

.....Comprehensive Plan
for the National Capital

Federal Elements



NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Federal Elements

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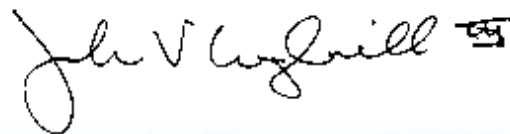
Message from the Chairman

Outstanding architecture, beautiful parks, and accessible transit are just a few of the features that make the nation's capital a great place to live, work, and visit. The National Capital Region has not achieved this status as a matter of course, but has been carefully nurtured through more than 200 years of thoughtful planning, including the defining plans of Pierre L'Enfant in 1791 and the McMillan Commission in 1901. Through the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, we intend to carry on that great planning tradition.

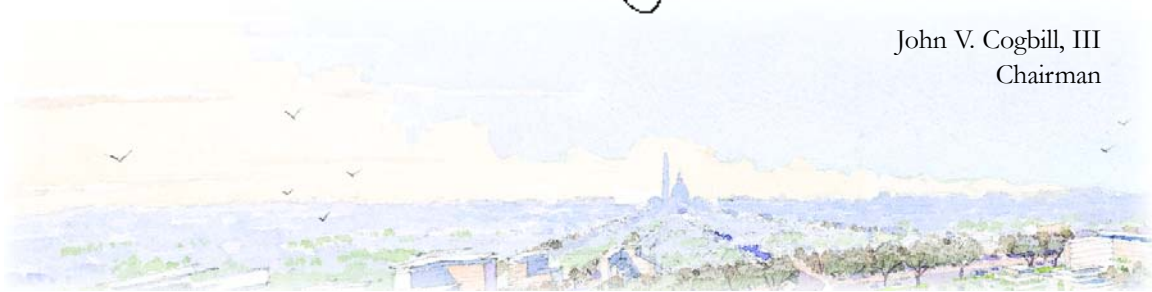
Planning in the National Capital Region requires a complex balancing act between the unique needs of our nation's capital and the everyday needs of the region as a home and place of business for millions of Americans. Unlike any other region in the nation, the Washington, D.C. area serves as the center of the federal government, a hub for foreign missions and international organizations, and a prime visitor attraction. NCPC's *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* shows how to accommodate these special functions while guiding the region's transportation, preservation, and open space planning.

Those who are familiar with the National Capital Planning Commission's previous Comprehensive Plan—produced in the 1980s—will notice many updates. This latest version addresses the capital's significant evolution during the past 20 years and offers a framework for planning during the course of the next two decades. The Comprehensive Plan comprises seven elements representing today's most important issues in national capital planning: Federal Workplace; Foreign Missions and International Organizations; Transportation; Parks and Open Space; Federal Environment; Preservation and Historic Features; and Visitors. Through these elements, the Comprehensive Plan establishes new goals and policies for future federal development in the region and encourages "Smart Growth" principles such as orienting development to public transit, protecting environmental and natural resources, and adapting and reusing historic and underutilized buildings. The Comprehensive Plan provides a broad vision of how the nation's capital should develop over the coming years and details how to accomplish that vision through an achievable action plan that outlines implementation strategies, identifies action partners, and offers a timeframe for completion.

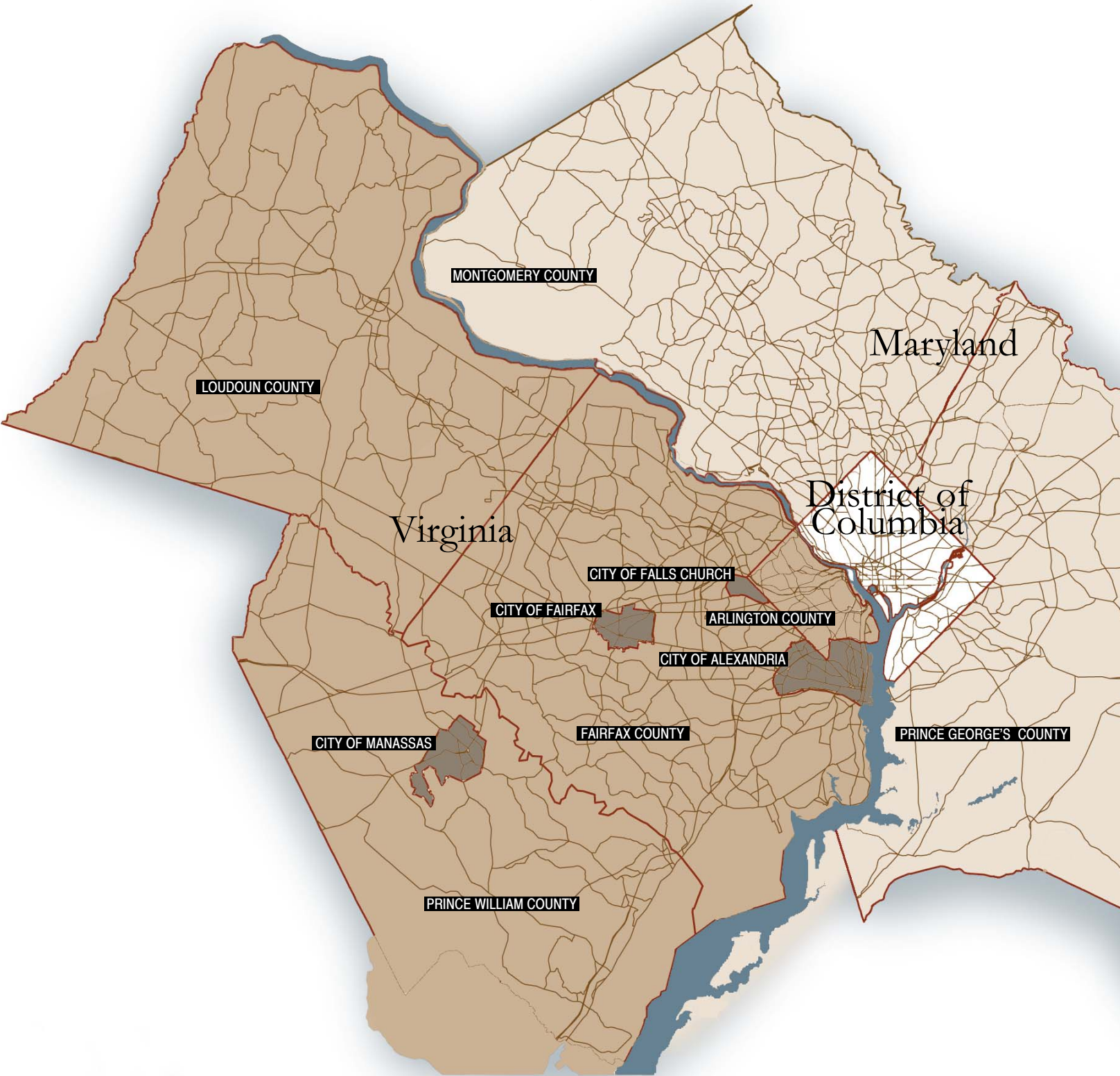
NCPC is entrusted with a rich legacy shaped by visionary planners, architects, engineers, public officials, and private citizens. The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* will help to ensure that Washington remains a greatly admired city throughout the world.



John V. Cogbill, III
Chairman




The National Capital Region



Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements

Introduction



National capital cities have distinct planning and development needs that distinguish them from other cities. While they share many traits of other major cities, by virtue of their national constituency they have unique qualities and requirements that must be accounted for in their planning. The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* is based on the premise that the nation's capital is more than a concentration of federal employees and facilities. Washington, D.C. is the symbolic heart of the nation. It provides a sense of permanence and centrality that extends well beyond the National Capital Region (NCR or region) and our national borders. It represents national power and promotes the country's shared history and traditions. Through its architecture and physical design, it symbolizes national ideals and values.

The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* is a statement of principles, goals, and planning policies for the growth and development of the national capital during the next 20 years. It is comprised of two parts—the Federal Elements and the District of Columbia Elements.¹ The Federal Elements address matters related to federal properties and federal interests in the National Capital Region, which includes the District of Columbia; Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties in Virginia; and all cities within the boundaries of those counties. The Federal Elements are prepared pursuant to Section 4(a) of the National Capital Planning Act of 1952. The seven Federal Elements presented in this Comprehensive Plan are Federal Workplace; Foreign Missions and International Organizations; Transportation; Parks and Open Space; Federal Environment; Preservation and Historic Features; and Visitors. Prior to this current update, most of the Federal Elements had not been updated since the mid-1980s.²

1. The District of Columbia Elements, which are prepared by the District of Columbia Office of Planning, are presently undergoing review and are scheduled to be updated by 2006.
2. NCPC adopted a revised Parks and Open Space Element in February 2001 and a revised Federal Environment Element in May 2001.

The District of Columbia Elements of the Comprehensive Plan are prepared by the Mayor and adopted by the Council of the District of Columbia. The eleven District of Columbia Elements include General Provisions; Economic Development; Housing; Environmental Protection; Transportation; Public Facilities; Urban Design; Preservation and Historic Features; Downtown Plan; Human Services; and Land Use. The District of Columbia government also prepares ward plans for each of the District of Columbia's eight wards.

NCPC's Role and Responsibility

The significant federal presence in the region demands expert planning and coordination. As the central planning agency for the federal government in the National Capital Region, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC or the Commission) is charged with planning for the appropriate and orderly development of the national capital and the conservation of its important natural and historical features.

The Commission coordinates all federal planning activities in the region, and has several planning functions: comprehensive planning; master planning; project planning; program review; and multi-year federal capital improvements programming. Commission responsibilities include preparing long-range plans and special studies to ensure the effective functioning of the federal government in the NCR; preparing jointly with the District of Columbia government the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*; approving federal master plans and construction proposals in the District of Columbia, as well as District government buildings in the central area of the city; reviewing proposed District of Columbia master plans, project plans, and capital improvement programs, and changes in zoning regulations; reviewing plans for federal buildings and installations in the region; reviewing comprehensive plans, area plans, and capital improvement programs proposed by state, regional, and local agencies for their effect on the federal establishment; and monitoring and evaluating capital investment projects proposed by federal agencies in the region.

Section 4(a) of the National Capital Planning Act of 1952 requires that NCPC prepare and adopt a “comprehensive, consistent, and coordinated plan for the National Capital.” The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* is the blueprint for the long-term development of the national capital and is the decision-making framework for Commission actions on plans and proposals submitted for its review. The Commission's comprehensive planning function involves preparing and adopting the Federal Elements, as well as reviewing the District of Columbia Elements for their impact on the federal interest.



U.S. Capitol

Federal Impact in the Region

The nation's capital serves as the seat of the federal government and the symbolic heart of the country.

The federal government exerts a powerful influence on the image, appearance, and livability of the city and surrounding region. Americans have special aspirations for Washington, D.C. and the surrounding region because it is the nation's capital and symbolic heart of the country. They expect their seat of government to set the national standard for beautiful and inspiring civic architecture and landscapes, efficient transportation, environmental stewardship, and land-use management and planning that respects Washington's great urban design heritage. Since the establishment of the city in the late 18th century, the federal government has played an active role in its planning and development to ensure that the nation's capital meets these expectations. In many cases federal laws, regulations, policies, and funding decisions direct activities in the region. Existing federal laws and policies recognize and give priority to Washington, D.C. as the established seat of the national government. This has been a major factor in assuring the continued growth of the District of Columbia's downtown commercial core even during periods of slow economic growth.

The National Capital Region draws millions of visitors to its national memorials, museums, and other destinations.

There are more than 230 memorials and museums in the District of Columbia and surrounding environs. The region attracts approximately 20 million visitors annually, generating about \$10 billion for the local economy.³ The tourism sector is strengthened by the large number of federal visitor attractions in the area. Heritage tourists, who are drawn by cultural resources such as memorials, museums, and historic sites, constitute the leading growth sector in national tourism. The region will continue to be enriched through the creation of new national memorials and museums.

The National Capital Region is home to numerous foreign missions and international organizations.

In 1983—the last time the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Element of the Comprehensive Plan underwent a major revision—there were 133 foreign diplomatic missions and 23 officially recognized international organizations in the National Capital Region. In 2002, those figures reached 169 and 28, respectively. Foreign diplomatic missions and international organizations are integral components in the mix of international activities in Washington, D.C. and contribute to the city's cosmopolitan flair. They also provide an economic impact comparable to the hospitality industry—one of the area's leading drivers of the regional economy.

3. *Washington, DC Local Comparables Report: A Report for the Washington, DC Visitor Transportation Study for the National Mall and Surrounding Parks*, prepared by Alexa C. Viets for the National Park Service, July 2003.



U.S. Supreme Court



Smithsonian Native American Festival on the National Mall



Embassy Row on Massachusetts Avenue

Seven agencies—the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Treasury, Justice, and Commerce, the General Services Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration—accounted for more than 84 percent of federal contracting activity in the Washington region in 2000.

The Impact of Federal Procurement on the National Capital Region, prepared for NCPC by Stephen S. Fuller, George Mason University, October 2002



Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens

National Park Service land within the District of Columbia totals 6,776 acres or 17 percent of the District's total land area.

The federal government is the single largest employer in the National Capital Region.

In 1980, about 25 percent of the total workforce in the NCR was federal. In 2000, approximately 370,000⁴ federal employees worked in the NCR, accounting for 15 percent of the total regional workforce. Out of the total federal workforce approximately 53 percent worked in the District of Columbia; 26 percent in Virginia; and 21 percent in Maryland.

The federal government spends billions on procurement and contracting activities in the National Capital Region.

While the size of the federal workforce has decreased during the past two decades, the magnitude of federal procurement and private-sector contracting has grown considerably. The value of federal procurement contracts in the NCR more than doubled between 1990 and 2000, from \$12.5 billion to a total of \$28.4 billion, an extraordinary increase of 126 percent. In 2000, direct and indirect federal procurement spending accounted for 21 percent of the Washington area's gross regional product.⁵

The federal government leases or owns a significant amount of space in the region.

Federal leased space in the NCR amounted to 55 million square feet in 2003. The trend toward leased space has become more prevalent over the years, but has not diminished the significance of federal ownership. In 2003, federally owned space amounted to 155 million square feet, or 74 percent of total federally owned and leased space. The regional distribution of federally owned and leased space is 43 percent in the District of Columbia; 30 percent in Maryland; and 27 percent in Virginia.

The federal government owns and maintains vast holdings of open space in the region.

Open space and parkland are as important today as when the site for the nation's capital was first selected. The federal government uses these open spaces as settings for important monuments, grand public promenades, major federal buildings, and quiet gatherings. Recognition of the environmental value and scenic beauty provided by natural and cultural landscape resources has encouraged the federal government to acquire and protect natural areas. As a result, National Park Service-controlled land accounts for one-quarter of publicly owned land in the region.

4. Federal civilian and military employees comprised 369,312 persons out of the regional workforce of 2,395,659. Federal civilian employees accounted for 13 percent of regional workers, and military personnel accounted for 2 percent.

5. *The Impact of Federal Procurement on the National Capital Region*, prepared for NCPC by Stephen S. Fuller, George Mason University, October 2002.

The Planning Legacy

The Comprehensive Plan turns to the legacy of past urban designers, such as Pierre L'Enfant and members of the McMillan Commission—Burnham, McKim, Saint Gaudens, Olmsted—the towering figures of art, architecture, and landscape architecture of their time. Through their vision and leadership, they continue to inspire the Commission to uphold and build upon standards set for the city and region over past centuries.

L'Enfant Plan Era

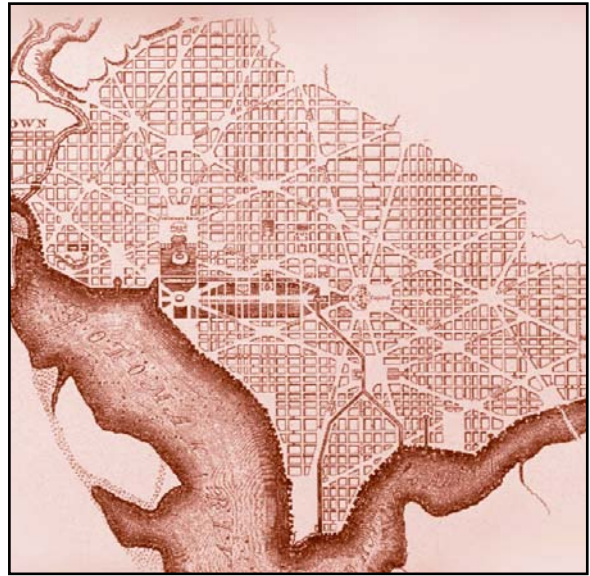
In 1787, the Constitution authorized the new federal government to establish a federal district as the seat of government. Selecting a site was one of the government's first tasks: the Residence Act of 1790 called for the district to be sited within a 75-mile stretch of the Potomac River, and authorized President Washington to choose the precise location. He chose an area encompassing the upper reaches of the navigable waterway, embracing the mouth of the “Eastern Branch” or Anacostia River as well as the port cities of Georgetown and Alexandria.

The next task was to site and construct government buildings within this district. President Washington accepted the inspired proposal of Pierre L'Enfant, an engineer who had previously worked with the continental army and federal government, to design the capital with a broad vision, providing the framework for a complete large-scale city that would meet the long-term needs of a growing nation.

L'Enfant's city plan, though occupying only a portion of the federal district, was extraordinarily ambitious. The plan included sites for major government buildings, memorials and other civic art, barracks and arsenals, cultural facilities, institutions such as hospitals and city markets, and the background urban fabric of a residential and commercial city. The streets and avenues were made broad and park-like: half their right-of-way was intended for gravel walks with double rows of trees. The L'Enfant Plan was overlaid with an abundant network of open space, ranging from monumental to local in scale, incorporating the area's rivers and topography, and resulting in the varied yet cohesive form that still characterizes the nation's capital.

McMillan Commission Era

The McMillan Commission was concerned with reviving, refining, and extending the L'Enfant Plan to preserve and enhance the character of the national capital. The McMillan Plan of 1901 addressed two main issues: building a public park system and designating sites for groupings of public buildings.



The L'Enfant Plan of 1791 laid the foundation for modern Washington.

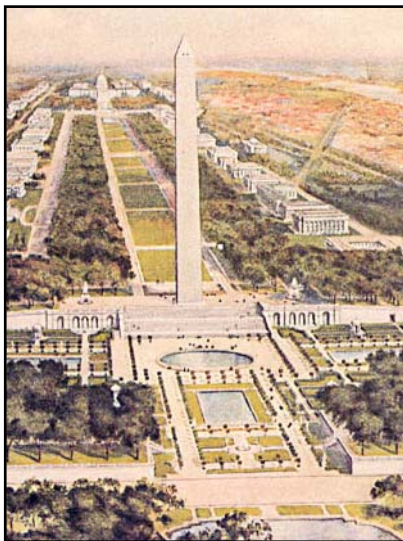
“The L'Enfant plan was unparalleled in its scale, scope, and complexity, and in its resolution of the problems...of creating out of bare landscape a new capital city.”

Worthy of the Nation, NCPC, 1977

By connecting the existing parkland and extending the capital's park system into the outlying areas of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, the McMillan Plan established a unified character for regional open space. The McMillan Plan suggested landscaped environments for dispersed specialized facilities such as the Dalecarlia, McMillan, and Georgetown Reservoirs and the Conduit Road from Little Falls. Scenic drives and parkways would trace the shorelines of the area's rivers and streams. These parkways would rise through the valleys and along steep hillsides to connect the larger parks and unite the old Civil War forts into a great circle encompassing L'Enfant's axial organization. The Fort Circle Park System, as it was conceived, was to be second in importance only to the Mall and the river designs.



The National Mall in the late 1890s



Design for the Washington Monument grounds and the National Mall as part of the McMillan Plan

The McMillan Plan grouped public buildings in formal landscaped settings, resulting in a highly concentrated monumental core. The plan reinforced a monumental Mall composed of prominent features and public buildings. Many important elements of the plan were accomplished over the next quarter century: building the Lincoln Memorial; redesigning the landscape of the U.S. Capitol and White House; removing the railroad tracks from the Mall; constructing Union Station; building the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway; and landscaping East and West Potomac Parks. Other parts of the McMillan Plan, such as the formal treatment of the Washington Monument grounds (shown at left), are no longer desirable due to evolving design values that favor the existing sylvan setting.

Comprehensive Planning in the National Capital Region During the 20th Century

The development of planning in the Washington region parallels the evolution of the profession throughout the nation, but with unique circumstances due to the presence of the national capital.

The McMillan Plan of 1901 provided a strong framework for many regional projects, extending into the region as well as in the core. But within a few years, the need for an enforcement body became apparent. Federal legislation in 1910 created the Commission of Fine Arts, whose duties included “advis(ing) upon the location of statues, fountains, and monuments in the public squares, streets, and parks in the District of Columbia.” It took on the role of protecting and promoting the McMillan Plan, and two of its initial members had been part of the McMillan Commission. The Commission of Fine Arts’ duties also soon expanded to include design review of all public buildings in Washington.

In the 1910s and 1920s, the planning field was becoming a more established component of modern urban management. Federal legislation in 1924 created the National Capital Park Commission to develop a comprehensive

plan for the park, parkway, and playground systems of Washington; and in 1926 its duties were extended to include consideration of all elements of city and regional planning, such as land use, major thoroughfares, systems of parks, parkways, and recreation, mass transportation, and community facilities. This body was renamed the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPPC) in 1926, and in 1952 it became the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). It was responsible for all planning matters within the District of Columbia, and also had limited planning responsibilities extending into the region. Planning bodies at the county and state level were created during this period, including the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1927, established by the state with authority in both Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties.

These federal and state agencies worked together on planning initiatives throughout the following decades. Beginning in 1930, the Capper-Cramton Act authorized NCPPC to acquire land for a regional park and parkway system, including coordinated acquisition of stream valley parks with Maryland and Virginia planning authorities. NCPPC produced the 1950 Comprehensive Plan, primarily covering the District of Columbia but also addressing regional issues. During the 1950s, NCPPC and NCPC studies demonstrated the need for a regional mass transit system, leading to the federal authorization of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority in 1965. In 1961, NCPC produced the influential “Year 2000” plan, proposing a model for long-term regional growth. M-NCPPC then incorporated and expanded on this recommended model in its own comprehensive plan, titled “On Wedges and Corridors.” The National Capital Regional Planning Council, a federal agency operating between 1952 and 1966, issued a “Regional Development Guide” in 1966. And NCPC issued drafts of new comprehensive plans in 1965 and 1967.

During this period, pressure was building for home rule in the District of Columbia, including reconsideration of the appropriateness of NCPC’s role as Washington’s local planning agency. The federal “Home Rule Act” of 1973 designated the District of Columbia’s elected mayor as the planner for the District government, a power that is exercised through the D.C. Office of Planning. NCPC’s role was re-defined to focus primarily on federal property in the District and the region. A new comprehensive planning effort was undertaken, leading to the publication of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* during the mid-1980s. This plan, a joint effort of NCPC and the District of Columbia government, contained Federal Elements, addressing federal concerns throughout the region, and District of Columbia Elements, addressing matters of local concern. The Federal Elements also work in conjunction with the comprehensive plans adopted by the various counties and cities of the region. This shared responsibility for the Comprehensive Plan remains the model for planning in the National Capital Region.

Principal themes of the *Legacy Plan* vision:

- Build on the historic L'Enfant and McMillan Plans, which are the foundation of modern Washington.
- Unify the city and the monumental core, with the U.S. Capitol at the center.
- Use new memorials and other public buildings to enhance local economic development.
- Integrate the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers into the city's public life and protect the Mall, East and West Potomac Parks, and adjacent historic buildings from future development that would result in a loss of open space, natural areas, and historic resources.
- Develop a comprehensive, flexible, and convenient transportation system that eliminates barriers and improves movement within the city.

Planning America's Capital for the 21st Century

In 1997, the National Capital Planning Commission released its long-term vision for the development of the monumental core. *Extending the Legacy: Planning America's Capital for the 21st Century (Legacy Plan)* was developed in response to the projected long-term demands on the nation's capital and the threat of overbuilding in the monumental core. By recentring the monumental core on the U.S. Capitol, the *Legacy Plan* creates opportunities for new monuments and museums and federal offices in all quadrants of the city. It calls for mixed-use development, expanding the reach of public transit and eliminating obsolete freeways, bridges, and railroad tracks that fragment the city. It reclaims Washington's historic waterfront for public enjoyment and adds parks, plazas, and other urban amenities. While the Commission initially characterized the *Legacy Plan* as a long-range vision, support has been strong and many of the plan's most significant proposals (e.g., Kennedy Center improvements and the Downtown Circulator) are now in development.

The Planning Framework: Vision and Guiding Principles

The Commission envisions:

A vibrant world capital that accommodates the needs of our national government; enriches the lives of the region's residents, workers, and visitors; and embodies an urban form and character that reflects the enduring values of the American people.

The Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan are linked by three guiding principles and by themes that have emerged within these principles. The three guiding principles are: (1) **accommodating federal and national capital activities**, while accounting for the changing impact of the federal government in the region; (2) **reinforcing smarter, more coordinated growth** and sustainable development principles; and (3) **supporting coordination with local and regional governments** in the National Capital Region to promote mutual planning and development objectives.

PRINCIPLE 1

Accommodate Federal and National Capital Activities

One of the key themes within this guiding principle is the importance of the appearance and image of our nation's capital. The city's physical design conveys the values and qualities to which we aspire as a nation. The Federal Elements emphasize fundamental concepts of beauty and order. Washington, D.C. and federal activities within the city must reflect the highest standards of architecture, urban design, and planning. As the central planning agency for the federal government, NCPC is committed to ensuring that adequate provisions are made for future generations who will come to the capital to petition the government, conduct business, or visit memorials and museums that honor the nation's heroes and capture the nation's history.

A second important theme in the Comprehensive Plan is the operational efficiency of the federal government. The Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan envision a capital city that is the economic, political, and cultural center of the Washington region. The Central Employment Area (CEA) (refer to Map 3 on p. 42) is seen as the primary focus of new federal office development and the preferred location of new major national capital activities. The CEA is promoted as the focal point for federal attractions, national events, and cultural and entertainment venues. Government headquarter facilities and functions that support national capital activities, such as entertainment and tourism, are encouraged to locate within or near the CEA. The District of Columbia is also considered the primary location for foreign missions and international organizations, consistent with international law and practice. An emphasis will be placed on retaining national and international activities in the city while preserving the autonomy of the District of Columbia government to regulate and plan local land use.

PLAN PRINCIPLES

Accommodate Federal and National Capital Activities

- Enhance the beauty and order of the nation's capital.
- Promote the highest quality design in the National Capital Region.
- Balance accessibility and security.
- Preserve historic properties and important L'Enfant and McMillan Plan design features.
- Disperse national capital activities throughout the city and region.
- Promote the District of Columbia as the prime location for foreign diplomatic missions.

Reinforce "Smart Growth" and Sustainable Development Planning Principles

- Preserve open space, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
- Discourage suburban sprawl and encourage more compact forms of development.
- Encourage mixed uses within federal facilities.
- Support pedestrian-oriented development that adds vitality and visual interest to urban areas.
- Concentrate more intense federal development near existing high-capacity transportation facilities.
- Promote non-auto transportation alternatives, including transit, walking, and bicycling.

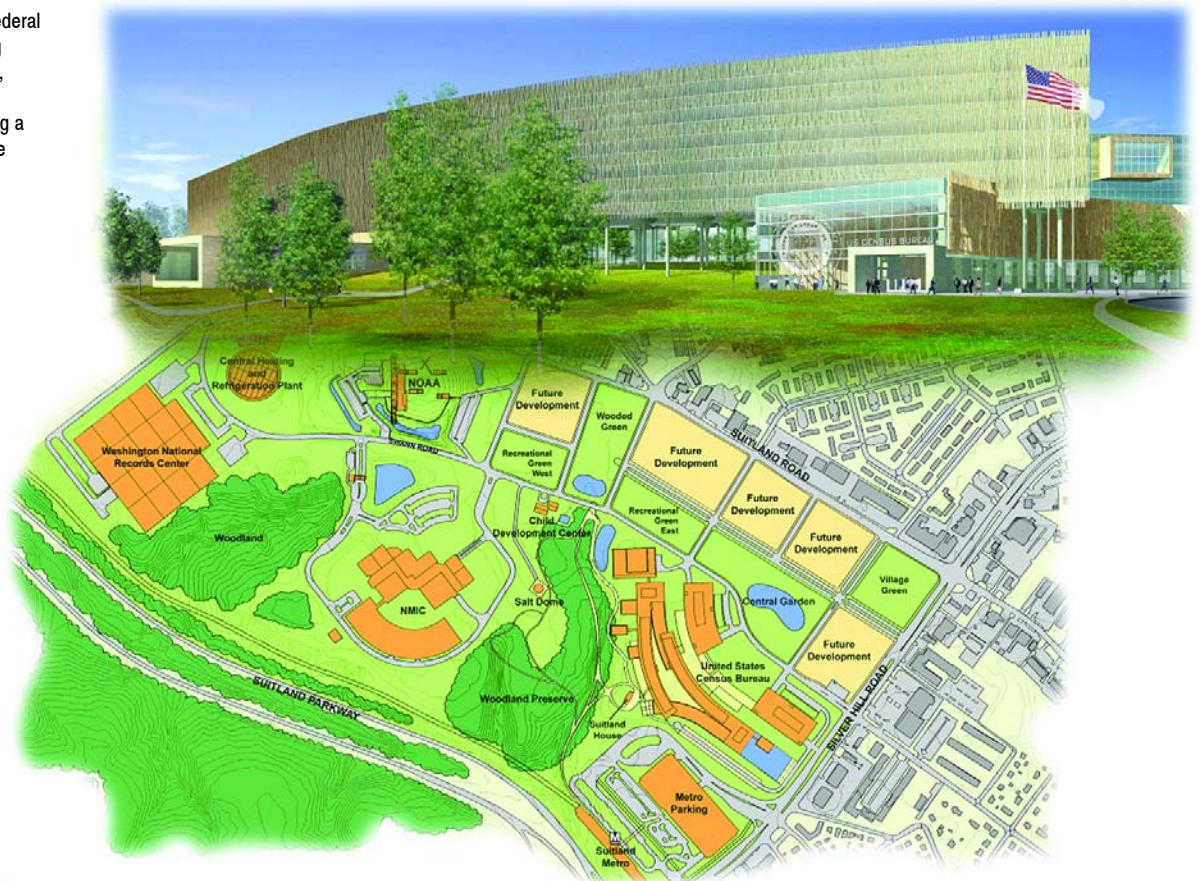
Support Local and Regional Planning and Development Objectives

- Maximize the contribution of federal projects to local and regional jurisdictions through the location and design of federal facilities.
- Promote intergovernmental coordination.

Those sectors of the regional economy that traditionally have been strong in the NCR—information processing, support services, intelligence gathering, medical research, international activities, national defense, tourism, information technology, and support services related to the government—are expected to continue to be drivers of the region’s economy because of their strong ties to the federal government. Activities requiring larger land areas or greater levels of security are directed to locations throughout the region that can accommodate those requirements.

The federal government should make every attempt to use existing federal facilities and land for new federal space needs. The Federal Elements recognize that many federal employees value living near their places of work, increasing the possibility that federal employees could commute primarily by transit, by bicycle, or by walking to job sites. Further, the siting and design of new federal facilities in the urban core and the District of Columbia that are convenient to public transportation will encourage employees and visitors to make greater use of transit opportunities. Federal activities will also be encouraged to locate in ways that promote the development of new, related private-sector activities, while meeting the requirements of federal agencies. Regardless of their location, federal facilities are expected to safely and efficiently accommodate government functions while promoting the highest quality design.

Redeveloping Suitland Federal Center utilizes an existing federal facility near Metro, satisfying operational requirements while making a positive contribution to the surrounding community.



PRINCIPLE 2

Reinforce “Smart Growth” and Sustainable Development Planning Principles

The Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan encourage “Smart Growth” and sustainable development principles. The plan supports strategies that orient development to public transit; protect environmental and natural resources; organize new development in compact land use patterns; promote opportunities for infill development to take advantage of existing public infrastructure; and adapt and reuse existing historic and underutilized buildings to preserve the unique identities of local neighborhoods. The concept of sustainable development recognizes the interrelationship between economic growth, environmental quality, and livability, and the responsibility that citizens have to preserve their communities and quality-of-life for future generations. These principles benefit the federal government and the region as a whole.

A critical theme within this guiding principle is transportation mobility and accessibility. To facilitate the movement of federal employees to and from their places of employment, federal agencies in the region are leading the way with a variety of creative commuting programs. The federal government provides a monthly transit benefit for employees, and many agencies have established highly effective transportation management plans to help reduce the number of drive-alone commuters, encourage carpooling and vanpooling, and offer staggered work hours and telecommuting. Considering the National Capital Region’s status as one of the most congested regions in the country, federal agencies must continue to find new and effective transportation strategies at their work sites, including incentives for alternative travel modes such as walking and biking.

Another fundamental theme that emerges within the guiding principle is the stewardship of the region’s natural and cultural resources. For more than two centuries, the federal government has actively acquired, developed, and maintained parks and open space, and protected and enhanced natural resources in the region. The importance of this mission has not diminished over time. In fact, with natural resources continually threatened by growth and development and declining budgets, it is imperative to develop and seek unified approaches and implement innovative solutions to ensure that these resources will be preserved and enjoyed by all citizens now and in the future.

PRINCIPLE 3

Support Local and Regional Planning and Development Objectives

The federal government will continue to be a major generator of growth and development in the National Capital Region. Federally owned and leased facilities are located throughout the region, and federal activities significantly impact the economic health, welfare, and stability of the region. The Commission and other federal agencies must, therefore, work closely with authorities in jurisdictions and with affected community groups in which federal activities are located or are proposed to be located.

The Commission strongly promotes intergovernmental cooperation and public participation in the preparation and review of federal policies, plans, and programs in the region by:

- Coordinating federal plans, projects, and capital improvement programming with local, regional, and state plans and programs.
- Encouraging federal agencies planning development projects to participate in the Commission's "early consultation" program in order to inform non-federal officials and community organizations about such projects prior to their submission to the Commission.
- Providing for public participation in the Commission's preparation and review of federal policies, plans, projects, and capital improvement programs.
- Assisting federal agencies in resolving issues with affected non-federal agencies and community groups in preparing proposed policies, plans, and programs.
- Coordinating the federal interest review of local, regional, and state plans and programs.
- Promoting information-sharing and data exchanges with state, regional, and local authorities.

The three guiding principles are designed to lead the federal government on a more efficient, more cohesive, and more coordinated planning path—one needed to support a functional federal government, while improving growth and development patterns in the region.

The Planning Program: Federal Elements

The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* identifies and addresses the current and future needs of federal employees and visitors to the nation's capital; provides policies for locating new federal facilities and maintaining existing ones; guides the placement and accommodation of foreign missions and international agencies; promotes the preservation and enhancement of the region's natural resources and environment; protects historic resources and urban design features that contribute to the image and functioning of the nation's capital; and, working with local, state, and national authorities, supports access into, out of, and around the nation's capital that is as efficient as possible for federal and non-federal workers.

The seven Federal Elements are: Federal Workplace; Foreign Missions and International Organizations; Transportation; Parks and Open Space; Federal Environment; Preservation and Historic Features; and Visitors.

The **Federal Workplace Element** encourages an efficient distribution of federal work activities in the region, assuring federal workplaces that offer good work environments for the federal workforce, while providing services that attract and retain federal employees.

The **Foreign Missions and International Organizations Element** provides a policy framework for the United States to fulfill its obligation to foreign governments in obtaining suitable locations for their diplomatic activities.

The **Transportation Element** promotes a balanced, multi-pronged strategy that encourages the provision of improved public transit services and the creation of new transportation modes and new commuting alternatives.

The **Parks and Open Space Element** establishes policies to protect, enhance, and expand the parks and open space system in the region.

The **Federal Environment Element** promotes the federal government as an environmental steward and emphasizes and supplements the existing environmental regulatory framework.

The **Preservation and Historic Features Element** preserves and enhances the image and identity of the nation's capital and region, and provides a framework for the federal government's treatment of historic properties.

The **Visitors Element** provides a response to the growth in tourism and the continuing interest in creating new federal visitor attractions.

The Federal Elements—along with the District of Columbia Elements, federal and District agencies' systems plans, individual installation master plans and subarea plans, development controls, and design guidelines—constitute the road map for NCPC's land use planning and development decision-making processes in the National Capital Region.

