

For Immediate Release  
July 12, 2012

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**National Capital Planning Commission Releases Draft  
*SW Ecodistrict Plan* for Public Comment**

*Innovative Plan Seeks to Transform Neighborhood between the National Mall and the  
Southwest Waterfront into a National Showcase of Sustainability*

**Washington, DC** – At its monthly meeting today the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) released the draft *SW Ecodistrict Plan* for a 60-day public comment period running through Monday, September 10, 2012. The plan proposes to transform a 15-block predominantly federal precinct located just south of the National Mall into a highly sustainable, walkable neighborhood that connects the National Mall and the Southwest waterfront, and becomes a showcase of sustainable urban development and the site for new nationally significant memorials, museums, and events.

The effort is the result of a comprehensive planning process led by NCPC involving 17 federal and District agencies, combined with input from private and public property owners and the public. The plan was also coordinated with the *Maryland Avenue Small Area Plan*, produced by the DC Office of Planning.

A virtual press kit, including a copy of the draft plan, and details about how to submit public comments, is available online at [www.ncpc.gov/swecodistrict/media](http://www.ncpc.gov/swecodistrict/media).

Two important drivers of the Plan were NCPC's 2009 *Monumental Core Framework Plan*, which proposed ways to extend the civic qualities of the Mall and the vitality of the city to this area, and Executive Order 13514, which provides federal agencies with goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, manage stormwater, and reduce water use and waste.

"The timing of this project could not be better, and if we act now we can capitalize on the momentum underway in Southwest Washington," said NCPC Chairman L. Preston Bryant, Jr. "We have the opportunity to transform a disconnected area and once again make it a vital part of the city as the plan's recommendations are implemented over time. By using space more efficiently, more than 19,000 additional federal employees could be accommodated."

The area is on the cusp of change. At one end the National Park Service is making improvements to the National Mall and at the other a proposed multi-billion dollar mixed-use private development along the Southwest Waterfront (The Wharf) is scheduled to break ground this year. The General Services Administration is re-examining its property to meet federal sustainability targets, create a more efficient workplace for a modern federal workforce, and reduce operating costs. Efforts to improve sustainability align with the District's efforts to transform Washington into a greener, healthier, and more livable city.

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“We are excited about the partnership that has formed between the District and federal government on the Southwest Ecodistrict and can’t wait to be a part of its evolution into one of the greenest multi-modal precincts in the region,” said Harriet Tregoning, Director, DC Office of Planning.

The proposed SW Ecodistrict comprises almost 110-acres bounded by Independence Avenue, Maine Avenue, 12<sup>th</sup> Street, and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW. The federal government owns approximately 56 percent of the land, and 26 percent is privately owned. The remainder consists of streets, freeways, and rail lines. The district includes eight federal buildings, two federal parks, and eight private buildings.

The area currently is uninviting and isolated, with few amenities. “Superblocks” and single-use office buildings with large setbacks and inaccessible ground floor uses deter foot traffic. Rail lines, the Southwest Freeway, and multiple levels of streets, ramps, and stairs all create obstacles.

The existing federal buildings are inefficient in their use of energy and space and are under consideration for major or minor rehabilitation as they near the end of their life-cycles. The area’s energy and water infrastructure is antiquated and the existing central utility plant, which generates electricity only for federal tenants, needs to be modernized.

The plan proposes four focus areas to create a revitalized neighborhood and cultural destination.

- Independence Quarter: A mixed-use community anchored by a new U.S. Department of Energy headquarters.
- Maryland Avenue: A restored urban boulevard centered on a reimagined park and an expanded L’Enfant Station intermodal center.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Banneker Park: An inviting civic corridor connecting the National Mall to the SW Waterfront, highlighted by Banneker Park—a nationally significant cultural destination.
- Southwest Freeway: A collection of private mixed-use development and solar panels built on air rights over the SW Freeway.

Implementation of the *SW Ecodistrict Plan* will result in a revitalized, well-connected community and cultural destination. With its recommendations 7.9 million sq. ft. of federal office space is retained and improved, and one million sq. ft. of public and private office space is added. Another 1.8 million sq. ft. of new residential or hotel space and sites for 1.2 million sq. ft. of cultural facilities and five memorial sites are established.

“The General Services Administration is working with federal agencies to use land and facilities efficiently and sustainably. The *SW Ecodistrict Plan* proposes innovative solutions for us to accomplish these goals, and also provide federal workspace that can meet the needs of a mobile, changing workforce,” said Mina Wright, Director, Office of Planning & Design Quality, General Services Administration.

The *SW Ecodistrict Plan* creates a high-performance environmental showcase. Developing a coordinated approach to land use, transportation, and energy systems would result in a majority of the area’s energy, water, and waste being captured, managed, and then reused. A zero-net energy district as measured in carbon is fostered, with greenhouse gases reduced by 51 percent. Potable water consumption is reduced by 70 percent and stormwater management is improved. In addition, 80 percent of everyday waste is diverted from the landfill.

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“Hoffman-Madison Waterfront is excited for the release of the draft *SW Ecodistrict Plan*. The Plan is a fantastic example of collaboration between local, federal, and business interests and will dramatically improve the SW quadrant of the nation’s capital. The Ecodistrict will help provide a critical link for pedestrian mobility between the National Mall and the rapidly redeveloping waterfront area, including the Wharf,” said Shawn Seaman, Principal–PN Hoffman and Project Director–Hoffman-Madison Waterfront.

The plan provides a framework to prioritize and develop projects over a 20 year period as they become economically viable and fall within federal and local investment priorities. Bold moves are needed to realize the plan, and no one entity alone can make it a reality. Achieving the plan’s sustainability measures and mixed-use vision will require partnerships between the federal government, the District of Columbia, private landowners, and real estate developers. The plan identifies various governance structures, financing and policy tools, and priority projects.

“The SW Ecodistrict Plan is a critically important component of the reconnection of the Southwest residential community of over 10,000 residents to the National Mall and beyond. First priority: improve pedestrian access and way-finding to the transportation, shopping, and dining options in L’Enfant Plaza,” stated Bob Craycraft, ANC6D01 Commissioner.

Following the 60-day public comment period the plan will be refined, finalized, and submitted to the Commission for final adoption. Once this is done it will serve as a guide for federal agencies to program, plan, and design future development proposals. While the plan is not applicable to District or privately-owned land, it is hoped they will use its recommendations in their projects to meet shared goals.

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

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