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NCPC Approves Final Master Plan for the Smithsonian's Suitland Collections Center

Washington, DC— At its [June 4 meeting](#), the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) approved the final master plan for the Smithsonian Institution's [Suitland Collections Center](#) located in Suitland, Maryland. Since the 1950's the center has been one of the Smithsonian's primary locations to store collections not on display in its museums. However, the growth of its collections storage has not kept pace with collection needs, leading to outdated and overcrowded facilities.

The 110-acre site currently includes 1.3 million square feet of space located in multiple facilities, which the Smithsonian proposes to increase to 2.4 million square feet. This includes a new collection building, relocation of select buildings, and the demolition of outdated facilities. The Smithsonian will implement the plan, which is connected to several other museum projects, in phases over the next few decades.

Commissioners supported the proposed layout of the new storage buildings that would be built around a common open space connecting to the campus' administrative buildings, and appreciated the plan enhancements and changes that were made in response to previous NCPC comments. These include an update to achieve a 1:3 parking ratio (one parking spot per three employees), reduction of the number of parking spaces onsite, and an update to the campus's Transportation Management Plan that will take place in FY 2021. Smithsonian staff will also meet with the National Park Service, Maryland State Highway Administration, and the General Services Administration to discuss ways to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to the nearby Suitland Metro station that are currently unsafe.

While Commissioners agreed that a proposed new perimeter security fence is justified to protect the center's important collections, they deferred looking at specifics such as location, height, clearance zones, and lighting until the Smithsonian submits individual projects at the center for review, which is anticipated to begin around 2030. The Commission also required the Smithsonian to submit an updated security analysis with these future submissions.

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

1. Preliminary and final site and building plans for U.S. Park Police Stables Replacement and Site Improvements, Independence Avenue, SW, South of the JFK Hockey Fields. (8170)
2. Approval of the final master plan for the Southeast Federal Center - Revised Master Plan 2nd Amendment, The Yards, Southeast Washington. (MPO3)
3. Preliminary site development plans for the Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion Defense Access Road Project, Arlington, Virginia. (8173)
4. Preliminary and final building plans for Revised Antenna Replacements at the Harvey W. Wiley Federal Building, 5100 Paint Branch Parkway, College Park, Maryland. (8172)
5. Comments to the Council of the District of Columbia regarding the District of Columbia Capital Improvement Plan FY 2021-2026. (0348)

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

1. Preliminary and final site development plans for the U.S. Department of Justice Robert F. Kennedy Federal Building Flood Barrier, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. (8171)
2. Preliminary site development plans for the Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Avenue Pedestrian Crosswalk Relocation, 1 Memorial Avenue, Arlington, Virginia. (8174)
3. Preliminary and final site development plans for the Chevy Chase Circle Fountain Lighting, Chevy Chase Circle, NW. (8162)
4. Comments to the Council of the District of Columbia for the Closing of a Public Alley in Square 5860 - S.O. 16 - 27269, 740-744 Howard Road, SE. (7841)
5. A report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for a Text Amendment to the Preferred Uses for the Capitol Gateway Zone. (ZC 20-04)
6. A report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for a Text Amendment Regarding Eating and Drinking Establishments in Arts Zones. (ZC 20-05)
7. A report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for a Text Amendment for Six Month Extension of Board of Zoning Adjustment and Zoning Commission Orders. (ZC 20-07)

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

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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