



NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION



# EXTENDING THE LEGACY

*Planning America's Capital for the 21st Century*

The new plan for Washington's Monumental Core shows what the Mall and surrounding areas could look like in the future -- if we plan boldly and wisely today.

The plan was prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission in collaboration with local governments, federal agencies, community groups and a team of renowned planners and architects.

The goal of this plan is to preserve and enhance Washington's Monumental Core—from the Mall and its historic landmarks to the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers and the neighborhoods along North and South Capitol Streets. This is our seat of government and the symbolic heart of our nation. Hundreds of thousands of people live and work here. More than twenty million tourists visit each year.

Yet, without enlightened planning, this unique place could soon be overwhelmed by its own success. Tourism is expected to double over the next 50 years. Automobile

traffic could increase by a third during the next 20 years. Sites for dozens of new museums and federal buildings, and scores of new memorials, must be found.

This new plan meets these challenges with bold proposals for transportation, community revitalization, public building and open space, including 22 miles of public waterfront from Georgetown to the National Arboretum. Not only does it preserve what is traditional and familiar, it provides a framework for creating a more beautiful and efficient capital, and for strengthening Washington's position as one of the world's great cities.



This dramatic site where South Capitol Street meets the water is ideal for a major civic building or memorial.





## THEME 1

Building on the legacy of the historic L'Enfant and McMillan plans, which are the foundation of modern Washington.



## THEME 2

Unifying the city and the Core, with the Capitol as the center.



## THEME 3

Using new memorials, museums and other public buildings to stimulate economic development.



## THEME 4

Integrating the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers into the city's public life, and protecting the Mall and its historic landscape from future building.

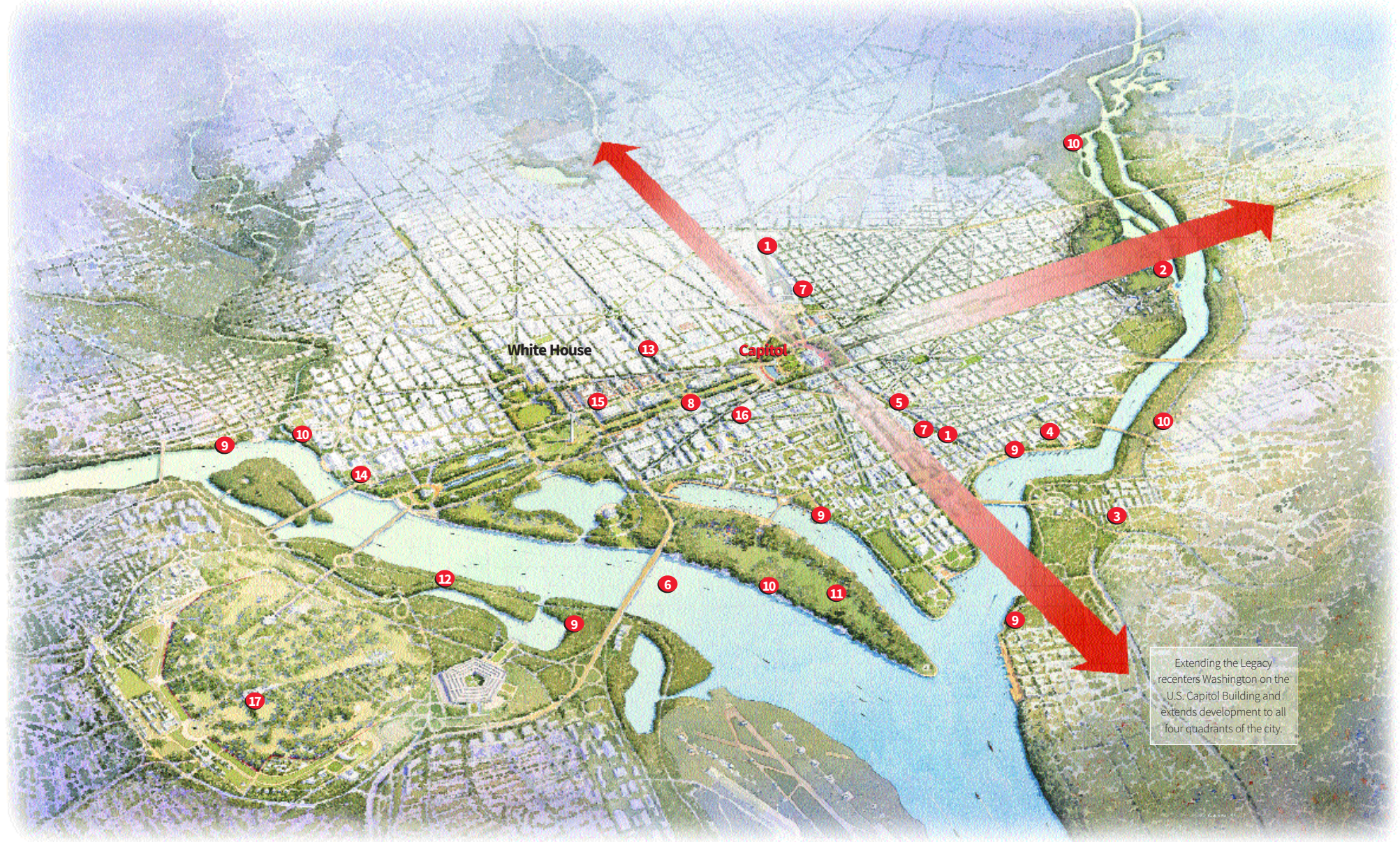


## THEME 5

Developing a comprehensive, flexible and convenient transportation system that eliminates barriers and eases movement within the city.



# *Highlights of the New Vision for Washington's Monumental Core*





This plan for Washington redefines the Monumental Core by creating opportunities for new museums, memorials and offices in all quadrants of the city. It expands the reach of public transit and eliminates obsolete freeways, bridges and railroad tracks that fragment the city. It reclaims Washington's historic waterfront for public enjoyment, and adds parks, plazas and other urban amenities. The plan's specific proposals fall into four broad categories.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 1 Transform North and South Capitol Streets into urban boulevards lined with offices, apartments, museums and hotels. Where South Capitol Street meets the Anacostia River, a new home for a new civic building or a memorial could be constructed.
- 2 Convert the area around RFK Stadium into a new eastern gateway to Washington, featuring a major memorial site, an environmental center, housing and commercial development.
- 3 Introduce new offices and housing to Old Anacostia at a scale appropriate for a historic neighborhood. Reconnect the neighborhood to the waterfront by depressing the Anacostia Freeway and redeveloping Poplar Point as a thriving riverfront neighborhood.
- 4 Assist the transformation of the Southeast Federal Center and adjacent Navy Yard into a lively urban waterfront of offices, restaurants, shops and marinas.

## TRANSPORTATION

- 5 Remove the Southeast-Southwest Freeway and relocate adjacent railroad tracks.
- 6 Replace the tangle of five bridges at 14th Street with a single monumental span.
- 7 Construct new transit centers where passengers can switch easily from cars to buses, trains and other forms of transit.

- 8 Develop a sophisticated surface transit system that links Metro to major attractions within the Core.
- 9 Create a system of water taxis serving key points along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers.

## RIVERS, PARKS AND RECREATIONAL SPACE

- 10 Develop a 22-mile public waterfront from Georgetown to the National Arboretum that includes a continuous riverwalk, parks, plazas and scenic overlooks.
- 11 Designate East Potomac Park for small memorials as well as for festivals and public celebrations.
- 12 Divert heavy commuter traffic away from the George Washington Memorial Parkway to improve public access to the Potomac waterfront.

## URBAN DESIGN

- 13 Transform the 8th Street Corridor (spanning 7th to 9th Streets, NW) into a Downtown Arts District featuring new museums, galleries and theaters.
- 14 Eliminate the knot of freeways and overpasses around the Kennedy Center and use the recaptured land for new public parks and plazas.
- 15 Create a public walk through the buildings and courtyards in the Federal Triangle reaching from 9th to 15th Streets, NW.
- 16 Restore Virginia and Maryland Avenues and other grand L'Enfant avenues.
- 17 Preserve Arlington National Cemetery for commemorating America's heroes and enhance Fort Myer as a setting for military parades and other important ceremonies.

▼ RFK Stadium will be replaced by a memorial gateway set in an ecological precinct focused on the Anacostia River.



“From the days of L’Enfant, Americans have come to expect the best of their Nation’s Capital. More than any other city... more than any other region, the Nation’s Capital should represent the finest living environment which America can plan and build.”

*President John F. Kennedy*

## EXTENDING WASHINGTON’S PLANNING LEGACY

The new plan for Washington is the third act in a heroic planning drama that began over 200 years ago, when President George Washington commissioned Pierre L’Enfant to lay out a new capital. Working with surveyors Benjamin Banneker and Andrew Ellicott, L’Enfant created a city of broad avenues and grand public spaces radiating outward from the “President’s House” (the White House) and the “Congress House” (the Capitol) like spokes on a wheel.

The McMillan Commission of 1901, composed of the leading planners and architects of the time, expanded L’Enfant’s vision by extending the Mall, and by designating numerous sites for future parks and monuments.

Now that the last museum site has been assigned, the Mall is essentially complete. The next step is to extend the legacy into the 21st century by implementing this new plan for Washington.

## PLANNING THE FUTURE

The guiding hand in this effort is the National Capital Planning Commission, the planning agency for the federal government in Washington. It has been assisted by local governments, federal agencies, neighborhood groups and a team of distinguished planners, architects and urban designers from around the country.

Together, they have created a framework for the future of Washington’s Monumental Core. This framework is a guide, not a blueprint; it recommends rather than dictates. It aims to be bold enough to spur action yet flexible enough to accommodate unforeseen change.

## THE NEED TO ACT

The arguments that visionary planning is too expensive and cumbersome and a distraction from the urgent business of making cities safe and livable evaporate when compared with the extraordinary benefits that such planning has bestowed on Washington and other American cities.

Washington’s challenge is to safeguard the unique features of its Monumental Core, and to imagine what it could be like 50 to 100 years from now—the way Pierre L’Enfant imagined a city that did not exist, and put on paper a noble diagram that brought it to life.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Like the L’Enfant and McMillan Plans before it, the Legacy Plan will require many years to be fully realized. Some projects can be completed within a few years; others will take 20, 40, even 80 years, depending on political and economic conditions. In big ways and small, NCPC and its planning partners have begun work on the plan’s “First Initiatives”—a variety of projects that are producing immediate, visible benefits within the longer-term framework.

The most ambitious initiative is the redevelopment of South Capitol and M Streets, SE, a historic area near the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. A new “Circulator” transit system will soon carry tourists and commuters around the Core and a coordinated signage system is already directing visitors and residents to museum Metro stations, historical sites and special events. In an effort to protect the historic open space of Washington’s Monumental Core, NCPC, working with city, federal and community partners, has prepared a master plan that will help direct future memorials and museums away from the National Mall and into all quadrants of the city.



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The new Monumental Core framework extends the legacy of L'Enfant and McMillan into the 21st century.