

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6629



*Monumental Core Framework Plan:
Connecting New Destinations with the National Mall
Monumental Core, Washington, DC*

Submitted by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and the
U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA)

March 26, 2009

Abstract

The *Monumental Core Framework Plan: Connecting New Destinations with the National Mall* (the *Framework Plan*) is the next step in advancing the vision of NCPC's *Extending the Legacy Plan*. A joint effort of NCPC and CFA, the purpose of this plan is to transform the federal precincts surrounding the National Mall into vibrant destinations and to improve the physical and visual connections between the city, the National Mall, and the waterfront. In guiding the future development of central Washington, the *Framework Plan* promotes livability and sustainability while creating destinations to support memorials, museums, and federal offices for our future generations. The plan identifies immediate and long-term opportunities to coordinate land use, urban design, public space, and transportation improvements, and lays out an action agenda for the detailed planning work that will be necessary to fully realize the plan's overall vision.

Commission Action Requested

Adoption of the *Monumental Core Framework Plan: Connecting New Destinations with the National Mall* pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8711 et. seq.

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Adopts the *Monumental Core Framework Plan: Connecting New Destinations with the National Mall*.

Directs staff to use the *Framework Plan* as a basis when evaluating and making recommendations for development proposals that go beyond the routine maintenance of public buildings, and proposals for improvements to parks, public spaces, and public transportation

systems; staff shall also advise all applicants to use the plan as a guide when programming, planning, and designing future development proposals.

Directs staff to use the *Framework Plan* as a guide when providing input into federal, local, and private planning studies and reports to facilitate moving the plan recommendations toward implementation.

Directs staff to use the *Framework Plan* to inform future updates of the agency Strategic Plan, and commence work on the key action priorities such as those initiatives pertaining to the Federal Walk; street level uses in the monumental core, and feasibility studies for the redevelopment of 10th Street, SW, and Maryland Avenue, SW.

Directs staff to incorporate recommendations of the *Framework Plan* when developing or amending future NCPC planning studies and reports including the *Comprehensive Plan for the Nation's Capital: Federal Elements*, and the *Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP)*.

Directs staff to report back to the Commission annually on the status of the *Framework Plan's* key action priorities.

Directs staff to incorporate minor changes to the plan in response to comments and direction provided by the National Capital Planning Commission and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, any technical corrections, and necessary clarifications to the text and graphics prior to publication of the final plan.

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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

Washington is one of America's great cities. As the seat of the national government, its iconic civic landmarks, ceremonial open spaces, architectural heritage, and panoramic skyline have long defined the city's image. Perhaps the most defining feature of Washington is the National Mall. The National Mall, and the buildings that surround it, is a physical feature that distinguishes Washington from any other city. It is a symbolic representation of the characteristics that define our nation's unique system of government, and the important role that citizens play in that system. As America's "front yard," the National Mall is expected to make lasting, positive impressions. Notwithstanding the physical demands placed on this popular destination, it is expected that the National Mall continually reflect three very important pillars of our democracy: openness, balance, and order. Unfortunately, over the past three decades, the character and use of the National Mall have changed dramatically with the addition of new memorials and museums, increases in both programmed events and everyday use, and heightened security requirements. These changes are making it difficult to maintain the Mall in a manner that is commensurate with its symbolic role in our society.

In 2003, in an effort to help preserve this nationally significant open space, Congress amended the Commemorative Works Act and declared the Mall a completed work of civic art. This act

prohibited locating future museums or memorials within an area known as “the Reserve,” a no-build zone in the central cross axis of the Mall that was first proposed in NCPC’s 2001 *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*. While this was an important step toward protecting this precious landscape, it did little to reduce the demand for locating new memorials and museums on the Mall. Although the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* identified many locations where future memorials could be located, it did not lay out the actions necessary to make some of these locations attractive to future sponsors. Many of these locations are currently surrounded by unsightly barriers and lack critical visitor and pedestrian amenities. Many of the nearby streets suffer from inadequate streetscapes. They appear isolated, inaccessible, and discourage sponsors from giving these areas serious consideration for new museums or memorials. Without a plan to improve some of these locations to provide dignified settings for future museums and memorials it will continue to be difficult for Congress, and other affected entities, to properly site future museums and memorials and preserve the openness of the National Mall. In 2005, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) initiated a planning effort to address this challenge.

The *Monumental Core Framework Plan: Connecting New Destinations with the National Mall* (the *Framework Plan*) is a joint effort of the NCPC and CFA. The purpose of the plan is to transform federal precincts surrounding the National Mall into vibrant destinations and to improve the physical and visual connections between the city, the National Mall, and the waterfront, while achieving the highest levels of livability and sustainability in central Washington. It is rooted in a planning history that spans more than 200 years and embraces such seminal plans as the 1791 L’Enfant Plan, the 1901 McMillan Plan, and the 1997 *Extending the Legacy* vision plan. Though initially focused on preserving the historic landscape of the National Mall by identifying ways to improve the settings of future museum and memorial sites off the Mall, it was soon discovered that in order to effectively do this the *Framework Plan* needed to take a much broader approach. This approach needed to consider the needs of the federal workforce and the impact that distributing new cultural destinations off the Mall would have on office space development potential. It also needed to factor in the broader planning and economic interests of the local government in order to maximize opportunities to leverage public and private investments, coordinate infrastructure improvements with economic development, and ensure that federal and local needs are met in a manner that is transparent to those that live, work, and visit the nation’s capital.

Following the official launch of the *Framework Plan* on May 17, 2006, a Memorandum of Agreement was established with key federal and local stakeholders in order to facilitate interagency coordination at the federal and local levels. The agreement established a Steering Committee which provided a forum for guidance, input, and coordination amongst stakeholders. A Working Group was also established to provide expertise and help resolve complex land use, ownership, transportation, and public space issues. The following sixteen agencies were parties to this agreement:

- NCPC
- CFA
- General Services Administration
- National Park Service
- Department of Defense
- Architect of the Capitol
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce

- Council of the District of Columbia
- DC Office of Planning
- DC Department of Transportation
- Smithsonian Institution
- National Gallery of Art
- Kennedy Center
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

In addition, recognizing that the success of the *Framework Plan* would also be dependant upon public participation, a forum for citizens, interests groups, and other key stakeholders was established. These groups and individuals were relied upon to provide valuable input on potential issues, opportunities, and strategies that ultimately helped to shape the plan's recommendations.

Research and data gathering was conducted during the first year of the initiative. Meetings and workshops were held with the Steering Committee and the public to identify issues and opportunities, and begin to refine the project goals, objectives, and potential strategies. In addition, meetings with the Working Group and individual members were held to obtain their input during this early stage of the planning process. To broaden the public outreach effort, NCPC and CFA worked closely with the National Building Museum to host a symposium entitled "Framing a Capital City." Held in early 2007, experts on urban ecology, history, planning, design, and commemoration examined how commemoration, environmental sustainability, symbolic architecture, and the use of public space should influence the character and shape of Washington in the 21st century. They discussed how these topics transcend local planning concerns and touch upon social, political, and economic matters of national significance. They also focused on the need to balance Washington's dual role as an urban center and a national showcase.

In December 2007, the preliminary *Framework Plan* strategies and recommendations were presented to the Steering Committee as well as to the public. The purpose of these presentations was to receive comments and provide a status of the planning work that had been completed thus far. In addition, executive briefings were provided to both CFA and NCPC; and meetings with federal stakeholders potentially affected by the *Framework Plan* were held. The input provided at these meetings was incorporated into the final draft of the plan. On June 2, 2008, the draft *Framework Plan* was presented to the Steering Committee and Working Group in order to receive their comments prior to releasing the draft plan for public review and comment.

On July 10, 2008, the Commission authorized release of the draft *Framework Plan* for a 90-day public comment period. The plan was well received and was covered by a wide range of media outlets including local and national newspapers, local television networks, public radio, and a collection of websites and online blogs. Following the public release an aggressive outreach effort was initiated in order to receive comments and acquire input from as many stakeholders as possible. The effort began on July 17th with a presentation to CFA. In addition, NCPC and CFA held two well-attended public meetings; presented the plan to over 20 interested agencies and organizations; and hosted three roundtable discussions that focused on urban sustainability and development. Valuable input was also received through written comments. Approximately 50 letters containing thoughtful and constructive feedback were received and were generally

supportive of the plan's recommendations. It is estimated that the outreach effort that followed the public release of the *Framework Plan* reached close to 1,000 people.

Following the completion of the 90-day comment period NCPC and CFA staff used the feedback that was received to refine the draft plan. Some of the specific comments received addressed the need to balance the future office needs of the federal government with the future demand for new museums and memorials; the potential impacts to agency budgets and operations; the need to prioritize implementation measures and interim solutions; and the need for a more robust multi-modal transit system. In the final draft plan, NCPC and CFA staff worked diligently to address specific issues and highlight those aspects of the plan that promote urban sustainability. Efforts were also made to: identify more innovative transportation solutions; clearly prioritize the recommended actions; rename the plan so that it accurately reflected its true scope and focus; and improve the overall readability of the plan. These revisions were reviewed with key federal stakeholders prior to submitting the final draft for adoption by CFA and NCPC. The final draft of the *Framework Plan* was completed in early March 2009 and was made publically available on NCPC's website.

The final draft of the *Framework Plan* is the result of close coordination among federal and local stakeholders as well as with the general public. It is a flexible tool that will assist in guiding future planning and development decisions at the federal and local level. It identifies immediate and long-term opportunities to coordinate land use, urban design, public space, and transportation improvements in a manner that is environmentally sustainable. The plan promotes fiscal responsibility by seeking to maintain federal ownership of land and buildings, and recommending ways to maximize the development potential of federally owned land within the study area. The plan also seeks to retain federal agencies in the District of Columbia in locations that are appropriate to their missions, while capitalizing on opportunities to integrate a mix of uses in order to blend the boundaries between the federal and local city, create a workplace environment that is healthy and productive, and contribute to the city's neighborhoods.

To begin moving the *Framework Plan's* vision toward reality the plan lays out an agenda for the detailed planning work necessary to evaluate the feasibility, costs, funding sources, and benefits of site-specific initiatives. It contains a variety of large and small initiatives, some easily achieved in the next few years, and others that will require a longer time frame. Many recommendations in the plan will require additional detailed planning before projects are funded or constructed. Some initiatives could be led by one or more federal, District, or private entities, while others will require Executive or Congressional approval for the necessary capital investments.

The *Framework Plan* is a product of a highly collaborative process that involved proud residents of the city and region, citizens that care about their nation's capital, and dedicated public servants. The end result is a unified vision that builds on the past, reinforces the present, promotes collaboration, and contributes to a more livable and sustainable capital city. The *Framework Plan* presents a course of action that will transform the way people experience Washington. It will contribute to its economic, social, and environmental well-being; and it will elevate its stature as a great capital city.

SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

The *Framework Plan* focuses on precincts near the National Mall, and specifically the federal land and buildings within these precincts; these four areas are commonly known as the Federal Triangle, Northwest Rectangle, Southwest Rectangle, and Potomac Park. These areas were chosen as the focus of the *Framework Plan* due to their proximity to the National Mall, and their relationship to many of Washington's extraordinary but often undervalued assets such as its waterfront, historic public buildings, civic spaces, and parkland. In addition, these areas possess some of the most significant barriers to achieving the primary goals of the *Framework Plan*. Barriers such as intrusive bridges, roadways, and railroads separate the National Mall from its surrounding neighborhoods, compromise security, and take away from an area's ability to successfully accommodate a future museum or memorial. Large, single-use buildings disrupt the urban fabric in ways that compromise the historic underpinnings of the city, create environments that are not pedestrian-friendly, and in some cases do not fully realize the development potential of the land they currently occupy.

Overcoming these barriers will lead to new destinations that define Washington as the nation's capital, and as a city of neighborhoods. It will establish connections that are easy to understand, improve access to new and existing destinations, and improve social equity. Finally, it will improve the livability of the city and move Washington towards becoming a model of urban sustainability.

The three primary goals of the Framework Plan are:

- Transform federal precincts into vibrant destinations by improving physical settings of key sites and corridors, enhancing the public realm, and infusing a mix of activities and uses.
- Improve connections between the National Mall, the city, and the waterfront by extending the civic qualities of the National Mall, repairing the urban fabric, and enhancing mobility.
- Enhancing the livability and sustainability of the Monumental Core by helping to protect the National Mall as an enduring cultural and natural resource; encouraging compact, walkable, and transit-oriented development; achieving the highest levels of environmental performance; and improving the urban ecology of central Washington.

To advance these goals, the Framework Plan identifies 6 guiding themes that inform the specific recommendations of the plan. These guiding themes and strategies are summarized below:

GUIDING THEMES AND STRATEGIES

The city of Washington – conceived, planned, and built as the urban expression of a new nation – has a form strongly linked to our nation's democratic principles. Some of these principles first embodied in the L'Enfant Plan, have guided two centuries of planning for the city. Other principles have emerged from the issues of each subsequent planning era. These include the monumental vision of the McMillan Plan, and the *Legacy Plan's* modern vision to protect the landscape of the National Mall and integrate federal buildings and commemorative works into

the capital city. The *Framework Plan* respects these fundamental principles of the past and present, and aims to address the paramount planning issue of our time by advancing new principles that are focused on the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of human habitation.

Each recommendation made by the *Framework Plan* is closely tied to one or more guiding themes that seek to safeguard and advance the principles mentioned above. Each theme has a unique focus as well as a collection of supporting strategies that when applied to the individual precincts will help to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan.

The guiding themes and supporting strategies of the *Framework Plan* are:

Celebrate the City as a Symbol – Washington’s iconic urban form and skyline are recognized around the world as symbols of American democracy. The *Framework Plan* seeks to reclaim, strengthen, and preserve historically significant views and axial relationships, as well as redefine several corridors to enhance connections between the National Mall, downtown, and the waterfront. The following strategies are proposed to help elevate key urban design elements of the L’Enfant Plan, create new visual connections, and facilitate the movement of pedestrians through the Mall and the monumental core to new and existing destinations:

- Enhance views and symbolic relationships to promote continuity in the historic design of the nation’s capital.
- Restore historic squares, streets, and original rights-of-way to reclaim streets and reservations that have been disrupted or closed, and protect the visual openness and function qualities of the L’Enfant Plan.
- Dedicate the most prominent development sites for primary civic assets to support and advance the design approach of the L’Enfant Plan.
- Promote visual connections to the Potomac and Anacostia waterfronts to reinforce the relationship of the monumental core with its surrounding natural resources.

Overcoming Barriers and Improving Connections – While the federal city is home to our country’s most treasured symbols of democracy, the important precincts surrounding the Mall have been diminished by barriers that cause these areas to appear isolated, inaccessible, and neglected. The *Framework Plan* envisions a walkable city that restores connectivity between the Mall, the waterfront, and the living fabric of the surrounding city by eliminating barriers caused by highway, bridge, and rail infrastructure, broken street grids, and “dead zones” of monotonous office facades. The plan proposes the following strategies to overcome barriers and improve connectivity:

- Reduce the impact of transportation infrastructure to restore the grid of streets and avenues, promote continuity of pedestrian access, and contribute to a sustainable urban environment.
- Eliminate visual obstructions and restore corridors to improve primary and secondary physical connections.

- Remove psychological barriers to improve the conditions of the public realm and create walkable, pedestrian-friendly linkages within and among neighborhoods, work places, and visitor destinations.

Encouraging Compact, Mixed Use Destinations – The concentration of federal agency headquarters is a foundation of Washington’s economy and is integral to the symbolic nature of the capital city. Yet despite the stability provided by the federal workforce, large single-use districts dedicated to federal offices often detract from the urban quality of the city. To help resolve this, the *Framework Plan* suggests that future museums and other new uses be incorporated into particular buildings within these districts. It also proposes to reprogram historic buildings, redevelop particular properties, and take full advantage of infill opportunities. These types of interventions can help activate existing buildings and create new cultural destinations. The plan proposes the following land use and development strategies to improve areas near the National Mall:

- Develop underused and air-rights properties to promote compact development integrated with public open space.
- Promote mixed-use destinations to facilitate transit-oriented development without reducing available federal office space.
- Reinvent civic corridors and urban spaces to promote livability.

Strengthen the Public Realm – Pennsylvania Avenue, the Reflecting Pool, and the Tidal Basin have become defining features of the nation’s capital. However, they exist almost in isolation separate from the rest of the city, lacking strong linkages to each other, as well as to other destinations within the monumental core. In and around the National Mall barriers block circulation between destinations. Security barriers and inconsistent streetscape treatments discourage pedestrian travel, wayfinding information is limited, and the lack of pedestrian amenities can deter people from visiting emerging commercial, entertainment, recreational, and cultural destinations. A strengthened public realm can improve this situation. The *Framework Plan* envisions a distinguished and accessible public realm shaped by beautiful streets, parks, and waterfronts that meet the highest standards of design, construction, and maintenance. The plan advances the following strategies for strengthening the public realm throughout the monumental core:

- Extend the premium qualities of the National Mall to enhance the significance of emerging destinations.
- Create an interconnected open space network to establish walkable linkages among open spaces within the city, including a continuous trail from Georgetown to the National Arboretum.
- Provide multi-purpose spaces to accommodate events and recreation.
- Design great streets to safely accommodate all users equally, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists.

Facilitate Transit Use and Public Mobility – After a long period of disinvestment, the value of public transit is undergoing a renaissance in the United States. Public transit supports compact development, and is an essential element for a walkable, welcoming, and friendly city.

Washington enjoys one of the finest public transit systems in the world, but it is not without its gaps. Recognizing these gaps and the need for improvements to serve workers, residents, and visitors; the plan calls for environmentally sustainable enhancements to extend transit to underserved areas, and improve transportation options in order to reduce dependency on automobiles. The *Framework Plan* includes the following strategies to improve public transportation service:

- Encourage environmentally sustainable transportation alternatives to minimize harmful emissions and increase transit choices.
- Support a multi-modal transit system to improve accessibility and connectivity in the Monumental Core.
- Promote bicycle use to increase mobility and reduce dependence on motor vehicles.

Advance Sustainability in the Urban Environment – Cities around the world are faced with interrelated challenges associated with growth, development, and resource management. These challenges are further complicated by the effects of global climate change such as sea-level rise, drought, and heat waves. In the face of all these challenges cities are being forced to find ways to become more sustainable. Fortunately, Washington possesses the critical components of a sustainable city: a compact urban form served by a multi-modal transit system; a diverse economy anchored by the federal government and tourism; an expansive public park system comprised of diverse ecosystems; and perhaps most important, federal and local leadership committed to a more sustainable capital city. The *Framework Plan* recognizes the importance of these assets to the city's continuing growth. The plan proposes a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to urban sustainability, and puts forth the following strategies that will allow Washington to evolve in a manner that meets the needs of current generations without compromising those of the next:

- Invest in high performance buildings to reduce energy consumption and generate renewable energy; recycle wastewater, reduce stormwater runoff, and conserve potable water; reduce light pollution; and promote healthier working environments.
- Promote the development of renewable energy technology within Washington's federal districts to help accelerate the availability and use of alternative fuels.
- Upgrade aging infrastructure with an emphasis on green technology to modernize water and sewer systems, and systems that combine gray and green infrastructure to promote the effective and efficient use of resources.
- Improve stormwater management to promote a more integrated natural system that addresses collection, conveyance, detention, treatment, and reuse of runoff.
- Promote energy efficient transportation to reduce energy consumption and improve air quality.
- Integrate natural elements into every scale of design to promote human connections to the natural environment, increase the benefits derived from these elements, and soften the built environment.
- Connect and enhance open spaces to be safe, highly functional, and accessible to all residents, workers, and visitors.
- Protect and restore urban native habitats to support plant and animal wildlife.

- Reestablish the urban tree canopy along streetscapes and on development sites to reduce the urban heat island effect.
- Restore the natural shoreline and riparian habitats along select riverfront areas to improve water quality, moderate flooding, and create new habitat for plants and wildlife.
- Program and design for appropriate uses in the floodplain to protect the city from river overbank flooding.

PRECINCT PROPOSALS

In order to achieve the goals of the *Framework Plan*, efforts need to be focused in specific areas instead of applied broadly across entire precincts. The plan focuses on key streets and federally owned property that offer the biggest potential for achieving one or more of the plan's goals. These sites, viewed in relation to their surrounding context, offer an abundance of opportunities to leverage public and private investment, coordinate development with future infrastructure improvements, and build upon the historic structure and unique urban form of the nation's capital. Each precinct within the study area contains a unique set of circumstances that lend themselves to a collection of focused improvements that if carried to completion will successfully reach that precinct's objective and achieve the plan's primary goals. For example, the Framework Plan recommends that the best way to connect the Mall with the waterfront is by an improved connection along 10th Street, SW, and a new cultural destination at the 10th Street overlook site. Another example is the intersection of Virginia Avenue and 20th Street in the Northwest Rectangle. Located at an important node in the 1901 McMillan Plan, and halfway between the White House and the Kennedy Center along the E Street corridor, this location has great potential to accommodate a new cultural attraction.

Considering their unique character and individual set of challenges, it was necessary to identify a separate approach for each precinct in order to achieve the goals of this plan. The objectives for each of the four Framework Plan precincts, along with the plan proposals are identified below:

Southwest Rectangle: Connect the National Mall with the Waterfront

Objectives:

Transform the Southwest Rectangle into a distinguished and pedestrian-friendly workplace, a cultural hub, and an exciting and welcoming visitor destination. Restore the urban fabric and improve connections between the Smithsonian Castle and the Southwest waterfront, and between the U.S. Capitol and the Jefferson Memorial.

Plan Proposals:

- Redefine 10th Street as an inviting, lively, mixed-use corridor that connects the National Mall to the waterfront, using state of the art sustainable redevelopment practices.
- Restore Maryland Avenue as a grand urban boulevard that links the U.S. Capitol to the Jefferson Memorial while enhancing mobility and environmental quality.

- Repair the urban fabric by restoring the street grid, decking over highways, and redeveloping superblocks to improve the public realm, integrate open space, increase development density, and improve the mix of uses.

Potomac Park: Enhance the Waterfront Experience

Objectives:

Establish Potomac Park as an easily accessible destination that offers expanded opportunities for recreation, leisure, commemoration, and celebration in a setting of scenic beauty showcasing environmental stewardship.

Plan Proposals:

- Develop Potomac Harbor along both sides of the Washington Channel with active uses, visitor services, an expanded marina, and a wider land bridge.
- Connect Potomac Park with the city by providing multiple linkages that improve access for visitors arriving by foot, bicycle, boat, car, Metro, and water taxi.
- Reprogram Potomac Park for sustainable recreation by offering a range of activities and naturalized areas connected to a continuous waterfront trail.
- Create a festival ground at the Jefferson Memorial to relieve pressure on the National Mall and allow for a diversity of uses.

Northwest Rectangle: Extend the Commemorative Landscape

Objectives:

Establish the Northwest Rectangle as an accessible and walkable cultural destination and high-quality workplace. Build upon its prestigious location and existing open space to expand cultural facilities and create an interconnected system of beautiful parks linking the Kennedy Center with both the Lincoln Memorial and the White House and President's Park.

Plan Proposals:

- Link the Kennedy Center with the Lincoln Memorial by establishing a ceremonial boulevard and enhanced waterfront esplanade that will extend the powerful symbolic qualities of the National Mall.
- Connect the Kennedy Center with the White House and President's Park by establishing the E Street corridor as a commemorative linear park with places for cultural enrichment and leisure activities, and by extending the street grid and placing infill development over the Potomac Freeway.

Federal Triangle: Link Downtown with the National Mall

Objectives:

Strengthen Pennsylvania Avenue's image as a grand urban boulevard and establish the Federal Triangle as a preeminent workplace and visitor destination. Showcase the art, architecture, and civic ideals of the nation with a lively mix of urban activities including animated and distinguished public spaces.

Plan Proposals:

- Establish a new destination on Pennsylvania Avenue by concentrating a mix of office, culture and hospitality uses on Pennsylvania Avenue between 9th and 12th Streets NW.
- Enhance the public realm by establishing a welcoming, interconnected system of lively and beautiful streets, introducing sustainable public spaces, and improving the pedestrian experience and symbolic importance of Pennsylvania Avenue and the Federal Triangle.

PLAN BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The *Framework Plan* has the potential to provide great benefits to both the federal and local governments, residents of Washington, and to those who visit the nation's capital. For the federal government, these benefits will strengthen the monumental core as the seat of the national government, and center of federal employment, by modernizing the office space that exists and providing for a substantial amount of new office space. In addition, the new opportunities for future museums and memorials will help preserve the National Mall and assist those who are involved in deciding where these new cultural assets are located. The local government could enjoy additional tax revenue through private development made available through the development of air-rights. Residents would not only have better access to available parks and open space but would be provided with a wider range of recreational activities. The creation of new mixed use developments and improved transportation choices would also improve quality of life and access to resources, as well as, have positive impacts on social equity. Finally, visitors will benefit for many of the same reasons that residents will. An expanded and convenient public transportation system will make it easier for visitors to experience new and existing destinations on and beyond the National Mall.

The *Framework Plan* identifies opportunities to create:

- More than 1 million square feet of new space for federal offices
- More than 2 million square feet of space that could be used for museums and other cultural attractions
- More than 2 million square feet of space for private air-rights development
- 75 acres of waterfront open space
- 32 acres of flexible event and recreation space
- 13 acres of new urban parks and plazas
- 27 miles of bicycle lanes and paths
- 6 new commemorative sites in highly prominent locations
- 1 new Metrorail station and 2 new Metrorail entrances

Other benefits of the *Framework Plan* could be:

- Restoration of important L'Enfant streets and avenues
- Beautifying and enlivening the public realm
- Removing intrusive infrastructure barriers
- Creating a seamless riverfront connection from Georgetown to the U.S. National Arboretum

- Encouraging an extensive water taxi system
- Enhanced pedestrian corridors
- Increasing urban tree canopy
- Upgrading the city's aging infrastructure
- Commitment to reducing potable water use and energy consumption as well as the production of renewable energy sources

ACTION AGENDA AND PRIORITIES

Since many of the recommendations made by the *Framework Plan* are dependant upon each other, and need to occur in a certain order, an action agenda was created to help coordinate the various components of the plan so that the overall vision can ultimately be realized in a productive and cost-efficient manner. The action agenda identifies a range of organizational and funding tools, and executive and legislative policies, that will help establish an implementation structure. It also recommends a series of next steps and recommends priorities.

It is important to begin planning for site-specific development so that the overall vision can ultimately be realized in a productive and cost-efficient manner. While the more ambitious goals may not be within the scope of a single federal or local agency's mission, the plan's recommendations should be considered by all agencies and used to help guide future decisions, particularly those related to infrastructure improvements and overall space and facility needs. The various projects can be pursued as funding becomes available either through public-private partnerships or special congressional appropriations, particularly for those recommendations that have far-reaching public benefits.

Some initiatives proposed by the *Framework Plan* are relatively inexpensive and can be achieved in a few years, while other initiatives are more complex and will require detailed planning, significant funding, and time for construction. Some of these complex initiatives would only be considered when the useful life of a facility is nearing its end, though they may warrant detailed feasibility studies in the near or mid-term given the complexity of the project and the significant amount of pre-planning that would be necessary.

While a range of factors may accelerate one project ahead of another, the action agenda recommends ways to coordinate, prioritize, and program future detailed planning studies for site-specific projects. To begin moving the *Framework Plan* toward implementation, several projects merit priority status. These priority projects represent components of the plan that can achieve multiple objectives and will be transformational; are near other active projects that will require close coordination to ensure that local and federal interests are addressed; or are complex projects that will require a detailed feasibility study to evaluate impacts, costs, and benefits for a range of development scenarios.

The *Framework Plan's* key action priorities are:

- 10th Street, SW Redevelopment Feasibility Study
- Maryland Avenue, SW Redevelopment Report
- Monumental Core Street-Level Use Report

- Washington Canal and Channel Study
- Potomac River Crossing Transportation Study
- Old Post Office Reuse Study
- The Federal Walk and Cultural Heritage Trail Plan
- J. Edgar Hoover Building Redevelopment Feasibility Study

EVALUATION

The *Monumental Core Framework Plan: Connecting New Destinations with the National Mall* is a comprehensive framework plan that will have the power to guide future development decisions in the federal precincts that surround the National Mall. Development of this plan benefited from extensive coordination with public and private interests alike. This plan identifies way to merge the civic qualities of the National Mall with the urban vitality of the city while providing connections and destinations that will support the needs for the memorials and museums of our future generations.

While the effort to develop this plan was extensive, continued effort will be critical to ensure that the recommendations of the plan are fully considered and incorporated as appropriate into future planning initiatives and development proposals. To accomplish this, there are several things that NCPC should do.

In NCPC's role as the federal government's central planning agency in the nation's capital, the Commission should consider the recommendations of the *Framework Plan* in the process of evaluating all future development proposals in this study area. As a practical matter, development proposals that don't limit the ability to advance recommendations of the *Framework Plan*, or projects such as routine maintenance or life-safety improvements should be evaluated less critically. Staff should also advise all applicant agencies that the Commission has adopted the *Framework Plan* and that its recommendations should be considered at the earliest stages of their project development process.

NCPC should not only evaluate how development proposals conform to the recommendations of the *Framework Plan*, staff should also use the plan as a guide when providing input into federal, local and private planning studies and reports; and when developing or amending NCPC planning studies and reports including the *Comprehensive Plan for the Nation's Capital: Federal Elements*, and the *Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP)*. In the limited instances where the plan may suggest how adjacent private properties could be improved, NCPC encourages those decision makers to consider the planning recommendations that could help to achieve the goals of this plan.

Through NCPC's responsibilities for coordinating and advancing important planning initiatives in the nation's capital, this agency should continue to champion the plan's principles in a proactive manner. To accomplish this, staff should identify and establish federal and local partnerships that can assist in moving the recommendations of the plan toward implementation. In addition, staff should also advance the planning efforts and feasibility studies contained in the *Framework Plan* in accordance with the agency strategic plan and available resources, and use the plan to inform future updates of the agency strategic plan. Finally, to ensure that the

Commission remains focused on implementing the plan's recommendations, staff should report back to the Commission annually on the status of the *Framework Plan's* key action priorities.

COORDINATION WITH U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

Development of this plan has been the result of a close working partnership with the Commission of Fine Arts and their professional staff. The final draft plan incorporates comments received from CFA in July 2008 based on their review of the initial draft plan.

On March 19th, the final draft plan was presented to CFA and was adopted by unanimous vote with the understanding that minor clarifying edits would be made to the plan and the name of the plan would be reconsidered prior to final publication. Following the CFA meeting the title of the plan was changed to "*Monumental Core Framework Plan: Connecting New Destinations with the National Mall.*" The March 26, 2009 letter from the Secretary of the Commission of Fine Arts summarizing their adoption of the plan and their associated comments is attached to this report.