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**4A1 (WASO-PPFL)**

**September 17, 2014**

**Memorandum**

**To:** Regional Directors

**From: For** Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands */s/Lizette Richardson*  
Acting Assistant Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement */s/Karen Knight*

**Subject:** Development Advisory Board Guidance on Design Competitions

The Servicewide Development Advisory Board (DAB) requirements for design competitions are outlined below, and detailed guidance documents are attached. Please ensure that Superintendents and other key personnel receive this memorandum and attachments.

**Updates to Existing Guidance:** Design competitions for park partnership projects have increased over the past several years. They may generate broad public interest, help park partners develop financial and other support, and provide creative solutions to park needs and goals. In 2011, the DAB recognized that parks needed additional design competition guidance. To address that need, the DAB updated its guidelines to clearly state that design competition projects[1] require DAB review prior to initiating a competition. That guidance, originally distributed to Regional Offices in 2011, has been updated and is described in this memorandum.

In 2013, the DAB asked the Washington Office (WASO) Construction Program Management Division (CPM) and the Office of Partnerships and Philanthropic Stewardship (PPS) to develop guidance for parks. In response, they created two tools:

- 1. A Memorandum of Intent (MOI) Template (Attachment A),** which documents initial understandings about the proposed competition and associated project, including the competition requirements, roles, and responsibilities. It also serves to brief Regional Directors and to obtain their support for the competition and proposed project.
- 2. A National Park Service (NPS) Design Competition and Partnership Process Flow Chart (Attachment B),** which outlines how the design competition process flows into the partnership process. It also illustrates how the process coordinates DAB reviews and Director approvals.

**Please Note:**

- DAB review of competitions is consistent with all other current DAB review thresholds. (i.e., Regional DAB review is required for projects estimated to cost \$500,000 - \$1,000,000 and National DAB review is required for projects estimated to cost \$1,000,000 and above.)
- There are several updates to the Partnership Process Flow Chart. First, some updates clarify the required partnership agreement types; others lay out the DAB presentation deadlines for final drafts and fully executed agreements. Second, this flow chart applies to all partnership design and construction projects—not just those associated with design competitions. Third, it also provides links to partnership agreement templates.

**Next Steps—Developing NPS Competition Guidelines:** WASO CPM and PPS will be developing NPS design competition guidelines. When combined with the MOI and flow charts, the DAB believes these guidelines will:

1. Help support parks and partners in making competition decisions,
2. Avoid the time and cost of developing guidelines from scratch, and
3. Establish design criteria appropriate for national parks—including NPS emphasis areas such as climate change, accessibility, sustainability, and addressing impacts to natural and cultural resources.

Once developed, the guidelines will include a Design Competition Agreement template. It should help parks and partners clearly define their respective roles and responsibilities during the competition, and set the stage for subsequent fundraising, design, and construction of the proposed project.

In the interim, the DAB recommends that parks utilize well-tested guidelines, such as those from the General Services Administration and the American Institute of Architects. WASO CPM and PPS will help parks modify these as needed to reflect park and partner-specific goals.

All in all, the guidance, tools, and process are intended to help parks and partners achieve their design competition goals, ensure that both parties are fully engaged in the process, and clarify the NPS and partner roles and responsibilities for all aspects of the design competition and subsequent project.

**Contacts:** Please contact Linda Neal, at 202-354-2187 or Lizette Richardson, at 303-969-2178 if you have any questions or need additional information.

**Attachments**

cc: Regional Line Item Construction Coordinators  
Regional Partnership Coordinators  
Associate Regional Directors

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[1] Exceptions: The design competition guidance and process described herein do not apply to competitions undertaken by schools or universities, when the competition is intended as a student exercise and does not establish public expectations that the NPS will carry out the winning design or project.

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**2 attachments**

 **NPS DESIGN COMPETITION AND PARTNERSHIP PROCESS - Attachment B.pdf**  
71K

 **MOI for Design Competitions - Attachment A.doc**  
51K