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NCPCC Provides Input on National Mall Telecom Infrastructure Concepts

Commission Approves Long Bridge Corridor-South Section Plans

Washington, DC—At its [Thursday, January 8 meeting](#) the National Capital Planning Commission provided comments on concept plans submitted by the National Park Service for **National Mall and Memorial Parks Telecommunications Infrastructure Improvements**. The Park Service seeks to create a planning and technical framework to guide wireless telecommunications infrastructure installations across the National Mall and surrounding areas to improve cellular service fivefold for visitors. The plan would provide guidance for the necessary infrastructure needed to achieve this goal by looking at potential locations and antenna types.

Commissioners recognized the importance of providing improved cellular service and supported the plan's goals to evaluate potentially acceptable wireless telecommunications infrastructure typologies in way that minimizes impacts to the public realm. NCPCC's primary concern is that new infrastructure does not negatively impact the Mall's unique setting and nationally significant viewsheds. They requested that the National Park Service work with cellular carriers and industrial designers to develop unified designs for new stand-alone poles, adapted or replicated light fixtures, any yet-to-be-developed solutions, and related equipment cabinetry in consultation with the NCPCC, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and the District State Historic Preservation Office.

The Commission approved final site development plans submitted by the National Park Service, on behalf of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, for the **Long Bridge Corridor Project-South Section**. Part of a larger 1.8 mile project, this portion covers the 0.5-mile section of the corridor that crosses over the Potomac River and the George Washington Memorial Parkway. It includes a new rail bridge that will parallel the existing Long Bridge and a new combined pedestrian/bicycle bridge that will also cross the river and parkway between Ohio Drive, SW and Arlington, Virginia's Long Bridge Park. It will provide ramp and stair connections to the Mount Vernon Trail.

Commissioners supported the project's goals to expand rail capacity and service. They appreciated the applicant's response to previous NCPCC comments regarding design features including bridge materials and widening the pedestrian bridge from 16 to 20 feet. NCPCC approved the project's north section on April 3, 2025.

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The Commission provided comments on concept plans submitted by the Smithsonian Institution for the **National Zoological Park Construct New Arabian Leopard Habitat**. Plans call for a new Arabian Leopard exhibit in the north of the zoo with a fully enclosed habitat, care facility, and visitor viewing areas. The National Zoo Conservation Biology Institute has a working relationship and shared goal with Saudi Arabia's Royal Commission for AlUla to conserve the endangered Arabian Leopard species. The exhibit would create a program similar to that with the pandas that seeks to breed Arabian Leopards and share the story of their conservation and rewilding.

The Commission supported the project's goals and the Smithsonian's preferred design that would include a low arched, clear-span screen enclosure, a simple leopard building with low massing, and the integration of stone and other natural materials found in the zoo. They recommended that the applicant continue to refine the habitat design and provide a landscape plan and proposed signage/wayfinding in the next submission.

Before adjourning, the Commission heard an information presentation on the **East Wing Modernization Project** by White House representatives and the project architect. No action is requested or taken on information presentations. This was an opportunity for Commissioners to learn about the project and ask questions. NCPC will formally review the project in the future.

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

The Commission approved four items on the Consent Calendar (no presentations were made). Unless otherwise noted, the projects are in Washington, DC.

1. Preliminary and final site development plans for the Smithsonian Gardens Street Tree Fence Design, Constitution Avenue, NW between 15th and 12th Street, NW. (8442)
2. Adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements, National Capital Region. (CP01)
3. Approval of the final Submission Guidelines Update, National Capital Region. (8497)
4. Preliminary site and building plan approval for the New District of Columbia Engine Company 7, 1101 Half Street, SW. (8718)

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The Executive Director approved 12 items under authority delegated by the Commission. Unless otherwise noted, the projects are in Washington, DC.

1. Preliminary and final building plans for the Prettyman Courthouse AT&T Antenna Installation, 333 Constitution Avenue, NW. (8705)
2. Preliminary and final building plans for the Washington VA Medical Center New Rooftop Mechanical Units, 50 Irving Street, NW. (8727)
3. Preliminary and final building plans for the American Pharmacists Association Building AT&T Antenna Installation, 2215 Constitution Avenue, NW. (8728)
4. Preliminary and final building plans for the Veterans Affairs Headquarters Building Verizon Wireless Communications Facility Relocation, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW. (8730)
5. Preliminary and final building plans for the National Capital Parks Headquarters Building T-Mobile Antenna Installation, 1100 Ohio Drive, SW. (8731)
6. Preliminary and final site and building plans for the National Institutes of Health Animal Center Building 102, Wings A and B Electrical Outbuilding, 16701 Elmer School Road, Dickerson, Maryland. (8586)
7. Preliminary and final site development plans for the Joint Base Andrews Replacement Aircraft Communication Arrays, 4598 Yorktown Road, Clinton, Maryland. (8722)
8. Preliminary and final site development plans for the Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall New Boingo Antenna, Fort Myer, Virginia. (8720)
9. Report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for the Text Amendment to Subtitle K, Section 605.1, Front Setback. (ZC 12-08E)
10. Report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for the Map Amendment at Square 621, Lot 860, 1010 North Capitol Street, NW. (ZC 25-02)
11. Report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for the Text Amendment to Subtitle U, Section 514.3 at Square 2557, Lot 800, 1781 Florida Avenue, NW. (ZC 25-10)
12. Report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for the Text Amendments to Modify and Clarify Various Provisions of 11-DCMR (DC Municipal Regulations). (ZC 25-12)

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.