

MEDIA RELEASE



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For Immediate Release
Thursday, July 11, 2002

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National Capital Planning Commission Approves Public Release of Urban Design And Security Plan For The Nation's Capital

Washington, DC – Members of the National Capital Planning Commission today approved the release for public comment of a comprehensive plan detailing urban design and security recommendations for Washington's Monumental Core. The National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan (the Plan) identifies permanent security and streetscape improvements for federal facilities and key areas and streets in the Nation's Capital.

An Interagency Security Task Force has been working on the Plan since November 2001, meeting dozens of times with members of the planning and design community, security experts, federal agencies, the District of Columbia government and community advisory groups. The task force recommended that the Commission vote today to release the plan for public distribution and to open a 60-day public comment period. Public input will be taken into consideration when the task force prepares its final plan in the fall.

The National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan includes solutions for Downtown, the West End, the Southwest Federal Center, the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, the Federal Triangle and for Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House and between the White House and Capitol. The Plan responds to the alarming proliferation of unattractive and makeshift security barriers that negatively impact the historic beauty of the Nation's Capital.

"Barricades don't have to be ugly," said Richard Friedman, Chairman of the Interagency Security Task Force. "We can have both good urban design and good security, but now we have neither. This Nation's Capital should reflect an open and democratic society, not one in which ad-hoc security measures sully the vision of Pierre L'Enfant's time-honored design for the capital."

The draft Plan details how building perimeter security can be seamlessly integrated into consistent, welcoming streetscapes. It focuses exclusively on perimeter building security and does not address building hardening, operational procedures or surveillance. It covers contextual areas, special streets, and memorials, which include the following:

- Contextual Areas: Federal Triangle, National Mall, West End, Southwest Federal Center, and Downtown.

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- Special Streets: Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and Capitol, Constitution, Independence and Maryland Avenues, and 10th Street, SW.
- Memorials: Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials.

Those who contributed to the Plan are pleased the report is a result of a wide range of diverse groups that worked diligently to reach consensus on complex and varied problems that have been neglected for too long.

"The partnerships that we have developed on this project are extraordinary," said John V. Cogbill, III the Bush-appointed Chairman of the Commission. "It has been very gratifying to see the security authorities, the historic preservationists, federal agencies, and District officials all come together to make the difficult decisions. The American people have been well served by their public servants in this truly collaborative effort."

The Plan offers an urban design framework that distinguishes the architectural character of various areas within the Monumental Core by identifying perimeter security design solutions most appropriate to the character of each area, responding to their unique conditions. This comprehensive approach will ensure that improvements along streets are complementary and enhance the special character of each precinct, while addressing the required security measures for individual buildings. As a framework report, the Plan does not include a binding set of design criteria. Instead, it sets forth a proposal for further design development and for acquisition of design and construction funding for those improvements.

In recommending designs, the Plan recognizes that one size does not fit all. The Plan proposes to introduce a vocabulary of unifying planters, benches, and seat bollards to improve connections to other precincts, enhance the pedestrian experience, and help establish the character of this precinct.

The Plan includes:

- A summary of the building perimeter security considerations that influence the conceptual streetscape designs proposed in the Plan.
- Streetscape design concepts that incorporate security components. These conceptual designs illustrate how an array of landscape treatments and street furniture may be applied within various areas of the Plan.
- A proposal to initiate the Circulator transportation system; develop a comprehensive parking program, including possible secure, centralized facilities; and undertake a set of comprehensive traffic and parking studies to evaluate impacts and develop strategies for mitigating and improving the overall condition.

- An implementation program for design, construction, funding, maintenance, and operations. The implementation program will ensure that work is completed according to the design intent and that improvements are maintained.

The Plan was motivated by five key issues which included providing appropriate levels of perimeter security; providing a seamless system of components that enhance the public realm rather than just provide security; expanding the palette of elements that can provide perimeter security; giving priority to achieving aesthetic continuity along streets and within areas; and providing perimeter security in a manner that does not impede the City's commerce, mobility, or operational use of sidewalks.

"Our real work is only just beginning," said Richard Friedman looking ahead to implementation of the Plan. "To achieve the vision laid out in this Plan we will need the support of Congress, the Administration, the City, and the American people. My colleagues and I look forward to working with all those who share our passion for a capital city that is the pride of the nation."

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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