

MEDIA RELEASE



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National Capital Framework Plan Draft Released Today for Public Comment

Washington, DC – The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) today announced the public release of the *Draft National Capital Framework Plan: Destinations and Connections Beyond the National Mall*. The Framework Plan seeks to preserve the treasured open space of the Mall by revitalizing the surrounding federal precincts and by creating great public spaces that are welcoming, well-designed, and easily accessible.

“The release of the draft Framework Plan today signals a strong commitment to preserving the National Mall by re-imagining four nearby federal precincts as new Washington destinations for future cultural attractions and government offices,” said John V. Cogbill, III, NCPC Chairman. “This plan examines Washington’s extraordinary assets such as its waterfront, historic public buildings, and parkland, and proposes how they can be made more accessible and better integrated into the life of the city.”

The announcement was made during a special 10:00a.m. session of NCPC’s monthly meeting. Staff requested that the draft plan be released for a 90-day public comment period that runs through October 10.

“By enhancing the areas around the National Mall and extending the vitality and vibrancy of the city into the adjacent federal precincts, we can transform Washington into an even greater capital city,” said Earl A. Powell, III, CFA Chairman. “By creating new destinations, we are addressing the needs for future commemoration and federal offices, refining usages for the city’s undervalued assets, and improving connectivity to the Mall for residents, workers, and visitors to the nation’s capital.”

By focusing on federal land in four key precincts near the National Mall, the Framework Plan identifies how to eliminate barriers and provide prominent settings for federal offices and nationally significant buildings and public spaces. The four key precincts are the Federal Triangle, Northwest Rectangle, Southwest Rectangle, and East Potomac Park.

“I have incorporated the Framework Plan as the core provision of H.R. 3880, the Mall Revitalization and Redesignation Act of 2007,” said Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC). “My bill, for the first time, designates NCPC as the administrative agency to define the Mall and to continue the appropriate expansion of the Mall as the city evolves in the 21st century.”

The Framework Plan proposes strategies to preserve the symbolic character of the nation's capital; protect the National Mall from overbuilding; improve the settings of key sites to attract new museums and memorials; accommodate government offices and new places for public gatherings; and improve linkages between these places to contribute to a sustainable city.

The plan seeks to infuse a mix of shops, businesses, and cultural activities into existing federal office precincts to support economic vitality and promote a vibrant city life.

Using a comprehensive approach, the draft Framework Plan identifies steps necessary to achieve the goal of creating exciting destinations near the National Mall. The plan includes strategies and short- and long-term goals that range from beautification, public space programming, increasing the mix of uses, infrastructure changes, using the full capacity of federal land, and improved transit options. It also includes an action agenda that identifies next steps, organizational and funding strategies, and policies and tools that could help bring the plan to fruition over time.

"I think it's a great plan, just a very thoughtful, far-reaching plan," said Harriet Tregoning, director of the District of Columbia Office of Planning. "The ceremonial functions and symbolic spaces of the federal city and the economic, social and cultural life of the international metropolis must enhance and benefit one another."

The Framework Plan reinforces and complements the goals and planning efforts developed by partnership agencies including the city's Center City Action Agenda, the Architect of the Capitol's Capitol Complex Master Plan, and the National Park Service's National Mall Plan.

"The National Park Service welcomes the release of the National Capital Framework plan," said Peter May, associate regional director for Lands, Resources and Planning for the National Park Service. "We believe this plan will complement and augment the NPS' National Mall Plan and the other planning efforts now underway and we look forward to further public discussion of planning issues that affect downtown Washington and the National Mall."

The Framework Plan builds upon NCPC's *Extending the Legacy* and *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*. *Legacy* is a visionary guide for long-term growth in the capital city and the *Master Plan* protects the open space of the Mall by identifying 100 sites for commemorative works throughout the city.

The draft Framework Plan was prepared with input from a number of local and federal stakeholders, including the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Architect of the Capitol; U.S. Department of Commerce; Department of Defense; District of Columbia, Office of Council Chair, District of Columbia, Office of the Mayor; General Services Administration; The John F. Kennedy Center; National Gallery of Art; National Park Service; Smithsonian Institution; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Other public participants in the process included the Committee of 100, DC Cultural Tourism, Downtown Business Improvement District, the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, Washington Convention and Tourism Corporation/Destination DC, historians, preservationists, and leading members of the professional design community.

“The National Capital Framework Plan is a vital step in continuing the District’s growth as a world-class tourism destination. Our classic national treasures...the monuments, memorials, museums and grand public spaces...are what DC is best known for and the stewardship of these treasures must be improved,” added William Hanbury, president and CEO of Destination DC. “The Framework Plan addresses this challenge and also recognizes the need for better connections to, and utilization of, our hip, cosmopolitan, renaissance city. The National Mall and the City can no longer be isolated from each other. With the Plan’s comprehensive approach, you will see the merging of our two great civic characters...the classic and new renaissance.”

After today’s meeting, the Commission of Fine Arts will review the draft Framework Plan at its next monthly meeting, which is scheduled for July 17, 2008. This will be followed by a series of public meetings from July to October 2008 to solicit public input. After the 90-day public review period, CFA will review the final plan at its November 20, 2008 meeting and NCPC will consider the final document at its meeting on December 4, 2008.

After its adoption, NCPC and CFA will work with federal and local stakeholders to incorporate Framework Plan objectives and recommendations into current and planned initiatives. Partnerships with agencies and organizations will also be sought to initiate the next planning steps for priority initiatives.

“As America’s capital, the strength of Washington, DC lies within its cultural venues, its architecture and open spaces, its vibrant, walkable neighborhoods and public transit, and its national and international presence,” added Chairman Cogbill. “Coordinated planning and investment are essential to ensure that central Washington continues to serve as a model for the nation and the world.”

Copies of the plan may be obtained online by visiting www.ncpc.gov. The public is invited to submit written comments by mail to NCPC at 401 9th Street, NW, North Lobby/Suite 500, Washington, DC, 20004, or by email at FrameworkPlan@ncpc.gov. The first public comment meeting on the plan is scheduled for the evening of July 22, from 5:00 – 7:30 p.m. at the NCPC offices.

The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government’s central planning agency in the District of Columbia and surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall planning guidance for federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal projects and memorials, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.

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Additional Quotes on the National Capital Framework Plan

Richard Bradley
Executive Director

Downtown Business Improvement District

“As the city of Washington in general and the downtown in particular have been revitalized, more people are using the city to live, to work, and to enjoy the many cultural and entertainment opportunities. At the same time, there is increasing pressure on our federal amenities and assets. The National Capital Framework Plan is a timely cooperative effort to find ways to accommodate our growth in order to ensure that we can meet future demands, particularly in the heart of our emerging center city.”

Claudette Donlon
Executive Vice President

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

“We commend the National Planning Commission for its far reaching vision for Washington, D.C., and are pleased to have participated in the process. We look forward to the day when their vision can be implemented.”

Linda Harper
Executive Director
Cultural Tourism DC

“We are delighted that the National Capital Framework Plan supports the sustainability of our monuments and Smithsonian museums while promoting the city of Washington as a destination for cultural tourism. In the decades ahead, we look forward to seeing our major monuments and attractions meld seamlessly with the capital’s neighborhoods, creating yet more reasons for visitors to come to DC.”

Richard Kurin
Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture
Smithsonian Institution

“We have been pleased to participate in the National Capital Framework Plan effort and hope the National Capital Planning Commission and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts develop a thoughtful and far-reaching plan that will serve the city and the nation for years to come.”