


GAO
 Accountability • Integrity • Reliability
Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-03-1014T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Legislative, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives.

Why GAO Did This Study

GAO has been providing ongoing assistance to the Capitol Preservation Commission and the Senate and House Appropriations Committees in their monitoring and oversight of the Capitol Visitor Center construction project. Given the current decisions facing the Congress, this testimony covers (1) management of the project, (2) the estimated cost for the project, (3) the status of the project's schedule, and (4) actions that Congress and the AOC should consider taking to address funding gaps and other current project issues and risks.

What GAO Recommends

We propose that the Architect of the Capitol and Congress consider taking actions to

- address the gap between the \$303.5 million current funding for the “base project” and the updated estimates;
- consider how best to address costs associated with risks and uncertainties not included in updated “base cost” estimates;
- continue to resolve scope, requirements, estimated costs, and funding sources for unresolved items;
- implement controls for the approval of changes and use of contingency funds;
- continue to resolve contingency tracking and reporting issues; and
- expeditiously develop a comprehensive, integrated master project schedule.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-1014T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Jeanette Franzel (202) 512-9471 or franzelj@gao.gov or Bernard L. Ungar at (202) 512-4232.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

Current Status of Schedule and Estimated Cost

What GAO Found

Recognizing the need for a new facility to provide greater security for all persons working in or visiting the United States Capitol and to enhance the educational experience of visitors who have come to learn about Congress and the Capitol building, Congress authorized the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) to build a new Capitol Visitor Center. The three-story, underground facility, located on the East side of the Capitol, is designed to be a seamless addition to the Capitol complex when completed without detracting from the appearance of the Capitol or its historic landscaping.

Earlier this spring, GAO and the AOC determined that the estimated budget amount of \$303.5 million for the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) “base project” was no longer current. Based on GAO’s recommendation, the AOC hired a contractor to help analyze and update the cost estimate for completion of the base project. GAO’s review of the contractor’s “base cost” estimate analysis identified \$7 million in adjustments, therefore increasing the contractor’s \$344.3 million estimate to \$351.3 million. GAO also conducted a supplemental analysis to identify potential future costs due to additional risks and uncertainties not included in the updated estimates. The result of this supplemental analysis disclosed that these risks and uncertainties could raise the estimated cost to between \$380 million and \$395 million. These potential additional costs do not need to be added to the base project budget now; however, a number of actions need to be taken to mitigate known risks.

The AOC’s May 2003 status report indicates the project is on schedule for substantial completion of the plaza deck in January 2005, substantial completion of the CVC in September 2005, and final completion and opening to the public in December 2005. However, the project is currently experiencing delays and until the AOC compiles a fully integrated schedule, there will not be adequate information to determine whether the estimated completion dates are likely to be met.



Source: The Architect of the Capitol.