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NCPC Adopts Updated Comprehensive Plan Introduction Chapter *Commission Approves Small Cell Guidelines for Standalone Poles*

Washington, DC—At its [June 6, 2024 meeting](#) the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) adopted updates to the **Introduction Chapter for the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements***. The Introduction Chapter outlines the planning framework and guiding principles for the Federal Elements. NCPC uses the Federal Elements' policies to guide agency actions, including review of projects and long-range plans that affect federal projects, and master plans. The Commission last adopted the Introduction Chapter in 2016.

The updates include a comprehensive approach and goals related to social, health, and racial equity, as well as environmental sustainability and resiliency. This guidance will inform future element updates and other agency planning initiatives. The updates reflect public input gathered during the update development and formally received over a 90-day public comment period. The update will go into effect 60 days after the publication of the Federal Register notice.

The Commission also approved **equity updates to the agency's Submission Guidelines**. The guidelines assist applicant agencies as they submit projects for NCPC review, and the updates will help them incorporate equity considerations. This update was coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan's Introduction Chapter updates to ensure that the equity principles in both were aligned. The Commission thanked staff for the work and several offered comments linking NCPC's 2024 Centennial observations with the updates' inclusion of historic planning practices.

NCPC approved final site development plans submitted by the National Park Service (NPS) for the rehabilitation of **Parkland at Shepherd Parkway** in Southeast Washington, DC. Parkland is a long, predominately wooded portion of NPS land with a relatively flat open space used by the surrounding community. Plans call for improving the park's design, providing flexible community recreation space including a children's play area, and making it safer and cleaner. Commissioners thought that the design will create a flexible, community-oriented park that appeals to people of all ages and commended the Park Service for coordinating with the community on its park goals.

The Commission approved plans for two District of Columbia projects. The first was preliminary and final site and building plans submitted by the District of Columbia Department of General Services for the modernization and expansion of **Thomas Elementary School**, located at 650 Anacostia Avenue, NE. Originally built in 1946, the school is adjacent to Kenilworth Park South. Work includes the complete rehabilitation and modernization of the classroom wing built in the 1940s. The 1940s auditorium and café wing, along with the portion of the building constructed in the 1960s, will be demolished and replaced by a new addition.

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The second is preliminary and final building plans submitted by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) for **Small Cell Guidelines Update for Standalone Poles**. The guidelines are for the design of proposed standalone small cell poles that would be installed within rights-of-way in Washington. DDOT is the lead agency and liaison with cellular providers and is responsible for permitting small cell facilities within District rights-of-way. DDOT developed the guidelines, with the assistance of NCPC and other federal and District agencies, to guide the placement of small cell facilities through specific criteria related to context, location, and aesthetics. The guidelines do not apply to small cell facilities proposed on federal property. These would need to be submitted by the land-holding federal agency to NCPC for review and approval.

Commissioners commended DDOT for its coordination with stakeholders and responsiveness to feedback received in the development of the standalone small cell pole design. They also supported installing gray-colored small cell poles on streets where the existing streetlights are predominately gray and black-colored poles where the existing streetlights are predominately black.

NCPC and Montgomery Parks Department staff presented an information presentation on a project referred to NCPC by Montgomery Parks under the Capper Cramton Act. The project would reconfigure a 0.4-mile section of **Little Falls Parkway** from a permanent four-lane, median-divided roadway into a permanent two-lane, median-divided cross-section. The Commission anticipates reviewing the project under its Capper Cramton Act responsibilities in early fall. No action is taken on information presentations.

NCPC Chair Teri Goodmann noted that June 6 marked NCPC's Centennial. She read into the record a letter from President Joe Biden congratulating the Commission on its 100-year anniversary.

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

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

1. Preliminary and final building plans for the Hubert H. Humphrey Building Antenna Upgrades, 200 Independence Avenue, SW. (8547)
2. Preliminary and final building plans for the Lafayette Building Antenna Upgrades, 811 Vermont Avenue, NW. (8548)
3. Preliminary and final building plans for the James V. Forrestal Building Antenna Upgrades, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW. (8549)
4. Preliminary and final building plans for the GSA Headquarters Building Antenna Upgrades, 1800 F Street, NW. (8550)
5. Preliminary and final building plans for the National Capital Parks Headquarters Building Antenna Installation, 1100 Ohio Drive, SW. (8551)

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.