

QUARTERLY

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER | 2005

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION



**AN AWARD
WINNING
YEAR**

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NCPC RECEIVES HONORS FOR EXCELLENCE IN PLANNING



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2005 was an award-winning year

for the National Capital Planning Commission. The most recent accolades came from the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA), which honored NCPC with two awards during a special gala on November 8, 2005. More than 180 guests attended to recognize those who have helped to re-establish the importance of planning in the Washington region.

APA's National Capital Area Chapter's distinguished awards committee acknowledged NCPC's *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* as an excellent plan that advances the science and art of planning in the greater Washington region. The plan recognizes that the nation's capital is a unique region with special needs. The city serves as the center of federal government, a hub for foreign missions and international organizations, and a prime visitor attraction, while also setting standards in transportation, preservation, and open space planning. The seven elements of NCPC's Comprehensive Plan outline broad visions, goals, and policies for federal development in the National Capital Region and detail how to accomplish these goals through an achievable action plan. The Comprehensive Plan is available in print or online at www.ncpc.gov.

“The nation’s capital has distinct planning and development needs that set it apart from other major cities. The plans for which we have been recognized this year all serve to reinforce the standards that have made Washington a world-class capital city. It is an honor to be recognized for our work on these important planning initiatives.”

John V. Cogbill, III
NCPC Chairman



The second award from APA's local chapter honored NCPC's vision for the Circulator transit system. The Circulator is a hop-on/hop-off bus system that complements existing transit options in Washington, moving people conveniently and inexpensively to businesses, restaurants, and key attractions. NCPC introduced the concept of the Circulator in its 1997 *Legacy Plan*, the agency's visionary framework for future development in the capital city. Two of the four potential Circulator routes introduced in *Legacy* began service in July and are steadily gaining ridership with approximately 4,000 riders each weekday and 2,000 riders a day on weekends.

Earlier in 2005, APA recognized the National Capital Planning Commission with two national awards. NCPC's *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* won the Current Topic Award for its planning efforts to promote Safe Growth; and APA's Federal Planning Division selected NCPC's *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* for its Outstanding Sustainable Planning award. We hope in 2006 to generate more successful planning ideas that will help to further Washington's image as a capital city worthy of the nation.

JOINT FORUM EXPLORES THE GREENING OF AMERICA'S CITIES



The National Capital Planning Commission and the Casey Trees Endowment Fund brought together some of the best minds in planning and design to discuss the importance of green spaces in urban areas during a joint symposium held November 28 through December 1. During the four-day conference, a panel of experts discussed how trees, parks, greenways, open space, and green roofs all contribute to the vitality, economy, and functionality of urban areas.

A public event, held at the U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center, capped off three days of thoughtful, strategic discussions on the needs and benefits of green spaces in the District of Columbia and other cities across the country. Many participants acknowledged the District's abundance of green space, but they emphasized the need for federal and city stewards to develop a shared vision for its use. At the event, NCPC announced its plans to develop such a shared vision through a joint initiative called CapitalSpace. NCPC will partner with the District of Columbia and the National Park Service to develop a planning framework for federal and local parks in the District in early 2006.

Charles Jordan, chairman of the Conservation Fund, served as the keynote speaker at the public event. He highlighted the importance of building communities and praised the CapitalSpace initiative as an excellent opportunity to connect people to each other and to the land. Drew Becher of the District of Columbia's Office of Planning said, "CapitalSpace is a plan we can all sign onto, enjoy, and be proud of."

NCPC and Casey Trees plan to issue a summary of each of the panelist's findings in 2006.

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"As the nation's capital, Washington should serve as a model for how greening can transform neighborhoods."

Gil Kelley, Director of Planning
City of Portland



Anzac Parade, Canberra's major ceremonial avenue, is lined with nearly a dozen memorials.



NCPC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DELIVERS KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT AUSTRALIAN SUMMIT

In a keynote address at Canberra's first Biennial Summit of Architecture and Design, NCPC Executive Director Patricia Gallagher described the development and implementation of NCPC's *Legacy Plan*. The *Legacy Plan* holds special meaning for Australian planners and designers because it served as a model for Canberra's new long-range plan—the Griffin Legacy. The Griffin Legacy builds on the vision for Canberra, conceived by Walter Burley Griffin, an American architect who won an international competition in 1911 to design Australia's capital. Like NCPC's *Legacy Plan*, the Griffin Legacy respects the original plan for the capital and balances urban design and development with the city's long-term needs.

The summit, which focused on Canberra's potential to become an international leader in design, was a joint endeavor among the National Capital Authority, Canberra's planning agency; the Australian Capital Territory, Canberra's local government; and the University of Canberra.

Ms. Gallagher, accompanied by Public Affairs Director Lisa MacSpadden, met with numerous planning officials during the visit, including the Minister for Local Government, Territories, and Roads and the Minister for Health and Planning. Ms. Gallagher and Ms. MacSpadden participated in workshops with Canberra's federal planning staff on preparing a comprehensive plan for a national capital and fostering public involvement in the planning process. They toured Canberra's federal precinct and visited the Anzac Parade, home to many of Australia's national memorials. In Sydney, Ms. Gallagher and Ms. MacSpadden met with some of the harbor city's top planning professionals and visited several historic buildings and renowned architectural icons, including the Queen Victoria Building, the Opera House, and Harbour Bridge.

The visit provided an excellent opportunity for the exchange of ideas and laid the groundwork for some of the discussions planned for the next Capitals Alliance meeting, which will be held in Canberra in early 2007.

CHARLES ATHERTON—IN MEMORIAM



The National Capital Planning Commission was deeply saddened to learn of the tragic and untimely death of Charles Atherton, long-serving Secretary of the Commission of Fine Arts. Mr. Atherton played a key role in the development of Washington from a sleepy Southern town at the dawn of President Kennedy's Administration to a town fully reflective of L'Enfant's 18th-century vision of stately grandeur.

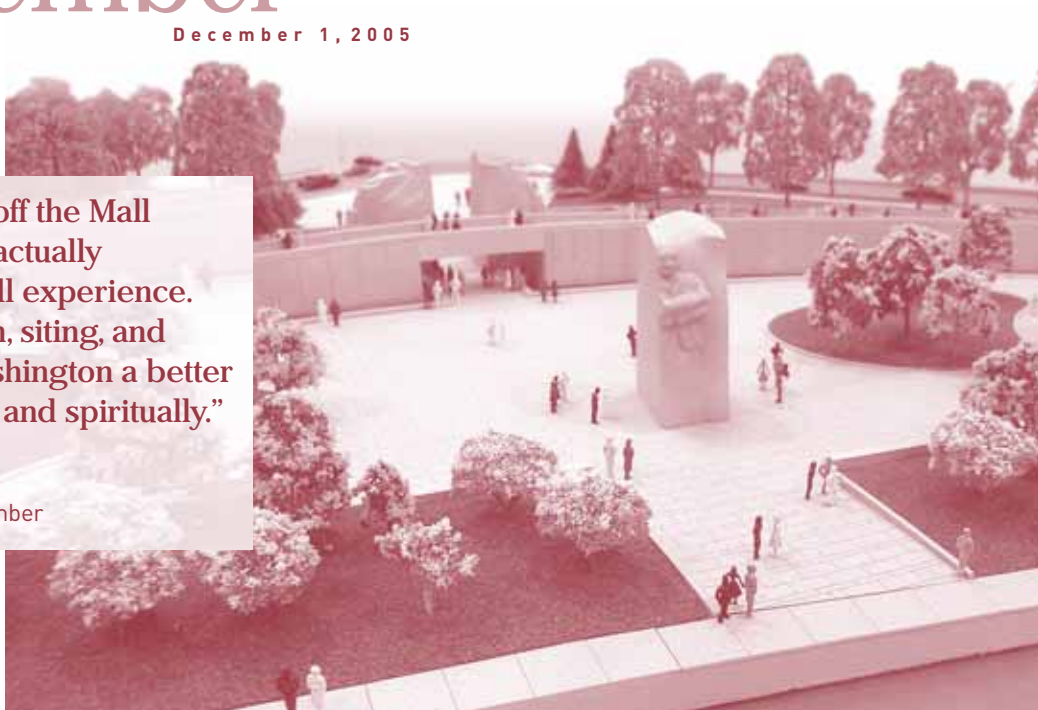
For 39 years, as Secretary of the Commission of Fine Arts, Mr. Atherton worked alongside the National Capital Planning Commission, overseeing the design of monuments and federal buildings,

including most notably the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the National World War II Memorial. Mr. Atherton had also been a member of the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission and the Joint Task Force on Memorials, which contributed to the development of NCPC's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*, a tool that now guides the location of commemorative works in the nation's capital. Mr. Atherton retired on May 30, 2004, the day the World War II Memorial was dedicated.

A creative thinker, esteemed colleague, and respected leader, Mr. Atherton helped to shape Washington into a grand and worthy American capital.

“The fact that it is off the Mall the way that it is actually enhances the Mall experience. I think its location, siting, and design make Washington a better place, artistically and spiritually.”

Donald W. Murphy
NCPC Commission Member



CONCEPT DESIGN FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL MOVES FORWARD

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial design concept received a unanimous endorsement from members of the Commission.

The proposed memorial, authorized in 1996 by President Clinton, has two signature elements—a “Mountain of Despair” and a “Stone of Hope.” At the entry portal, two stone blocks are parted, as if split in half, and a single stone, representing the missing piece from the original boulder, is pushed back into the horizon. The Stone of Hope depicts Dr. King emerging from the Mountain of Despair in a movingly symbolic tribute to his powerful role in America’s historic civil rights era.

Other notable design elements include: (1) a landscape proposal that seamlessly integrates the memorial’s setting with the Tidal Basin; (2) a water wall, with a gradation of water intensity that serves as an effective metaphorical reference to Dr. King’s orations, and also visually relates to the water in the Tidal Basin; (3) the overall crescent shape of the memorial, which creates a dynamic tension within the triangular-shaped site; and (4) placement of parking along West Basin Drive, thus locating all transportation activities near the FDR memorial.

The Commission agreed with several staff recommendations for enhancing the project, including removal of the horizontal bridge portion of the Memorial Walk and modifications to the entrance portal through the Mountain of Despair to improve visitor movement and the view of the Stone of Hope. The Commission also asked the National Park Service to coordinate on the size, location, and programmatic requirements for a Ranger and Visitor Information Kiosk.

NCPC previously reviewed this project in 1999, when it approved the memorial’s four-acre site, a triangular-shaped parcel of land at West Potomac Park on the Tidal Basin’s northwestern side. The site offers views of the Washington Monument and the Jefferson Memorial.

“I support this project unequivocally. I wish all of our decisions were this easy.”

Herbert F. Ames
NCPC Commission Member

STAFF BRIEFS COMMISSION MEMBERS ON CAPITALSPACE

During the December meeting, staff from NCPC's Planning Research and Policy Division briefed the Commission on CapitalSpace, an exciting new parks initiative for the nation's capital.

Almost 20 percent of land in Washington, D.C. is devoted to parks and open space. Open space includes community parks, the formal circles and squares established by the L'Enfant Plan, neighborhood "pocket parks," and large forested areas. However, ownership and management of this land is shared by a variety of government agencies and, occasionally, nonprofit organizations.

Recognizing that coordinated management of the land could enhance the parks and avoid duplicated efforts, NCPC is joining forces with the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation, the D.C. Office of Planning, and the National Park Service to develop CapitalSpace. NCPC will direct the 18-month study. The goals of this initiative are to achieve a seamless network of urban parks; manage the conflicting demands placed on parks and clarify appropriate uses; and share scarce resources to design, program, and maintain our parks and open space to the highest possible standards.

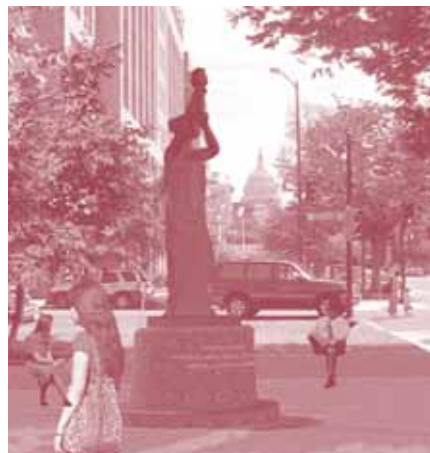
Throughout the process, public input will be sought and incorporated, leading to a final plan slated for release in summer 2007. To learn more about this initiative, contact CapitalSpace@ncpc.gov.

COMMISSION APPROVES MEMORIAL TO VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM

At its October and November meetings, respectively, the Commission approved preliminary and final site and building plans for the Victims of Communism Memorial, a new international memorial that will honor the memory of the more than 100 million victims of communism worldwide.

The memorial will be located in Northwest Washington, D.C. on a nearly 3,500-square-foot triangular site situated at the intersection of Massachusetts and New Jersey Avenues. The location, approved by the Commission in April, provides a direct view to the U.S. Capitol and is one of 100 memorial or museum sites proposed in NCPC's 2001 *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*.

The site plan features a 900-square-foot paved plaza with a 10-foot-high sculpture atop a stone pedestal. The sculpture, a bronze female figure, is modeled after the "Goddess of Democracy" statue built in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989 by pro-democracy students. The statue will stand in front of a low curved granite seating area, and three ornamental trees, located southeast of the statue, will provide a shady grove for visitors. The unpaved portion of the site will remain a green space.



The site will feature a 10-foot-high bronze figure modeled after the Goddess of Democracy sculpture built in Tiananmen Square.



The entry portal to Lincoln Hall is designed as a ceremonial space, enclosed by a glass and steel canopy.



ANTENNA AT BOLLING AIR FORCE BASE TO SERVE NEW COAST GUARD STATION

The Commission commented favorably on preliminary and final site and building plans for the installation of an antenna tower with two antennas for a new Coast Guard station at Bolling Air Force Base in Southeast Washington, D.C. The station will include a 10,000-square-foot building, and the antenna tower will be located at the proposed station building's site. Plans for the building will be submitted to the Commission at a later date.

ZONING CHANGES PROPOSED IN DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The Commission concluded that several proposed changes to the Downtown Development District would not adversely affect the federal interest or be inconsistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*. The changes include the creation of a sub-area in the Mount Vernon Triangle section of the Downtown Development District; the inclusion of Square 483 in the Downtown Development District; and the rezoning of Square 483 from C-3-C to DD/C-3-C, which retains high-density commercial use with increased square footage of mixed use and residential development. The proposed zoning district is designed to increase street vitality and retail activity along the major spines of the Mount Vernon Triangle area.

NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY AT FORT MCNAIR EXPANDS

The Commission approved final site and building plans for Lincoln Hall, a new three-story building to be located at the National Defense University at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Southwest Washington, D.C. This 250,900-gross-square-foot building will provide the National Defense University with additional classroom, meeting, and conference space. Lincoln Hall will be located on 5th Avenue north of the existing Marshall Hall, to which it will be connected via a shared atrium corridor.

COMMISSION APPROVES ACCESS CONTROL POINT AT FORT MCNAIR

The Commission approved preliminary site and building plans for a new security entrance into Fort Lesley J. McNair at the intersection of Q and 2nd Streets, SW. The new entrance will provide secure entry and exit for visitors and staff on foot or in vehicles. As part of its preliminary approval, the Commission required the Army to reassess its use of wide-edged precast concrete at the guardhouse and inspection station; provide additional details and illustrations on certain aspects of the project; and continue consulting with NCPC, the Commission of Fine Arts, and the D.C. Office of Planning on the perimeter fence at 2nd Street and Potomac Avenue. The existing ceremonial entry gate at P Street will remain functioning for essential employees and for exiting, but a temporary access entry at 2nd and P Streets, SW will be closed and removed once the new gate is completed.



A new inspection complex will provide secure entry at Fort McNair.

October

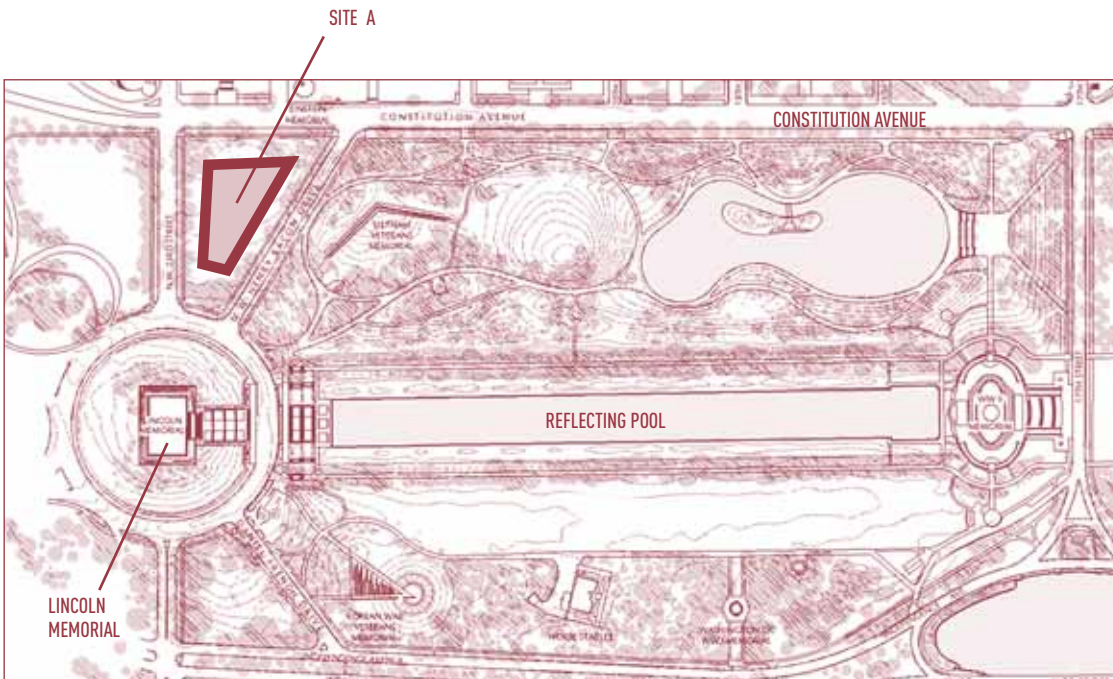
October 6, 2005

SITE SELECTION IS UNDERWAY FOR THE PLANNED VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL VISITOR CENTER

The National Park Service—on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund—submitted a preferred site for a new visitor center to serve the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The site proposed by the Park Service is located on the grounds of the Lincoln Memorial, between Constitution Avenue, 23rd Street, and Henry Bacon Drive. Known as Site A, this is one of two locations that the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) recommended to the Department of the Interior in May 2005 to advance to NCPC and the Commission of Fine Arts. The other site recommended by NCMAC is the South Building of the Department of the Interior, known as Site E.

In reviewing plans for a commemorative work, the Commission is guided by the Commemorative Works Act, which requires NCPC to ensure that submitted projects do not encroach upon existing commemorative works or public open space. Further, an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is required under the Commission's environmental policies and procedures for site selection for commemorative works.

At its October review, the Commission neither approved nor disapproved Site A as a location for the Visitor Center. During the debate on this important issue, some Commissioners raised questions about the center's potential impact on the vistas and landscape of the Lincoln Memorial. They argued that if the center were located at Site A, elements such as skylights, paved areas, and grade changes would be visible from the steps and terrace of the Lincoln Memorial. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Commissioners requested additional information on how these elements—as well as excavation and increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic generated by the new center—would affect the historic surrounding elms, the physical setting, and the visitor experience at the western end of the Mall.



Site A, upper left, is the National Park Service's preferred site for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center.

The Commission asked that the Park Service provide information on the proposed building program so that potential above-ground impacts could be better understood. It also asked the Park Service to evaluate additional sites that might suit the project's needs, including the building yard between the Interior South Building and Constitution Avenue and Site G, located between 23rd Street and Constitution Avenue. In addition, staff noted that all required environmental information would be needed in order to complete the NCPC review. Commission looks forward to reviewing this information when the project is resubmitted.

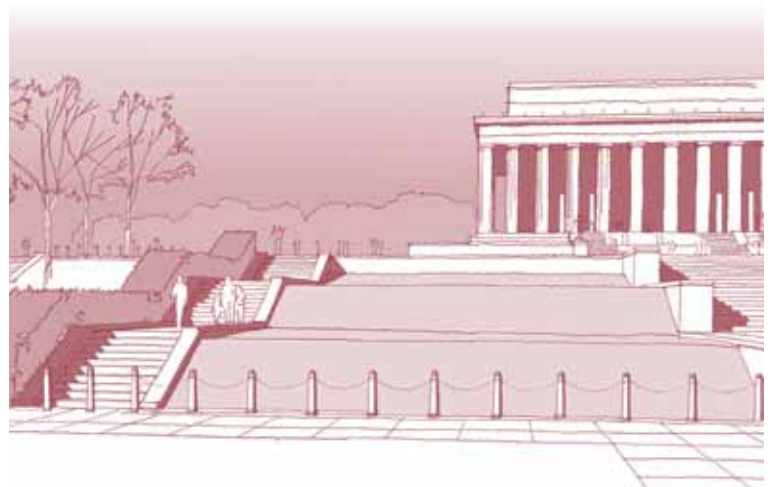
SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL PROCEED

The Commission gave preliminary site development approval for the location and design of a vehicle security barrier on the east side of the Lincoln Memorial. The plans include a line of bollards crossing Memorial Circle near its intersection with French and Bacon Drives, descending the outer sides of the memorial's lower stairs (inside four-foot-high hedges), and continuing across the memorial's lower stairs.

The National Park Service (NPS) sought final plan approval, but because NPS has not concluded consultation with the D.C. State Historic Preservation

Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, as required under the terms of a memorandum of agreement, the Commission was unable to consider final approval. In its preliminary approval, the Commission required that NPS provide examples of the proposed security elements on site prior to returning for final approval.

The proposed security boundary at the base of the lower stairs of the memorial is derived in part from a design by landscape architect Laurie Olin, proposed in NCPC's 2002 *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan*. Changes from the original idea include enclosing some of the bollards inside hedges. The submission is part of a larger Lincoln Memorial project previously approved by the Commission that includes roadway and sidewalk reconstruction and the addition of two concession buildings.





GEORGETOWN WATERFRONT PARK

The Commission approved revised preliminary plans for a proposed Georgetown Waterfront Park landscape design at three overlooks. This represented a modification of the previous plan by removing all tall or vertical design elements and selecting a single paving granite material. Each overlook will consist of granite sidewalks, a red granite bench, and a granite interpretive backdrop element. The exact configuration and design of the interpretive element will differ at each overlook, but all will relate to the history of the Georgetown waterfront. The Commission requested that they receive material samples and a complete description and details of the proposed landscaping, paving, structural layout, and artwork as final plans for the overlook area are developed.

EPA'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE GOALS ADVANCED

The Commission recently approved the placement of a high frequency antenna in downtown Washington—part of a nationwide communications network to facilitate emergency responses and continuity of operations during emergencies. The General Services Administration received five-year approval of its preliminary and final site and building plans for an antenna, support masts, and associated equipment, which will sit atop the historic Ariel Rios Building at 12th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. The Commission was satisfied that the project adheres to federal regulatory and planning environmental standards and requirements. The Commission shared GSA's assessment that the project will not compromise the building's eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

FORT MCNAIR'S REVISED TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT PLAN MEETS APPROVAL

The Department of the Army's revised Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for Fort Lesley J. McNair is a step in the right direction toward encouraging employees and visitors to use public transportation to reach this historic military facility—one of only 16 focal points in L'Enfant's plan for Washington. The TMP, in accordance with the Highway Authorization Bill President Bush recently signed into law, calls for shuttle services between Metrorail transit stations and Fort McNair. The Commission approved the implementing plan and requested a demonstration of compliance from Fort Myer's Military Community in an annual report to the Commission beginning on September 1, 2006 and every year thereafter until the next full TMP update.

CommissionNotes

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

A small delegation from Canberra, Australia visited NCPC on November 9 to discuss NCPC's role in tourism. The Australian delegation is researching how the capitals of Australia, Canada, and the United States promote their cities and, in particular, how the activities of planning agencies intersect with tourist-related issues. The delegation was particularly interested in the Visitor Element of NCPC's *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*; NCPC's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* and its influence on creating symbolic spaces beyond the National Mall; and the impact of security barriers on the tourist experience. The delegation plans to share its findings with NCPC once it finalizes a report.

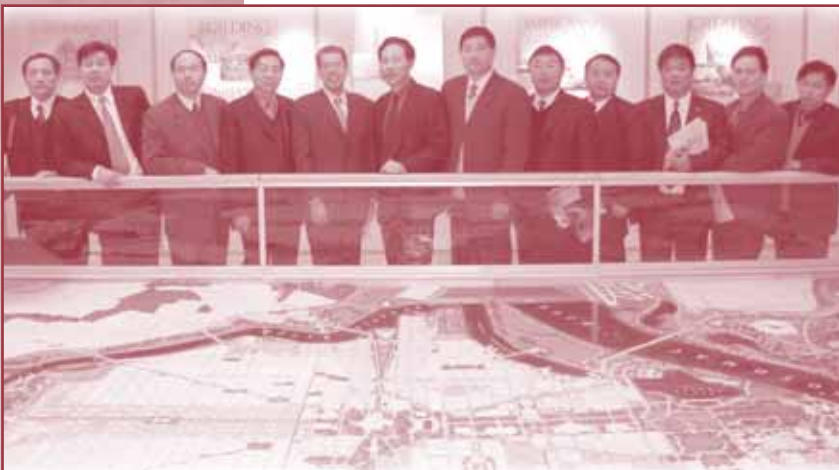
On December 8 Deputy Executive Director Marcel Acosta and NCPC staff met with a delegation of government officials and business representatives from China's Jiangsu province. The visitors, who represent government planning, construction, and property bureaus as well as chambers of commerce, learned about NCPC's role in planning for America's capital. The delegates expressed great interest in how the Commission balances federal and local interests and were quite interested in the agency's long-range visionary plans for the capital city. The representatives were participating in a professional exchange between the United States and China.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

An era has come to an end. **David Hamilton**, who served in project review at NCPC longer than anyone else in the agency's history, retired at the end of December after 25 years with NCPC. He managed numerous projects during his tenure including the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; the World War II Memorial; the National Museum of the American Indian; design concepts for the Washington Monument grounds; the Korean War Veterans Memorial; and the German-American Friendship Garden. For two years he worked on the *Legacy Plan*, helping bring to fruition NCPC's long-range plan for our nation's capital. Mr. Hamilton, a professional freelance photographer, also served as NCPC's unofficial staff photographer. NCPC will miss his warm presence, charming manner, and bowties. We thank him for his many years of valued service and wish him well with his future endeavors.

The agency also bids farewell to **Nicole Green-Catten** who is relocating to Arizona where she will work as a planner/urban designer with the City of Surprise. Ms. Green-Catten first came to NCPC as an intern in 1993 while studying at Howard University. She completed a three-year internship and returned to NCPC in 2002 as a community planner in the Technology Development and Applications Division. Since that time, Ms. Green-Catten has been instrumental in several projects, including NCPC's *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* and the agency's work in identifying sites for the proposed Department of Homeland Security headquarters. We wish Ms. Green-Catten and her family all the best in Arizona.

Angela Roach, a program and management analyst in NCPC's Office of Administration, recently returned from Baton Rouge where she supported FEMA's Hurricane Katrina Recovery effort in their Joint Field Operations. Ms. Roach worked with the contracting unit where she was primarily responsible for preparing leases for travel trailers and mobile homes to house hurricane evacuees.



QUARTERLY

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The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's planning agency in the District of Columbia and surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall planning guidance for federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal construction projects, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.

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