

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **Interagency Group to Examine Security Design in the Nation's Capital Including Pennsylvania Avenue**

**Washington, DC** – The National Capital Planning Commission today established an interagency task force to evaluate the impact of federal security measures on the historic urban design of the Nation's Capital. The task force will examine existing security designs around the White House, including Pennsylvania Avenue between 15th and 17th Streets, and around national memorials and federal buildings in the city's Monumental Core. The task force will recommend design solutions that will improve the aesthetic and visual character of the city without undermining security.

The first efforts of the task force will focus on developing security design alternatives to the current use of concrete barriers and planters around Pennsylvania Avenue, including a permanent plan that will preserve the security and beauty of the White House and Lafayette Park. The task force also intends to develop standards for beautifying security measures that may ultimately serve as a benchmark for security design throughout the federal city.

Recognizing the Commission's "unique statutory role in planning for the Nation's Capital, including the White House," the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations recently authorized the Commission to review proposals regarding the future of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House. The task force plans to evaluate all existing proposals, including the Department of Interior's proposal for the development of a permanent President's Park and the recent Federal City Council/Rand proposal. The task force will provide its recommendations within four months.

Richard L. Friedman, Chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission, said, "We must find creative ways to ensure that our public places are safe, accessible, and respectful of the city's historic streetscapes while achieving critical security goals. New technologies and innovative approaches to urban design and planning can help provide the solutions we need. All of the stakeholders concerned with security, urban design, economic development, and traffic management need to be at the table as we examine these issues in a comprehensive way. Good security and good urban planning are not incompatible."

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Secret Service spokesman Terry Samway said, "The Secret Service has a long history of cooperation with the National Capital Planning Commission. The Secret Service has been on the forefront of efforts to remove jersey barriers and other temporary security measures around Pennsylvania Avenue and replace those necessary security measures with aesthetically pleasing and historically accurate designs. We look forward to working with the task force to develop security designs that will beautify the area surrounding the White House while maintaining the current White House security perimeter."

Serving on the task force are members of the National Capital Planning Commission, including Interior Secretary Gale Norton, Acting General Services Administrator Thurman Davis, District of Columbia Mayor Anthony Williams, and District of Columbia Council Chairman Linda Cropp. Heads of other federal agencies may be invited to join the task force in various aspects of its work. These may include the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Transportation, the National Coordinator for Infrastructure Protection and Counterterrorism for the National Security Council, the Director of the U.S. Secret Service, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Architect of the Capitol, the Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, and the Executive Director of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Richard Friedman will act as Chairman of the task force and NCPC's Executive Director will serve as task force director.

In announcing the establishment of the task force, Mr. Friedman noted that the interests of the group would be broad in focus and extend beyond Pennsylvania Avenue. "Nowhere has the value of planning been so clearly demonstrated as in the development of our National Capital. We should do everything we can to preserve the magnificent legacy of Washington's historic L'Enfant and McMillan Plans. We expect the task force to be concerned with all aspects of security measures that affect our public domain; this includes not only street closings, but also the availability of curb-side parking; the installation of security bollards, walls, and other barriers; security cameras; and the 'hardening' of public buildings and monuments. We want to develop ways to ensure the security of our public institutions while at the same time preserve for future generations the historic urban design and monumental open space that have made Washington one of the most admired capital cities in the world."

*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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