

THE FRAMEWORK

Washington is blessed with a great number and wide variety of public open spaces, from waterfront parks to urban plazas. As a result, there are literally hundreds of possible commemorative sites in the District. To help select the most appropriate sites, NCPC, in consultation with CFA and NCMC and expert urban design consultants, developed a commemorative framework based on established design considerations. This framework provides an organizational hierarchy of sites for today and for the future.

Planning Influences

Several bold concepts set forth in historic and current plans strongly influenced the development of the framework and the identification of potential sites. The most important plans include the L'Enfant Plan, the McMillan Plan, the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*, and NCPC's *Extending the Legacy*.

The L'Enfant Plan of 1791 established the physical layout of Washington. Located within the confines of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, the Florida Avenue escarpment, and the Anacostia Hills, the Plan recognized the importance of natural features.

Although various components have been lost or intruded upon over the last 210 years, the L'Enfant Plan continues to be the single greatest urban design influence in the District of Columbia. The central positions of the Capitol Building and the White House, the basic shape of the original L'Enfant City, and the urban grid are shown on the L'Enfant Plan. Figure 2-1 depicts the broad urban design direction of the L'Enfant Plan.

The McMillan Plan was a continuation and expansion of the L'Enfant Plan and, in response to growth, an early effort aimed at comprehensively planning the City of Washington. Prepared in 1901, the McMillan Plan grouped public buildings, including the Federal Triangle, to accommodate and organize governmental activities.

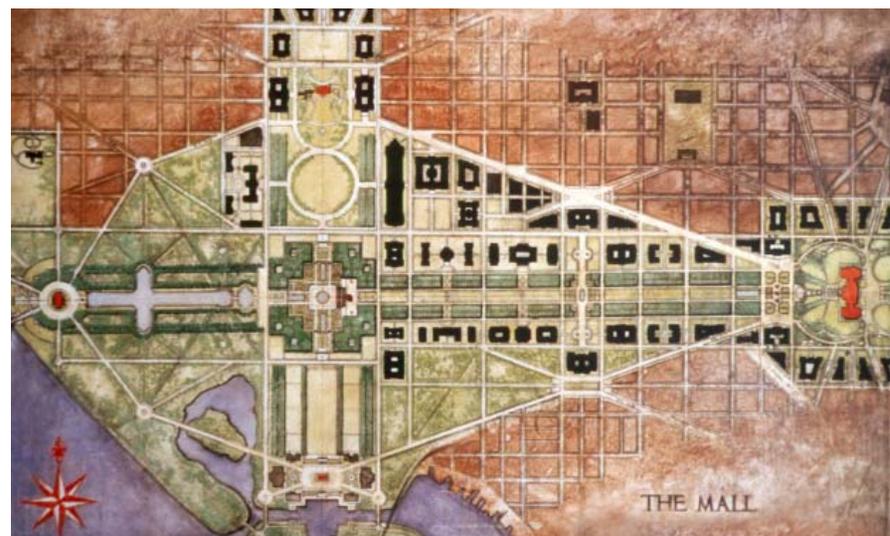
The McMillan Plan also stressed the importance of open space in the city. It established a park system and proposed connecting the Civil War forts that encircled the city with a parkway. The McMillan Plan also concentrated resources in key locations throughout the city. Through these and other efforts, the Plan expanded the city past the boundaries of the L'Enfant Plan. Figure 2-2 illustrates many of the urban design concepts proposed in the McMillan Plan for the Monumental Core.

The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*, published jointly by NCPC and the District of Columbia government, is the principal planning document guiding

federal development in the National Capital Region. The Plan includes policies that recognize and protect the most important components of both the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans. The Comprehensive Plan protects the historically significant and symbolic avenues, streets and parkways, reservations, squares, and circles that contribute to the spatial organization of the city by designating them as Special Streets and Special Places. Special Streets provide important symbolic and physical connections between key areas of the city; Special Places serve as places of public amenity and as focal points for important civic activities.

Extending the Legacy was prepared in 1997 by NCPC. *Legacy* proposes to re-establish the U.S. Capitol as the center of monumental Washington by guiding federal activities and civic features to portions of North, South, and East Capitol Streets, thereby extending redevelopment into each quadrant of the city. In addition, the plan recommends removing intrusive elements that interrupt the L'Enfant Plan, such as surface freeways and rail lines. *Legacy* also promotes the enhancement of natural resources and waterfront lands. It removes barriers that have divided communities and hampered mobility throughout the city, while proposing new connections between neighborhoods. Figure 2-3 illustrates the planning guidance included in *Extending the Legacy*.

Figure 2-2 The McMillan Plan



Framework Intent

Washington, D.C. is a symbolic city where many of the nation's values—democracy, opportunity, diversity, and mobility—were born and are defended and redefined. As the primary showplace for the nation's commemorative works and most treasured artifacts, the National Mall plays an important role in symbolizing these core values. The special commemorative and cultural resources present in the Mall area, the careful planning that has shaped its development over time, and its unique appearance make it an enduring Special Place. The primary purpose of the Master Plan Framework is to establish and illustrate an organizational hierarchy for identifying and evaluating current and future commemorative sites consistent with the urban design traditions of Washington. The framework:

- *Highlights the special character of key locations outside the Monumental Core.*
- *Utilizes existing natural features, including waterways, natural areas, and*
- *Urban spaces, the physical foundations of the L'Enfant Plan with the concentrated core and connected open spaces of the McMillan Plan.*
- *Incorporates selected Special Streets and Special Places from the Comprehensive Plan to re-center the city around the U.S. Capitol and the White House.*
- *Encourages revitalization of urban areas in a manner that is consistent with the Legacy vision.*

This distribution to key points in the city can serve as a catalyst for revitalization of long-neglected areas and as focal points for community pride. By integrating ceremonial spaces with everyday spaces, the framework also recognizes that Washington, D.C. must function as both a national capital and as a hometown. The framework includes a strong commitment to ecological protection, environmental stewardship and historic preservation. It reconnects the built environment with the natural surroundings, focusing on the waterfront and places where the axial geometry crosses topographic high points. The framework's emphasis on the waterfront offers numerous opportunities for environmental protection and reclamation, and proposes to increase public access to the city's long-neglected, but valuable, water resources. The framework also emphasizes the important role that memorials and museums can play in fostering neighborhood revitalization throughout the city.

Figure 2-3 *The Legacy Plan*

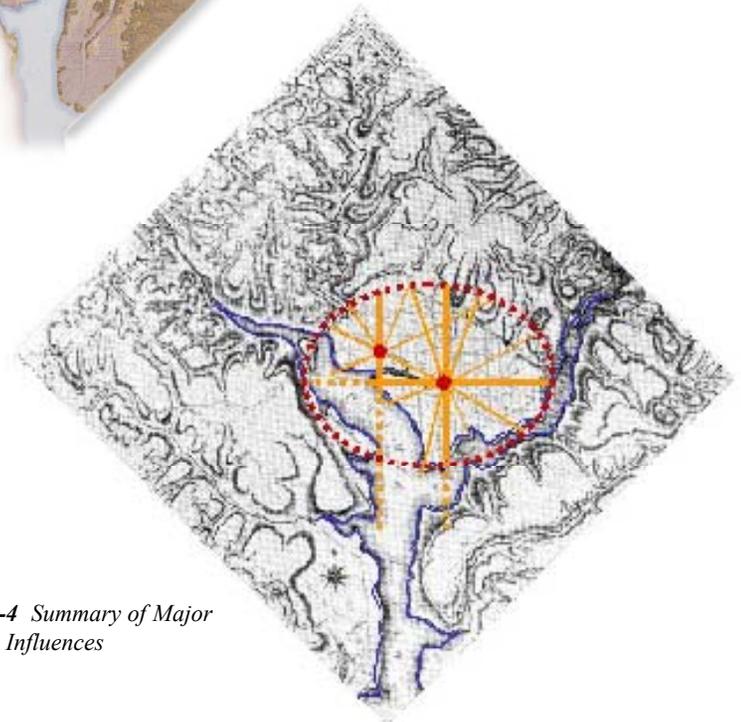
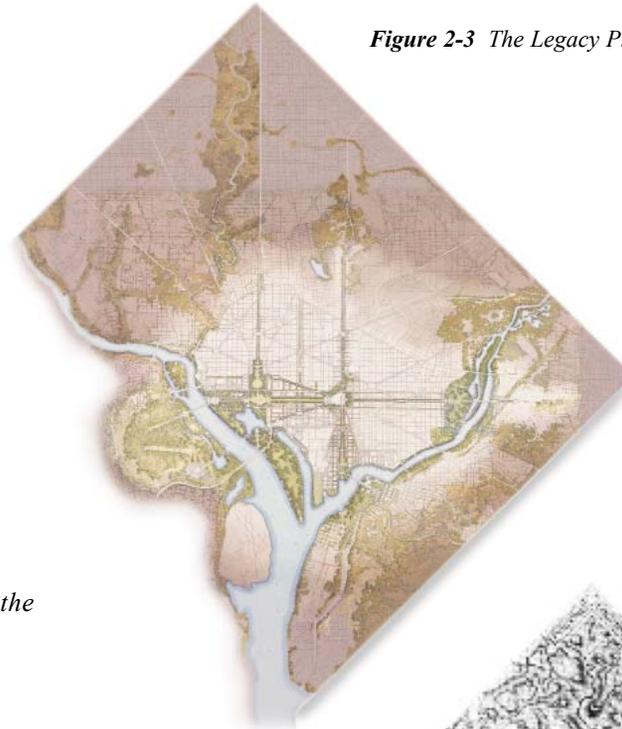


Figure 2-4 *Summary of Major Planning Influences*

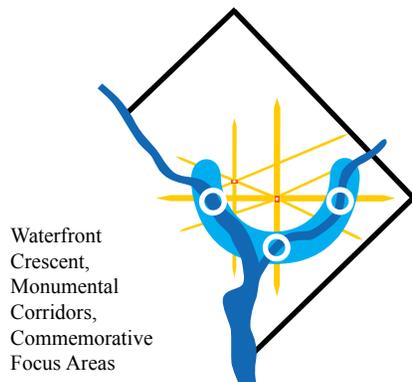
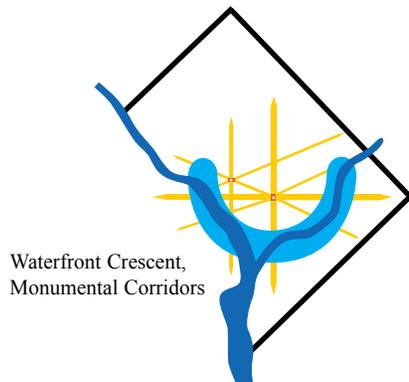
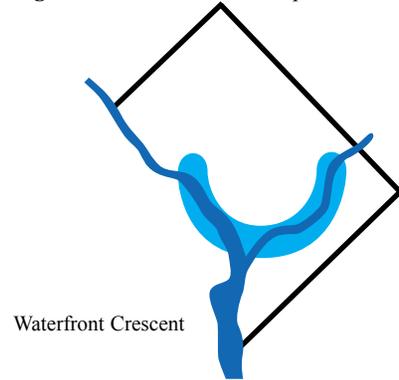


Potential view within the North Capitol Street Monumental Corridor as proposed public space improvements could redefine the character and vitality of this important L'Enfant street.

The framework recognizes that memorials and museums can be powerful tools for bolstering economic development. By providing a neighborhood with civic beauty and giving residents a sense of ownership and pride, memorials and museums can further revitalization efforts. Such benefits have been realized in the area surrounding the Navy Memorial. As a long-term guide, it focuses on redefining key areas and reclaiming lost opportunities throughout the city. The framework has been designed to offer policymakers the flexibility to accommodate change over time. The framework honors the past, embraces the natural setting of the Nation's Capital, and recognizes important economic activity areas and neighborhoods. It is a framework upon which the nation's history, values, and dreams can be exhibited for future generations. It connects key economic activity areas and neighborhoods throughout the city with the Monumental Core.

The framework continues and builds upon the historical foundations of the early planning efforts and urban design traditions that make Washington, D.C. a renowned capital city. It honors the past, yet responds to modern-day realities and needs. It does not attempt to create one or more new Malls. Rather, the framework preserves the historic open space of the traditional Monumental Core area and, in new ways, creates a special character in other strategic places throughout the city.

By dispersing memorials and museums beyond Washington's traditional federal precincts and bringing the benefits of these national attractions to city neighborhoods and commercial districts, the framework supports fundamental American values. Rather than concentrate cultural resources in traditional federal precincts, the framework places them in all quadrants of the city.

Figure 2-5 Framework Components

Framework Components

The framework incorporates, and is based upon, the natural landforms and physical features that formed the boundaries of the original city, supported by an internal network of distinctive urban features that offer appropriate locations for future memorials and museums. The physical foundation has three elements: a crescent-shaped band that follows the general alignment of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers along the southern border of the Monumental Core; the principal roadways that radiate from the White House and U.S. Capitol; and focal areas that are formed by the intersection of these major streets with the waterfront.

The framework suggests key opportunity areas and potential sites that have distinction and that can accommodate new memorials and museums. Figure 2-5 illustrates the principal framework elements in a sequence of images that depicts their relationship and context to the city's natural and cultural features.

The framework's most important element is the *Waterfront Crescent*. The Waterfront Crescent is aligned on major waterfront lands along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. These open spaces along the District's waterfront offer prime, visible areas for commemoration, especially at points where major axes that radiate from the U.S. Capitol intersect the waterway.

The framework's crescent shape is strengthened internally by a lattice of *Monumental Corridors*. These Corridors include Special Streets and the circles, squares, reservations, and corner parks formed by the intersection of the city's diagonal avenues with the orthogonal grid system.

The intersection of the Waterfront Crescent and the major Monumental Corridors offers a special opportunity for a concentration of commemorative works. These *Commemorative Focus Areas* include the three areas where the Waterfront Crescent intersects with the western extension of the National Mall, with South Capitol Street, and with East Capitol Street.

Inherent in the framework are several urban design principles that can be used to organize commemorative opportunity areas. These principles are based on symbolic prominence, visual linkages, and aesthetic quality. For example, to reinforce the focal importance of the U.S. Capitol and the White House, the framework includes areas that have symbolic axial relationships to either central element. The framework also includes areas that have strong visual connections with other existing major commemorative resources. Also included in the framework are areas with distinct identities and unique aesthetic qualities, such as natural beauty, notable architecture, and clusters of civic art. Although the master plan framework is based largely on the *Waterfront Crescent*, *Monumental Corridors*, and *Commemorative Focus Areas*—key elements of the Monumental Core—it recognizes that commemoration should not be contained within the bounds of the original L'Enfant City.

**Figure 2-6 Framework Summary Diagram**

The framework's extension of the roadway lattice reaches out to include various distinctive communities, such as neighborhoods, historic resources, and natural areas beyond the Monumental Core. Inclusion of these important, vibrant communities is crucial both to the economic and social development of the communities themselves and to the overall vitality of Washington, D.C.

Furthermore, the framework does not preclude the selection of site areas that are located beyond the framework elements. This framework is not a tool for including or excluding possible sites; rather, it is an attempt to organize and promote certain areas as suitable locations for commemorative and cultural resources. Figures 2-6 and 2-7 illustrate the generalized elements of the master plan framework.

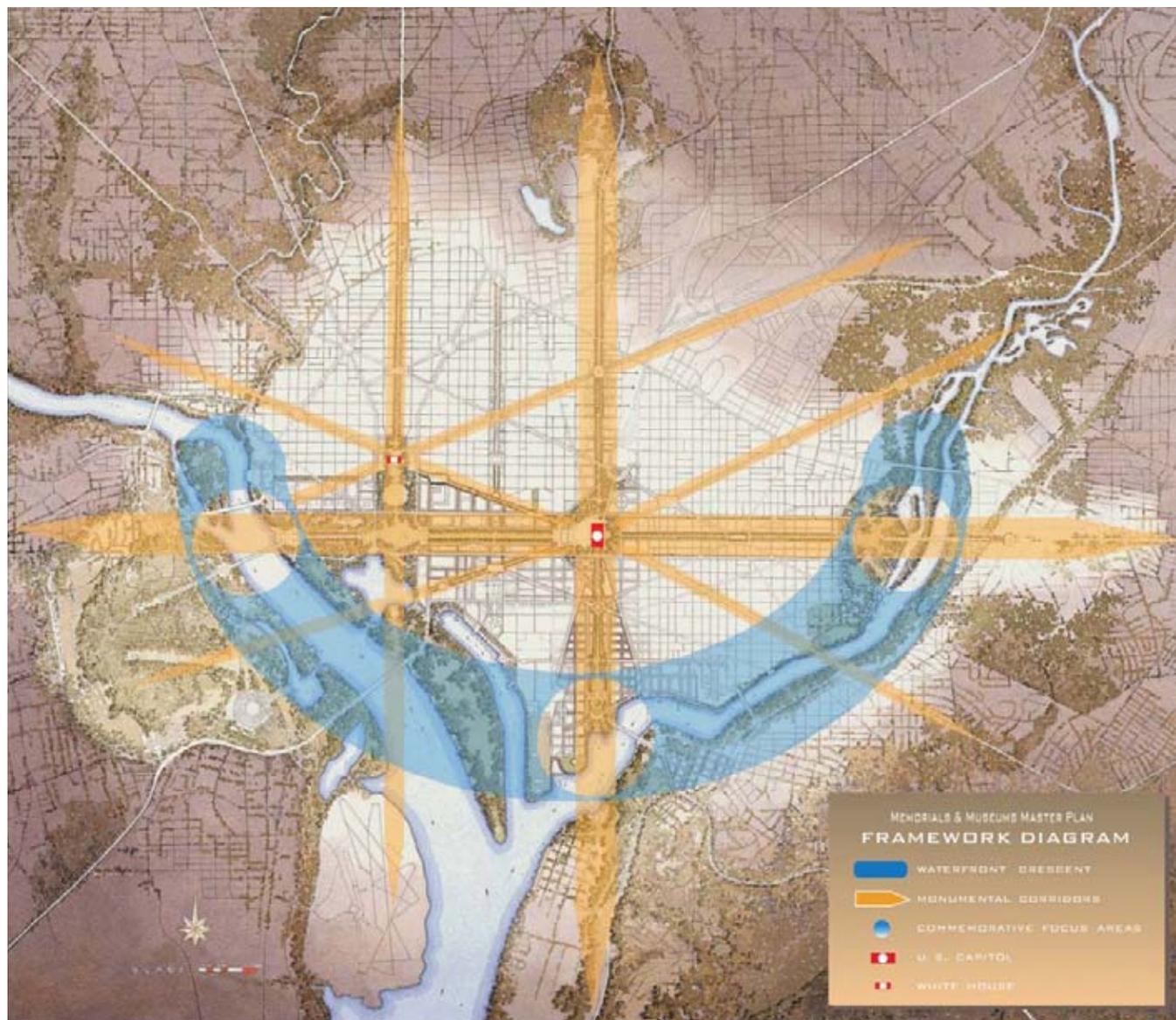


Figure 2-7 The Framework Diagram summarizes planning considerations for directing the location of future memorials throughout the District of Columbia.



Washington's monumental core, viewed from the Arlington Ridge vicinity with the Iwo Jima Memorial in foreground, capturing the city's riverfront and parkland character