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National Capital Planning Commission Accepts *SW Ecodistrict Plan*

Innovative Plan Seeks to Transform Area South of the National Mall into a Sustainability Showcase

Washington, DC – At its monthly meeting today the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) accepted the *SW Ecodistrict Plan*. The plan proposes to transform a 15-block predominantly federal precinct located just south of the National Mall into a highly sustainable, walkable neighborhood and workplace that connects the National Mall with Washington’s southwest waterfront, and becomes a national showcase of sustainable urban development and the site for major new museums, memorials, and events.

The *SW Ecodistrict Plan* is based on the idea that planning, implementing, and operating at a neighborhood (or district) scale results in increased environmental and economic benefits than a traditional building by building approach. The plan proposes a development scenario where projects can be prioritized and implemented over a 20 year period as they become economically viable and align with federal and local investment priorities.

“The *SW Ecodistrict Plan* is the result of a terrific collaborative effort between federal and local agencies, with a great deal of public input. The plan will help federal agencies achieve the President’s sustainability goals,” said NCPC Chairman L. Preston Bryant. “The release of the plan is timely. We’re seeing a tremendous amount of activity both in the Ecodistrict area and around it, and are thrilled at the opportunities available to create a positive transformation.”

The plan’s proposal to develop a coordinated approach to land use, transportation, and energy systems would result in a majority of the area’s energy, water, and waste being captured, managed, and then reused. Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by 51 percent even with the proposed addition of 4 million sq. ft. of new development. Potable water consumption is reduced by 70 percent, and all the stormwater will be managed. In addition, 80 percent of everyday waste can be diverted from the landfill.

Following the Commission’s action, NCPC will utilize the plan when evaluating and making recommendations for development proposals in the *SW Ecodistrict*, as well as use it to guide input on federal, local, and private planning studies and reports prepared for the area. While not formally applicable to District or privately-owned land, representatives are looking at ways to incorporate the plan’s concepts into their own projects.

The plan was coordinated with the *Maryland Avenue, SW Small Area Plan*, produced by the District of Columbia Office of Planning.

“We are pleased to have partnered with NCPC to reimagine the Southwest federal enclave into a mixed-use and walkable neighborhood that will reconnect the National Mall to the Southwest community and waterfront redevelopment,” said Harriet Tregoning, Director, District Office of Planning.

The District Department of Transportation will initiate a technical planning study of this area focused on multi-modal transportation analysis and the more detailed design and engineering.

“The transportation infrastructure in the Ecodistrict area is some of the most complex in the District, with key arteries for multiple modes literally overlapping,” said DDOT Director Terry Bellamy. “The Ecodistrict plan is the type of forward looking approach needed to take make sustainable transportation and land use investment decisions.’

NCPC staff, together with federal and District agencies and other stakeholders, are currently moving forward on studies to implement Ecodistrict strategies. One new study is analyzing the technical and financial feasibility of establishing an area-wide, sustainable stormwater system. They are also developing interim streetscape plans for the 10th Street Corridor that will provide three concept alternatives and determine the necessary right of way width to accommodate planned programming, as well as concept designs for a temporary pedestrian connection between Banneker Park and Maine Avenue. In addition, a more detailed economic analysis will examine the costs and benefits of the development scenario, with more detail regarding impacts to specific stakeholders.

The SW Ecodistrict comprises almost 110-acres bounded by Independence Avenue, Maine Avenue, 12th Street, and 4th Street, SW. The federal government owns approximately 56 percent of the land, and 26 percent is privately owned. The remainder consists of streets, freeways, and rail lines. The district includes eight federal buildings, two federal parks, and eight private buildings. It’s aging and inefficient federal buildings, tangled transportation networks, and lackluster public space are ready for transformation to match its unparalleled location.

The plan provides a framework to prioritize and develop projects over a 20 year period as they become economically viable and fall within federal and local investment priorities. Bold moves are needed to realize the plan, and no one entity alone can make it a reality. Achieving the plan’s sustainability measures and mixed-use vision will require partnerships between the federal government, the District of Columbia, private landowners, and real estate developers. The plan identifies various governance structures, financing and policy tools, and priority projects.

The *SW Ecodistrict Plan* complements and informs work already underway. At one end of the site the National Park Service is making improvements to the National Mall and at the other a proposed multi-billion dollar mixed-use private development (The Wharf) along the southwest waterfront is scheduled to break ground this year. Nearby, recognizing the area’s potential and building upon the plan’s momentum, private property owners are making property and infrastructure investments. Local business owners are also looking into creating a business improvement district for an area that includes the SW Ecodistrict.

The General Services Administration (GSA) recently issued a RFI (Request for Information) seeking ideas to address long-term needs of federal facilities located in an area designated Federal Triangle South. This area sits entirely within the SW Ecodistrict.

“Federal Triangle South provides us with an opportunity to reexamine how the federal government uses its buildings and fits into the surrounding community,” said General Services Administration Acting Administrator Dan Tangherlini. “Building upon the vision put forth by NCPC in its *SW Ecodistrict Plan*, Federal Triangle South will contribute to a more sustainable neighborhood where people will want to work, live, and learn, while at the same time saving taxpayer dollars by redeveloping outdated and underutilized properties into state-of-the-art facilities.”

Implementation of the *SW Ecodistrict Plan* will result in a revitalized, well-connected community and cultural destination. 7.9 million sq. ft. of federal office space is retained and improved, and 1 million sq. ft. of public and private office space is added. Another 1.8 million sq. ft. of new residential or hotel space and sites for 1.2 million sq. ft. of cultural facilities and five memorial sites are established.

The plan proposes four focus areas to create a revitalized neighborhood and cultural destination.

- Independence Quarter: A mixed-use community anchored by a new U.S. Department of Energy headquarters.
- Maryland Avenue: A restored urban boulevard centered on a reimagined park and an expanded L'Enfant Station intermodal center.
- 10th Street and Banneker Park: An inviting civic corridor connecting the National Mall to the SW Waterfront, highlighted by Banneker Park—a nationally significant cultural destination.
- Southwest Freeway: A collection of private mixed-use development and solar panels built on air rights over the Southwest Freeway.

The plan is the result of a comprehensive process led by NCPC involving 17 federal and District agencies. The final plan reflects the input of numerous federal and local stakeholders, as well as combined input from private and public property owners and the public. Through numerous public and stakeholder meetings and an online forum, more than 100 comments were received, the majority positive.

A virtual press kit, including a copy of the plan, is available online at www.ncpc.gov/swecodistrict/media.

For more information about the District's projects please contact Tanya Stern, Chief of Staff, DC Office of Planning, (202) 442-7635, tanya.stern@dc.gov.

For more information about GSA's projects please contact Jackeline Stewart-Johnson, Deputy Press Secretary, General Services Administration, (202) 501-0800, jackeline.stewartjohnson@gsa.gov.

The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central planning agency in the District of Columbia and surrounding counties of Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall 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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