



MEDIA RELEASE

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NCPC Comments on Eisenhower Memorial Concept Designs

Commission approves Georgetown Waterfront Park Phase III and Report on District Zoning Regulations Rewrite for Motor Vehicle and Bicycle Parking and Loading

Washington, DC – At its monthly meeting today the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) provided comments on three concept designs for the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial. Submitted by the National Park Service on behalf of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission, the memorial will honor America's 34th president. It will be located on a four-acre site south of Independence Avenue, SW across from the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. The memorial will be the eighth in the nation's capital honoring American presidents.

The first concept (Maryland Roadway) would realign Maryland Avenue on axis with the U.S. Capitol and maintain the avenue as an active street. A monumental colonnade and stone blocks with sculptures would surround a central grove of trees. Stone lintels containing quotes from President Eisenhower would top the stone blocks. The remainder of the memorial site would consist of a plaza with a formal tree arrangement. The second concept (Maryland Promenade) is similar to the first, except it transforms Maryland Avenue into a non-vehicular pedestrian promenade. In the third concept (Maryland Park), the site will feature stone block sculptures, a central tree grove, and large woven stainless steel tapestries depicting imagery of President Eisenhower's hometown of Abilene, Kansas.

NCPC noted its support of a memorial that uses modern and innovative ways to honor President Eisenhower and voiced support for the possible use of the woven stainless steel tapestries as a memorial element. However, the Commission found that development of the concept designs were done in a manner that is not yet consistent with the agency's 2006 site approval action. That action requires the Park Service and Eisenhower Commission to develop concept designs, using the National Historic Preservation Act's Section 106 process, to meet seven design principles developed by NCPC with assistance from the Park Service, DC State Historic Preservation Office, and other interested parties. Section 106 requires federal agencies to take into account the potential effects of projects on historic properties.

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The seven design principles provided by NCPC in 2006 are:

1. Preserve reciprocal views to and from the U.S. Capitol along Maryland Avenue, SW.
2. Enhance the nature of the site as one in a sequence of public spaces embellishing the Maryland Avenue vista.
3. Create a unified memorial site that integrates the disparate parcels into a meaningful and functional public gathering place that also unifies the surrounding precinct.
4. Reflect L'Enfant Plan principles by shaping the memorial site as a separate and distinct public space that complements the Department of Education Headquarters and other surrounding buildings.
5. Respect and complement the architecture of the surrounding precinct.
6. Respect the building lines of the surrounding rights-of-way and the alignment of trees along Maryland Avenue.
7. Incorporate significant green space into the design of the memorial.

The Eisenhower Memorial project will return to the Commission for both preliminary and final design review.

During their meeting the Commission also approved final site development plans for Phase III of the Georgetown Waterfront Park. Members voted to have the National Park Service consider using an alternative Sycamore tree, or another species of comparable size. The Commission previously reviewed this project in January, but deferred consideration to allow the Park Service time to research the feasibility and appropriateness of replacing Sycamore trees planted in 2009.

The alternative Sycamore or other species could replace the existing Sycamore trees, provided that residents of the Watergate provide the Park Service with funds to transplant the existing trees, and purchase and plant the new Sycamores. Phase III of the park stretches from the Thompson Boat Center to the Kennedy Center. The project includes a resurfaced asphalt bikeway, a new asphalt-tile pedestrian promenade, new tree plantings, and other site enhancements.

Before adjourning the Commission approved a report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia regarding a proposed rewrite of three of the District's zoning regulations for motor vehicle parking, bicycle parking, and loading. NCPC commended the District for developing parking and loading regulations consistent with federal policies in the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements and the Monumental Core Framework Plan, and advised the Zoning Commission that the proposed language would not negatively impact any identified federal interests.

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The District seeks to develop new standards that are clear, relevant, and easy-to-use, and that better reflect the city's plans to provide a transportation network with a wider range of transportation options for residents and workers. The project is part of the District's comprehensive review of its zoning regulations, last updated in 1958.

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

- Preliminary and final site development plans for reconstruction of the turf on the three easternmost center panels on the National Mall, Washington, DC;
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for replacement of the Main Naval Exchange at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland;
- Building Improvements at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Headquarters/Robert C. Weaver Building, 451 7th Street, SW, Washington, DC;
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for replacement of the 11th Street Bridge, Washington, DC;
- Approval of a report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for a zoning map and related text amendment to allow expansion of an ice rink and construction of a youth baseball academy, Fort Dupont Park, Washington, DC.

In addition, the Commission delegated two items to the Executive Director for review. The staff recommendations for each project reviewed, as well as related material, are available on NCPC's website.

The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central planning agency in the District of Columbia and surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall planning guidance for federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal projects and memorials, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.

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