition to my firm, we  
9 continue to evaluate various sizes and  
10 configurations for the project. Today, I'd like  
11 to report that the ultimate decision in late  
12 November was not to continue exploring options for  
13 increasing the size of the project; instead, the  
14 decision was made to advance one of the earlier  
15 schemes that had been developed prior to our joining  
16 the team.

17 That scheme is calibrated to respect key  
18 contextual relationships. The addition's cornice  
19 aligns and does not exceed with the cornice height  
20 of the White House. And the building mass is set  
21 back approximately ten-and-a-half feet from the  
22 White House's primary north facade on Pennsylvania

1 Avenue. These measures, I think, are essential to  
2 maintaining the visual primacy of the White House.

3 The program includes a ballroom of  
4 approximately 22,000 square feet. It's designed  
5 to accommodate approximately a thousand seated  
6 guests at a formal dinner. The total area of the  
7 two aboveground visible East Wing floors, that's  
8 two floors, including the colonnade and the ballroom  
9 structure, is just slightly over 89,000 square feet.

10 Below the ballroom, and included in the 89,000  
11 square feet, the project incorporates a series of  
12 functions, which I'll show you on the boards shortly  
13 here.

14 One could generously describe the current  
15 functioning of the White House support areas, such  
16 as loading, waste handling, general deliveries,  
17 food service, as being quite labyrinthian in  
18 character. And I think that's a kind description.

19 These conditions reflect incremental adaptations  
20 over time, and they place ongoing operational stress  
21 on the historic structure.

22 The proposed East Wing Modernization seeks

1 to rationalize these functions in a manner that will  
2 relieve the stress by increase connectivity,  
3 operational efficiency, and by enhancing overall  
4 security. The changes will allow the White House  
5 to be experienced and to age, I think, at a much  
6 more graceful way over time.

7 In advancing this proposal, we have aimed  
8 to land in a thoughtful middle ground by adapting,  
9 as I mentioned earlier, one of the earlier 2025  
10 designs that meets the thousand-seat requirement  
11 for the ballroom. And also, as I mentioned earlier,  
12 further consideration of enlarging the size was  
13 abandoned in late November.

14 Our primary focus has been on refining the  
15 exterior facades through the re-proportioning of  
16 windows, masonry detailing, revisiting the exterior  
17 terraces, and further developing the interior  
18 spaces, of course.

19 This scheme does require a two-story  
20 colonnade connecting the East Wing -- I'm sorry,  
21 connecting the East Room in the White House to the  
22 new ballroom. We believe it's appropriate to

1 evaluate this condition within the context of the  
2 broader White House campus.

3 The White House is, therefore, considering  
4 the idea of a modest one-story addition to the West  
5 Wing colonnade, which would serve to restore a sense  
6 of symmetry around the original central pavilion.

7 It will be considered as part of a future overall  
8 planning framework which will be presented at a  
9 future hearing here.

10 So, with this context, I'll now just walk  
11 you through, briefly, some of the boards that we  
12 have here. So, here, of course, you have  
13 Pennsylvania Avenue to the top here. Thank you.

14 You have Pennsylvania Avenue here; it's  
15 at the upper part of the board. So the White House  
16 complex. And, of course, the colonnades with the  
17 (audio interference). There will be two priority  
18 access points to the ballroom. And we are talking  
19 about a large crowd here of a thousand people. One  
20 of them will be through the White House, through  
21 the colonnade, to a foyer that will serve the  
22 ballroom. And then the other one will be one level



1 down.

2 The grade drops as we come around this way.

3 And there will be an entrance through a portico  
4 here into a foyer with a grand stair that will take  
5 you up one level to the ballroom, and essentially  
6 meet where the other guests will be coming from the  
7 other direction.

8 The new structure here has a series of  
9 terraces on three sides of the building. On the  
10 south side of the colonnade we have a terrace that's  
11 about 12-feet wide with a stair that leads down to  
12 the lawn panels. And then that terrace continues  
13 around to the west side of the ballroom, along here.

14 And, actually, that's a very important life safety  
15 egress point for the whole project.

16 And that leads down to a stair here, which  
17 also lands at the lower level grade. Halfway down  
18 that stair you can make a left and access a terrace,  
19 which is underneath this colonnade roof. And that  
20 also has a stair leading down to the lawn.

21 We will show you much more detailed  
22 drawings next time with viewsheds, but, for today,

1 I'd just like to point out that there is a very dense  
2 cluster of trees here, which will remain, which  
3 really affects your view from the south, the public  
4 view from the south looking at this, just as there  
5 is a dense cluster of trees that protects the view  
6 of the West Wing. And we also have the same  
7 condition on the north side, where we have a dense  
8 cluster of both evergreen and deciduous trees, which  
9 will really frame the view of the central pavilion  
10 of the White House.

11           These are very schematic drawings of the  
12 two primary levels. On your right here is the  
13 ballroom level, which is the upper level. And on  
14 the left is the level below the ballroom.

15           So, well, let's start at the upper level  
16 here. So if you're entering the ballroom from the  
17 White House, the East Room is right here. You'll  
18 come across the colonnade, adjacent to the stairs  
19 here, enter this foyer area, and then make your way  
20 into the ballroom, which has windows on three sides,  
21 facing east, west, and south.

22           If you're entering from the other side,

1 as many of the guests will be entering from the other  
2 side, you will come up a few stairs here through  
3 a portico, and that would give you access -- you'll  
4 be coming up here actually in a lower level -- that  
5 will give you access to this hall here, the foyer,  
6 and then up a grand stair which would land you right  
7 in the same area here. And, again, giving you  
8 access to the ballroom.

9           On the lower level, the other uses that  
10 we have are this large space, which is devoted to  
11 food service. That's basically a commercial  
12 kitchen. And it will not only service the ballroom,  
13 but also service events inside the White House  
14 itself.

15           Opposite that, we have an office suite for  
16 the First Lady. And then, on the lower level of  
17 the colonnade itself, we are rebuilding the movie  
18 theater that had been there.

19           These are north and south elevations of  
20 the White House complex. We removed all three  
21 trees. No landscaping at all is shown; just wanted  
22 you to see the building very clearly. And I think

1 the most important thing here, perhaps, is what I  
2 mentioned earlier, which is the alignment of the  
3 cornice of the ballroom directly aligns with the  
4 cornice and the balustrade of the White House. The  
5 heights will match exactly.

6 Here you see the upper level of the East  
7 Colonnade. And I did mention the potential for a  
8 future addition, a one-story addition, to the West  
9 Wing. And that would occur right here. And you  
10 can see that the reason to think about that is so  
11 that we would reinstate the symmetry around the  
12 central pavilion of the White House. We have not  
13 looked at that at all yet, but hope to do so in the  
14 future.

15 So, here is the view from the south.  
16 Again, you have the rear elevation of the White House  
17 itself. We have the ballroom with the portico.  
18 The terrace at the half-level. And then, of course,  
19 here the West Wing, two-part with a colonnade.

20 These are larger elevations so you can  
21 start to understand the character of the building.

22 So, what we have at the top here is the east

1 elevation of the ballroom, which is directly across  
2 from the Treasury. This portico sits pretty much  
3 directly across from a portico that abuts the  
4 Treasury.

5           The floor of the ballroom is at this upper  
6 level, right through here. And the eight windows  
7 that you see here are basically centered on the  
8 ballroom. On the opposite side we have the same  
9 condition, with the eight windows there centered  
10 on the ballroom.

11           This is the west elevation. And on the  
12 lower level here you're seeing windows that face  
13 into -- they serve the First Lady's office suite.

14           We intend to develop all of this with a  
15 combination of stone and precast. It will all be  
16 painted white to match the White House. A very  
17 similar finish as you see on the White House. And,  
18 of course, you know, the windows and all of the  
19 masonry details are things we are working on right  
20 now.

21           And then, finally, I just have one more  
22 board. And this is just the north elevation, which

1 you saw a minute ago. But here we've added in the  
2 street trees, which are shown as a darker green.

3 And then we've put in transparent outlines of the  
4 larger trees, which are behind the street trees  
5 inside the fence line. So the trees pretty much  
6 match the height of the proposed ballroom. So  
7 you'll start to get a sense, when I show you at your  
8 next hearing some photographs, the extent to which  
9 these will frame the view of the central pavilion.

10 So, that's all I have. And happy to open  
11 it up to questions if you like.

12 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you very much for  
13 that presentation and for showing us this diagrams  
14 and images. I'll open it up to the Commission now  
15 for questions and clarifications.

16 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Mr. Chairman,  
17 I'll have some questions. This is Commissioner  
18 Mendelson.

19 CHAIR SCHARF: Please proceed,  
20 Commissioner.

21 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Oh, thank you.  
22 I hope you can all hear me. I do want to just first

1 take a moment to thank my designee, Evan Cash, who  
2 comes to all the meetings. And I just want to thank  
3 him publicly. And I also want to thank those who  
4 gave the presentation.

5 I do have a number of questions. The first  
6 is, how is this proposal consistent with the  
7 Comprehensive Plan's urban design requirements,  
8 which include, I think it's B.1.4 in the Urban Design  
9 Element, visually reinforce the permanents of the  
10 Capitol Building, White House, and other  
11 nationally-significant resources by protecting the  
12 visual frame around them; and B.5.10, visually  
13 reinforce the special importance of the White House  
14 and its grounds by protecting the existing spatial  
15 relationship of the White House and the mass and  
16 scale of adjacent buildings?

17 So my question pertains to how this  
18 proposal is consistent with those comments of the  
19 Comprehensive Plan.

20 MR. BARANES: Thank you for those  
21 questions, Mr. Mendelson. We are being very, very  
22 careful, first of all, to maintain, I think, a fairly

1 sufficient distance from the central pavilion of  
2 the White House. And by proposing that the  
3 colonnades be developed in a matching way on both  
4 sides of the central pavilion of the White House,  
5 I think we will actually be in concurrence with the  
6 paragraph that you just cited.

7 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: All right.  
8 That probably will come up again at future  
9 presentations.

10 Can the size, footprint, or location of  
11 the ballroom, the location of the ballroom on the  
12 site, be changed at this point?

13 MR. BARANES: I mean, certainly, anything  
14 is possible. It all depends on schedule and money.

15 But this particular location has been studied  
16 pretty carefully by the previous architect, as well  
17 as myself. And it's been determined that this is  
18 the best location in terms of getting access to it  
19 from the East Room of the White House.

20 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: But part of my  
21 question was the size or footprint. So, has  
22 construction work on the ballroom foundation



1 already begun?

2 MR. BARANES: There's been excavation  
3 work, there is some foundation work, but that's  
4 really not the limiting issue in terms of whether  
5 things can be changed or not.

6 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Okay. So, as  
7 this gets further refined, the footprint could  
8 conceivably be reduced a little bit, the work on  
9 the foundation, so far as not that significant?

10 MR. BARANES: Well, as I said, the  
11 footprint has been studied fairly extensively  
12 already, and many different massing options were  
13 studied before we even came onboard. So, at this  
14 point, we've continued working with that, with the  
15 product of all those studies, and we are primarily  
16 refining the scheme.

17 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: So, I appreciate  
18 that the cornice line will not be higher than the  
19 historic structure, but is it possible that the  
20 height of the ballroom, which of course determines  
21 the cornice line, that that could be reduced  
22 somewhat? Because it still seems to me that it's

1       overwhelming the existing building.

2               MR. BARANES:   You know, it's interesting.

3       I mean, it is the same height.   I think you're  
4       familiar with the addition that we built to the  
5       Wilson Building that you're in?

6               COMMISSIONER MENDELSON:   Yes.

7               MR. BARANES:   So, you know, I mean, I bring  
8       it up because this size -- this question of size  
9       and relationship of an addition to an historic  
10      building comes up with almost every project I've  
11      ever worked on over the last 40 years.   And we're  
12      essentially doing the same thing here we did at the  
13      Wilson Building.

14              We're building an addition.   Although at  
15      the Wilson Building it really contrasts.   It's a  
16      very modern addition; it contrasts very strongly  
17      to the neoclassical building.   But, even there, we  
18      matched the height.   You know, we did match the  
19      height of the existing building.   And I think it  
20      works quite well.   And we've done that on many, many  
21      other structures.

22              You know, we're just finishing up an

1 addition to the Cannon Building where we increased  
2 the height by one story. That was reviewed pretty  
3 extensively. And, you know, you could look at it.

4 I mean, I think that, too, works really well, you  
5 know, with the original historic structure, despite  
6 the additional height.

7 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: But my sense of  
8 it is that there are two levels here. One is, I'm  
9 going to say the lower level, and then there is the  
10 ballroom level. And I can't remember what the  
11 height. What is the height for the ballroom level?

12 MR. BARANES: Well, if you measure it off  
13 the front driveway, where the portico is of the White  
14 House, we're approximately 51 feet above that  
15 elevation.

16 (Simultaneous speaking.)

17 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: That's roughly  
18 the level of the ballroom?

19 (Simultaneously speaking.)

20 MR. BARANES: That's the roof of the  
21 ballroom. That's the height -- I mean, that's the  
22 height of the balustrade around our ballroom

1 structure. I'm sorry, is that what you're asking?

2 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: No. I think I'm  
3 not asking it well. The ballroom is going to be  
4 like a 20-foot ceiling or 40-foot ceiling?

5 MR. BARANES: It's about 38 to 40. Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: And could that  
7 be reduced?

8 MR. BARANES: It's possible. Not  
9 impossible.

10 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: I had one other  
11 question, which I think is probably for Mr. Fisher  
12 and not you. And that is, why didn't the project  
13 come to us a whole instead of after the demolition?

14 MR. FISHER: Thank you for that question.

15 Yeah, we've been -- we've begun work on this  
16 project. There are two phases to this project.  
17 I think that you've alluded to it with Shalom here.

18 There are some things regarding this project that  
19 are, frankly, of Top Secret nature that we are  
20 currently working on. That does not preclude us  
21 from changing the above-grade structure, but that  
22 work needed to be considered when doing this

1 project, which was not part of the NCPC process.

2 CHAIR SCHARF: And let me note just for  
3 the record, if it's okay with you, Commissioner,  
4 it's long been the view of NCPC's Counsel's Office  
5 that the National Capital Planning Act does not give  
6 us authority to review demolition or site  
7 preparation work. So, while many projects do come  
8 before us at that stage, that's not a requirement  
9 of the National Capital Planning Act, and review  
10 of demolition is not something that we have the  
11 authority to do as a Commission.

12 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: I appreciate  
13 that. And I've actually read that legal opinion.

14 And I'm not arguing with it. It's just that I don't  
15 know the last time that a project has been presented  
16 before NCPC or Zoning Commission or any of the  
17 planning agencies where it wasn't presented as a  
18 whole: this is what we're going to do and we will  
19 proceed with the demolition as we move forward.  
20 As opposed to here, where the demolition occurred  
21 first.

22 I don't have any other --

1           CHAIR SCHARF: The Air and Space Museum  
2 addition is one example of that, where they  
3 proceeded with demolition of the old addition, I  
4 believe, prior to presenting plans for the new  
5 addition to this Commission. I think that's the  
6 nearest historical analogy. I could be wrong.

7           COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: I just want to  
8 conclude my -- I have a lot of respect for Shalom  
9 Baranes. He's done a lot of great projects in the  
10 city over the decades and I just want to acknowledge  
11 that. Thank you.

12           CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.  
13           Do any other Commissioners have questions  
14 for the presentation team? Yes, Commissioner  
15 Dixon.

16           COMMISSIONER DIXON: One. The stairway,  
17 that's going to be handicapped accessible also, I'm  
18 assuming? You had mentioned stairways on the  
19 building, but they were -- they're going to be  
20 handicapped accessible, obviously?

21           MR. BARANES: The primary handicapped  
22 access into the ballroom will be through the front

1 door of the White House.

2 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Oh. So the other  
3 entrances will not accommodate --

4 MR. BARANES: The other stairways are  
5 there for egress purposes, for fire code purposes.

6 And they are stairways, so a wheelchair would have  
7 to really go in the other direction.

8 COMMISSIONER DIXON: But I think that may  
9 be a concern, I would think. I mean, we want  
10 handicapped people to be able to egress, too.

11 MR. BARANES: Oh, absolutely. No, no,  
12 believe me, we are looking very closely at all of  
13 the codes.

14 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Secondly, there was  
15 -- there hasn't been any discussion of the new  
16 security process that we used to go through, that  
17 we have gone through, with the labyrinth of  
18 different corridors to get cleared to get into the  
19 White House. How is that going to be addressed in  
20 this process?

21 MR. BARANES: I'm sure they'd let you in  
22 at any time, but --

1 COMMISSIONER DIXON: No, I doubt that.

2 (Laughter.)

3 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I haven't been back  
4 for a while.

5 MR. FISHER: Thank you for the question,  
6 sir. We are currently looking at a new visitors  
7 entry facility that would be part of this project.

8 Again, as we look at this, it's not just the East  
9 Wing Modernization, it's not the ballroom; we are  
10 looking at a totality experience for the White House  
11 complex.

12 As I mentioned earlier, historically, when  
13 you come to the White House you go through  
14 double-wide trailers, tents, out in the cold. We  
15 don't think that that's befitting of what the White  
16 House should be or could be, quite frankly. So  
17 those plans are under review. We're trying to put  
18 them together, make sure that we've got our i's  
19 dotted and our t's crossed before we bring before  
20 this Commission so that you guys can hopefully see  
21 and enjoy what we've produced.

22 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yeah, I think that



1 it's a sensitive area to even put it -- make it  
2 public, how this process may work. But one of the  
3 detractions from the historical structures was the  
4 complicated clearance process and the hodgepodge,  
5 if you will. So I'm assuming you will present to  
6 us how that will be handled in the future --

7 MR. FISHER: Yes, sir.

8 COMMISSIONER DIXON: -- so we can look at  
9 that? Good. And I do hope we do something with  
10 the handicapped issue. Thank you.

11 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you. Do any other  
12 Commissioners have questions for the project team?  
13 Yes, Commissioner --

14 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Clarification  
15 from something that was presented. There was talk  
16 of adding, potentially, an additional level on the  
17 West Wing side of the building. Is that to the West  
18 Wing structure itself or just to the walkway or what  
19 --

20 MR. BARANES: It would be just to the  
21 colonnade.

22 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Okay.

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Any other questions before  
2 we proceed to deliberations?

3 Hearing none, I'd like to thank, as always,  
4 our Staff and the presentation team here. Vice  
5 Chairman Levenbach, would you like to kick things  
6 off?

7 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: I think what  
8 strikes me about is this, you know, some people here,  
9 some of the Commissioners, have participated in  
10 White House events more than I have, but I'm struck  
11 at how much this expands the utility of the compound.

12 I mean, I think about the Hanukkah party  
13 I just went to you. You start the north end of  
14 Lafayette Park and you walk through one set of  
15 trailers and you walk through another set of  
16 trailers, and there's a coat check. And then when  
17 you get inside it's pretty crowded and there aren't  
18 that many people there. And this is going to just  
19 open up access to people at a much higher level.

20 I think that it's going to be enjoyed for  
21 generations to come, so I'm really excited to see  
22 how this project develops.

1 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Vice Chairman  
2 Levenbach. Commissioner Blair?

3 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: I would just say I  
4 think that, you know, it looks like it's going to  
5 be very beautiful, but the utility, I think, for  
6 those of us that spend a lot of time there, is fairly  
7 obviously. Winston Churchill said to the House of  
8 Commons, when they were going to rebuild it, that  
9 we shape our buildings and they shape us thereafter.

10 The White House is a special place, but  
11 people come there to gather and to work. I would  
12 tell you that we've seen times where simply doing  
13 something like getting the Congress together to have  
14 a meal and break bread is not something that the  
15 current structure of the White House really  
16 accommodates in any way with the President of the  
17 United States. That's a problem.

18 When foreign dignitaries visit, you know,  
19 the President of the United States, of any party,  
20 is invited all over the world and goes and gets to  
21 see the best of whatever the country has to offer.

22 And I think the President's view would be that he

1 would -- he thinks the American people deserve that  
2 same opportunity to have grand gatherings for  
3 visitors to our country and show them what American  
4 has to offer.

5 So I think it has a obvious utility. I  
6 think it's very considered in its design. And I  
7 look forward to seeing the progress of the project,  
8 and appreciate your presentation and look forward  
9 to working with you.

10 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.  
11 Administrator Forst?

12 COMMISSIONER FORST: Thanks so much,  
13 Chairman. James read from my notes, so I --

14 (Laughter.)

15 COMMISSIONER FORST: Thanks.

16 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Administrator  
17 Forst. Commissioner Dixon?

18 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I appreciate the  
19 presentation and look forward, as this moves  
20 forward, to more deliberation. Thank you, Mr.  
21 Chairman.

22 CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.

1 Commissioner Mendelson?

2 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Yes. Sorry, I  
3 was muted. Let me say that I think that elevation  
4 we saw from Pennsylvania Avenue was not as  
5 disturbing to me as the elevation from the Ellipse.

6 And as I said in my questions, I'm concerned about  
7 this addition overwhelming the original historic  
8 building.

9 I appreciate that the architect, Shalom  
10 Baranes, has really good taste with regard to  
11 dealing with historic structures, but I do think  
12 that -- it sounds to me like the height could be  
13 lowered without jeopardizing the footprint. I  
14 don't think that the footprint -- that is, 89,000  
15 square feet -- should be the goal in and of itself.

16 So maybe it can be and needs to be shrunk a little  
17 bit more. Again, looking at the elevations from  
18 the south, it's just so -- it's just so imbalanced.

19 The other observation I have is that it  
20 is disturbing to me that we are looking at an  
21 addition to this historic structure, but we're  
22 looking at what appears to be an overall plan in

1 a very segmented approach. So is there going to  
2 be some changes with the visitor center? Is there  
3 going to be some changes with Lafayette Park? Is  
4 there going to be some changes with the West Wing?

5 But rather than looking at this as a whole, we're  
6 going to be looking at it piecemeal, and that's  
7 concerning as well.

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

10 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: I would just  
11 suggest, to those of us who don't work in that  
12 complex every day, that it would be probably be  
13 worthwhile and beneficial to our consideration to  
14 take some opportunities to go and see the site, see  
15 the facilities as they are, between now and future  
16 considerations.

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

19 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: I don't have any  
20 additional comments or questions, but thank you all  
21 so much for the presentation. It was very  
22 informative.

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

3 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes. Thanks to the  
4 staff for their work on this and for the  
5 presentation. And I look forward to when it comes  
6 before the Commission again.

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

9 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: So, again, my  
10 thank you as well. This is -- it's exciting. It's  
11 a great job overall with the architectural features.  
12 And looking forward to see how this progresses,  
13 since I echo the same comments as has come before  
14 me, as well, because I think this is a great  
15 opportunity for us to continue to expand upon the  
16 importance of our entire nation. So, thank you.

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

19 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you. And  
20 thank you for the overview. It is really helpful  
21 to get a sense of the project.

22 And I should lead with that Secretary

1 Burgum, who I sit as a delegated position here, and  
2 the Department of the Interior, supports the East  
3 Wing Modernization without reservation. We  
4 appreciate the designs that were shown here today  
5 and we look forward to seeing more detail,  
6 especially when it comes to the landscaping and  
7 understanding how the temporary facilities will be  
8 -- how the uses that currently happen in this  
9 temporary facilities are taking shape in the new  
10 facility, to really understand how that replacement  
11 is taking place.

12 As well as understanding clearly, you  
13 know, it's important in those views, you know,  
14 anyone who is coming to visit who does not have the  
15 opportunity to be inside the fence to be able to  
16 understand and to view the White House. And so  
17 understanding those views will be really helpful  
18 when you come back, as well as the design choices  
19 you make and the materiality. So we look forward  
20 to much more detail and appreciate the overview.

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



1                   COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yeah. I want to  
2                   associate myself with my next door neighbor's  
3                   comments. And seeing, you know, how seeing how this  
4                   progresses. I have some concern about size and  
5                   scale in a number of ways, but we can talk more about  
6                   that, as I said, as the design and the work on this  
7                   progresses. Thank you.

8                   CHAIR SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner.  
9                   Speaking for myself, just a few things that  
10                  I'd say. First of all, Commissioners, if you want  
11                  to come over to lunch, you're welcome anytime. I'm  
12                  happy to show you around.

13                  More seriously, though, I think every  
14                  project that comes before this Commission is  
15                  ultimately determined, in large part -- or is  
16                  shaped, in large part, by its function. And I think  
17                  it's worth emphasizing a point that Commissioner  
18                  Blair made, which is the vital nature of the function  
19                  that I believe this project is intended to advance.

20                  It's been a distinct honor for me to get  
21                  to, frankly, travel around the world with the  
22                  President and visit foreign countries and be hosted

1 by the leaders of foreign countries. And I think  
2 it's notable that when the President of the United  
3 States of American flies to the United Kingdom he's  
4 hosted at Windsor Castle. And when, next year, the  
5 King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and North  
6 Ireland comes to the United States, more likely than  
7 not, he will be hosted in a tent on the South Lawn  
8 with porta-potties.

9 That, to me, is not a good look for the  
10 United States of America. And I think that, when  
11 you think about the long history of planning for  
12 a state ballroom on White House grounds, if you think  
13 about the number of times this project has been  
14 suggested historically, it speaks to that  
15 programmatic need. This isn't a new idea.

16 I've been interested to see that even in  
17 the press reports that have been -- or the press  
18 articles that have been very, I'd say, agitated  
19 about the way that this project has progressed,  
20 there has been a recognition by previous occupants  
21 of the White House from both parties, people who  
22 have worked in the White House from both parties,

1 that there is a real programmatic need for a building  
2 like this.

3           So I think what we're really talking about,  
4 then, is a lot of the issues that Shalom in  
5 particular was addressing in his presentation,  
6 which is, given the programmatic need, given this  
7 size that that programmatic need necessarily  
8 requires for this project, how do we ensure that  
9 this project accords with what we, as a Commission,  
10 care about? How do we ensure that the viewsheds,  
11 the way that the public will experience this  
12 building, won't detract from the way that the public  
13 experiences what I believe is one of the, really,  
14 two or three most important buildings in Washington,  
15 D.C., and in the region that we have jurisdiction  
16 over, which is the White House.

17           I'd be interested to see more detailed  
18 elevations, particular from the south, in light of  
19 Commissioner Mendelson's comments, what this would  
20 look like with the tree line, because I think that  
21 the elevation that we see there, just based on my  
22 knowledge of that the property looks like, that's

1 very stark and I don't think really represents how  
2 the public would experience this building.

3 I think it's important that this is framed  
4 between the White House and the Treasury Building,  
5 which is a building of significant massing. And  
6 I'd be interested to see an elevation that extends,  
7 essentially, further to the left, or further to the  
8 east, to encompass sort of the full viewing  
9 experience from Pennsylvania Avenue.

10 And, as many Commissioners have said, I  
11 just look forward to seeing more details in the weeks  
12 and months ahead. And I'd like to thank, as always,  
13 our staff for the collaboration, the work they're  
14 already put in on this issue. I think they can be  
15 a real resource to the project team, particularly  
16 as you start thinking about the visitor experience,  
17 visitor entrance, other aspects of the broader  
18 modernization of the White House complex. In  
19 particular, how the public interacts with it.

20 But, again, just speaking personally, I'm  
21 really excited to see how this project develops.

22 And I'm excited to, hopefully, see more detailed

1 planning materials in the weeks and months ahead.

2 So, thank you.

3 Are there any other Commissioners that  
4 have questions or comments before we adjourn for  
5 the day?

6 (No response.)

7 CHAIR SCHARF: In that case, unless there  
8 is anything else for us to address today, if there  
9 is no other business, that concludes the open  
10 session agenda for this meeting of the National  
11 Capital Planning Commission. Our next regular  
12 Commission meeting will be on Thursday, February  
13 5th, at 1:00 p.m.

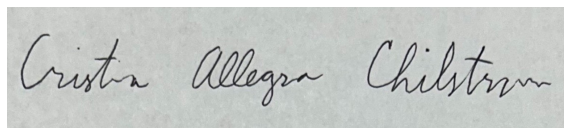
14 I believe the Commissioners are now going  
15 to exit the chambers. If you can please hold your  
16 seats while they do so, that would be a great help.

17 And thank you all for being here today.

18 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
19 went off the record at 3:10 p.m.)  
20  
21  
22

## 1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 This is to certify that the foregoing transcript  
3 was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under  
4 my direction; further, that said transcript is a  
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9 not a relative nor an employee of any of the parties  
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11 financially or otherwise interested in the outcome  
12 of the action.

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19 Cristina Allegra Chilstrom  
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