



# EXTENDING THE LEGACY: PLANNING AMERICA'S CAPITAL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

## FIRST INITIATIVES REPORT

With earthmovers soon to appear in the South Capitol Street area, implementation of the Legacy Plan is underway. The plan, NCPC's long-range framework that will guide development in Washington's Monumental Core for the next 50 to 100 years, is now poised to move from vision to bricks-and-mortar reality. In the words of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, it is time for "the plan to rise from the paper." In big ways and small, NCPC and its planning partners have begun work on the plan's "First Initiatives"—a variety of projects that will produce immediate, visible benefits within the longer-term framework.



SIGNS OF NEW DEVELOPMENT CAN BE SEEN THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH CAPITOL/ M STREET, SE CORRIDOR.

### REVITALIZATION OF THE SOUTH CAPITOL/M STREET, SE CORRIDOR

The most ambitious initiative is the redevelopment of South Capitol and M Streets, SE, a historic area near the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. The Washington Navy Yard and the Southeast Federal Center, both of which have ambitious development plans, anchor the South Capitol/M Street Corridor. In addition, the area has been targeted for commercial and housing development by the newly established and funded National Capital Revitalization Corporation. First Initiative partners are taking advantage of these and a variety of other development plans to advance Legacy objectives by using federal resources to spur local and private development.

### REDEVELOPMENT OF THE WASHINGTON NAVY YARD

As part of a Congressionally mandated military base consolidation program, the Washington Navy Yard is preparing to receive 5,000 employees who have relocated from Northern

Virginia. The Navy Yard, now sprouting construction cranes, is undergoing a major building and modernization program that will preserve the facility's historic



RENDERING OF PROPOSED RENOVATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION TO ACCOMMODATE NAVSEA. PROPOSED WATERFRONT PARK IS ALSO DEPICTED.

*Courtesy SHG*

industrial character, while upgrading it to meet modern office requirements. Several hundred of the relocated Navy employees have already moved into the Yard and all 5,000 are expected to be in place by 2001.

**REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTHEAST FEDERAL CENTER** The General Services Administration is now developing a revised master plan for the Southeast Federal Center, an underutilized 55-acre waterfront site adjacent to the Navy Yard with excellent development potential. The revised master plan is expected to recommend mixed-use development of federal, retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses and public open spaces—all activities that will contribute significantly to the revitalization of the M Street Corridor. Although construction funding has not yet been made available, ultimately the Center will accommodate 23,000 federal employees in 5.8 million square feet of office space.

**NEW COMMERCIAL OFFICE DEVELOPMENT** One of the Navy activities relocating to the Navy Yard is the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), a major Navy procurement office and a magnet for private-sector contractors. Many of the approximately 4,000 private contractors and consultants doing business with NAVSEA and now located in Crystal City are expected to follow their customer to the South Capitol/M Street, SE area. Recent studies indicate that even if only half of these private companies relocate, they will generate a market for 500,000 square feet of Class A office space.



the proposed navy yard metro center office building on m street, se between first street and cushing place is conveniently located to the navy yard and the southeast federal center.

*Courtesy Ai Architects*

Private developers have been quick to recognize the opportunities offered by the relocation of these consulting firms and two development projects are already well advanced. Two seven-story office buildings, both with ground-floor retail space, are now being proposed and marketed; one is located at 300 M Street, SE, and the other

at First and M Streets, SE. All seven floors of one building have been pre-leased and the developer of the other reports strong interest from at least 40 potential tenants.

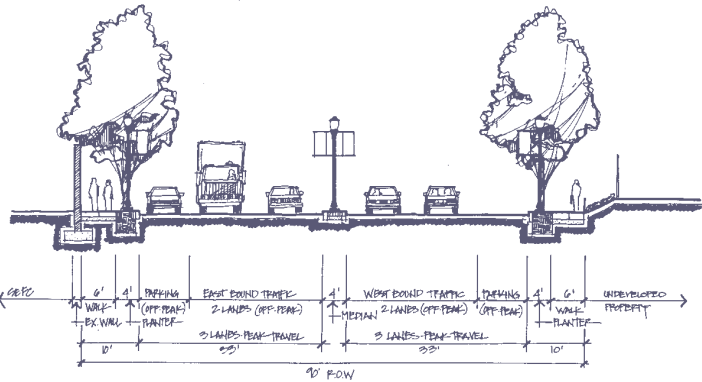
To support this commercial interest, NCPC has developed computer-aided, three-dimensional animations of an improved South Capitol/M Street. These animations depict proposed improvements in the area, including new streetscapes and office construction, and illustrate how these corridors can become attractive mixed-use urban destinations. The Commission staff has presented these computer animations to over 40 private contracting companies, developers, key Navy staff, and District of Columbia officials.

**M STREET STREETSCAPE** Thousands of new employees at the Navy Yard and, eventually, at the Southeast Federal Center will require banks, restaurants, dry cleaners, and other services, all of which will help to spark the rebirth of M Street as an important commercial artery. Today however, the street is in a state of serious deterioration. To attract these new commercial establishments and to lure the newly arrived employees out of their cars and offices and into the community, NCPC and its planning partners are working to refurbish M Street between South Capitol and 11th Street, SE.

Working with a block grant awarded by the District's Department of Housing and Community Development, NCPC, the Department of the Navy, and the city's Department of Public Works are now overseeing detailed design and engineering studies for a new M Street streetscape. The streetscape will include trees, lighting, sidewalks, benches, and landscaping designed to enhance the pedestrian environment, improve security, and invite further private investment. The design and engineering work is nearing completion and construction is expected to begin in the spring of 1999. NCPC and its planning partners have been consulting with property owners, local citizens, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, and District of Columbia elected officials.

## RECLAMATION OF THE WATERFRONT

The Legacy Plan envisions Washington's waterfront—nearly all of which is publicly owned—as a continuous band of open space from Georgetown to the National Arboretum. Some stretches will be quiet and pastoral, perfect for walks or picnics, while others will support festivals, concerts, and other urban activities.



SECTION C - SEFC Between 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Streets, Typical Section w/Median

a proposed design suggests how a new street streetscape can improve the pedestrian environment and encourage economic and community growth.

*Courtesy EDAW, Inc.*

To achieve this vision, NCPC is now working with other government agencies to complete a study to highlight development and conserva-

tion opportunities for the 22 miles of waterfront.

Expected to be completed in spring/summer of 1999, the study will include analysis of the public and private waterfront interests, assess the current state of the rivers and their shorelines, and recommend methods to coordinate development and environmental interests.

## NEW MUSEUMS AND MEMORIALS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CITY NEIGHBORHOODS

NCPC and the two other commissions that review the site and design of commemorative works in the National Capital, the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Memorial Commission, are working together to develop strategies to direct new memorials away from the Mall and into all quadrants of Washington. The goal of the review commissions is to protect the historic vistas of the Mall while encouraging distribution of cultural

resources throughout the city in a manner that spurs neighborhood economic development.

As part of this effort, NCPC is preparing a master plan for the location and design of future monuments, memorials, and museums. In identifying new sites for these facilities, the master plan will encourage memorial sponsors to consider sites throughout Washington, including circles and squares on major avenues, on the waterfronts, and along urban gateways and scenic overlooks. Well-designed and strategically located memorials and monuments will attract tourists and residents into city neighborhoods that they might not otherwise visit, and spark investment in stores, hotels and office buildings. The master plan will be completed in fiscal year 2000.

## VISITOR SIGNAGE

Another First Initiative effort on a more pedestrian scale is a coordinated visitor orientation program for central Washington that will eventually be expanded to the entire city. Such a program would include improved maps and signs and a network of information kiosks to direct visitors to museums, Metro stations, historical sites and special events. The effort, which is led by the Downtown Business Improvement District, includes the D.C. Office of Tourism, NCPC, the General Services Administration, and other stakeholders. NCPC is assisting the group in developing a visitor wayfinding program in the downtown area. A stakeholders group will review the final designs in January 1999 and sign prototypes will be installed in the spring of 1999.

This visitor signage program is more than a cosmetic flourish. The more than twenty million visitors to Washington each year generate \$295 million in tax revenue. Nurturing the tourist industry is vital to Washington's long-term economic health.



the capitol dome provides a backdrop for nightlife on the new south capitol street.

## THE LEGACY PLAN

*Extending the Legacy: Planning America's Capital for the 21st Century* redefines Washington's Monumental Core by creating opportunities for new museums, memorials and federal office buildings in all quadrants of the city. It expands the reach of public transit and eliminates obsolete freeways, bridges and railroad tracks that fragment the city. It reclaims Washington's historic waterfront for public enjoyment, and adds parks, plazas and other urban amenities. Using federal resources to generate local investment, the Legacy Plan will spur community renewal well into the 21st century.

The National Capital Planning Commission, working with leading architects, planners, and urban designers, developed the plan in response to the projected demands on the Nation's Capital in the coming century. Tourism is expected to double over the next 50 years, automobile traffic could increase by a third during the next 20 years, and sites for dozens of new museums and federal buildings and scores of new memorials must be found.

## PARTNERS IN PLANNING

As its name implies, the National Capital Planning Commission plans; it does not build. The Commission has neither the funding nor the authority to dig the holes, lay the infrastructure, or pour the concrete that implementation of the Legacy Plan requires. For this work, it relies on a changing coalition of business, community, and federal and local government partners. Having laid out a broad framework for future development in the Legacy Plan, NCPC will continue to work with a variety of partners, from citywide economic development corporations to neighborhood alliances.

The M Street streetscape project illustrates how successful projects require many contributors. Working on the project at the local level are the District of Columbia's Departments of Public Works, Housing and Community Development, Office of Property Management, and Office of Planning, as well as interested members of the City Council, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. In addition to NCPC, the Department of the Navy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the General Services Administration are participating at the federal level. In the visitor signage project, NCPC partners include the Downtown Business Improvement District and the General Services Administration. While the partners change depending on the scope and impact of any given implementation project, the goal remains the same—protecting and enhancing the image of the National Capital while respecting local planning prerogatives and community wishes.

## IMPLEMENTATION – THE LONG VIEW

Like the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans before it, the Legacy Plan will be implemented by future generations. It took a century for L'Enfant's original vision to triumph over commercial expediency. Another 30 years passed before the Mall described in the McMillan Plan came into being. And Legacy will be no different. While some projects may be completed within a few years, others could take 20, 40, even 80 years depending on political and economic conditions. The plan is called a framework because it is meant to guide—not prescribe—future development.



the plan recenters Washington on the Capitol and extends development to the four quadrants of the city.

The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's planning agency in the District of Columbia and surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall planning guidance for federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal construction projects, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.

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The Legacy Plan is available on request from the Commission offices and is posted on our web site.

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