

For Immediate Release
May 3, 2018

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NCPC Briefed on Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative

Streetscape Manual Update and District's Smart Lighting Project also Presented

Washington, DC—At the National Capital Planning Commission's (NCPC) May 3 meeting, staff provided an update on the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative, a collaborative multi-agency effort to examine short- and long-term ways to improve the Avenue. The initiative's Executive Committee released its [Findings and Strategies Summary](#) that synthesizes the previously completed Market Study, Cultural Landscape Inventory, and Urban Design Analysis, which includes a follow-up transportation analysis.

There were three major findings based on these studies. While Pennsylvania Avenue has a strong civic identity and character, it doesn't provide a consistently engaging experience. While it is well served by multiple modes of transportation, it is not easy for pedestrians to connect from it to surrounding areas. Real estate is expensive and redevelopment opportunities are limited. From these findings, the Executive Committee developed four goals.

1. Celebrate Pennsylvania Avenue's civic role and build upon its symbolic role by creating more opportunities for people to participate in activities there.
2. Develop the avenue's vital urban landscape in and around awe-inspiring architecture, and create more accessible public spaces and ground floor uses.
3. Reinvigorate the avenue's circulation and mobility for 21st century needs by making it more walkable, improving pedestrian connections, and using the roadway and sidewalks more efficiently.
4. Elevate Pennsylvania Avenue's identity as a great destination by creating an inviting and beautiful setting for daily activities and providing flexible spaces.

Looking forward, the Executive Committee in the short-term (2018-2019) will identify opportunities to improve Pennsylvania Avenue through interim programming and operation improvements, as well as visioning and conceptual urban planning and design work. Mid-term (2019-2022) efforts will develop and evaluate long-term changes to the avenue, and then identify and document solutions through an action plan and, if needed, an update to the 1974 *Pennsylvania Avenue Plan*. Long-term efforts will implement the action plan.

NCPC staff then briefed the Commission on the [Monumental Core Streetscape Project](#), a new interagency initiative to update the 1992 Streetscape Manual. The previous document guided construction details and specifications including roadway and sidewalk pavement, curb and gutter treatment, streetlights' and other street furnishings on and around the National Mall. Between 1992 and 2012, it guided more than 25 projects.

However, with new technologies and other changes to streetscapes, and no major planned roadway improvements anticipated in the near-term, now is a good time to update the document to further connect the National Mall and tie the capital city together through its public realm and streetscapes. NCPC will use the new Streetscape Guide to review future submissions. As part of this effort, NCPC will update lighting standards in the monumental core and coordinate with the city's Smart Street Lighting Project.

Representatives from the Mayor's Office of the City Administrator, Office of Public-Private Partnerships, and the District Department of Transportation, discussed this [Smart Street Lighting Project](#). This initiative will establish a partnership agreement to replace the city's existing streetlights with LED lighting and smart technologies that would have a remote control monitoring and control system, and obtain long-term maintenance services.

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The Commission then approved preliminary site development plans submitted by the Department of the Army for a new security fence at [Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall](#) in Arlington, Virginia, with the exception of the Selfridge and Memorial Gates, which need additional design work. The approximately two-mile long, eight-foot high fence would run parallel to an existing four-foot historic wall that separates the base from Arlington National Cemetery and secure the fort's eastern boundary with the cemetery. The current plans propose a smoother and more linear fence alignment than what the Commission saw at its previous concept review.

The historic wall, predominantly composed of red Seneca sandstone for most of its length, is on Arlington National Cemetery property while the new fence will be on Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall land. The entrances are used for ceremonial and operational purposes, as a number of the base activities support cemetery operations. There are five existing entrances along the historic wall, and proposed new security gates could not be included into the existing wall and piers. The Commission noted that while the new gates would have a negative visual impact on the historic entrances, this could be improved by creating more defined entrances via the design of the new gates and fence. NCPC also found that the submission included enough information to justify the ten-foot distance from the proposed fence from the historic wall.

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

1. Preliminary and final site development plans for perimeter security at the Howard T. Markey National Courts Building, 717 Madison Place, NW. (7809)
2. Preliminary and final site development plans with comments for security bollards at the Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building (U.S. Department of Agriculture), 1400 Jefferson Drive, SW. (7978)
3. Approval of comments to the Council of the District of Columbia regarding the District of Columbia Capital Improvements Plan FY 2019-2024. (0348)
4. Approval of a report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia regarding a Map Amendment from Unzoned to MU-5-B, MIRV Holdings, LLC (Irving Street, NE and Michigan Avenue, NE). (ZC 17-26)

The Executive Director approved five items, under authority delegated by the Commission.

1. Final site development plans for streetscape modifications at the National Law Enforcement Museum, 901 E Street, NW. (6321)
2. Preliminary and final site development plans for front entrance gate alterations at the Embassy of Ghana, 3512 International Drive, NW. (7982)
3. Final site development plans for an emergency landing zone at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, St. Elizabeths West Campus, 2700 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE. (7933)
4. Preliminary and final site development plans for reconfiguration of Gate 6 at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, St. Elizabeths West Campus, 2700 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE. (7983)
5. Approval of a report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia regarding a Zoning Map Amendment at Square 560, Lot 853, 901 3rd Street, NW, 251 Massachusetts Avenue, LLC. (ZC 17-16)

The Chairman approved one item, under authority delegated by the Commission.

1. A transfer of jurisdiction for land area of the Smithsonian Institution's Anacostia Community Museum, 1901 Fort Place, SE (7980)

The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central planning agency in Washington, DC and surrounding counties of Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall 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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