



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: December 6, 2018

PROJECT Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements – Parks & Open Space Element	NCPC FILE NUMBER CP01H
	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 00.00(00.00)43858
SUBMITTED BY National Capital Planning Commission	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Final adoption of the updated policies to the Parks & Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan, to take effect after a 60-day period.
REVIEW AUTHORITY Preparation and Adoption of Federal Elements per 40 U.S.C. § 8721	PROPOSED ACTION Approve as requested
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

Staff is requesting Commission adoption of the Parks & Open Space Element of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* (Comprehensive Plan), effective 60-days after adoption. On March 1, 2018, the Commission released the draft element for a 60-day public comment period which lasted through May 7, 2018. NCPC also hosted two public open houses to present the policies and received comments from federal agencies, local government agencies, interest groups, and individuals. Since then, the Element has been revised to incorporate public input, guidance from stakeholder agencies, and minor text amendments for clarity purposes.

Following Commission adoption, staff will incorporate any changes as directed and complete minor editorial updates to the text and graphics to ensure document accuracy and consistency. In addition, NCPC staff will notify applicant agencies, regional partners, and the public of the new effective date of the Parks & Open Space Element.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Parks & Open Space Element update will replace the 2004 Parks & Open Space Element and policies.
- The 2004 Parks & Open Space Element policies will remain in effect for 60-days after the publication of Federal Register notice announcing the adoption of the revised Parks and Open Space Element by the Commission.

- Many of the titles for the guiding principles were revised to address comments and feedback. Additionally, several maps and images were included to support the narrative and highlight prominent examples of parks and open space in the National Capital Region.
- In response to comments and feedback, the Parks & Open Space Element incorporates new material and policy guidance related to lighting, the nighttime experience of Washington through lighting, and efforts to minimize light pollution in parks.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the final adoption of the updated policies in the Parks & Open Space Element of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8721.

Notes the 2004 Parks & Open Space Element policies will remain in effect for 60-days after the publication of Federal Register notice announcing the adoption of the revised Parks and Open Space Element by the Commission.

Notes that for projects with previous approval under the old policies or for projects with special and unusual circumstances, applicant agencies can consult with NCPC staff to determine the applicable Parks & Open Space Element policies.

Notes that following Commission adoption, staff will incorporate any changes as directed by the Commission and will complete minor editorial updates to the text and graphics to ensure document accuracy and consistency.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	2004 – Last adoption of the Parks & Open Space Element
	2016 – Adoption of all Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan except for the Parks & Open Space Element
	2017 – Information presentation on the <i>Small Parks Management Strategies</i>
	2018 – Information presentation on Adapting Designed Landscapes
	2018 – Draft Parks & Open Space Element released for public comment

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The proposed Parks & Open Space Element consists of a goal statement, policies, and narrative that provide background information to support the policies. The Element also included several maps and images that aid the narrative and highlight prominent examples of parks and open space in the National Capital Region. A detailed Response to Comments document will be included with the project materials.

Analysis

Background

On March 1, 2018, the Commission released the draft Parks & Open Space Element for a 60-day public review and comment period. NCPC accepted public comments on the draft Element through May 7, 2018. NCPC received comments from federal, regional, and local agencies and institutions; interest groups; and individuals. Based on feedback and comments received during the public comment period, NCPC staff has revised the narrative and policies and made minor text amendments to the Element for clarity purposes.

Major modifications from Draft to Final element

The following is a summary of the major modifications in the Final Element, organized by order of the guiding principles.

Introduction to the Parks & Open Space Element

- The goal statement for the Parks & Open Space Element provides the broad intent of its policies. The goal statement has been modified to state:
The federal government's goal is to protect and enhance the National Capital Region's parks and open space system—for recreation; as commemorative and symbolic space; as social, civic, and celebratory space; and to provide environmental and educational benefits.
- The introduction to the Element describes the unique types of federal parks and open space in the region and describes the role parks play at a national and local level. Several maps and images have been added to the introduction to support the narrative and highlight prominent examples of parks and open space in the National Capital Region.
- The park categories in the introduction, reflect the primary functional characteristics of parks and open space in the region. Outdoor recreational areas, such as athletic fields and playground, has been added under the 'recreational parks' category.

Guiding Principles

In response to comments and feedback, staff simplified and clarified the titles of the guiding principles and modified the order to better reflect current issues and trends, including challenges and opportunities, faced by parks and open space in the National Capital Region. The principles and policies together promote protection of the region's natural areas, cultural resources, and designed landscapes. They also foster improved access to the park system and call for cooperation and partnership among federal and local agencies, and nongovernmental organizations entrusted with the stewardship of the region's parks and open space.

The revised guiding principles are as follows:

- A. Protect the Historic Features of Parks and Open Space
- B. Encourage Stewardship of Natural Resources
- C. Balance Commemorative Works within Parks
- D. Improve Access to, and Connections, between Parks and Open Space
- E. Balance Multiple Uses within Parks
- F. Build a Cohesive Parks and Open Space System

Section A. Protect the Historic Features of Parks and Open Space

- The title of the guiding principle is modified to better acknowledge the historic and cultural significance of the park system.
- The section *A.1 History of Parks and Open Space* organizes the history of parks and open space in the region in a chronological order and discusses various other eras and styles, in addition to L'Enfant and McMillan eras, that have contributed to the history of the parks and open space system. The narrative has been revised to include several regional park and open space development efforts.
- The discussion of cultural landscapes has been moved to the first guiding principles under the section *A.2 Protect Cultural Resources and Landscapes*. It provides guidance on protecting the cultural resources within parks. National Register terminology has been used when characterizing resources and stating significance.
- The section *A.3 Adapt Designed Landscapes Sensitive* acknowledges that designed landscapes often accommodate programmatic changes, user needs and changes to the surrounding area. While the section does not prioritize between restoration, rehabilitation or adaptation; it emphasizes that these landscapes in urban areas need to consider a variety of users, incorporate seating and shaded areas, promote opportunities for social interaction, and maintain physical and visual connectivity to surrounding areas. New to this section, are *Key Considerations to Assess Designed Landscapes*, which lays out important issues to consider in both the context of the existing space and the proposed improvements. This section allows a consistent approach to assess designed landscapes.
- The section *A.4 Sensitive Lighting of the Monumental Core Parks* incorporates some new material and policy guidance related to the nighttime experience of Washington through lighting. Nighttime illumination of the iconic civic landmarks was included in

response to feedback received during the public comment period. Thoughtful illumination of the monumental core parks affords an opportunity to strengthen the identity and experience of the nation's capital. This section calls to protect the image of Washington, along with the lighting hierarchy established by iconic civic landmarks including the U.S. Capitol, White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and Jefferson Memorial. The capital's nighttime image is closely associated with the architectural lighting of these significant civic landmarks, which are in the minimally lit setting of National Mall, East Potomac Park, Columbia Island, and adjacent parkland.

- The section ***A.4 Sensitive Lighting of the Monumental Core Parks*** includes four new policies, which are listed below

The federal government should:

POS.A.13 Protect the image of Washington, along with lighting hierarchy established by the iconic civic landmarks including the U.S. Capitol, White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and Jefferson Memorial.

POS.A.14 Maintain the dark, minimally lit setting of the National Mall, East Potomac Park, Columbia Island, and adjacent parkland in order to highlight the lighting of the capital's iconic civic landmarks.

POS.A.15 Protect the nighttime image of Washington, including views to and from the cross-axes of the National Mall, when evaluating lighting proposals or considering the location and orientation of illuminated signs.

POS.A.16 Minimize the cumulative effect of ambient illumination in the vicinity of monumental core parks.

Section B. Encourage Stewardship of Natural Resources

- This guiding principle has been reorganized to focus on the federal government's role in protecting and managing natural resources in the region for future generations. Section ***B.1 Natural Resource Areas in the Region***, describes and highlights the unique natural areas in the region. Policies under this guiding principle are categorized under two sections: *B.2 Stewardship of Natural Resource Areas* and *B.3 Sustainable Practices in Parks and Open Space*.
- Section ***B.2 Stewardship of Natural Resource Areas***, provides guidance to ensure the protection, appropriate usage, and enhancement of natural areas including forests, parkland, waterways, shorelines, wetlands, and riparian corridors.
- Protecting the night sky by reducing light pollution in natural areas and urban parks is discussed under the new subsection ***B.2.5 The Night Sky***. This topic is new to the element and was added in response to feedback received during the public comment

period. Reducing light pollution, or excessive artificial light, protects the night sky and the natural environment. Light pollution can diminish the experience of a park and negatively affect adjoining uses. Plants and animals depend on the cycle of light and dark for critical behaviors, including eating, sleep, reproduction, navigation, and protection from predators. Artificial lighting, while important for way-finding, security, and aesthetics, can interfere with these nocturnal functions and negatively affect environmentally sensitive areas. This section emphasizes that minimizing light pollution in and around parks protects their character and the natural environment. Light pollution can be reduced through careful attention when determining how much, and where, lighting is needed, and through strategic placement and design of light fixtures.

- The section **B.2.5 The Night Sky** includes two new policies, which are listed below:

The federal government should:

POS.B.14 Minimize light pollution in and adjacent to parks and open spaces, with special consideration for natural parks and environmentally sensitive areas. Use lighting only where needed for safety and use only the amount of light necessary. Pay careful attention to light direction and color, retrofit existing lighting where needed, and use energy efficient fixtures.

POS.B.15 Utilize shields or other appropriate means to minimize glare from light sources and light fixtures within parks in urban neighborhoods and near natural resources.

- The section **B.3 Sustainable Practices in Parks and Open Space** discusses best practices in the construction, renovation, and maintenance of the region's parks and open space. It promotes sustainable practices in parks such as green infrastructure techniques, increasing pervious surfaces, use of native species in natural areas, and the increase of urban tree canopy.

Section C. Balance Commemorative Works within Parks

This section provides guidance on locating and designing commemorative works in parks. No major changes were made to this section.

Section D. Improve Access to, and Connections between, Parks and Open Space

- This guiding principle provides guidance on how to prioritize pedestrian and other multimodal access to, and connectivity between, parks and open space in the region. It includes examples of ongoing and recently completed examples of projects that improve pedestrian connections between parks and to and along the waterfront.
- Section **D.3 Enhance the Existing Trail Network** emphasize 2004 Parks and Open Space Element's intent of improving access to, and connections between the existing Civil War Defenses of Washington.

Section E. Balance Multiple Uses within Parks

- This policy section provides guidance on accommodating different uses while also protecting the natural and cultural features of the park system. Role of parks as areas for outdoor recreation discussed broadly but not categorized as passive and active recreation.
- The section ***E.1 Accommodate Different Activities in Urban Parks*** acknowledges that in urban areas, where there is limited open space, parks accommodate multiple uses and programmatic needs. At times, streets function as temporary civic gathering spaces. A new policy, in this section is listed below:

The federal government should:

POS.E.3 Support the expansion of existing parks, on a temporary basis, by using adjacent spaces such as streets to accommodate special events.

- The section ***E.3 Protect the Scenic Value of Parkways*** acknowledges that today parkways serve as major transportation corridors. They not just protect valuable scenic viewsheds, and often incorporate recreational amenities including pedestrian and biking trails. A new policy in this section is listed below:

The federal government should:

POS.E.8 Plan and incorporate safe, convenient, and distinct multi-use trails as part of the parkway system.

- The concept of parks as safe gathering areas is covered under the section ***E.4 Plan for Security in Parks***. This topic was added in response to feedback received during the public comment period.
- The section ***E.4 Plan for Security in Parks*** includes a new policy, which is listed below:

The federal government should:

POS.E.9 Minimize impacts from safety and security improvements, so parks remain inviting public spaces, accommodate multiple users and activities, retain physical and visual connectivity, and are consistent with maintenance, management, and programming strategies.

Section F. Build a Cohesive Parks and Open Space System

- The title of the guiding principle was revised to incorporate all collaborative approaches, including partnerships that create a cohesive park and open space network.

Conclusion

The new polices of the Parks & Open Space Element provide guidance to federal agencies that administer parks and open space in the region. Further, the policies act as standards by which the Commission and staff can evaluate project proposals.

Recommendation Summary

The Executive Director recommends that the Commission approve the final policies in the Parks & Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan and recommends that the proposed policies take effect 60-days after the publication of Federal Register notice announcing the adoption of the revised Parks and Open Space Element by the Commission.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The updates to the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan are provided in accordance with the provisions of the preparation and adoption of Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan specified at 40 U.S.C. § 8721.

National Historic Preservation Act

This proposal does not meet the criteria/definition of a federal undertaking. The proposal of policy revision does not implement, contract, or take other actions that would preclude consideration of the full range of alternatives to avoid or minimize harm to federal historic properties. Consequently, the proposed action does not require review pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 process.

National Environmental Policy Act

Staff reviewed the proposal in accordance with NCPC's implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act and determined that the amendments to the Federal Elements can be categorically excluded from further environmental analysis and documentation. The action is determined by the staff to qualify as NCPC's Categorical Exclusion: (4) Adoption of a Federal Element of the Comprehensive Plan or amendment thereto or broad-based policy or feasibility plans prepared and adopted by the Commission in response to the Comprehensive Plan.

CONSULTATION

The update to the Parks & Open Space Element has been coordinated with the National Park Service, the District of the Columbia Office of Planning, and the District Department of Parks and Recreation.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The document will be available online following Commission action:

<https://www.ncpc.gov/plans/compplan/>

Appendices

Appendix 1– Modification to Policies

Appendix 2– *Final* Parks & Open Space Element

Parks & Open Space Element

December 6, 2018

Modification to Policies

Notes on List of Comments:

- The left column of this document lists the policies per the Draft 2018 Parks & Open Space Element update.
- The middle column of this document lists if the draft policy was revised, retained or combined with another policy.
- Policies that were not in the Draft 2018 Parks & Open Space Element are indicated as new policy.
- Policies indicated in the right most column are the revised Final policies being recommended for approval.

Draft Element Policy	Modification	Final Element Policy
<p>POS.A.1 Rehabilitate, protect, and where feasible, enhance historic designed landscapes and civic streets, including squares, circles, and triangles associated with the historic Plan of the City of Washington.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.A.1 Rehabilitate, protect, and, where feasible, enhance historic designed landscapes and civic streets, including squares, circles, and triangles associated with <i>The Plan of the City of Washington (The L’Enfant and McMillan Plans)</i>.</p>
<p>POS.A.2 Preserve and protect historic designed landscapes including their natural and manmade elements.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.A.4 Preserve and maintain cultural landscapes, including their natural and constructed elements.</p>
<p>POS.A.3 Protect and maintain the cross-axis of the National Mall and its historic landscape as a complete work of civic art.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.A.2 Protect and maintain both the north-south and east-west cross-axes of the National Mall and its historic landscape as a complete work of civic art.</p>
<p>POS.A.4 Protect historic parks as important architectural and landscape legacies of national and regional significance.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.A.5 Protect and maintain cultural landscapes as important architectural and landscape legacies of national and regional significance.</p>
<p>POS.A.5 Protect the resources and open space qualities of the National Mall and other heavily used parks by encouraging outdoor cultural events, gatherings, and celebrations to take place in East and West Potomac Parks, Pennsylvania Avenue, 10th Street, SW, and other public spaces throughout the National Capital Region.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.A.3 Protect the resources and open space qualities of the National Mall and other heavily used parks by encouraging outdoor cultural events, gatherings, and celebrations to take place at venues throughout the monumental core and the National Capital Region.</p>
<p>POS.A.6 Protect the character of parks and open space with significant cultural or natural resources and that contribute to the setting of the National Capital Region.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.A.6 Protect the character of parks and open space with significant cultural or natural resources that contribute to the National Capital Region’s setting.</p>
<p>POS.A.7 Protect or restore viewsheds that contribute to the aesthetic quality, historic significance, and visitor experience of the parks and open space system.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.A.7 Protect or restore viewsheds that contribute to cultural landscapes and the aesthetic quality, historic significance, and visitor experience of the parks and open space system.</p>
<p>POS.A.8 Recognize the value of more recent landscapes with special design, and/or cultural significance. Maintain a sense of historic continuity and evolution by preserving parks and landscapes that are exceptional representations of different eras and styles.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.A.9 Recognize the value of more recent landscapes with special design and/or cultural significance. Maintain a sense of historic continuity and evolution by preserving park and landscape characteristics that represent different eras and styles.</p>
<p>POS.A.9 Reinforce Washington’s design evolution, grounded in the L’Enfant and McMillan Plans, and the distinguishing characteristics of designed landscapes when making</p>	Retained	<p>POS.A. 12 Reinforce Washington’s design evolution, grounded in the L’Enfant and McMillan Plans, and the distinguishing characteristics of designed landscapes when making</p>

Draft Element Policy	Modification	Final Element Policy
adaptations to address contemporary needs and/or change in use, access, and maintenance.		adaptations to address contemporary needs and/or changes in use, access, and maintenance.
<p>POS.A.10 Balance significant and sometimes competing planning principles and design features and elements from different eras when adapting designed landscapes to meet contemporary programmatic goals and user needs.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.A.8 Balance significant and sometimes differing planning principles and design features, along with elements from different eras, when adapting designed landscapes to meet contemporary programmatic goals and user needs.</p>
<p>POS.A.11 Maintain and improve a strong physical and/or visual connectivity with the surrounding neighborhood context when making adaptations or improvements to designed landscapes.</p>	Retained	<p>POS.A.11 Maintain and improve a strong physical and/or visual connectivity with the surrounding neighborhood context when making adaptations or improvements to designed landscapes.</p>
<p>POS.A.12 Recognize the original design intent may remain relevant for some landscapes due to their planning, design, cultural, and/or historic significance. Ensure the original design intent is considered when making adaptations or improvements to designed landscapes.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.A.10 Recognize that the original design intent may remain relevant for some landscapes due to their planning, design, cultural, and/or historic significance. Consider the original design intent when making adaptations or improvements to designed landscapes.</p>
	New Policy	<p>POS.A.13 Protect the image of Washington along with lighting hierarchy established by iconic civic landmarks including the U.S. Capitol, White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and Jefferson Memorial.</p>
	New Policy	<p>POS.A.14 Maintain the dark, minimally lit setting of the National Mall, East Potomac Park, Columbia Island, and adjacent parkland in order to highlight the lighting of the capital’s iconic civic landmarks.</p>
	New Policy	<p>POS.A.15 Protect the nighttime image of Washington, including views to and from the cross-axes of the National Mall, when evaluating lighting proposals or considering the location and orientation of illuminated signs.</p>
	New Policy	<p>POS.A.16 Minimize the cumulative effect of ambient illumination in the vicinity of monumental core parks.</p>
<p>POS.B.1 Protect the region’s terrain features including: a. The region’s rivers and streams, their associated valleys and bluffs, and the shoreline park system.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.1 Protect and improve the condition of the region’s natural terrain and its features including: a. The rivers and streams, their associated valleys and bluffs, and the shoreline park system.</p>

Draft Element Policy	Modification	Final Element Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The palisades and gorges of rivers and streams in their natural state. c. The headwater and reservoir areas along the rivers. d. The forested ridgelines of the topographic bowl surrounding the central city of Washington. e. Other scenic and ecologically significant terrain. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The palisades and gorges of rivers and streams. c. The headwater and reservoir areas along the rivers. d. The forested ridgelines of the topographic bowl. e. Other scenic and ecologically significant features.
<p>POS.B.2 Protect features along natural shorelines, such as riparian landscapes, wetlands, steep slopes, mature/healthy trees and understory vegetation, floodplains, woodlands, and highly permeable soils.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.2 Protect, and where necessary restore, the region’s natural shorelines such as riparian landscapes, wetlands, steep slopes, mature/healthy trees, and understory vegetation, floodplains, woodlands, and highly permeable soils.</p>
<p>POS.B.3 Protect and maintain greenways for their environmental benefits and as natural and cultural resources.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.3 Protect and maintain the role of greenways as natural resources, for their environmental benefits, when incorporating trail or roadway improvements.</p>
<p>POS.B.4 Protect and preserve small forests and stream valley parks as natural resource areas, so they continue to serve as valuable scenic, ecological, cultural, and recreational resources.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.4 Protect and preserve the terrain features, greenways, rivers and waterways, stream valley parks, and forested natural areas so they continue to serve as valuable scenic, ecological, cultural, and recreational resources.</p>
<p>POS.B.5 Encourage gradual transitions from the natural areas surrounding the terrain features to densely developed urban environments.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.10 Encourage the use of parks, trees, and natural areas as gradual transitions from the natural areas surrounding the terrain features to densely developed urban environments.</p>
<p>POS.B.6 Maintain and protect the Potomac Gorge, and the surrounding palisades and gorges and their resources, in its natural condition and keep its transition highlands, the rim areas, and surroundings free of intrusive constructed forms.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.11 Preserve and protect the Potomac Gorge and its related palisades and gorges in their natural condition. Keep their transition highlands, rim areas, and surroundings free of intrusive constructed forms and provide a gradual transition between them and developed areas.</p>
<p>POS.B.7 Protect the character and setting of all parks acquired as Capper-Cramton lands as critical elements of the region’s park and open space system.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.8 Protect the character and setting of all Capper-Cramton parks as critical elements of the region’s park and open space system.</p>
<p>POS.B.8 Improve Capper-Cramton lands to be compatible with their existing park use. Projects that provide public benefits such as improving the water quality of streams,</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.9 Improve Capper-Cramton lands to be compatible with their existing park use. Encourage projects that provide public benefits such as improving stream water quality, promoting park access, and</p>

Draft Element Policy	Modification	Final Element Policy
promoting park access, and protecting park resources are encouraged.		protecting park resources.
<p>POS.B.9 Encourage land use and actions that protect and improve the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, including natural shorelines to enhance their ecological quality and scenic character.</p>	Policies POS.B.9 & POS.B.12 were combined as Policy POS.B.5	<p>POS.B.5 Encourage urban shoreline areas to be resilient and adaptable to variations in water level. Along the natural shorelines, restore riverine edge habitats and avoid hardscape surfaces.</p>
<p>POS.B.10 Retain and restore natural shoreline areas to a more natural state, including daylighting streams to provide more sustainable and resilient conditions.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.16 Retain and restore natural shoreline areas to a more natural state, including daylighting streams and planting trees/vegetation to provide more sustainable and resilient conditions.</p>
<p>POS.B.11 Discourage paved parking areas along the shoreline of rivers, streams and at waterfront parks. Remove existing parking when feasible and restore these areas to a landscaped condition, which could include recreational uses.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.17 Discourage impervious paved surfaces, especially parking areas, along the shorelines of rivers, streams, and at waterfront parks. Remove existing waterfront parking when feasible and restore these areas to a landscaped condition, which could include recreational uses.</p>
<p>POS.B.12 Treat urban shoreline areas to be resilient and adaptable to variations in water level.</p>	Policies POS.B.9 & POS.B.12 were combined as Policy POS.B.5	<p>POS.B.5 Encourage urban shoreline areas to be resilient and adaptable to variations in water level. Along the natural shorelines, restore riverine edge habitats and avoid hardscape surfaces.</p>
<p>POS.B.13 Encourage actions that improve the water quality of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers to contribute to the restoration of natural systems, improved water quality, and increased recreational use.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.7 Encourage land uses and actions that protect and improve the water quality of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. Restore their constructed and natural shorelines to enhance their ecological quality and as scenic and recreational resources.</p>
<p>POS.B.14 Preserve and maintain natural areas and open space on federal campuses that support wildlife habitat, improve scenic quality, and enhance aesthetic character. Preservation of these spaces should be compatible with the campus mission and programmatic needs.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.6 Preserve and maintain trees, vegetation, natural areas, and open space on federal campuses that support wildlife habitats, improve scenic quality, and enhance aesthetic character. Preservation of these spaces should be compatible with the campus mission and programmatic needs.</p>
	New Policy	<p>POS.B.14 Minimize light pollution in and adjacent to parks and open spaces, with special consideration for natural parks and environmentally sensitive areas. Use lighting only where needed for security and use only the amount of light necessary. Pay careful attention to light direction and color, retrofit existing lighting where needed, and use energy efficient fixtures.</p>

Draft Element Policy	Modification	Final Element Policy
	New Policy	<p>POS.A.15 Utilize shields or other appropriate means to minimize glare from light sources and light fixtures within parks in urban neighborhoods and near natural resources.</p>
<p>POS.B.15 Increase and conserve urban tree canopy, understory plantings, and landscape cover through best design and installation practices to provide long-term aesthetics and environmental benefits.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.18 Enhance Washington’s green setting, which provides long-term aesthetic and environmental benefits, by protecting mature trees and increasing the urban tree canopy and landscape cover.</p>
<p>POS.B.16 Protect and maintain large tree preserves, forests, and mature urban trees when planning and designing development projects in the region.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.19 Enhance the region’s natural setting by conserving and protecting large tree preserves, forests, mature trees, understory plantings, and landscape cover.</p>
<p>POS.B.17 When planning and designing the location of towers, antennas, or similar structures in or adjacent to the federal park system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Avoid locating antennas and tower structures within the viewsheds of natural and cultural landscapes and open spaces. b. Encourage innovative designs that reduce the visibility of antennas and towers. 	Revised	<p>POS.B.13 When designing and locating small cell infrastructure, cell towers, antennas, or similar structures, discourage their location in, or adjacent to, federal parks. If this is not possible then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Avoid locating these elements within the viewsheds of natural and cultural landscapes, urban plazas, and open spaces. b. Encourage innovative designs that reduce the visibility of antennas and towers.
<p>POS.B.18 Conserve portions of federal campuses and installations that add significantly to the open space system. To the extent practicable, provide public access to and through these open spaces.</p>	Retained	<p>POS.D.11 Conserve portions of federal campuses and installations that add significantly to the open space system. To the extent practicable, provide public access to and through these open spaces.</p>
<p>POS.B.19 The mass and scale of development along or adjacent to the shoreline should preserve view corridors and be compatible to the character and quality of open space.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.12 The mass and scale of development along, or adjacent to the shoreline, should preserve view corridors and be compatible with the character and quality of open space.</p>
<p>POS.B.20 Preserve and protect the park-like character and setting of the region by planting native species to promote sustainable practices and minimize maintenance requirements.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.20 Consider hardy trees and vegetation in urban areas. Similarly, encourage native plant species, in natural areas and where appropriate, as they are uniquely adapted to the local ecosystem and require minimal water and maintenance requirements.</p>
<p>POS.B.21 Consider opportunities to educate and engage communities in the cleanup, planting, removal of invasive species, and maintenance of the region’s rivers, trails, parks, and open space.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.21 Support and expand opportunities to educate and engage communities and local non-profits in the cleanup, planting, removal of invasive species, and maintenance of the region’s rivers, trails, parks, and open space.</p>

Draft Element Policy	Modification	Final Element Policy
<p>POS.B.22 Promote interpretive signage and educational programming, and support the use of mobile technology, to educate and raise awareness about cultural resources and ecological functions of parks and open space.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.B.22 Promote sustainable practices within the parks and open space system by raising awareness about ecological functions of natural areas through educational programming, interpretive signage, and the use of technology.</p>
<p>POS.C.1 Plan and maintain connections between parks and open space through streets, sidewalks, plazas, and trails to create a unified and accessible park system for the national capital region.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.D.1 Plan and improve connections between parks and open space through streets, sidewalks, plazas, and trails to create a unified and accessible park system for the National Capital Region.</p>
<p>POS.C.2 Improve public access to parks and open space, including removing barriers that limit physical or visual connectivity.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.D.2 Provide safe and convenient pedestrian access to parks and open space. Additionally, plan pedestrian connections through and around physical barriers, such as roads and bridges, which limit physical or visual connectivity.</p>
<p>POS.C.3 Create access points to the region’s park system from adjacent communities where impacts on natural and cultural resources will be minimal.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.D.3 Consider the siting of entrances and access points from adjacent communities to the region’s park system.</p>
<p>POS.C.4 Link open space along the Potomac and Anacostia shorelines to provide a continuous public open space system.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.D.4 Connect open space along the Potomac and Anacostia shorelines, and encourage water access where appropriate, in order to provide a continuous public open space system.</p>
<p>POS.C.5 Promote access to waterfront parks by encouraging improved pedestrian and other multimodal connections, and wayfinding signage from adjacent communities.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.D.5 Encourage access to waterfront parks by considering improved pedestrian and other multimodal connections and wayfinding signage from adjacent communities.</p>
<p>POS.C.6 Promote public access along the region’s shorelines, including on federal properties when security considerations will permit.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.D.9 Promote public access along the region’s shorelines, including on or adjacent to federal properties, when security considerations permit.</p>
<p>POS.C.7 Develop, improve, and maintain a regional trail system that serves recreational and commuter needs by closing gaps and connecting parks and open space, natural areas, and destinations. Ensure that regional trails connect with the national trail network.</p>	Retained	<p>POS.D.6 Develop, improve, and maintain a regional trail system that serves recreational and commuter needs by closing gaps and connecting parks and open space, natural areas, and destinations. Ensure that regional trails connect with the national trail network.</p>
<p>POS.C.8 Consider opportunities to develop trails or connect trail systems when planning and designing projects throughout the region.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.D.7 Identify opportunities to develop trails or connect trail systems when planning and designing projects throughout the region.</p>

Draft Element Policy	Modification	Final Element Policy
Ensure that new development do not preclude future improvements to trail connections.		Ensure that new development does not preclude future improvements to trail connections.
POS.C.9 Improve access to the Civil War Defenses of Washington historic fort sites by linking them to surrounding communities using the existing street rights-of-way, sidewalks, and trails where possible.	Revised	POS.D.8 Improve access to, and connections between, the Civil War Defenses of Washington historic fort sites. Link them to surrounding communities using existing streets, sidewalks, and trails where possible.
POS.C.10 Provide public access to open space on or adjacent to federal properties as mission and security considerations permit, while minimizing impacts on natural and cultural resources. Where security is an issue, encourage limited access through coordinated programs and events.	Retained	POS.D.10 Provide public access to open space on or adjacent to federal properties as mission and security considerations permit while minimizing impacts on natural and cultural resources. Where security is an issue, encourage limited access through coordinated programs and events.
POS.D.1 Plan and design parks and open space to accommodate and balance multiple uses while protecting natural and cultural resources and mission needs.	Revised	POS.E.1 Plan and design parks and open space that meet agency mission requirements and protect natural and cultural resources. Additionally, where appropriate, accommodate the needs of diverse age groups and consider opportunities for active recreation.
POS.D.2 Encourage programming that supports recreation, education, commemoration, and special events while protecting natural and cultural resources.	Policies POS.D.2 & POS.D.3 were combined as Policy POS.E.2	POS.E.2 Accommodate different activities and programming in urban parks that enrich the visitor experience, address the needs of diverse populations and age groups, and protect and minimize impacts to resources.
POS.D.3 Accommodate programming and uses that enrich the visitor experience while ensuring resources are protected and impacts minimized.	Policies POS.D.2 & POS.D.3 were combined as Policy POS.E.2	POS.E.2 Accommodate different activities and programming in urban parks that enrich the visitor experience, address the needs of diverse populations and age groups, and protect and minimize impacts to resources.
POS.D.4 Ensure that proposed improvements and maintenance projects along trails and parkways minimize impacts to viewsheds and are sensitive to their natural and historic qualities that make them significant.	Retained	POS.E.5 Ensure that proposed improvements and maintenance projects along trails and parkways minimize impacts to viewsheds and are sensitive to the natural and historic qualities that make them significant.
POS.D.5 Minimize impacts from development adjacent to parks and open space, including trails and parkways, to protect their natural and historic features.	Retained	POS.E.6 Minimize impacts from development adjacent to parks and open space, including trails and parkways, to protect their natural and historic features.
POS.D.6 Maintain and improve the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail in coordination with the local government as a regional resource that	Revised	POS.E.7 Maintain and improve the park-like setting of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, in coordination with local governments, as a regional resource that provides multiple recreational

Draft Element Policy	Modification	Final Element Policy
provides multiple recreational opportunities.		opportunities.
POS.D.7 Develop waterfront parks that accommodate multiple uses and programming opportunities while enhancing the resilience and natural features of the waterfront.	Revised	POS.E.4 Accommodate different activities and programming in waterfront parks while protecting and enhancing the resilience and cultural and natural features waterfronts.
	New Policy	POS.E.8 Plan and incorporate safe, convenient, and distinct multi-use trails as part of the parkway system.
	New Policy	POS.E.9 Minimize impacts from park safety and security improvements so they remain inviting public spaces, accommodate multiple users and activities, retain physical and visual connectivity, and are consistent with maintenance, management, and programming strategies.
	New Policy	POS.E.3 Support the expansion of existing parks, on a temporary basis, by using adjacent spaces such as streets to accommodate special events.
POS.E.1 Balance the need for public space uses with the memorial program and sacred space required by memorials based on size, surrounding context, and function of site.	Revised	POS.C.1 Balance the need for public space with the memorial program and contemplative space required by memorials based on size, surrounding context, and function of the site.
POS.E.2 Preserve and protect park features that contribute to its unique character and function while balancing the addition of new commemorative uses.	Retained	POS.C.2 Preserve and protect a park's features that contribute to its unique character and function while balancing the addition of new commemorative uses.
POS.E.3 Provide areas for diverse park uses and functions by balancing landscape and built elements, and reserving space for the commemorative experience.	Revised	POS.C.3 Provide areas for diverse park uses and functions by balancing landscape and built elements and reserving space for the commemorative programs and experiences.
POS.E.4 Within neighborhood parks, acknowledge that the site may currently serve multiple functions for residents. Scale and place memorial elements in a manner that balances existing functions along with the commemorative experience.	Retained	POS.C.4 Within neighborhood parks acknowledge that the site may currently serve multiple functions for residents. Scale and place memorial elements in a manner that balances existing functions along with the commemorative experience.
POS.E.5 Maintain and protect the urban design framework of <i>The Plan of the City of Washington</i> (L'Enfant and McMillan Plans) including original rights-of-way, streets, and	Revised	POS.C.5 Maintain and protect the urban design framework of <i>The Plan of the City of Washington</i> including original rights-of-way, streets, and vistas. Protect the squares,

Draft Element Policy	Modification	Final Element Policy
vistas. Protect the squares, circles, and triangles of the L’Enfant Plan intended to house memorials and civic art. Avoid the introduction of visual incursions into the rights-of-way or placement of physical elements that would detract from the views of national memorials, civic institutions, or landmarks.		circles, and triangles of the L’Enfant Plan as potential sites for memorials. Avoid the introduction of visual incursions into the rights- of-way or placement of physical elements that would detract from the views of national memorials, civic institutions, or landmarks.
POS.E.6 Locate memorial elements in a compatible manner to adjacent buildings, structures, and historic properties by considering existing building lines, massing, and scale. Memorial elements should complement and not compete with the scale of the surrounding landscape and built environment.	Revised	POS.C.6 Locate memorial elements in a manner that is compatible with adjacent buildings, structures, landscapes, and historic properties by considering existing building lines, massing, and scale. Memorial elements should complement and not compete with the scale of the surrounding landscape and built environment.
POS.E.7 Relate memorial landscape elements with the surrounding streetscape elements to create a visual connection that is responsive to the surrounding context.	Revised	POS.C.7 Relate memorial landscape elements to the adjacent streetscape elements to create a physical and visual transition that responds to the surrounding context.
POS.E.8 Improve and enhance the visual connections between park space, commemorative elements, and the surrounding environment.	Retained	POS.C.8 Improve and enhance the visual connections and transitions between park space, commemorative elements, and the surrounding environment.
POS.E.9 Plan circulation routes that connect to the surrounding transportation network, accommodate visitors or passers-by, and meet ADA requirements to the memorial and park space.	Revised	POS.C.9 Plan circulation routes that accommodate visitors or passers-by, and meet accessibility requirements to connect the memorial and park space with the adjacent transportation network.
POS.E.10 Support innovative programming and events within commemorative settings while minimizing impacts on cultural and natural resources or the visitor experience.	Revised	POS.C.10 Support innovative programming and events within commemorative settings that cause minimal impacts on cultural and natural resources and visitor experience.
POS.E.11 Support the installation of temporary memorials or artwork while minimizing impacts on cultural and natural resources.	Revised	POS.C.11 Support the installation of temporary memorials or artwork that cause minimal impacts on cultural and natural resources and visitor experience.
POS.E.12 Support memorials beyond physical representations and encourage the exploration of alternative forms of commemoration.	Revised	POS.C.12 Encourage alternative approaches to commemoration including temporary installations, non-traditional materials, and the use of technology-based formats.
POS.F.1 Use easements, donations, purchases, exchanges, or other means to create, expand, and enhance a cohesive park and open space system.	Revised	POS.F.1 Continue to use conservation easements, donations, purchases, exchanges, or other means to create, expand, and enhance a cohesive and connected park and open space

Draft Element Policy	Modification	Final Element Policy
<p>POS.F.2 Develop partnerships and build coalitions among local agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, foundations, and other stakeholders to create, manage, maintain, and connect a cohesive open space system.</p>	Revised	<p>system.</p> <p>POS.F.2 Continue to develop partnerships and build coalitions among local agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, foundations, and other stakeholders to create, manage, maintain, and connect a cohesive park and open space system on land and along shorelines and waterfronts.</p>
<p>POS.F.3 Coordinate planning, development, and management of federal and local parkland to identify opportunities for shared recreation, open space preservation, and resource protection.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.F.3 Continue to coordinate the planning, development, and management of federal and local parkland to identify opportunities for shared recreation, open space preservation, and resource protection to address current and future needs.</p>
<p>POS.F.4 Balance the national significance of parks with federal and local interests and the need to accommodate a range of uses and events.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.F.4 Balance the national significance of parks with local interests and the need to accommodate a range of uses and events without adversely affecting natural and cultural resources.</p>
<p>POS.F.5 Encourage the use of a variety of management and maintenance strategies including partnerships, cooperative management agreements, or when appropriate within the District of Columbia, transfer of administrative jurisdiction to the District government to improve parks and create a unified open space network.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.F.5 Encourage the use of a variety of management and maintenance strategies including partnerships, cooperative management agreements, or when appropriate, transfer of administrative jurisdiction, to improve parks and create a unified open space network.</p>
<p>POS.F.6 Develop federal and local collaborative relationships to maximize the functionality of small parks as local neighborhood amenities.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.F.6 Develop federal and local collaborative partnerships to maximize the functionality of small parks as well-maintained local neighborhood green space without adversely affecting natural and cultural resources.</p>
<p>POS.F.7 Coordinate with responsible agencies and local jurisdictions to minimize physical and visual impacts of development projects on the regional park and open space system, including natural features and viewsheds.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.F.7 Coordinate with responsible agencies and local jurisdictions to minimize physical and visual impacts of development projects on natural and cultural resources and viewsheds of the regional park and open space system.</p>
<p>POS.F.8 Coordinate with responsible agencies and local jurisdictions during redevelopment projects to encourage new areas of park and open space preservation.</p>	Revised	<p>POS.F.8 Coordinate with responsible agencies and local jurisdictions during development projects to encourage adding new parks and open space, as well as preserving and enhancing existing parks to meet current and future needs.</p>

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital | Federal Elements



Parks & Open Space Element

2018

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Introduction to the Parks & Open Space Element

The federal government’s goal is to protect and enhance the National Capital Region’s parks and open space system—for recreation; as commemorative and symbolic space; as social, civic, and celebratory space; and to provide environmental and educational benefits.

Parks and Open Space in the National Capital Region

One of the defining characteristics of the National Capital Region¹ (NCR or region) is its parks and open space system. The NCR has diverse outdoor spaces for public use that range from community parks in residential neighborhoods to urban downtown parks, and from the National Mall’s grand expanse to extensive open space and natural areas.

Open space offers environmental benefits, supports recreational uses, provides areas for wildlife habitat, and helps with cultural and natural resource protection. It also allows people to explore history and nature while providing diverse recreational opportunities that strengthen our communities. In the capital, the planned public spaces are settings for renowned memorials, museums, and historic landscapes; function as grand public promenades; protect visual corridors; and allow for large civic gatherings such as national celebrations, special events, and First Amendment gatherings.

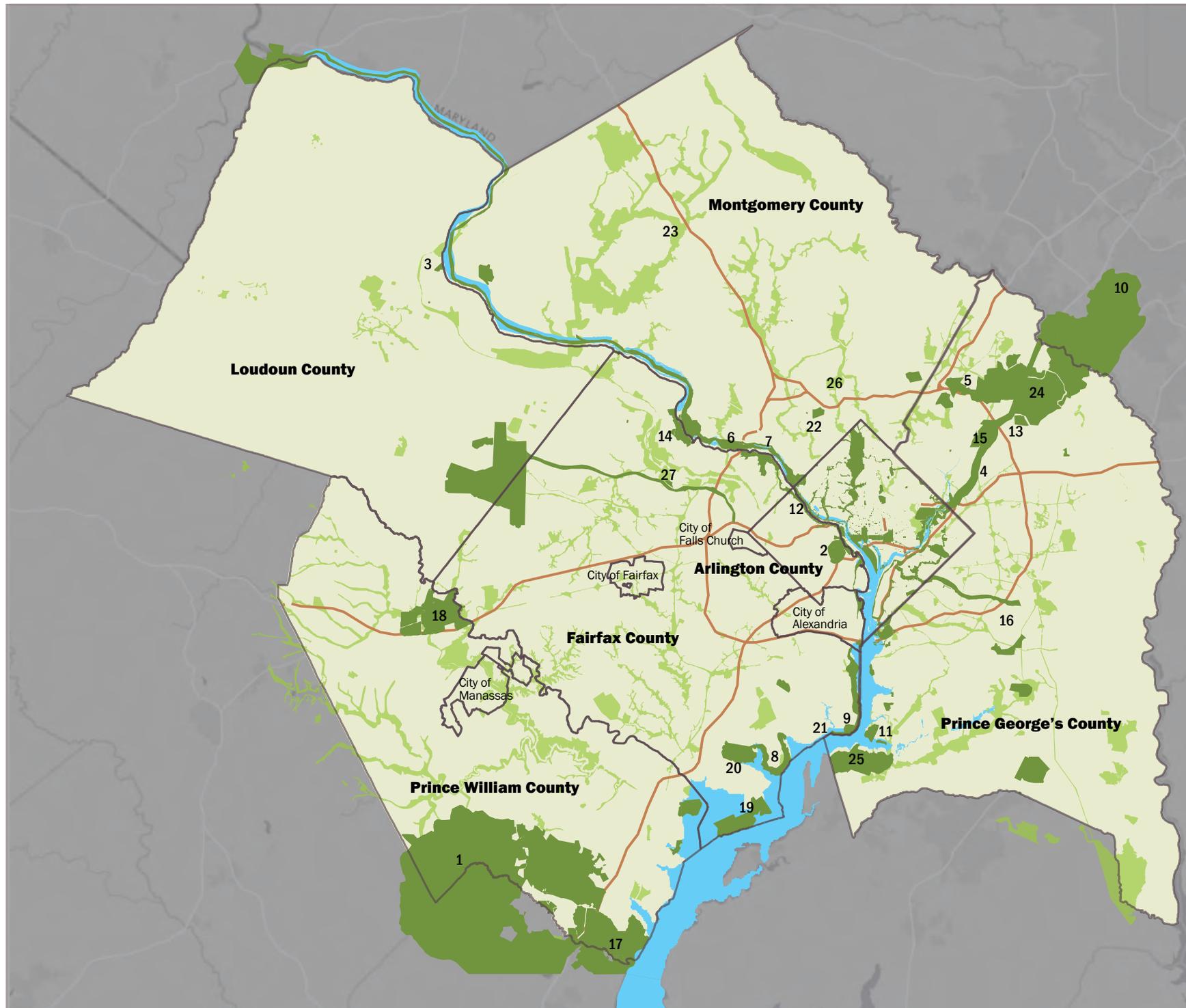
Several federal agencies and other entities administer large amounts of parks and open space in the region, including the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), General Services Administration (GSA), and Architect of the Capitol (AOC). Entities or trust instrumentalities that are partially federally supported include the Smithsonian Institution (SI), National Gallery of Art (NGA), and John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

In the region, several federal campuses also have large amounts of open space. These include National Institutes of Health; Balls Bluff National Cemetery; Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge; Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area; and the United States Army’s Arlington National Cemetery. In addition, many non-publicly accessible federal facilities and campuses, contribute to the region’s overall open space. They also often function as natural habitat areas. Examples include Joint Base Andrews, Fort Belvoir, Marine Corps Base Quantico, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.



Katie Harbath

The National Mall hosts national celebrations, special events, First Amendment activities, and other recreational activities.



The geographic extents of the National Capital Region includes Washington, DC (also referred to as Washington or the capital); Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties in Virginia; as well as the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church in Virginia.

Regional Parks & Open Space*

1. Prince William Forest Park
2. Arlington National Cemetery
3. Balls Bluff National Cemetery
4. Baltimore-Washington Parkway
5. Beltsville Agricultural Research Center
6. Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park
7. Clara Barton Parkway
8. Fort Belvoir
9. Fort Hunt
10. Fort Meade
11. Fort Washington
12. George Washington Memorial Parkway
13. Goddard Space Flight Center
14. Great Falls Park
15. Greenbelt Park
16. Joint Base Andrews
17. Marine Corps Base Quantico
18. Manassas National Battlefield Park
19. Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge
20. Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area
21. Mount Vernon
22. National Institutes of Health
23. National Institute of Standards and Technology
24. Patuxent Research Refuge
25. Piscataway Park
26. Rock Creek Regional Park
27. Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts

*This map shows federal parks and open space in the National Capital Region that are referenced in this element

Parks and Open Space in Washington

In Washington, DC, federally administered parks and open space include not just designated parkland, but a majority of shoreline areas along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. Other prominent areas with large designated open space include the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Arboretum and the Smithsonian Institution’s National Zoological Park.

Within Washington’s city limits, the federal government administers 80 percent of the total land dedicated to parks and open space⁴. Of that, NPS is responsible for approximately 74 percent of the land⁵ that includes formal parks and open space that complement memorials and monuments; L’Enfant circles, squares, and triangles; natural and cultural landscapes; historic sites; conservation and natural areas; parkways; rivers; and canals. Some well-known examples include the National Mall, President’s Park, Rock Creek Park, Anacostia Park, Civil War Defenses of Washington (commonly referred as the Fort Circle Parks), Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

Several District of Columbia (District) government agencies oversee non-federal parks, primarily located in neighborhood areas, with a focus on providing recreation opportunities to city residents. There are a number of parks administered by District government agencies, but the underlying ownership is with the U.S. government.

As defined in the federal Urban Design Element, Washington’s spatial and symbolic center is the monumental core, with the greatest concentration of federal properties and resources. It includes the U.S. Capitol grounds, the White House, the National Mall, Smithsonian grounds, Federal Triangle, Arlington National Cemetery, and the public spaces that function as settings for the surrounding memorials, museums, and civic structures. The parks and open space associated with the above-mentioned areas help define the National Mall’s cross-axes and are collectively referred to as the monumental core parks.

It is important to note that the monumental core parks address a national audience and have different functions, as well as maintenance and management needs, as do city or regional parks. Monumental core parks accommodate a wide range of activities; are a physical and symbolic setting for our government; and house the nation’s most renowned memorials and museums.

Urban parks are distinct from natural areas, as they require different maintenance, management, and programming strategies. Urban parks are dynamic cultural and social hubs, which support a variety of user needs and have many stakeholders. For the many federally administered urban parks, federal-local partnerships or public-private partnerships often provide additional funding sources, consistent oversight, visitor services, and help generate economic activity for the community.

Within the NCR, NPS administers approximately 27 percent of the parks and open space². These include historic sites, natural and cultural landscapes, urban forests, and conservation areas³ at places such as Piscataway Park, Prince William Forest Park, Great Falls Park, and the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts.

Parks and open space are critical components of the region and encompass different forms and experiences. Publically accessible federal lands not only fulfill their primary obligation to meet federal and national needs, but they also provide opportunities for recreation for surrounding neighborhoods. While meeting federal agency missions and protecting natural and cultural resources are priorities, there are federal parks that are also able to accommodate local recreation needs. When developed with a clear understanding of different goals, collaboration and partnerships can successfully bring additional resources and appropriate activities to enhance parks. In surrounding jurisdictions in the NCR, federal parkland contributes to the natural resource and public parkland inventory. Additionally, they are part of a comprehensive regional network of parks and open space that supports local residents and visitors.



NPS

The Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge was the first refuge in the nation created to protect critical habitat for bald eagles.



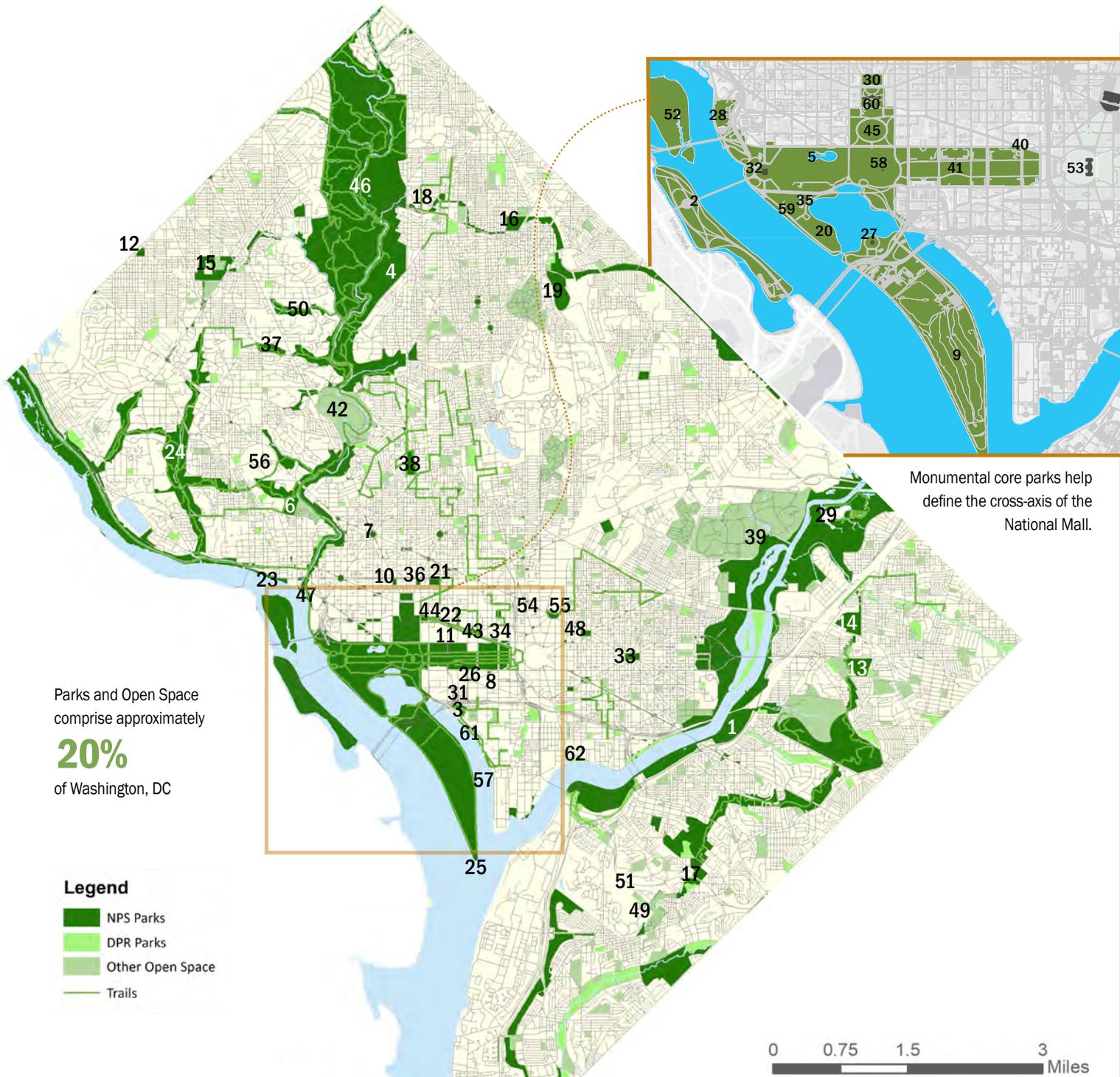
O. Charlene/Flickr

Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts is the only national park dedicated to presenting the performing arts.



Army Corps of Engineers

Arlington National Cemetery extends over 600 acres of open space.



Parks and Open Space
comprise approximately
20%
of Washington, DC

Legend

- NPS Parks
- DPR Parks
- Other Open Space
- Trails

Washington, DC Parks and Open Space*

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Anacostia Park | 32. Lincoln Memorial |
| 2. Arlington Memorial Bridge and Columbia Island | 33. Lincoln Park |
| 3. Banneker Park | 34. Marshall Park |
| 4. Carter Barron Amphitheater | 35. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial |
| 5. Constitution Gardens | 36. McPherson Square |
| 6. Dumbarton Oaks Park | 37. Melvin Hazen Park |
| 7. Dupont Circle | 38. Meridian Hill Park |
| 8. Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial | 39. National Arboretum |
| 9. East Potomac Park | 40. National Gallery's East Wing Plaza and Sculpture Garden |
| 10. Farragut Square | 41. National Mall |
| 11. Federal Triangle | 42. National Zoological Park |
| 12. Fort Bayard | 43. U.S. Navy Memorial |
| 13. Fort Dupont | 44. Pershing Park |
| 14. Fort Mahan | 45. President's Park |
| 15. Fort Reno | 46. Rock Creek Park |
| 16. Fort Slocum | 47. Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway |
| 17. Fort Stanton | 48. Stanton Park |
| 18. Fort Stevens | 49. St. Elizabeths Campus |
| 19. Fort Totten | 50. Soapstone Valley Park |
| 20. Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial | 51. Suitland Parkway |
| 21. Franklin Park | 52. Theodore Roosevelt Island |
| 22. Freedom Plaza | 53. U.S. Capitol |
| 23. Georgetown Waterfront Park | 54. Ukrainian Manmade Famine Memorial of 1932-1933 |
| 24. Glover-Archbold Park | 55. Union Station and Columbus Circle |
| 25. Hains Point | 56. United States Naval Observatory |
| 26. Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden | 57. Washington Channel |
| 27. Jefferson Memorial | 58. Washington Monument |
| 28. John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts | 59. West Potomac Park |
| 29. Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens | 60. White House |
| 30. Lafayette Park | 61. The Wharf at Southwest Waterfront |
| 31. L'Enfant Plaza | 62. Yards Park |

*This map shows parks and open space in Washington, DC that are referenced in this element.

Parks and Open Space Categories

In this element, parks and open space are discussed under one, and often several, of the following broad categories.

Cultural Landscapes

Geographic areas associated with a historic event, activity, person, or exhibiting characteristics of a specific design style or aesthetic values. These landscapes were affected, influenced, or shaped by human involvement and consist of natural and constructed elements.

Natural Parks

Protected natural or semi-natural areas—including terrain features, forests, wetlands, stream valley, or tributary parks, wildlife refuge areas, easements and conservation areas—that help preserve, protect, or restore the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife.

Waterfront Parks

Rivers and waterways including public space along rivers and waterways that often incorporate water-related activities.

Recreation Parks

Parks that accommodate outdoor recreation activities such as designated areas for hiking, camping, picnics, athletic fields, pools, skating rinks, and playgrounds.

Trails, Parkway, and Greenways

Designated linear routes used by motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians, or linear habitat corridors that follow natural or constructed features.



Steven Markos

Prince William Forest Park



Eleanor Craig

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historic Park



Catalina Calachan

Georgetown Waterfront Park



NPS

Fort Dupont Park



Hiking Upward

Great Falls Park



Guiding Principles

This element provides policy guidance to protect, enhance, and help shape the region's parks and open space while balancing federal and local interests. The following guiding principles serve as the element's organizational framework. These principles reflect current issues, trends, challenges, and opportunities faced by parks and open space in the region. Together they create a cohesive vision through improved stewardship, utilization, maintenance, planning, and design and may apply to more than one parks and open space category. In addition, the Federal Urban Design, Historic Preservation, Environment, and Visitors & Commemoration Elements have related policy guidance.

Section A

Protect the Historic Features of Parks and Open Space

The Plan of the City of Washington (The L'Enfant and McMillan Plans) influenced the parks and open space network that is the foundation of Washington's nationally recognized character. As the nation's capital and surrounding region grew, subsequent planning and design eras contributed to its parks and open space design legacy. Many historic parks and designed landscapes are important cultural resources of landscape and architectural significance. Several of these natural and constructed elements also feature scenic viewsheds that contribute to the region's aesthetic quality and enhance the visitor experience. Protecting these parks and their significant features, while considering modifications for contemporary uses, requires balancing multiple interests with user needs and understanding a park's local and regional context.

Section D

Improve Access to, and Connections between, Parks and Open Space

Providing access to and through parks is key to linking parks with surrounding communities and visitors, and expands opportunities for different park experiences. Connecting parks and open spaces together reinforces and builds a regional park system. In regional parks systems, such connections support the need for wildlife corridors. Access to, and connections through, federal parks and open space vary significantly, and are often driven by security and agency mission. Improving access and enhancing connections includes improving physical and visual connectivity and filling the gaps in the existing system. It requires a shift from thinking of parks and open space as isolated spaces to planning how the park system functions as a whole. It also requires recognizing how streets, sidewalks, trails, and plazas complement and connect parks and open space and facilitate movement within the system.

Section B

Encourage Stewardship of Natural Resources

As a major landholder and manager of parks and open space across the region, the federal government has an important role in protecting and managing these natural resources for future generations. The federal government's stewardship role also includes protecting landscapes for their scenic and aesthetic values. Past and current plans take advantage of the region's topography and natural settings, with many parks and open spaces encompassing unique terrain features and a variety of natural areas such as wetlands, stream valley areas, floodplains, and forests. The natural resources within parks and open space face development-related challenges that need protection from overuse; changing environmental conditions; fragmentation of habitat corridors; stormwater run-off; and invasive plant species.

Section E

Balance Multiple Uses within Parks

As the region continues to grow, there will be additional demands on parks and open space to accommodate more people and a greater variety of uses and programs. In addition to public assembly, celebration, education, and recreation, parks and open space provide ecological and environmental benefits, mitigate changing environmental conditions, serve as settings for commemorative works, and function as transportation and wildlife corridors. Some parks suffer from overuse while others are under-used due to barriers that limit access; lack of park amenities; perceived lack of safety; inadequate signage; and poor maintenance. It is important to address these challenges, and more effectively use and program our parks to address growing and changing demands, while still protecting their natural and cultural resources.

Section C

Balance Commemorative Works within Parks

One of the unique characteristics of the parks and open space system in the nation's capital is the role of commemorative works. Effectively balancing commemorative requirements with other important park uses is critical to creating successful public spaces. Memorials are often located in national parks and are important elements of prominent viewsheds. Often, larger memorials include several commemorative components consisting of landscape and built elements. Size and scale is an important consideration when planning and designing memorials as space becomes harder to find. Many memorials are located within urban parks that also function as recreation and public gathering areas. These places have to balance quiet areas for contemplation with the need for space for other activities. This approach is central to creating both a successful memorial and a welcoming park. In addition, as new memorials are increasingly located beyond the monumental core, there will be a need to balance the function of neighborhood parks with commemorative functions.

Section F

Build a Cohesive Parks and Open Space System

Parks and open space cross jurisdictional boundaries and have multiple agencies or stakeholders involved in various aspects of planning, preservation, management, and maintenance. Building partnerships and improving coordination among stakeholders is imperative to improve the park system's quality and achieve joint goals and objectives for a cohesive park and open space network. Encouraging collaboration among federal and local agencies, along with engaging communities and other stakeholders, further encourages flexibility and creativity in the design, use, and maintenance of parks.



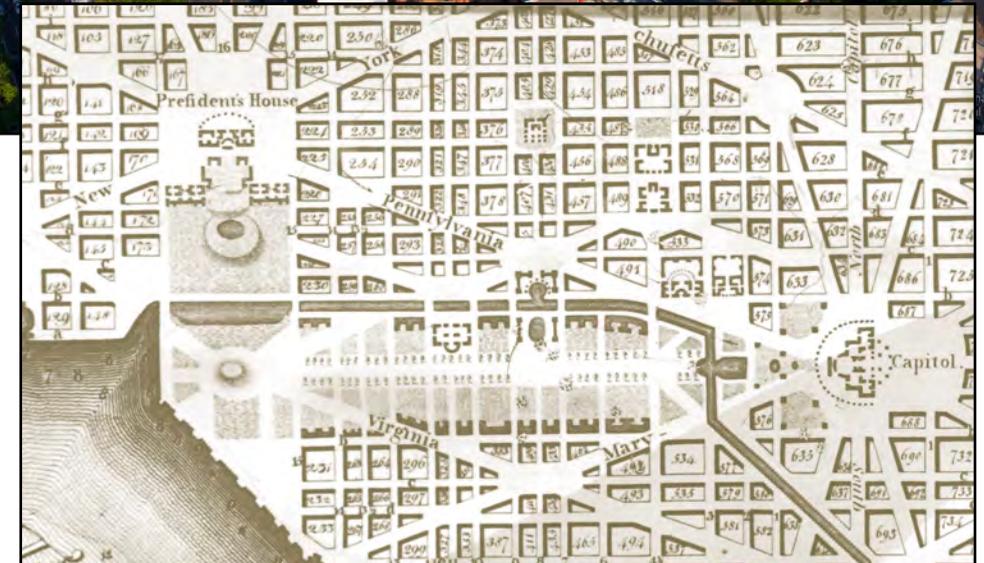
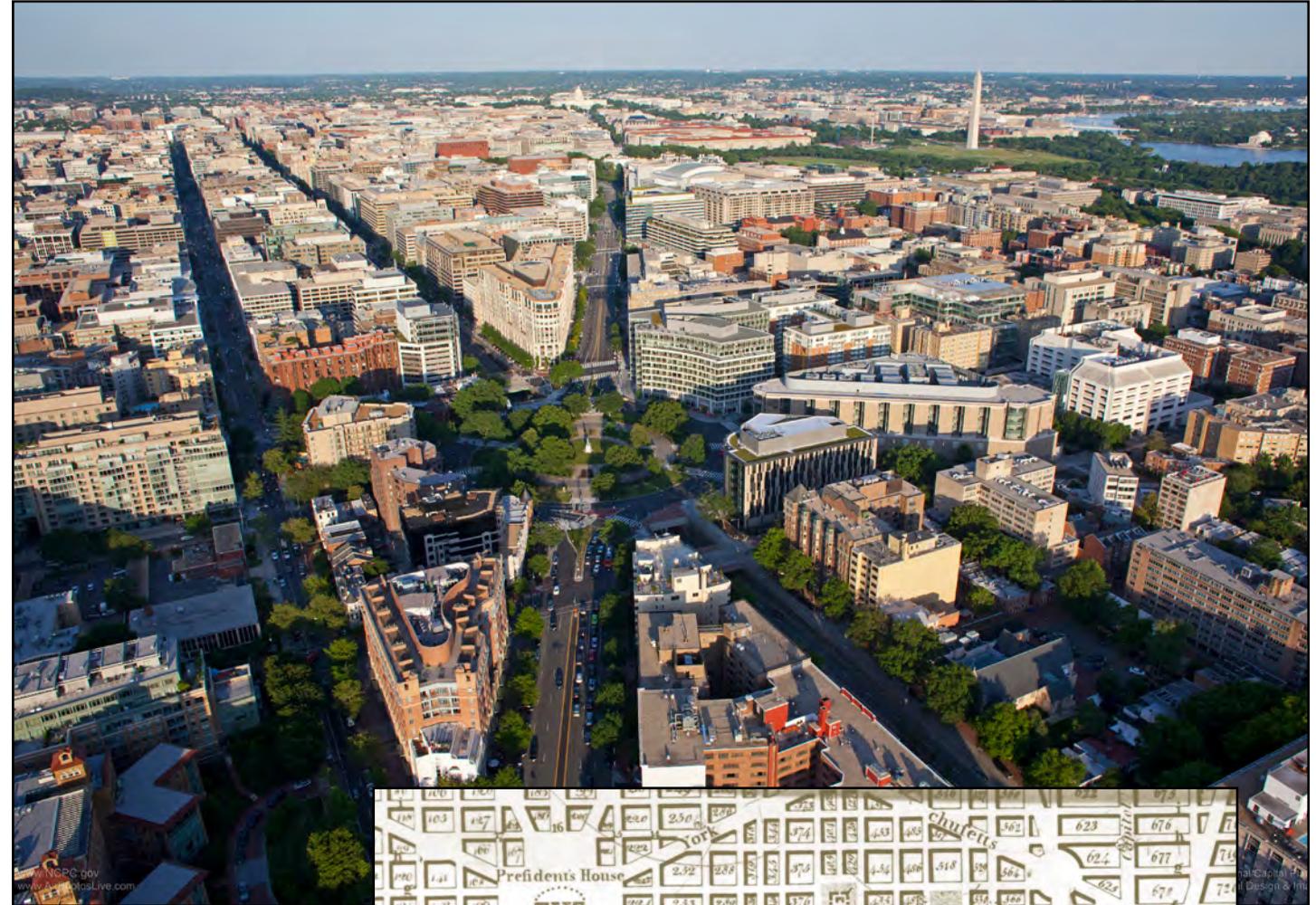
Section A. Protect the Historic Features of Parks and Open Space

The parks and open space system includes a variety of historic features that reflect different periods and provide a variety of visitor experiences. The small urban parks that resulted from the L'Enfant Plan, and natural parks, with historic resources such as Piscataway Park in Maryland, reflect the evolution of the region and different aspects of its history. This policy section provides guidance on protecting the historic features of parks and open space while also acknowledging the need to accommodate contemporary functions.

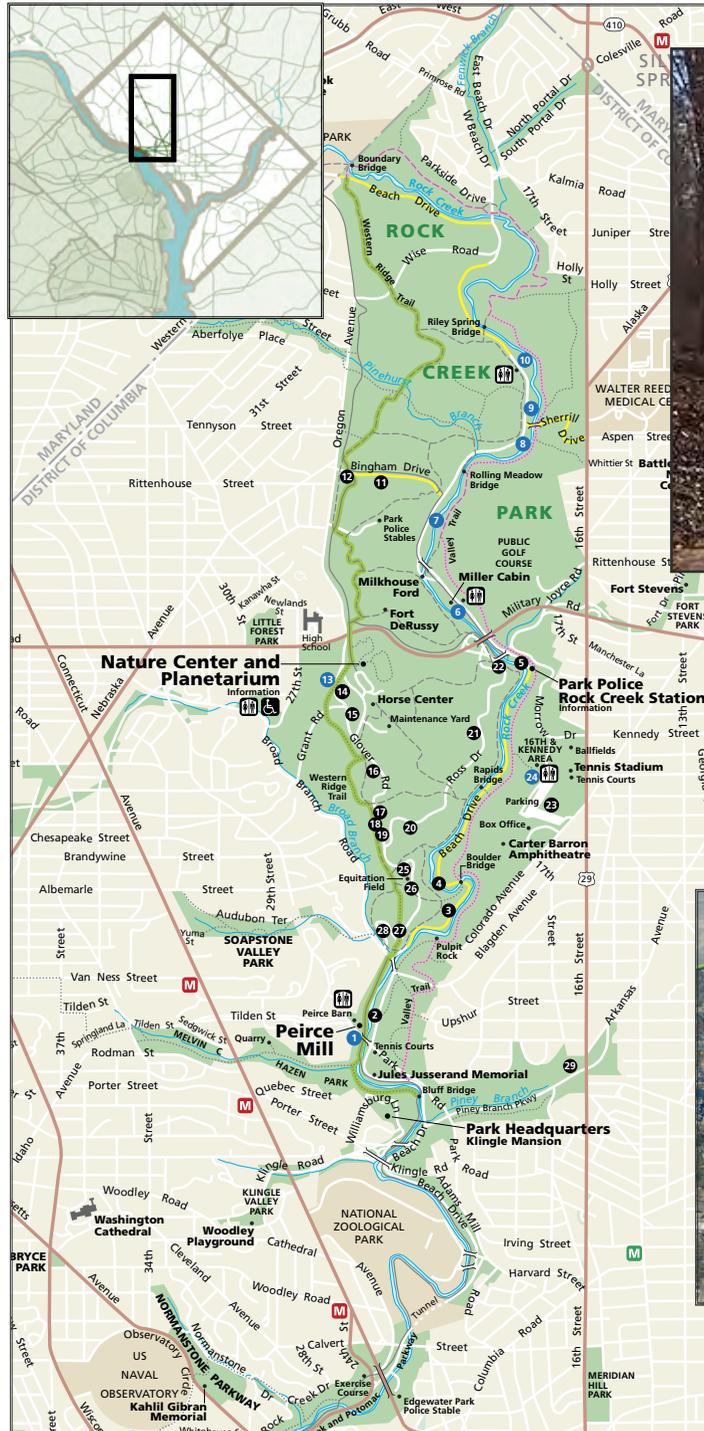
A.1 History of Parks and Open Space

A.1.1 L'Enfant Plan Era: 1800-1850

The L'Enfant Plan centered Washington within a distinctive topographic bowl, accentuating the natural beauty of the rivers and allowing extensive views from the surrounding elevated ridges. The L'Enfant Plan, organized around a street network and open spaces, established a physical and visual hierarchy that still defines the shape of parks and open space today. It set the foundation and a vision for many of the capital's most important park areas including large reservations such as the National Mall, the U.S. Capitol grounds, and President's Park, and smaller reservations resulting from the intersection of avenues and streets. The plan's geometric form resulted in green space, including circle, square, and triangle parks found at streets transected by wide, park-like, diagonal avenues. One of the plan's central ideas was that the parks would feature fountains, monuments, memorials, and other features of civic art. Examples include Farragut Square, McPherson Square, Dupont Circle, Franklin Park, Lafayette Park, Lincoln Park, and Stanton Park, as well as many smaller neighborhood triangular parks.

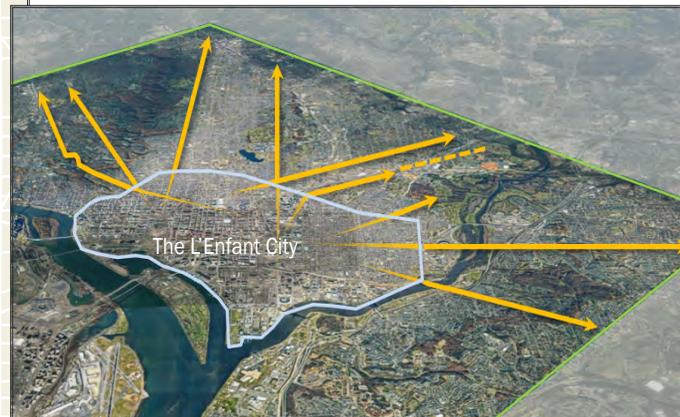


Influenced by the design of several European cities, the L'Enfant Plan of 1791 capitalized on the area's natural features and is organized around a system of street network and open spaces.



DC File

In 1890, Rock Creek Park became one of the first federally administered natural park preserves. The park protects the rugged terrain, steep bluffs, side slopes, ridgelines, terraces, deep ravines, and narrow floodplains of Rock Creek and its tributaries.



The Highway Plan of 1893 established a street structure outside the L'Enfant City, utilizing boulevards and parkways to link the area's large parks and open space into a regional network.

A.1.2 Civil War/Victorian Era: 1850-1900

Several of the L'Enfant Plan recommendations were implemented after the Civil War when the city experienced significant population growth. Interest in making the National Mall the nation's public park led to Andrew Jackson Downing's plan, which departed from L'Enfant's original design. It envisioned individual parks connected by curvilinear walks and drives and further defined with trees. Downing's plan was executed at the President's Park Ellipse and Lafayette Park. During this time, Washington aspired to be a worthy capital by repairing wartime damage and improving infrastructure and public spaces with amenities and tree plantings. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) embarked on the systematic construction of roads, parks, and open space as envisioned in the L'Enfant Plan. Public space improvements provided for landscaping in the rights-of-way and the creation of park reservations along avenues. These improvements also added a more pedestrian scale to the sidewalks, parks, and plazas.

In 1873, Congress commissioned Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. to design the grounds of the U.S. Capitol. He proposed a marble terrace that wrapped around the buildings north, south, and west facades and designed a landscape that complemented the building's classical structure. His symmetrical design incorporated park-like edging, low walls, lamps, trees, shrubs, and a series of curved walkways that provided views of the Capitol. Olmsted was also instrumental in designing the National Zoological Park as part of Rock Creek Park. Established by Congress in 1890, Rock Creek Park was one of the first national parks. Today it is one of the largest natural urban parks in the United States.

As Washington grew beyond the original L'Enfant City, new development often included features of the L'Enfant Plan such as circles, small pocket parks, and the street grid layout. The Highway Plan of 1893, developed by Olmsted and his firm, took its cue from the L'Enfant Plan and established a coordinated street structure outside of the boundaries designed by L'Enfant. It utilized boulevards to connect the city's large parks and open space. It also located winding parkways that responded to the topography and extended them into a regional network. Examples include Nebraska Avenue from Rock Creek Park to the Potomac River; the alignment of Minnesota Avenue parallel to the Anacostia River; and the location of MacArthur Boulevard and Alabama Avenue along significant topographic features.

A.1.4 Post-World War II Era: 1950-1973

During the post-World War II era, the park system grew and evolved as the region expanded. The influx of federal office spaces in Washington and placement of federal facilities in the outer reaches of the region influenced the role and function of parkways. Parkway served as transportation routes; provided a dignified approach to the capital; connected the region's parks, workplaces, and housing; and provided environmental benefits by protecting stream and canal corridors from degradation and providing flood control. The Baltimore-Washington Parkway ran through Greenbelt Park and linked major federal facilities such as Fort Meade and the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center to Washington, DC. Similarly, Suitland Parkway was envisioned as a national defense highway, linked Andrews Air Force Base to Washington.

The mid-twentieth century saw refocused planning, urban renewal efforts, and the advent of design movements that combined functionalism with aesthetic ideals and rejected historical precepts and styles. Southwest Washington is an example where entire neighborhoods were transformed, with both buildings and landscapes rebuilt with a modernist vocabulary utilizing constructed materials, such as concrete, for open plaza areas between buildings, and simple plantings and vegetation were used in green spaces. The 10th Street Promenade and Overlook, now Banneker Park, were components of an urban renewal program in Southwest Washington. New civic and memorial construction projects utilized the tenants of the modernist movement. Significant modernist landscapes include the National Gallery's East Wing Plaza, portions of L'Enfant Plaza, areas within the National Zoo, the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden, and master plans for the National Arboretum, Pennsylvania Avenue, and Arlington National Cemetery.

Towards the end of the 1960's, the importance of environmental planning was recognized, and an increased awareness about historic preservation began to influence how parks were used and rehabilitated. Many of the parks identified by the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans were located along stream valleys, steep slopes, and rivers, and were acknowledged as important natural resource areas. With an intent to strengthen the public's appreciation for natural history and to recognize sites for their exceptional scenery, rarity, and diversity, Congress passed the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1964. Similarly, the passage of National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 laid the groundwork for historic properties and landscapes to be included to the National Register of Historic Places. Over the years, several landscapes were nominated including L'Enfant and McMillan Plan circles and squares, the Civil War Defenses of Washington park system, and Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. Landmarks in the region outside of Washington, such as Fort Washington, were also included.



In 1986, in honor of the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, President Ronald Reagan issued a proclamation making the gardens a living legacy tribute to the Constitution.



The modernist landscape of the National Gallery of Art's East Wing Plaza connects the classical west wing to the modernist east wing.

In 1970, in preparation for the nation's Bicentennial, funding increased for park improvements including infrastructure, historic preservation, interpretation, and visitor services. Several park areas relevant to the Bicentennial benefited from the program including a master plan for the National Mall, development of Constitution Gardens, plans for Pennsylvania Avenue, and regional efforts such as restoration of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, including its locks and towpaths. The program also aimed to improve neighborhood parks by adding basketball courts, softball fields, and other amenities. Skating rinks were built in Anacostia and Fort Dupont Parks, bike trails added at some Civil War Defenses of Washington, picnic areas at Fort Stanton, and tot lots at Fort Totten.

A.1.5 Post Home Rule Era: 1973-Present

Up until Home Rule, the federal government was responsible for planning and managing all of Washington’s park spaces. In this capacity, the park system served both local and national needs, designating recreational centers and envisioning connected, open public spaces on federal facilities. When the Home Rule Act of 1973 established self-governance for the District of Columbia, the federal government transferred some public land deemed not nationally significant to the District government. More commonly, there were transfers of jurisdiction where the federal government retained ownership yet allowed the District to use the sites for specific purposes such as parks and recreation, education, or transportation. Many of the properties transferred to the District were recreational facilities or open spaces associated with schoolyards, fields, streets, and recreational centers. These sites, managed by several different District agencies, reflected changing administrative structures and responsibilities.

While the preceding decades of park acquisition and design development laid the groundwork, the late 1970’s saw an increased appreciation for the identification, interpretation, and conservation of cultural landscapes. Since Home Rule, with a shift from acquiring park space, the federal government and the District collaborated to maximize resources; maintain and improve parks; and create a stronger park system. An example of such collaboration was the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative that led to the *Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan* in 2003. It brought together District and federal agencies to develop a vision for the future of the Anacostia waterfront. The ongoing 30-year effort recognized the Anacostia River as an important resource for the region.

In 2014, to plan for future changes along Pennsylvania Avenue as part of its dual role for the city and nation, NCPC, NPS, the General Services Administration (GSA), and the District launched the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative. The portion of the Avenue that runs between the U.S. Capitol and the White House is a National Historic Site that includes a number of commemorative elements, parks, and plazas, as well as grand streetscape framing iconic views to the Capitol. The ongoing initiative builds upon the 1974 *Pennsylvania Avenue Plan* that adapted L’Enfant and McMillan Plan principles to the post-war urban development and envisioned the avenue as an urban boulevard and civic event destination for the nation’s capital.



Chinatown Park, Washington, DC

Mayor’s Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs



Established in 1918, Anacostia Park recently celebrated its centennial. The park offers educational, recreational, and community opportunities in the heart of Washington.

A.2 Protect Cultural Resources and Landscapes

The region's parks and open space system includes cultural resources and landscapes from all the eras previously described. Cultural resources are physical evidence of past human activity: a site, object, landscape, structure; or a site, structure, landscape, object or natural feature of significance to a group of people traditionally associated with it. Types of cultural resources often found in parks and open space include archaeological resources, historic structures, cultural landscapes, and ethnographic resources.

In Washington, the L'Enfant Plan is the foundation of many urban parks, and rehabilitation and protection of these landscapes is a priority. Similarly, many parks in the region are cultural landscapes that contribute to the area character and setting of the area; reflect architectural and landscape legacies of national and regional significance; and protect viewsheds that contribute to their aesthetic quality, historic significance, and visitor experience. The most recognized cultural landscape in the region is the National Mall. It is often a venue for national celebrations, special events, First Amendment activities, and many types of recreation. To protect the Mall's resources and open space, large events, gatherings and celebrations that are not mandated by law, should be considered at other suitable locations in the monumental core or region.

Other regional cultural landscapes range in size from small urban triangle parks to Rock Creek Park, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, the Manassas National Battlefield Park, and the Civil War Defenses of Washington.

Most designed and vernacular landscapes are intricately connected to natural resources including land, air, water, vegetation, and wildlife. This connection to natural resources



Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park provides a place to enjoy nature and recreation, but most importantly, it tells the story of the canal's important role in the nation's history.

distinguishes cultural landscapes from a historic building. As noted in the Urban Design Element,⁷ the natural setting heavily influenced the Capital's design and layout by creating parks and green settings that surround important federal buildings and civic spaces. Protecting both the natural features and constructed elements of cultural landscapes is critical to preserving their historic and aesthetic values.

It is important for the federal government to protect the historic features of parks in the region and balance the contributions of different design eras and major plans with improvements that allow this critical network to function for current uses. Similarly, federal agencies have a responsibility to protect these resources and evaluate impacts from development proposals. The responsibility to protect valuable viewsheds extends to cultural resources including the scenic quality and character of the area surrounding them. The treatment and management of cultural landscapes needs to be in concert with individual park management plans, historic structures reports, and cultural landscape reports.

The federal government should:

- POS.A.1** Rehabilitate, protect, and, where feasible, enhance historic designed landscapes and civic streets, including squares, circles, and triangles associated with *The Plan of the City of Washington* (The L'Enfant and McMillan Plans).
- POS.A.2** Protect and maintain both the north-south and east-west cross-axes of the National Mall and its historic landscape as a complete work of civic art.
- POS.A.3** Protect the resources and open space qualities of the National Mall and other heavily used parks by encouraging outdoor cultural events, gatherings, and celebrations to take place at other venues throughout the monumental core and the National Capital Region.
- POS.A.4** Preserve and maintain cultural landscapes, including their natural and constructed elements.
- POS.A.5** Protect and maintain cultural landscapes as important architectural and landscape legacies of national and regional significance.
- POS.A.6** Protect the character of parks and open space with significant cultural or natural resources that contribute to the National Capital Region's setting.
- POS.A.7** Protect or restore viewsheds that contribute to cultural landscapes and the aesthetic quality, historic significance, and visitor experience of the parks and open space system.

Cultural Landscapes

NPS defines four types of cultural landscapes.

Designed Landscape: A landscape consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person(s), trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Examples include parks, campuses, and estates.

Vernacular Landscape: A landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday lives. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes. They can be a single property such as a farm, or a collection of properties such as a district of historic farms along a river valley. Examples include rural villages, industrial complexes, and agricultural landscapes.

Historic Site: A landscape significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person. Examples include battlefields and president’s homes.

Ethnographic Landscape: A landscape containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources. Examples are contemporary settlements, religious sacred sites, and massive geological structures. Small plant communities, animals, subsistence, and ceremonial grounds are often components.



U.S. National Arboretum



Piscataway Park



Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

Steven Markos

NPS

A.3 Adapt Designed Landscapes Sensitive

While Washington is largely known for its neoclassical architecture and landscapes that reflect the visions of the L’Enfant and McMillan Plans, it is also influenced by other eras that contribute to the city’s nationally recognized design character. These include the Italianate landscape of Meridian Hill Park; landscapes in the Victorian Garden tradition like President’s Park; and Modernist landscapes like Constitution Gardens or the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial. Other parks and plazas designed in the Modernist and Post-modern period include landscapes along the Southwest Waterfront such as Banneker Park, and public spaces along Pennsylvania Avenue such as Freedom Plaza, Pershing Park, and Marshall Park.

As some architectural and landscape design styles become less influential, how to retain their best examples becomes a question posed by historic preservationists and urban planners alike. Concurrently, it is also important to consider programmatic changes, user needs, and changes to the surrounding area when making adaptations to such landscapes.

Designed landscapes face various pressures, ranging from alterations in the surrounding areas to changes in their use and management. Redevelopment on adjacent parcels, for example, can influence a landscape’s use, access, and circulation patterns. Changes can include a new development, introduction of barriers such as highways and bridges, new traffic patterns that make pedestrian access difficult, or security features such as bollards or planters that modify pedestrian routes. An example where the function and use of a designed landscape has evolved over time is Banneker Park, originally designed as the terminus of 10th Street, SW. As a result of new development along the Southwest Waterfront, and anticipated increases in pedestrian and bike traffic, a new stairway and ramp were added to Banneker Park in 2018 to improve an important pedestrian connection between the National Mall and the waterfront.

Physical changes are not the only catalysts driving adaptation for designed landscapes. As urban environments develop and become denser, demographics shift and so does the public’s expectations of the spaces they use to recreate, commemorate, and gather. As a result, designed



Curbed DC

Meridian Hill Park



U.S. Capitol Grounds and National Mall



Pershing Park



Henry Arnold

Banneker Park

landscapes and the needs they serve have to evolve as well. Many of these urban spaces need to accommodate changes in use, new programmatic goals, infrastructure improvements, modified funding, and ongoing maintenance issues. For example, in 2014 Congress authorized the incorporation of a national World War I memorial into Pershing Park, an urban park along Pennsylvania Avenue. As a result, modifications to the park's original design will incorporate a commemorative element and associated contemplative space.

Recent improvements to the National Mall respond to the types and intensity of use and highlight how landscapes must adapt. The National Mall is a place for national celebrations, parades, festivals, ceremonies, and rallies, as well as local and regional events. Over time, events contributed to the Mall's deterioration, which resulted in worn turf, heavily compacted soil, and poor drainage. As one of the preeminent public spaces that hosts events of national significance, the National Mall needs to be able to accommodate large numbers of people flexibly, efficiently, and sustainably. The improvements completed in 2016, as recommended in the *National Mall Plan*, included widening walkways and paved areas to improve circulation, better accommodate public events on hard surfaces, and protect lawn and landscapes areas.

Irrespective of the forces driving the need to modify a designed landscape, it is important to consider and evaluate key issues before determining if restoration, rehabilitation, or redesign is the appropriate treatment. This evaluation can also help clarify the history and evolution of a landscape, the original intent behind the design, its current use pattern, and its local and regional context.

In addition, modifications need to consider a variety of users, incorporate seating and shaded areas, promote opportunities for social interaction, and maintain physical and visual connectivity to surrounding areas. Many designed landscapes represent a particular time and context that may be important to acknowledge when considering modifications or improvements.

The federal government should:

- POS.A.8** Balance significant and sometimes differing planning principles and design features, along with elements from different eras, when adapting designed landscapes to meet contemporary programmatic goals and user needs.
- POS.A.9** Recognize the value of more recent landscapes with special design and/or cultural significance. Maintain a sense of historic continuity and evolution by preserving park and landscape characteristics that represent different eras and styles.
- POS.A.10** Recognize that the original design intent may remain relevant for some landscapes due to their planning, design, cultural, and/or historic significance. Consider the original design intent when making adaptations or improvements to designed landscapes.
- POS.A.11** Maintain and improve a strong physical and/or visual connectivity with the surrounding neighborhood context when making adaptations or improvements to designed landscapes.
- POS.A.12** Reinforce Washington's design evolution, grounded in the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans, and the distinguishing characteristics of designed landscapes when making adaptations to address contemporary needs and/or changes in use, access, and maintenance.

Key Considerations to Assess Designed Landscapes

To be consistent, consider the following—in both context and of the existing space and the proposed improvements—when assessing a designed landscape.

1) Use of Space

Understand how the current use and users evolved over time. Compare how the needs of existing users, along with a proposed/modified user group, help define scope, program, and proposed improvements.

2) Design Characteristics

Identify the existing design characteristics, including site elements, style, and amenities that help define the character and role of the unique landscape. Compare the existing conditions against the proposed improvements to understand the programmatic changes and their potential impacts.

3) Original Design Intent

Consider information regarding the original design, including the spatial orientation of the site, style, and site elements, when evaluating proposals.

4) Design Context

Evaluate how the surrounding context of a landscape—including adjacent land-use, demographics, physical and visual characteristics— can influence the perception, and use of a specific site. Use this context to inform how the landscape responds to, and fits within, its surroundings.

5) Performance and Maintenance

Understand the overall performance and function of an existing landscape to help determine inherent design issues and maintenance limitations. Use this information to improve the existing design, or to inform the new design of site systems such as stormwater management, water features, and a site’s resilience with respect to climate conditions.

6) Historic and Cultural Significance

Consider the historic and cultural significance of a landscape when evaluating proposed improvements and modifications. This includes a site’s character-defining elements, views, or viewsheds, any cultural traditions, and if the site is associated with a notable designer.





Washington's Nighttime Skyline

A.4 Sensitive Lighting of the Monumental Core Parks

Thoughtful nighttime illumination of the monumental core parks affords an opportunity to strengthen the identity and experience of the nation's capital. Lighting in these parks is not just important to ensure safety and visual comfort; it also plays a role in a city's image and nighttime experience. The capital's nighttime image is closely associated with the architectural lighting of significant civic landmarks that make it recognizable around the nation and world.

In Washington, DC, the five most prominent and iconic civic landmarks are the U.S. Capitol, White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and Jefferson Memorial. At night, these landmarks stand out due to their soft white architectural lighting and the contrasting relative darkness of the National Mall and adjacent park spaces. This contrast is part of an intentional lighting hierarchy that prioritizes them in the nighttime skyline. The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, located along the northwest corner of the monumental core, is another prominent landmark and its architectural lighting plays an important role in the nighttime skyline.

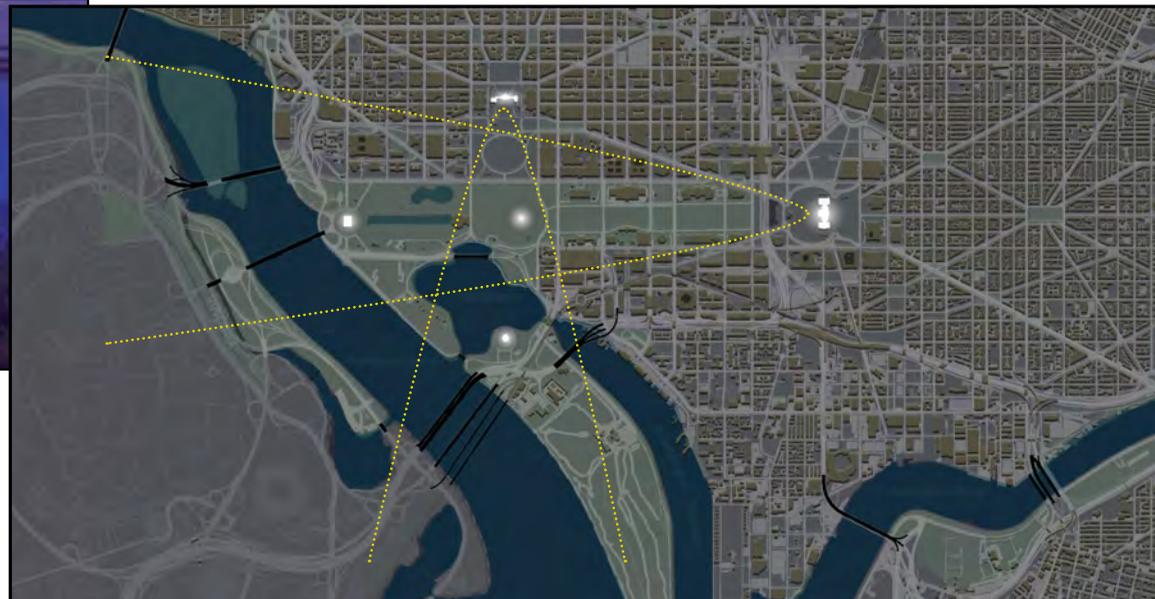
Just as civic landmarks in the monumental core parks are distinct symbols of Washington, there are prominent monuments and memorials located in circle, square, and park reservations

throughout the capital. These parks define prominent street intersections and contribute to the city's nighttime identity. It is important to consider lighting schemes that emphasize focal elements within these parks in addition to acknowledging the character and setting of adjacent land uses, surrounding natural and cultural resources, nearby historic properties, and important viewsheds.

As lighting technologies evolve, the ability to illuminate architecture and urban features is constantly changing. Technological advances allow for complex light installations, ease of manipulation, and a variety of colors and lighting levels. Sophisticated lighting designs are used for temporary special events and permanent applications. In order to protect Washington's nighttime image, careful consideration needs to be given to how multiple illuminated elements (illuminated signs, colored lighting, temporary event lighting, and bridge architectural lighting) affect parks and open space—including the natural environment—as well as the city's established lighting hierarchy and its nighttime identity.

The federal government should:

- POS.A.13** Protect the image of Washington, along with the lighting hierarchy established by iconic civic landmarks including the U.S. Capitol, White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and Jefferson Memorial.
- POS.A.14** Maintain the dark, minimally lit setting of the National Mall, East Potomac Park, Columbia Island, and adjacent parkland in order to highlight the lighting of the capital's iconic civic landmarks.
- POS.A.15** Protect the nighttime image of Washington, including views to and from the cross-axes of the National Mall, when evaluating lighting proposals or considering the location and orientation of illuminated signs
- POS.A.16** Minimize the cumulative effect of ambient illumination in the vicinity of monumental core parks.





Section B: Encourage Stewardship of Natural Resources

Parks and open space are valuable resources that help shape a sustainable, livable, and beautiful region. Their ecological functions help improve air and water quality; support better physical and mental health; provide habitat corridors and wilderness protection, and increase groundwater retention. Parks provide social value as gathering places for families, friends, and individuals of all ages and economic status. Urban parks are critical public spaces that provide opportunities for recreation and are essential to the quality of life. Neighborhood open spaces, such as community gardens and play lots, often serve a vital function in bringing people together, as well as educating communities about the value of green space.

Stewardship begins with understanding the value of existing resources; responsible use and protection; adopting sustainable practices; and communicating what individuals can do to be good stewards. Coordination among various federal agencies and surrounding jurisdictions is critical when managing parks and natural resources that cross jurisdictional lines. This policy section highlights the unique natural resources in the region and provides guidance to ensure their protection, appropriate usage, and enhancement for years to come.



Great Falls Park protects the unique geological characteristics and scenic views of the Great Falls of the Potomac

B.1 Natural Resource Areas in the Region

The region has a variety of resources that protect unique geological characteristics, native ecosystems, plant and animal habitats, and scenic landscapes. Some of these areas include terrain features, greenways, waterways, and stream valley parks.

B.1.1 Terrain Features

The region's terrain features are key natural resources areas that contribute to its character and setting. They include the escarpment of hills that form the topographic bowl surrounding the L'Enfant City,⁸ the palisades and gorges along the Potomac River and Rock Creek, the Coastal Plain and Piedmont Plateau in which Washington is situated, and the mountains of the region's western and northwestern parts. The geology, terrain features, and variation in topography help create a wide variety of habitats for different plant and animal communities.

Lowland and rim features of the L'Enfant City and its environs form the topographic bowl. Its geographic boundaries are the Florida Avenue escarpment, Anacostia Hills, and Arlington Hills. The topographic bowl's forested ridgelines provide sweeping panoramic views of the monumental core. The natural juxtaposition of highlands and lowlands emphasized by extensive tree cover and tree lines contributes to the area's unique views and vistas, including those seen from topographic vantage points.

The region's topography and landscape reflect the geology of the Coastal Plain and the Piedmont Plateau. The low-lying, flat Coastal Plain is characterized by many shallow inland bays and meandering tidal rivers. Further west are the low, rolling hills



All Events

Manassas Battlefield Park, Virginia

of the Piedmont Plateau. These hills are like stair steps to the higher mountains of the region to the west. Areas of typical Coastal Plain and Piedmont Plateau character are preserved at several federally owned sites such as the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Patuxent Research Refuge, Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge, Baltimore-Washington Parkway, Fort Meade, Marine Corps Base Quantico, and Prince William Forest Park.

The palisades and gorges of the rivers and streams, including the Potomac Gorge and Rock Creek Valley, are areas of dramatic elevation changes where calm, upstream rivers and creeks converge at spectacular fall lines. The palisades and gorges are predominantly in their natural state, free of intrusive constructed forms.

The Blue Ridge Mountains, which include the Bull Run, South Catoclin, and Sugarloaf Mountains in the western and northwestern part of the region, rise above the gently rolling hills of the Virginia Piedmont to the east. Portions of these natural forested areas are visible from the region’s suburban locations; for example, Sugarloaf Mountain is visible from northern Montgomery County.

B.1.2 Greenways

Greenways contribute significantly to the region’s green setting, a defining characteristic. These natural resource areas are vegetated corridors of open space or undeveloped land that typically follow natural features, such as streams and ridgelines, or constructed features, such as abandoned railroads and utility corridors. They primarily function as environmental corridors that often accommodate contiguous circulation routes such as trails and narrow scenic drives. Examples of linear parks that function as greenways include Melvin Hazen Park, Soapstone Valley Park, Glover-Archbold Park, Anacostia River shoreline, and parts of the Civil War Defenses of Washington.

Greenways with trails enhance existing recreational opportunities and provide routes for alternative transportation. They traverse urban, suburban, and rural communities and are ideal for many recreational uses such as walking, bicycling, and horseback riding.

The abundant tree cover and vegetation along greenways provide a landscape and park setting that encompasses the urbanized areas of the capital city and extends to the suburbs of Maryland and Virginia. Within the city limits of Washington, they are primarily administered by NPS. As they transition out from the city, they are managed by state and local jurisdictions. Greenways, when managed as vegetated buffers with native vegetation, support local ecosystems. Similarly, greenways along streams and canals, improve water quality, reduce impacts of flooding in floodplain areas, provide wildlife habitat, and support migration corridors.



Korriin Bishop

Soapstone Valley Park, Washington, DC

B.1.3 Rivers and Waterways

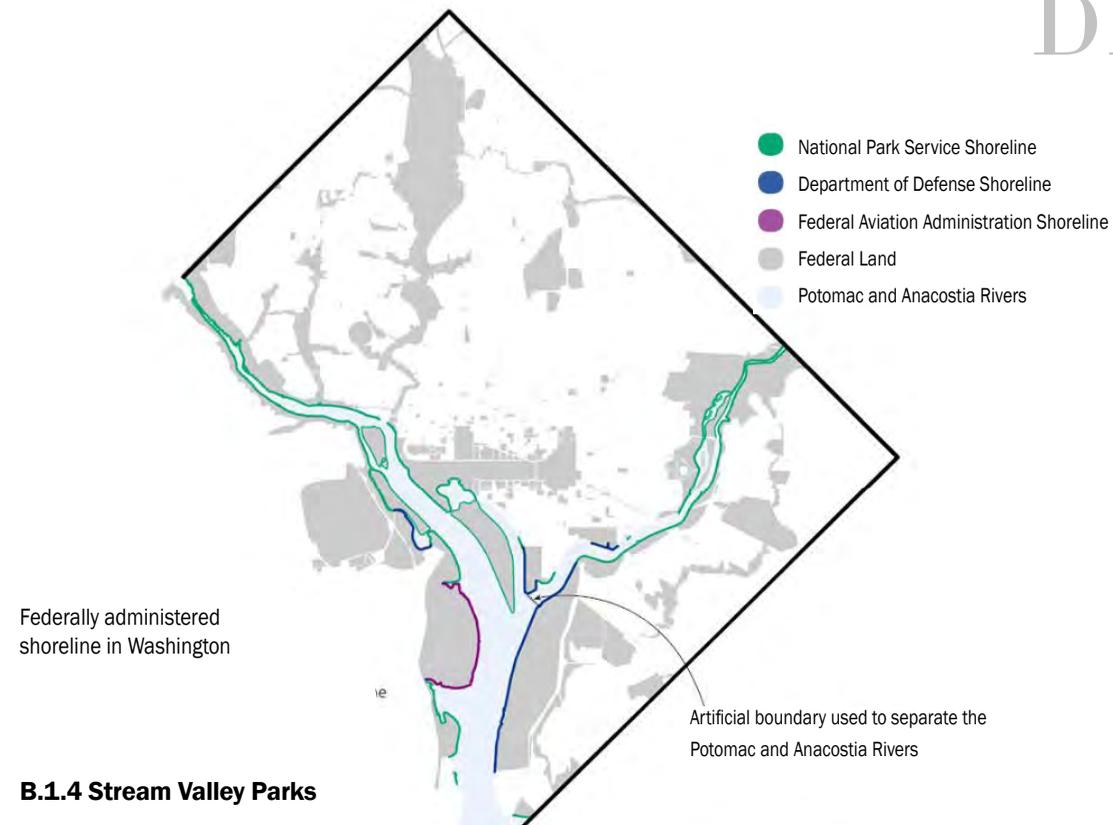
Rivers and waterways are resources that are valued for their recreational and scenic qualities. They also provide habitat for plant and animal species, protect native ecosystems, and are transportation resources. The Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, along with the Chesapeake Bay, are important water resources in the region. In Washington, the confluence of the two rivers forms a “Y” shape near Hains Point, part of East Potomac Park. Approximately 90 percent of the river shorelines in Washington, DC are on federal land.

The most common shoreline conditions found in the region include natural or semi-natural areas or constructed seawalls located along the water’s edge. Natural shorelines are located in areas such as Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens, and the coves and headlands south of Mount Vernon, Great Falls, Dyke Marsh, and the Gaps at Point of Rocks. These ecosystems are important open space resources that support significant aquatic life and shoreline habitat in addition to protecting watersheds, protecting land from storm surge, and filtering pollutants. Significant for their ecological quality and scenic character, these areas also offer unique recreational opportunities that are important in a dense urban environment.

Seawall conditions along the water’s edge are located in areas of the National Mall (Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park), East Potomac Park, and along portions of the Anacostia River. The seawalls, levees, and landfill areas, which help manage excessive flooding, were a result of dredging a deep channel in the rivers. Erosion and aging, in addition to rising waters, often affects seawalls. Along the Anacostia River, the seawalls confine the river and limit its width during high and low tides, where vegetated wetlands might normally occur.

The region’s shorelines are ecologically sensitive areas. Along with natural areas of the shoreline, riparian buffers, woodlands, and mature trees help protect steep slopes and floodplains, prevent erosion, and help prevent sediment and associated pollutants from reaching water bodies. Shoreline parks with a constructed seawall condition, like East and West Potomac Parks, the Tidal Basin, and Anacostia Park, also provide important recreational space and sometimes accommodate commemorative uses.

Waterfront parks in urban areas accommodate passive recreational uses, in areas such as Hains Point and Anacostia Park; and active recreational uses in areas such as Georgetown Waterfront Park. A number of non-federal waterfront locations also accommodate active recreation uses in the proximity of mixed-use private development, such as the Wharf at Southwest Waterfront. In contrast, federally administered waterfront parks are primarily programmed for passive uses, viewshed protection, and as commemorative sites. West Potomac Park and the Tidal Basin include a number of memorials. East Potomac Park is a site for future memorials but currently houses public golf, tennis, and swimming amenities. Hains Point, located at the southern tip of East Potomac Park, offers views of the Potomac River, Anacostia River, and the Washington Channel. The area is a popular destination for picnics.



B.1.4 Stream Valley Parks

Stream valley parks in the region include natural and forested areas along rivers, streams, and tributaries. These natural resources are important for their ecological and scenic value. Their forested riparian buffers help filter nutrients, sediment, and other pollutants from entering streams; protect stream banks from erosion; slow the flow of water during storm events; provide shade; and prevent the water from becoming too warm for sensitive species. These parks also function as greenways, as their vegetated buffers along streams and canals, provide wildlife habitat and support migration corridors.

River and stream valley parks protect approximately 70 percent of Washington’s floodplains and wetlands, 68 percent of the wooded areas, and 72 percent of land with steep slopes⁹. Parks protect most stream valleys, including Rock Creek, Oxon Run, and Watts Branch. Due to early planning efforts, federal funds allocated from the Capper-Cramton Act (CCA), help acquire and protect several stream valley parks in the region. NPS administers and manages the vast majority of the federally owned shoreline in Washington, DC. Furthermore, the legislation helped extend the Anacostia Park system further up the Anacostia River valley and set a mandate for NPS to preserve the flow of water and prevent pollution in Rock Creek and the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. It called to preserve forests and natural areas along streams and rivers in the region.

Capper-Cramton Act

Along with allocating funds for a comprehensive park, parkway, and playground system in the nation's capital, the Capper-Crampton Act allocated funds for the acquisition of certain enumerated stream valleys in order to preserve land and to protect the water quality of the region's waterways. All land acquired outside Washington, DC was titled in the name of the individual state or designated park authority. Examples include Cabin John Creek, Paint Branch, Northwest Branch, and Sligo Creek. CCA preserved and protected more than 2,200 acres of stream valley parks in the National Capital Region. In addition to funding for acquisition, CCA authorized the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (now NCPC), to approve any development projects in parks acquired under CCA to ensure protection and preservation of the region's valuable watersheds and parklands in perpetuity.



Capper-Cramton Parks ensure protection and preservation of the region's valuable watersheds and parklands in perpetuity.

B.2 Stewardship of Natural Resource Areas

The federal government has an important stewardship role to protect many of the region's natural areas including forests, parkland, waterways, shorelines, wetlands, and riparian corridors.

B.2.1 Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Many natural areas are also environmentally sensitive as they provide habitat for plant and animal species and ensure sustainable ecosystems. They are vital to the long-term maintenance of biological diversity, soil, water, and other natural resources. Maintaining an interconnected system of protected lands and waters allows wildlife to follow natural migration routes with changing climate conditions. The region's shorelines are uniquely sensitive areas prone to erosion and flooding. Natural shoreline areas, riparian buffers, woodlands, and mature trees help protect steep slopes and floodplains, prevent erosion, and help prevent sediment and associated pollutants from reaching water bodies.

B.2.2 Resilient Shorelines

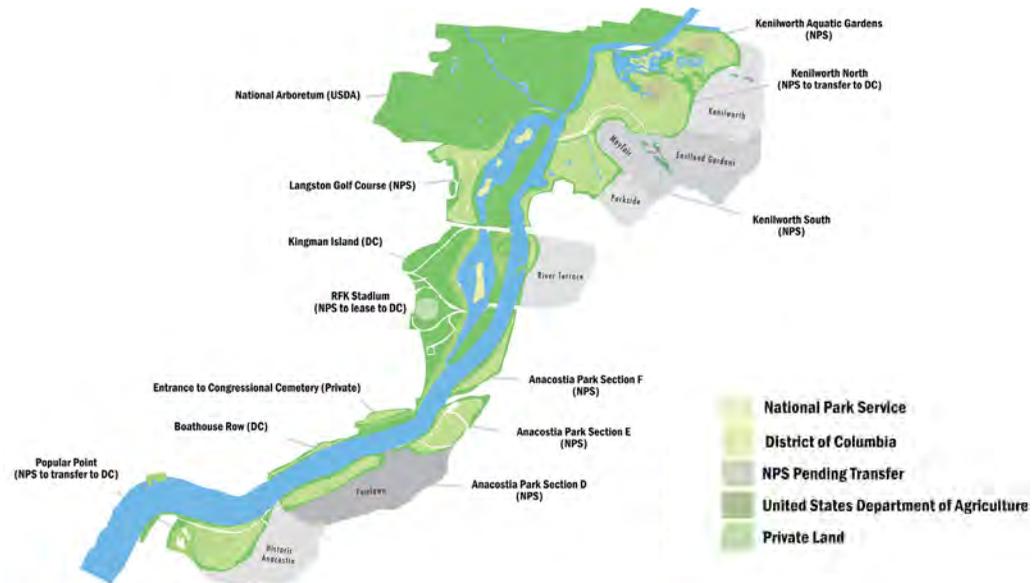
Along both constructed seawall conditions and natural shoreline areas, ongoing stewardship efforts can improve resiliency in the face of intense storms, manage fluctuating water levels, and reduce sewage and stormwater pollution. At Hains Point, the rivers often overflow along the seawall banks during high tide, covering adjacent paths with water. Constructed shorelines along Anacostia Park and the Tidal Basin house many commemorative sites and are important recreational spaces.

In areas where the seawalls are deteriorating, it is important to consider restoration techniques or vegetated natural shorelines that help manage fluctuating water levels and their impacts. Similarly, recreating wetlands, planting riparian buffers, and constructing living shorelines that use plants and other natural elements to stabilize the water's edge can further reduce erosion while simultaneously providing sediment removal and water quality improvement.

B.2.3 The Character and Setting of Capper-Cramton Parks

Capper-Cramton parks often incorporate environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands, steep slopes, and sensitive habitat areas along the region's rivers, waterways, and streams. The federal government's stewardship role derives from NCPC's review authority that includes overseeing Capper-Cramton park development projects to ensure continued protection and preservation of the region's valuable watersheds and parklands. Stewardship of Capper-Cramton lands requires coordination with local park partners and focuses on protecting the character and setting of these parks to ensure that any development or improvements are compatible with existing park uses. Projects that incorporate public benefits, such as improving the water quality of streams along with improving park accessibility and park resources, are encouraged.

Examples of compatible improvements include adding wetlands and meadow areas to a stream valley park, adding a multi-use trail to improve the regional trail network, or adding a footbridge and connector trail to improve access to an existing park. A majority of project improvements in Capper-Cramton parks fall under watershed management or stormwater management categories. When maintaining and replacing stormwater infrastructure, adding treatment facilities (such as green streets), or using green or natural infrastructure techniques helps maintain the park's natural character and setting. Use of bio-retention basins, bio-swales, and vegetation as stormwater solutions should be encouraged. Similarly, along streams, more natural streambank restoration techniques for slope protection and erosion control should be encouraged.



Anacostia Park

Anacostia Park, originally acquired with Capper-Cramton funds, is one of the largest recreation areas in the region. It encompasses approximately 1,100 acres of land composed of natural areas, cultural sites, managed waterfront areas, and public recreation facilities along the shores of the Anacostia River in Washington. Anacostia Park serves as an important urban park between heavily developed urban spaces and the Anacostia River. It includes natural shoreline areas that provide habitat for a diverse population of plants and animal species such as the bald eagle; woodlands and wetlands that contribute to the protection of the water quality of the river; and a range of recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors.

The 2010 *Anacostia Waterfront Initiative-10 Years of Progress* report outlined the vision, accomplishments, and goals established by several District and federal agencies to collaborate on restoring and revitalizing the river and its waterfront. The plan outlined

long-term partnerships between the District of Columbia and the federal government to achieve several goals, one of which was to restore the river’s environmental condition. Ongoing efforts focus on eliminating combined sewer overflows and pollution discharges, installing bio-retention systems, restoring natural riparian functions, restoring and expanding wetlands, daylighting tributary streams, increasing river oxygen levels, and developing environmental guidelines for future waterfront development.

Projects implemented include the creation of more than 98 acres of wetland at Kingman Island in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and NPS. This wetland filters water from the Anacostia River by absorbing and reducing pollutants carried to the river from upstream activities. Other areas where District and federal agencies collaborated include implementing a resident Canada geese management plan, creating the Anacostia River No Discharge Zone, and conducting stream habitat and stormwater monitoring of Watts Branch to determine pollutant load reductions.

B.2.4 Valuable Scenic Viewsheds

Another important stewardship responsibility is to protect viewsheds associated with natural areas. While the Urban Design Element documents important views associated with *The Plan of the City of Washington*, many parks and open space managed as natural areas protect prominent viewsheds or provide views and vistas of terrain in its natural state. Similarly, higher elevation areas allow unobstructed views to the lowlands below. Sensitive siting of small cell infrastructure, cell towers, antennas, or similar structures ensures the protection of views and vistas. Development adjacent to the shorelines has the potential to affect the character and scenic qualities of the rivers and waterways. The mass and scale of development should consider the surrounding open space’s scenic qualities and character.

B.2.5 The Night Sky

Reducing light pollution—excessive artificial light—protects the night sky and the natural environment. Light pollution can diminish the experience of a park and negatively affect adjoining uses. Plants and animals depend on the cycle of light and dark for critical behaviors, including eating, sleep, reproduction, navigation, and protection from predators. Artificial lighting, while important for way-finding, security, and aesthetics, can interfere with these nocturnal functions and negatively affect environmentally sensitive areas.

Light pollution is primarily from light sources that emit up or sideways. Minimizing light pollution in and around parks protects their character and the natural environment. Light pollution can be reduced through careful attention when determining how much, and where, lighting is needed, and through strategic placement and design of light fixtures.

The federal government should:

- POS.B.1** Protect and improve the condition of the region's natural terrain and its features including:
- The rivers and streams, their associated valleys and bluffs, and the shoreline park system.
 - The palisades and gorges of rivers and streams.
 - The headwater and reservoir areas along the rivers.
 - The forested ridgelines of the topographic bowl.
 - Other scenic and ecologically significant features.
- POS.B.2** Protect, and where necessary restore, the region's natural shorelines such as riparian landscapes, wetlands, steep slopes, mature/healthy trees, and understory vegetation, floodplains, woodlands, and highly permeable soils.
- POS.B.3** Protect and maintain the role of greenways as natural resources, for their environmental benefits, when incorporating trail or roadway improvements.
- POS.B.4** Protect and preserve the terrain features, greenways, rivers and waterways, stream valley parks, and forested natural areas so they continue to serve as valuable scenic, ecological, cultural, and recreational resources.
- POS.B.5** Encourage urban shoreline areas to be resilient and adaptable to variations in water level. Along the natural shorelines, restore riverine edge habitats and avoid hardscape surfaces.
- POS.B.6** Preserve and maintain trees, vegetation, natural areas, and open space on federal campuses that support wildlife habitats, improve scenic quality, and enhance aesthetic character. Preservation of these spaces should be compatible with the campus mission and programmatic needs.
- POS.B.7** Encourage land uses and actions that protect and improve the water quality of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. Restore their constructed and natural shorelines to enhance their ecological quality and as scenic and recreational resources.
- POS.B.8** Protect the character and setting of all Capper-Cramton parks as critical elements of the region's park and open space system.
- POS.B.9** Improve Capper-Cramton lands to be compatible with their existing park use. Encourage projects that provide public benefits such as improving stream water quality, promoting park access, and protecting park resources.
- POS.B.10** Encourage the use of parks, trees, and natural areas as gradual transitions from the natural areas surrounding the terrain features to densely developed urban environments.
- POS.B.11** Preserve and protect the Potomac Gorge and its related palisades and gorges in their natural condition. Keep their transition highlands, rim areas, and surroundings free of intrusive constructed forms and provide a gradual transition between them and developed areas.
- POS.B.12** The mass and scale of development along, or adjacent to the shoreline, should preserve view corridors and be compatible with the character and quality of open space.
- POS.B.13** When designing and locating small cell infrastructure, cell towers, antennas, or similar structures, discourage their location in, or adjacent to, federal parks. If this is not possible then:
- Avoid locating these elements within the viewsheds of natural and cultural landscapes, urban plazas, and open spaces.
 - Encourage innovative designs that reduce the visibility of antennas and towers.
- POS.B.14** Minimize light pollution in and adjacent to parks and open spaces, with special consideration for natural parks and environmentally sensitive areas. Use lighting only where needed for safety and use only the amount of light necessary. Pay careful attention to light direction and color, retrofit existing lighting where needed, and use energy efficient fixtures.
- POS.B.15** Utilize shields or other appropriate means to minimize glare from light sources and light fixtures within parks in urban neighborhoods and near natural resources.



Banneker Park

B.3 Sustainable Practices in Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space play an important role in ensuring that our communities successfully adapt and thrive in rapidly changing environmental conditions. A sustainable approach to any park or landscape is one where natural areas are protected, where wildlife habitat is improved, and where human uses and maintenance practices do not harm the environment. As reinforced in the Federal Environment Element, sustainable practices can be part of the construction, renovation, and maintenance of the region's parks and open space. These practices can reduce the consumption of water and energy and improve the use of renewable energy sources. A big part of adopting and fulfilling sustainable practices is engaging park partners, local communities, and other stakeholders. The federal government can create opportunities to educate and raise awareness of the ecological functions and historic value of the region's parks and open space. Finding ways for people to participate and engage with the natural environment through interpretative signage; educational programs; and community clean-up, planting, and maintenance will encourage continued stewardship of the environment and landscape. Prominent areas with opportunities for environmental stewardship with respect to parks are listed below.

B.3.1 Green Infrastructure Techniques

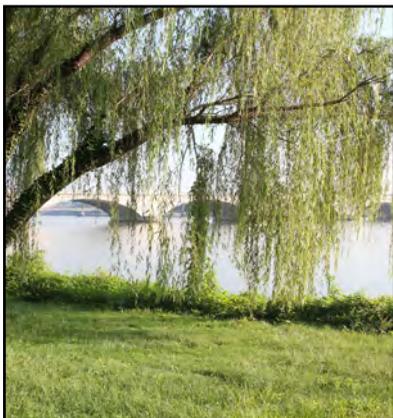
Green infrastructure solutions protect, restore, and mimic the natural water cycle and as a result, reduce stormwater runoff and flooding. They play a vital role in managing stormwater by infiltrating it in the groundwater or by capturing it for later reuse. Bio-retention areas, vegetated swales, permeable pavements, green roofs, and rainwater harvesting significantly help to meet local stormwater regulations, manage water supplies, prevent pollution, and create more sustainable urban environments. They also effectively reduce energy needs, reduce potable water demands, and can reduce maintenance costs. Daylighting streams, which involves the redirection of a piped or culverted stream into an aboveground channel, restores the stream to a more natural state and improves the riparian environment. The resulting restored stream or tributary provides stormwater benefits as well as numerous aesthetic, economic, and environmental benefits.



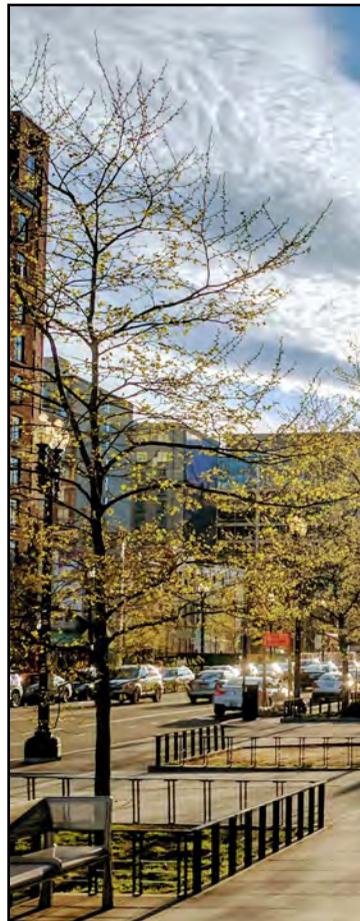
RFK Stadium



National Arboretum



Mount Vernon Trail



NW Washington, DC

B.3.2 Non-Porous Surfaces

Untreated stormwater runoff often carries pollutants such as oil, dirt, and chemicals directly to streams and rivers, where they seriously harm water quality. To protect surface water quality and groundwater resources, non-porous surfaces should be discouraged along rivers, streams, and waterfront areas. In other areas of the parks, minimize the use of non-porous surfaces where necessary and consider permeable surfaces to replace asphalt and concrete pavements. Porous or permeable pavements mimic the natural process that occurs on the ground’s surface, reduce runoff, and allow rainwater to infiltrate to the ground below. They filter out pollutants, eliminate the need for retention basins and water collection areas, reduce erosion, and lessen flooding events.

B.3.3 Native Plant Species in Natural Areas

Many designed parks and landscapes in the region are known for non-native ornamental plant species, formal planting, and plant diversity. However, native plant species are the foundation of our natural ecosystems, especially in environmentally sensitive areas. They help preserve biodiversity, are uniquely adapted to a particular ecosystem, and successfully provide food and shelter for native wild animals as compared to non-native plant species. In historic designed landscapes, it is important to replace plant materials in kind to maintain the integrity of the landscape. However, native trees and plants species in natural areas are better adapted to local environmental conditions, require less water, and require little maintenance once established.

B.3.4 The Urban Tree Canopy

Protecting mature trees and increasing the urban tree canopy in parks and along urban streetscapes helps improve air and water quality, can absorb and reduce stormwater runoff by intercepting rainfall, creates shade, mitigates the urban heat island effect and reduces energy usage due to their cooling capabilities. Tree canopy and understory vegetation in natural areas create a more diverse ecosystem where wildlife can thrive and stormwater infiltration in soils is improved. As the region continues to grow, protecting mature trees and emphasizing the value of tree canopy and landscape cover needs to be a priority.

The federal government should:

- POS.B.16** Retain and restore natural shoreline areas to a more natural state, including daylighting streams and planting trees/vegetation to provide more sustainable and resilient conditions.
- POS.B.17** Discourage impervious paved surfaces, especially parking areas, along the shorelines of rivers, streams, and at waterfront parks. Remove existing waterfront parking when feasible and restore these areas to a landscaped condition, which could include recreational uses.
- POS.B.18** Enhance Washington’s green setting, which provides long-term aesthetic and environmental benefits, by protecting mature trees and increasing the urban tree canopy and landscape cover.
- POS.B.19** Enhance the region’s natural setting by conserving and protecting large tree preserves, forests, mature trees, understory plantings, and landscape cover.
- POS.B.20** Consider hardy trees and vegetation in urban areas. Similarly, encourage native plant species, in natural areas and where appropriate, as they are uniquely adapted to the local ecosystem and require minimal water and maintenance requirements.
- POS.B.21** Support and expand opportunities to educate and engage communities and local non-profits in the cleanup, planting, removal of invasive species, and maintenance of the region’s rivers, trails, parks, and open space.
- POS.B.22** Promote sustainable practices within the parks and open space system by raising awareness about ecological functions of natural areas through educational programming, interpretive signage, and the use of technology.



Section C: Balance Commemorative Works within Parks

Memorials are a signature component of Washington’s symbolic landscape and intricately connected to the park system. *The Plan of the City of Washington* established the city’s urban design framework and a park system that created a foundation for memorial planning. Commemorative works in Washington are primarily located in urban parks and open space, but can also be found in natural settings. This policy section provides guidance on the most common planning and design issues related to commemorative works in parks.

C.1 Siting and Designing Commemorative Works

Based on the 2012 *Memorial Trends and Practice Report*¹⁰ and from NCP’s recent review of proposed commemorative works, common issues include the protection of *The Plan of the City of Washington*; historic preservation; and balancing the commemorative experience with a park’s character, use, size, scale, and circulation. In the review of memorial design, design guidelines provide parameters and a framework to address planning issues as a memorial moves forward in the design development process. NCP adopted site-specific guidelines to address these and other issues when reviewing memorials including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial; Victims of the Ukrainian Manmade Famine Memorial; and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial.

Protection of *The Plan of the City of Washington* and other historic properties is a key planning consideration with the design of most commemorative works. The plan and subsequent planning efforts in Washington created reciprocal views between natural and built elements. Memorials or statues are often located at the center of parks and open space, and at times become the focal point of a viewshed. Protection of features such as streets, rights-of-way, building lines, and views is a consideration when creating a memorial. The placement and relationship of memorial elements to these features have the potential to affect public space and influence the park’s programming and usability. Memorial or landscape elements may be used to frame or define an edge condition of a view corridor to maintain the openness of vistas and relate to the surrounding context, but new commemorative works should not detract from an existing prominent viewshed.

Memorial Approval Process

The Commemorative Work Act (CWA) guides the process for development, approval, and location of new memorials on federal lands, administered by NPS and GSA, in the District of Columbia and environs. Both the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* and the Visitors & Commemoration Element provide additional guidance on the memorial approval process. While the plan provides guidance regarding memorial location and design and identifies memorial sites in Washington, DC, and Virginia, the Visitors & Commemoration Element sets forth guidance and policies for visitor destinations, including commemorative works. The element also lists the various federal agencies involved in the memorial approval process, as outlined by the CWA. NCP and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts are responsible for reviewing and approving the preferred site and design of memorials. They can also develop site-specific guidelines to ensure that a proposed commemorative work carries out the purpose of the law.



Jane Martin

Successful memorials and parks are often in locations where there are multiple opportunities for placemaking.

A key issue when planning and designing memorials is striking a balance between the contemplative areas associated with commemorative elements and the enjoyment of public parkland. The Commemorative Works Act (see Memorial Approval Process on pg. 28) calls for new memorials, to the maximum extent practicable, to protect open space, existing public uses, and cultural and natural resources. However, the CWA does not provide guidance on how to achieve this goal.

Recent memorials have varied in size depending on subject, program, and site selection parameters. Memorials that consume large areas of land should be discouraged. NCPG and other agencies must consider the memorial subject and how much of a site or park is appropriate to dedicate to the memorial experience versus public space that can accommodate other uses. Commemoration sites often need to accommodate a range of programs, events, or ceremonies. Integrating memorials with context-sensitive solutions is critical to a successful commemorative work and public park. Once a framework and program for a memorial are defined, the size of individual memorial elements must be considered in relation to the site and its surrounding context. The appropriate size for a memorial will depend on several factors, including its subject, the scale, and use of adjacent buildings and landscapes, historic properties, and any existing features that contribute to the character or function of the site or park space.

In Washington, federal parks and open space are often located at roadway intersections or in areas with limited neighborhood park space, and therefore are the only green space available to residents. While commemorative elements in neighborhood parks help create a sense of identity for communities, many visitors expect a certain level of decorum, respect, and dignity at these sites. These spaces also need to accommodate everyday park uses, such as community gathering areas or playgrounds. In such areas, balancing commemoration with local neighborhood needs is critical to creating successful urban parks. The most successful parks with memorials are ones that engage people and activities from the surrounding community. Dupont Circle, Lincoln Park, and Stanton Park all function as memorials and neighborhood parks.

Other planning considerations previously addressed in design guidelines related to circulation and access. Providing clear circulation is important for the visitor experience and to the success of the memorial as a public space and park. Circulation must be considered at various scales and levels. During site selection, the location of the site within the city or region is critical. At the design development stage, considerations become specific to the selected site and how the site is accessed by pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, or tour buses, as well as how to meet American with Disabilities Act requirements. At times, depending on the surrounding context, it may be appropriate to limit parking and/or vehicular drop off areas to minimize impacts on landscape elements and the surrounding environment. Circulation routes should connect to the larger transportation network and consider the experience of visitors traveling to, and through, a site.

The federal government should:

- POS.C.1** Balance the need for public space with the memorial program and contemplative space required by memorials based on size, surrounding context, and function of the site.
- POS.C.2** Preserve and protect a park's features that contribute to its unique character and function while balancing the addition of new commemorative uses.
- POS.C.3** Provide areas for diverse park uses and functions by balancing landscape and built elements and reserving space for the commemorative programs and experiences.
- POS.C.4** Within neighborhood parks acknowledge that the site may currently serve multiple functions for residents. Scale and place memorial elements in a manner that balances existing functions along with the commemorative experience.
- POS.C.5** Maintain and protect the urban design framework of *The Plan of the City of Washington* including original rights-of-way, streets, and vistas. Protect the squares, circles, and triangles of the L'Enfant Plan as potential sites for memorials. Avoid the introduction of visual incursions into the rights-of-way or placement of physical elements that would detract from the views of national memorials, civic institutions, or landmarks.
- POS.C.6** Locate memorial elements in a manner that is compatible with adjacent buildings, structures, landscapes, and historic properties by considering existing building lines, massing, and scale. Memorial elements should complement and not compete with the scale of the surrounding landscape and built environment.
- POS.C.7** Relate memorial landscape elements to the adjacent streetscape elements to create a physical and visual transition that responds to the surrounding context.
- POS.C.8** Improve and enhance the visual connections and transitions between park space, commemorative elements, and the surrounding environment.
- POS.C.9** Plan circulation routes that accommodate visitors or passers-by, and meet accessibility requirements to connect the memorial and park space with the adjacent transportation network.



UHCL

Large urban parks accommodate many uses, including commemoration and recreation. Commemorative elements at Lincoln Park (above) include President Lincoln's emancipation statue and a monument to civil rights activist and educator Mary McLeod Bethune. The park also has two playgrounds, a large grass panel, and seating areas.

C.2 Consider Creative Programming and Innovative Memorials

Balancing commemorative uses with park space requires careful program planning. As demands grow on the park system, it is important that a variety of programming and events can occur within commemorative settings. Providing space for different types of uses and events contributes to an active, vibrant park, and can enrich the meaning of a commemorative work. While programming can relate to the memorial theme, events that respect the commemorative setting and do not negatively affect cultural or natural resources may also be appropriate.

Along with programming opportunities, the federal government should consider what future forms memorials will take and how to continue to provide enriching visits to memorials. In 2016, NCPC, NPS, and the Van Alen Institute organized Memorials for the Future, an ideas competition to reimagine the way we think about, feel, and experience memorials. The competition presented new ideas to engage diverse new subject matters, allow for reinterpretation over time, enable and respect multiple narratives, consider the use of technology, and honor national contexts and local experiences.

The federal government should:

- POS.C.10** Support innovative programming and events within commemorative settings, that cause minimal impacts on cultural and natural resources and visitor experience.
- POS.C.11** Support the installation of temporary memorials or artwork that cause minimal impacts on cultural and natural resources and visitor experience.
- POS.C.12** Encourage alternative approaches to commemoration including temporary installations, non-traditional materials, and the use of technology-based formats.

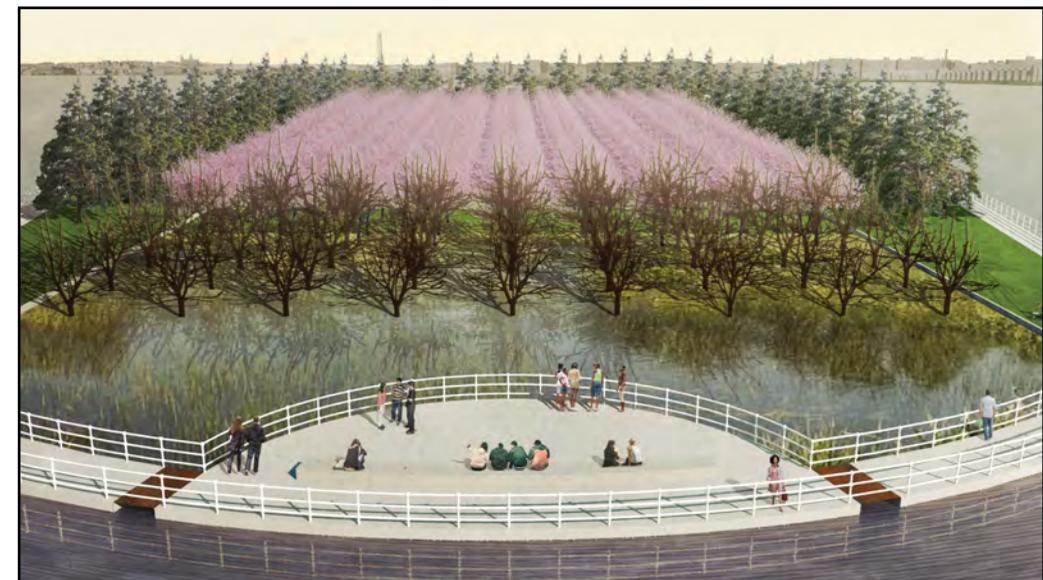


U.S. Navy

The design of the United States Navy Memorial successfully integrates a commemorative work and its urban context by creating flexible space for formal ceremonies, informal social engagement, and relaxation. Residents, workers, and visitors regularly use the space for a range of activities.



Lessons learned from the Memorials for the Future ideas competition merit further exploration to ensure that memorials continue to evolve and reflect a diverse range of narratives and innovative designs.



Azimuth Land Craft



Section D: Improve Access to, and Connections between, Parks and Open Space

The region has diverse parks and open space types spanning multiple jurisdictions. While jurisdictional boundaries between different cities and states are important for effective management of park spaces, they do not matter to visitors who want to enjoy the spaces. As a significant regional landholder, the federal government is in a unique position to maintain and improve access and connections between parks and open space.

Providing a connected and accessible park system may require acquiring new spaces. However, it also includes using existing spaces in new and different ways; establishing new connections between parks and the people that use them; and thinking about how the park system functions as a whole. Additionally, creating new physical, visual, and transportation connections between existing parks helps improve accessibility especially where open space is limited. A pedestrian-friendly street network that includes traffic-calming measures, bikeways, wide sidewalks, and seating allows streets to become connectors and gathering places. Well-connected street networks encourage walking, bicycling, and extend the park experience into the community. Green infrastructure techniques and plantings further help to visually extend park space into the street and create a unified experience.

This policy section provides guidance on how to prioritize pedestrian and other multimodal access to, and connectivity between, parks and open space in the region.

D.1 Reduce Physical and Visual Barriers

Despite the quantity and variety of parks and open space in the region, physical and pedestrian access can be a challenge for a variety of reasons. Physical barriers that limit access include large buildings, freeways, railroads, steep terrain, and security fencing. Similarly, missing, poorly maintained, or inaccessible sidewalks, trails, pedestrian amenities, and other infrastructure make it difficult to connect to existing parks and open space. Visual barriers, such as limited visibility of entrances, lack of signage, poor maintenance at park edges, and overgrown vegetation can also limit connectivity, contributing to uninviting and underused parks. Prioritizing the removal of barriers, both physical and perceptual, is important to connecting parks and open space with surrounding communities.

Many of the region's parks and open spaces consist of either large passive natural areas or pocket parks that are too small to meet many local needs. With limited medium-sized parks suitable for recreational amenities and facilities, certain neighborhoods and communities have limited access to green space. In addition, at times these spaces are often not suitable for a variety of possible user groups, including people with mobility limitations.

These problems increase over time due to a lack of funding to maintain or improve park facilities or a general lack of investment in physical connections to parks and open space. It is important to address access and connectivity early in the planning and development process. Similarly, for areas where access to parks and open space may be limited, the federal government should identify opportunities to improve connections to existing parks and ensure access to users of all ages, abilities, incomes, and backgrounds.



Brian Gibbons



A Park System for the Nation's Capital

Ideas to Achieve the Full Potential of Washington's Parks and Open Space

Washington's parks are not uniformly distributed, size variations and conditions affect use options, and physical and perceptual barriers limit access. 2010's *CapitalSpace: Ideas to Achieve the Full Potential of Washington's Parks and Open Space* highlighted areas of the city that have less walkable access to park resources. Continued residential growth in those areas will only exacerbate the need for parks. District agencies have a responsibility to plan and develop space to meet these needs. Similarly, federal agencies must consider how to meet the needs of increasing number of visitors to the nation's capital. Close coordination between federal and District entities are critical to addressing growth and accessibility to parks.

D.2 Connect to, and along, the Waterfront

Waterfront areas can provide public space opportunities for the surrounding community in addition to being regional destinations. A walkable connection to, and along, the waterfront requires much more than a sidewalk, path, or boardwalk. In urban areas, these connections require the involvement of various stakeholders to ensure that pedestrians are safe and welcome; they have to provide a range of public space opportunities, including places to sit; they have to incorporate water-related activities; and allow for large and small-scale gathering areas for a diverse set of users.

Multimodal connections increase the number and types of connections to waterfront parks, thus contributing to their use and enjoyment. Recent redevelopment in Washington led to the creation of several new waterfront parks and improved river connections. Yards Park, part of the former Southeast Federal Center, features paved and landscaped areas, a water feature, performance and event space, and multiple locations to enjoy river views. The Anacostia Riverwalk Trail runs through Yards Park connecting Anacostia Park along the waterfront and to multiple residential communities.

Other ongoing redevelopment efforts continue to improve the pedestrian experience and provide new connections along or across the rivers. These include a proposed pedestrian and bicycle path along the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, which would provide connections across the Anacostia River and to surrounding neighborhoods and existing trails. Along the Potomac River, the REACH (the Kennedy Center’s expansion project), will provide a safe pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Kennedy Center, the Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail, and the waterfront.

The Wharf, a destination along the Southwest Waterfront—with restaurants, shops, offices, concert halls, apartments, and promenade transformed the role of Banneker Park from an overlook to an important connection from the National Mall to the waterfront. The Banneker Park connection project includes pedestrian and bicycle access improvements, tree plantings, integrated lighting, and stormwater management improvements. Similarly, the 11th Street Bridge Park will provide a pedestrian connection between two sides of the Anacostia Park.



New Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge



Seven Hill Architects

The REACH at the Kennedy Center



ZGF Architects

Banneker Park Connection



OMA + OLIN

11th Street Bridge Project

D.3 Enhance the Existing Trail Network

Trails in the region link some of our nation’s most significant cultural and natural areas, parks, and destinations. A strong, interconnected, inter-jurisdictional system of land and water trails create opportunities for recreation, multimodal transportation, and education. They provide diverse trail experiences and are used for walking, biking, boating, and horseback riding. They connect people to parks, offer alternatives to driving, and help define the region’s multimodal transportation infrastructure. They often follow scenic routes and traverse environmentally sensitive areas.

There are nearly 100 miles of federally administered paved trails in the region’s national parks that travel through Washington, DC, two states, five counties, and the City of Alexandria. This complex trail network requires careful planning and design, especially near sensitive areas and habitats. The federal government strives to lead the region in providing exceptional outdoor trail experiences, seamlessly linking diverse places of natural and historic significance while providing safe and enjoyable places for people to walk, run, bike, and commute.

Trails in the region often belong to one or more systems: local, regional, or national. Federally built and maintained trail segments are part of larger regional systems. As the area continues to grow, trail usage has increased, encouraging federal and local governments to address challenges associated with meeting commuter and visitor needs and expanding the trail network. Although the region has hundreds of miles of trails, they are not all connected in a cohesive, easy-to-navigate network. Trail segments

are often administered by multiple jurisdictions with different design standards and funding constraints. Access improvements, supported by wayfinding signage, can connect a trail to other local and regional trail systems. Trail links to surrounding neighborhood parks, recreational facilities, and community amenities can provide additional opportunities for recreation, enjoyment of natural resources and wildlife, historical interpretation, and cultural education.

One of the many congressionally designated scenic and historic trails in the National Trails System is the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHT), an evolving network of locally managed trails between the mouth of the Potomac River and the Allegheny Highlands. The authorized PHT corridor runs through many parks and protected areas, historic sites and communities, and notably, the nation’s capital. Within the region, segments of the PHT network include the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Towpath, a walking route connecting many Civil War Defenses of Washington, various Potomac Heritage Trail segments in Northern Virginia, the Mount Vernon Trail, and the Southern Maryland On-Road Potomac Heritage Trail Bicycling Route.

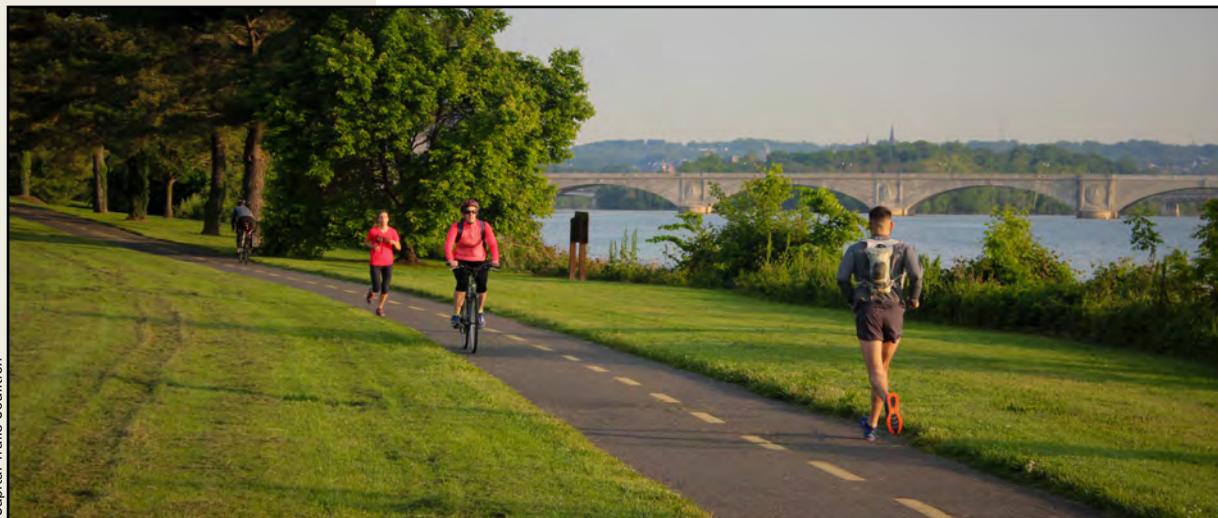
The recently completed Kenilworth Segment of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail connects Anacostia Park in Washington, DC with Bladensburg Waterfront Park in Prince George’s County, Maryland. The three-mile connection links Washington, Maryland, and Virginia as part of a sixteen-mile trail. It provides a safe and accessible route for bicyclists and offers convenient access to the surrounding natural areas.

Another trail network that connects some of the Civil War fort sites, associated green space, and forested areas is the Civil War Defenses of Washington hiking-biking trail. The seven-mile-long trail runs from Fort Stanton to Fort Mahan in southeastern Washington. It provides impressive views of the capital, and is a means to explore the region’s Civil War history. Efforts to improve access to, and connections between, other fort sites; education and awareness regarding preservation of existing structures; and improved wayfinding and interpretive signage would further improve the trail system.

Trails create an integrated, inter-jurisdictional network for recreation, multimodal transportation, and education. They often follow scenic routes, linking destinations including significant cultural properties and natural areas. However, these often traverse environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains, steep slopes, or wetlands. Trail development in or near sensitive areas and habitats must be planned with thorough research and careful design.

Paved Trail Study

In 2016, NPS completed its Paved Trail Study, setting a vision to guide future planning and coordination for the region’s paved trails network.¹² These trails often traverse historic landscapes, scenic viewsheds, or ecologically sensitive areas.



Capital Trails Coalition

The Mount Vernon Trail runs along the Potomac River offering uninterrupted views of Washington, DC’s skyline.

D.4 Encourage Public Access to Federal Open Spaces

Along with parks, there are a number of publicly accessible federal open spaces in the region. Examples include the National Arboretum, Arlington National Cemetery, and portions of the National Zoological Park. Many of these spaces, in addition to their primary mission, also serve similar functions as parks in that they provide recreational, educational, and ecological benefits. Federal properties along the region's shorelines should consider public access to, and along, the waterfront. Open space on federal campuses such as the United States Naval Observatory, Armed Forces Retirement Home, St. Elizabeths Campus, and regional military installations, have limited access due to security and mission-driven considerations. As federal uses on these sites change, security and mission conditions evolve. Federal campuses should be encouraged to periodically assess their security requirements and consider trail access through them. They should also evaluate opportunities to provide limited or occasional public access to federally administered open spaces.



Pohick Bay, Fort Belvoir, Virginia

The federal government should:

- POS.D.1** Plan and improve connections between parks and open space through streets, sidewalks, plazas, and trails to create a unified and accessible park system for the National Capital Region.
- POS.D.2** Provide safe and convenient pedestrian access to parks and open space. Additionally, plan pedestrian connections through and around physical barriers, such as roads and bridges, which limit physical or visual connectivity.
- POS.D.3** Consider the siting of entrances and access points from adjacent communities to the region's park system.
- POS.D.4** Connect open space along the Potomac and Anacostia shorelines, and encourage water access where appropriate, in order to provide a continuous public open space system.
- POS.D.5** Encourage access to waterfront parks by considering improved pedestrian and other multimodal connections and wayfinding signage from adjacent communities.
- POS.D.6** Develop, improve, and maintain a regional trail system that serves recreational and commuter needs by closing gaps and connecting parks and open space, natural areas, and destinations. Ensure that regional trails connect with the national trail network.
- POS.D.7** Identify opportunities to develop trails or connect trail systems when planning and designing projects throughout the region. Ensure that new development does not preclude future improvements to trail connections.
- POS.D.8** Improve access to, and connections between, the Civil War Defenses of Washington historic fort sites. Link them to surrounding communities using existing streets, sidewalks, and trails where possible.
- POS.D.9** Promote public access along the region's shorelines, including on or adjacent to federal properties, when security considerations permit.
- POS.D.10** Provide public access to open space on or adjacent to federal properties as mission and security considerations permit while minimizing impacts on natural and cultural resources. Where security is an issue, encourage limited access through coordinated programs and events.
- POS.D.11** Conserve portions of federal campuses and installations that add significantly to the open space system. To the extent practicable, provide public access to and through these open spaces.

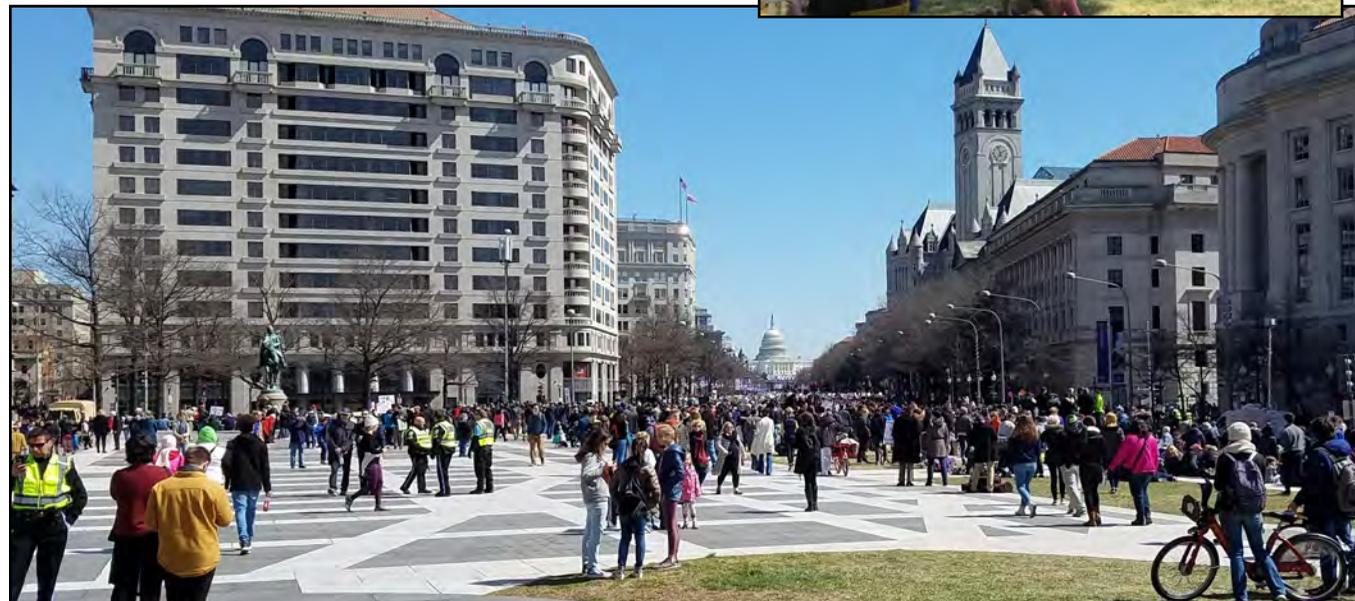


Section E: Balance Multiple Uses within Parks

A great strength of parks is their ability to accommodate multiple uses and functions, including recreation, education, commemoration, celebration, demonstration, and transportation. Parks protect valuable scenic viewsheds as well as natural and cultural resources. In addition, parks help mitigate changing climate conditions, and function as transportation and wildlife corridors. With multiple uses, conflicts can arise that present management challenges.

This policy section provides guidance on accommodating different uses while also protecting the natural and cultural features of the park system.

Farragut Fridays hosted by the Golden Triangle BID during the summer months is a free all-day event that brings together area workers, local residents, and visitors to enjoy fun and innovative activities.



Pennsylvania Avenue is often used as a civic gathering space.

E.1 Accommodate Different Activities in Urban Parks

Parks can accommodate the needs of different user groups and allow for both active and passive recreation. In urban areas, where there is limited open space, parks have to accommodate multiple uses and programmatic needs. At times, streets function as temporary civic gathering spaces.

There are many examples of successful federal/local collaborations in urban parks that engage residents and create meaningful and enriching experiences. NPS works with local groups, including business improvement districts (BIDs), to help program a variety of activities in downtown urban parks. Meridian Hill Park, a National Historic Landmark, accommodates a wide range of uses, including a drum circle, dance performances, and local community activities within its distinct levels of well-connected space. The park offers a place for social and cultural exchange and accommodates multiple users while protecting its historic significance.

E.2 Balance Recreational Uses in Regional Parks

For many federally managed parks and open space in the region, while the underlying agency mission and other federal legislation guide use and management, they still offer recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors. Recreational uses that incorporate educational and interpretative opportunities ensure the protection and preservation of historic, natural, and cultural resources within parks for future generations.

The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, located along the Potomac River, served as a transportation corridor for coal, lumber, and agricultural products. Today, as an important cultural landscape, it balances its mission to tell the story of the canal's important role in America's history while providing recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, boating, fishing, and horseback riding.

Prince William Forest Park is one of the region's largest protected natural areas, totaling nearly 15,000 acres. The park is the largest example of a Piedmont forest in the national park system, serving as a sanctuary for a diversity of plants and animals.

The Patuxent Research Refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, is the nation’s only national wildlife refuge established to support wildlife research. The U.S. Geological Survey, through the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, conducts most of the research in the refuge. Throughout decades of change, Patuxent’s mission of conserving and protecting the nation’s wildlife and habitat through research and wildlife management techniques has remained virtually unchanged. The refuge also offers hiking, hunting, fishing, and educational opportunities.



Natural Bridge Science Program

Prince William Forest Park offers a range of recreational activities and research opportunities on the natural landscape.

E.3 Protect the Scenic Value of Parkway

Parkways are linear, landscaped parks designed to link visitor destinations throughout the region through a leisurely driving experience. In the early 20th century, the federal government planned and developed several parkways along vegetated park corridors. These parkways, conceived of as scenic drives, linked large parks and federal workplace destinations, served as important travel corridors and gateways to the nation’s capital, and functioned as environmental corridors. Today these parkways, administered by NPS, serve as major transportation

corridors, protect valuable scenic viewsheds, and often incorporate recreational amenities including pedestrian and biking trails. Prominent parkways in the region include Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Baltimore-Washington Parkway, Suitland Parkway, and the Clara Barton Parkway. All are instrumental in open space preservation and incorporate scenic or pastoral views.

The Baltimore-Washington Parkway evolved from a scenic roadway into a major commuter corridor. It has to balance transportation needs and modern roadway safety standards with its role as a recreational amenity. The parkway is a scenic, forested transportation corridor, designed to connect federal facilities such as USDA’s Beltsville Research Area, NASA’s Goddard Spaceflight Center, and Fort Meade.

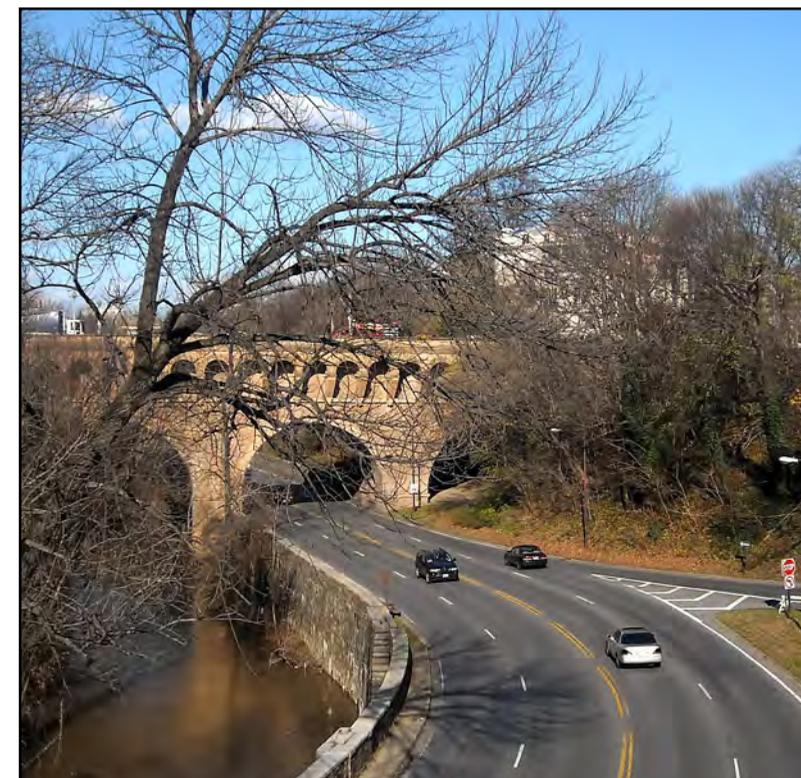
The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway occupies the gorge and rim of the lower Rock Creek Valley and is one of the best-preserved and earliest examples of motor parkway development.

The George Washington Memorial Parkway was the first comprehensively designed modern motorway built by the federal government. Originally intended to connect the historic site of Mount Vernon to Washington and to preserve the natural setting along the Potomac River, the parkway features views of iconic cultural resources or other privately managed cultural open spaces. The Mount Vernon Memorial Highway section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Piscataway Park, Fort Washington, Fort Hunt, and other areas within the viewshed from Mount Vernon, are integral to the historic property’s landscape setting. Similarly, on the Maryland side of the George Washington Memorial Parkway is a short segment named in honor of Clara Barton. It runs along the Maryland shore of the Potomac River between Washington and the Capital Beltway. Dotted along Clara Barton Parkway are several small access points to the adjacent Chesapeake & Ohio Canal towpath.

The Suitland Parkway, which connects Joint Base Andrews to South Capitol Street, accommodates motorcades, visitors, and commuters approaching the nation’s capital from the southeast.

A continuing challenge for parkways is to balance transportation needs and modern roadway safety standards with their role as a park and recreational amenity. For parkways that function as primary commuter routes, it is important to strategically plan

vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation along and across the roadways. Similarly, it is important to evaluate and protect valuable scenic viewsheds, carefully plan development around parkways, and limit visual and physical encroachment on and adjacent to parkways and associated parklands. In addition to comprehensively looking at the parkway system, any infrastructure improvements should minimize impacts to, and maintain the integrity of, parkway elements. Proposed improvements along parkways must consider the location of berms, type of vegetation, and retaining wall treatments.



APK on Flickr

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway is one of the best-preserved and earliest examples of motor parkway development.

E.4 Plan for Security in Parks

The Urban Design Element provides guidance on permanent security improvements for federal facilities and public spaces in Washington¹¹. Many of these policies are applicable to parks and open space as they address issues such as circulation, design context, aesthetics, and visual quality. When considering safety and security features in parks, it is important to maintain the perception of an inviting and easily accessible space, consider multiple uses and activities, ensure physical and visual connectivity, and maintain safe and secure public gathering areas. Park safety and security improvements should consider the threat level against the location of historic properties, user needs, surrounding uses, and circulations needs. In addition, security improvements should be coordinated with maintenance, management, and programming strategies.



Security features around the Washington Monument.

The federal government should:

- POS.E.1** Plan and design parks and open space that meet agency mission requirements and protect natural and cultural resources. Additionally, where appropriate, accommodate the needs of diverse age groups and consider opportunities for active recreation.
- POS.E.2** Accommodate different activities and programming in urban parks that enrich the visitor experience, address the needs of diverse populations and age groups, and protect and minimize impacts to resources.
- POS.E.3** Support the expansion of existing parks, on a temporary basis, by using adjacent spaces such as streets to accommodate special events.
- POS.E.4** Accommodate different activities and programming in waterfront parks while protecting and enhancing the resilience and cultural and natural features waterfronts.
- POS.E.5** Ensure that proposed improvements and maintenance projects along trails and parkways minimize impacts to viewsheds and are sensitive to the natural and historic qualities that make them significant.
- POS.E.6** Minimize impacts from development adjacent to parks and open space, including trails and parkways, to protect their natural and historic features.
- POS.E.7** Maintain and improve the park-like setting of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, in coordination with local governments, as a regional resource that provides multiple recreational opportunities.
- POS.E.8** Plan and incorporate safe, convenient, and distinct multi-use trails as part of the parkway system.
- POS.E.9** Minimize impacts from park safety and security improvements so they remain inviting public spaces, accommodate multiple users and activities, retain physical and visual connectivity, and are consistent with maintenance, management, and programming strategies.



Section F: Build a Cohesive Parks and Open Space System

Parks and open space in the region cross city and county lines, jurisdictions, and geographic boundaries. Federal, state, and local agencies along with educational institutions, private landholders, and other stakeholders own and administer parkland. Managing and maintaining cohesive parks and open space system requires coordination and partnerships. With its significant parks and open space holdings, the federal government is a critical partner and uniquely positioned to support regional goals.

This policy section identifies opportunities for partnership and coordination efforts when planning, managing, and protecting parks and open space.

F.1 Create a Unified Regional Open Space Network

Planning for a unified parks and open space system requires working with stakeholders and developing a shared vision to strengthen and connect the network of parks, open spaces, greenways, and trails. Connecting federally administered lands to regional parks requires collaboration and partnerships. For example, Rock Creek Park in Washington abuts Rock Creek Regional Park in Montgomery County and requires close collaboration between NPS and the county to manage park resources and the visitor experience.

Collaboration is crucial to ensure there is adequate park space for current and future generations and to address large-scale regional issues such as water quality, linking habitat corridors, and connecting transportation networks. As an example, cooperation between federal and local jurisdictions can ensure that multi-jurisdictional trails continue to serve both recreational and transportation functions.

The Capital Trails Coalition Network



Derek Stout and Danielle Marks

The Capital Trails Coalition is a collaborative effort between of public and private organizations, agencies, and citizen volunteers to unify the region's trails by advancing the completion of an interconnected network of multi-use trails in the region. The coalition's goals include closing gaps, improving trail access, and creating a network that links communities and major destinations.

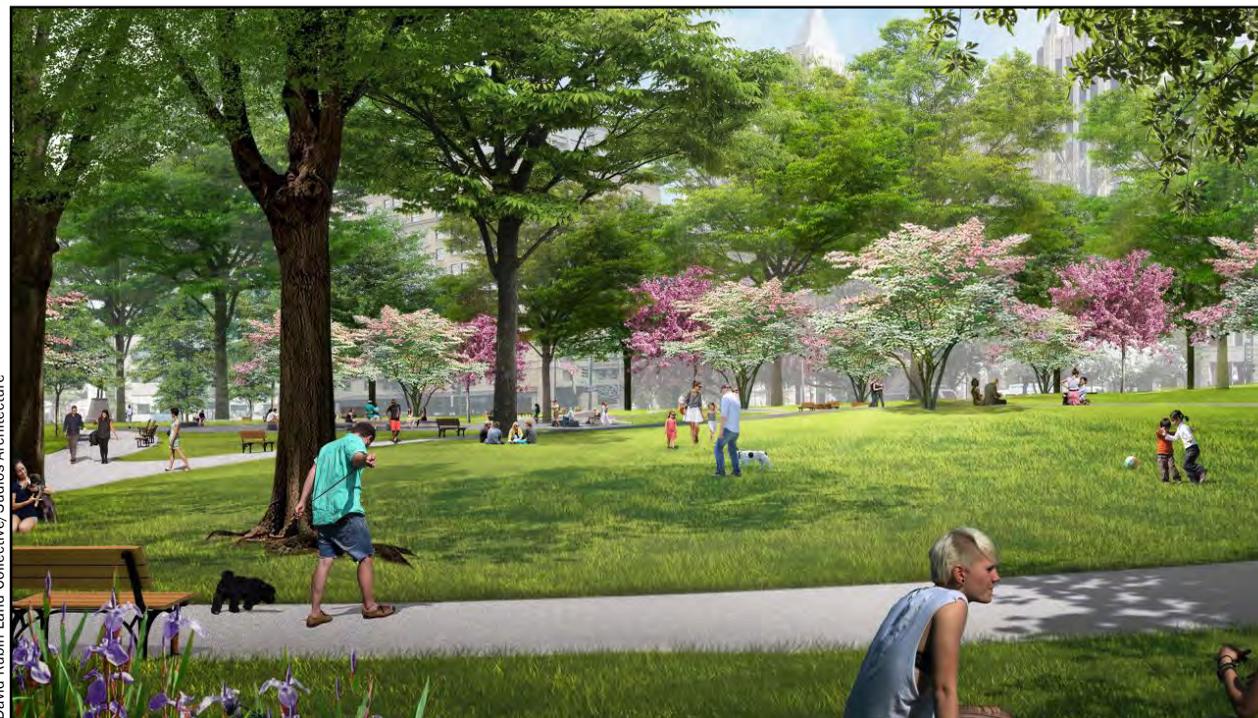
Existing Trails	Planned Trails
Length: 400.47 miles	Length: 276.03 miles
Total Trails Length: 676.50 miles	
----- State Line -----	----- County Line -----



National Mall



Rock Creek Park



David Rubin Land Collective/Sudios Architecture

NPS, the District of Columbia, and the DowntownDC Business Improvement District are working together to transform Franklin Park into an active, flexible, sustainable, and historic urban park better connected to its community. A new public-private management structure will fund, program, maintain, and provide security for the park.

F.2 Balance Management of Federal Parkland in Washington with Local Community Needs

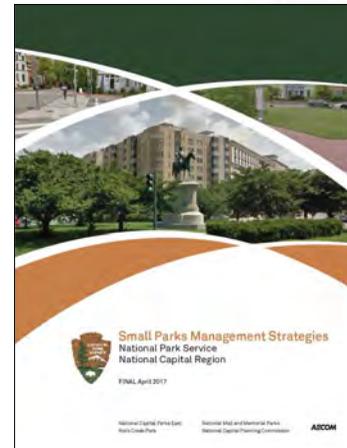
Downtown Washington’s resurgence and the resulting increase in population have led to an increased demand for high-quality urban parks. Federal park use and development must strike a balance between recognition of national significance, resource protection, and local needs. Developing collaborative relationships, partnerships, cooperative agreements, and transferring of properties are different strategies to manage federal parkland and address local needs. Federal-local partnerships should focus on fulfilling shared goals while remaining sensitive to federal interest issues. Establishing these types of partnerships is a lengthy, complex process; however, when done successfully there are many benefits for both parties.

Small urban parks present an opportunity where federal and local partners can collaborate to accommodate recreational, ecological, and commemorative uses. With more people living in the city center, there is a greater demand for federal parks to serve a residential base. Additionally, the federal government has struggled to provide adequate funding to plan, develop, and maintain the range of parks and open space that it operates. In urban parks that also serve local neighborhoods, business improvement districts, interest groups, and other partners can participate in rehabilitation, development, maintenance, and operations.

2010's *CapitalSpace: Ideas to Achieve the Full Potential of Washington's Parks and Open Space* provides a vision for a beautiful, high quality and unified park system for Washington. As a multi-agency initiative between NCPC, NPS, and the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation, the plan's goals are to coordinate existing management plans, maximize assets, address current and future needs, and create a stronger park system for the city. The plan recommends that the partner agencies commit to strengthening parks and open space through improving information sharing, exploring legislative changes, and identifying opportunities for cooperative agreements. The plan identifies common goals between the District's mission to maintain and provide recreational opportunities to residents and visitors and NPS' mission to preserve the region's natural and cultural resources.

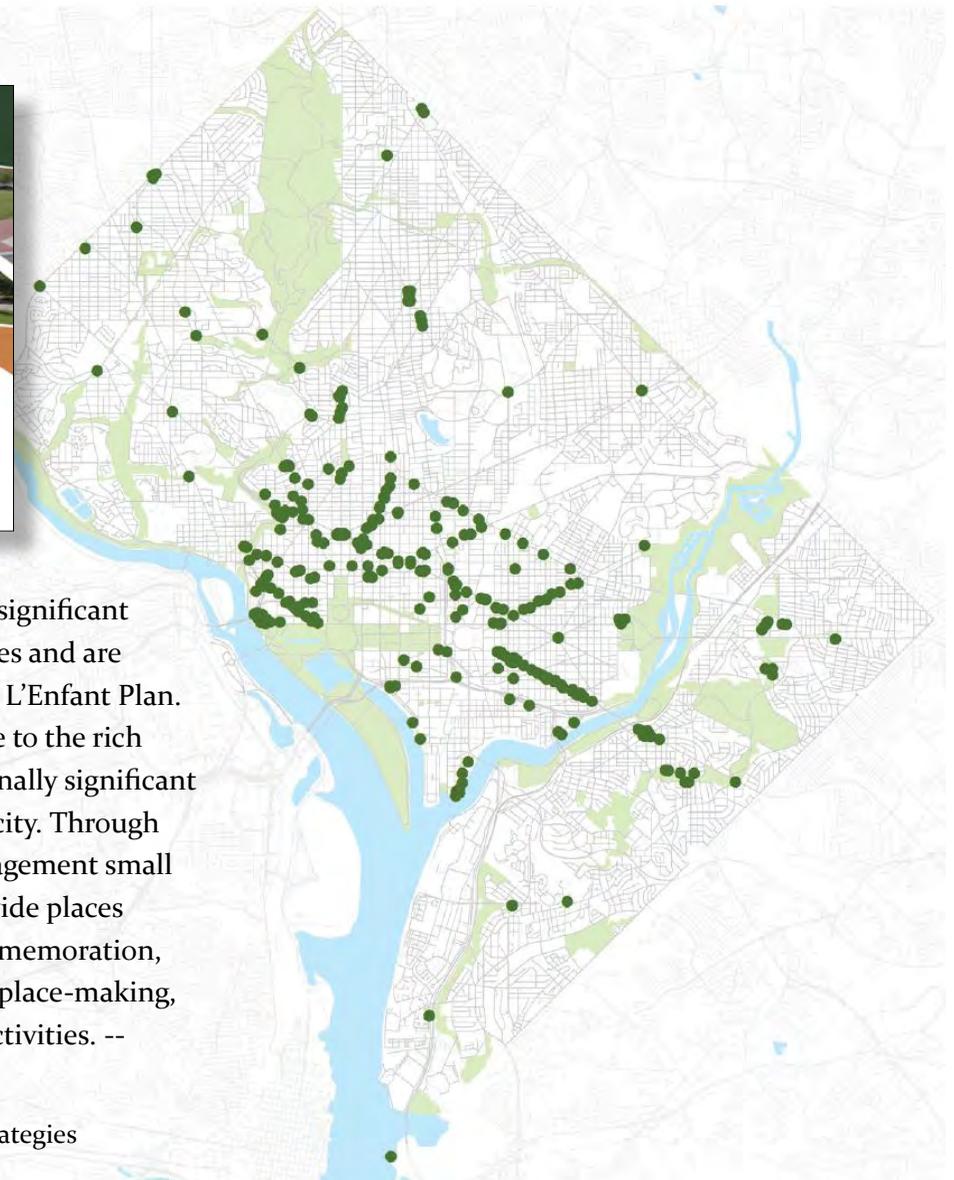
One CapitalSpace's recommendations focused on the planning and management of small urban parks created by the L'Enfant Plan, offering guidance on how to transform them into a connected network of successful public spaces. They serve multiple functions, including as sites for national and local commemoration; as venues for events and celebrations; and as neighborhood parks, playgrounds, traffic circles, street medians, and traffic islands. While an important feature of the city's park and open space system, many small urban parks are hard to program and could benefit from increased collaboration among federal and local agencies.

Building upon CapitalSpace, in 2017, NPS, in collaboration with NCPC, completed the *Small Parks Management Strategies* report that focused on the planning and management of small parks. The study identified approximately 300 small parks under the jurisdiction of NPS that ranged from less than one acre to seven acres in size. The report developed goals to recognize the complex challenges and opportunities facing small parks and reflects a broad range of desired outcomes from resource protection to branding. The report provides the framework and decision-making methodology used by NPS to identify potential management options. These management options, driven foremost by the underlying resource values of individual parks, are categorized as follows: NPS retaining sole management responsibility; establishing cooperative management/partnerships; or considering conveyance of property or interest, if authorized by Congress.



Many small parks contain significant natural or cultural resources and are critical components of the L'Enfant Plan. These resources contribute to the rich tapestry of local and nationally significant resources throughout the city. Through proper planning and management small parks can continue to provide places for local and national commemoration, recreation, neighborhood place-making, and other programming activities. --

Small Parks Management Strategies



F.3 Coordinate the Federal and Local Development Review Process

Adjacent development pressures and encroachment of new development along park borders threaten many parks and open space in the National Capital Region. Modifications and improvements to adjacent properties can affect park character and function. In addition, conversion of parkland to different uses, or a lack of resources for adequate maintenance, are important issues the federal government must address. Protecting important viewsheds and minimizing adverse environmental impacts are also federal priorities. Greater emphasis should be given to coordinating federal parks and open space plans with development plans for surrounding jurisdictions. Working together, federal, and local agencies can minimize potential impacts on parkland while achieving shared and individual development goals.

The federal government should:

- POS.F.1** Continue to use conservation easements, donations, purchases, exchanges, or other means to create, expand, and enhance a cohesive and connected park and open space system.
- POS.F.2** Continue to develop partnerships and build coalitions among local agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, foundations, and other stakeholders to create, manage, maintain, and connect a cohesive park and open space system on land and along shorelines and waterfronts.
- POS.F.3** Continue to coordinate the planning, development, and management of federal and local parkland to identify opportunities for shared recreation, open space preservation, and resource protection to address current and future needs.
- POS.F.4** Balance the national significance of parks with local interests and the need to accommodate a range of uses and events without adversely affecting natural and cultural resources.
- POS.F.5** Encourage the use of a variety of management and maintenance strategies including partnerships, cooperative management agreements, or when appropriate, transfer of administrative jurisdiction, to improve parks and create a unified open space network.
- POS.F.6** Develop federal and local collaborative partnerships to maximize the functionality of small parks as well-maintained local neighborhood green space without adversely affecting natural and cultural resources.
- POS.F.7** Coordinate with responsible agencies and local jurisdictions to minimize physical and visual impacts of development projects on natural and cultural resources and viewsheds of the regional park and open space system.
- POS.F.8** Coordinate with responsible agencies and local jurisdictions during development projects to encourage adding new parks and open space, as well as preserving and enhancing existing parks to meet current and future needs.



Arlington Courthouse Square Study

In 2014-2015, NCPC worked with Arlington County, CFA, and NPS to transfer Arlington County's civic center into public destination. The courthouse is located in the viewshed of the National Mall's primary east-west axis and is an important contributor to the character of the monumental core and its setting. From the steps of the U.S. Capitol, the viewshed to the western horizon includes the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and the courthouse. All the stakeholders committed to protect the viewshed and collaborate to determine the appropriate height for new buildings in the courthouse area while maintaining the iconic viewshed's character and quality. By working together, the agencies agreed on 210 feet as the maximum height for new development on one of the parcels included in Arlington County's *Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum* (2015).

Endnotes

1. This element addresses federal parks and open space within the National Capital Region as defined by National Capital Planning Commission.
2. Approximate numbers from the 2004 Parks & Open Space Element as discrepancies in boundary areas between jurisdictions, ownership, and definitions of parks and open space result in data that does not perfectly match across the region. Several groups, including NPS, with boundaries that differ from NCPC's, use the term "National Capital Region."
3. A protected area of land. In these areas human occupation, or the use of resources, is limited.
4. The Trust for Public Land, 2017 City Park Facts.
5. **CapitalSpace Plan:** https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/CapitalSpace_Plan_full.pdf
6. **Capper-Cramton Act of 1930:** <https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/capper-cramton-act.pdf>
7. See page 23 of the Urban Design Element notes how the natural setting heavily influenced the Capital's design and layout: https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/02_CP_2016_Urban_Design_Element_2.29.16.pdf
8. See page 7 of the Urban Design Element for the extents of the L'Enfant City: https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/02_CP_2016_Urban_Design_Element_2.29.16.pdf
9. **CapitalSpace Plan:** https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/CapitalSpace_Plan_full.pdf
10. **Memorial Trends and Practice Report:** https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/NCPC_Memorial_Trends_Practice_Report.pdf
11. Urban design guidance on permanent security improvements.
12. The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board adopted the trail plan to address gaps and deficiencies in the region's trail system. The Capital Trails Coalition also adopted this plan as central to their efforts to create a system.