2017 Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan

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Policy Statement

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), an independent executive branch agency, defines and protects the federal government's interests in the development of the National Capital Region. We are guided by the National Capital Planning Act; the National Historic Preservation Act; the National Environmental Policy Act; and environmental and energy statutes, regulations, and executive orders. Through planning, policymaking, and project plan review, we protect the broad and multifaceted interests of the federal government. These interests include federal land; buildings and operations; parks and open space; and the form, character, and experience of the nation’s capital.

The agency’s annual update of the Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan supports the goals and requirements of Executive Order 13693, *Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade* (E.O. 13693).

A brief summary of these activities include:

- Updating the *Parks and Open Space Element* of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* (Comprehensive Plan) to develop consistent strategies to address emerging issues, improve management, and streamline policies.
- Coordinating with federal agencies in the region to identify opportunities to introduce resilient and sustainable practices as facilities and master plans are built or updated.
- Working with federal and local agencies to advance implementation of the recommendations from the *SW Ecodistrict Plan*, a vision plan that identifies development scenarios, urban design, and environmental strategies to transform 110-acres of primarily federal office space in Washington, DC into a vibrant community with modern infrastructure.
- Working closely with local and federal agencies to coordinate multiple efforts related to flood risk mitigation in the National Capital Region.

In January 2017, the NCPC requested a waiver for the FY 2016 Greenhouse Gas Comprehensive Inventory submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The loss of funding for agency use of the General Services Administration (GSA) Carbon Footprint Tool and consultant services makes it difficult for NCPC to complete the reporting requirements. However, through our agency operations and our initiatives, the NCPC is committed to efficient operations and advancing development and infrastructure in the National Capital Region.

Marcel C. Acosta  
Executive Director / Chief Sustainability Officer  
National Capital Planning Commission
Executive Summary

VISION

The NCPC’s mission is to protect capital investments and enhance the extraordinary historic, cultural, and natural resources of the National Capital Region in a cost effective manner. The goals in Executive Order 13693 (E.O. 13693) are consistent with the NCPC’s mission and strategic goals and other long-range planning work. Each year the NCPC evaluates how to meet E.O. 13693’s intent through its work plan.

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital (Comprehensive Plan) supports several of the goals and requirements in E.O. 13693. Pursuant to Section 4(a) of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. §8721(a)), the NCPC is responsible for the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan’s Federal Elements, which address matters related to federal properties and interests in the National Capital Region. The Comprehensive Plan includes goals and policies for sustainably siting federal facilities, supporting transportation management and sustainable development patterns, creating and preserving parks and open space, and flood risk mitigation.

LEADERSHIP

A twelve-member Commission leads NCPC and reviews and acts on the Comprehensive Plan, agency-prepared plans and studies, federal projects, and a range of other projects and plans. NCPC and the District of Columbia share planning responsibilities: in 1973, the District of Columbia Home Rule Act established the Mayor as the chief planner for private development in the District of Columbia; however, NCPC retained review authority for all development proposals on public land in the National Capital Region. For proposals on federal land in the District of Columbia, the Commission has review and approval authority in lieu of zoning approval. These authorities allow the Commission to monitor and promote compliance with E.O. 13693 requirements. The NCPC applies sustainability policies on a regular basis when reviewing development plans, which includes all federal facilities, planned and constructed in the National Capital Region. The NCPC’s mission to protect the region’s natural and cultural resources also makes sustainability a focus of our long-term planning initiatives.

The agency’s Executive Director is the designated Chief Sustainability Officer. The agency has also appointed a lead sustainability planner to manage the agency’s efforts in meeting the goals and requirements of E.O. 13693. Daily decisions such as taking public transit to meetings, encouraging digital distribution of information instead of traditional hard-copy documents, promoting web-based training, and recycling demonstrate how employees reduce costs and increase efficiency.
PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REVIEW

The NCPC’s FY 2017 work plan includes the following projects and initiatives that support E.O. 13693 goals.

Comprehensive Planning

- Completed the Small Parks Management Strategies Plan (Plan), in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS). The primary purpose of the Plan is to help the NPS National Capital Region (NCR) develop consistent strategies to improve the management of small urban parks.
- Develop staff draft of the revised Parks & Open Space Element (Element) which addresses emerging issues, reorganizes content, and streamlines policies. Staff is completing research to improve policies in the Element concerning Capper Cramton Parks which fall under NCPC’s jurisdiction per the Capper Cramton Act.
- Complete a National Capital Region Parking Study, in partnership with Volpe, the National Transportation Systems Center. The goal of the Study is to assess the validity of NCPC’s current federal development parking ratio goals with respect to future forecasted (20-year) land use and environmental patterns, transportation network, and population demographics in the NCR as defined in 40 U.S.C. § 8702((3).
- Review, analyze, and complete the Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP) for FY 2018 - 2023. The NCPC reviews federal capital projects to ensure consistency with the sustainability and environmental policies of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements and the orderly development of the National Capital.
- Review and analyze non-federal Capital Improvements Programs (CIP) and regional plans in the NCR. These plans include: Prince George’s County’s Preliminary Resource Conservation Plan, Preliminary East Riverdale-Beacon Heights Sector Plan, and Preliminary Greater Cheverly Sector Plan; and the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The NCPC reviews these plans to ensure consistency with the sustainability and environmental policies of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements.
- Collaborate with the District Government on the “100 Resilient Cities” initiative and the addition of a Resilience Element to the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Continue working with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and other stakeholders on the Smart Cities initiative to correlate their efforts around the development of Washington DC as a “Smart City” pilot. The pilot/demonstration project plans to address sensor applications to parking, maintenance, security, energy, the environment, public space planning, wayfinding, and visitor centers.

Project and Plan Review

- Review and analyze local and federal projects and their components to ensure compliance with federal requirements to minimize stormwater runoff and deforestation, and promote reductions in Scope 3 emissions by minimizing the need for single-occupancy vehicles.
- Draft new submission guidelines, which include the evaluation of floodplain management (E.O. 11988) as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.
Physical Planning

- Continue collaborating with federal and local agencies to advance implementation of the *SW Ecodistrict Plan* recommendations including: approving plans to construct improved pedestrian and bicycle accessibility through Banneker Park; and assisting the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Southwest Business Improvement District (SWBID), and private developers to advance near-term placemaking and new development plans along 10th Street, SW.
- Approved new development guidelines for the J. Edgar Hoover site, a large urban transit-oriented redevelopment project. The new guidelines, created in collaboration with federal agencies and the District of Columbia, encourage sustainable development and design of buildings and streetscapes. Coordinated the guidelines with the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative.
- Lead the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative to identify physical, economic, and operational issues affecting the area between the White House and U.S. Capitol. Sustainability-related issues with infrastructure, such as transportation, stormwater management, and maintenance are under consideration.
- Initiate an update to the *National Mall Road Streetscape Manual* (Manual), in collaboration with federal agencies and the District of Columbia. The primary purpose of the Manual is to coordinate and guide streetscape infrastructure improvements that will protect and enhance resources on and near the National Mall.

Public Engagement

- Convene and coordinate with federal agencies, including the Department of Defense, to improve the review process for projects in or near floodplains.
- Participate in Metropolitan Washington Council of Government’s (MWCOG) Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers/MWCOG joint study on Coastal Storm Resilience in Washington, DC; and the 100 Resilient Cities Initiative in partnership with the District of Columbia.
- Engage stakeholders on flood mitigation and stormwater infrastructure in the National Capital Region, including the 17th Street, NW levee closure. Share the NCPC’s work at national conferences and with local audiences.
- Continue to participate in regional interagency groups including the DC Flood Risk Management Team (DC Silver Jackets), the NASA Interagency Forum on Climate Change Impacts, and the Federal Adaptation Community of Practice.
- Continue to provide public outreach and engagement on the NCPC initiatives related to regional and local sustainability, including the SW Ecodistrict Initiative.
PROGRESS ON ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES

The NCPC accomplished the following projects and initiatives in FY 2016 that will help the agency meet the goals of E.O. 13693.

Comprehensive Planning

- In partnership with the National Park Service (NPS), completed the Memorials for the Future design competition, which includes commemorative thematic proposals addressing climate preparedness and sustainability and seeks to increase awareness about sustainable ways to efficiently use land and resources for commemorative purposes.
- The Commission adopted updates to all Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan in FY 2016 except for the Parks and Open Space Element, which will be updated after completion of the NPS and NCPC Small Parks Management Strategies Plan in FY 2017. The 2016 updates included the Federal Environment Element, which covers new policies and executive orders on sustainability, flooding, and climate preparedness; and a new Urban Design Element. The Urban Design Element earned the Federal Planning Division award from the American Planning Association (APA) and the Committee of 100 on the Federal City Vision award.
- Reviewed, analyzed, and completed the Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP) for FY 2017-2022. NCPC reviewed and analyzed 99 proposed capital improvement projects submitted by federal agencies with an estimated value over $5.1 billion. The NCPC reviewed the federal capital projects to ensure consistency with the sustainability and environmental policies of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements and the orderly development of the National Capital.
- Reviewed and provided advisory comments on six local plans and five Capital Improvements Programs (CIP) in the National Capital Region (NCR) to ensure consistency with the sustainability and environmental policies of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements. These plans included Arlington County’s Envision Courthouse Square Plan; the DC State Rail Plan; the DC Zoning Regulations Review; the Southeast High Speed Rail Project (DC to Richmond segment), the Northeast Corridor Future Plan; and DDOT’s proposal for Title 13 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR).
- In partnership with the NPS, drafted the Small Parks Management Strategies Plan.
- Continued work on the Smart Cities initiative, which includes research on sensor technology to monitor climate and environmental conditions.
- Prepared and submitted staff comments to the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) on its Ecosystem Services draft guidance.

Project and Plan Review

- Reviewed and analyzed 121 plans and development projects to ensure compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other applicable plans and regulations. These reviews include transportation and stormwater management plans; for example, the NCPC approved the National Institute of Health Final Master Plan and the Pentagon Reservation Final Master Plan, both of which addressed stormwater and transportation management issues.
- Attended meetings and provided comments for projects in the NEPA scoping phase. Staff also reviewed and provided comments on environmental documents.
• Collaborated with the Department of Defense in the National Capital Region to support facility planning by providing more transportation options, improving stormwater and energy management, and improving connections to surrounding communities.

Physical Planning

• Advanced an urban leadership partnership between the NCPC, the General Services Administration (GSA), the District of Columbia, and Southwest Business Improvement District (SWBID). The NCPC and EcoDistricts completed a two-year process: making the SW Ecodistrict Initiative a case study within the National EcoDistrict Organization’s Target City Program, accelerating collaboration to advance the SW Ecodistrict Plan recommendations, and creating replicable models for next-generation urban revitalization.
• Federal and local agencies, in partnership with developers, advanced implementation of SW Ecodistrict Plan recommendations through the development of the International Spy Museum, the Wharf, and plans for improved pedestrian and bicycle connections through Banneker Park.
• Approved an amendment to the 1974 Pennsylvania Avenue Plan to allow the J. Edgar Hoover site to redevelop as a private mixed-use development.
• Through the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative, the NCPC assessed physical, economic, and operational issues between the White House and U.S. Capitol; this included completing a market study and holding an urban design workshop to explore potential design scenarios incorporating new technology and sustainable elements into the sidewalks and streets.

Public Engagement

• Participated in and as appropriate, served as convener and/or leader of local and regional interagency groups including the Interior Flooding Task Group; the Communications Task Group; the Monumental Core Climate Adaptation Working Group (MCCA); the DC Flood Risk Management Team (DC Silver Jackets); the NASA Interagency Forum on Climate Change Impacts; and the Federal Adaptation Community of Practice.
• Represented federal interests related to the District Department of Energy and Environment’s Climate Adaptation Plan.
• Coordinated with federal agencies and convened task groups to develop region-specific flood risk resources for use by federal agencies and others in applying E.O. 13690, Establishing a Federal Flood Management Standard.
• Continued to provide extensive public outreach and engagement on NCPC initiatives related to regional and local sustainability, including the SW Ecodistrict Initiative, flood risk mitigation in Washington, DC, and the 17th Street levee closure.

Buildings and Operations

The NCPC leases office space in a building that was certified LEED Gold for Existing Buildings in the fall 2011.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Since 2010, the NCPC has submitted the annual Greenhouse Gas Comprehensive Inventory to the Department of Energy’s Federal Energy Management Program. NCPC is a contributing agency with fewer than 40 employees. Over the reporting years, the agency’s annual greenhouse gas emissions have been minimal, ranging from 60 to 41 metric tons of CO2 per year.
Because of the loss of funding for agency use of the General Services Administration (GSA) Carbon Footprint Tool and consultant services, NCPC can only easily measure part of Scope 3 (commuter travel emissions). Without these tools and services, it is difficult for the NCPC to submit the Greenhouse Gas Comprehensive Inventory. Therefore, the NCPC requested a waiver for the FY 2016 Greenhouse Gas Inventory submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) in January 2017.

The agency remains confident that through smart practices and daily sustainable choices such as using transit and technology the agency will continue to keep emissions low. Approximately 94 percent of the NCPC employees utilized the transit subsidy program as part of their daily commutes in FY 2016, and the agency is constantly looking at different ways to make more efficient commuting and business travel choices.

CHART NOTES: Scope 1 and 2 Emissions: *Scope 1 Emissions* are direct GHG emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the Federal agency. *Scope 2 Emissions* are GHG emissions resulting from the generation of electricity, heat or steam purchased by a Federal agency.
CHART NOTES:
Scope 3 Emissions are GHG emissions from sources not owned or directly controlled by a Federal agency, but related to agency activities.