

MEDIA RELEASE



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Planning Commission Adopts New Memorials And Museums Master Plan

Washington, DC – In a unanimous vote today, the National Capital Planning Commission adopted a new plan that will change the way museums and memorials are located and developed in the Nation’s Capital. The Memorials and Museums Master Plan features a Reserve area in the central cross axis of the National Mall in which no new memorial sites will be approved. It further identifies 100 sites away from the Mall and in all quadrants of the city for future commemorative and cultural attractions. The new plan is designed to preserve the historic open space of Washington’s Monumental Core and to ensure that future generations of Americans have an abundant supply of premier sites for their own needs.

The master plan is the result of a collaborative effort of the Joint Task Force on Memorials, led by the National Capital Planning Commission in cooperation with the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Memorial Commission, the three federal bodies with responsibility for commemorative works in the Nation’s Capital. The National Capital Memorial Commission endorsed the plan at its August 30, 2001 meeting and the Commission of Fine Arts expects to officially act on the plan at its September 20, 2001 meeting.

In announcing the NCPC action, Commission Chairman, John V. Cogbill, III said, “In recent years some proposals for new memorials in Washington have generated considerable controversy. We believe that this new plan shows all of us—federal agencies, memorial sponsors, and the public—a way to build consensus on the best locations and design parameters for these national landmarks.”

The urban design framework of the Memorials and Museums Master Plan capitalizes on Washington’s wide variety of public open spaces and creates a new geography of commemoration keyed to the Potomac and Anacostia waterfronts and the network of monumental boulevards that are part of the original L’Enfant City. The plan includes general guidelines for the design and development of new facilities as well as the policies that will guide the review commissions as they consider memorial and museum proposals. NCPC undertook the master plan in response to a Congressional directive and now, in cooperation with its sister agencies, expects to work with Congress to incorporate key provisions of the plan into existing legislation that guides commemoration in Washington.

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A team of nationally recognized architects, urban designers, and planners assisted the Joint Task Force in the preparation of the Memorials and Museum Master Plan. An extensive public participation program accompanied both the development of the plan and its release in draft form in December 2000. John Parsons, Chairman of the National Capital Memorial Commission, said “The master plan gives us a new way to accommodate the desires of memorial sponsors to be in the heart of the city by providing new opportunities for commemorative works throughout the Nation’s Capital.”

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 location and design of federal construction projects, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.

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