



Smithsonian Institution

NEPA Public Scoping/Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting #2 Notice
National Air and Space Museum - Construct Integrated Bezos Learning Center

September 29, 2023

Dear Interested Party:

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) announce the opportunity to provide public comment, to attend an online public scoping meeting, and a separate public site tour as part of the initiation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the Construct Integrated Bezos Learning Center project, an addition to the east end of the National Air and Space Museum (NASM), on the National Mall in Washington D.C.

The purpose of the proposed project is to build and operate a world class center for education based at the National Air and Space Museum (NASM). The new Bezos Learning Center (BLC) will fulfill the need for: a pan-Institutional resource overseen by NASM that will engage all students and teachers, with a particular focus on under-resourced communities in Washington, DC and across the nation, both at the National Mall site of the new facility and virtually through remote capabilities; a 600- to 700-seat restaurant accessible from the Museum's main level; a public Astronomy Park; and a permanent location for the Phoebe Waterman Haas Observatory on the East Terrace.

The proposed project is subject to the review of the NCPC under the National Capital Planning Act. NCPC will serve as the lead and responsible federal agency and work with SI as project owner to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NCPC and SI will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with this project, in accordance with NEPA. The preparation of the EA will enable SI and NCPC to evaluate and analyze the environmental impacts of the project and alternatives under consideration. Concurrently, SI will conduct consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

SI and NCPC invite you to attend an online joint NEPA Public Scoping/Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting #2 that will take place on November 1, 2023 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. The meeting will include a brief presentation about the project, a discussion of the project's purpose and need, proposed project alternatives under consideration, and issues to be analyzed in the EA. Attendees must register in advance at <https://www.ncpc.gov/projects/8351/> for the combined meeting. Those registered for Consulting Parties Meeting #2 do not need to complete an additional registration.

A site tour will be conducted by Smithsonian Institution and National Capital Planning Commission staff on Monday, November 6 from 9:30 – 10:30 am, to provide an opportunity to understand the NASM site, location of the addition, and its relationship to the National Mall, other museums, and important viewsheds. Please email preservation@si.edu to register for the tour. Tour participants should meet at the northwest corner of Jefferson Drive SW and Fourth Street SW.

Should a federal government shutdown interfere with implementing the above plans, we will reschedule when normal operations resume and adjust the comment period accordingly.

SI and NCPC will accept comments concerning the scope of issues to address in the EA through Monday, November 16, 2023. Comments received during the scoping period will be used to refine alternatives and inform the EA analysis. SI and NCPC will accept comments at the public scoping meeting or comments can be submitted in writing via mail or email to:

Smithsonian Institution
Attn: Jane Passman
PO Box 37012
MRC 511 Suite 5001
Washington, DC 20013-5012
preservation@si.edu

We look forward to meeting with you online on November 1. and in person for the site tour on November 6. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

To request accessibility services, please email preservation@si.edu, one week in advance of the program. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact NCPC at info@ncpc.gov or 202-482-7200 or preservation@si.edu.