

Independence Quarter



View of Independence Quarter from the north west

(top image) - Existing Conditions Study Model (2012)

(lower image) - Recommended Revitalization Scenario Study Model (2012)

REVITALIZATION OBJECTIVE

Redeveloping of the area between Independence and Maryland Avenues provides the greatest opportunity to create Independence Quarter, a new walkable neighborhood that will help blur the boundaries between the federal and local city. The primary objectives for this area are:

- › Reconnect the street grid;
- › Balance the office and housing use mix;
- › Increase efficient use of federal lands and buildings;
- › Improve the setting for cultural development;
- › Unlock the potential for 10th Street and Maryland Avenue to be vibrant corridors.

TODAY

Today, approximately 20 acres south of Independence Avenue support the Department of Energy (DOE) Headquarters, the Cotton Annex, the 12th Street Highway Ramp and Tunnel, and several oddly shaped, under-used parcels. The General Services Administration (GSA) has jurisdiction of the land and buildings and the District of Columbia controls the streets. The Department of Energy's 1.8 million sq. ft. Forrestal Complex includes underground parking, a day care center, and cafeteria for DOE employees. The Cotton Annex is currently vacant.

Infrastructure barriers make it difficult to access the area by car or foot. These include the I-395 access ramps, the depressed CSX Railroad corridor, and a broad Independence Avenue. Except for 10th Street, all streets have been abandoned, creating one large superblock. The excessive setbacks and elevated structures create large buildings yard that make entrances hard to find, and there are no easily accessible ground floor uses to activate the street. Collectively, these characteristics create a foreboding and inhospitable pedestrian environment.