

MEDIA RELEASE



401 9th Street, NW
North Lobby, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004
Tel: 202 482-7200
Fax: 202 482-7272
www.ncpc.gov

For Immediate Release
Thursday, June 05, 2003

Lisa MacSpadden
202-482-7263 or lisa@ncpc.gov

New NCPC Study Highlights Potential Scenarios for Revitalizing South Capitol Street Corridor

Gateway to Nation's Capital Could Rival Great Urban Boulevards of the World

Washington, DC – A new study unveiled today by the National Capital Planning Commission envisions several potential scenarios for reclaiming South Capitol Street and developing it into an area that reflects the vitality of the nation's capital.

Today, South Capitol Street west of the river is a one-mile stretch in a blighted part of the city, where abandoned lots and businesses testify to the area's neglect in recent years. NCPC's South Capitol Street Urban Design Study sets the stage for the corridor to become a great new business, cultural, and residential address for the nation's capital.

The study outlines key urban design principles for revitalizing the corridor and highlights three potential scenarios for how to achieve a great urban boulevard to serve residents as well as national and international visitors. South Capitol Street connects to the Suitland Parkway to provide dignitaries and other visitors arriving at Andrews Air Force Base with their first – and unfortunately bleak view – of the nation's capital. The current condition of the corridor contrasts sharply with the importance of the street's role as a gateway to the original L'Enfant City.

“NCPC has long considered South Capitol Street ripe for renewal,” said NCPC Chairman John V. Cogbill, III. “The corridor figures prominently in the Commission's long-range Legacy Plan, and we consider the street and its terminus on the Anacostia Waterfront one of the most symbolically significant places in the nation. We envision this revitalized area as a place of beauty that features distinguished architecture, national symbols, and waterfront views in a vibrant city setting.”

The Commission released the study in conjunction with a draft of the South Capitol Gateway and Corridor Improvement Study prepared by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). Both reports were released at a press conference at the Pump House in Southeast Washington this morning. While the draft Gateway and Corridor Study looks at the traffic needs and solutions for the Avenue, the NCPC study examines the entire corridor in its broader urban design context and envisions expanded opportunities for parkland and open civic spaces. The NCPC study provided base analysis and design guidance for the draft South Capitol Gateway Study.

—MORE—

The key urban design principles outlined in NCPC's study include:

- Create a great urban boulevard that serves local neighborhoods as well as regional and national visitors.
- Establish a linear park along the length of a new South Capitol Street that will connect the Mall and Capitol Hill with the Anacostia River.
- Create a great civic space on both sides of the river where South Capitol Street meets the Anacostia River.
- Improve local and commuter traffic flow and create a ceremonial approach to the Capitol Building from the Suitland Parkway.
- Replace the existing Frederick Douglass Bridge with a more beautiful and memorable gateway to Washington's Monumental Core.
- Align the new river crossing to minimize highway ramp infrastructure and provide greater flexibility for future development on Poplar Point.
- Strengthen existing neighborhoods within the corridor, along New Jersey Avenue, and on Buzzard and Poplar Points.

The study details three scenarios illustrating how these urban design principles can be achieved. Each scenario proposes a possible configuration for the street itself as well as the design of the open space and bridge alignment at the terminus on the Anacostia waterfront.

Scenario A maintains the current 130-foot width of South Capitol Street but converts its present highway-like character to a more pedestrian-friendly, landscaped boulevard. This scenario includes a seven-acre park where the street meets the river and the alignment of the new Frederick Douglass Bridge is moved slightly to the south.

Scenario B expands the width of the street to 220 feet allowing for a substantial 100-foot landscaped center median that could provide a setting for small-scale memorials along the length of South Capitol Street. In this concept, the alignment of the new bridge would allow ample space for a nine-acre waterfront park suitable for commemoration and public gatherings.

Scenario C is the most ambitious of the three concepts and creates new monumental public spaces. In this scenario, a 140-foot wide park runs along the east side of South Capitol Street that could accommodate memorials and museums. A new bridge would be located significantly south of the existing one creating a large amount of developable land at Poplar Point. A 12-acre waterfront with important building sites to the north and south is also envisioned in this scenario.

In leading the Commission's efforts on the study, Patricia Gallagher, Executive Director of NCPC, said, "With imagination and bold leadership, South Capitol Street can rival the great urban boulevards of cities around the world. We have an unparalleled opportunity to advance a daring, but achievable vision that will include a mix of federal, local, and private uses for the people of the city, region, and nation to enjoy."

NCPC Press Release
Thursday, June 05, 2003
Page 3

In addition to DDOT, NCPC also consulted with the D.C. Office of Planning and the Maryland Department of Transportation when preparing the South Capitol Street Urban Design Study. It was prepared by the Chan Krieger & Associates consulting firm and can be accessed online, under Publications.

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.

###