



Information Presentation

Commission Meeting: April 4, 2019

PROJECT

**Monumental Core Streetscape Project -
Lighting Policy and Framework**

NCPC FILE NUMBER

7886

SUBMITTED BY

National Capital Planning Commission

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER

00:00(44.70)44830

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Purpose

The purpose of this Information Presentation is to inform and seek the Commission's comments on the *Lighting Policy and Framework* for the downtown monumental core.

Overview

At the September 6, 2018 Commission meeting, staff provided an Information Presentation on the *Monumental Core Streetscape Project*, focusing on the *Urban Design Streetscape Framework*; the first task towards updating the 1992 Streetscape Manual. Since then, staff has continued collaborating with the Interagency Working Group to advance the *Lighting Policy and Framework* to guide the future development of streetscapes within Washington's downtown monumental core. The *Lighting Policy and Framework* builds on current lighting policy and identifies structures, landscapes, and streetscapes that are important to the city's nighttime image and identity.

This work is timely as the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Office of Public Private Partnerships (OP3) are currently overseeing the Smart Street Lighting Project, which entails retrofitting all the District's streetlights to LED. Because streets within the downtown monumental core are administered jointly by DDOT and other federal agencies, it is important to coordinate streetlight guidance so that nighttime streetscape appearance is coordinated and consistent.

The *Lighting Policy and Framework* builds upon the *Urban Design Streetscape Framework*, particularly the categories and principles for federal interest streets. The scope of work for the Monumental Core Streetscape Project and a summary of the *Urban Design Streetscape Framework* reviewed by the Commission in September 2018 is attached.

Request for Comments

The *Lighting Policy and Framework* will provide guidance to federal and local agencies. Today, staff is requesting Commission comments on the following issues:

- 1) Symbolic and visual hierarchies for and among structures, landscapes, and streetscapes;
- 2) Lighting buildings with color;
- 3) Night sky protection; and
- 4) Streetlight color temperature and brightness principles (considering settings and views).

Next Steps

Staff anticipates presenting the *Urban Design Streetscape Framework*, including the *Lighting Policy*, to the US. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) this spring. Staff will return to the National Capital Planning Commission later this year for Concept Review of the *Urban Design Streetscape Framework*, including the *Lighting Policy*. Comments received will inform development of the *Streetscape Guidelines* and development and implementation of the District’s Smart Street Lighting Project, currently underway.

ATTACHED:

1. Draft Lighting Policy and Framework

PROJECT TIMELINE

Previous actions	September 6, 2018 – Commission received information presentation on the Monumental Core Streetscape Project’s Urban Design Streetscape Framework. May 3, 2018 – Commission received information presentation on the Monumental Core Streetscape Project’s Scope of Work.
Remaining actions (anticipated)	–Concept Review of the Monumental Core Streetscape Project’s Urban Design Streetscape Framework and Lighting Policy, and direction to circulate for public comment (Summer/Fall 2018). – Preliminary Review on the Monumental Core Streetscape Project’s Design Guidelines and approach to the Construction Manual. – Final Review of the Draft Monumental Core Streetscape Guide. – Acceptance of the Monumental Core Streetscape Guide.

Draft Lighting Policy and Framework

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Section A. Introduction:

The Lighting Policy and Framework builds on current polices and historic principles. It also integrates existing conditions and planned street lighting improvements into a comprehensive lighting framework. To coordinate with the City’s Smart Street Light Project, the Lighting Policy and Framework addresses street lighting differently by providing more detail and technical guidance.

This document addresses lighting for several components of the public realm within the monumental core, and is organized as follows:

- **Structures:** Monuments, Memorials, Civic Buildings, and Bridges
- **Landscapes:** Parks and Open Spaces
- **Streetscapes:** Avenues and Streets

Lighting principles and guidance are provided for each component of the public realm within their respective sections.

Section B. Purpose:

The purpose of the Lighting Policy and Framework is to provide general guidance for lighting within downtown areas of the monumental core in support of policies that state the federal government should:

*Utilize building, street, and exterior lighting that **respects the hierarchy of memorials, monuments, and important civic buildings and spaces in the nation’s capital, with the U.S. Capitol and Washington Monument the most prominent features in the nighttime skyline.***

(Urban Design Element, 2016)

The Lighting Policy and Framework focuses on enhancing the character of areas with greatest national interest within the monumental core and clarifying the role street lighting plays in supporting visual connections to nationally significant destinations. The Lighting Policy and Framework builds on current policies; advances guidance on the hierarchy of nationally significant memorials, monuments, civic buildings, bridges, parks, and open spaces; and provides detailed guidance on street lighting to coordinate guidance with the city’s new Smart Street Lighting project. Coordinating guidance for streets within downtown areas of the monumental core is particularly important since the District Department of Transportation’s (DDOT) Streetlight Policy and Design Standards (2013) exempts the areas in and around the National Mall.

Section C. Goals:

Building upon the Lighting Policy and Framework’s purpose to advance implementation of the Urban Design Element, the goals of the Lighting Policy and Framework are to:

- **Create a clear lighting hierarchy** that respects and protects the symbolic meaning and nighttime appearance of iconic structures, civic buildings, open spaces, and streets within the monumental core.
- **Build upon the capital city's historic lighting plans** by carrying forward important principles.
- **Recognize the nighttime appearance of the existing urban context** that surrounds the monumental core.
- **Address contemporary street lighting issues**, such as changing technologies and capabilities.

Section D. Background and Context:

City lighting is important because it fulfills a range of aesthetic and mobility needs. Streetscape and architectural lighting illuminate the city at night, provides visual access, improve safety and security, offer visual comfort, and enhance the character and spatial experience of the urban environment.

Lighting design has a long planning history in the capital city covering a range of subjects, including lighting for distinct purposes, the type and placement of light poles, and the color and type of light emitted. Over time, the primary emphasis of street lighting has gone from pedestrian comfort and safety, to the convenience of the motorist, to crime prevention, and has now become more comprehensive to address all needs. As needs have evolved, Washington's streetlight fixtures (Washington Globes and Twin-Twenties), as originally designed in 1910 and 1923, have stood the test of time; the cast iron pole design is still in use. Speeds of arteries have increased along with demands for higher illumination to compensate for the glare of headlamps and the need to make traffic decisions quickly. Higher wattage incandescent lamps were followed by more efficacious mercury lamps (with their distressing blue-green cast) and most recently by high pressure sodium lamps (with their distorted yellow-orange color and intolerable glare).

Modernization programs to reduce energy usage and cut costs, like the City's Smart Lighting Project and public-private partnership, introduce new challenges. Creating LED street light fixtures with warmer light tones (warmer color temperature) similar to incandescent and high-pressure sodium lamps, is technically challenging and expensive. The heavy glass globes, difficult to maintain and costly to purchase, have been replaced with high impact plastic, which tends to yellow over time and effect light quality.

New technologies and practices are changing the design, installation, and management of lighting in the city, affecting the long-standing lighting principles established by history and preceding plans. These changes require re-assessing lighting goals and re-visiting historical street lighting aesthetics and principles.

Principles Carried Forward from Historic Lighting Plans:

In order to balance current modernization programs and changing technologies with the capital city's lighting legacy, it is important to carry forward the following principles from historic lighting plans:

- **Lighting should differentiate areas of national significance** (within the monumental core and radial avenues and streets) from surrounding city lighting. Historically, the monumental core

had a soft white (color temperature) lighting, while the surrounding urban and residential areas had yellow to orange (color temperature) street lighting.

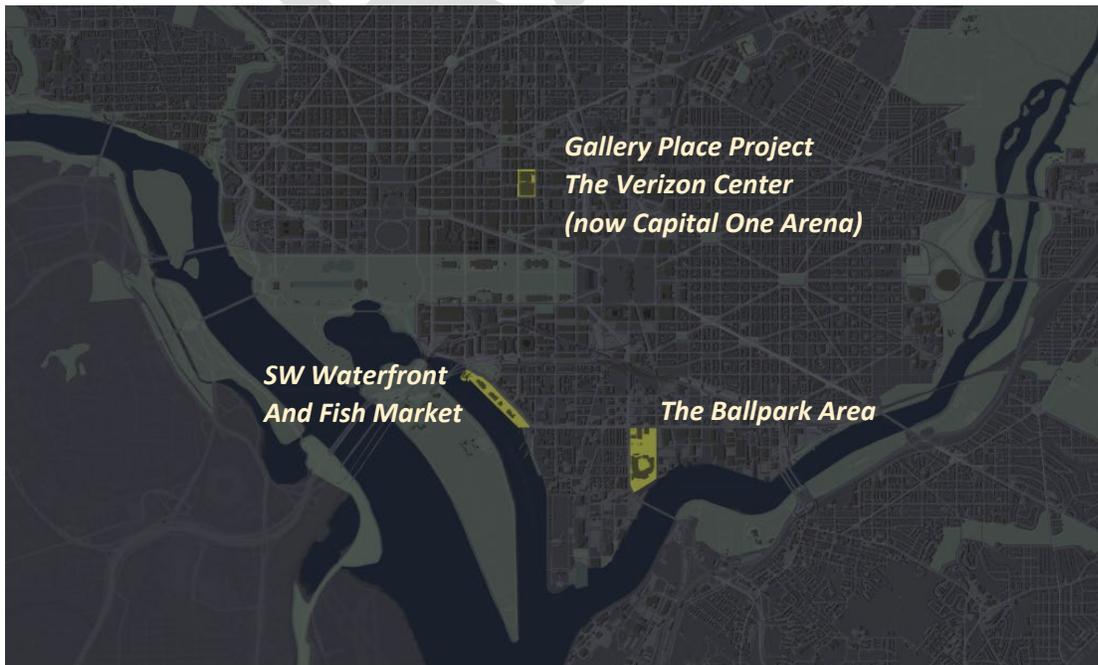
- **Street and building lighting should enhance views and vistas to illuminated iconic structures.** Streets with visual termini on nationally significant illuminated structures should calibrate architectural and street lighting brightness to enhance the illuminated terminus, rather than focus on the adjacent buildings or streetlights.

Contextual Considerations:

It is important to consider the urban context and relationships of monumental core lighting to city policies, land use policies, and existing conditions, such as residential areas and Designated Entertainment Areas (DEAs) when considering architectural and streetscape illumination. The Lighting Policy and Framework may need to adapt to accommodate these areas.

The city currently has several illuminated structures whose entertainment uses draw large crowds. Entertainment uses often use brighter architectural and sign illumination for outdoor visibility, wayfinding, and amusement. For example, the Nationals Stadium uses brighter outdoor, architectural, and sign illumination for outdoor baseball games and entertainment-related signage. The Capital One Arena uses brighter architectural and sign illumination to draw crowds to its location within the Chinatown neighborhood. The Anthem concert hall at the Wharf also maintains brighter signage to advertise its music programming.

The following map illustrates the city’s Designated Entertainment Areas according to District Zoning Regulations (Chapter 9). These include: The Gallery Place Project, The Verizon Center (now the Capital One Arena), The Ballpark Area, and the SW Waterfront and Fish Market.



Section E. Conceptual Approach and Organization:

Each component within the public realm is subdivided into tiers. The tiers help to distinguish the symbolic meaning, significance, and visual prominence of iconic structures and streets within the city’s urban design framework. General lighting guidance and principles are provided for each tier. While the tiers define a hierarchy of significance and nighttime appearance, the tiers are not intended to indicate relative brightness (or luminance) or provide specific guidance or details on how to implement building or park or open space illumination. Specific strategies and techniques to illuminate individual buildings or parks are outside of the scope of this document and would be determined by building or park and open space property owners and operators.

To establish a nighttime illumination hierarchy, Washington’s important structures and open spaces are organized into tiers using the following criteria.

Tier 1 Criteria:

- Nationally significant symbolic meaning.
- Critical to the national capital nighttime image and identity.
- Visually prominent structures that have relationships to other sites and open spaces beyond their immediate surroundings.
- Located on a major axis or entry point.
- Identified in policies or historic plans.

Tier 2 Criteria:

- National or local symbolic meaning.
- Important to the city’s nighttime image and identity.
- Visually prominent structures that have relationships to other sites and open spaces beyond their immediate surroundings.

Tier 3 Criteria:

- National or local importance.
- Civic uses.
- Either symbolic meaning or visual prominence in the city’s nighttime image.

Landscapes and Streetscapes are sub-categorized according to their context or settings. The settings include the following:

Nationally Significant Open Space: located within or edging the National Mall and Architect of the Capitol Grounds.

Urban: located in federal workforce, commercial, or mixed-use areas.

Residential: located in residential neighborhoods.

Natural/Waterfront: located within large parks or gardens, or edging riverfronts, channels, or basins.

Section E1. Structures: Monuments, Memorials, Civic Buildings, and Bridges:

Federal policies support the preeminence of the Washington Monument and US Capitol building in Washington's nighttime skyline. These structures are most visually prominent because of both their location, scale, height and architectural lighting. However, other monuments, memorials, and civic buildings such as the White House, Jefferson and Lincoln memorials are also important to Washington's nighttime cityscape.

The nation's important monuments, memorials, civic buildings, and bridges, are categorized into the following tiers:

Tier 1: US Capitol, Washington Monument, White House, Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, US Supreme Court, and Kennedy Center.

Tier 2: Library of Congress (Jefferson Building), Union Station, Old Court House, Archives, Portrait Gallery, Carnegie Library, US Treasury, Eisenhower Executive Office Building, City Hall, Arlington House, Iwo Jima Memorial, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Air Force Memorial, WWII Memorial, Arlington Memorial Bridge, National Cathedral, and Basilica of the National Shrine of Immaculate Conception.

Tier 3: Federal Triangle (and Old Post Office Tower), Smithsonian Castle and museums, National Gallery of Art, Whitten Building (Dept. of Agriculture), National Building Museum, Court buildings within Judiciary Square, US Botanic Garden, Adams Building, Madison Building, House and Senate Office Buildings (Cannon, Dirksen, Hart, Longworth, Rayburn, Russell), Folger Shakespeare Library, Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial, Eisenhower Memorial, Women in Military Service for America Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, DC War Memorial, MLK Memorial, FDR Memorial, George Mason Memorial, Ford's Theatre, Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument, National War College, NW Rectangle buildings along the National Mall and President's Park (Organization of American States, Octagon House, Red Cross, Daughters of the American Revolution / Constitution Hall, Corcoran School), US Institute of Peace, Latrobe Gate to Navy Yard, Pentagon (and Memorial), Frederick Douglas House, Netherlands Carillion, Francis Scott Key Bridge, Frederick Douglas Memorial Bridge, and St. Elizabeths.

Structures



Structures Lighting Principles:

This guidance addresses the nighttime appearance of civic icons within the capital city.

1. **Nighttime appearances should convey symbolic meaning:** Within this area, monuments, memorials, and civic building lighting should provide a nighttime experience that reflects their symbolic and ceremonial meaning and role.
2. **Buildings should have a clear lighting hierarchy:** Monument, memorial, and civic building lighting should have a legible illumination hierarchy – as defined by the tiers - which elevates preeminent nationally significant structures in the night sky; Tier 1 buildings.
3. **Architectural lighting should enhance buildings:** Lighting of monuments, memorials, and civic buildings shall be designed to reveal and emphasize symbolism and architectural detailing, as well as ensure readability of any quotations or inscriptions at night.
4. **White light is important to the city’s identity and harmony among monuments, memorials, civic buildings, and bridges:** White light reinforces a timeless image and dignified character for the capital city.
5. **Protect the night sky:** Lighting of monuments, memorials, and civic buildings should prioritize down-lighting and limit up-lighting to protect the night sky.

Specific technical guidance for architectural illumination is outside the scope of this document. Building owners and architectural lighting designers can use a variety of techniques to feature or express the symbolic meaning and showcase architectural features or details. Various techniques include:

- Down-lighting
- Up-lighting
- Interior illumination (from translucent materials)
- Facade illumination (for inscriptions or bas relief panels)

Building owners and lighting designers should balance architectural lighting for aesthetic purposes with other considerations including, building security, operations and programming, deliveries, and maintenance.

Section E2. Landscapes: Parks and Open Spaces:

The city's L'Enfant Plan establishes a network of parks and open spaces critical to the pedestrian experience that connect between civic and neighborhood destinations. The National Mall is an iconic civic destination and open space at the core of the capital city. The circles and squares, such as Columbus Circle and Farragut Square highlight the L'Enfant City structure and transition between the monumental core's open spaces and the capital city's neighborhood parks and open spaces, such as Logan Circle and Eastern Market Park. The capital city's parks and open spaces are in a variety of settings, including nationally significant open space, urban, residential, and natural. These setting have different sensitivities to streetlight brightness.

The nation's important parks and open spaces are tiered according to their national significance and spatial prominence within the city's framework. The parks and open spaces are also sub-categorized by their settings as follows:

Tier 1:

Nationally Significant Open Space

Setting: National Mall including The Mall, Washington Monument Grounds, and West Potomac Park; President's Park including The White House, Ellipse, and Lafayette Park; and PADC parks including Pershing Park, Freedom Plaza, Market Square, Indiana Plaza, Mellon Fountain, and Marshall Park.

Urban Settings: Capitol Square, Senate Parks, Columbus Circle, Judiciary Square, Mt. Vernon Square, Farragut Square, McPherson Square, Scott Circle, Washington Circle, DuPont Circle, Banneker Park, and Rawlins Park.

Natural Settings: Arlington National Cemetery.

Tier 2:

Urban Setting: Thomas Circle and Franklin Square.

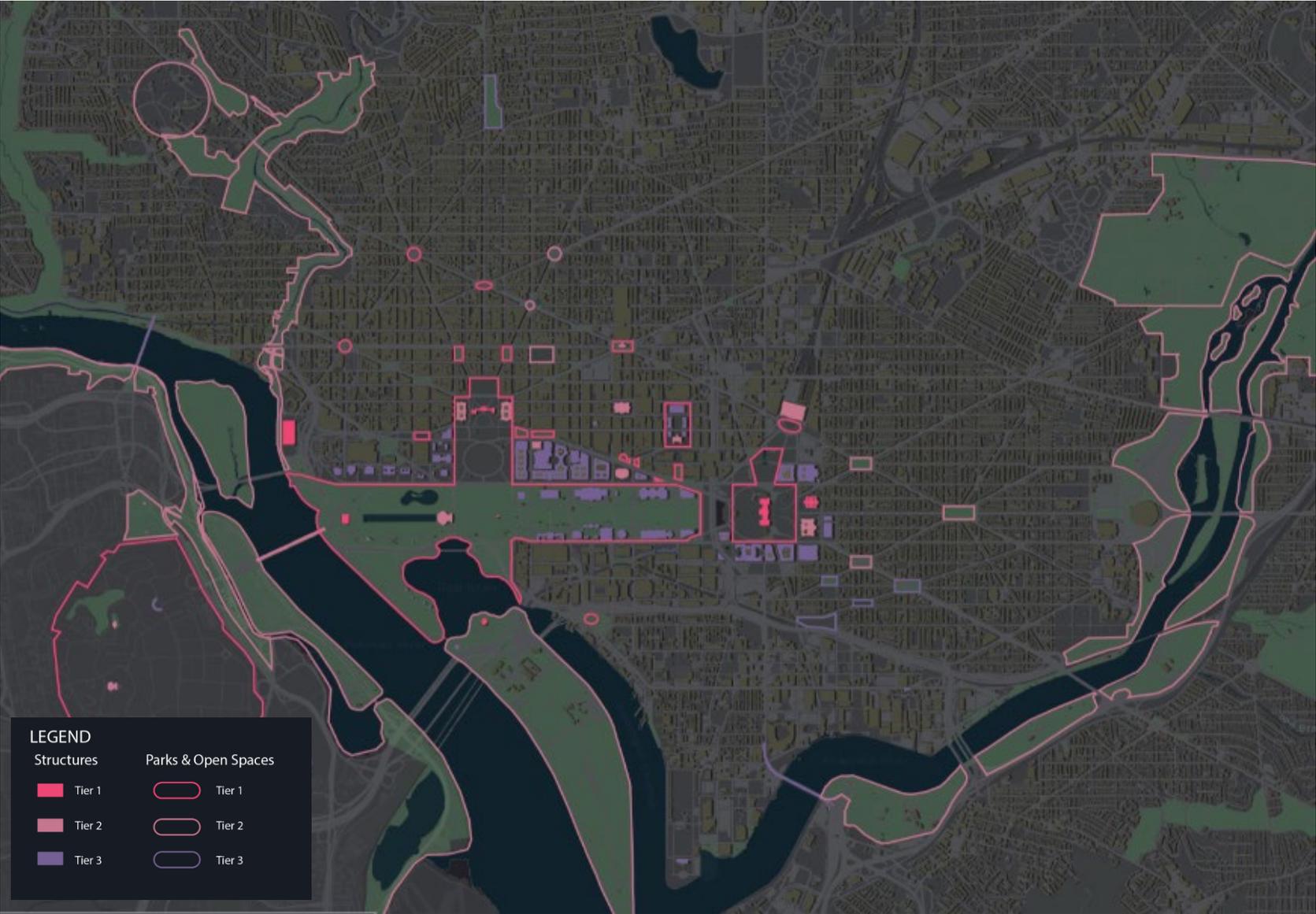
Natural Setting: East Potomac Park, George Washington Memorial Parkway (including Columbia Island, Arlington Ridge Park, and Theodore Roosevelt Island), Rock Creek Park, National Arboretum, Anacostia Park, Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens, and Potomac and Anacostia waterfronts.

Residential Setting: Logan Circle, Stanton Park, Lincoln Park, and Seward Square.

Tier 3:

Residential Settings: Eastern Market Park, Folger Park, Marion Park, Garfield Park, and Meridian Hill Park.

Landscapes



Landscape Lighting Principles:

This guidance addresses street lighting edging the perimeter or traversing through parks and open spaces. This guidance does not address the lighting within or internal to parks and open spaces. Street light brightness depends on the setting, land use context, and pedestrian use of each park or open space.

1. **National Mall lighting should accentuate iconic civic structures:** Street lighting through and around the National Mall should have a soft or warm white light and low ambient light levels to supporting a dark backdrop for highlighted monuments, memorials, and civic buildings.
2. **Highlight the L'Enfant Plan:** Street lighting along the perimeter of significant L'Enfant Plan circles, squares, parks, or open spaces should provide visual continuity through a soft or warm white light color temperature and consistent brightness, depending upon the location and setting.¹
3. **Urban areas should be brighter:** Street lighting adjacent to parks in urban and commercial areas may have higher ambient light levels to meet pedestrian visibility, safety, and security demands.
4. **Natural areas should be dimmer:** Street lighting adjacent to parks in naturalized areas and waterfronts such as East Potomac Park, should have low ambient light levels to shield habitats, aquatic life, and protect the night sky.

Specific technical guidance for park illumination within or internal to parks and open space is outside the scope of this document. Park owners and operators can use a variety of techniques to feature or express the symbolic meaning and showcase park features or details.

- Path lighting
- Site lighting
- Spot lighting
- Underwater lighting

¹ This principle is compatible with the 1992 CFA Conceptual Lighting Plan.

Section E3. Streetscapes: Avenues and Streets

The streetscape lighting hierarchy is defined by each avenue or street's symbolic and visual connections, surrounding context and settings, and the application of streetlight fixtures. The capital city's avenues and streets are located in a variety of settings, ranging from urban to naturalized, which influence appropriate lighting levels.

Streetscape Lighting Tiers

Special streets within the capital city are categorized into three tiers that generally correspond with street light fixture applications. The lighting tiers correspond with the Urban Design Streetscape Framework and include:

Radiating and Edging Streets because of their meaningful visual and symbolic connections to or between nationally significant structures or open spaces. These streets generally have Twin-Twenty fixtures.

Connecting and Traversing Streets because of their physical linkages to or among nationally significant structures or open spaces. These streets generally have Washington Globe fixtures.

Local Streets because of their grid structure and integration with local neighborhoods of the capital city. These streets generally have a variety of fixture types ranging from Washington Globes to Cobraheads and other Pendant pole fixtures.

More detailed descriptions and guiding principles for each street tier follows.

Radiating and Edging Streets

These streets are important because of their unique symbolic role and spatial alignment providing a reciprocal, radial, or edging visual frame between nationally significant structures or open spaces. These streets are generally located in either nationally significant open space settings or urban or federal workforce settings and include for example:

Nationally Significant Open Space Setting (examples):

Independence Avenue SW
Constitution Avenue NW

15th and 17th Streets NW

Urban Setting (examples):

Pennsylvania Avenue NW
(more information regarding Pennsylvania Avenue lighting can be found in the 1977 and 1987 PADC Lighting Plans)

16th Streets NW
Virginia Avenue NW

New York Avenue NW
North and South Capitol Streets
Portions of East Capitol Street
Independence Avenue SE
Constitution Avenue NE

Special lighting considerations apply to avenues and streets with symbolic connections; streets with views or reciprocal vistas to or between important monuments, memorials, or civic buildings. These streets may:

- Require dimmed lighting levels (achieved through coordination with DDOT); and
- Require evaluation to develop special lighting guidance that focuses views to nationally significant monuments, memorials, civic buildings, or open spaces.

Connecting and Traversing Streets

These streets are important to highlight because they link nationally significant structures or open spaces. Connecting and traversing streets are located in a variety of settings, including urban, residential, and natural, which have different sensitivities to streetlight brightness. These streets are sub-categorized by their settings as follows:

Urban Setting (examples):

Massachusetts Avenue NW
K and F Streets NW

7th Street NW and SW
Rhode Island Avenue NW

Residential Setting (examples):

Massachusetts Avenue NE

North Carolina Avenue SE

Natural Setting (examples):

Ohio Drive SW

East and West Basin Drives

Local Streets

These streets are important because they form the urban street grid and provide circulation to other precincts and neighborhoods in a diversity of settings (urban, residential, and natural), and include for example:

G Street NW

M Street SW and SE

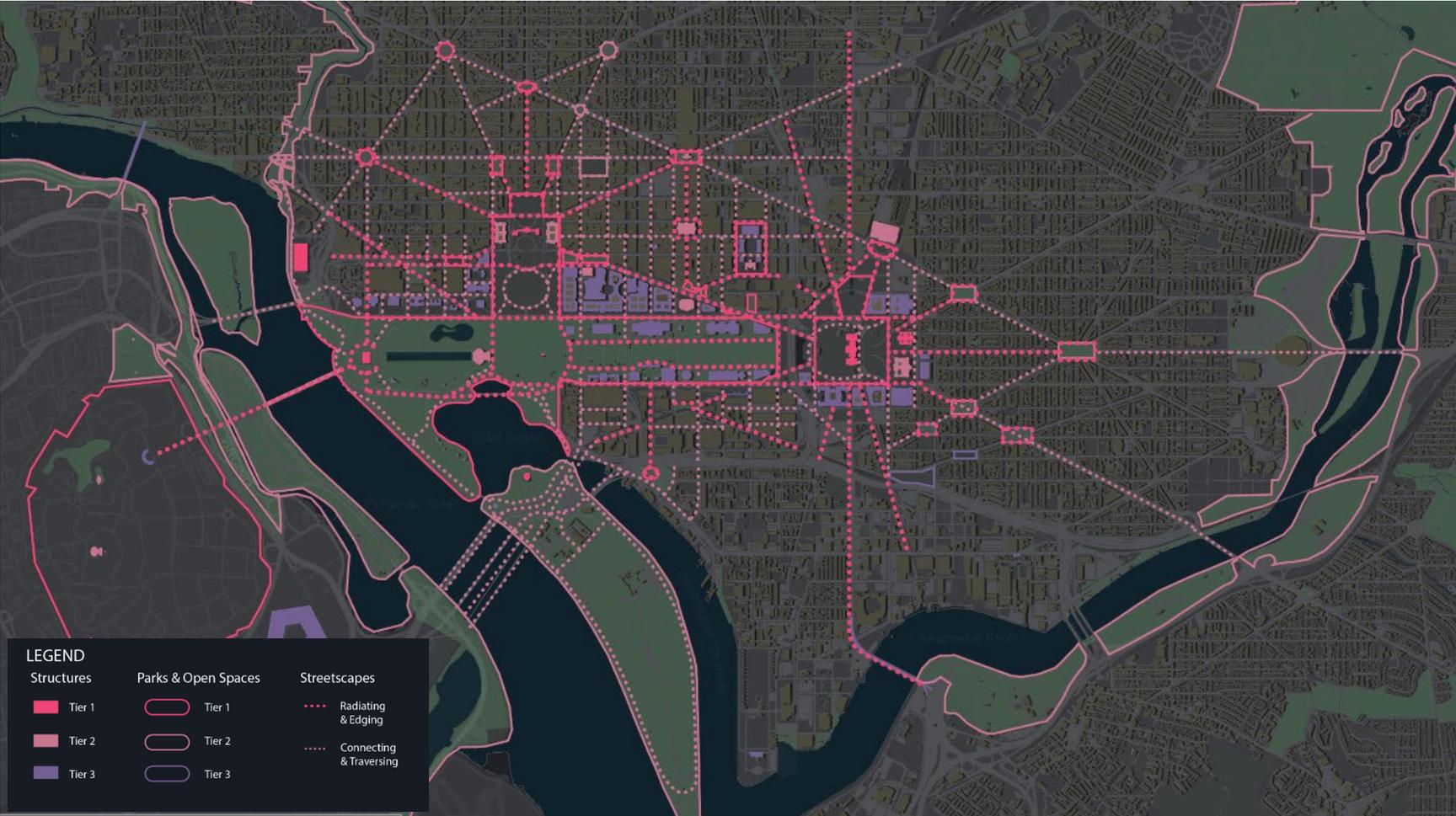
Portions of Maine Avenue SW

1st Street NE and SE

Portions of H Street NW and NE

Portions of 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st Streets NW

Streetscapes



Radiating and Edging Street Lighting Principles:

1. **Street Lighting should enhance nighttime views to national icons:** The streetlight brightness levels on streets with symbolic connections (particularly with reciprocal terminating views on illuminated structures) **should be dimmer than nationally significant structures** or open space focal points. This supports **enhancing and focusing views to important illuminated structures** at avenue and street termini. ² However, guidance should be balanced with safety and security needs required by adjacent land uses.
2. **Support the capital city's nighttime image and identity:** Lighting on streets radiating from or edging nationally significant structures or open spaces **should be slightly whiter (3,000K)³ lighting to differentiate⁴** these streets from other residential city streets or streets through naturalized areas.

Connecting and Traversing Street Lighting Principles:

1. **Highlight the L'Enfant Plan:** Lighting on streets connecting significant structures or open spaces **should use slightly whiter (3,000K)⁵ and/or brighter lighting to differentiate⁶** these streets from other residential city streets or streets through naturalized areas.
2. **Dim street lighting in sensitive settings:** streets in sensitive settings (natural or residential) should balance highlighting nationally significant areas with neighboring uses and environmental concerns by dimming street lighting.
3. **Protect the Mall's Viewshed:** Preserve the open viewshed along the center panels of the Mall between the US Capitol Building and the Washington Monument by not permitting streetlights on north-south oriented streets in this zone.

Local Street Lighting Principles:

1. **Soften street lighting in sensitive settings:** streets in sensitive settings (residential or natural areas) **should accommodate neighboring uses and environmental concerns with warm to white light (2,700K)** and possibly **dimmer** street lighting.

² This principle is compatible with the 1987 Conceptual Lighting Plan for the Pennsylvania Avenue Monumental Core recommendations.

³ DDOT anticipates that Arterials (Principle and Minor) would have LED bulbs with a white 3,000 Kelvin color temperature.

⁴ This principle is compatible with the 1992 CFA Conceptual Lighting Plan.

⁵ DDOT anticipates that Arterials (Principle and Minor) would have LED bulbs with a white 3,000 Kelvin color temperature.

⁶ This principle is compatible with the 1992 CFA Conceptual Lighting Plan.

Section E.4. Guidance Summary Chart:

Element Type & Tier	Color Temperature Guidance	Luminance Guidance	Other Guidance
Structures: Memorials, Monuments, Civic Buildings, and Bridges			
Tier 1	Soft white (3,000K)	Most visually prominent in the nighttime sky.	-Temporary use of color lighting is dependent upon existing condition, symbolic role, function, and program. E.G.: Kennedy Center currently uses color lighting for special events.
Tier 2	Soft white (3,000K)	More visually prominent than Tier 3 and the surrounding urban context.	-Temporary use of color lighting is dependent upon existing condition, symbolic role, function, and program.
Tier 3	Soft white (3,000K)	More visually prominent than surrounding urban context.	-Temporary use of color lighting is dependent upon existing condition, symbolic role, function, and program. E.G.: Carnegie Auditorium currently uses color lighting for special events.
Landscapes: Parks and Open Spaces			
Tier 1	Soft white (3,000K) for nationally significant open space and urban settings. Warm white (2,700K) for natural/waterfront and residential settings.	Brightness and dimness dependent on the setting.	-Protect the nighttime vista and dimmer lighting on the Mall between the US Capitol and Washington Monument. -Small parks in urban settings should have brighter perimeter streetlighting to highlight the L'Enfant Plan.
Tier 2	Soft white (3,000K) for nationally significant open space and urban settings. Warm white (2,700K) for natural/waterfront and residential settings.	Brightness and dimness dependent on the setting.	
Tier 3	Soft white (3,000K) for nationally significant open space and urban settings. Warm white (2,700K) for natural/waterfront and residential settings.	Brightness and dimness dependent on the setting.	
Streetscapes: Avenues and Streets			
Radiating & Edging	Soft white (3,000K) for nationally significant open space and urban settings. Warm white (2,700K) for natural/waterfront and residential settings.	Brightness and dimness dependent on setting and views to important illuminated structures. (Streetlight dimming achievable through coordination with DDOT)	See the Pennsylvania Avenue Lighting Plan (1977) for more details on this street's unique lighting design.
Connecting & Traversing	Soft white (3,000K) for nationally significant open space and urban settings. Warm white (2,700K) for natural/waterfront and residential settings.	Brightness and dimness dependent on setting and views to important illuminated structures. (Streetlight dimming achievable through coordination with DDOT)	
Local	Determined by DDOT (2,700 to 3,000K)	Determined by DDOT	Determined by DDOT