



Media only: Linda St. Thomas (202) 633-5188
Fleur Paysour (202) 633-4761

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Site Announced for Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture

The Smithsonian's Board of Regents, the governing body of the Institution, today announced the location for the new National Museum of African American History and Culture. The Regents selected the area of land known as the "Monument site," bounded by Constitution Avenue, Madison Drive, and 14th and 15th streets N.W. The site is adjacent to the Washington Monument and across the street from the National Museum of American History.

The site was selected from among four choices put forth in legislation signed into law by President George Bush on Dec. 16, 2003. The other sites the Regents were asked to consider were:

- The Arts and Industries Building of the Smithsonian Institution, located on the National Mall at 900 Jefferson Drive S.W.
- The site known as the Liberty Loan site, located on 14th Street S.W. at the foot of the 14th Street Bridge
- The site known as the Banneker Overlook site, located on 10th Street S.W. at the foot of the L'Enfant Plaza promenade

"The Regents have chosen an ideal site on the National Mall for the Smithsonian's 19th museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture," said Lawrence M. Small, Secretary of the Smithsonian. "On this historic land, we look forward to working with the various planning commissions, like the National Capital Planning Commission, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Commission of Fine Arts, to build a remarkable museum that will inspire generations of future visitors from around the world with truly American stories of perseverance, courage, talent and triumph, and that is completely consistent and respectful of the iconic symbolism of the Mall."

In order to help guide their decision, the Board of Regents commissioned a thorough engineering study to examine the four locations. The site evaluation study, conducted by Plexus Scientific Corporation and PageSoutherlandPage, examined each site, analyzing location; size; site history and relationship to African American history; vehicular and pedestrian traffic; issues concerning the existing structure itself, where applicable (Arts and Industries Building); availability of

utilities; environmental factors (such as soil, topography and existing landscape); availability of public transportation and parking; surrounding attractions and entertainment; archeological significance; noise levels; and ease of providing security for visitors, staff and collections.

In addition to the engineering study, the Regents consulted with a variety of groups, including members of Congress; the museum's Council; the National Capital Planning Commission; the Commission of Fine Arts; the National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission and federal agencies, as well as the District of Columbia mayor and the public.

The Regents visited each site and received public comments via the Smithsonian's Web site and a November 2005 town hall meeting as part of their efforts to conduct a comprehensive and objective review of the locations

The Smithsonian Board of Regents

Legislation mandated that the Regents choose from these four sites. The legislation that created the Smithsonian Institution (approved by Congress on Aug. 10, 1846) called for the creation of a Board of Regents to govern and administer the organization. This 17-member board, which meets four times a year, includes Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts and the Vice President of the United States Dick Cheney, both ex officio voting members of the Board. The chief justice is the chancellor of the Institution.

Other members of the Board of Regents are three members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the House; three members of the Senate, appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate; and nine citizen members, nominated by the Board and approved by the Congress in a joint resolution signed by the president of the United States. Regents who are representatives and senators serve for the durations of their elected terms. Citizen Regents serve six-year terms.

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