

## MEDIA RELEASE



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### **National Capital Planning Commission's Security Plan Wins National Award from the American Planning Association**

**Washington, DC** – The American Planning Association (APA) has named the National Capital Planning Commission's (NCPC) urban design and security plan the winner of its 2005 Current Topic Award for Safe Growth. APA will present the award on March 22 in San Francisco during its annual national planning conference. This is the second APA award for the NCPC's National Urban Design and Security Plan. The planning organization previously honored the security plan with its Outstanding Federal Planning Project in 2002.

The APA 2005 award recognizes NCPC's security plan for its efforts to promote safe growth by balancing good planning and urban design in the nation's capital against an increasing need for perimeter security. NCPC's plan offers a variety of streetscape elements and design solutions that are geared toward enhancing the public realm while providing necessary perimeter security. Although written with federal facilities in mind, the plan's principles are applicable throughout the country. To date, more than 60 security projects have been guided by the plan, including the redesign of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House and a Mall-wide perimeter security plan proposed by the Smithsonian Institution for 10 of its museums.

"We are honored to have this level of recognition bestowed on our security plan," said NCPC Chairman John V. Cogbill, III. "We reached consensus with more than 75 agencies prior to adopting the document. We are proud to have it serve as a model for planning agencies across the country and abroad, as an increasing number of cities work to develop their own security plans."

"This plan takes the planning of physically secure environments to a whole other level," said Carol Rhea, AICP, co-chair of the APA Awards Committee. "It offers a variety of tools and techniques to federal agencies interested in protecting their building or complexes from terrorist attack," she said.

The National Urban Design and Security Plan, adopted by NCPC in October 2002, identifies perimeter design solutions aimed at protecting buildings from bomb-laden vehicles.

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The plan proposes employing a variety of hardened street furniture, including retaining walls, street lights, decorative fences, benches, and plinth walls to seamlessly integrate security measures into Washington's historic urban fabric. The plan's impact is already being felt throughout Washington.

Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House is now a beautiful pedestrian plaza graced with pedestrian-friendly amenities and street furnishings that welcome residents and visitors to the historic setting. Today's avenue is a far cry from the cluttered assortment of ad-hoc cement barriers that marred the beauty of the street less than one year ago. Construction is currently underway on a landscape solution for the grounds of the Washington Monument. In addition to new paths, the monument will feature 800 new trees, upgraded lighting, and new granite paving. When construction is complete in spring 2005, new elements will provide necessary security while preserving the character of the grounds and allowing recreational and civic uses to continue.

Other projects guided by the plan include the Smithsonian Institution's plan for 10 of its museums on the National Mall and security enhancements at the State Department and Federal Reserve.

"In just two years' time, NCPC's plan has begun to turn the tide in Washington away from unattractive makeshift security measures toward integrated well-designed perimeter security that blends into our urban landscapes," said NCPC Executive Director Patricia Gallagher. "We are proud of the impact that this plan has had, and we are honored to receive such recognition from APA."

The National Capital Planning Commission is continuing its efforts to ensure that a secure Washington does not look and feel like a fortress. NCPC is working with other federal agencies and private-sector vendors to develop and test hardened street furniture so that federal facilities have a variety of attractive security measures available to them. NCPC also recently reconvened its Interagency Security Task Force to address changing security needs. The agency plans to revise its security plan in 2005 to reflect the task force's current deliberations.

*The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central 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 projects and memorials, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.*

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