

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **Commission's Security & Design Plan Receives Top National Award** *APA Division Names Plan as the Outstanding Federal Planning Project*

**Washington, DC** – The National Capital Planning Commission's report recommending guidelines for balancing security with good urban design has won the 2002 Outstanding Federal Planning Project. The award is bestowed annually by the Federal Planning Division of the American Planning Association.

Interagency Security Task Force Chairman Richard L. Friedman accepted the award on behalf of the Commission during an awards ceremony at the APA conference held this past week in Denver. Friedman is delighted the distinguished planning panel recognized The National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan as one that could serve as a national model.

The plan, approved by the Commission in October 2002, identifies design solutions for perimeter security to protect against threats by bomb-laden vehicles approaching federal buildings. It proposes a variety of security design solutions including "hardened" street furniture and landscaped planting walls that can enhance local streetscapes, while still providing good security.

"This plan is extremely important to Washington and to the entire nation," said Friedman. "It would have been irresponsible of us to simply watch as makeshift security barriers visually pollute this great city and erode our democratic values. If we had, we would have failed in our duty to serve the American people and our legacy. Security must not be gained at the expense of the very values and qualities we seek to protect – accessibility, openness, and civic beauty."

While The National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan primarily focuses on federal facilities in the nation's capital, its principles and concepts are applicable to other public and private lands throughout the nation. In fact, the APA said the plan "could naturally serve as a model for other cities around the country" and praised the plan for showing "that effective security measures need not undo the quality of the public environment."

Friedman says the Commission is committed to the goals outlined in the plan to balance the need for security with the need to maintain both openness and good design.

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“Good security and excellence in design are not mutually exclusive,” said Friedman. “This plan offers numerous street furniture and landscaping options that can be employed in cities across the country, in place of alternatives such as street closures, excessive setbacks and clumsy concrete fortifications that do little more than instill fear.”

The National Capital Planning Commission formed its Interagency Security Task Force in March 2001 in order to address the alarming proliferation of unsightly and obtrusive security barriers that were beginning to mar the beauty of Monumental Washington. Many of the ad-hoc measures started going up after the 1995 bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City, and rapidly appeared throughout the capital city following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

NCPC’s task force collaborated with numerous federal, local and private partners to halt the proliferation and to help create a more welcoming and beautiful public realm. Members presented their early recommendations to the President and to Congress in November 2001, in the report, "Designing for Security in the Nation’s Capital." The report called for the preparation of a comprehensive urban design and security plan to identify permanent security and streetscape design measures that would balance the need for security with good urban design. The report was well received and the task force went on to produce The National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan.

The design goal is to use amenities that are normally found in the urban environment such as trees and planters; benches and bus shelters; and terraces and raised planting beds. The plan identifies different areas and types of streets with distinct features to help guide design principles, but recognizes that no single security solution can be applied throughout the capital. The plan does not address building hardening, operational procedures or surveillance.

Some of the projects in the plan include the Federal Triangle; Constitution Avenue; the Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials; and Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, which is one of the first projects to be undertaken in coordination with the plan. The goal is to have the famous stretch of Avenue redesigned as a beautiful and dignified public realm in time for the 2005 inaugural parade.

*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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