

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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COMMISSION MEETING

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OPEN SESSION

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THURSDAY,  
FEBRUARY 5, 2026

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The meeting convened via Videoconference,  
at 1:00 p.m. EST, 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  
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  
WILLIAM HENDERSON, U.S. Senate Committee on  
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
PAUL INGRASSIA, General Services Administration  
ELLIE MCGOWAN, U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Oversight and Accountability  
PAUL J. SCHAEFER, Department of Defense  
TAMMY STIDHAM, Department of the Interior

NCPC STAFF PRESENT:

MARCEL C. ACOSTA, Executive Director  
MEGHAN HOTTEL-COX, General Counsel

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

2 (1:00 p.m.)

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Good afternoon, and  
4 welcome to the National Capital Planning  
5 Commission's February 5th, 2026, open session.

6 Commission Roll Call

7 First, Meghan, could you please take the  
8 roll call?

9 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes.

10 Commissioner Cozart?

11 COMMISSIONER COZART: Here.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Schaefer?

13 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Here.

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Stidham?

15 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Here.

16 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

17 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Here.

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Vice Chairman Levenbach?

19 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Here.

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

21 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Here.

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair? I

1 believe he's here.

2 Commissioner Ingrassia?

3 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Here.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

5 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Here.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

7 COMMISSIONER CASH: Present.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Henderson?

9 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Here.

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

11 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Here.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Marcel Acosta, executive  
13 director, and Diane Sullivan, current planning  
14 division director, are also in the meeting.

15 With those present, Mr. Chairman, we have  
16 a quorum.

17 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Meghan.

18 Noting the presence of a quorum, I hereby  
19 call this meeting to order. Today's meeting is  
20 live-streamed and will be available on the NCPC  
21 website in a few days, as is our custom. If there's  
22 no objection on the floor, the agenda as posted is

1 adopted as the order of business. Hearing no  
2 objections, we will proceed with the pledge of  
3 allegiance, if everyone would please stand.

4 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

5 Report of the Chair

6 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you. Agenda item  
7 2 is the report of the chair. I'd just like to say  
8 a few things quickly. First of all, what a year  
9 this has been for NCPC. Last meeting, we had the  
10 East Wing Modernization Project. We had the  
11 Arabian leopards, which I was particularly excited  
12 about at the zoo. And this week and -- or this  
13 month, in addition to a number of other important  
14 projects, we have the Commanders stadium coming  
15 before us for the first time, other than the previous  
16 informational session. Really exciting project,  
17 very important for the future of the city. And  
18 we're excited for that, in addition to, obviously,  
19 our consent calendar items and informational  
20 presentations on the agenda as well.

21 Looking ahead, our next meeting, our March  
22 2026 meeting -- our current plan, given agenda items

1 that are expected for that meeting, including the  
2 ballroom coming back before us and the public  
3 interest in those items -- our current plan is to  
4 do that March meeting virtually on Thursday, March  
5 5th, 2026.

6 Now, I want to give a little bit of  
7 explanation as to how that decision was arrived at  
8 so that there's no misunderstanding. NCPC staff  
9 recommended to me that we do that March meeting  
10 virtually, given their past experience with other  
11 projects that have had significant public attention  
12 and that warranted significant public input.

13 Conducting that meeting virtually allows us to more  
14 readily accommodate public comment, including from  
15 people who aren't local to Washington, DC. I  
16 presented that proposed plan in addition to a number  
17 of other potential options to the executive  
18 committee of the NCPC. I was particularly  
19 interested in that meeting in Commissioner Dixon's  
20 input, given that he is the longest serving member  
21 of the executive committee. In the end, it was our  
22 unanimous recommendation or it was our unanimous

1 view to hold that March meeting virtually assuming  
2 that there is actually a significant public interest  
3 in commenting on projects that are coming before  
4 us at that meeting.

5           So in light of that, the executive  
6 committee unanimously adopted the recommendation  
7 of staff that that March meeting be held virtually,  
8 and that's why we are planning currently to conduct  
9 it virtually. Should the situation change, should  
10 there not be as much public comment as is -- as we  
11 expect, we still have the option to move that meeting  
12 back to our customary hybrid format. But as of now,  
13 we are planning on that meeting being virtual only.

14           All that having been said, I'd also like  
15 to welcome Paul Ingrassia to the NCPC. This is his  
16 first meeting. He is here as a designee of Ed Forst,  
17 the new administrator of the GSA. Paul is an  
18 attorney and the acting general counsel at GSA.  
19 We were honored to have Ed Forst at our last meeting,  
20 and it's great to have Paul here today. You're  
21 going to have a lot of fun. This is an incredible  
22 commission with a storied history, and if you don't

1 know anything about cell towers, you're going to  
2 learn an awful lot about them in the coming months.

3 With that, I have nothing further, and agenda item  
4 3 is the report of our executive director, Marcel  
5 Acosta.

6 Report of the Executive Director

7 MR. ACOSTA: Thank you, Chair Scharf, and  
8 welcome, Commissioner Ingrassia, to the Commission.

9 I have one matter of public interest, the  
10 National Park Service is seeking public comments  
11 on environmental assessment for the Tidal Basin  
12 Development Concept Plan. Comments are due by  
13 March 5th. We also expect the Tidal Basin Concept  
14 Plan to be on our Commission's March agenda and more  
15 information and a link to the Park Service's EA site  
16 is available on our website. This concludes my  
17 update. My full report is in your packet, and I'm  
18 happy to answer any questions that you might have.

19 Legislative Update

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you very much,  
21 Marcel. If there are no questions from  
22 Commissioners, we'll proceed to agenda item 4, which

1 is the legislative update presented by our secretary  
2 and general counsel, Meghan Hottel-Cox.

3 MS. HOTTEL-COX: I don't have any specific  
4 legislative items to provide an update on this  
5 month, but I'm happy to answer any questions on  
6 pending ones if anyone has one.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Do any Commissioners  
8 have any questions for Meghan on pending legislative  
9 matters?

10 Consent Calendar Items

11 Hearing none, we will proceed to agenda  
12 item 5, which is the consent calendar for this month.

13 There are two items on this month's consent  
14 calendar. The first is to approve comments on the  
15 draft Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling Dormitory  
16 Facility Plan. The second is to approve comments  
17 on concept plans for the Pentagon Commercial Vehicle  
18 Inspection Facility. Both of these items have been  
19 previously circulated to members of the Commission.

20 Are there any questions or comments from  
21 Commissioners present or online about either of  
22 these two consent calendar items?

1           COMMISSIONER DIXON:  Chairman, I move  
2 that we adopt the consent calendar.

3           CHAIRMAN SCHARF:  Thank you,  
4 Commissioner.  Is there a second?  Hearing a motion  
5 and a second, is there any discussion on this item?

6       Do any Commissioners have any concerns before we  
7 move forward?

8           Hearing none, Madam Secretary, could you  
9 please confirm the motion and the second and take  
10 the vote by roll call?

11           MS. HOTTEL-COX:  Yes.  Motion was made by  
12 Commissioner Dixon and seconded by Commissioner  
13 Stidham.

14           Commissioner Cozart?

15           COMMISSIONER COZART:  Yes.

16           MS. HOTTEL-COX:  Commissioner Schaefer?

17           COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER:  Yes.

18           MS. HOTTEL-COX:  Commissioner Stidham?

19           COMMISSIONER STIDHAM:  Yes.

20           MS. HOTTEL-COX:  Commissioner Argo?

21           COMMISSIONER ARGO:  Yes.

22           MS. HOTTEL-COX:  Vice Chairman Levenbach?

1 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Yes.

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Ingrassia?

5 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: 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: The motion passes.

15 8721 Mayor of the District of Columbia, 2400 East

16 Capitol Street, NE, Washington, DC - New Stadium

17 at RFK Campus

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Madam

19 Secretary. With that the motion obviously is

20 carried. We have one voting item and two

21 informational presentations in our open session

22 today. Agenda item 6A is a request to approve

1 comments on concept plans for the new stadium on  
2 the RFK Campus, and we have Laura Shipman with our  
3 team here to present. So Laura, please proceed  
4 whenever you're ready.

5 MS. SHIPMAN: Great. Thank you.

6 Good afternoon, Chairman Scharf and  
7 Commissioners. The District of Columbia RFK  
8 Stadium Project Management Office, in partnership  
9 with the Washington Commanders, has submitted  
10 concept plans for a proposed new stadium and  
11 surrounding site improvements on the RFK Campus.

12 As a reminder, at the concept review stage, the  
13 Commission is focused on topics such as general  
14 consistency with NCPC policies, appropriateness of  
15 the project for the site, and identification of any  
16 complex issues. Under the National Capital  
17 Planning Act, NCPC has advisory review authority  
18 for the stadium project as a District project  
19 outside the central area. My presentation today  
20 will include a project overview and then will focus  
21 on recommendations for site and stadium design,  
22 circulation and parking, and coordination.

1           The stadium will be located within the  
2 larger RFK Campus, which is an approximately 180  
3 acre parcel between the Anacostia River and the  
4 adjacent Kingman Park and Hill East neighborhoods.

5       In January 2025, the DC RFK Memorial Stadium Campus  
6 Revitalization Act allowed the transfer of  
7 administrative jurisdiction over the campus from  
8 the National Park Service to the District. The  
9 campus redevelopment will be comprised of five  
10 districts and is envisioned to include a mix of uses  
11 with approximately 5,000 to 6,000 housing units,  
12 a sportsplex, retail, restaurants, hotels, and 30  
13 percent of the campus as parks and open space. The  
14 focus of the Commission's current review is the  
15 stadium district development, highlighted on this  
16 map in pink, and the related components. The  
17 broader RFK Stadium, RFK Campus mixed-use  
18 redevelopment will be guided by a District-led  
19 master plan, which will be prepared by the DC Office  
20 of Planning.

21           The campus is located along the system of  
22 NPS-controlled parklands bordering the Anacostia

1 River. The RFK Campus Revitalization Act requires  
2 the District to ensure that development does not  
3 adversely impact NPS lands and to designate a  
4 200-foot wide buffer along the river as a riparian  
5 zone. The stadium project site is approximately  
6 30 acres within the overall RFK Campus. NCPC has  
7 long recognized the significance of this site as  
8 identified in the Legacy Plan, Monumental Core  
9 Framework Plan, and the agency's 2006 RFK Stadium  
10 Site Redevelopment Study. Of particular interest  
11 to NCPC is the project's potential impacts to the  
12 system of streets, public spaces, and important  
13 viewsheds within the L'Enfant city, namely East  
14 Capitol Street as a prominent gateway and major  
15 axial corridor. Impacts on NPS lands and adjacent  
16 federal facilities were also evaluated along with  
17 general consistency with policies set forth in the  
18 Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

19 The proposed project will replace the  
20 original RFK stadium, which officially closed to  
21 the public in 2019. Demolition began in late  
22 January 2025 and is anticipated to be complete by

1 the middle of this year. With that, we will dive  
2 into the proposed stadium concept. The applicant  
3 team has identified several design drivers, which  
4 I will walk through over the next few slides.  
5 First, the landscape strategy bridges the formal  
6 historic urban fabric to the west and the river  
7 ecology to the east. The site is also meant as a  
8 destination and a place to gather for locals and  
9 the region. The stadium is positioned along the  
10 East Capitol Street axis, linking to the Capitol  
11 Building and Lincoln Memorial within the monumental  
12 core. The roof form raises to the north and south  
13 to welcome neighbors and lowers on the east-west  
14 axis in deference to the viewshed to the Capitol  
15 Dome and Washington Monument.

16 It is also similar to the curvature of the  
17 original RFK Stadium. The perimeter colonnade and  
18 raised podium anchors the building within its  
19 setting and reinforces the civic presence. The  
20 colonnade is also intended to create a framework  
21 that shapes covered indoor-outdoor spaces, and  
22 allows permeability. The designers envision the

1 stadium as a new landmark in the District that draws  
2 from tradition and expresses it through a  
3 contemporary lens. The structure includes several  
4 elements that reference the formal architecture of  
5 buildings in the monumental core. These elements  
6 include the surrounding colonnade, elevated podium,  
7 and grand stairways, as shown in this west  
8 elevation. Here is the east elevation that will  
9 be seen on the approach from the Whitney Young  
10 Memorial Bridge. While not strictly symmetrical,  
11 the applicant notes that the architecture aims to  
12 create a balanced composition of indoor and outdoor  
13 spaces focused on proportion and rhythm,  
14 referencing the colonnades and facade compositions  
15 of historic buildings throughout the nation's  
16 capital. On the north and south elevations, the  
17 podium dips down and the stadium entrances are at  
18 ground level with open air colonnades.

19           The 1910 Height of Buildings Act permits  
20 the stadium to be constructed to a height of 130  
21 feet and allows a dome to extend above that height.

22       The dome roof form varies in height and reaches

1 195 feet at its highest points. This section also  
2 shows the open air colonnades on the building  
3 exterior oriented towards the public plazas and  
4 neighborhoods to the north and south. As noted  
5 previously, the stadium is located at a prominent  
6 Capitol gateway on a preeminent linear view corridor  
7 identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Here is a  
8 view of the original RFK Stadium from the west  
9 looking over the Capitol Building, and the proposed  
10 conceptual view of the new stadium in the distance.

11 The original RFK Stadium is shown here in an aerial  
12 view from the east, with the Capitol Building and  
13 Washington Monument visible beyond.

14 The design of the proposed stadium's roof  
15 symbolically responds to the importance of the East  
16 Capitol Street view corridor by lowering the height  
17 along its east-west axis. However, additional  
18 analysis is needed to confirm if the proposed  
19 stadium visually reinforces the preeminence of the  
20 U.S. Capitol and Washington Monument by protecting  
21 the visual frame around them, as outlined in  
22 Comprehensive Plan Policy UD.B.1.4.

1           As such, staff recommends the Commission  
2 request additional views of the stadium in context  
3 with the next submission, including views from  
4 within the site, adjacent neighborhoods, and the  
5 river, as well as an accurate long view along the  
6 East Capitol Street axis to ensure visibility of  
7 the U.S. Capitol Building dome and Washington  
8 Monument is maintained. The views should be taken  
9 from the higher elevations of the topographic bowl  
10 in the Anacostia hills, where the axis crosses the  
11 Civil War Defenses of Washington parks.

12           Regarding lighting and digital signage,  
13 the Comprehensive Plan discusses that lighting can  
14 be used to activate public areas and create a more  
15 dynamic visitor experience, particularly at  
16 sporting venues. However, depending on  
17 implementation, digital lighting may negatively  
18 alter the monumental core's street atmosphere and  
19 skyline views of iconic national resources. This  
20 is also an important consideration in the context  
21 of existing residential and future mixed-use  
22 neighborhoods.

1           As such, staff recommends that the stadium  
2 design, as it's developed, the applicants study  
3 exterior graphics and lighting approaches that  
4 respect the hierarchy of memorials, monuments, and  
5 important civic buildings and spaces in the nation's  
6 capital, with the U.S. Capitol and Washington  
7 Monument the most prominent features in the  
8 nighttime skyline, as outlined in Urban Design  
9 Element Policy B.1.5.

10           Here is a view of the former stadium from  
11 the west at the center of East Capitol Street, and  
12 a conceptual view of the stadium's west entrance  
13 from the same viewpoint within the proposed festival  
14 plaza. The applicant envisions the new roof  
15 stadium serving as a venue for sports, arts, and  
16 cultural events, creating a year-round activity and  
17 entertainment center for District residents and  
18 visitors. The stadium will contain 65,000 seats  
19 and additional space for 5,000 people standing.  
20 The Comprehensive Plan encourages programming and  
21 placemaking strategies to strengthen the public  
22 realm and user experience.

1           At the same time, it guides new development  
2 to be compatible with the character of surrounding  
3 public space, properties, and community. The  
4 stadium design should, therefore, aim to create a  
5 lively destination with consideration for any  
6 potential impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods,  
7 and staff recommends the Commission request  
8 additional information in the next submission  
9 regarding proposed building program at street  
10 level, planned number of stadium events and plans  
11 for tailgating, approach to event noise, and  
12 potential interim uses and creative placemaking  
13 strategies until new mixed-use development is built  
14 out.

15           The design integrates innovative  
16 structural and material components, including the  
17 transparent roof membrane shell with a steel-cable  
18 structure to allow in ample natural light and give  
19 the indoor-outdoor feel to the stadium. The  
20 material pallet also includes concrete ribs and  
21 steel girders, fluted glass curtain walls, and  
22 operable glass doors.

1           This is the proposed site plan with the  
2 stadium project area outlined with a dotted red  
3 line. The site includes a series of vegetative  
4 plazas at the north, south, and east entries to the  
5 stadium, along with a landscaped podium terrace.

6       To enhance the experience of these spaces adjacent  
7 to high-traffic roadways, staff recommends that the  
8 landscape design buffer the stadium plazas,  
9 particularly the east plaza, from the adjacent  
10 roadway traffic to improve user comfort and create  
11 inviting public spaces.

12           And as the design is developed, staff  
13 recommends the Commission request additional site  
14 design information in the next submission related  
15 to the stormwater-management strategy, landscape  
16 and planting plans, the design of kiosks and  
17 pavilions proposed around the stadium grounds, and  
18 the perimeter security approach.

19           And now, we will focus on the initial  
20 concepts for circulation and parking. Just for  
21 orientation, north is to the right in the next few  
22 transportation slides. The project aims to

1 prioritize multimodal access to the stadium,  
2 including Metrorail, Metrobus, and upgraded  
3 pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Plans are  
4 in development for a BRT station near Benning Road  
5 by 2030, shown with the dotted green rectangle to  
6 the north, and WMATA is exploring the possibility  
7 of extending the Stadium-Armory Metrorail station  
8 mezzanine to accommodate the anticipated crowds.

9           A festival plaza is planned outside of the  
10 project site at the east end of the stadium that  
11 is phased to open at the same time as the stadium,  
12 and to provide the primary connection to the  
13 Stadium-Armory Metrorail station. The existing  
14 tunnels under C Street and Independence Avenue will  
15 be upgraded to provide safe access to the stadium  
16 without conflicting with vehicular traffic.

17           However, at the time of stadium opening,  
18 several large surface parking lots will be  
19 surrounding the site, which may create an  
20 uncomfortable streetscape environment for  
21 pedestrians for the years prior to full build-out.

22       To ensure improved public access to the Anacostia

1 River and Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, as required  
2 by the Transfer Act, staff suggests the applicant  
3 consider integrating landscaped pathways through  
4 the proposed surface parking lots to create  
5 comfortable pedestrian connectivity, particularly  
6 through the parking lots adjacent to the riparian  
7 area.

8           The site currently has several existing  
9 bike facilities shown in dark blue, including  
10 protected bike lanes and the Riverwalk Trail System.

11       Some existing bicycle facilities on the north side  
12 of the stadium will be modified and upgraded as shown  
13 with the dotted dark blue lines. New bicycle  
14 facilities, shown in light blue, will also be  
15 provided. Overall, staff is supportive of the  
16 concept's approach to emphasize multimodal access  
17 to the stadium, including upgraded transit,  
18 pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure -- okay.  
19 Upgraded transit, pedestrian, and bicycle  
20 infrastructure.

21           In terms of vehicular circulation, the  
22 stadium ingress and egress approach aims to

1 efficiently direct regional traffic to and from 295  
2 and 695. At the time of stadium opening, two  
3 structured parking garages are proposed to be  
4 located to the north and south of the stadium,  
5 labeled G1 and G2 on this slide. These garages will  
6 be highly visible in the early stages of the campus  
7 redevelopment project, though they will be  
8 surrounded by development at full build-out.

9 To understand how these garages may impact  
10 views towards the stadium, staff recommends the  
11 Commission requests the applicant provide the  
12 designs of the parking garages in the next  
13 submission. If the designs are not available at  
14 that time, information on the heights, massing, and  
15 the bulk of the proposed garages should be provided.

16 Further information about how traffic will be  
17 managed will be helpful with future reviews.

18 Therefore, with the next submission, staff  
19 recommends the Commission request additional  
20 information on proposed strategies to encourage  
21 multimodal transportation and minimize stadium  
22 traffic impacts to surrounding neighborhoods,

1 including planned multimodal transportation  
2 projects that will be in place at the time of stadium  
3 opening, any potential contingencies if transit  
4 improvements are not complete at the time of stadium  
5 opening, a traffic study to understand the stadium's  
6 impacts to the surrounding street network, a parking  
7 strategy outlining the number of structured and  
8 surface parking spaces proposed at stadium opening,  
9 and stadium parking capacity throughout future  
10 development phases as surface parking is removed,  
11 and a transportation management plan, if available,  
12 outlining recommended strategies to manage the  
13 traffic demand, foster multiple modes of travel,  
14 and reduce congestion on the roadways.

15           To ensure visitor comfort when visiting  
16 the stadium grounds, staff also recommends the  
17 Commission requests the applicant provide  
18 additional information with the next submission  
19 regarding accessible circulation routes,  
20 wayfinding and signage, and planned improvements  
21 to the high-traffic roadways adjacent to the  
22 stadium's public spaces. In terms of coordination,

1 the applicant began community and stakeholder  
2 engagement in early 2025, and this engagement is  
3 ongoing with the development of the full stadium  
4 design and overall RFK campus master plan. Last  
5 night, the applicant team held a community meeting  
6 to gather feedback on the stadium design concept,  
7 which they will summarize in the next submission.

8           Because the stadium site is located  
9 directly adjacent to the historic DC Armory, a  
10 federal installation, staff suggests the applicant  
11 coordinate with the DC National Guard Armory and  
12 NPS on the proposed stadium project and master plan,  
13 specifically regarding pedestrian connectivity  
14 improvements, proposed street redesign along the  
15 frontages to the armory site, and security and  
16 operations. Additionally, staff suggests the  
17 applicant continue coordination with the National  
18 Park Service regarding connections and transitions  
19 to the broader Anacostia Park system.

20           In summary, staff notes the conceptual  
21 design approach aims to balance innovative stadium  
22 design with respect for the site context by

1 maintaining the East Capitol Street viewshed of the  
2 L'Enfant Plan, referencing the scale, composition,  
3 and civic importance of the architecture within the  
4 monumental core, integrating the riparian landscape  
5 into the site, and echoing the form of the original  
6 RFK Stadium. With that, staff recommends the  
7 Commission approve the comments on concept plans  
8 highlighted throughout the presentation and listed  
9 on the following slides, which are intended to  
10 support consistency with the Comprehensive Plan for  
11 the National Capital as the design develops.

12           And that concludes my presentation.  
13 Members of the applicant team from the District,  
14 the Commanders, and the design firm HKS are also  
15 available for any questions from the Commission.

16       Thank you.

17           CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you.

18           Do any Commissioners have any questions?

19           Yes, ma'am?

20           COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: So I actually have  
21 a long list of questions, actually. So the festival  
22 plazas are -- I think are mentioned within the

1 submission as something that would be developed and  
2 opened at the same time as the stadium, but there  
3 isn't really any information on what those plazas  
4 consist of.

5 Can you share a little bit more on that?

6 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Go ahead.

7 MR. HANLON: Yes.

8 So I'm Brian Hanlon, project executive for  
9 the RFK PMO, and I'm joined remotely today by Andy  
10 VanHorn of the Commanders, and Lance Davis (sic)  
11 with HKS. So I invite Lance Davis to actually  
12 respond to your question on that.

13 MR. EVANS: Hi, everyone. Lance Evans,  
14 joining --

15 MR. HANLON: I have --

16 MR. EVANS: -- from HKS Group.

17 MR. HANLON: I have an old friend named  
18 Lance Davis, so sorry about that. He's a great guy.  
19 He's a great guy.

20 MR. EVANS: That's all okay.

21 Yeah. The festival plazas, we're in the  
22 beginning stages, Commissioner, of planning the

1 plazas in and around the stadium in the public realm,  
2 and we will be following up with more information  
3 on those in our next submission.

4 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Okay. I had a  
5 similar question about the parking structures. And  
6 I know that the staff report is already requesting  
7 additional information, but I would just note for  
8 anything that is going to be implemented as part  
9 of the stadium, District, right, it should be coming  
10 in as a package so that we have a full understanding  
11 of all of the moving parts and pieces, and a good  
12 idea of what the landscape will include as a whole.

13 And I know that the other pieces will come as the  
14 master plan and the NEPA continues, but just the  
15 pieces associated with the District are important.

16 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: And I would just echo  
17 that, particularly with respect to the G1 structure  
18 that's noted on our diagrams, I mean, that's really  
19 close to the stadium. So in terms of our  
20 consideration of viewsheds looking to the west, what  
21 that structure looks like, its massing, its size,  
22 I mean, all that is sort of relevant, and it's not

1 really reflected on the images we have of the  
2 stadium, even though I think, certainly from some  
3 angles, it's going to be right there. Am I wrong  
4 on that?

5 MR. HANLON: Lance?

6 MR. EVANS: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. Good.

8 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: And on that sort  
9 of note about the viewsheds, it's really important  
10 that the view angle that you're showing is maybe  
11 a view angle that no one other than someone in a  
12 helicopter or airplane will kind of perceive, right?

13 Because it's this sweeping view of a high level.

14 I think having more of an understanding of the view  
15 of people crossing the bridge, people coming down  
16 the road from the Capitol area, people coming from  
17 other angles at a more pedestrian or vehicular  
18 level, will help us in better understanding how  
19 you're protecting those views that are so important  
20 on this axis. So that --

21 MR. EVANS: Yeah.

22 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: -- that was going

1 to be a comment, but -- sorry.

2 MR. EVANS: Yes. Yeah. And the staff  
3 explained, you know, similar requests for us, and  
4 we're actively documenting viewsheds and corridors  
5 from a pedestrian perspective. And we'll have  
6 those in our next submission as well, Commissioner.

7 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Okay, great. Two  
8 more. Sorry.

9 So another -- so my understanding of this  
10 is for more than just football, right, that there's  
11 a versatile, flexible facility that allow for  
12 festivals, concerts, events, and other sports. Can  
13 you help me understand how -- and not, like, down  
14 to the technical detail, but understanding how you  
15 would transition from something like football, to  
16 maybe tennis, or soccer, or knowing that there are  
17 other stadium events, but just thinking through,  
18 like, how it is another -- how it can adapt for other  
19 sports activities?

20 MR. EVANS: Yeah, we have -- you know, the  
21 infrastructure of the stadium on the event level  
22 is large enough and flexible enough to allow for

1 the transition of the football playing surface to  
2 other surfaces, whether it be surfaces for soccer  
3 matches or conventions. We also feature  
4 retractable seating in the lower bowl of the stadium  
5 that allows for configurations for various events  
6 such as concert stages and other ancillary  
7 entertainment.

8           COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Okay great. And  
9 then last question, this is more of a technical  
10 question related to its height. I know it's  
11 proposed at 195 feet, and 130 is allowable with the  
12 extension of the dome. Is there a limit on the dome  
13 from a zoning perspective? I know the height is  
14 regulated, but I'm just curious about the zone  
15 height -- the dome height.

16           MR. HANLON: I would say there's been a  
17 -- Lance, you might want to jump in, but there has  
18 been a determination by the Zoning Administrator,  
19 and that letter is on the -- it's on the DOB website,  
20 but we will share it in our next submission.

21           COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Okay.

22           MR. HANLON: And we'll describe the --

1 there's some technical language that defines the  
2 height points and those things. So that we can  
3 share in our next submission.

4 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: The view of the DC  
6 government is that the stadium is compliant with  
7 the Height of Buildings Act; is that correct?

8 MR. HANLON: That's our current view, yes.

9 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Okay. Thank you  
10 very much.

11 MR. HANLON: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Do we have any other  
13 questions for the presentation team? Yeah,  
14 Commissioner.

15 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: As I guess one  
16 of the two representatives, I guess, of the Capitol  
17 building here, I do think it would be helpful to  
18 see -- and I appreciate the staff comments on this,  
19 and I think they hit on a lot of my concerns. But  
20 seeing the elevation of the stadium compared to the  
21 Capitol compared to the Washington monument, all  
22 in one line so we can see how those are going to

1 line up.

2 MR. HANLON: We hear that loud and clear.  
3 Absolutely. Yeah.

4 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: And I had not  
5 thought about it until the staff comments about the  
6 lighting and the impact of that on the views. I  
7 think that is going to be very important to see.

8 And I understand when there's a game going on, it's  
9 going to be lit up. I think everybody understands  
10 that, but what's it going to be --

11 MR. HANLON: Sure.

12 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: -- for the times  
13 that it's not going to be used? I think it would  
14 also be useful to see -- and I don't know if you  
15 all have that now or can submit that at a later point,  
16 a size comparison of this to the old RFK, either  
17 the footprint --

18 MR. HANLON: Sure.

19 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: -- and the  
20 overall map of it. And finally, from the drawings  
21 that I've seen, the column design does not seem to  
22 be settled. At least it appeared to be different

1 designs, none of which seem to match up with some  
2 of the more historic properties around town, so,  
3 including the Capitol.

4 So, I would be interested in seeing further  
5 refinement on that and how that's going to try to  
6 fit with what else we see on other important  
7 buildings.

8 MR. HANLON: Okay. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Are there any other  
10 questions for -- yeah, Commissioner?

11 COMMISSIONER CASH: So I had a question.

12 So I noticed during the presentation that there  
13 was talk of possible future expansion now of the  
14 infrastructure of Stadium-Armory station. Some  
15 earlier conversation -- and I do want to commend  
16 that there's not a second -- the third parking garage  
17 on the map right in the presentations at the  
18 beginning. But is Oklahoma Avenue now kind of off  
19 the table? Is that more of a WMATA question? Is  
20 Transportation Planning Board and COG looking at  
21 that? Because for those that don't know, there was  
22 originally a plan for an Oklahoma Avenue station

1 long ago that would've served the Kingman Park  
2 neighborhood. It never happened, but it's --  
3 there's still room to do it. So I'm just wondering,  
4 is the view now that we're just going to look at  
5 expanding Stadium-Armory and not adding a second  
6 station?

7 MR. HANLON: Yeah, I guess I would say  
8 that's a WMATA question, and we'd be happy to share  
9 whatever we can in the next submission.

10 MS. SHIPMAN: And just --

11 MR. HANLON: They're underway with the  
12 study.

13 MS. SHIPMAN: And just to supplement that  
14 there is that BRT station that's planned for 2020,  
15 just so -- that's a --

16 MR. HANLON: 2030, yeah. Yeah.

17 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: We had a  
18 streetcar at the same -- I'm not going to pooh-pooh  
19 BRT, all modes of transit are great, but I think  
20 that having that Metro station, we're looking at  
21 the volume here, anyone that's been to the ballpark  
22 on a game day, it's a lot.

1           The other question I had was, I think that  
2 a lot of the renderings are really cool, but we  
3 didn't see kind of any of the ugly side of the  
4 stadium, and I know there's got to be one. So if  
5 you've ever been to 6th Street, at Cap One Arena,  
6 if you've ever been -- somewhere they're loading  
7 in all the stuff that's coming in, somewhere there's  
8 the food service, somewhere there's all of these  
9 things. If you've been to the ballpark, there's  
10 sides that don't look nice. Somewhere around here,  
11 that's got to exist, and I haven't seen any of it  
12 yet.

13           So I don't know if you can even give an  
14 opinion on, is it going to be on the west side, is  
15 it going to be in the east side, is it going to be  
16 adjacent to the ugly parking garage? Like, where  
17 is the ugly side going to be and when can we see  
18 it to see what you've done to mitigate it?

19           MR. EVANS: Yeah, there is no back door,  
20 you know, to the stadium, Commissioner. It is  
21 envisioned as a 360 degree accessible piece of civic  
22 architecture. The stadium infrastructure is

1 actually -- access is located on the north side of  
2 the site, adjacent to the G2 garage that you see  
3 on the screen now. And then from there we go  
4 underground, under the public realm to the event  
5 level of the stadium.

6 So the intent is that  
7 the stadium infrastructure, the movement of goods  
8 and services in and out, is actually concealed from  
9 the public realm.

10 COMMISSIONER CASH: So it's going to be  
11 kind of like the new tunnel that was built with the  
12 visitor center on the Capitol where you're routing  
13 everything under so you don't actually see any of  
14 that back end anymore?

15 MR. EVANS: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER CASH: Okay. Thanks.  
17 That's helpful.

18 MR. EVANS: Sure.

19 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Are there any other  
20 questions? Paul?

21 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Quick question.

22 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Mr. Chairman?

COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Thank you for

1 the presentation.

2 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Mr. Chairman? Go  
3 ahead.

4 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: The  
5 architectural style, you know, we appreciate -- you  
6 know, realizing it's not a federal project, still  
7 appreciate the references to classical  
8 architecture, to the historic characteristics of  
9 the neighborhood. To the extent you're able to  
10 incorporate more historic, classical design into  
11 particularly the colonnade and the entrance just  
12 to convey a sense of heft and gravity when people  
13 enter I think that would be a good recommendation.

14 And even with the surrounding landscape, to the  
15 extent you're able to incorporate more of those  
16 elements, I'm interested in hearing a little bit  
17 more about, you know, the historic sort of  
18 references that are being considered for this  
19 design.

20 MR. EVANS: Yeah. You know -- I think,  
21 you know, for us, you know, the stadium is inspired  
22 by the city, you know, and the District. And the

1 neoclassical style and architecture is synonymous  
2 with the city itself. I think, rather than  
3 replicating individual pieces or components of the  
4 style, what we really valued were the principles  
5 of the architecture itself. So a design that has  
6 a clarity of form, a balanced composition, the use  
7 of the colonnades to create a rhythm and order to  
8 the design, and the use of entries and axial  
9 connections to create a visual hierarchy for the  
10 guests as they come into the building. You know,  
11 the stadium does sit on an elevated base, you know,  
12 which is reminiscent of examples that are found  
13 throughout the Capitol.

14           The siting of the stadium itself along the  
15 monumental axes and how it expresses and establishes  
16 those view corridors and connections and links with  
17 the L'Enfant Plan was very important to the  
18 architecture and the foundation of the stadium's  
19 design. But for us, you know, the idea of the true  
20 value of looking back, you know, to define a path  
21 for our future, is where we've landed with the  
22 architecture. So very much inspired by the rules

1 and the principles of classical architecture but  
2 really interpreted in a way that it represents, you  
3 know, a venue of sports entertainment facility for  
4 the District.

5 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Awesome. I think  
6 Commissioner Dixon had a question if I'm not much  
7 mistaken. Is that right, sir?

8 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes, it is. One,  
9 the -- it was already implied, I guess, that they  
10 may be able to accommodate track and field, like  
11 an Olympic kind of an event in the facility?

12 MR. EVANS: Track in like a -- an Olympic  
13 track in the stadium right now would not fit on the  
14 event level. It would have to require some  
15 infrastructure changes. You can fit Olympic events  
16 inside the stadium, Commissioner, just not the track  
17 and field.

18 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Okay. I thought  
19 that might be the case. Secondly, I hope that there  
20 will be consideration for solar utilization as much  
21 as possible, solar paneling. There's a lot of  
22 advances being made architecturally in the kind of

1 panels that can be put on facilities inside,  
2 outside, and around. And we ought to capture that  
3 energy if we can to use it for the benefit of the  
4 project, of course.

5 MR. EVANS: And we're actively  
6 researching those elements, Commissioner.

7 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Mr. Chairman?

8 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes?

9 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Yeah, just so --  
10 yeah, so first, thank you. This is great work  
11 across the board, and really look forward to seeing  
12 this mature. And I know in the next submission,  
13 we're going to talk a little bit more about some  
14 security considerations, and I just wanted to  
15 encourage you and the entire team to be thinking  
16 not just with your traditional security measures,  
17 and I would say to start thinking about some of those  
18 exquisite issues that come with a mass gathering  
19 location such as this as well. So again, we don't  
20 need to go into any more detail than that, but just,  
21 please, as you guys continue to go forward, I'm  
22 looking forward to seeing how that's going to be

1 incorporated.

2 MR. EVANS: Thank you.

3 MR. HANLON: Yes, sir?

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: My question, what's the  
5 roof made out of? Like, what's the actual material?

6 MR. HANLON: That is another Lance  
7 question, so.

8 MR. EVANS: Yeah. We're --

9 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Like, I saw the  
10 description in our material -- I'm just trying to,  
11 like -- what is that stuff?

12 MR. EVANS: There's two materials that  
13 were under consideration right now, Mr. Chairman.  
14 One is ETFE.

15 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay.

16 MR. EVANS: It's a transparent membrane  
17 or plastic film. It's the same material that was  
18 used in U.S. Bank Stadium for the Vikings and the  
19 stadium in Los Angeles at SoFi.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: SoFi.

21 MR. EVANS: There is an alternate material  
22 on the market called ViewScape, and it also has

1 similar properties to ETFE, and we're evaluating,  
2 you know, what is the right choice of materiality  
3 in there, but they're both membranes.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: How do you keep them  
5 clean?

6 MR. EVANS: There is a -- each one of these  
7 comes with a maintenance program, you know, on the  
8 roof, the -- essentially, they are -- they do --  
9 they have a high coefficient of a slip -- a slippery  
10 coefficient. That's not the right word here, but  
11 basically when it rains, they're self-cleaning, and  
12 then it does require, you know, kind of a monthly  
13 --

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Sure.

15 MR. EVANS: -- access.

16 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Interesting.

17 Any other questions before we proceed to  
18 public comment?

19 Yeah, go for it, Paul.

20 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: One last  
21 question.

22 The plaza, do we have an idea of what the

1 material will be for that? Is it stone, like the  
2 surrounding plazas, or is it consistent across the  
3 entire stadium? Like, what color? Do we have any  
4 details about that?

5 MR. EVANS: Oh, we're just beginning the  
6 journey into the hardscape strategy and the  
7 softscape around the -- of the site, Commissioner.  
8 So we'll follow up with that with our next  
9 submission.

10 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Any further questions?

12 Seeing and hearing none, we do have two  
13 people signed up for public testimony today. I  
14 believe the first is, is it Robert Hershey? Mr.  
15 Hershey, representing the DC Council of Engineering  
16 and Architectural Societies.

17 You'll have five minutes to give  
18 testimony, sir. Do you want to proceed at will?

19 MR. HERSHEY: Yes. I'm here to urge  
20 everybody to keep the streets open so that people  
21 can get to the stadium. And in particular, we urge  
22 everybody to keep Pennsylvania Avenue America's

1 main street. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I appreciate your  
3 brevity very much, sir. Thank you for joining us.

4 And I hope the project team has taken note of your  
5 concern.

6 With that, we have one other person signed  
7 up for public comment. I believe that's Kat Aristi,  
8 representing Oceana, who is joining us virtually.

9 MS. ARISTI: Hello. Can everybody hear  
10 me?

11 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes, ma'am. You have  
12 five minutes to proceed whenever -- to provide  
13 testimony whenever you'd like to proceed.

14 MS. ARISTI: Okay. Thank you. Good  
15 afternoon. My name's Kat Aristi and I am here  
16 representing Oceana, which is the largest  
17 international advocacy organization focused solely  
18 on ocean conservation. I am speaking today to  
19 express Oceana's support for including reusable  
20 beverage cup systems, other reusable foodware, and  
21 related wash facilities in the design for the new  
22 Commanders stadium. Oceana's headquarters are

1 here in Washington, DC, and we feel a responsibility  
2 to speak up as the development of the new stadium  
3 begins, especially at a time when the global plastic  
4 pollution crisis is intensifying.

5           As the stadium and stadium grounds,  
6 including kiosks and pavilions are being designed,  
7 this presents the perfect opportunity to build on  
8 foodware systems that protect the surrounding  
9 landscape from plastic pollution. Plastic  
10 pollution is one of the greatest threats to the  
11 health of our oceans and rivers, our climate and  
12 our communities. Researchers are increasingly  
13 identifying concerning connections between our  
14 exposure to plastics and adverse human health  
15 impacts. Plastic, almost all of which comes from  
16 fossil fuels, is also a significant contributor to  
17 climate change. In fact, if plastics were a  
18 country, it would be the fourth-largest emitter of  
19 greenhouse gases in the world. Reducing single-use  
20 plastics through reusable cup systems is a  
21 practical, effective step that the Commanders can  
22 take to protect public health and the environment.

1           As of 2015, approximately 8.3 billion  
2 metric tons of plastic has been produced, of which  
3 6.3 billion metric tons became plastic waste.  
4 Despite the scale of the plastic pollution crisis,  
5 recycling, often presented as the solution, barely  
6 makes a dent in the amount of plastic waste produced.

7       Only 6 percent of the plastic waste in the United  
8 States is recycled. The effective solution is to  
9 reduce plastic pollution and move to non-toxic reuse  
10 and refill systems. This shift is supported by the  
11 public, as proven by a recent national polling  
12 conducted by Oceana by a nonpartisan polling  
13 company, Ipsos, which revealed that 85 percent of  
14 U.S. voters support increasing the use of reusable  
15 packaging and foodware.

16           Reuse systems work. They are designed so  
17 that packaging and foodware can be reused multiple  
18 times for their original purpose in their original  
19 form. A single reusable cup can be used more than  
20 100 times, greatly reducing the amount of single-use  
21 plastic that's incinerated or landfilled. A ten  
22 percent increase in beverage and bottling companies

1 implementing reusable cups across the U.S. would  
2 save an estimated 432 million cups from entering  
3 aquatic ecosystems. That is the scale of the impact  
4 we're talking about. Requiring reusable cups at  
5 the new stadium would also help protect the  
6 Anacostia River; one of only three rivers in the  
7 U.S. that the EPA deemed impaired by trash. Every  
8 single-use cup prevented from entering the waste  
9 stream is one less item that can end up in this  
10 already polluted river.

11           And this is not just an environmental  
12 issue, it's also a financial one. Litter cleanups  
13 cost the U.S. an estimated 11.5 billion every year,  
14 with about 20 billion pieces comprised of disposable  
15 food serviceware. Reducing the amount of  
16 single-use plastic cups at stadium events will save  
17 the District money, money that can be saved instead  
18 of spent cleaning up unnecessary waste. DC would  
19 not be alone in taking this step. Stadiums and  
20 arenas across the country are moving to reusable  
21 cups. Levi's Stadium, home to the 49ers, and  
22 Arrowhead, home to the Chiefs, both committed to

1 implementing reusable cup programs this year,  
2 including at this weekend's Super Bowl.

3           After a reusable cup pilot program at  
4 Crypto.com Arena in LA, home of the Lakers, Kings,  
5 and other teams, eliminated 23,000 single-use cups  
6 in two nights, the arena established the reusable  
7 cups as a permanent fixture in the venue. Here in  
8 DC, many concert venues are already using reusable  
9 cup systems. Reuse is not theoretical. It is  
10 happening, it works, and it should be a priority  
11 at the new stadium. For all of these reasons, I  
12 strongly urge the Commanders to design reasonable  
13 cup systems into the stadium plan. This is a  
14 practical, proven, and popular solution that will  
15 protect our waters, our climate, and our city. It  
16 is a chance for DC to lead on tackling the plastic  
17 pollution crisis and to build a stadium that does  
18 not leave waste behind. Thank you.

19           CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms. Aristi.

20           Are there any questions for either of these  
21 two witnesses from any members of the Commission?

22           Hearing none, that concludes public testimony on

1 this item for today. Is there a motion on the floor  
2 to approve comments on the concept plans for the  
3 new stadium at RFK campus?

4 Thank you, Commissioner.

5 Is there a second?

6 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: I'll second.

7 COMMISSIONER COZART: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I'll now open things up  
9 to the Commission for discussion, and I'll start  
10 with Commissioner Cozart.

11 COMMISSIONER COZART: Good afternoon.  
12 So, really appreciate the staff presentation on  
13 this. And just wanted to lift up the parts of the  
14 presentation, in particular, that really speak to  
15 how this stadium design really celebrates  
16 Washington as a monumental city, with our historic  
17 significance, our architectural excellence, and  
18 civic vitality. And in particular, appreciated,  
19 kind of, the pieces around the design drivers and  
20 really thinking about this as a new landmark in many  
21 ways. The old stadium was a landmark, and this  
22 continues in that tradition and helps it to be a

1 real anchor for our city. And so just appreciate  
2 how the design team has really embraced all of the  
3 historic planning work in the city and brought it  
4 in with that kind of contemporary way and expressed  
5 it in a contemporary way to use the designer, Lance's  
6 words.

7           So I'm looking forward to -- you know, as  
8 I've spoken to others, they've been really, really  
9 impressed by the design. And so that gives a lot  
10 of confidence about the pieces that are going to  
11 come to this Commission after this. So really,  
12 again, appreciate the staff work on this, appreciate  
13 the presentation, and appreciate the great work of  
14 my colleagues in the District and the consultants  
15 who are supporting it.

16           CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner  
17 Cozart.

18           Commissioner Schaefer.

19           COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Hi, yes.  
20 Nothing further to add. Just, again, great  
21 presentation. Looking forward to seeing this  
22 progress.

1 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thanks, Commissioner.  
2 Commissioner Stidham.

3 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you very  
4 much for the presentation. And while I have many  
5 questions -- I had many questions, I think the design  
6 is off to a great start. As I'm sure many people  
7 -- I've spent a lot of time in the older stadium.

8 My grandfather had season tickets when the Redskins  
9 called it home; many concerts. I love the homage  
10 to the old stadium and how you are respecting that  
11 structure in this new contemporary architecture,  
12 but it was a very heavy structure. And the measures  
13 that you have taken with the new design to lighten  
14 it, not just lighten it through and giving it  
15 transparency, but also how it sits on the landscape  
16 and how it interacts with the landscape. I think  
17 you're off to a really great start.

18 I think there are some refinements that  
19 you could make. I would take a look at the ribbing  
20 and see if maybe less ribbing was an opportunity.

21 It feels like it's maybe too much structure and  
22 an opportunity for a little bit more transparency

1 and lighting through it. I love the grand stairs  
2 and the fact that the glass doors allow for what  
3 looks like you could see all the way through, giving  
4 it that structure from both the exterior and I'm  
5 sure from the interior as well. And I think the  
6 dome and the materiality that is chosen for the dome  
7 actually adds to that a great bit.

8 I did have concerns originally with the  
9 design being on axis and the importance of that axis  
10 as part of the city, but I think that you have taken  
11 care of that in your respect for the axis through  
12 this design. So I would just encourage you, as you  
13 continue to refine and modify the design, to just  
14 keep that in mind. But as a whole, I think it is  
15 starting off as a very beautiful structure that is  
16 going to be a lovely new landmark to the District  
17 and a great complement to the Park Service land  
18 around it. So, thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
20 Commissioner.

21 Commissioner Argo. Are you still with us?

22 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I am still with you.

1 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Awesome.

2 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I'm just trying to  
3 find the buttons. Sorry. And I can't get on the  
4 -- unable to start video. That's okay. As long  
5 as you can hear me. I really love Commissioner  
6 Stidham's comments, and I want to be sure to  
7 associate myself with those. I think one of the  
8 things -- what were the -- yeah. The comment about  
9 using, kind of, the rules of classical architecture  
10 and adapting them in this design is really  
11 satisfying, and just -- I don't have much more to  
12 say other than I'm so excited that we're as far along  
13 as we are, and will love to see the next development.  
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
16 Commissioner.

17 Vice Chairman Levenbach.

18 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Thanks for the  
19 presentation. And I -- you know, I was excited when  
20 I saw this on the agenda. I asked my friends and  
21 family, and importantly, my wife, what they all  
22 thought of the renderings. And to a person,

1 everybody liked it. And I mean, it could just be  
2 the crowd I run with. But part of it -- part of  
3 the reason why they liked it was that the traditional  
4 design, the classic design, I think it resonated  
5 with, at least the people that I spoke with. And  
6 it's interesting, I just want to also just go to  
7 the executive order of making federal architecture  
8 beautiful again. And I think one of the things that  
9 I think is interesting about the EO and how it talks  
10 about architecture, is that it talks about how  
11 public buildings, in this case and obviously this  
12 isn't a public building, but they should uplift and  
13 beautify public spaces, inspire the human spirit,  
14 ennoble the United States and command respect from  
15 the general public. And I think that's what we want  
16 this stadium to aspire to.

17           So I want to just foot stomp what  
18 Commissioner Ingrassia said, which -- about the  
19 classical -- the classic features of it. If  
20 anything, I think it -- if there are changes, I'd  
21 like to see it move more towards that direction.

22       Very interested in some of the other development

1 around the stadium and how that complements the  
2 renderings that we saw. And also want to see some  
3 of the additional renderings that some of the  
4 Commissioners requested as well, because I think  
5 it'd be helpful to give us all a sense of what it's  
6 going to look like when we go visit it.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Sure. Thank you, Vice  
8 Chairman Levenbach.

9 Commissioner Blair, I don't believe is  
10 with us.

11 Commissioner Ingrassia?

12 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Thank you.

13 Yeah, just want to reiterate, you know, what -- the  
14 sentiments of the other Commissioners. I think  
15 this is an important project, it's an important  
16 project for the city. It's long overdue. It's  
17 going to be a landmark in the District for many years  
18 to come, I'm sure. And I'm very impressed with the  
19 progress being made. Just to the extent that we  
20 can keep in mind, again, those principles of  
21 neoclassical, traditional, historic architecture.

22 You know, I think a lot of that has already been

1 incorporated into the design, which is great. And  
2 to the extent that those elements could be  
3 animating, you know, the surrounding plaza, not just  
4 in terms of design, but materials and color. I hope  
5 those factors are taken into account. Again, this  
6 is not a federal project, but I think, you know,  
7 we want it to seamlessly weave with the tapestry  
8 of the rest of the city. And it's going to be an  
9 important landmark for the city for many years to  
10 come. And we look forward to getting more details  
11 about that as this comes along. But appreciate this  
12 today.

13 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner  
14 Ingrassia.

15 Commissioner Dixon?

16 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yeah. First, I want  
17 to thank the staff for its typical great work, and  
18 I want to associate myself with our DC Planning  
19 Director, Commissioner Cozart. And yes, it is  
20 definitely neoclassic and it looks great.

21 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
22 Commissioner.

1 Commissioner Cash?

2 COMMISSIONER CASH: Thanks so much. And  
3 I also associate myself with Commissioner Cozart's  
4 comments. And I also appreciate the feedback on  
5 the 360 design that we're supposed to have on the  
6 stadium. I really want to hold the design team to  
7 that because, unfortunately, I think those are the  
8 kinds of details that get value-engineered out very  
9 early, especially when we're talking about now  
10 underground structures under future development.

11 So I would just urge the design team to make sure  
12 that you're keeping to that, to not make an ugly  
13 site if you can help it, and to really think ahead  
14 with all the other developments that's going to have  
15 to go on. And now that we're having that really  
16 complicating structure, I think it's probably going  
17 to complicate things underground. Just to make  
18 sure that we're kind of keeping that as a -- as one  
19 of the design principles that you don't want to waver  
20 from.

21 So thanks for the presentation. Thanks  
22 to the staff for the analysis.

1                   CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
2 Commissioner.

3                   Commissioner Henderson?

4                   COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: I've said most  
5 of what I already have to say, but I just, again,  
6 thank the staff for their forward leaning thoughts  
7 that they put down on paper, and look forward to  
8 working with you all as everything comes in.

9                   CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
10 Commissioner.

11                  Commissioner McGowan?

12                  COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: I don't have any  
13 additional comments, but thank you to staff for the  
14 presentation, for those who are both online and in  
15 person, who were able to provide more information  
16 and answer questions about the project. So thank  
17 you all.

18                  CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
19 Commissioner.

20                  Speaking for myself, first of all, staff,  
21 Laura, you and the team really knocked it out of  
22 the park with these comments. I associate myself

1 with almost all of them. I just think this was a  
2 really thoughtful review of a highly complicated  
3 plan.

4           So thank you for that. I'd also like to  
5 thank the project team and obviously DC government  
6 for what they've put together here. When we had  
7 the first informational presentation on this  
8 project, I was really worried we were going to end  
9 up with some modernist garbage that would've  
10 destroyed the skyline of Washington, DC, would've  
11 been a blight on a key axis of sort of the entire  
12 core of the city and would have been a real problem.

13        Instead, I think we have a really interesting  
14 project, one that I think will stand the test of  
15 time. I think the colonnade is an inspired choice.

16        I was saying, I was talking to Marcel Acosta, our  
17 executive director before. To me, it's evocative  
18 of Eero Saarinen and the Dulles terminal. I'm not  
19 sure if anyone agrees with me on that point, but  
20 that's what I see when I look at it. And I think  
21 that's an interesting design choice in keeping with  
22 the history of the District.

1           And I think we have some questions about  
2 massing, about how this actually aligns with the  
3 Capitol. I think I'd like to see more elevations,  
4 as other Commissioners have said, or other imagery  
5 more generally. But overall, I think this is a  
6 really incredible stadium that will be of tremendous  
7 benefit to Washington, DC, in the long term, and  
8 I would just congratulate everybody involved for  
9 what they've achieved so far.

10           Few comments. I'm concerned with  
11 lighting. Obviously, game days are game days, but  
12 if this stadium is going to be fully lit, given the  
13 amount of lighting that shines through the colonnade  
14 in the pictures that we've already seen, I'm  
15 concerned with what this will look like sort of in  
16 the background of life in DC at night.

17           The G1 garage is really close to the  
18 stadium itself. What that looks like and how it  
19 impacts viewsheds I think is an open question that  
20 hopefully we'll get more clarity on as we go forward.

21           The roof -- I'm interested in material  
22 science. This has come out in a number of prior

1 projects. So any further details on what material  
2 is going to be used and what it's going to look like  
3 in the long term, most specifically, I guess the  
4 -- I've been to SoFi Stadium and I know what that  
5 looks like. But if a different material is used,  
6 I'd be very interested in that.

7 I think Commissioner Cash's point about  
8 the ugly side is very well-taken. Most stadiums  
9 do have an ugly side. If we can avoid that here,  
10 that's obviously great. If not, I think we need  
11 to know sort of know what that looks like, and what  
12 direction that ugly side will be facing in or will  
13 be facing.

14 And lastly, the only thing I'd say, this  
15 is well beyond the scope of this Commission, but  
16 since one of our members of the public who testified  
17 today raised it, I am actually in favor -- opposed  
18 to reusable service items, reusable food  
19 containers, at any stadium. I was involved in the  
20 drafting of President Trump's executive order on  
21 bringing back plastic straws. I think paper straws  
22 are terrible. So to the extent that anything NCPC

1 is doing or saying impacts choices on food service  
2 items within the stadium, I would encourage you to  
3 go with traditional plastic.

4 But with that, is there a -- we've already  
5 taken the motion. Where -- what do we do now? Do  
6 we have to take a vote?

7 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Sorry. Here we are.  
9 I apologize. Are there any further comments or  
10 questions before we proceed with the vote?

11 Okay. Madam Secretary, can you please  
12 confirm the motion and second, and take the vote  
13 by roll call?

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. The motion was  
15 made by Commissioner Henderson and seconded by  
16 Commissioner Cozart.

17 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 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes.

7 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Ingrassia?

8 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Yes.

9 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

10 Commissioner Dixon?

11 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

13 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Henderson?

15 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Yes.

16 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner McGowan?

17 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: Yes.

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Motion passes.

19 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you very much,

20 Meghan. That motion is carried.

21 7509 Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative Update

22 We will now move on to agenda item 7A, which

1 is an informational presentation on the  
2 Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative. NCPC staff are  
3 going to present a brief project background and  
4 share an overview of work to date and the project  
5 timeline going forward. This is a really important  
6 project. Really, since I joined this Commission  
7 last summer, we've been talking a lot about  
8 Pennsylvania Avenue. This is one of the key -- I  
9 mean, it's a core thoroughfare in the center of our  
10 nation's capital. And it's just -- it's a really  
11 important civic corridor that hopefully we will be  
12 able to improve dramatically in the coming years.

13 I'd like to acknowledge, sorry, the National Park  
14 Service's work on restoring the fountains of Freedom  
15 Plaza, John Marshall Park, in preparation for  
16 America 250. They're a crucial partner here, as  
17 are some of the other key stakeholders in the area,  
18 including DC Department of Transportation.

19 And with that, I'll turn it over to NCPC  
20 staff, Karin Schierhold is going to be presenting  
21 for us.

22 MS. SCHIERHOLD: Thank you.

1                   CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Karin.

2                   MS. SCHIERHOLD: Good afternoon, Chairman  
3 Scharf and Commissioners. This information  
4 presentation will provide a background on  
5 Pennsylvania Avenue, its unique location and role  
6 in the capital city. I will review some past  
7 revitalization efforts, its current management and  
8 design issues, and highlight some of the key  
9 planning milestones that have led to where we are  
10 today, then conclude with a project overview and  
11 walk through our anticipated review timeline. The  
12 material may be familiar to some of you, many of  
13 you, but we're hopeful it provides a helpful  
14 background for those who may be new to the project  
15 and also set the stage for our upcoming concept  
16 review.

17                   The 1791 L'Enfant Plan of the City of  
18 Washington created an interconnected system of  
19 public and ceremonial spaces, providing physical  
20 and visual access to the buildings, landmarks, and  
21 iconic symbols of our new democracy. This resulted  
22 in an urban form that encouraged the interaction

1 of citizens and their government. At the heart was  
2 Pennsylvania Avenue, intended to be a primary  
3 thoroughfare, drawing activity to the city center  
4 and connecting the two rivers at the eastern and  
5 western borders. And while Pennsylvania Avenue and  
6 our city extends west to Rock Creek and east across  
7 the Anacostia River, our work and this presentation  
8 focus on the segment between the White House and  
9 the Capitol.

10           Historically, the avenue has served as the  
11 nation's venue to celebrate, commemorate, and  
12 recognize social, cultural, political moments and  
13 events. It's where we've collectively mourned,  
14 gathered in the name of justice, and come together  
15 in celebration of some of our most important  
16 achievements. And every four years, it's the sight  
17 of the presidential inaugural procession. It's  
18 more than just a city street. The avenue is a  
19 cultural resource. The avenue and its surrounding  
20 area are home to many historically significant  
21 buildings, statues, memorials, parks, and landscape  
22 features. Its symbolic character and national

1 ceremonial role contribute to the significance of  
2 the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site.

3 Over time, the avenue has gone through  
4 periods of renewal and decline from L'Enfant's  
5 People's Promenade to a bustling commercial center,  
6 to an office district, to a car-focused landscape,  
7 and today in disrepair and lacking vitality. The  
8 avenue's most recent renewal was in the early 1970s  
9 when Congress created the Pennsylvania Avenue  
10 Development Corporation, or the PADC. As one of  
11 the first public-private partnerships in the  
12 country, PADC was a quasi-federal agency that  
13 oversaw all aspects of management and operations.

14 PADC was responsible for planning, regulation,  
15 development, maintenance, public space  
16 improvements, and event programming. To carry out  
17 these duties, it prepared a master plan in 1974,  
18 which shaped the avenue as we see it today.

19 In 1996, after the plan was substantially  
20 implemented, Congress dissolved the PADC and  
21 divided its responsibilities among the General  
22 Services Administration, the National Park Service,

1 NCPC, and the District of Columbia government.  
2 Each agency worked independently, often without  
3 dedicated funding, leaving no single organization  
4 in charge of the avenue. Over time, this  
5 contributed to deferred maintenance, declining real  
6 estate values, and its perception as a lackluster  
7 destination. It also left in place the 1974 plan,  
8 which is now over 50 years old.

9           The delegation of responsibilities also  
10 created a highly complex jurisdictional condition  
11 on the avenue, leading to inefficient management  
12 and inconsistent regulations for use of space.  
13 While each set of rules works well within its own  
14 jurisdictional area, they become ineffective when  
15 the avenue is used as a single unified space. For  
16 example, National Park Service rules designed for  
17 places like the Grand Canyon also apply to  
18 Pennsylvania Avenue's sidewalks, parks, and plazas,  
19 while District roadway standards treat the avenue  
20 like any other city street. During events, this  
21 results in visible separations, as you can see in  
22 the photo to the right, with fences dividing areas

1 with different regulations, crowding activities  
2 into the roadway, and leaving sidewalks empty or  
3 for support functions.

4           The avenue is also overdue for a redesign.

5     Its modernist design is reflective of its era, and  
6 aging materials and visible wear are evident. Ad  
7 hoc security measures clutter the sidewalks, and  
8 events rely on large and unattractive temporary  
9 infrastructure. The avenue is also vulnerable to  
10 extreme heat and flooding, making it at times an  
11 uncomfortable and unattractive place to be.

12           To address some of these issues, agencies  
13 with post-Pennsylvania Avenue Development  
14 Corporation responsibilities formed an executive  
15 committee and launched the Pennsylvania Avenue  
16 Initiative to plan and -- to plan for the avenue's  
17 future and update the 1974 plan. The initiatives  
18 established strategic goals leading to a new vision.

19     The avenue as a venue elevated as an American stage  
20 for events of national and regional significance  
21 and a great street for people, a memorable  
22 destination that balances an efficient roadway with

1 beautiful and engaging public spaces for people to  
2 enjoy every day, all day, and into the evening.

3           The initiative also directed and completed  
4 studies which found that the roadway is larger than  
5 needed; the avenue works best as an event venue;  
6 and that high quality public spaces are a key driver  
7 of economic revitalization. Guided by the vision,  
8 these findings informed three early design concepts  
9 that NCPC released in 2022, starting a public  
10 conversation about what the avenue could be. That  
11 conversation gave us great feedback, which is now  
12 informing our current phase of work and guiding  
13 design ideas into the alternatives that we will  
14 share this spring.

15           NCPC, General Services Administration,  
16 National Park Service, the District government,  
17 DowntownDC BID, and Events DC are working together  
18 to create a new Pennsylvania Avenue plan that will  
19 replace the outdated 1974 plan. Our 87-acre  
20 planning area includes the avenue's 1.2-mile  
21 stretch between the White House and the Capitol and  
22 40 acres of adjacent public space. The team is also

1 looking beyond the formal boundary to improve  
2 connections to its terminus at the Capitol and  
3 between the avenue of the National Mall and the heart  
4 of downtown. When complete, the new Pennsylvania  
5 Avenue plan will be a usable and comprehensive  
6 document that will guide decision making and  
7 development for decades to come.

8           Two teams -- two consultant teams are  
9 leading the development of the new plan. David  
10 Rubin Land Collective is leading the Public Space  
11 Master Plan, which is a physical public space plan  
12 that will address the alignment and configuration  
13 of the street and public spaces and the  
14 infrastructure needs to realize the vision of the  
15 Avenue as a venue. David presented to the  
16 Commission last June, and he'll be back in April,  
17 hopefully, for a concept review.

18           HR&A Advisors is leading the  
19 implementation program, which is a management  
20 framework that addresses programming,  
21 administration, operations, and maintenance, all  
22 critical to the Avenue's use, upkeep, enjoyment,

1 and long-term success. Their work is integrated  
2 into the Public Space Master Plan. The consultant  
3 teams are working closely together and with our  
4 project partners at both the senior executive and  
5 technical staff levels, as well as with NCPC's  
6 internal planning and design staff.

7           This is a quick preview of some of the  
8 foundations for the new design. The design team  
9 shared with this with the Commission and the public  
10 last June and it's a good representation of how the  
11 work to date, including feedback from the early  
12 vision and concepts, has provided a basis for the  
13 ideas that we're testing now. Looking at our  
14 timeline, we will begin Commission and regulatory  
15 reviews this spring. Once we begin, we have a year  
16 to complete design development and the required  
17 documentation. This year includes going to NCPC  
18 and the Commission of Fine Arts for review, comment,  
19 and ultimately acceptance of the new plan. After  
20 the plan is accepted, some elements will require  
21 legislative action before implementation, after  
22 which another entity will lead final design and

1 construction.

2 Closer look at our timeline. I mentioned  
3 April, we anticipate coming back to NCPC for concept  
4 review then, which would put us around October for  
5 preliminary review and final review in early 2027  
6 with Commission of Fine Arts reviews on a similar  
7 schedule. There will be opportunities for the  
8 public to share feedback along the way. All NCPC  
9 and CFA meetings are public, and we will host  
10 additional public meetings as part of the regulatory  
11 process following our concept and preliminary  
12 reviews. This is a very exciting moment, the  
13 beginning of a once in a generation opportunity to  
14 invest in infrastructure improvements and set the  
15 stage for implementation.

16 As we've seen, the status quo is not  
17 working, the Avenue is not functioning the way it  
18 should be to fulfill its national role, and with  
19 this plan, we have a design opportunity to address  
20 infrastructure and create a world-class venue and  
21 a management opportunity to facilitate the changes  
22 needed to successfully steward the Avenue for

1 decades to come.

2 Mr. Chairman, that concludes my  
3 presentation and the NCPC team is here to answer  
4 any questions the Commission may have.

5 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you for that,  
6 Karin. I think you really summed it up best. The  
7 status quo just isn't working with respect to  
8 Pennsylvania Avenue.

9 Do any Commissioners have any questions?

10 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Yeah. I'm  
11 interested in just knowing what are some of the --  
12 once you go a little more granular, what are some  
13 of the key problems you're trying to solve in the  
14 new plan?

15 MS. SCHIERHOLD: I can start with this one  
16 and I'll invite my colleagues up to fill in the gaps.

17 But essentially, the -- there are clear design  
18 issues right now. the Avenue is aging. There are  
19 material things that are -- need upgrading.  
20 Traffic studies have shown that the roadway is --  
21 has excessive capacity and that some of that space  
22 can reallocated to make it more efficient. We have

1 other situations where there's a maze of  
2 infrastructure below ground that's not currently  
3 providing adequate services above ground as we can  
4 see with events needing things like generators and  
5 bringing in other types of ways to access utilities  
6 that can be very cumbersome. That's sort of on the  
7 physical side.

8           And then in terms of management, what I  
9 think is -- the basis of the challenge is the Avenue  
10 has different parts of the street are -- have  
11 different sets of regulations. So for example, the  
12 IndyCar race that is coming to DC has taken an  
13 executive order to get around some of the hurdles  
14 with restrictions on signage, branding,  
15 sponsorships. So even smaller scale events have  
16 that issue here. So every spring the Avenue hosts  
17 a National Capital Barbecue Battle. Is sponsored  
18 by Giant, and because Giant needs their sponsorship,  
19 it's located in the middle of the street, so they  
20 don't have to -- because there are restrictions on  
21 branding and signage if they were to use the  
22 sidewalk.

1           So one thing that is frustrating from --  
2 for event producers, and I think even the regulatory  
3 agencies, is that there is no consistent set of rules  
4 that applies to the whole space. So if you wanted  
5 to come and use the Avenue, all of the Avenue, you  
6 would have to kind of portion your activities in  
7 places to meet those regulations. It's  
8 complicated.

9           CHAIRMAN SCHARF: You've got an 107-foot  
10 wide street, four traffic lanes each way plus bike  
11 lanes. This is the landmark street in our nation's  
12 capital, and it's essentially unusable for many  
13 events or it's -- we have a lot of trouble using  
14 it for many of the events we would want to use it  
15 for. You walk along Pennsylvania Avenue, and as  
16 you can see there, you've got these flower pot  
17 bollards, which are not an ideal security measure  
18 and also look like heck. The trees are all dying.

19          What I've been told is that underground, you have  
20 a morass of utility projects dating back to the Civil  
21 War. It's just a mess, and I think it could be a  
22 lot better, but I'm sorry to jump in the place of

1 staff here.

2 MS. SCHIERHOLD: That -- that's a good  
3 summary of it. It is a good summary. It's a  
4 combination of physical needs and this management  
5 structure that we're hoping to simplify to really  
6 make the Avenue something that's very usable for  
7 more people.

8 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: It -- it's a regulatory  
9 flub-a-dub. It's like a bunch of different animals  
10 combined together, and what you end up with just  
11 doesn't make much sense.

12 Paul?

13 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Quick question.

14 You know, I think one of the most noticeable issues  
15 and I think this is a very important project, and  
16 I appreciate this presentation. This is great.  
17 In terms of -- maybe you could talk a little bit  
18 more about what design principles or what goals do  
19 you have to improve walkability in this area? You  
20 know, I know walking down this avenue, a lot of  
21 these, you know, structures are aging. There are  
22 a lot of dislodged bricks and it, you know, when

1 you have a snowstorm, it just makes things even more  
2 compromised. So I'm wondering if that's a focus  
3 for you, you know, improving our walkways, making  
4 sure that everything's nice and smooth and flat,  
5 and there aren't you know, dislodged stones and  
6 stuff. What exactly is your focus on that?

7 MS. SCHIERHOLD: Sure. So this is a bit  
8 of a teaser for April. When we come into concept  
9 review, we'll be sharing those design intentions  
10 and ideas. But the foundations that we've shared  
11 previously with the Commission, this is a shorter  
12 summarized version, but it -- essentially, there's  
13 a lot of different uses that we need to accommodate  
14 within the roadway, within the sidewalks. And the  
15 design team is taking a really holistic look at that  
16 to make sure we accommodate as many uses as possible,  
17 make it as efficient as possible, and also make it  
18 as beautiful as possible.

19 So if the 1974 plan really gave us what  
20 we see today, that -- that's been out there for a  
21 very long time, and so it's -- we're past due for  
22 a refresh. We are looking at prioritizing the

1 framed view to the Capitol, looking at the  
2 configuration of the roadway so that it does  
3 accommodate pedestrians, vehicles, bicycle,  
4 loading, rideshare, all the things that you need  
5 in a city street, but also still retaining that sense  
6 of grandeur, that ceremonial function.

7           We've been working closely with maybe the  
8 Avenue's most unique design requirement outside the  
9 IndyCar is the inaugural parade. So we've been  
10 working a lot with the Military District of  
11 Washington to make sure that anything we are  
12 proposing for the sidewalks and the roadway supports  
13 their needs. Let's see what -- the event use, we  
14 have everything from the barbecue battle to an  
15 IndyCar race to the cherry blossom festivities.  
16 So there's a range of different sizes of events that  
17 we are considering and how best to look at moments  
18 where we can upgrade infrastructure to help service  
19 those areas.

20           The north-south connections, we want the  
21 Avenue -- you mentioned walkability, making it an  
22 attractive place to go from the mall and encourage

1 folks to go into downtown and vice versa. We get  
2 a lot of visitors to the mall. I've heard, like,  
3 35, 40 million and so can the Avenue serve as more  
4 of a draw and less of a barrier?

5           And then in terms of retail, we know that  
6 the Avenue probably is not the retail destination  
7 of the city, but could it compliment downtown? We'd  
8 like to see that. So some of the foundations that  
9 are going into our work, and we're so excited to  
10 share more in April.

11           CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Any other questions?  
12 Hearing none I'll open things to the Commission for  
13 discussion, and we'll start with Commissioner  
14 Stidham.

15           COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you. And  
16 thank you for the presentation. The National Park  
17 Service has been a partner with this project for  
18 a really long time really long time. And I cannot  
19 disagree that it's a mess.

20           CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Sorry. I didn't mean  
21 to go on before.

22           COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: And that --

1           CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I had a briefing on this  
2 this morning, so it's all very fresh to mind. And  
3 I apologize. Yeah. I didn't mean to tear your head  
4 off, Stuart.

5           COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: It -- you know, it  
6 does need some tender loving care, but I -- also,  
7 I think I would be remiss in not pointing out that  
8 it's also a national historic site and the  
9 importance of that as America's Front Street, not  
10 just to serve a venue for events, but a place for  
11 people to protest, to come together, to celebrate.

12         And it needs to serve those needs in a manner that  
13 is consistent with what should be America's Front  
14 Street, right?

15                 And is that -- is it doing it now? No.

16         So I think the work that we're all doing together  
17 is really important and looking to the future and  
18 seeing how we can elevate the Avenue itself while  
19 maintaining those historic features that make it  
20 part of the National Register. So we enjoy the  
21 process and look forward to continuing working on  
22 it.

1 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
2 Commissioner.

3 Commissioner Argo?

4 Do we still have Commissioner Argo with  
5 us?

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Maybe come back to her.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. Vice Chairman --

8 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Oh, wait. Wait.  
9 Here I am.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Oh.

11 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Here I am. Here I am.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Got you now.

13 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Sorry. And sorry to  
14 make such a fuss, since I don't have a lot to say,  
15 but except to be -- it's very exciting for those  
16 of us who have made -- who did not grow up here,  
17 but have made this city -- someone like me, made  
18 this city -- came for an internship and stayed over  
19 40 years ago. It's exciting to see the work that's  
20 being contemplated for, you know, our -- what we  
21 call one of our most historic venues, I call it,  
22 a venue. Not much else to say except, you know,

1 carry on. I love this.

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
3 Commissioner.

4 Vice Chairman Levenbach.

5 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: If we could put the  
6 planters outside the EPA building in this, I would  
7 get thrilled because so those are kind of my bane  
8 of existence. But the -- what I would say when I  
9 asked the questions about what the priorities were,  
10 not because --

11 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Sorry.

12 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: -- I questioned the  
13 premise of the exercise. It's more from a  
14 management perspective, if you work in the federal  
15 government for as long as at least I have now, you  
16 work on a lot of plans, and those plans don't  
17 necessarily -- they're not necessarily useful in  
18 terms of management and execution and  
19 implementation. I mean, sometimes they are, but  
20 there are a lot of plans that people work on that  
21 aren't. And so I would really think about how you  
22 develop a plan that is implementable, because right

1 now, you have a lot of different agencies and  
2 organizations that are -- that have a piece of this,  
3 and when a lot of organizations are responsible,  
4 then nobody's responsible, right?

5           And you're in the plan -- especially a plan  
6 like this, which might not necessarily have a  
7 champion maybe other than the NCPC, you know, when  
8 you have the different jurisdictions and the budgets  
9 that go with it and people are going to spend money  
10 on only the things that necessarily are within their  
11 ambit. So I would just really think about, not just  
12 the outcome and having a great vision for what the  
13 street should be, but also how do you get there?

14           How do you get there within current services or  
15 current resources and give people something that  
16 then they can take up to their organizations and  
17 actually try to make progress on?

18           CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Vice  
19 Chairman Levenbach.

20           Commissioner Blair is not with us.  
21 Commissioner Ingrassia?

22           COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: I don't have

1 much more to add. Thank you again for the  
2 presentation. I know GSA has been an active  
3 participant in the initiative, and we look forward  
4 to continuing the work with NCPC and other  
5 stakeholders in this. GSA has a lot of property's  
6 - is the primary property owner on the south side  
7 of the avenue and the Federal Triangle.

8           You know, this avenue is the front door  
9 to many federal agency headquarters, the -- some  
10 of the most famous. I think these proposed  
11 improvements will enhance the impression of these  
12 very important buildings and create a welcoming  
13 environment for tenants, for visitors, for people  
14 visiting our city, for those participating in  
15 parades. And we look forward to -- just to  
16 continuing this collaborative enterprise and making  
17 this city and the street area, you know, much safer,  
18 more beautiful, and much better to use than it has  
19 been over the last couple of decades falling into  
20 a little bit of disrepair.

21           So appreciate the presentation. We look  
22 forward to, you know, continuing the conversations.

1                   CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner  
2 Ingrassia.

3                   Commissioner Dixon?

4                   COMMISSIONER DIXON: Hi. First of all,  
5 I'm pleased to be involved because, I don't know  
6 whether to bring it up, but I was involved with the  
7 Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. I  
8 was on that structure. And we were trying to, at  
9 that time, bring an avenue which was in bad need  
10 of organization, more or less as a ceremonial strip,  
11 but I'm pleased to be with you all now, looking at  
12 making this more of a people's place, a place that  
13 will have more vibrance, more strengthening of the  
14 whole community, not just for the Capitol.

15                   So I -- I'm very pleased to be a part of  
16 it, and I'm looking forward to what's being done,  
17 and it's a great -- it's a great time. Thank you.

18                   CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
19 Commissioner.

20                   Commissioner Cash?

21                   COMMISSIONER CASH: Thanks so much. I  
22 just want to commend the work that's going on with

1 this initiative. The thing that I've always come  
2 back to, even though this Commission has now evolved  
3 to a lot more of kind of the legislative side of  
4 things versus the planning side of things, I think  
5 that one of the things that makes the avenue so  
6 difficult is just what staff was talking about.  
7 The fact that you have this random mishmash of GSA  
8 running the buildings, then you have the Park  
9 Service running the sidewalks, you have DDOT and  
10 DC running the center of it, and all these plans  
11 are great if -- but if you can't get the governance  
12 right, you're never going to get the avenue right.

13           So if we want to talk about kind of the  
14 ugly side of buildings, a lot of these federal  
15 agencies, if you're at 10,000 feet, the buildings  
16 look great, but you get down there, there's no --  
17 there -- there's no, like restaurants or anything  
18 like that you can do. If you've gone over to the  
19 EPA building to try and go into the post office,  
20 it gets worse, not better every time you go in there.

21           So until we can really address kind of the  
22 holistic planning aspects of making sure there's

1 things to do, making sure that you can go from the  
2 street to the sidewalk during an event, making sure  
3 that if you're going to have an event like Pride  
4 or inauguration or anything like that, that you  
5 don't have a fence between getting into those great  
6 new places we want to bring on the avenue, instead  
7 you have to go through these little gates and  
8 security. Until you get the governance right and  
9 everyone's on the same page, it's never going to  
10 get there.

11 So I appreciate that there's work being  
12 done with the Military District of Washington  
13 because that's one of the big security theater  
14 things that we have to worry about with any of these  
15 events on the avenue. But I think if you also looked  
16 a lot of the other events that have happened that  
17 don't have as much security necessarily, you can  
18 see there's ways to mitigate a lot of what we think  
19 is traditional security with putting all the fences  
20 up.

21 So I think that the governance is often  
22 underrated. I'm glad that's one of the central

1 planning aspects going on here because, with the  
2 kind of bureaucracy that you get on the avenue with  
3 different agencies, it -- it's never going to get  
4 there until you can get everyone on the same page.

5 So I appreciate the work that's going into that,  
6 especially on the governance side.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
8 Commissioner.

9 Commissioner Henderson?

10 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: You know, I  
11 appreciate that you all are looking at this. It's  
12 -- there -- there's a lot of issues that need to  
13 be dealt with. I would just encourage that if we  
14 can, let's try and find a way to make the traffic  
15 lanes straight rather than the zigzag that they are  
16 down the street now.

17 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
18 Commissioner.

19 Commissioner McGowan?

20 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: I don't have any  
21 additional comments right now. Thank you to staff  
22 for the informative presentation.

1                   CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
2 Commissioner.

3                   Commissioner Cozart?

4                   COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes. Appreciate  
5 staff for the presentation, but more so the  
6 intentionality of your approach to this, having,  
7 you know, a work stream that's around design, having  
8 a work stream around governance and moving those  
9 forward together in parallel so that one can inform  
10 the other, I think is a really smart strategy, and  
11 just want to appreciate your patience with all of  
12 us as we, you know, kind of move through this  
13 process.

14                   CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
15 Commissioner.

16                   And Commissioner Schaefer?

17                   COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Nothing else to  
18 add. My fellow Commissioners have basically summed  
19 it up, so thank you.

20                   CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
21 Commissioner.

22                   Speaking for myself, first of all, thank

1 you again, Karin, for the presentation. I'm a big  
2 believer in this. I think as my comments before  
3 may have sort of prefaced, I think this is the most  
4 important street in our nation's capital, and I  
5 think it's just fallen into a pretty terrible state.

6 I think you have, if you walk up and down  
7 Pennsylvania Avenue, you will see vacancies, you  
8 will see essentially unusable space. I think it's  
9 a real problem. And I think it's a -- not just is  
10 it a real problem, it's a fixable problem. There  
11 are governor -- governance issues, there are  
12 infrastructure issues, but I think long-term when  
13 we think about the most important projects we're  
14 doing around the Capitol, this certainly ranks up  
15 there.

16 And I would just commend our staff, GSA,  
17 National Park Service, and really everybody else  
18 involved here for their willingness to take on  
19 what's really a pretty complicated problem and  
20 hopefully build towards a place where we can chart  
21 a better future for Pennsylvania Avenue and for that  
22 part of the District.

1 Does anyone else have any other comments  
2 or questions before we move on to agenda item 7B?

3 Hearing and seeing none, thank you. And thank you,  
4 Karin. And we will now move on to agenda item 7B,  
5 which is an informational presentation on the Great  
6 Falls Area Maryland Development Concept Plan. And  
7 we have Laura back with us once again.

8 MP178 Great Falls Area Maryland Development  
9 Concept Plan

10 MS. SHIPMAN: Yes. Good afternoon again,  
11 Commissioners. Today, the National Park Service  
12 will provide an information presentation on the  
13 development concept plan for the Great Falls area  
14 of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical  
15 Park in Montgomery County, Maryland. The Great  
16 Falls Maryland planning area is located northeast  
17 of the Potomac River. Park lands along the southern  
18 shore of the Potomac River located in Great Falls,  
19 Virginia are administered by George Washington  
20 Memorial Parkway and are not included in this  
21 effort.

22 As background, the NPS process for park

1 development includes several stages. Management  
2 plans such as the Civil War Defenses of Washington  
3 Management Plan are the earliest stage in the park  
4 planning process, and typically cover a broad area,  
5 providing high level guidance. Later stages in  
6 park development include development concept plans,  
7 which develop major park elements such as this plan  
8 and the reimagined Anacostia Park development  
9 concept plan. Then the project design of specific  
10 elements is conducted, and finally, construction  
11 and implementation. Once specific projects included  
12 in the Great Falls Development Concept Plan are  
13 identified for implementation, they will be  
14 submitted to NCPC for further review.

15           And with that, I will turn it over to Andrew  
16 Landsman, NPS Chief of Resources Management for the  
17 C&O Canal National Historical Park.

18           MR. LANDSMAN: Hello. Thank you for  
19 having us here to share the results of recent  
20 National Park Service planning efforts for the Great  
21 Falls area in Potomac, Maryland, within Montgomery  
22 County.

1           The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National  
2 Historical Park preserves a 184 and a half mile  
3 historic canal corridor along the Potomac River,  
4 stretching from Georgetown in Washington, DC, to  
5 Cumberland, Maryland. Once an important 19th  
6 century transportation route for coal, lumber, and  
7 agricultural goods, the canal now offers visitors  
8 opportunities to enjoy recreational and educational  
9 experiences that connect them to the region's  
10 history and landscape.

11           The project area centers around the  
12 Maryland side of Great Falls and is the most popular  
13 area of the park, which itself is one of the most  
14 visited national parks in the country with over five  
15 million annual visitors. We undertook this plan  
16 so we could ensure that the park was continuing to  
17 meet visitor needs into the future, provide high  
18 quality recreational and educational experiences,  
19 and preserve our amazing natural and cultural  
20 resources.

21           This plan was developed in coordination  
22 with partners, stakeholders, and the public, and

1 offers a shared path forward for the Great Falls  
2 area. I will now -- I'll turn it over to Christine  
3 Bruins with our regional planning team to share more  
4 information about the plan. Thanks.

5 MS. BRUINS: Thank you, Andrew, and thank  
6 you, Laura. So thanks. Today, our plan is public,  
7 and we have been working on it for a couple of years  
8 now, and we're excited to share what we're up to.

9 So at -- as Andrew mentioned, this is the  
10 most visited area of the park. The visitation to  
11 the area has steadily increased over the last 15  
12 years. The Billy Goat A Trail, which is located  
13 in this area, can see up to 2,000 visitors a day  
14 during the peak season, and the falls viewing area  
15 is also a very popular regional draw and draws a  
16 high visitation all year round.

17 We've also seen in this part of the park  
18 changing visitation, more multi-day hiker, biker  
19 through traffic, more large groups, organized large  
20 groups. And so the pattern of visitation is  
21 changing and we wanted to take on a plan to  
22 accommodate everyone and accommodate for the

1 future.

2 So the popularity of this area can also  
3 create some challenges. There's a lot of crowding  
4 on popular trails, and the -- that crowding pushes  
5 over into sensitive natural resource areas.

6 There's parking challenges, and there have been  
7 increased visitor safety incidents, particularly  
8 along the Billy Goat A Trail and in the river.

9 As mentioned before, this planning area  
10 is centered around the Great Falls Tavern parking  
11 lot. It goes up to the north to Swains Lock where  
12 we have a campground and another overnight lock  
13 house rental and it extends to the south to the  
14 Anglers parking lot where many locals use to access  
15 the site and to access the Billy Goat Trail.

16 The plan purpose had four main goals, and  
17 those were to look at strategies to promote resource  
18 stewardship; to continue to provide safe, high  
19 quality national park experiences; to have  
20 appropriate ranges of facilities and services to  
21 meet the visitors; and to proactively engage with  
22 the partners, stakeholders, and the public. This

1 plan is very high level. It's programmatic. The  
2 recommendations are ranging from smallest scale and  
3 very specific, such as water filling stations at  
4 targeted areas to larger actions such as adaptive  
5 reuse of the historic structures located throughout  
6 the site. All of the recommendations in the plan  
7 are in service to the Park Service's goals of  
8 promoting safe and enjoyable opportunities for  
9 recreation and stewardship of resources. This plan  
10 is not an environmental assessment. It does not  
11 have any sort of design element and there's no  
12 preferred alternative. We will come back with  
13 discrete actions following.

14           The plan is centered around the main issues  
15 and opportunities we have at the site, which  
16 includes managing the high and growing volume of  
17 visitation. And what that means for us as  
18 recreation managers is evaluating the use and  
19 capacity of our facilities and infrastructures and  
20 how that supports visitation. We're looking at  
21 social trails throughout the areas. We're looking  
22 at put-in and takeouts to the rivers and the canal

1 and the trails between them. We're looking at  
2 potential for new concessions, whether that be food  
3 or recreational outfitters, and we're looking at  
4 the management of overnight campsites and lodging.

5 We're also charged with preserving the  
6 19th century canal infrastructure and protecting  
7 natural ecosystems of the area. The plan also looks  
8 to reduce injuries and fatalities, of which there  
9 are a large number, and to ensure more timely access  
10 for emergency response and search-and-rescue teams  
11 to areas. The plan also looks to improve parking,  
12 traffic, and related safety issues. We want to  
13 increase accessibility of the core experiences in  
14 the site, and then we are looking to find suitable  
15 uses for all of the historic structures onsite, many  
16 of which are vacant or underused.

17 So we had two comment periods. The first  
18 was broader-level. We wanted to touch base with  
19 our visitors and find out, you know, how they're  
20 using, what's working for them, what's not working  
21 for them, what we need to consider as we move  
22 forward. And in the second planning period, we

1 asked more targeted feedback about what we're  
2 proposing along the Billy Goat A Trail, which is  
3 where a lot of the recommendations in the plan go,  
4 and then also specifically where we're going to make  
5 changes to access to the Potomac River. There are  
6 no formal river take-in or put-outs, and so we asked  
7 our public where they use and where they would like  
8 to see those infrastructure.

9           So we received a lot of feedback from  
10 long-term visitors, from people who volunteer with  
11 our search and rescue crew, from anglers and  
12 paddlers, just a diverse group of people, and their  
13 feedback was incorporated into our planning effort.

14       The recommendations are, again, programmatic, but  
15 we're looking at physical and operational  
16 interventions to improve safety and crowding along  
17 the Billy Goat A Trail. We're looking to improve  
18 safety by formalizing some of these access points,  
19 and we're looking to formalize some social trails  
20 and close others for resource management and visitor  
21 safety reasons.

22           There's also a number of recommendations

1 that are specific to making the visitor experience  
2 better. We're -- one of the primary concerns is  
3 making sure there's consistent access to water,  
4 food, and supplies. We're looking at improvements  
5 for parking and access from Montgomery County into  
6 the park site, and then, again, finding appropriate  
7 uses for some of the structures on site that could  
8 also accommodate the recreation that visitors are  
9 seeking.

10 We'll be back when we have more detailed  
11 designs for implementation. The C&O Canal is going  
12 to continue to work with Montgomery County Fire on  
13 first respond -- the -- some of the safety issues  
14 onsite and coordinating first response. We're --  
15 they're also working with Montgomery County Traffic  
16 Department on the access road and some connections  
17 between MacArthur Boulevard and the park, and we'll  
18 continue to seek funding for some of the  
19 larger-scale design and construction projects. So  
20 thank you for your time.

21 And hand it back to you, Laura?

22 MS. SHIPMAN: We'll turn it over to the

1 Commission for questions.

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thanks a lot, Laura.

3 Does anyone have any questions? Hearing

4 none --

5 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: Well -- okay.

6 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Oh. Sorry, Stuart.

7 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: I've got -- I mean,  
8 I have a lot -- I go here a fair amount, and so I  
9 see a lot of opportunities. All the things that  
10 you laid out, I can see areas to try to improve the  
11 visitor experience. I'm interested -- you talked  
12 a little bit about safety, and I'm interested in  
13 what the numbers look like, because I can think of  
14 a lot of different ways in which -- between people  
15 accessing the river improperly and safety around  
16 that, the Billy Goat Trail, collisions, because you  
17 have a lot of bikers and people that are walking.

18 I think you might be -- like, I'm curious  
19 what those numbers look like and how that might guide  
20 your overall plan, because I think a number of the  
21 things that you're trying to address, you might find  
22 evidence in the safety statistics that will guide

1 you in trying to address a number of those different  
2 issues.

3 MS. BRUINS: The safety is concerning.  
4 And so in terms of search and rescue, there's over  
5 150 a year. There's 50 to 75 medical calls a year,  
6 and there's been over 50 fatalities since 2000.  
7 So those are caused by a number of issues. They  
8 could be slip and falls, they could be medical  
9 conditions triggered by overexertion or heat, or  
10 swimming in the river that looks calm on the surface  
11 but has a great amount of undertow due to the falls.

12 So there are a number of safety issues onsite, and  
13 they were definitely a principal factor when we were  
14 looking at the recommendations for the area.

15 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: So you have an average  
16 of two fatalities a year on the site?

17 MS. BRUINS: I don't know yearly, but --

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay.

19 MS. BRUINS: -- there have been over 50  
20 since the year 2000.

21 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Wow.

22 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: I think that part

1 of it is people underestimate --

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Sure.

3 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: -- the difficulty  
4 of the trail, and the congestion on the trail. So  
5 people start off with not enough water, or no water,  
6 because they think they're going to just take a  
7 leisurely walk.

8 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Sure.

9 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: And part of the way  
10 through, they find themselves in a bad situation  
11 without anything, and then we end up having to do  
12 a search and rescue. And then the water issues are  
13 the same. You know, they think it's -- they can  
14 just put in a boat and they're good, and then the  
15 rapids are right there, the swiftness of the water.

16 I think it's just people who are inexperienced and  
17 unprepared for sort of the situation is a lot. And  
18 then the congestion, it's not good. Too many people  
19 too close on the trail, not good for the resource  
20 and not good for visitor experience or for the safety  
21 of others.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Are there any other

1 questions from Commissioners? Proceeding to  
2 comments.

3 Vice Chairman Levenbach?

4 VICE CHAIR LEVENBACH: No more comments  
5 other than what I said, and, you know, I look forward  
6 to seeing how this project develops.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Vice  
8 Chairman.

9 Commissioner Ingrassia?

10 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Appreciate the  
11 National Park Service on initiating the planning  
12 process, and we look forward to seeing more as the  
13 project develops.

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
15 Commissioner.

16 Commissioner Dixon, are you still with us?  
17 I don't hear Commissioner Dixon.

18 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Is Skunk Valley in  
19 the area we're looking at?

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Oh.

21 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Uh-oh.

22 MS. BRUINS: What --

1 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Can you --

2 MS. BRUINS: Can you --

3 COMMISSIONER DIXON: -- hear me?

4 MS. BRUINS: -- repeat that, Commissioner  
5 Dixon?

6 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Skunk Valley. Is it  
7 part of the area we're speaking of? I think it's  
8 right off the bridge there.

9 MS. BRUINS: I don't believe so.  
10 Andrew?

11 MR. LANDSMAN: The -- was it Hunt Valley?  
12 Is -- that was the question?

13 MS. BRUINS: Skunk.

14 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Skunk, as in the  
15 animal that smells. Skunk Valley.

16 MR. LANDSMAN: That's not what -- that's  
17 not something I'm familiar with, no.

18 COMMISSIONER DIXON: When I was a cub  
19 scout, or a scout, we camped in that area. I know  
20 it's under the bridge in the woods. Like, I caught  
21 my first trout and found out you could cook a trout  
22 right from the stream, right in that area. So I

1 just wondered whether it was the same. It was a  
2 spectacular area then, and we camped there. So  
3 maybe I'm in the wrong area. Maybe somebody can  
4 research that for the next time to see if Skunk  
5 Valley is a part of the area that you're speaking  
6 of.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Commissioner  
8 Dixon.

9 If you don't have any other questions,  
10 Commissioner Cash?

11 COMMISSIONER CASH: No questions.  
12 Thanks so much.

13 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
14 Commissioner.

15 Commissioner Henderson is no longer with  
16 us.

17 Commissioner McGowan?

18 COMMISSIONER MCGOWAN: I don't have any  
19 additional comments, but thank you to staff for the  
20 presentation.

21 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
22 Commissioner.

1 Commissioner Cozart?

2 COMMISSIONER COZART: I appreciate the  
3 presentation and your work on this project.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
5 Commissioner.

6 Commissioner Schaefer?

7 COMMISSIONER SCHAEFER: Nothing further.  
8 Thank you so much.

9 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
10 Commissioner.

11 Commissioner Stidham?

12 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you for  
13 allowing us to bring this information presentation,  
14 and we will surely be back with other projects.  
15 I think just to highlight the importance of this  
16 type of planning effort as we begin to look at  
17 visitation and park management in a way that we're  
18 serving our visitors, but we're also protecting the  
19 resource, and it's really key for the mission of  
20 the National Park Service and the work we do, so  
21 thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,

1 Commissioner.

2 And Commissioner Argo?

3 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I don't have any  
4 additional questions. I'm very excited. I live  
5 about a block off of the trails, the river, all of  
6 that, in the upper northwest corner of Washington.

7 And it's a beautiful place, and anything we can  
8 do to preserve the beauty and upgrade the experience  
9 for everybody is -- got my vote. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
11 Commissioner.

12 Speaking for myself, I mean, I was planning  
13 on spending a lot of time here until I realized that  
14 people are apparently dying here quite often. So  
15 let's figure out how to make Great Falls and the  
16 whole area safe and beautiful and a wonderful  
17 resource, as it has been historically.

18 Thank you to staff and to NPS for this  
19 presentation. I think I speak for all of us when  
20 I say I look forward to hearing more about the  
21 exciting plans you have for this area in the coming  
22 months.

1           With that, is there anything further? Are  
2 there any other questions or comments on this  
3 project?

4           COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Just, Chairman, I  
5 would encourage you to visit, that it is a safe  
6 place, --

7           CHAIRMAN SCHARF: The Billy Goat A Trail?  
8 I love it.

9           COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: -- got involved in  
10 June --

11          CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I --

12          COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: -- opportunities  
13 for safe recreation. And I encourage you to get  
14 out when you can and visit the site and enjoy the  
15 many things that it has to offer.

16          CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,  
17 Commissioner. Duly noted.

18                 Before we adjourn for the day, are there  
19 any other questions or comments from Commissioners?

20                 Well, we will see you all next month. I  
21 guess that will -- is most likely to be a  
22 virtual-only meeting, but I look forward to it, as

1 I know that you do.

2 And with that, this meeting is adjourned.

3 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
4 went off the record at 2:49 p.m.)

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## 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  
5 true and accurate record of the proceedings; and  
6 that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor  
7 employed by any of the parties to this action in  
8 which this matter was taken; and further that I am  
9 not a relative nor an employee of any of the parties  
10 nor counsel employed by the parties, and I am not  
11 financially or otherwise interested in the outcome  
12 of the action.

13

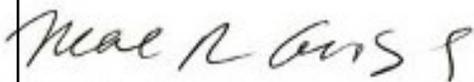
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19 Vicki Simonyak

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