



WITH THE OPENING OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN IN 2002, THE McMILLAN PLAN FOR THE MALL WILL BE COMPLETE. FROM THE FOOT OF THE CAPITOL TO THE STEPS OF THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL, ALL OF THE CHOICE MEMORIAL SITES WILL HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED. YET LACK OF SPACE HAS NOT DAMMED THE FLOOD OF REQUESTS. OVER THE NEXT 50 YEARS, WASHINGTON MAY HAVE TO ACCOMMODATE ANOTHER DOZEN MUSEUMS AND UP TO 60 NEW MEMORIALS AND MONUMENTS.

MUSEUMS, MEMORIALS AND THE FEDERAL WORKPLACE

If the Monumental Core is to remain America's national gathering place and at the same time preserve its historic openness, sites for these new museums and memorials must be found outside the Mall, in adjacent neighborhoods and commercial districts that need public investment and some signal from government that they matter. *Legacy* strongly discourages new building on the Mall itself.

Museums and memorials could be prominent features of the redesigned North and South Capitol streets, attracting visitors and residents who might not go there otherwise. If well designed and strategically located, they could spark investment in stores, hotels and office buildings and become sources of community pride and identity.

East Potomac Park, southeast of the Jefferson Memorial, would be an ideal site for smaller memorials. Visible from air, land and water, it could become a significant ceremonial and recreational space for the capital.

The District and federal governments, along with private cultural groups, foresee 8th Street, NW between the National Archives and Mt. Vernon Square as the spine of a growing downtown arts and entertainment district. New museums, theaters and an opera house would complement the National Portrait Gallery, the National Museum of American Art, the new MCI Arena, and the new convention center.

When the McMillan Commission identified sites for new museums and memorials nearly a century ago, the definition of both was widely understood. A museum was a repository of important social and cultural artifacts; a memorial commemorated a significant person or event in our nation's history. Those definitions are changing. Technology has brought us the interactive museum and the virtual museum, the museum with no collection and the museum that we visit only on our computer screens. Memorials today can be events, ceremonies and landscapes as well as heroic objects. *Extending the Legacy* is proposing that the Anacostia waterfront near East Capitol Street become a living environmental memorial in which enjoyment of the river and nature becomes itself an act of commemoration.

This redefinition of museum and memorial will continue into the next century, affecting the scale, siting and symbolism of what is built. Under such fluid conditions, the best thing for planners to do is to devise flexible guidelines that protect the public realm without usurping the prerogatives of future generations.

Monuments and memorials have enduring appeal for all generations.



EIGHTH STREET, NW



The 8th Street, NW arts district will stimulate downtown economic growth.

~
*The new South Capitol Street
Bridge creates a dramatic entrance
to the Core.*
~





Sites that strengthen visual and symbolic connections to the Capitol should have top priority. Locations that reclaim waterfront for public use should likewise be encouraged, such as East Capitol Street or Poplar Point. Whenever possible, new museums and memorials should be integrated into the community to enrich the layering of urban life. They should be welcoming rather than coolly aloof and, whenever possible, accommodate diverse uses.

Similar efforts should be made to modernize and humanize the federal workplace. Computers, faxes and fiber optics are permitting more people to work at home while shrinking the demand for conventional, four-walls-and-a-desk office space. Instead of commuting downtown five days a week, many employees are now using satellite offices closer to home. A single office may be shared by several companies on a rotating basis, each paying a share of the rent and expenses.

It is unclear whether the contraction of the federal government will be permanent or merely a hiatus in an historical pattern of expansion. Either way, a return to the sterile worker warehouses of the past seems unlikely. Employees will continue to come into the office some part of the week. But they will likely come with different expectations, which government buildings must meet.

In the past, government buildings have often frustrated public life, being too big, too remote, too impenetrable. *Extending the Legacy* recommends that future government buildings be incorporated into mixed-use districts that support a range of public activities, including shopping, dining and entertainment. North and South Capitol streets could offer many such opportunities, as will proposed developments at Poplar Point and the Southeast Federal Center.

Improvements can also be made to existing government buildings. The cluster of chilly monoliths that make up the Federal Triangle could be animated by first floor shops, exhibitions and other attractions for employees and visitors. Some might eventually be converted to cultural and tourist uses, in the manner of the Old Post Office and the Pension Building.

Opening the interior courtyards of these buildings would create a Federal Walk from 9th to 15th streets, connecting the Old Post Office to the new Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center and the Ellipse. This network of interior pedestrian streets would complement adjacent grand avenues.

These changes in federal offices and institutions will encourage future generations to think of central Washington not just as a place to erect memorials, but as a place to create a city.



FEDERAL TRIANGLE



New and existing federal buildings can be enlivened with gardens, cafés and art exhibits.



Clockwise, from upper left: New footbridge over Washington Channel • Water taxis serving the Kennedy Center • Arlington National Cemetery • Anacostia waterfront at the Southeast Federal Center