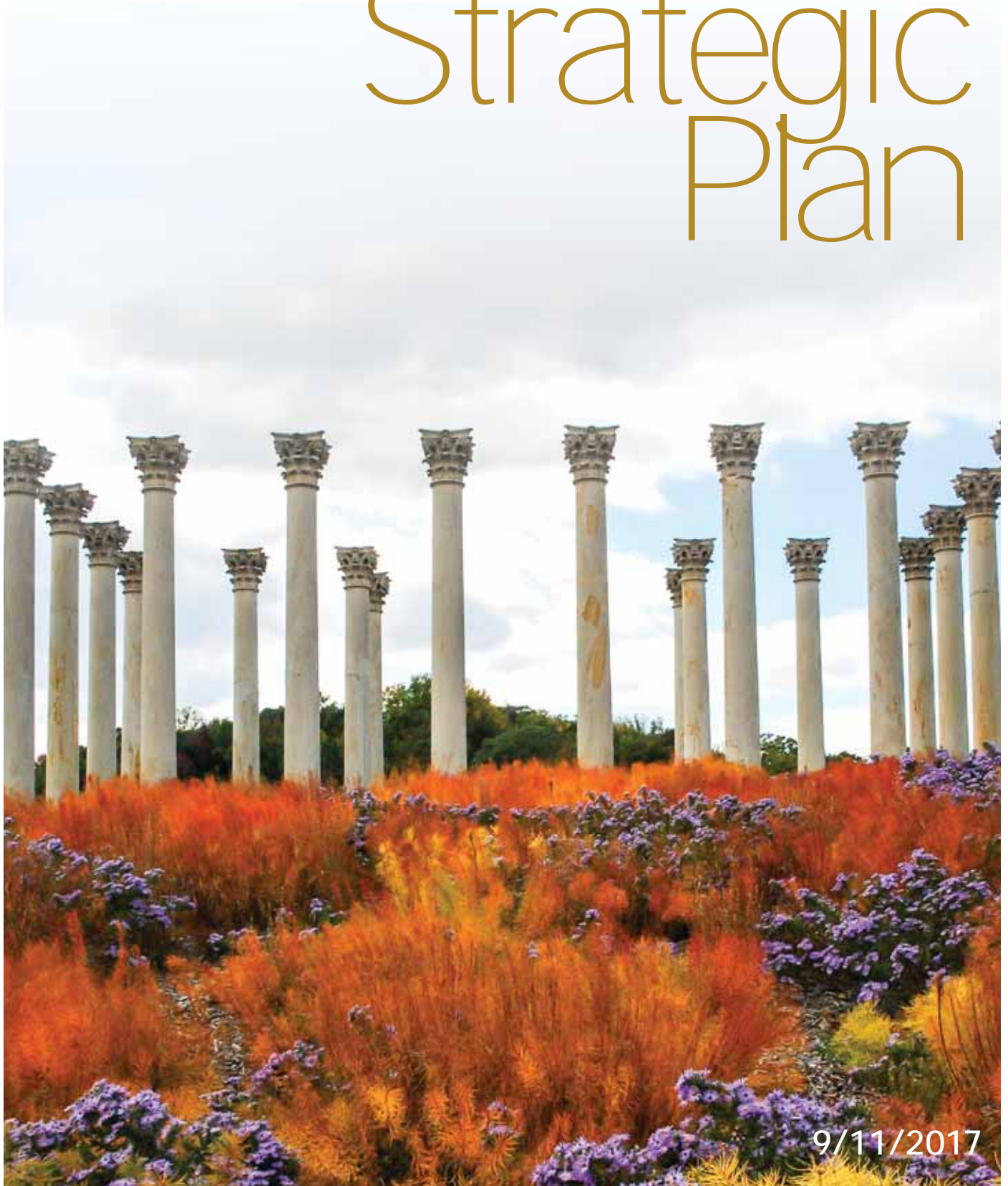


# 2018-2022 Strategic Plan





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Thomas M. Gallas (Maryland)  
Elizabeth White (At-Large)

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The Honorable Timothy Horne  
Acting Administrator of General Services

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Security and Government Affairs  
United States Senate

The Honorable Trey Gowdy  
Chairman, Committee on Oversight  
and Government Reform  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Muriel Bowser  
Mayor, District of Columbia

Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chair, Council of the District of Columbia

*Marcel Acosta*  
Executive Director



### National Capital Planning Commission

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# Strategic Plan 2018-2022

## Mission

The **National Capital Planning Commission** preserves and enhances the extraordinary historical, cultural, and natural resources and federal assets of the National Capital Region to support the needs of the federal government and enrich the lives of the region's visitors, workers, and residents.

## What NCPC does

**Established by Congress in 1924**, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) is the federal government's central planning agency for the National Capital Region. Through planning, policymaking, and project review, NCPC protects and advances the federal government's interest in the region's development. The Commission provides overall planning guidance for federal land and buildings in the region by reviewing the design of federal and certain local projects, overseeing long-range planning for future development, and monitoring capital investment by federal agencies.

## Core Responsibilities

### **Plan and Project Review**

**Review and approve plans** and projects for federal and certain District of Columbia buildings and installations.

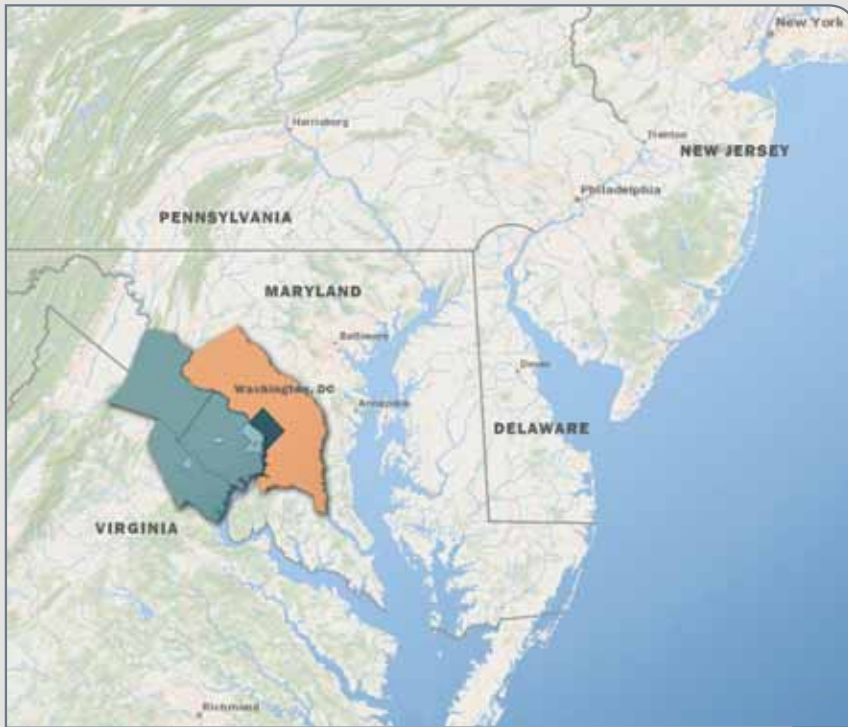
### **Comprehensive Planning**

**Update** the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, a statement of principles, goals, and policies that guides future federal development. Collaborate with stakeholders to develop policies and plans that address key and emerging issues for the capital city and surrounding region.

### **Federal Capital Improvements Program**

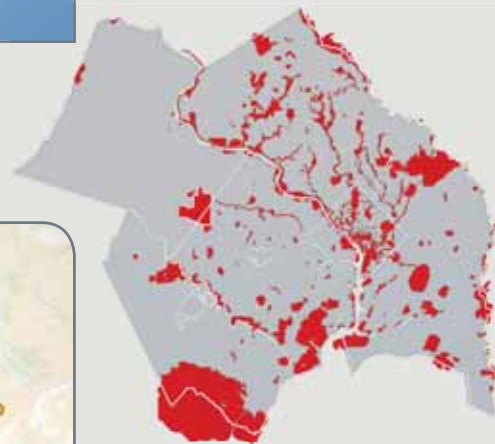
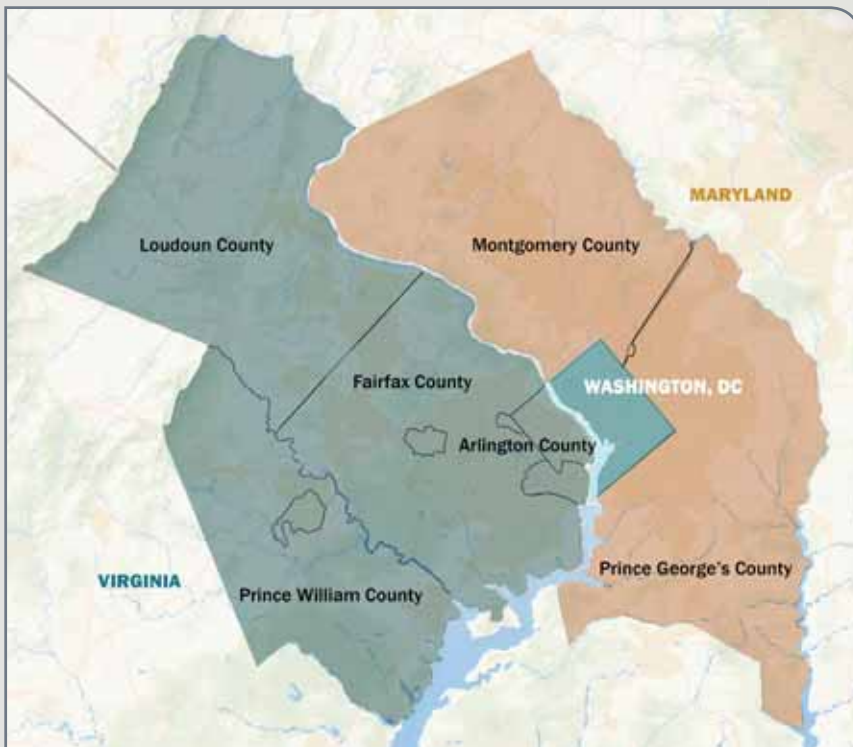
**Compile and review** proposed federal capital projects throughout the region.

## The National Capital Region (NCR)



*The National Capital Region (NCR) consists of the District of Columbia (the official seat of the national government), the surrounding counties within the states of Maryland and Virginia (Montgomery, Prince George's, Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William), and the incorporated cities therein.*

*The NCR totals approximately 2,400 square miles.*



*Federal Holdings in the NCR*

# NCPC's Core Values

NCPC's mission is translated into action and results through its people. These core values define how NCPC's people will treat each other, our constituents, and our partners as we work together to preserve and enhance the extraordinary historical, cultural, and natural resources and federal assets of the National Capital Region.

## Public Service

We serve the citizens of Washington, DC, the National Capital Region, and the United States. We are results-oriented public servants, dedicated to meeting the immediate and long-term needs of the federal establishment and national interests in the nation's capital.

## Stewardship

We protect the integrity of the national capital's built and natural environments and serve as guardians of Washington's extraordinary design, culture, and historic legacy to ensure their conservation for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

## Inclusiveness

We accept, value, and embrace all people in our communities. We promote the free exchange of ideas and opinions and the fair and equitable treatment of all. We believe there is strength in diversity, and we recognize, respect, and appreciate different views.

## Excellence

We continually seek improvement through sustained commitment to quality, increased effectiveness and efficiency, and dedication to the public and the betterment of the nation's capital.

## Leadership

We lead by example, educating and informing all citizens about the importance of planning in the nation's capital. We maintain the highest level of expertise in our professional fields, and employ best practices and cutting-edge technologies. We foster partnerships and coalitions among federal and local agencies, professional and civic organizations, and members of the public to achieve shared implementation goals.

# Federal Planning in the Nation's Capital

As a capital city, Washington, DC is the seat of the federal government, but it is much more than a concentration of government employees and public buildings. Washington, DC is the symbolic heart of the nation, and its image resonates well beyond the region and the country's borders. Through its architecture and physical design, the capital symbolizes the nation's ideals and values, and its visibility makes it a standard-bearer for best practices in transportation, historic preservation, and sustainable growth.

Perhaps in no other country is the idea that the capital city belongs to the entire nation so firmly rooted in its collective psyche. Millions travel to Washington each year to learn about the country's history, experience its culture, and make a mark on the political system, not just in the corridors of power, but also in the city's majestic public spaces.

NCPC incorporates broader national interests into planning guidance. This includes safeguarding the visual pre-eminence of Washington's iconic civic and symbolic structures, which have contributed to the identity of the nation's capital for more than 200 years. It also entails enhancing visitor experiences within and around Washington's federal buildings, commemorative works, and national parks.

The capital city and surrounding area must serve the needs of local residents and workers, while at the same time supporting the activities of the federal government that has interests both shared, and distinct from, those of local authorities. The significant federal presence in the region encompasses facilities and land assets, a large workforce, direct and indirect spending, and the diverse missions and operations of various departments and agencies. Accommodating the current and future needs of the federal establishment requires forethought and coordination.

NCPC, through planning, policymaking, and plan review, defines and protects both federal interests and broader national interests in the region's development. These interests are wide-ranging and multi-faceted—from ensuring that government agencies and foreign missions have safe, well-served facilities to addressing multiple uses at parks and open spaces. NCPC encourages forward-looking outcomes that achieve shared federal and local interests, including efficient infrastructure, a thriving economy, sustainable and safe development patterns, and natural and cultural resource stewardship.

NCPC's mission is unique, and requires a sufficiently broad perspective to define and protect federal and national interests in the National Capital Region. The Commission and NCPC's planning and design professionals weigh the needs of many different federal agencies, the concerns of local and regional authorities, and the opinions of citizens and stakeholders to develop optimal solutions.

## Federal Presence in the Region

427,000

*Number of federal civilian  
and military employees—  
12% of the region's workforce.*

2015, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

\$73.5 billion

*Amount of federal  
procurement spending in the  
Greater Washington region.*

2016, Fuller Institute, George Mason University

8,475

*Acres of land managed  
in Washington by the  
National Park Service.*

National Park Service

39

*Percent of Metrorail's  
peak period commuters  
who are federal employees.*

WMATA

185

*Number of countries  
that have foreign missions  
in Washington, DC.*

Department of State

# NCPC's Roots

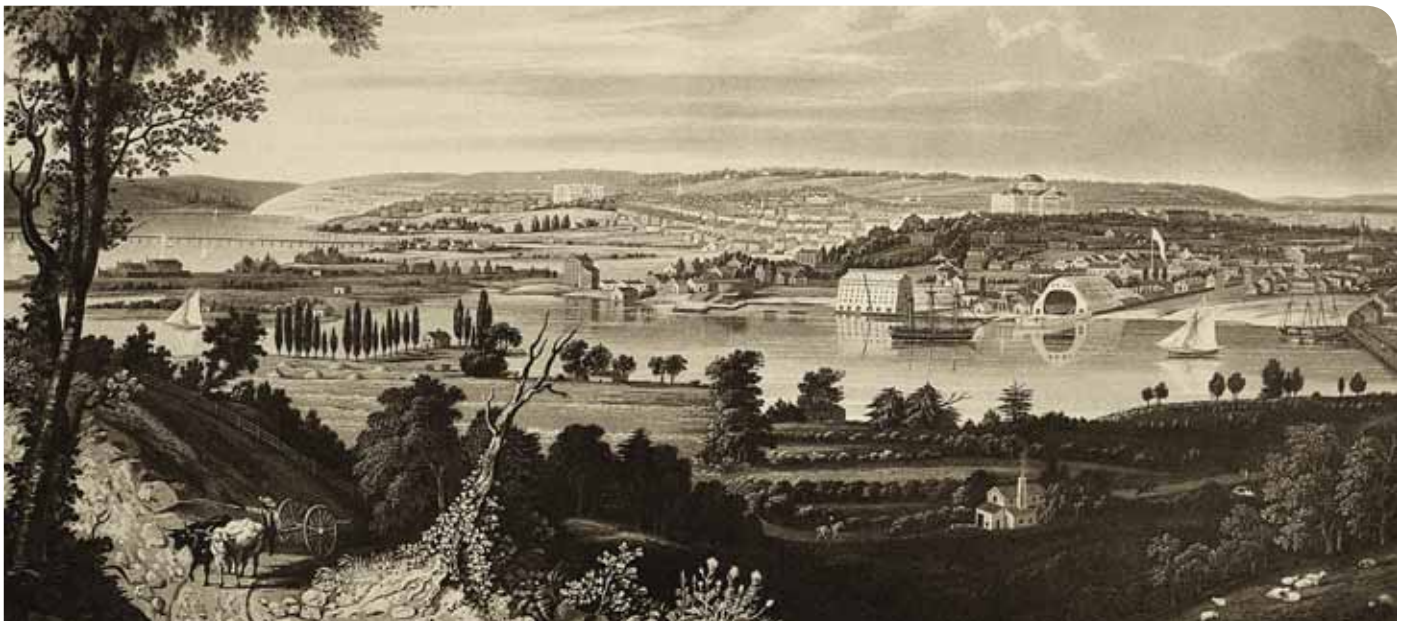
Since 1791, when Pierre L'Enfant set out to create a “magnificent city, worthy of the nation, free of its colonial origins, and bold in its assertion of a new identity,” the nation’s capital has been a planned city. This is one of Washington, DC’s defining characteristics, and NCPC, as the federal government’s planning agency for the National Capital Region, is the steward of this planning legacy.

L'Enfant’s design—with its broad avenues, commanding views, and neighborhoods centered around public parks and squares—remains the foundation of the modern city. However, Washington’s development proceeded unevenly. This prompted in 1901 the formation of the Senate Park Commission, chaired by Senator James McMillan, to restore the grandeur of L'Enfant’s vision to the capital. The McMillan Plan made an enduring imprint on the city’s architecture and public spaces, particularly in the open greenway of the National Mall, the monumental core of federal buildings, and the comprehensive public park system.

In part to ensure the implementation of the McMillan Plan, the U.S. Congress established the National Capital Park Commission, the predecessor of today’s National Capital Planning Commission, in 1924. Over the next several years, Congress expanded the Commission’s original mandate, endowing it with responsibility for the “comprehensive, systematic, and continuous development of the park, parkway, and playground systems of the national capital and its environs.”

The 1952 passage of the National Capital Planning Act gave the Commission the name it bears today and established it as the central planning agency for the federal government in the National Capital Region, with its current form and functions. This includes its core responsibilities of plan and project review, comprehensive planning, and capital improvement programming. When the District of Columbia received home rule in 1974, it assumed planning responsibilities for privately held land in the city.

Thanks to its tradition of planning, Washington, DC is one of the world’s finest urban achievements. NCPC carries on this tradition by establishing and promoting a vision for the development of Washington and the surrounding area. Through the *Comprehensive Plan for the Nation’s Capital*, NCPC addresses emerging issues and guides federal development regionally. NCPC’s long-range conceptual plan, *Extending the Legacy: Planning America’s Capital for the 21st Century* (1997), builds on the L'Enfant and McMillan legacies, charting a course for the nation’s capital for the next 100 years.



The background of the page is a photograph of the United States Capitol building. The top half shows the iconic dome against a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The bottom half shows the wide, white marble steps leading up to the building's entrance, with a few people walking on them. A semi-transparent white box with rounded corners is overlaid on the lower half of the image, containing the text for the vision and goals.

## NCPC's Vision

NCPC envisions a vibrant world capital that accommodates the needs of our federal government; enriches the lives of the region's residents, workers, and visitors; and embodies an urban form and character that reflect the enduring values of the American people.

### Strategic Goals

**To carry out its mission and ensure that the nation's capital evolves as NCPC envisions, the following strategic goals direct the agency's planning and public outreach efforts and critical support activities over the next four years:**

1. Foster a vibrant, beautiful, and well-planned national capital and engaged public
2. Ensure that individual projects and plans within the National Capital Region are consistent with federal interests.
3. Advance coordinated and efficient federal development in the National Capital Region.
4. Ensure effective stewardship and accountability of agency resources.

# Strategic Goal 1:

Foster a vibrant, beautiful,  
and well-planned national capital  
and engaged public.

NCPC develops its planning vision for the National Capital Region through the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* (Comprehensive Plan); special planning initiatives, often geographically based, that address key and emerging issues; and a robust public process. NCPC ensures that its plans and studies respond to the unique issues of a capital city, reflect best planning and design practices, and provide aspirational, achievable, and coordinated development guidance.

## Program Objective 1.A:

**Develop, update, and advance comprehensive planning policies to guide development in the National Capital Region.**

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth the long-term planning vision for the National Capital Region and guides NCPC's review of plans and projects. NCPC prepares and adopts the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Mayor of the District of Columbia develops the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan's Federal Elements outline policies for eight distinct planning elements in which the federal government has an interest. The elements address the needs of federal employees, as well as residents and visitors; provide policies to locate new federal facilities and maintain existing ones; guide the placement of foreign missions and international agencies; promote the preservation and improvement of the natural environment, public parks and open spaces; protect historic and cultural resources; and encourage efficient transportation. Opportunities for public engagement and coordination with federal and regional agencies occur during the development of all updates to the Federal Elements, including a formal public comment period. The Commission reviews and adopts all elements.

The Comprehensive Plan's Federal Elements are a key factor in NCPC's decision-making process, as both the staff and Commissioners use them to evaluate plans and projects under review. Periodic policy updates respond to national and regional trends; federal policy direction, including new legislation and executive orders; and the plans and studies undertaken by NCPC and others. As an example, NCPC's current study of parking standards at major federal installations will shape future Comprehensive Plan transportation policies. NCPC is also studying the impacts of technology, changing workforce practices, and security considerations on federal workplaces.

NCPC recently completed a full update of the Federal Elements except for the Parks & Open Space Element, which is in development. This element will reflect recent NCPC plans identifying opportunities for park improvements, as well as studies conducted jointly with the National Park Service and the District of Columbia on Washington's park systems, including the management of small parks. It will offer guidance on effectively accommodating the continuing demand for various park uses and needs, such as commemoration and recreation.

## Program Objective 1.B:

**Create and advance plans and studies that address existing and emerging planning issues and respond to the unique issues of a national capital.**

NCPC conducts special planning initiatives and studies of existing and emerging planning issues to appropriately protect and advance federal interests throughout the region. These initiatives and studies work in tandem with the agency's comprehensive planning to inform updates to the Federal Elements and provide guidance during plan review. NCPC advances this work in coordination with stakeholders to find common interests and address challenges associated with balancing multiple federal and local land uses and goals.

NCPC's special planning initiatives combine policy goals, physical planning strategies, and programming opportunities to reinvigorate the urban form and function of areas with a concentration of federal assets. Initiatives range in size and scope, from more conceptual framework plans that cover large geographic areas to preliminary urban design plans that provide detailed analysis and recommendations.

Pennsylvania Avenue is one of the most important settings of national significance in the country. However, today it confronts a number of important planning challenges. NCPC's Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative, conducted in partnership with the National Park Service, the General Services Administration, and the District of Columbia provides a detailed study of the avenue between the U.S. Capitol and the White House. The effort addresses transportation, security and open space, urban design, land use, and economic development. It will develop a vision for the avenue's future design and the long-term management of its iconic open spaces. The Initiative's work will guide near- and long-term improvements reflecting the avenue's historic, symbolic, and economic importance while establishing an engaging experience for the 21st century.

NCPC also tackles smaller area-based projects. For example, NCPC worked with Fort Belvoir, the National Park Service, and civic organizations to explore ways to extend a regional trail system in, or adjacent to, this defense installation. NCPC recently participated with several federal and District agencies to explore the potential for 'smart city' technologies along certain street corridors.



*Pennsylvania Avenue*

### **Key and Emerging Planning Issues**

To improve the depth of its policymaking and review activities, NCPC undertakes focused studies of key and emerging planning issues regarding the federal presence in the region and the experience of the capital city. The reports, policies, and concept designs that result from the study of key and emerging planning issues help define and clarify federal and national interests in these areas. They often form the basis for future planning initiatives and help establish priorities for updating the Comprehensive Plan.

*Examples of current key and emerging issues include the following.*

### **Form of the City**

As the capital of the United States, Washington is a unique place with its own authentic character and identity. Since its founding, the image and experience of Washington was carefully planned to reflect the pre-eminence of the nation's democratic institutions and provide a beautiful, memorable public realm. Many of NCPC's projects grapple with fundamental questions about how to plan for and protect the city's public realm, while also supporting the development of the region as a desirable place to work, live, and visit.

One study example is the Congressionally requested Height Master Plan (2013), which explored the impact of potential strategic changes to one of the most important contributors to the form of the city, the federal Height of Buildings Act of 1910. NCPC used this study and other technical analyses to prepare a new Urban Design Element (2016), which articulates policies related to the form, character, and experience of the nation's capital. Recently, NCPC prepared required guidelines to direct the size and shape of any future private development at the site of the FBI headquarters building on Pennsylvania Avenue, and guide general land use, circulation, and other urban design components. NCPC anticipates undertaking additional public realm, urban design, and view-shed studies identified in the Federal Elements and other plans.

### Commemorative Works

The capital's commemorative landscape reflects the history, heritage, and experiences of the nation. NCPC seeks to ensure that current and future generations have opportunities for new commemoration, and guides the appropriate location and design of commemoration proposals. Recent plans and studies prepared in partnership with other agencies identify sites for future commemoration (*Memorials and Museums Master Plan*, 2002; *Monumental Core Framework Plan*, 2009), and issues and trends associated with authorizing, siting, and designing memorials in Washington under the Commemorative Works Act (*Memorial Trends and Practice Report*, 2012). More recently, the Memorials for the Future ideas competition considered how to incorporate more inclusive and representative subject matter; create new materials and media; develop temporal, ephemeral, and event-driven approaches; and provide greater access and integration with surrounding communities. These studies and other agency plans direct NCPC's continuing work, including anticipated updates to the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*; development of a process manual; strategies to balance urban and commemorative uses on park lands; and strategies to improve memorial guidance through the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission.



### Security

When unsightly, ad hoc security structures started popping up around the capital city in the 1990s, NCPC took action by recommending approaches to security design that would restore the capital's beauty and accessibility. After the catastrophic 2006 flood in the monumental core, NCPC responded with a report that discussed its causes, identified potential remedies, and outlined a series of next steps for involved stakeholders. The agency continues to prepare studies and resource materials regarding natural and manmade hazards; in particular, sharing information and best practices for asset managers across local and federal agencies. NCPC's ongoing work on security topics resulted in updated Federal Element policies, which in turn inform project review activities.

### Infrastructure

NCPC is involved in several inter-agency planning initiatives that address infrastructure improvement needs for federal facilities at the neighborhood, local, and regional scale. These activities involve assessment of current transportation, flood protection and stormwater, and energy systems to support effective, high performing federal government operations in the National Capital Region. The agency is also studying innovative strategies, such as more refined parking requirements, to support multimodal transportation choices that reflect current and future facility conditions. NCPC's infrastructure planning activities focus on ways to align land use and transportation; increase efficiency; reduce environmental, economic, and social risks; create a public realm befitting the nation's capital; identify innovative funding mechanisms; and establish governance structures for implementation.

## Program Objective 1.C:

**Ensure that the public is engaged in all aspects of the agency's work, and foster partnerships to advance plans and policies towards shared stewardship goals.**

NCPC includes the public's input in all aspects of the planning process. The capital city serves several distinct constituencies, so "the public" has a very broad meaning. The public includes local citizens, both individuals and those represented by organizations. The public also encompasses federal employees and agencies who, as a group, comprise a distinct federal interest. A broader national audience, the citizens of the United States, for whom the capital city is the symbolic heart of the nation and an important travel destination, comprise a third component of the public NCPC serves.

NCPC engages the broader public in many ways. Monthly Commission meetings are open to the public, live-streamed, and video-recorded for posting on the agency's website. Citizens and organizations are encouraged to comment or provide testimony and comment on proposed Commission actions. The agency holds frequent outreach events; shares critical planning information through electronic publications, notices, and social media; explores best practices through forums and other events with industry leaders; and seeks formal and informal public engagement during the development of plans and policies.

NCPC strives to provide clear, understandable, and accessible information through all media formats. The agency fully updated its website in 2017 to a mobile-responsive and easy to use format. Digital information improves opportunities for timely, informed public comment. NCPC emphasizes outreach, education, engagement, and transparency through all of its initiatives, plans and project review work.

As part of this process, NCPC also focuses on building consensus and facilitating cooperation to move plans and policies toward fruition. The National Capital Planning Act identifies NCPC as the agency through which all other federal entities responsible for public development in the National Capital Region must cooperate and correlate their work. The agency's coordination efforts also include District of Columbia and regional agencies, public interest groups, and business associations, among others. Every plan or policy has a lifecycle that starts with the identification of a need. The process of finding a solution moves through various stages, from the conceptual to the concrete, as ideas evolve descriptions, drawings, and recommendations. A successful planning process does not end with a plan's completion of a plan, but with its implementation.

While NCPC does not provide the bricks and mortar to turn its plans into reality, it does bring together, persuade, and encourage other organizations that can turn plans into reality. Consensus building begins early in the planning process, because a plan is more likely to become reality if all related parties are involved from the outset. NCPC therefore begins most major planning projects by consulting with stakeholders—those likely to play an important role in marshaling popular support, passing necessary policies, crafting the project design, and providing funds.



## Moving from Plan to Reality



ZGF Architects

**SW Ecodistrict and the Banneker Park and waterfront connection**

*The Monumental Core Framework Plan* (2009) proposed revitalizing federal precincts adjacent to the National Mall to use federal assets more efficiently; better integrate federal and local activities; create appealing cultural sites and destinations for visitors, residents and workers; and generate economic development opportunities.

*The SW Ecodistrict Plan* (2013) considered one 15-block precinct in more detail. Its redevelopment strategies will create a well-connected, transit-served community linking the National Mall and the southwest waterfront; accommodate current and future federal workspace needs while expanding cultural and mixed-use development opportunities; and reduce energy, water, and waste through high-performance services.

**Today, new private development** is occurring, including a new International Spy Museum and The Wharf. Federal redevelopment strategies take into account many of the plan's ideas, and work is underway to improve connections between the National Mall, Banneker Park, and the waterfront.

## Evaluating Success

NCPC can advance its vision of fostering a vibrant, beautiful world capital by successfully developing strategic partnerships with federal agencies and other stakeholders that can implement our shared planning vision. For example, in 2017, NCPC worked with the National Park Service to complete the *Small Parks Management Study* that identified tools for enhanced partnership opportunities and management, building on earlier joint planning that recognized the unique role and needs of Washington's small parks.

NCPC will continue to shepherd its planning ideas toward implementation and build on recent successes. As noted in the example above, the *SW Ecodistrict Plan* is informing public and private development decisions. GSA's recent sale of the Cotton Annex building for private use will improve connections and the mix of uses. The International Spy Museum is relocating to 10th Street, SW, the mixed-use culture corridor envisioned in the plan. The National Park Service and Hoffman-Madison developers partnered to plan and build a pedestrian and bike connection between Banneker Park and Maine Avenue.

NCPC uses its policies and plans in the agency's review process to successfully guide project siting, design, and development. NCPC will continue to evaluate the Comprehensive Plan's policies to ensure that they effectively guide the agency's work and create a sound planning vision for the National Capital Region.

NCPC will continue to improve upon and explore technologies and tools to provide meaningful, timely information and comment opportunities for the public and our stakeholders. NCPC will identify specific approaches to improve public participation across all activities. Using established metrics, the agency will continue to evaluate and refine its reach and impact.

# Strategic Goal 2:

Ensure that individual projects and plans within the National Capital Region are consistent with federal interests.

Plan and project review is a core NCPC responsibility, established by the Planning Act and augmented by other federal legislation. Through its review and agency consultation activities, NCPC protects the federal interest on all planning matters. NCPC also protects and advances federal interests through its representation on local and regional planning bodies and involvement in other agency's development of plans.

## Program Objective 2.A:

**Review federal, District of Columbia, and certain private development projects and plans in a public forum for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, federal sector plans, current urban planning and design principles, and other federal interests.**

On average, the Commission reviews more than 120 projects annually. The wide range of plans and projects that advance agency missions and enrich the nation's capital underscore the value and importance of NCPC's review process.

The Commission protects the broader federal interest as defined by the Comprehensive Plan, federal laws, and individual agency interests. NCPC's professional staff considers the federal interest within the context of federal, state, and local laws; the policies and guidelines articulated in the Comprehensive Plan and other long-range plans; the plans and policies of local and regional planning authorities; applicant agency needs; the concerns of other agencies; and public input.

Federal interests in the development of the National Capital Region encompass many areas, and the needs and priorities of any one agency may not align with other agencies. The Commission's review weighs varying, sometimes competing, policies and concerns to determine how best to serve the broader federal interest. For example, secure public facilities is an important federal interest, but so is maintaining the image and public experience of the capital city's civic institutions and public realm. Building new campuses in locations that serve an agency's needs is a federal interest, but so is promoting sustainable, smart growth, and the use of public transit.

NCPC's review advances current urban planning and design principles, encouraging federal leadership in the region's development. NCPC's professional staff have strong technical and design expertise that reflects deep knowledge of the National Capital Regions' particular planning issues. Such expertise adds value and a new perspective to projects, particularly for applicant agencies with limited resources or local familiarity.

NCPC's review ensures coordination among federal agencies, other jurisdictions, and organizations for better planning outcomes. NCPC has formal and informal processes for intergovernmental review of projects with key federal agencies, and state and local agencies in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. These reviews identify local/federal issues and provide applicants the opportunity to address concerns early in the process, avoiding delay over the long run. As part of the agency's review activities, NCPC acts as a lead or participating agency to meet its responsibilities under the National Environmental

Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. The agency's decision-making process incorporates environmental and historic preservation considerations, recognizing our shared stewardship of the region's extraordinary natural, historic, and cultural resources.

The review of plans and projects is a rigorous and transparent process. NCPC staff consults closely with submitting agencies, stakeholders, and the public to identify and resolve issues early in the process. NCPC invites the public to comment on projects under Commission consideration, and uses its website and digital tools to provide accurate, timely, and clear public information. Staff recommendations and public input inform the discussion of the Commissioners, who vote on projects during their monthly meetings.

NCPC has review authority for a wide range of plans and projects including:

- Projects on federal land in the National Capital Region such as site and building projects, parks and open space improvements, commemorative works, and foreign missions.
- Master Plans for federal installations and campuses in the National Capital Region.
- Projects on District land in Washington, DC and certain types of private development referred by the DC Zoning Commission.



**Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Public Library**



**State Department Perimeter Security**



**The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial**



**Master Plan Review: Pentagon Reservation**

## Program Objective 2.B:

### **Review and comment on state, District of Columbia, and other local plans and proposals for consistency with federal interests.**

In addition to project review during NCPC's Commission meetings, NCPC protects the federal interest through formal representation on various local, regional, and federal authorities such as the District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment, the Foreign Missions Board of Zoning Adjustment, the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission, and the Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC).

NCPC also participates in project-specific and issue-based studies conducted by other agencies and organizations to ensure that federal interests are recognized and to advance agency plans. As examples, NCPC is involved in the National Park Service's National Mall Roads Interagency Group, MWCOC's Geographic Information Systems and Planning Directors Committees, the Department of Homeland Security's Interagency Security Committee, and the General Service Administration's Better Government Community of Practice Group.

To coordinate development planning in the region, NCPC reviews plans and other documents developed by regional and local planning agencies. NCPC formally reviews proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan's District Elements for adverse federal interest impacts, coordinating closely with the District of Columbia during the preparation of these updates. NCPC provides comment letters to regional municipalities regarding major plans and projects, such as comprehensive plans, sector plans, municipal capital improvement programs, and park master plans. For example, NCPC recently reviewed and provided comments addressing planning matters on the Bethesda, Maryland Downtown Plan; Prince George's County Resource Conservation Plan; the Greater Cheverly, Maryland Sector Plan; and the District of Columbia Bill 21-919, "Nationals Park and Ballpark District Designated Entertainment Area Signage Regulations Amendment Act of 2016."

## Evaluating Success

From staff consultation through Commission action, NCPC supports the orderly development of the National Capital Region and ensures that federal interests are protected during project review. While an important measure, NCPC's success goes well beyond meeting specific benchmarks associated with monthly Commission review, such as the number of projects reviewed. It rests in the ability to improve the foundational planning decisions associated with each proposed federal project NCPC reviews in accordance with guidance in the Comprehensive Plan. To this end, NCPC's success is measured by the quality of the projects when they receive final approval and with their consistency with the criteria in the underlying review authority, as follows:

- Site and building projects should advance agency missions while minimizing impacts on historic and environmental resources.
- Master plans should lay the framework for the coordinated development of the campus/ installation over the next twenty years.
- Commemorative works should meet the criteria of the Commemorative Works Act.
- Foreign Missions should meet the criteria of the Foreign Missions Act.
- Public and private projects in the District of Columbia should not have any adverse impacts on federal land and buildings, security, public open space, and viewsheds that define the nation's capital.

Moving forward, NCPC will continue to document successes and identify areas where we can make improvements.

# Strategic Goal 3:

Advance coordinated and efficient federal development in the National Capital Region.

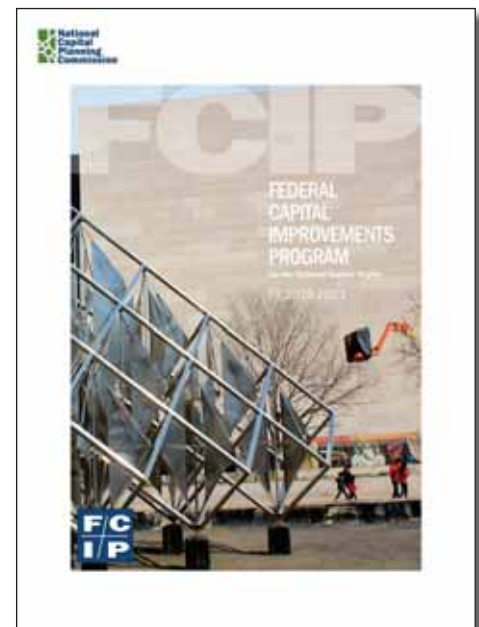
## Program Objective 3.A:

**Analyze and recommend proposed capital improvement projects in consultation with stakeholders in the National Capital Region.**

As part of the Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP), NCPC annually collects from federal agencies with regional facilities proposals for capital improvements over the next six years. NCPC evaluates each submission for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and federal and local planning policies. NCPC provides the FCIP to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). NCPC also reviews and comments on any federal interest issues identified in local jurisdictions' capital improvement programs.

NCPC implemented a number of improvements to the FCIP process in consultation with OMB and applicant agencies to improve evaluation clarity, timeliness of the information, and the reporting process. NCPC now uses a scorecard that includes a planning evaluation for each project based on the Comprehensive Plan's Federal Elements and provides clear and consistent assessments. NCPC developed an automated on-line portal used by reporting agencies to submit materials, making the process easier and more accurate. NCPC also automated the scorecard process to improve staff's efficiency and effectiveness in reviewing FCIP projects. To ensure timeliness and relevance, the FCIP report is publically released after the President's Budget, and only includes those projects listed in this budget.

NCPC will continue to identify and execute improvements to the FCIP reporting and evaluation process. This may include presenting information visually through maps and other online media. NCPC may also explore enhancing the analytical outcomes of the FCIP program to better inform government-wide policy discussions. For example, the FCIP data could prompt an evaluation of key trends related to location of capital improvements and type of investment.

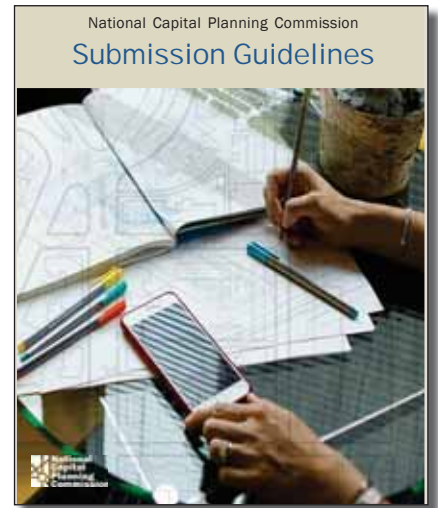


## Program Objective 3.B:

### Promote efficient and coordinated review and operations.

The Commission's review of development projects occurs in the context of a growing, urbanizing region with unparalleled cultural, historic, and environmental resources, where local, state, and other federal agencies have review roles. NCPC seeks to coordinate its review processes with other entities and applicants' internal development schedules, and provide clear, effective, and timely guidance to promote better project outcomes.

The Commission uses adopted guidelines, procedures, and policies to carry out its planning and review authorities. NCPC recently completed a full update to its Submission Guidelines, last revised in 1991, and its' National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, which establish the rules that NCPC and applicants follow to ensure compliance with this act. The updates create clear, accessible, and efficient guidelines that are responsive to agency needs; align NCPC's review stages and NEPA requirements with those of applicant agencies to save time and money; and allow staff to exempt from review certain minor projects based on specific criteria where there is no federal interest.



In addition to implementing newly adopted guidance, NCPC will examine other ways to streamline and improve operating processes, which could include intergovernmental coordination, the multi-agency review of commemorative projects, and public participation. NCPC will use its website and other digital tools to provide easy-to-use information and improve submission procedures.

## Evaluating Success

NCPC has already made significant improvements to the FCIP. Ultimately, the success of this program is rooted in NCPC's ability to improve planning-related decisions for each capital project proposed for the region. Future program evaluations may include measuring NCPC's planning scorecard against actual budget and implementation decisions. To develop the evaluation protocol, NCPC may consult with other agencies that utilize scorecards for guidance and best practices, and will coordinate with federal agencies providing information for the FCIP to identify potential process improvements.

Process improvements for plan review benefit the Commission, applicants, staff, and the public. The Commission can provide more substantive and meaningful guidance earlier in the process. The public better understands NCPC's authorities and process, and is clearer on when and how to provide input. Applicants better understand the process and have greater latitude in making project improvements before making substantial commitments of time and resources. While these are largely qualitative in nature, NCPC can review comments received on draft proposals to evaluate if the improvements provide meaningful benefits. Once implemented, NCPC can also consult with the Commission, applicants, and the public to see if benefits are occurring.

# Management Goal 4:

Ensure effective management and accountability of agency resources.

## Program Objective 4.A:

**Recruit and retain a capable, motivated, and inclusive workforce that advances NCPC's mission and embraces its core values.**

NCPC pursues strategies to nurture a high-quality staff and build morale within the agency. For example, community planners have cross-divisional assignments to expand their technical expertise, learn the work of the agency, and enrich their understanding of its mission. NCPC hosts in-house training sessions for topics such as plain writing and NEPA. NCPC invites industry leaders to provide informal presentations to keep staff abreast of best planning practices and other related issues. NCPC will continue to cultivate a skilled workforce by setting clear performance standards, rewarding good performance, and, if necessary, correcting poor performance.

## Program Objective 4.B:

**Ensure sound financial performance**

NCPC will ensure that its financial systems and operations can produce, in a timely manner, accurate and relevant financial information to support sound decision-making and comply with the external reporting requirements directed by Office of Management and Budget and the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The agency can demonstrate that appropriate financial controls are in place to quickly identify and correct potential waste, fraud and abuse. The financial system and processes enables the agency to link investment of resources to performance.

## Program Objective 4.C:

**Use technology and IT expertise to streamline the agency's work processes to enhance workforce productivity and efficiency that supports the Commission's needs.**

An effective information technology (IT) infrastructure is vital to meet the agency's planning and operational goals. NCPC will identify and provide critical, high quality and low-risk IT services that are agile enough to meet the Commission's current and evolving needs. NCPC established IT policies and procedures, and will update these as appropriate to remain relevant and effective. NCPC seeks to meet all federal information and website security standards and ensure continued compliance.



## Program Objective 4.D:

**Ensure the agency's resource management and compliance operations are effectively, efficiently, and sustainably supported.**

NCPC's daily activities rely on program operations that include telecommunications, procurement of administrative goods and services, property management, space, mail and record services, facilities and equipment maintenance, and transportation. NCPC advances program operation strategies to support the needs of staff and the public. For example, the agency's electronic records management system is now operational, allowing agency records to be stored and recovered in a central, searchable location.

## Program Objective 4.E:

**Provide the Commission with accurate, timely information and resources that support its work.**

To help the Commission meet its stewardship responsibilities to guide federal development in the nation's capital, it is critical to provide timely, accurate information, including staff recommendations and reports, plans and studies, briefings, and public comments. The Commission meets on a monthly basis to take action on a variety of projects, and meetings are livestreamed and available as online videos. Commissioners have field trips and educational briefings to enhance their knowledge of facilities and issues in the region. NCPC is incorporating new digital technologies to provide information to the Commission earlier in the monthly review cycle, sharing public comments and updated materials upon receipt. In addition, the Commission actions are provided regularly to the public and the media through traditional and social media formats. NCPC will explore new and improved ways to provide accessible, clear, and engaging information to improve public awareness of the Commission's work.

## Evaluating Success

NCPC has in place various tools to evaluate management goals, and uses these tools to continuously evaluate performance and identify areas for improvement. These include the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) employee viewpoint survey administered to NCPC staff, OPM-established hiring deadlines, IT security reporting documents, and regular financial audits. While NCPC meets established deadlines for providing materials to the Commission, there are opportunities to enhance digital delivery to improve timeliness and usability.

# External Factors

NCPC works with a variety of partners, including federal, state, and local agencies that have a direct stake in many of our planning efforts. Achievement of the performance targets in this plan is therefore contingent in part upon the contributions of other agencies. NCPC will continue to foster strong working relationships among stakeholders and partners as one means of furthering its objectives.

NCPC also acknowledges the possibility that unforeseen events may reorder the priority of performance targets related to core planning initiatives, particularly those that address emerging issues. Continuing fiscal constraints are likely to lead to conservative budgets. Therefore, NCPC must continue to optimize resources and align its budget with global priorities.

Adequate personnel resources are needed to plan for emerging issues; update the website and other digital platforms to increase public participation; conduct community and stakeholder outreach; and provide administrative and IT support. NCPC will therefore continue to prioritize maintaining a full complement of staff, particularly in the core planning functions, by identifying creative processes to attract and retain the best and brightest workforce, and to cross-train professional staff to ensure operational continuity.

# Summary

With this Strategic Plan, NCPC has laid out a set of goals to guide the agency over the next four years in fulfilling its mission as the federal planning agency for the National Capital Region. Through its principal activities of comprehensive, special and emerging issues planning, review of plans and project proposals, and analysis of capital improvement projects, NCPC will continue to define and protect the federal government's interest in the development of the capital city and surrounding areas.

NCPC looks forward to updating its policies to reflect new priorities and best practices in security design, parks and open spaces management, architectural and urban design, sustainability, and the siting and design of commemorative works. NCPC will also advance the Legacy Plan's vision for the capital through a series of planning and design projects that integrate the city's federal and local activities, create appealing destinations, and generate additional opportunities for economic development. The agency will also pursue new opportunities for public outreach and continue to improve human resources, work processes, and technology.

Each year, NCPC will revisit the Strategic Plan's goals to assess progress and reaffirm our commitment to its vision, mission, and strategic goals. NCPC will respond to changing circumstances by reconsidering the assumptions made in setting our goals, identifying unanticipated challenges and, if necessary, formulating new priorities.

In 2022, the agency will conduct a formal review of the Strategic Plan. This review will determine if a fresh approach is required to ensure that the nation's capital remains a vibrant metropolis that accommodates the needs of the federal government, reflects the American people's enduring values, and enriches the lives of the area's residents as well as those who visit from around the country and world.

## Appendix: Statutory Framework

The National Capital Planning Commission is an independent executive agency charged with oversight of the development of federal property within the National Capital Region. The National Capital Planning Act defines and authorizes NCPC's core mission, and other authorities guide additional Commission activities, including those listed below. A comprehensive list of authorities is at [www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov).

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### National Capital Planning Act

This law, 40 U.S.C. §§ 8701 et seq., established the Commission as the central planning agency for the federal government in the National Capital Region. It defined its membership, and outlined the Commission's core responsibilities: preparation of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital's Federal Elements, review of plans and projects for federal and certain District of Columbia property, and preparation of the Federal Capital Improvements Program

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### Commemorative Works Act (CWA)

The CWA, 40 U.S.C. Section § 8901, requires NCPC and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts to review and approve the site and design for a commemorative work located on land under the jurisdiction of either the National Park Service or the General Services Administration in Washington, DC or its environs.

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### Foreign Missions Act and International Chancery Act

The Foreign Missions Act, 22 U.S.C. § 4301 et seq., reaffirms the federal government's jurisdiction over the operation of foreign missions and international organizations in the United States. The Act establishes the criteria and procedures by which foreign missions may locate in the District of Columbia. It provides for NCPC's executive director to serve as a member of the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment when it considers applications by foreign missions.

The International Center Act, passed in 1968 and amended in 1982 (Section 1 of P.L. 90-553 (82 Stat. 958) and P.L. 97-186 (96 Stat. 101), authorizes the Secretary of State to sell or lease to foreign governments and international organizations federal property located within the international Center along Van Ness Street in Northwest Washington, DC. Plans for all chanceries in the 47-acre International Center are subject to NCPC's approval.

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### National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq., requires federal agencies to consider potential environmental impacts of federal actions. Under NEPA, NCPC must undertake an environmental review to inform its analysis of project proposals. Environment is broadly defined by the act to include social, economic, and historic impacts as well as effects on the natural environment. Beginning at an early point in its decision-making process, NCPC considers the environmental and historic aspects of proposed actions that it reviews.

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### National Historic Preservation Act

This law, at 16 U.S.C. § 470, establishes a program for preserving historic properties throughout the nation. By carrying out its obligations under this law, NCPC serves as a steward of the region's historic buildings, districts, landscapes, and views.

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### Height of Buildings Act of 1910

This law, enacted in 1910 as 36 Stat. 452, is key to establishing and assuring the horizontal character of the national capital by setting maximum building heights that are controlled primarily by street width. The height limit on residential streets is 90 feet. In business areas, the building height is generally limited to the width of the adjacent street plus 20 feet. There is an overall height limit in the District of 130 feet, which is extended to 160 feet along certain portions of Pennsylvania Avenue.

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### District of Columbia Home Rule Act

The District of Columbia Self Government and Governmental Reorganization Act, known as the Home Rule Act, P.L. 93-198 (87 Stat. 774), and codified at DC Code § 1-101 et seq., made the Mayor of the District of Columbia the chief planner for the city of Washington. As a result of the Home Rule Act, the District became responsible for its own planning, including social and economic development, land use, and housing and transportation policies. NCPC approves District projects in the central areas of the city, reviews and advises on other District of Columbia projects and the District of Columbia Elements of the Comprehensive Plan, and reviews and advises on amendments of city zoning regulations and maps.





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