

April 8, 2022

Stephen Staudigl
stephen@ncpc.gov

Julia Koster
julia@ncpc.gov

NCPC Updated on Comprehensive Plan's Federal Workplace Element

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Shares Information on Regional Economic Trends

Washington, DC—At its [Thursday, April 7 meeting](#) the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) heard a report on the status of the **Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital's Federal Workplace Element** update. The Federal Elements are the blueprint for the long-term development of the national capital and are the decision-making framework for Commission actions on plans, proposals, and policies submitted for its review. The element emphasizes Washington as the seat of the federal government; helps agencies efficiently plan for locating federal workplaces to help contribute to the region's economic well-being; promotes resource protection in development and operations; and provides sustainable and healthy work environments.

NCPC released a draft update to the Federal Workplace Element for public comment in July 2019. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting changes to the economy and federal government operations, the update was put on hold except for adoption of amendments to the boundary and definition of the Central Employment Area in March 2021 to make them consistent in the Federal and District Elements.

NCPC is studying the potential long-term impacts of the pandemic on the planning, location, and design of federal workplaces. The pandemic accelerated trends in teleworking (3% pre pandemic which increased to 45% during the pandemic per the U.S. Office of Personnel and Management) and permanently changed the way the federal government operates. To better understand this, NCPC will partner with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to utilize scenario planning to examine the cumulative impacts of federal telework/hybrid workplaces on the region.

The scenario planning will analyze how telework could impact office demand (in 2020 federal workers were 12% of the region's total per the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis); the federal footprint (per General Service Administration statistics, it currently leases more than 45 million square feet of space); the transportation network (per WMATA, one-third of Metrorail's pre-pandemic peak period commuters were federal employees); and federal procurement (approximately 30 percent of the region's economy in Fiscal Year 2017, with \$78 billion procurement spending according to the Stephen S. Fuller Institute for Research on the Washington Region's Economic Future). Each scenario will also examine impacts on climate and equity. Research will take place this fall/winter, followed by the development of key findings and an update to the element in 2023.

Paul DesJardin, COG's Director of Community Planning and Services, shared information about the region's economic trends and COG's efforts to update the region's long-range forecast for population, household, and employment from 2020-2045. The forecast anticipates employment growth from 3,364,000 to 4,244,500; population growth from 5,699,800 to 6,983,500; and an increase in households from 2,129,800 to 2,665,400. The top locations for employment will continue to be the District of Columbia and Fairfax County. The top two locations for households would remain in Fairfax and Montgomery Counties. From April 2020 to February 2022 the region recovered 291,900 jobs and February 2022 employment is at 98 percent of the March 2020 job figures.

—MORE—

"I'm excited that NCPC is working with the Council of Governments on this scenario planning. The federal workforce plays such an important role in the region's economy, and federal workplaces shape both development and transportation patterns," said NCPC Chair Beth White. "This is an incredibly timely briefing, and I look forward to additional information as Washington, like so many other regions, recovers and responds post-pandemic."

This month's agenda included two consent calendar items (no presentations were given).

1. Preliminary and final site development plans for the National Zoological Park Bus Lot Security Fence and Access Modifications, 3001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. (8353)
2. Comments to the Mayor of the District of Columbia on the District of Columbia Capital Improvement Plan FY 2023 - 2028. (0348)

The Executive Director approved one item under authority delegated by the Commission.

1. Preliminary and final site development plans for the Internal Revenue Service New Carrollton Building Sprint Antenna Installations, 5000 Ellin Road, New Carrollton, Maryland. (8352)

[Commission actions and related materials are available online.](#)