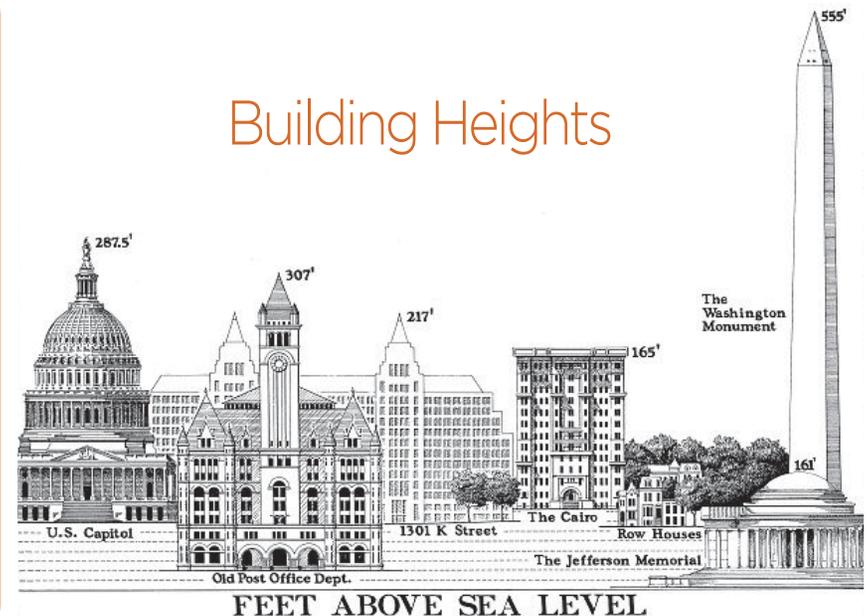


What is the Height Act?

- 1894** 164-foot Cairo Building constructed
- 1899** Congress passed the first law regulating the District's building height
- 1910** First law amended into the present day Federal Height Act
- 1912-1961** Congress has modified the Height Act seven times, four of which allowed more height for individual buildings



The Details

- The Height Act limits buildings to **90 feet** in residential areas.
- Buildings in mixed use or commercial areas can be as high as the width of the street plus 20 feet, but cannot exceed **130 feet**.
- **The Exception-** Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and the U.S. Capitol. Buildings can rise to **160 feet**.
- Building height is linked to street width.

Overview of Study

NCPC and DCOP are jointly conducting the Height Master Plan study at the request of Congress.



The study will address:

- The impact of strategic changes to the federal Height of Buildings Act of 1910.
- The extent to which the Height Act continues to serve the interests of both federal and District governments.



The study will not include:

- DC zoning issues or proposed changes to zoning or the District's Comprehensive Plan
- Detailed environmental or infrastructure analysis

Height Master Plan Study

- Phase 1** Overview, discussion of study principles and issues shaping federal and local interests, case studies. Public meetings in May-June 2013.

- Phase 2** Modeling studies and planning analysis. Identification of opportunity areas for strategic changes to the Height Act. Public meetings in July-August 2013.

- Phase 3** Draft recommendations. Public meeting and hearing in Fall 2013.

Recommendations transmitted to Congress in Fall 2013.

Phase 2 Modeling Study

Panoramic views: the larger context

Skyline studies:

Impacts on Washington, DC's skyline character

- L'Enfant City
- Topographic Bowl (Beyond Florida Avenue and along the edges of the escarpment which reflect steep grade change outside of the L'Enfant City)
- Illustrative sites across the District

Street-level corridor studies:

- Impacts on pedestrian experience and quality of public spaces

Height Master Plan For Washington, DC

www.ncpc.gov/heightstudy



Image and Identity of the City

Height Master Plan
For Washington, DC

Washington, DC

Population: 632,323 | City Area: 68.3 Sq. Miles
Density: 9,258 People per Sq. Mile



Building heights are regulated by the 1910 Height Act, which limits building heights in relation to the width of the street right-of-way. As a result, Washington has a mid-rise horizontal skyline, with national symbols like the U.S. Capitol punctuating the skyline.



San Francisco, CA

Population: 8,174,100 | City Area: 611 Sq. Miles
Density: 13,378 People per Sq. Mile



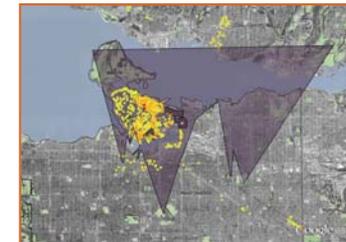
Building heights policies step down to respect parks, open spaces, and distinct character zones.

Taller buildings are permitted through in-depth urban design and development review process.



Vancouver, Canada

Population: 2,234,000 | City Area: 40.7 Sq. Miles
Density: 54,889 People per Sq. Mile

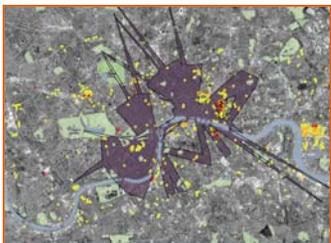


Building height policies sculpt the city's skyline to preserve views to surrounding mountains and other natural features.



London, UK

Population: 8,174,100 | City Area: 611 Sq. Miles
Density: 13,378 People per Sq. Mile



Building height regulations preserve views into the central core and its landmarks such as St. Paul's Cathedral.

Clusters of tall buildings are found in the gaps between protected view corridors.



Paris, France

Population: 2,234,000 | City Area: 40.7 Sq. Miles
Density: 54,889 People per Sq. Mile



Building height regulation preserve the historic scale of central Paris.

Clusters of new high-rise development in the city's edges and gateways.



Barcelona, Spain

Population: 1,615,448 | City Area: 39.2 Sq. Miles
Density: 41,263 People per Sq. Mile



Building height regulations respect to planned height of the tallest spire of the Sagrada Familia Cathedral (under construction) and managed through neighborhood input.

Taller buildings permitted within the central business district, but must respect culturally significant urban character areas.

- Buildings Over 12 Stories (~133 ft; 40m)
- Buildings Taller Than The U.S. Capitol Building (~289 ft; 88m)
- Buildings Taller Than The Washington Monument (~555 ft; 169 m)
- Primary area where height is managed

What approach might we like to follow



Image and Identity of the City



London protects historic viewsheds and wants clusters of tall buildings along the Thames River to signify that the city is a world financial power.



Paris has maintained its historic lower-scale by directing growth out of the core to a high-rise cluster.



Barcelona wants to shape a mid-rise skyline to frame the spires of the Sagrada Familia Cathedral (under construction).



San Francisco wants clusters of beautifully designed tall buildings that step down in scale in deference to the city's natural features, waterways, and open spaces.



Vancouver wants to add visual interest to its skyline of tall buildings while maximizes views of, and to, the backdrop of surrounding mountains and water.



How would you describe Washington's skyline image today and in the future?

What is Washington's postcard image of the future



How will we evaluate changes to the Height Act?

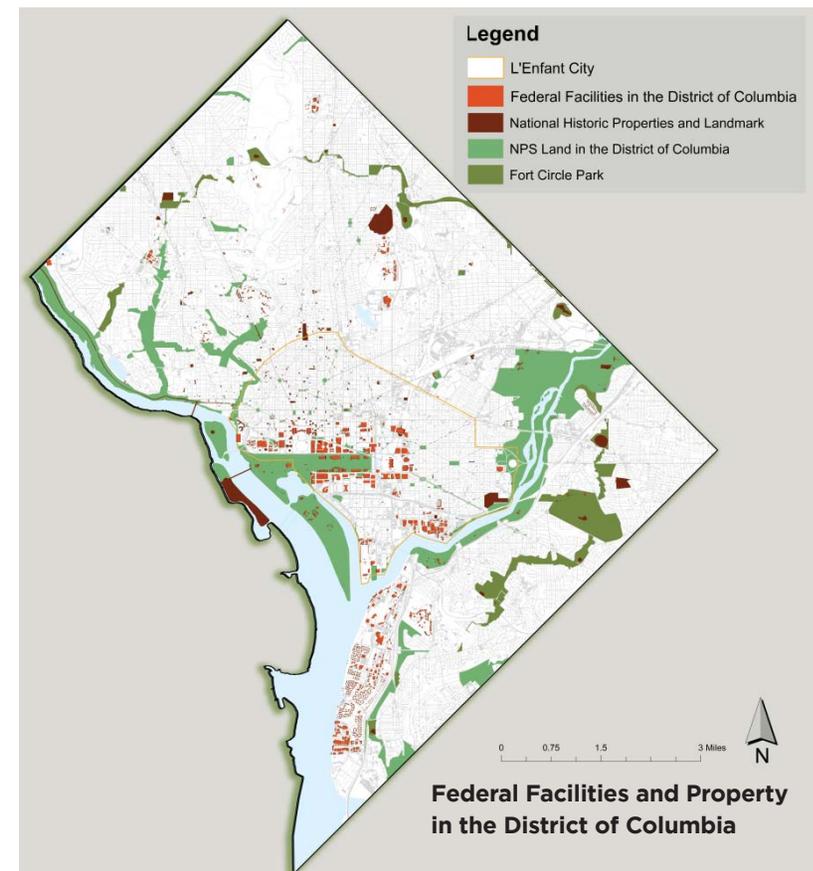


CORE PRINCIPLES:

1. Ensure the prominence of federal landmarks and monuments by preserving their views and setting
2. Maintain the horizontality of the monumental city skyline
3. Minimize negative impacts to nationally significant historic resources, including the L'Enfant Plan

Consider impacts to:

- Capital city image
- Federal properties and operations
- Issues important to the future growth of the national capital and local city



Core Principle 1: Ensure the prominence of federal landmarks and monuments by preserving their views and setting.

What landmarks and monuments should be prominent?



Old Post Office Building



National Mall



Howard University



National Cathedral

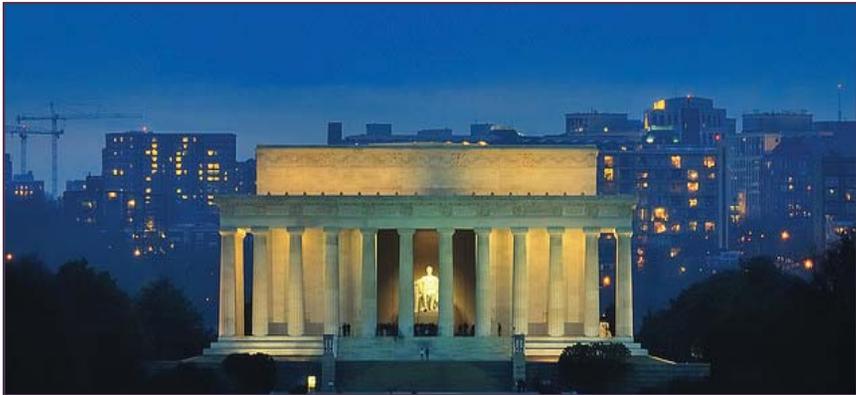
What views are important to you?

Is it important for civic structures to define Washington's future skyline?
Should private buildings become prominent landmarks in Washington's skyline?



Core Principle 2: Maintain the horizontality of the monumental city skyline.

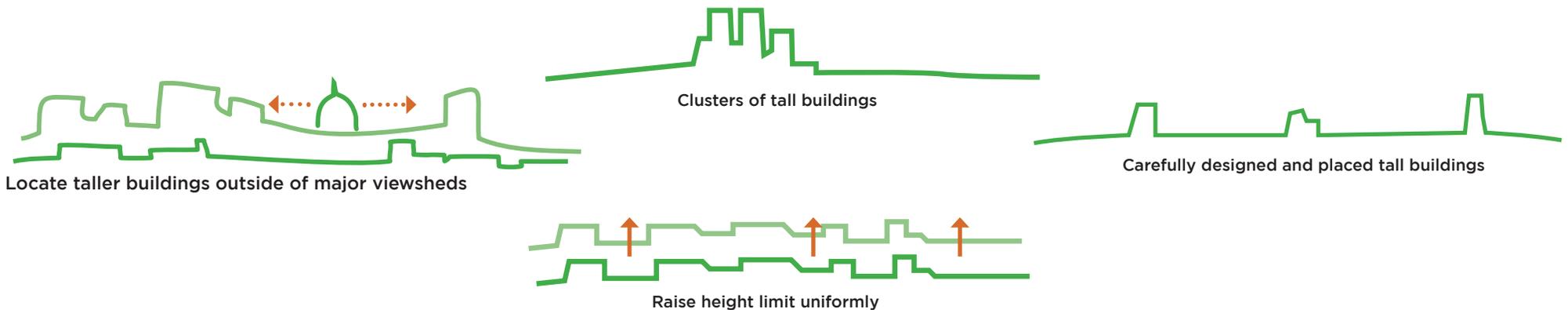
Can new taller buildings coexist with our skyline? Why or why not



What does a horizontal skyline mean to you



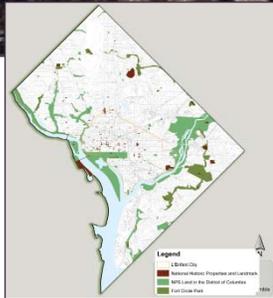
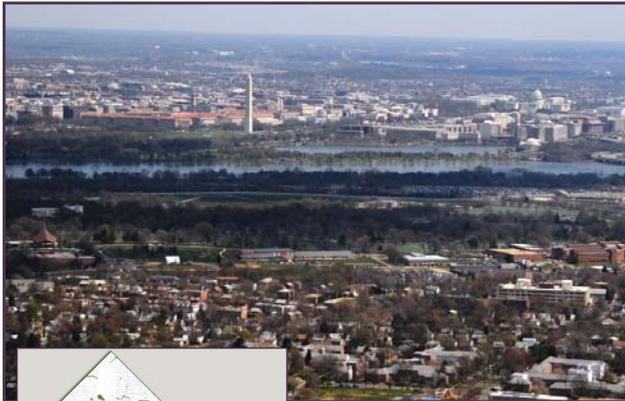
Here are some approaches from other cities.



Core Principle 3: Minimize negative impacts to nationally significant historic resources, including the L'Enfant Plan.

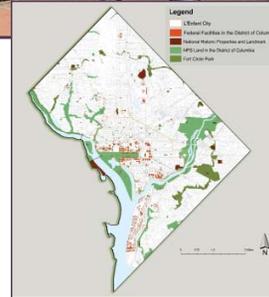
How should building heights relate to: 

Major Parks and Natural Features



The L'Enfant and McMillan Plans established many of Washington's major parks, preserving natural features and protecting the overall setting of the nation's capital.

Historic Buildings and neighborhoods



Numerous buildings and neighborhoods are listed on the National Register of Historic Places contributing to Washington's distinctive sense of place.

L'Enfant Streets and Public Spaces



The L'Enfant Plan and the Height Act have collectively shaped the look of Washington's corridors, with broad streets lined by buildings of a uniform height, framed views to important civic structures, and public space.



Livability

Economic Vitality

Walkability

Sustainability

Infrastructure

**How does
building height
play in these
issues?**

Affordability

Security

Symbolism

Housing Options

Federal Presence

Transportation

Visitor Experience