Dear Interested Party:

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) is developing a Master Plan for the South Mall Campus located on the National Mall in Washington D.C. The South Mall Campus encompasses the Smithsonian campus from the Freer Gallery of Art on the west to the Hirshhorn Gallery and Sculpture Garden on the east, between Independence Avenue and the National Mall. The purpose of the Master Plan is to improve the alignment between Smithsonian facilities and their strategic plan, increase public access and realize benefits from the efficiencies of an integrated plan. Preparing a Master Plan will allow the SI to optimize the benefits of connections between projects and to take advantage of cost and space saving synergies among facilities. A primary goal of the Master Plan is also to improve and expand visitor services and education by providing spaces for public gatherings and programming as well as retail and food service.

The Master Plan is needed to provide a coordinated approach to revitalize, replace and renovate current buildings and building systems, such as mechanical and electrical systems, within the South Mall area that are reaching the end of their useful life. The Master Plan is also needed to improve access to, circulation within, and visibility of the South Mall Campus

The proposed Master Plan is subject to the review of the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) under the National Capital Planning Act. NCPC will serve as the lead responsible federal agency and work in cooperation with the SI to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NCPC, in cooperation with the SI, will be preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the environmental impacts of a range of alternatives for the Master Plan, in accordance with NEPA. The preparation of the EA will enable the SI and NCPC to evaluate and analyze the environmental impacts of the Master Plan and alternatives under consideration. At the same time, the SI and NCPC will be conducting consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act to take into account the effects of the Master Plan on historic properties.

With this notice, NCPC and SI are announcing the start of the public scoping period for the preparation of the EA in compliance with NEPA requirements. The SI and NCPC invite you to attend a joint NEPA/Section 106 meeting that will take place on Tuesday December 16, 2014 at the Smithsonian Castle in the Commons space on the first floor from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The meeting will be an “open house” format. A brief presentation about the Master Plan will begin
at 5:30 pm and will include a discussion of the purpose and need statement, proposed alternatives under consideration, and issues to be analyzed in the EA.

NCPC and SI will accept comments concerning the alternatives and scope of issues to address in the EA from **December 16, 2014 until January 30, 2015**. Interested parties are also invited to participate in the consultation under Section 106 process. Comments received during the scoping period will be used to refine alternatives and inform the EA analysis. Beginning December 16th, SI and NCPC will be accepting comments at the public scoping meeting, in writing via mail or email, or on the Master Plan website:

http://www.southmallcampus.si.edu

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We look forward to seeing you on **December 16th at the Smithsonian Castle Commons located at 1000 Jefferson Drive SW, Washington, DC**. To request accessibility services, please contact the Smithsonian via email at SpoffordM@si.edu or 202-633-6558, one week in advance of the program. Your participation is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding NCPC’s review of the Master Plan or the NEPA or Section 106 process, please contact Jennifer Hirsch at jennifer.hirsch@ncpc.gov or at 202-482-7239.