



MEDIA RELEASE

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NCPC Provides Feedback on Peace Corps Commemorative Work Design *Commission Approves Foreign Missions Center Master Plan*

Washington, DC—At its [Thursday, May 2 meeting](#), the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) commented on a concept design for the proposed [Peace Corps Commemorative Work](#) submitted by the National Park Service in collaboration with the Peace Corps Commemoration Foundation. The work will honor the timeless, enduring American ideals on which the Peace Corps was founded. It consists of three components: a central plaza with a map of the world; three granite benches designed as human arms and hands; and a 14-22' high metal pergola with glass blades on top that frames the memorial. The proposed site is a small triangular urban park (approximately 7,200 square feet) bounded by Louisiana Avenue, 1st Street, and C Street, NW that is near the U.S. Capitol Grounds.

While acknowledging its appreciation for the use of an underutilized small triangular park, as opposed to a larger site, NCPC noted that the design did not take into consideration previous Commission comments and that the applicant should explore a more modest design that better fits the site's sensitive natural and historic context. Commissioners expressed concern that the memorial imagery was confusing and that the proposed program overwhelmed this particular site, noting that the removal of two healthy mature trees was especially concerning. The retention of these trees was a specific request in the previous Commission review and continued to be a major point of conversation. Additional concerns were that the height of the pergola and the spacing of its steel supports could negatively impact views to the U.S. Capitol and access to the site by creating a de facto wall along two sides.

A foundation representative acknowledged the Commission's concerns and stated that the design team will re-examine the design to address Commission comments. He also said that while new trees will be added, preserving the two large mature trees is not feasible.

For the next submission NCPC required that the applicant explore a more welcoming memorial design that allows people to enter from all sides; modify the design to ensure that views to the U.S. Capitol are maintained; examine design concepts that preserve all significant trees; and retain more green space to improve stormwater management and provide a parklike setting for visitors. If it is not possible to create a design that responds to site constraints, then the Commission said that the applicant should look again at the possibility of locating the memorial at Reservation 31—Edward R. Murrow Park located at Pennsylvania Avenue and 18th and H Streets, NW—a larger site previously under consideration.

NCPC then provided comments to the U.S. Department of Agriculture on their concept design for perimeter improvements at the 446-acre [National Arboretum](#) located on New York Avenue, NE. Plans include the replacement of 2.4 miles of decorative fencing with new decorative fencing; replacement of 855 linear feet of chain-link fencing with new decorative fencing; realignment of the fence in five locations; and modifications to six of the Arboretum's seven gates. All new fencing will be eight feet in height (two feet taller than the existing fence) to protect against deer jumping over the fence and eating important tree and plant specimens (there are 16,000 types of trees and plants in the Arboretum).

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The Commission supported the plan's general intent to improve the overall appearance and security at the National Arboretum and recommended that a single style of new decorative picket fencing be used that matches the existing one as much as possible. The Commission requested to see a more detailed fence plan in a future submission. They noted that a new gate proposed along Bladensburg Road would function as the future main entrance for both pedestrians and vehicles and that a historic—and currently unused—Art Deco entrance along M Street, NE is proposed as a new pedestrian gate which will provide better accessibility for nearby neighborhoods.

Washington is home to more foreign missions (190) than any other city in the world. To assist foreign nations in finding appropriate locations for their missions, the U.S. Department of State proposes to turn a 32-acre site at the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center into a new [Foreign Missions Center](#). NCPC approved the final master plan that would provide for one million square feet of developable space that could host 11-15 individual chanceries and approximately 2,000 employees at the location on 16th Street, NW.

In its approval the Commission noted its support for the Foreign Mission Center vision and the master plan for the development of new three-four story buildings that are in scale with the surrounding neighborhood, and the reuse of historic buildings, where feasible. NCPC will review individual projects in the Foreign Mission Center as they are proposed.

Before adjourning, the Commission provided feedback to the District of Columbia Department of General Services on a concept design for improvements to the [Eastern Market Metro Park](#) located on six parcels by the entrance to the Eastern Market Metro station. The 6.5-acre site is bound by 7th Street to the west, 9th Street to the east, and D Street to the north and south and is bisected by Pennsylvania Avenue and 8th Street, SE. Components include a new playground, water features, paving, landscaping, public art, signage, trees, and stormwater management.

Commissioners noted their support of the project's overall goals and programs that will create a lively destination and improve an underutilized park but felt that the proposed design was too busy and recommended that it be simplified. They also recommended strengthening the South Carolina Avenue axis as a visual connection through the park because it is an important vista; better integrate the water features to make them more prominent; and minimize proposed shading structures to reduce clutter. They requested that the applicant continue coordinating with the National Park Service to ensure that proposed landscape and streetscape designs along the Pennsylvania Avenue medians are consistent with the rest of the avenue and don't block views of the U.S. Capitol.

Video of the Commission meeting, Commission actions, and related materials are available [online](#) within five days after the meeting.

This month's agenda included three consent calendar items (no presentations were given):

1. Preliminary and final site development plans for targeted accessibility improvements at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, 701 East Basin Drive, NW. (7937)
2. Final site and building plans for a Consolidated Communications Center at Joint Base Andrews, Camp Springs, Maryland. (7902)
3. Preliminary and final site development plans for an antenna installation at Joint Base Andrews. Camp Springs, Maryland. (8065)

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

1. Preliminary site and building plans for renovation of the Patrick Henry Building at Square 457, 601 D Street, NW. (P8068)
2. Approval of comments to the Council of the District of Columbia regarding the closing of a public alley and establishment of a public alley easement in Square 740 - S.O. 18-41587. (8063)
3. Approval of comments on a 35% design for Parcel G at The Yards - Southeast Federal Center. (8067)
4. Approval of a report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia regarding Southeast Federal Center Design Review for Parcel E4 of The Yards - Trapeze School, in a portion of Square 883 - Forest City SEFC, LLC. (ZC 19-07)

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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