

CONCLUSION

*E*xtending the Legacy offers a framework for change that, like the L'Enfant and McMillan plans, combines sweeping ideas for the whole city with smaller ones tailored to streets, blocks and neighborhoods. Washington must work for its residents and for the people who do business there. It must be clean, safe, attractive and affordable, a place where the trains run on time and stop at interesting places. Yet like all capitals, Washington is also a symbolic city where the values of the nation are on public display. When Washington doesn't work, it implies that the rest of America isn't working either. As the focus of attention, Washington must epitomize the nation's democratic ideals and show the world that it is on the right course for the 21ST century.

The themes of *Extending the Legacy*, therefore, are the themes of our time — ecology, mobility, diversity, opportunity. This document reasserts the value of planning and urban design and redefines how government should participate in the renewal of Washington — not as the autocratic master builder, but as a partner and a catalyst for change. Fears that visionary plans such as *Legacy* are too expensive and cumbersome, a distraction from the urgent business of making cities safe and livable, evaporate when compared with the extraordinary benefits that such planning has already bestowed on Washington. The capital is the product of bold plans, conceived in optimism and carried out with conviction. Inertia is the agent of urban decay. Cities that cannot anticipate the future will be run over by it.

“Make no little plans,” urged Daniel Burnham, a member of the McMillan Commission and the father of modern Chicago. “They have no magic to stir men's blood. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die.”

Extending the Legacy aspires to do both: to safeguard the special features of the Monumental Core, the things that make Americans proud and joyful, and to provide a compelling vision of what the rest of the capital could be 50 to 100 years from now — the way Pierre L'Enfant imagined a city that did not exist and put on paper a noble diagram that brought it to life.

POLICIES FOR EXTENDING THE LEGACY



Extending the Legacy is a vision for the Nation's Capital over the next 50 to 100 years. It sketches the big picture that future generations will fill in. A key step in that process is devising policies for the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. Published jointly by NCPD and the District of Columbia government, the Comprehensive Plan is the principal development document for Washington. The following policies, to be incorporated into the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan, translate the Legacy vision into specific planning recommendations.

PROTECTING THE LEGACY

- The Mall is a unique national space, a summary of our democratic ideals and achievements, and must be protected from excessive development. New building on the Mall is strongly discouraged.
- The historic urban design framework of the capital established by the L'Enfant and McMillan plans — open spaces, long axes and dramatic vistas — must be rigorously protected.
- Elements of the L'Enfant and McMillan plans that have been disrupted, especially major avenues and civic spaces, should be restored.
- The most prominent development sites identified in *Extending the Legacy*, particularly those with important visual connections to the U.S. Capitol and other landmarks, are to be reserved for the most important symbolic functions.
- Federal and local governments should cooperate in protecting and enhancing the unique historic resources of the Monumental Core and surrounding areas.
- Federal legislative activities should continue to be concentrated on Capitol Hill, as specified in the Architect of the Capitol's 1981 master plan.
- If the Supreme Court decides to relocate, as suggested in the 1981 Capitol master plan, its new site should be comparable in dignity and symbolic importance to the White House and the Capitol.
- The District's historic height limit should be preserved, in accordance with the 1910 Height of Buildings Act. Neighboring communities are urged to respect the integrity of the Mall and the surrounding Monumental Core in their own planning and development.
- Arlington National Cemetery, including the woodland setting, should be preserved as a shrine to America's military heroes and foremost public servants.

UNIFYING THE CITY AND THE MONUMENTAL CORE

- The U.S. Capitol should be the symbolic center of Washington and the Monumental Core. Development sites that strengthen views of, and symbolic ties with, the Capitol should be given special consideration.
- Future transportation, infrastructure and urban development projects should reinforce the preeminence of the Core.
- Federal activities should benefit all quadrants of the city. Local governments, trade associations, international organizations and private development should be encouraged to locate in neglected areas, in a manner that strengthens the urban design of the city.
- Federal facilities should be placed where they bolster the Washington economy. The historic distribution of federal employment — 60 percent in the District, 40 percent in the region — should be enforced.

STIMULATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The federal government, in concert with the District government and the private sector, should create a development corporation to fund and coordinate planning and development projects for specific areas of the city.
- Federal buildings should include shops, restaurants, exhibits and other public activities that stimulate street life.
- Memorial sponsors should consider sites throughout Washington, including circles and squares on major avenues, waterfronts, urban gateways and scenic overlooks. Special attention should be given to North, South and East Capitol Streets, Poplar Point and 8th Street, NW.
- Embassies, consulates, trade missions and other international groups are encouraged to contribute to the city's revitalization by making their unique cultural resources available to the Washington community through exhibits, lectures, festivals and other public events.

RENEWING RIVERS AND OPEN SPACES

- The Monumental Core should be a model of urban environmental quality. It should serve to educate the public about the importance of the natural environment, foster the sensitive design of the built environment and conserve and improve open spaces and environmental resources in the National Capital.
- The 22 miles of waterfront along the Potomac and Anacostia rivers should be a national showcase of urban vitality and sensitive design. The plan will include different kinds and levels of activity to complement the character of the rivers themselves — from environmentally sensitive open space near the Arboretum to urban development at South Capitol Street.
- Barriers that separate the city from its waterfront — freeways, rail lines and other inappropriate land uses — should be removed.
- The civic attractions of the Monumental Core should be extended across the Anacostia River through memorials, parks and overlooks, all scaled to the surrounding neighborhoods.

IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION

- Washington should become a model of advanced urban transportation, combining a commitment to expanded public transit with support for new technology and the development of supplementary transit systems, such as water taxis and a circulator.
- Metrorail must be the cornerstone of this new system, tied to other modes of transportation through a network of transit centers and extended to Dulles and Baltimore-Washington International airports.
- Obstacles to movement within the city, including obsolete freeways, tunnels and bridges, should be removed.
- Simple, inexpensive improvements such as sidewalks and bike paths should be constructed at every opportunity.

This report was prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission as part of its ongoing mission as the central planning agency for the federal government in the Washington region. The Commission includes three members appointed by the President, two members appointed by the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Secretaries of Defense and of the Interior, the Administrator of General Services, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, the Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, the Mayor and the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia.

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