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NCPC Provides Feedback on National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial Visitor Center Design *Commission Approves FDA Muirkirk Road Campus Master Plan*

Washington, DC—At its [July 6, 2023 meeting](#) the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) provided feedback on concept plans submitted by Arlington National Cemetery, on behalf of the Pentagon Memorial Fund, for the proposed two-story 50,000 square foot **National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial Visitor Education Center**. It would be located on a 3.71-acre site that is part of the Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion and near the existing memorial. The center would have a 100-space parking lot and bus drop off area.

Commissioners said that the overall site layout and design improved over the past year, with the center now located at the bottom of the hill closest to the memorial. They noted that while the current building design is conceptual it should be further refined to make it more dignified and worthy of its importance and should avoid literal design features.

Because the center site is not immediately adjacent to the Pentagon 9/11 Memorial, pedestrians would have to cross Columbia Pike and travel under Washington Boulevard to access the memorial. The Commission requested that the pathway be more appealing to pedestrians and extend the visitor experience; that the applicant coordinate with local and federal transportation agencies to ensure the route prioritizes pedestrian safety; and look at other forms of transportation to better connect the center, memorial, nearby attractions, and other parking options. They also recommended shrinking the center's proposed parking and adding more trees to provide shade.

The Commission next provided feedback on the **University of the District of Columbia Van Ness Campus Master Plan**. The plan seeks to modernize and upgrade campus facilities to meet future needs, including a modest increase in student, faculty, and staff populations; identifying potential building sites (including potential dorm locations); and making academic spaces in existing buildings more efficient. The plan will guide the 21- acre Northwest Washington campus as transforms into a selective admissions flagship institution.

Commissioners supported the university's objectives, including plans to rehabilitate most on-campus building space; reduce single-occupant vehicle use by students, faculty, and staff; and make the campus more sustainable by installing green roofs, photovoltaic solar arrays, a geo-thermal field, and on-site stormwater management facilities; and increasing trees on-campus.

Commissioners recommended that the final master plan be updated to accurately reflect the proposal to demolish Building #41 and construct a new District of Columbia Archives Building in its place. They also requested that the university coordinate with the U.S. Department of State regarding any potential impacts to the nearby International Chancery Center.

Commissioners provided comments to the District Department of General Services (DGS) on its concept plans to build a new four story, 118,000 square foot **District of Columbia Archives Building** on the University of the District of Columbia Van Ness Campus (UDC). It would replace Building #41 and help the city with its long-term archival preservation needs by providing office, research, exhibit, meeting, archival storage, and document processing space.

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While not a university building, the facility's location on the UDC campus was seen by Commissioners as an opportunity for collaboration. Plans call for it to meet LEED Gold criteria and include solar rooftop photovoltaic panels and a partial green roof, but Commissioners encouraged DGS to consider designing to a LEED Platinum standard.

NCPC approved the final **Food and Drug Administration Muirkirk Road Campus Master Plan** for the 249-acre facility located in Laurel, Maryland. The plan submitted by the General Services Administration provides guidance to consolidate approximately 1,500 additional FDA employees to the campus over the next 10-30 years and 385,000 square feet of development.

Commissioners noted that the Alternative B option was chosen for the final master plan and supported this option because it best balances program needs with the site's unique natural resources and character. NCPC commended the final master plan's approach to green building for future campus development and were pleased that the design eliminated all negative wetland impacts and reduced the amount of impervious surface area previously proposed. Commissioners noted that the final master plan proposed an improved interim parking ratio of 1 (parking space) per 1.33 (employees) within five years and a 1:2 parking ratio by 2030. This would be primarily achieved through population growth and expanded telework policies.

Before adjourning, NCPC staff presented an update on plans for the **Washington Union Station Expansion Project** which seeks to expand and modernize the multimodal transportation facilities at Washington Union Station to meet anticipated increases in rail traffic. Project components include expanded train platforms, and a new central concourse, east-west train hall, underground parking, bus facility, and pick-up/drop off area.

The Commission provided feedback on revised concept plans at its July 2022 meeting. Since then, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) restarted the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and prepared a supplemental draft impact statement that evaluated the impacts of the new preferred alternative. NCPC will send comments on this document to FRA. NCPC does not take formal action on information presentations.

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

The Commission approved two items on the Consent Calendar (no presentations were made).

1. Preliminary and final site development plans for the WMATA Escalator Canopy Program - Phase 4, various locations in Washington, DC. (8043)
2. Final site and building plans for the Fort Belvoir North Area Headquarters Annex, Springfield Virginia. (8433)

The Executive Director approved four items under authority delegated by the Commission. Unless otherwise noted, all projects are in Washington, DC.

1. Preliminary and final building plans for the Stewart Lee Udall Department of Interior Building Antenna Modifications, 1849 C Street, NW. (8469)
2. Preliminary and final site development plans for the Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling Electric Charging Station Pilot Project, 361-362 Cudahey Street, SW. (8471)
3. Preliminary site development plans for the Great Falls Visitor Center Courtyard Rehabilitation, 9200 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, Virginia. (8470)
4. Report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for the Consolidated Planned Unit Development and Related Map Amendment at Square 772, Lot 17, 1232 4th Street, NE. (ZC 22-32)

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.