

# STAFF RECOMMENDATION



NCPC File No. 7060

## THE NATIONAL MALL NATIONAL MALL PLAN

Washington, DC

Submitted by the National Park Service

November 23, 2010

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### Abstract

The National Park Service has submitted the National Mall Plan for the management and stewardship of the land in its jurisdiction on the National Mall. The plan is a framework for future decision-making and implementation of physical improvements for the protection of the National Mall's renowned natural and cultural resources, new visitor amenities and services, additional accommodations for First Amendment demonstrations and special events, better-linked circulation in a range of modes, accessibility throughout the Mall, additional opportunities for active and passive recreation, and improved visitor information and education. The National Park Service's goal for the National Mall is that it be a model in sustainable urban park development, resource protection, and management.

### Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of the National Mall Plan, pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)).

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### Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

**Approves** the National Mall Plan, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.41(78.00)43205.

**Notes that:**

- The National Mall Plan is based on the Preferred Alternative presented and analyzed in the National Park Service's Final Environmental Impact Statement, Record of Decision, and Section 106 Programmatic Agreement.

- Additional compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act will be required for the development and implementation of many of the National Mall Plan's proposed projects, and that the siting and design of individual projects are subject to the Commission's review and approval.

**Commends** the National Park Service for:

- Completing a well-considered plan that balances the equally important requirements for stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of the National Mall's symbolic, historic landscape and for the encouragement and accommodation of public access and use.
- Meeting the planning and management objectives for the National Mall within Washington's broader planning context, and for complementing and reinforcing the Monumental Core Framework Plan, which protects the historic landscape of the National Mall by extending some of its qualities to adjacent areas and by creating linkages with the National Mall.
- Conducting extensive public outreach and consultation during the development of the Plan.

**Supports** the major goals of the National Mall Plan, including:

- Conservation of the National Mall's nationally significant natural resources through the use of best practices for the improvement and protection of the turf lawn and trees, including management of the intensity, duration, and location of special events.
- Development of a visitor transportation system for the National Mall that offers optional interpretation, is well-linked with transit service, and has a coordinated fare structure.
- Improvements in the appearance, number, and variety of visitor amenities and services through the redevelopment of appropriate sites with multi-purpose facilities dispersed throughout the National Mall.
- Improvements to the National Mall as a civic stage to include the redevelopment of the Capitol Reflecting Pool as Union Square, with a comprehensive, high-caliber landscape plan that will connect the National Mall and the U.S. Capitol, and the continuation of the National Mall as a civic venue for the expression of First Amendment rights.
- Provision of universal access throughout the National Mall.
- Expansion and separation of the bicycle path system for recreation and circulation and pedestrian safety, and the rehabilitation of athletic fields to increase capacity, flexibility, and durability.

- Development of new or improved infrastructure so that the National Mall becomes a model of sustainable urban park development and management.

Notes further that the National Park Service, in the development of the Final Environmental Impact Statement and National Mall Plan, has responded to the Commission’s March 4, 2010 comments and recommendations on the draft National Mall Plan.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Site

The National Mall Plan area is shown in Figure 1. The National Plan area covers 684 acres and received 22.3 million visits in 2008. It extends from the foot of the U.S. Capitol at the Grant Memorial to the Potomac River west of the Lincoln Memorial; and from Constitution Avenue to Independence Avenue, 15<sup>th</sup> Street, and the highway bridges south of the Jefferson Memorial.

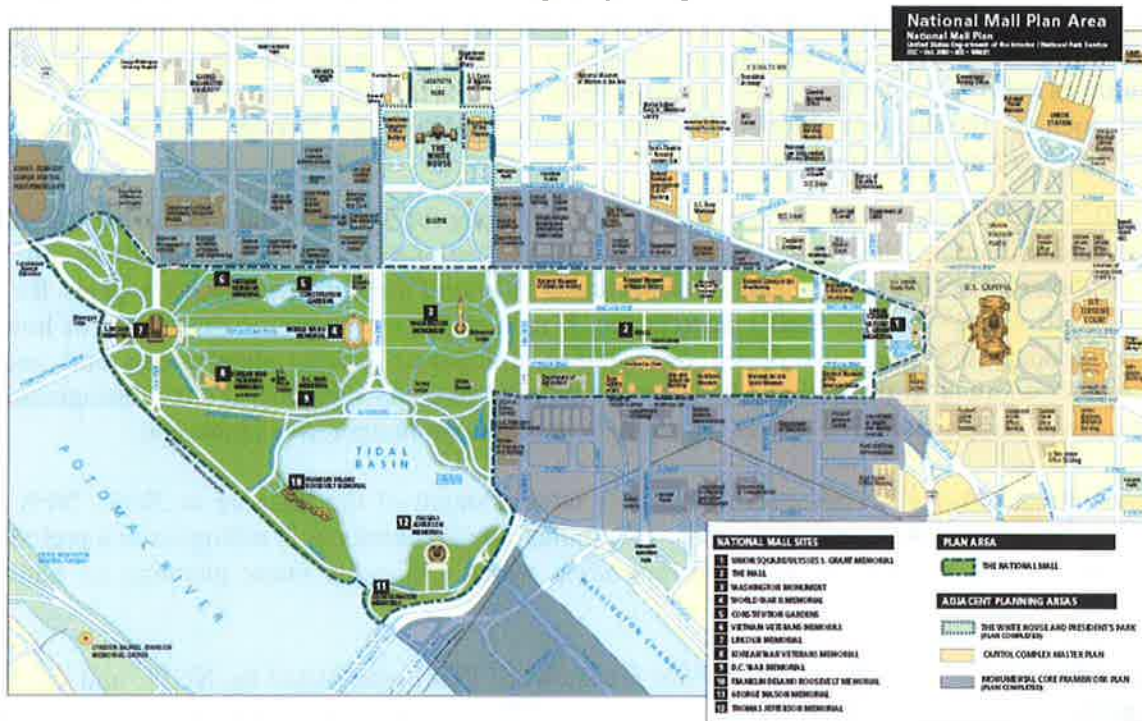


Figure 1: National Mall Plan Area

Much of the open space and commemorative landscape of the National Mall is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS), but many government agencies and entities have jurisdiction over lands and roads within and adjacent to the National Mall, including the

Architect of the Capitol, the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian Institution, the Department of Agriculture, the General Services Administration, the District of Columbia, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. In addition, federal and District of Columbia agencies, including the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), have review and approval authority in the areas of planning, historic preservation, commemorative works, and design.

### Planning Background and Context

The National Mall is the heart of Washington's Monumental Core. It is a place of inspiration, contemplation, pilgrimage, education, and recreation. It is a busy hub of local and national activities. It is a vast green park in the center of Washington. It has been the subject of seminal plans by L'Enfant and the McMillan Commission, as well as significant landscape plans by Andrew J. Downing; Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.; Skidmore, Owens, and Merrill (SOM); and Laurie Olin, among others. National museums and memorials have reframed and reshaped the appearance and symbolic character and meaning of the Mall since the founding of the capital city. This evolutionary growth continues today with a new memorial under construction and sites for a new memorial visitor center and a new national museum selected.

The National Mall is a destination for millions of visitors and regional residents and thousands of events and activities annually, and is served by a range of transportation modes. Ancillary buildings serving the needs of visitors have been a part of the Mall since the nineteenth century and include the historic Monument and Survey Lodges, the Sylvan Theater, and more contemporary restrooms and food kiosks.

NCPC's 1997 *Legacy Plan* is a vision plan for integrating the Monumental Core in the life of the city and extending the qualities and uses of the National Mall throughout the Core and Washington. The 2001 *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* furthers Legacy's goals for the protection of the National Mall's open space. It also advances the public discussion of how to accommodate the continued desire by many Americans to memorialize events and people deemed important to the nation. It recommends attractive and meaningful sites throughout the city, envisioning our capital city as the nation's premier commemorative landscape.

The National Mall Plan observes Congress's establishment of the Reserve in 2003. NPS and NCPC have undertaken a joint inventory of commemorative works in Washington as a prelude to a study entitled *Washington as Commemoration*, which will guide future planning for national commemoration.

The *Monumental Core Framework Plan* (Framework Plan), completed by NCPC and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) in April 2009, creates the framework for continued implementation of Legacy goals and concepts in three precincts surrounding the National Mall. It articulates specific planning objectives for extending some of the Mall's symbolic qualities and uses throughout the Monumental Core and creating and enhancing physical and visual connections between the National Mall and the surrounding city. NCPC and its many federal and District of Columbia partners are collaborating through a task force to implement Framework concepts through the creation of the Southwest EcoDistrict, which melds the sustainability goals

of Executive Order 13514 (Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance) with the redevelopment of public and private properties south of the National Mall.

The National Park Service's (NPS) draft National Mall Plan contributes significantly to these planning efforts. In addition to the Framework Plan, the National Mall Plan also complements NPS's 2000 *White House and President's Park Plan*; the District of Columbia's 2008 *Center City Action Agenda*, which redefines central Washington with the Mall as its centerpiece and advances Washington's identity as a waterfront city; and the *Capitol Complex Master Plan*, now in development by the Architect of the Capitol.

The development of the draft National Mall Plan is, in part, a response to increasing public and congressional concern for the physical appearance and uses of the Mall, complaints about the lack and condition of visitor amenities, interest in commemorative works, and debate about the need for and appearance of security barriers.

On April 12, 2005, former NCPC Chairman John Cogbill testified at the invitation of Senator Craig Thomas before the Senate Subcommittee on Natural Parks of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Senator Thomas's interest was in planning for future development and growth on the National Mall while "maintaining the National Mall as a place of national significance." Mr. Cogbill emphasized that the *Legacy Plan* is the guiding visionary plan for the monumental core for the next fifty to one hundred years and noted Congress's creation of the Reserve on the cross-axis of the Mall in the 2003 reauthorization of the Commemorative Works Act. Mr. Cogbill also testified, "A new Mall master plan would be a valuable tool in preserving its historic landscapes, managing its physical development, and improving its maintenance and services for visitors and residents alike."

NPS introduced the prospective development of the National Mall Plan to the public in the fall of 2006 with a week-long public symposium in Washington and nationwide media coverage. NPS established a website and developed newsletters to inform the public and solicit suggestions and comments. The website now contains a great deal of information about past and current planning and management of the National Mall, including documents describing the historic memorials, features, and landscapes of the Mall; studies and findings on transportation planning, the condition of the elms, and visitor habits and preferences; and public correspondence and comments.

NPS staff met with dozens of school, community, civic, business, and professional organizations, soliciting feedback and answering questions. The public process was extensive and the public comments far-ranging, from the need for better visitor amenities to concern for the physical appearance of the landscape; and from the importance of First Amendment demonstrations on the Mall to the need for better transportation options and accessibility.

The National Mall Plan is contained within a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Plan. NPS signed its Record of Decision (ROD) on November 9, 2010. Staff's summary of the ROD is found on pages 27-31 of this report. NCPC is a cooperating agency for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act.

NPS also conducted historic preservation review and consultation under the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 consultation occurred during each phase of the Plan's development, most intensively and specifically in the spring of 2009, when NPs held a regular series of meetings to consider the potential effects of possible new structures and landscape alterations to the historic fabric and character of the National Mall. NPS executed a Programmatic Agreement (PA) pursuant to Section 106 with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on November 8, 2010 following final circulation of the draft PA for comment. NCPC's Executive Director signed for NCPC as an invited signatory to the agreement. The Smithsonian Institution also signed the PA as an invited signatory, and other signatures are anticipated. Further information about the PA is found beginning on page 32 of this report.

The National Mall Plan, once it is reviewed and approved, will be implemented with site-specific projects to achieve the Plan's objectives. NPS will conduct additional compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act for individual projects. NPS anticipates a multiyear and multidisciplinary planning and design effort. Certain actions may require congressional authorization or revision of federal or park regulations. NPS will submit individual projects to NCPC for the commission's customary review of siting and design.

#### Other Projects on the National Mall

NPS and the Smithsonian Institution are both undertaking significant projects, some funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

NPS is repairing a portion of the Tidal Basin seawall in front of the Jefferson Memorial and is also rehabilitating the District of Columbia War Memorial, returning the memorial to its original function as a concert bandstand. NPS's largest Recovery Act project is the comprehensive rehabilitation of the Reflecting Pool and the lower approachway to the Lincoln Memorial, including the provision of full accessibility and vehicle barriers on the east side of the memorial. The source and quality of the water in the Reflecting Pool will be addressed by this project. The Elm Walks will be refurbished and illuminated. A concept plan for the improvement of the soil and turf on the center panels of the Mall was presented to the Commission and an Environmental Assessment has been released for public comment. These projects were designed in concert with the development of the National Mall Plan and reflect the Plan's goals.

Construction of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial is underway in West Potomac Park. The National Mall Plan recommends reviewing circulation and visitor use near the Tidal Basin after the memorial opens to assess if adjustments in access and visitor amenities are necessary.

NPS will soon install a comprehensive sign and wayfinding program for Mall and off-Mall destinations, funded by the Centennial Fund, matched by funds raised by the Trust for the National Mall.

In 2009, the Commission approved plans for the reconstruction of a portion of the levee in West Potomac Park and its extension eastward across 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW onto the Washington Monument

Grounds. The approved site plan includes the opportunity to redesign circulation and landscape in the area between Constitution Gardens Lake and 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, and for programming the now-vacant Lockkeeper's House with some of the visitor amenities proposed for this area in the National Mall Plan. The Plan recommends constructing a multi-purpose building (similar to the National Gallery of Art's Sculpture Garden restaurant pavilion) for dining, recreation, relaxation, and entertainment on the plaza at the east end of the lake.

NPS presented concepts to the Commission in October 2010 for the location and potential design of perimeter security at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, as well as improvements to visitor amenities, events space, and tour bus queuing. These elements are anticipated in the Plan.

NPS is proceeding with design development, consultation, and review of the sponsored and proposed Vietnam Memorial Visitors Center, to be located on a site west of Bacon Drive.

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) has used ARRA funds this year for necessary repairs to the Arts and Industries Building. SI is considering possible future uses for the now-vacant building. The National Museum of the American Latino Community Commission Act was signed into law in 2008 and the building is among locations being considered.

The Hirshhorn Museum has proposed a seasonal pavilion and enhanced programming of its courtyard during two months of every year.

The National Museum of American History has proposed the installation of large window in its west facade toward 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW and the return of the Alexander Calder stabile to its original location in the west lawn.

By far the most significant construction project by the Smithsonian Institution on the National Mall is the National Museum of African American History and Culture, to be constructed on the Washington Monument Grounds between Constitution Avenue and Madison Drive, and 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets. The Smithsonian and NCPC serve as co-leads for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act. SI has engaged many consulting parties and agencies in the ongoing environmental and historic preservation review. The Commission commented favorably on the concept design at its September 2010 meeting.

#### National Mall Plan – Planning Goals

The National Mall must function efficiently and flexibly at many levels: as the physical and symbolic setting for our nation's government; as part of Washington's park and open space system; as an integral component of Washington's circulation and transportation networks; as the setting for many of the nation's most admired memorials and museums; and as a stage for First Amendment demonstrations, national celebrations, and national and regional special events.

The public has expressed concern in recent years for the worn condition and deteriorated appearance of the Mall turf lawn, the stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of the Mall, the sometimes-shabby conditions of visitor facilities, the limited offerings of basic visitor

amenities, less-than-full accessibility to and on the Mall, the lack of adequate wayfinding, and some current conditions that don't allow for more sustainable management practices. Current facilities can become overwhelmed by use. Vegetation cannot easily recover, and areas of lawn may be worn to the ground and soils heavily compacted, which in turn adversely affects the vigor of trees and other vegetation. Many walks are not wide enough for current levels of use, and adjacent lawn and trees may be damaged as a result.

The National Mall Plan provides a comprehensive vision and framework to protect the historic character of the National Mall, to restore the health and beauty of its natural resources, to improve its function as our nation's premier civic space, and to meet the needs of local, national, and international visitors for enjoyment, education, and recreation.

The National Mall Plan is a framework for future stewardship, development, design, and implementation. It is akin to the Monumental Core Framework Plan in that it provides a foundation of guidance for the planning and design of individual projects or sectors, within a plan that seeks to balance comprehensive stewardship and the requirements of intensive public use for national and local purposes.

The Plan will facilitate the ability of National Mall and Memorial Parks to seek funding for the design and construction of projects. Completion of the Plan does not ensure that all actions will be funded or occur, however. As NPS implements the Plan with individual projects, it will provide ongoing opportunities for public involvement and for NCPC review and approval. As siting and design proceed for individual projects, NCPC or other review agencies may require modifications or alternatives to projects as they are described or indicated in the Plan.

In the implementation of future projects, NPS intends to work with well-respected firms with design expertise commensurate with the national significance of the setting, as demonstrated this year in projects for the rehabilitation of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and its surrounding setting, perimeter security design for the Jefferson Memorial, and the Mall turf rehabilitation.

NPS suggests that the proposed redevelopment of the Capitol Reflecting Pool at the east end of the Mall to create a new Union Square be an appropriate opportunity for a national design competition. The project will require a comprehensive consideration of desired and appropriate uses and will involve the Architect of the Capitol, other agencies and organizations, and the public.

NPS's broad goals for the National Mall Plan are to:

- Improve resource conditions; establish a standard of quality that invites respect and generates stewardship; and raise the standard of care and maintenance;
- Prepare for intensive levels of use for First Amendment demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events;



- Provide desired experiences, such as opportunities for education, contemplation, rest relaxation, recreation, entertainment, and social experiences;
- Address user capacity, which for this plan is defined as the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining desired resource conditions and visitor experiences on the National Mall;
- Provide for the physical needs, enjoyment, and convenience of visitors and park users, including information, restrooms, food, retail, drinking water, and access.

### National Mall Plan - Proposal

The composite map illustrating the overall framework for the Plan's proposals is shown as Figure 2 in this report. Pages 10 to 13 contain staff's summary of the proposals by area (east to west, and then north to south). Additional maps in the draft Plan follow. Discussion of the major proposals of the Plan follows in the "Analysis" section of this report, beginning on page 20.

The following is the staff's summary of the National Mall Plan and NPS's Record of Decision. The summary is similar to that contained in the report for the March 2010 Executive Director's Recommendation on the draft National Mall Plan. The final Plan is similar to the draft Plan, but contains updated or additional information, some in response to public and agency comments on the draft Plan. NPS has responded to both the Commission's and the staff's March 2010 comments on the draft.

The nation's premier civic space will be refurbished to sustain high levels of use and the needs of visitors in an energy-efficient manner. Its memorials and large areas of open space and vistas will be protected. The designed historic landscape will continue to support significant national events as well as accommodate contemporary visitor needs and uses. A more coherent pedestrian environment within the park will be created.

NPS will emphasize the National Mall as a year-round destination. Conditions and facilities for First Amendment demonstrations and special events will be improved. Better circulation and transportation modes will provide better access to the Mall's open space. Visitors will be welcomed by a comprehensive wayfinding system and additional, improved, and accessible restrooms, food service, and information. There will be more diverse opportunities for public enjoyment; educational, cultural, and musical programs; and active and passive recreation.

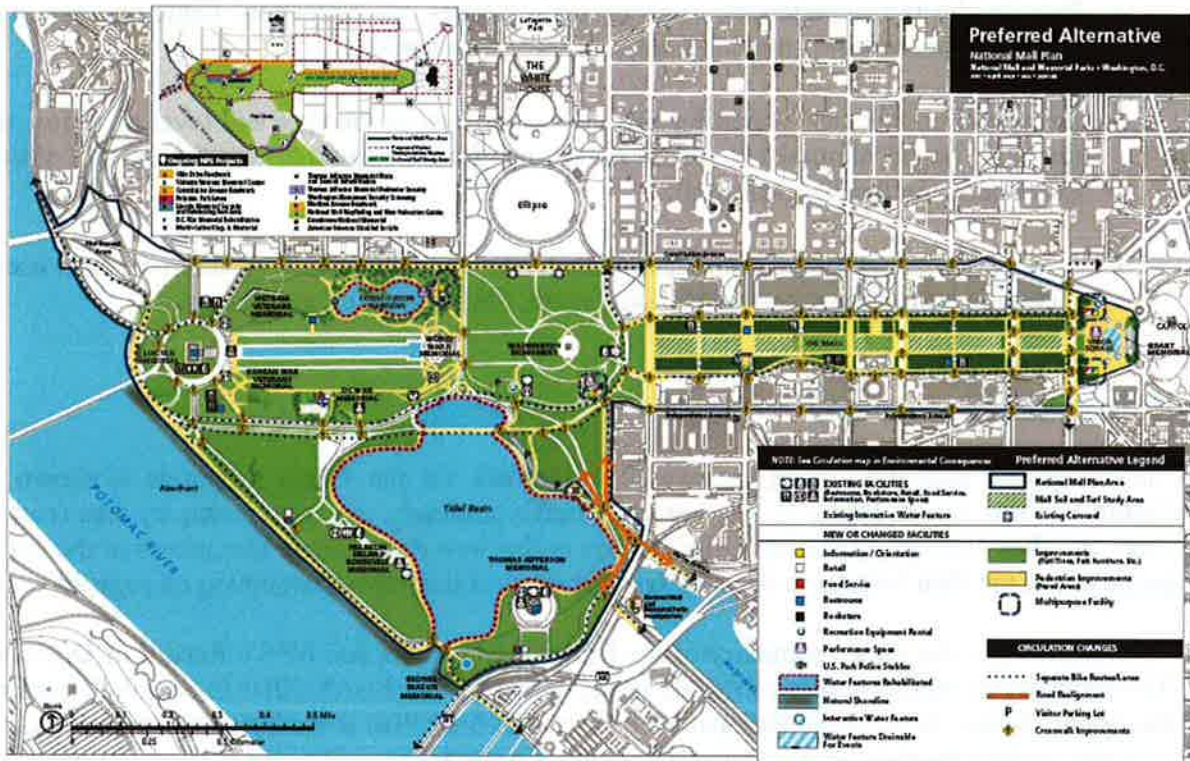


FIGURE 2: National Mall Plan (also referred to as the Preferred Alternative)

*The Mall*

Union Square (the Capitol Reflecting Pool and its surroundings)

- Restore the Grant Memorial as the focal point of a symmetrical, formally laid out civic square.
- Create a popular, active, and dignified day and evening destination
- Design it so it can be easily transformed into a larger venue for First Amendment demonstrations and events.
- Provide infrastructure for demonstrations and events
- Determine the location, size and character of visitor amenities through a comprehensive design plan.
- Consider a smaller reflecting pool to make the space more suited to various uses and reduce water use.
- Consider shade structures for visitor comfort and relaxation.
- Provide facilities (located outside view corridors) such as restrooms, drinking water and recreation equipment rentals.

#### The Mall (3<sup>rd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> Streets, NW)

- Improve and protect the turf lawns and elm trees.
- Remove compacted soils and replace with engineered soils capable of withstanding intensive use.
- Direct permitted special events temporary facilities such as tents and vehicles to the Mall's center panels or to hardscaped areas in order to protect the elm tree panels.
- Redesign areas in the 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 12th Street axes for higher levels of use and to support event logistical, operational, and temporary facilities.
- Design a welcome area at the head of the Metro escalators at 12th Street and Jefferson Drive, SW, to include a visitor contact station, high-capacity public restrooms, multiple orientation maps, and a tactile model or pavement map of the National Mall, along with shaded seating.
- Pave gravel pathways as part of a coordinated paving plan for the National Mall; the new surface (to be determined) should be a low-maintenance, sustainable, and universally accessible material to improve circulation, facilitate events, and maintain improved landscape conditions.
- Widen some north-south sidewalks to accommodate demonstrations, events, visitor amenities, or recreation.
- Design subtle grading of the turf panels to maintain the appearance of continuous turf in long views down the Mall.

#### *Washington Monument Grounds*

- Reopen the Washington Monument to visitors in the evening throughout the year.
- Replace the Sylvan Theater with a multipurpose facility on the Washington Monument Grounds at the northwest corner of 15th Street and Independence Avenue, SW, in the swale below the level of adjacent roads.
- Offer food service, retail, information, education, integrated exhibits, restrooms, and performance space in the new facility.
- Protect and improve views of the Washington Monument and the north-south vista between the Thomas Jefferson Memorial and the White House by removing the current visitor facilities buildings at the Tidal Basin.
- Provide utility infrastructure on the grounds for First Amendment demonstrations and special events.
- Improve pedestrian circulation to areas north and south of Independence Avenue, including access to the southwest waterfront and East Potomac Park.
- Construct a system of separate dedicated bike trails.
- Adapt the historic Survey Lodge for services and parking for visitors with disabilities.
- Provide bicycle and recreation equipment rentals.
- Continue to provide visitor information and restrooms at the Monument Lodge.
- Continue implementation of the 2003 Olin landscape plan through tree planting.
- Analyze and design options to provide for security at the Washington Monument.

*West Potomac Park***Constitution Gardens**

- Construct a multipurpose facility on the paved plaza at the east end of the lake.
- Provide food service, restrooms, education, retail, recreation equipment rentals (model boats, portable lawn chairs), and space for partner activities
- Provide a flexible performance space, stage, or gazebo.
- Rebuild the lake to be self-sustainable, with a non-potable, sustainable water source.
- Offer urban recreational activities, such as fishing and model boating.
- Relocate the historic canal lockkeeper's house away from the corner of 17th and Constitution Avenue NW.
- Adapt the lockkeeper's house to serve some of the amenities envisioned for this area, in concert with the proposed multi-purpose facility and the levee.

**Vietnam Veterans Memorial**

- Provide additional seating in the vicinity of the memorial for contemplation and rest.

**Lincoln Memorial and Grounds**

- Expand the restrooms within the Lincoln Memorial.
- Develop a ceremonial use for the Watergate steps.
- Construct a restroom in the vicinity of the south refreshment stand on French Drive.
- Provide for accessibility, security, and improved Reflecting Pool water quality.

**Korean War Veterans Memorial.**

- Widen the walks on the west side of the memorial to accommodate changing circulation patterns and group visitation.

**Ash Woods**

- Rebuild the U.S. Park Police stables and redesign the area to be compatible with the historic character and quality of the National Mall.
- Make the paddocks part of the visitor experience, with educational exhibits about the Park Police and horse patrols.
- Replace the Ash Woods restrooms with a new restroom building nearer the stables.
- Provide food service near the new restroom, if warranted by increased visitation.

**Tidal Basin**

- Create a sense of arrival at the Tidal Basin by redesigning pedestrian circulation and parking.
- Provide recreational experiences for strolling, sightseeing, bicycling, and boating.
- Install pedestrian lighting in a manner that would not affect the ambience of the memorial's lighting.
- Rebuild the Tidal Basin seawalls (based on future engineering recommendations) above tidewater.

- Retain the seawalls' historic appearance while accommodating wider walks and improving bicycling/vehicle circulation and safety.
- Develop a system of separate bicycle lanes or trails.
- Widen and separate walks for pedestrians and bicyclists on or near the Inlet, Outlet, and Kutz Bridges.
- Remove the recreation equipment rental and refreshment facilities on the northeast side of the Tidal Basin.
- Construct a new structure or structures for these functions and restrooms and seating in same general location, avoiding the north-south axial viewshed.

#### Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial

- Assess new visitor use patterns after completion of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial.
- Provide a small food service and restroom facility near Ohio Drive, if warranted by demand.

#### West Potomac Park Riverfront

- Establish sustainable, vegetated shoreline along the Potomac River.
- Provide areas for seating, fishing, and enjoyment of the river
- Provide nodes for water taxi service or for launching small, hand-carried watercraft (such as canoes or kayaks).
- Develop or separate bicycle lanes, trails, and improve pedestrian walkways along Ohio Drive.

#### Thomas Jefferson Memorial and Grounds

- Allow no special event stage, roof, or walls to obstruct the view to the White House from the north plaza of the memorial.
- Redesign the parking area south of the memorial for demonstrations and special events; provide utilities.
- Construct bicycle lanes or trails for safer or improved access near the memorial and to the I-395/14<sup>th</sup> Street bridges.
- Construct perimeter security for the memorial, handicap parking, and tour bus access.
- Rebuild and relocated the food kiosk.

### Conservation of the Natural Resources of the National Mall

The Conservation Zoning Map at Figure 3 illustrates how NPS manages its stewardship responsibilities for the natural and cultural resources of the Mall and balances them with accommodation of high intensity First Amendment demonstrations, events, and recreational activities. The Plan addresses how NPS will accommodate as much activity as possible in the most sustainable manner possible. NPS proposes that special events be directed to areas of the Mall designated for High Use (shown in yellow). The soils in these areas will be reengineered and the health of the turf protected through appropriate periods of activity and rest. The center panels of the Mall will continue to be a focus for permitted special events. As distinguished from

permits for *special events*, permits for *First Amendment demonstrations* will continue to be issued by NPS for areas throughout the Mall, as requested by demonstration organizers.

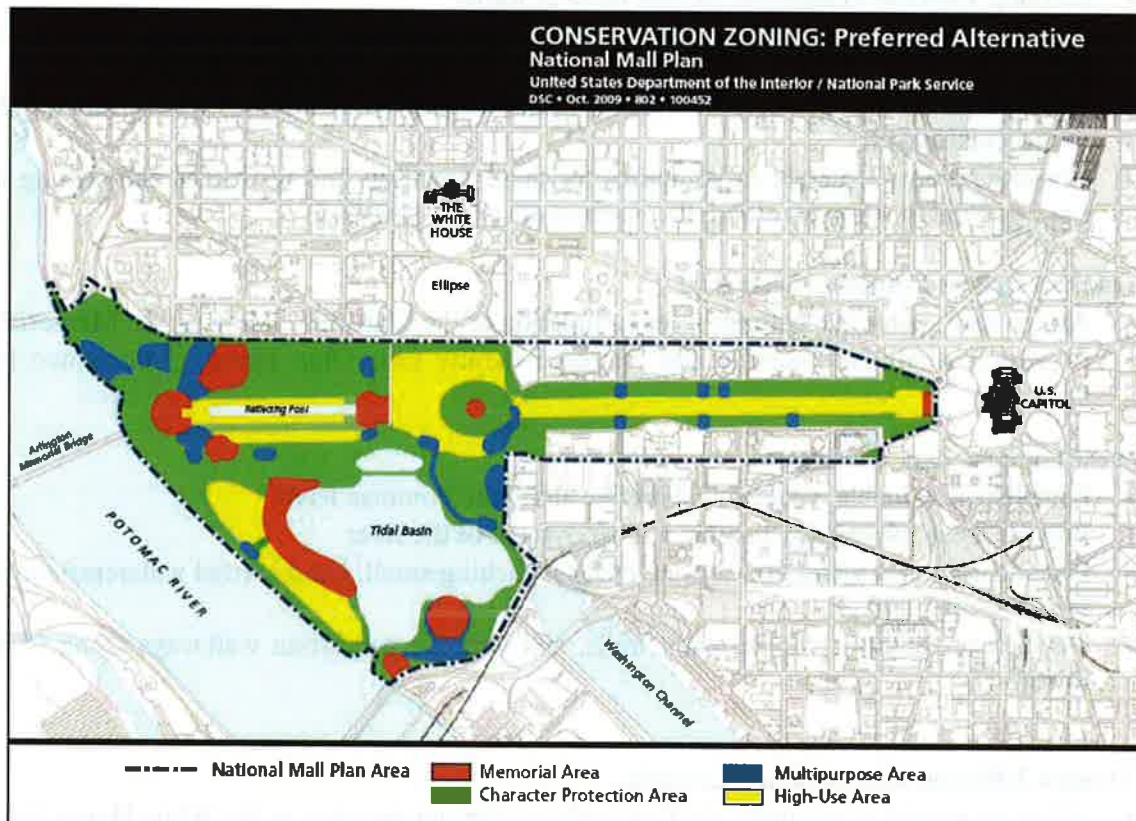


FIGURE 3: Conservation Zoning

The Conservation Zoning map also shows Character Protection areas (in green), including the elm panels, collectively one of the most significant compositional elements of the Mall. Conceived by the McMillan Commission, the panels frame the central axial greensward and shape the universally recognized scale and formal qualities of the National Mall. While Dutch elm disease affected stands of elms throughout the country in the past half-century, NPS preserved most of its elms through research and careful treatment. Following removal of the federal government's temporary office buildings (the tempos) by the 1970s, the elm panels were finally fully planted. Individual trees have been replaced as necessary, but most of the elms are mature and contribute to the landscape composition envisioned by the McMillan Commission.

NPS encourages the enjoyment of the Elm Panels by individuals or groups of visitors by walking, sitting, and picnicking. Benches and possibly small water features on the north-south paths will be added.

NPS intends to direct temporary structures and vehicles for permitted special events to the center panel of the Mall or to landscaped areas in order to ensure the protection of the elm panels. NPS

will continue ongoing monitoring and research for the protection and management of the elms and develop additional policies and procedures for the permitting of special events.

NPS issues permits for temporary *special events* on the Mall, with conditions for use by the events' organizers. Tents, vehicles, and hundreds or thousands of event participants walking to or standing in line at events tents and vehicles (such as for food service) further compact the soil around the elm roots, damage or kill turf underneath the tents if they are covered for a prolonged period, and contribute to the creation of trash in these areas. Temporary utilities are often installed along the ground and covered with matting to prevent tripping, which further damages the grass.

The Center for Urban Ecology, a research center for the National Park Service, has recently published a history and management plan for the elms of the Monumental Core that recommends preferred treatment for the protection of the elms. In addition, NPS has also retained the firm Hellmuth, Obata, and Kassabaum (HOK), in collaboration with nationally noted landscape experts, to research and produce a detailed treatment and protection plan for the turf of the National Mall. NPS considers the rehabilitation of the turf to be one of the first and most significant implementation measures of the National Mall Plan.

"Multipurpose" areas (shown in blue on the map in Figure 3) indicate where amenities for visitors will be constructed, expanded, or improved. The dearth of restrooms on the National Mall has been particularly noted by the public in comments to NPS. Additional locations for food service will be provided, usually in proximity to restrooms. Information for visitors will be more readily available. NPS's strategy is to disperse visitor amenities throughout the Mall, but to aggregate the types of amenities, as appropriate, where they will occur. Multi-purpose facilities are proposed for the east end of the National Mall, for the east end of Constitution Gardens Lake, in a new structure to replace the Sylvan Theater, and in a new building or buildings to replace the paddle boat rental facility at the north side of the Tidal Basin. A small restroom building is proposed near the food kiosk in front of the Air and Space Museum, in an area within the Elm Panel where the trees are less mature and construction can be accommodated.

### Circulation

The Circulation Map at Figure 4 graphically summarizes existing, improved, and proposed new routes, modes of circulation, and linkages on and around the National Mall. It includes two proposed visitor transportation routes that are described further in the February 2010 Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for NPS's 2006 *Washington, DC Visitor Transportation Study for the National Mall and Surrounding Park Areas*.

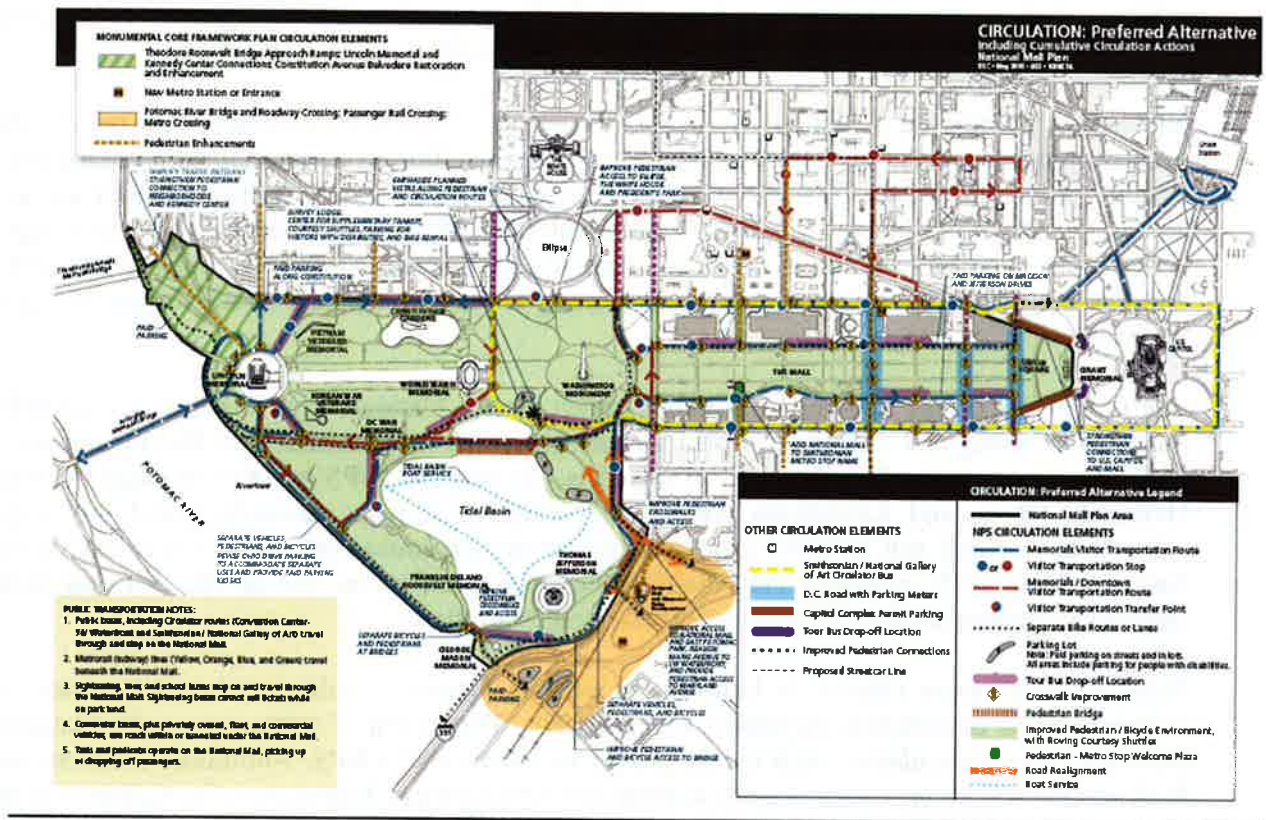


FIGURE 4: Circulation

A prominent feature of the circulation plan is the construction of separate, safer paths for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles. Routes on Ohio Drive, on Independence Avenue, around the Tidal Basin, on 15<sup>th</sup> Street, and on Madison Drive will receive particular attention. Unsafe chokepoints at the Kutz, Inlet, and Outlet Bridges will be altered or redesigned.

Bicycle connections and crosswalks between the Jefferson Memorial and the I-395/14<sup>th</sup> Street bridge corridor will be improved -- an area where the *Framework Plan* also recommends adding or improving pedestrian connections.

In addition, Tidal Basin boat service will be implemented, both for excursions and for drop-offs at various points.

Parking meters will be added on Madison and Jefferson Drives, on Constitution Avenue, and in all parking lots to encourage alternate means of arrival to the National Mall and potentially to create revenue to subsidize other transportation modes, such as the proposed visitor transportation system. (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets, NW are District of Columbia roads that already contain parking meters.) The map also designates tour bus drop-off locations.

Visitors with limited mobility will experience welcome improvements in access and services. The Survey Lodge, near the southwest corner of the Washington Monument Grounds, will be



dedicated to providing supplementary transit such as electric scooters and courtesy shuttles to sites around the Mall. Handicap parking will be provided at this location, as well as in all parking lots. The repurposing of the Survey Lodge is another example of the improved circulation linkages in the draft Plan; the lodge will become a node that links transit, handicap parking, courtesy shuttles and electric scooters, a bicycle trail, bicycle racks and rental, and tour bus drop-off.

Vehicles and interpretive materials will be universally accessible. Additional access will be allowed for Segways and electric scooters along the existing trail system on the Mall, as well as on Ohio Drive, SW and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. When used as a mobility assistive device, Segways and electric scooters are permitted throughout the Mall, including all facilities, sidewalks, and trails. NPS already has a policy of universal access for bicyclists within the parks; improvements in trails will improve conditions for bicyclists.

NPS proposes that the name "National Mall" be added to the Smithsonian Metrorail station name. A visitor welcome area with orientation maps, information, and restrooms will be sited and designed near the top of the Metro escalators.

Pennsylvania and Maryland Avenues, NW, adjacent to the Capitol Reflecting Pool, indicated in brown, are used for permit parking for the Capitol Complex. The draft Mall Plan recommends strengthening pedestrian connections to the U.S. Capitol and the Mall in these corridors.

The District of Columbia Department of Transportation's (DDOT) proposed streetcar route crossing the Mall on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW and NW is indicated on the map.

The D.C. Circulator's seasonal route is shown in yellow on the map. Two new proposed visitor transportation routes, with stops, are indicated in red and blue on the map and are described further in the following section of this report. The routes could be operated through the D.C. Circulator.

NPS released its Finding for its 2006 *Visitor Transportation Study* in February 2010. The purpose of the study was to develop a range of convenient transportation services coordinated with long-term transit planning for Washington, DC. NPS found that its preferred alternative best met the purpose of the study by "providing convenient two-way transportation service, maximizing interconnection points, providing choices in level of interpretation, and expanding service to a greater number of desired visitor destinations."

NPS's hybrid solution will offer many of the advantages of public transit with flexible options for interpretation, if desired by visitors. The preferred alternative calls for two proposed interconnected routes in the Monumental Core. (Service to Arlington National Cemetery will be extended to the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial.) A one-way loop will connect Downtown, the Federal Triangle, the Mall, and West Potomac Park. A two-way route will connect Union Station with the length and breadth of the National Mall and will extend to sites across Memorial Bridge.

Access will be provided to visitor destinations on and off the Mall. New transit stops will be located within easy walking access of Metrorail destinations. NPS envisions that service will provide basic visitor orientation by drivers or brochures. Riders will have a choice of additional educational or interpretive services through a range of potential audio/electronic options, including handheld devices or headphone plug-ins at each seat. NPS's preferred alternative does not preclude some route or stop modifications or the potential for pay-per-ride options. NPS intends to make ticketing options as seamless as possible for visitors through the integration of the SmarTrip card with future services.

NPS, DDOT, and the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) have been meeting since the release of the FONSI to plan the routes and their implementation.

### Recreation

Permitted activities on athletic fields are shown in Figure 5. NPS issues permits for fields or courts. Under a memorandum of agreement with the District of Columbia government, the District also issues permits for field use. NPS regulations restrict use in case of wet grounds, and activities are permitted at the discretion of the superintendent. Activities include softball, soccer, football, kickball, Frisbee, kite flying, rugby, and catch. The fields are well worn and most lack an irrigation system.

The Plan proposes improvements to the condition of the soil and turf so that the fields can durably withstand a high intensity of use, thereby increasing capacity for games. The fields are multi-purpose fields, with the intended purpose of allowing flexibility in the scheduling and type of sport played on them. One of the goals of *CapitalSpace* is to increase capacity for athletic fields in federal and District of Columbia open space.

NPS notes that it will continue working with NCPC to mitigate the loss of one multipurpose field for the construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitors Center.

For passive and informal recreation, the Circulation map (Figure 4, page 16) indicates proposed improvements in the addition and type of facilities and recreational opportunities, in improved surfaces and separated paths, in more points of access, and in safer conditions for bicycling, walking, jogging, in-line skating, and boating of various kinds. Equipment rentals (including boats, kites, and bicycles) and bicycle racks are proposed at several locations in West Potomac Park.

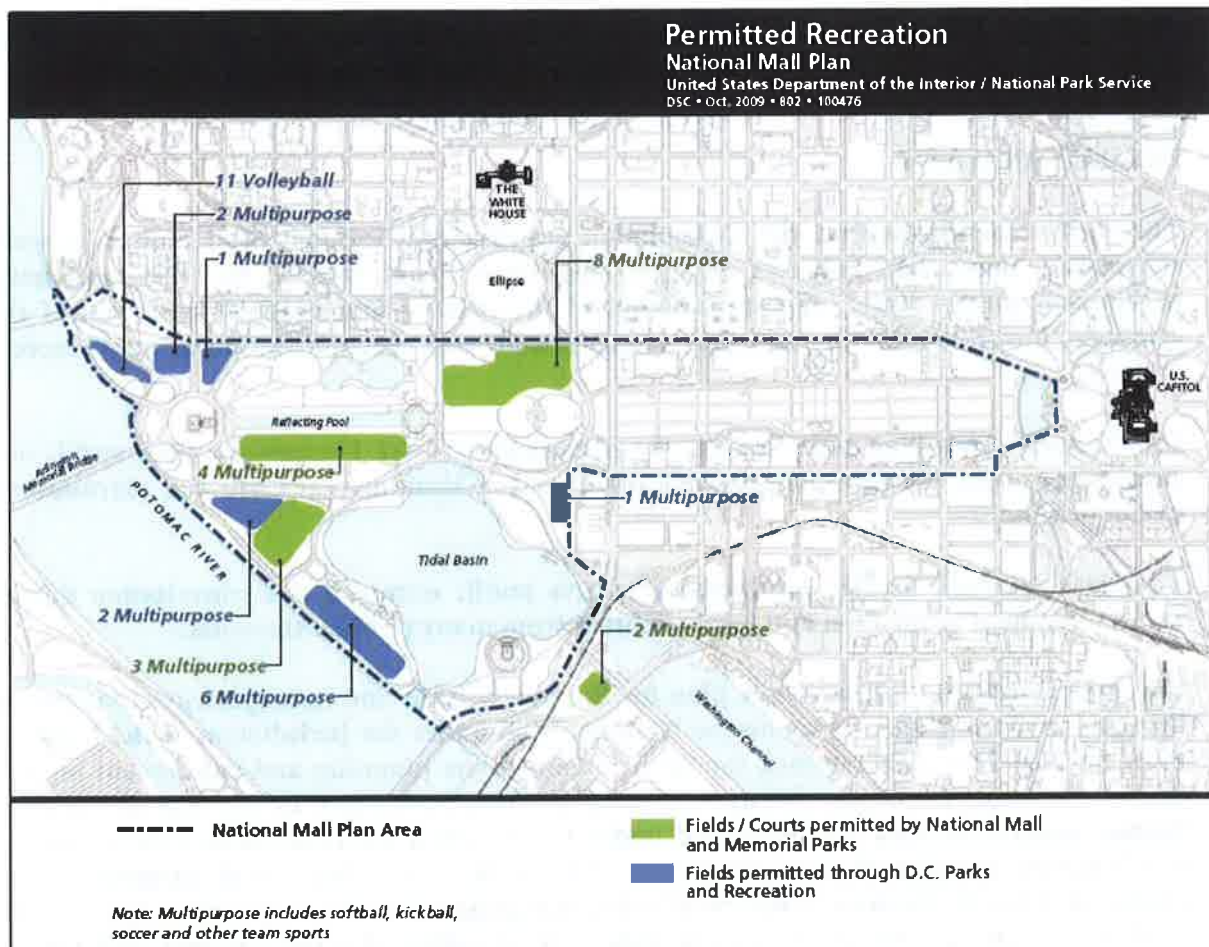


Figure 5: Permitted Recreation

The National Mall Plan – 2010 General Implementation Priorities

NPS has placed projects in three priority categories—high, medium, and low. The order of listing does not indicate any mandatory order of implementation. NPS will update the implementation priorities periodically or change priorities due to funding availability, donations, or park needs. Higher priority projects are those that place the National Mall on a sustainable track for the future. Staff has provided the list and map of NPS’s Implementation Priorities to commissioners and NPS has posted the information for the public.

High priority projects include: Union Square design competition and construction; National Mall paving materials, infrastructure, and site furnishings; Tidal Basin seawalls and walks; Mall welcome plaza at the Metrorail station; tree panel and street tree restoration; circulation and bridge improvements at the Tidal Basin; construction of restrooms at Constitution Gardens, the Lincoln Memorial, and in Ash Woods; construction of a multi-purpose facility and food service at the Washington Monument Grounds (the location of the Sylvan Theater); implementation of the Visitor Transportation System (such as the DC Circulator); and potentially relocate the

lockkeeper's house and adapt it for visitor amenities in concert with the construction of the Constitution Gardens multi-purpose facility and levee.

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

**The staff recommends that the Commission approve the National Mall Plan as a well-considered plan that balances equally important requirements for this nationally preeminent public place: the stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of the symbolic, historic landscape and the encouragement and accommodation of public access and use.**

**The National Mall Plan complements the Monumental Core Framework Plan and is one component of the broader planning initiative for the Monumental Core and surrounding urban precincts.**

**The National Park Service conducted extensive public outreach and consultation during the development of the Plan and has benefitted from many public comments.**

**The Plan constitutes a framework plan for the stewardship and management of visitors to the memorials and open space on the National Mall under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. It is a framework for future detailed site planning and subsequent project design and implementation. Many individual projects anticipated in the Plan will require further analysis as they are developed under the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. NPS will submit individual projects to the commission for its customary review of siting and design, and the commission may ask for modifications or alternatives to projects described or indicated in the National Mall Plan as they are developed and presented for public comment.**

With an approved National Mall Plan, NPS will be in a position to seek funding to begin the fine-grained programming and design that will lead to improvements in the health of natural resources, the appearance of facilities, and access and circulation to and around the Mall.

Following are staff recommendations in support of major proposals in the National Mall Plan.

### *Conservation of Natural Resources*

Staff supports the protection of the character-defining natural resources of the National Mall. Even aside from the historic and symbolic qualities of the Mall, the landscape should be a beautiful and welcoming environment. The health and appearance of the trees and turf lawn of the Mall are high priorities for the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior, and for Congress. Preservation of the turf and trees through appropriate permitting of special events on the Mall is a responsible and reasonable way to manage these significant natural resources and allow them to recover after heavy use.

NPS has long experience in and scientific observation of the care of the elm panels that have led it to recommend that the panels and other parts of the Mall with trees of special status no longer be available for the installation of temporary structures for special events. Special events organizers will continue to use the center panel of the Mall and other “high use” areas such as the Washington Monument Grounds and open space in West Potomac Park (illustrated in the Conservation Zoning Map at Figure 3). Existing and proposed hardscaped areas will support high-intensity uses during special events such as temporary structures and Jumbotrons. NPS has considered the research and recommendations of multiple studies in its FEIS and ROD.

While supporting the active use of the National Mall for national festivals and large events that bring visitors to the nation’s capital and to the Mall, staff notes that the Monumental Core Framework Plan envisions holding national celebrations and events in other locations adjacent or near the Mall and in East Potomac Park. The Framework Plan recommends landscape improvements to the character and quality of the nearby public spaces (such as 10<sup>th</sup> Street, SW) and associated improvements to pedestrian and transit connections so that these public spaces will be considered by the public to be desirable, convenient, and inspiring locations for special events. The Framework Plan’s recommendations are intended to reduce the heavy demand for *special events* on the National Mall and to protect the natural and cultural resources of the Mall’s historic landscape.

NPS’s practice of reviewing and issuing permits for *First Amendment demonstrations* at locations requested by demonstration organizers will continue.

#### *Visitor Transportation*

Staff supports the implementation of visitor transportation routes to and through the National Mall that will replace the current tour operator. NPS has proposed a transportation system with clean fuel vehicles that will run regular, marked routes with transit stops, and that will be linked to the DC Circulator, Metrorail, Metrobus, tour buses (parked at Union Station and elsewhere), and bicycle paths and lanes on and near the Mall. While basic orientation will be provided by the driver and brochures or maps, interpretation will be optional and provided by electronic means.

NPS, DDOT, and the Downtown BID have met during 2010 to continue planning for the DC Circulator and the future associated and connected Mall-area transportation system.

The staff supports NPS’s proposal to install parking meters on several of the park roads to produce revenue that could be used to subsidize the cost of the transportation service.

#### *Improvements in Visitor Amenities*

Staff supports the co-location of food service and restrooms where possible, and the development of multi-purpose facilities at several nodes throughout the National Mall that will provide amenities to visitors and residents. These amenities can include food service, rest rooms, education and information, and entertainment or performances in some venues.

Staff supports the development of a facility similar to the National Gallery of Art's Sculpture Garden Pavilion at the east end of Constitution Gardens. Along with additional proposals for small boating on the lake, the east end of Constitution Gardens has the potential to be a significant contribution to the recreational use and enjoyment of the lake by local residents and visitors.

Staff agrees with NPS that dispersal of these amenities throughout the Mall, located and designed appropriately, is the correct approach. Suggestions for the reuse of the Smithsonian's Arts and Industries Building as a visitor center for the Mall have been made. Regardless of the fact that the building is currently vacant, the National Mall is two miles long. Visitors should expect to find well-located restrooms, food service, and information within a reasonable walking distance.

Furthermore, one of the Plan's goals -- and one of the Monumental Core Framework Plan's goals -- is to increase the number of accepted and well-used entry points to the National Mall and the flow of visitors to, through, and throughout the Mall. The comprehensive wayfinding system has been designed with that object in mind. Dispersed locations for amenities, information, and education will encourage the public to visit and experience all parts of the National Mall.

#### *Redevelopment of the Capitol Reflecting Pool as Union Square*

This Plan proposal is one of the linchpins of the National Mall Plan and NPS ranks it a high priority for implementation. As now envisioned, the Trust for the National Mall will administer a design competition to commence in about one year's time. The area is now used for both First Amendment demonstrations and permitted special events, but the area is not adequate to support the equipment typically required for large events. A new plan for this area will provide utilities, public restrooms, food service, and other services so that the east end of the Mall at the foot of the U.S. Capitol can become as attractive in appearance as it is prominent in location. The provision of a public square designed for special events and demonstrations (or designed to be convertible to such uses) will attract groups as well as individual visitors to this prominent location and help reduce wear on the turf and trees of the National Mall.

The McMillan Plan's vision of a formal French garden landscape in this location was never realized. Some trees from the later Olmsted, Jr. landscape plan of the 1930s do survive at the periphery. In the early 1970s, following the construction of the Center Leg Freeway, the reflecting pool was built over the highway, but the pool was not integrated in a compelling landscape design with the surrounding land managed by the Architect of the Capitol. The Capitol Reflecting Pool provides a beautiful image of the Capitol dome but the area around it can seem austere, shade is insufficient in the summer, and circulation through the site is peripheral. The area is not commensurate in quality with the rest of the central axis of the National Mall.

The site demands the highest achievement in comprehensive landscape planning, programming, and design. The redevelopment must involve the active participation of the Architect of the Capitol, the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian Institution, and the General Services Administration, among others. The American public and the nation's most talented and capable designers must be engaged. NPS intends to do just that, and plans to hold a national design

competition are underway. When plans for redesign begin, a public discussion of desirable design qualities and uses (such as the degree of formality, type of water features, location and type of visitor amenities, the nature of the programmed uses) will inform the redesign process.

#### *Accessibility for mobility-impaired visitors*

Staff supports NPS's implementation of the Plan to address comprehensively the needs of mobility-impaired visitors to the Mall through the establishment of a convenient central location at the Survey Lodge for courtesy shuttles, electric scooters, and handicap parking. Full accessibility at the west end of West Potomac Park between the Reflecting Pool and the Lincoln Memorial will be provided through the current ARRA-funded rehabilitation project. The Plan also recommends paving the gravel paths of the Mall to create a more even and dust-free walking surface. This is a subject that has engaged public opinion and comments for many years. NPS must develop its proposals for the paths in consultation with the public and a range of experts. Staff supports the provision of services and vehicles for visitors needing mobility assistance throughout the Mall, but encourages NPS to inform the public as it develops and designs its plans for Mall paths.

In recent months, NPS has moved forward with its proposal for turf and soil reconstruction on the center panels of the National Mall. The Commission commented favorably on a concept at its June 2010 meeting for the reconstruction of three center panels. The reconstruction includes the incorporation of a shallow curb around the panels in order to support the reconstructed turf and the irrigation system, to collect water run-off from the turf panels and paths and direct it to underground cisterns, and to protect the turf against turning vehicles. The shallow curbs conform to requirements for universal access.

#### *Improvements to the Athletic Fields and the Bicycle Path Network*

The public's concern for the appearance of the Mall's turf extends to the athletic fields. Local leagues sometimes experience the poor quality of the fields, and NPS and the District experience difficulties in scheduling games. If the soil is re-engineered so that the fields are more durable, the result will be greater capacity for athletic use, since the fields will recover quickly from high-intensity use. Staff supports the improvement of playing fields so that they will have better appearance and health and support greater capacity, which are *CapitalSpace* goals.

The Executive Director noted in his Finding of No Significant Impact for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center that mitigation for the loss of athletic fields on the site of the Center would be required. At the June 4, 2009 meeting, at which the Commission commented on the revised concept design for the Center, the Commission noted that NPS had not yet responded to this requirement. The Plan states that NPS is continuing to study possible mitigation.

The National Mall is located at the center or confluence of a regional network of bicycle routes. The Plan recognizes the need to add, improve the condition of, and separate bicycle paths for the region's many bicyclists who ride on the Mall for recreation or who commute across the Mall. Placing bicycle racks throughout the Mall, especially near transit nodes, and developing bicycle rental and bicycle sharing programs will significantly improve access to the Mall, reduce the

intrusion of paved parking lots, and improve the health and appearance of the Mall's natural resources. Staff strongly supports the integration of the Mall and Monumental Core into the city's bicycle network. NPS is currently studying how and where it could accommodate future bicycle sharing stations on the Mall. Staff also supports the use of the Mall for bicycle circulation on designated and well-designed paths.

*The National Mall as a Sustainable Urban Park*

Staff supports NPS's goal for the National Mall as a model of sustainable urban park development, resource protection, and management. The National Mall should be a healthy and beautiful park as well as a symbolic manifestation of our democratic history. Staff recommends that the final National Mall Plan be amplified to include more specific information about how NPS intends to meet the requirements and goals of the October 5, 2009 Executive Order 13514, Federal Leadership in Environment, Energy, and Economic Performance.

NPS summarizes its sustainability goals as follows:

**Sustainable Water Use:** Conserve water; reduce use of potable water for large designed water bodies; use non-potable water sources when feasible; capture, store and reuse storm and graywater for irrigation; filter and reuse water; complete the Potomac Park Levee; use a vegetated shoreline for Potomac where feasible, and rely more on natural methods to improve water quality.

**Resource Health:** Implement the Sustainable Sites Initiative ©; restore soils and reverse soil compaction; improve tree health and growing conditions; reduce impacts from high use levels; protect special status trees (elm, cherry, and witness trees); preserve or restore plant biomass; and improve ecosystem health.

**Circulation:** Facilitate pedestrian activities; use clean alternative fuel sources in visitor transportation; maximize use of public transportation; facilitate multi-modal coordination; separate bicycle routes and offer rentals; use sustainable approaches to walk surfacing to facilitate water reuse.

**Sustainable Facilities:** Achieve highest LEED standards possible for new facilities (minimum LEED standard for NPS is silver); reduce energy consumption and seek renewable energy sources; maximize energy efficiency and convert inefficient approaches (LED lighting) facilities; increase recycling, reduce amount of solid waste, and increase use of biodegradable products.

**Meeting Requirements and Policy:** Meet Executive Order 13514 (Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance); meet NPS policy and program goals (Climate Friendly Parks; meet minimum LEED silver standards; achieve NPS goals to reduce energy use; reduce greenhouse gases, maximize energy efficiency, improve building envelopes, mechanical systems and glazing).



The Executive Director's March 2010 recommendations on the draft National Mall Plan included a reference to the approved 2003 Olin landscape plan for the grounds of the Washington Monument (Figure 6). The Commission-approved landscape plan envisions the planting of hundreds of additional trees to improve the appearance, health, and shade of the Grounds, to complement the revised circulation pattern, and to frame the Grounds and reinforce viewsheds. NPS has confirmed in its final Plan that it will continue to implement the Olin Plan on land under its jurisdiction. Given the future National Museum of African American History and Culture, staff has discussed with SI and NPS staffs the value of fully integrating landscape planning for the Washington Monument Grounds.



FIGURE 6: Olin Landscape Plan for the Washington Monument Grounds

## CONFORMANCE

### Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital (Comprehensive Plan) provides goals and policies that guide the Commission in evaluating and acting on plans and projects in the National Capital. The National Mall Plan supports the three major themes of the Comprehensive Plan by providing improved stewardship of the cultural and natural resources on the National Mall as our nation's symbolic gathering place; by improving the physical conditions and visitor amenities for

permitted and informal activities on the National Mall and for active and casual uses; by offering improved education, interpretation, and wayfinding on and beyond the Mall; by expanding circulation paths and modes on the Mall and improving connections to areas around the Mall; and by improving the sustainability of resources and management practices in accordance with Executive Order 13514 (Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance) and with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management).

The three major themes of the Comprehensive Plan are:

1. Accommodate federal and national capital activities
2. Reinforce smarter, more coordinated growth
3. Support coordination with local and regional governments

The staff finds the National Mall Plan to be in conformance with the goals and policies of federal elements of the Comprehensive Plan, as follows.

#### *Parks and Open Space Element*

The Parks and Open Space Element establishes policies to protect, enhance, and expand the region's parks and open space system. With the adoption of the National Mall Plan, NPS will seek funding for ongoing and future projects to improve amenities, recreation, programs, and access for visitors. Creating paved surfaces and utilities in selected places on the Mall (while an alteration of the current greensward in some locations), and issuing events permits for areas designated for high use, will allow NPS to improve and maintain the health and appearance of the turf lawn and trees. NPS will continue to review and issue permits for First Amendment demonstrations at locations requested by demonstration organizers. The transition to multi-purpose ball fields will allow permitted recreation to continue while maintaining the appearance and unprogrammed use of those areas when ball games are not scheduled.

#### *Environment Element*

The Federal Environment Element promotes the federal government as an environmental steward and identifies the Commission's planning policies related to the maintenance, protection, and enhancement of the region's natural environment. The National Mall Plan identifies measures for the reduction or elimination of potable water for the pools and lake. NPS anticipates that new structures will incorporate geothermal technology, that new paths will be constructed of more sustainable materials and be more permeable, that reengineered soil will improve the health and appearance of the turf and the elms and that they will be maintained with gentler means. Improved transit and bicycling opportunities and, notably, significant improvement in the provision of a central facility and small vehicles for use by visitors who are disabled, will reduce the current dependency on private automobiles to reach and move around the National Mall.

### *Preservation and Historic Features Element*

The Preservation and Historic Features Element helps to strengthen the significant architectural and planning character that makes our nation's capital a unique place. The implementation of best management practices for the protection of the turf lawn and trees will help NPS achieve its stewardship responsibilities for the preeminent historic landscape. The memorials on the National Mall will continue to be protected and their surrounding open space maintained. The primary east-west vistas and several north-south vistas on the National Mall will be improved and perpetuated. Proposed facilities are located away from major viewsheds, and must be designed appropriately. The Plan also recommends removing buildings that are close to major viewsheds, such as the facilities at the north side of the Tidal Basin.

### *Transportation Element*

The Transportation Element promotes a balanced, multi-pronged strategy to maximize federal employees' and facilities' access to the region's extensive transit system. The continuation and expansion of a low-cost transportation system (such as the DC Circulator or a similar system) to and around the Mall from major transit hubs (such as Union Station), improvements in orientation and wayfinding at the Metro station on the Mall and throughout the Mall, and the provision of separate bicycle paths and bicycle rental programs and systems such as Bikeshare on the National Mall are encouraged by this element.

### National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

NPS conducted an extensive and vigorous public involvement process for the National Mall Plan including a public symposium, the establishment of a website, newsletters, briefings, public scoping and comment meetings, and the release of a preliminary range of alternatives well in advance of the draft Plan so that the public would have additional time to comment. NPS received approximately 18,000 comments during the comment period and thousands more after the comment period closed. Many comments in this first phase expressed concern for the protection of First Amendment rights. After the draft EIS was released in December 2009, more than 400 distinct comments were received from 11 cooperating agencies, 12 consulting parties, three regional governments, nine organizations, and 88 individuals. NPS responded to these comments in a companion volume to the National Mall Plan/Final EIS. Approximately 7,000 copies of the Plan were released in hard copy or as CDs. As elements of the plan are implemented NPS will continue public involvement pursuant to NEPA and the National Historic Preservation Act. NPS will also submit proposed projects to the National Capital Planning Commission and to the Commission of Fine Arts for review and action on siting and design. NPS pledges to continue working with District of Columbia and federal agencies and organizations "on matters of mutual concern and public interest."

Secretary Salazar signed a Record of Decision (the ROD) for the National Mall Plan on November 9, 2010. The National Park Service prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), in which NCPC participated as a cooperating agency. NCPC is a federal

agency with its own NEPA obligations set forth in its Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures. The Executive Director used NPS's FEIS and ROD in the preparation of his recommendations.

The National Mall Plan is also referred to in the EIS as the "Preferred Alternative," and is a compilation of proposed actions and focus in the three action alternatives, each of which emphasized to different degrees the resources and uses of the National Mall. The three alternatives developed with public input, emphasize: Historic Landscape and Education; Welcoming National Civic Space for Public Gatherings, Events, and High-Level Uses; and Urban Open Space, Urban Ecology, Recreation, and Healthy Lifestyles.

Staff concurs with the National Park Service that the Preferred Alternative achieves the necessary balance between the protection of the natural and cultural resources that have come to symbolize and characterize the National Mall and the adaptation of the National Mall to meet current and future needs of all visitors. NPS carefully considered the need for facilities and amenities while protecting the Mall's well-known historic resources and landscapes; protecting and improving the vistas; and reversing the damage to natural resources and improving the health and appearance of the turf lawn and trees. Visitor transportation options will reduce reliance on automobiles. NPS is also committed to making improvements to the health and appearance of its designed water features, water source management, and the incorporation of sustainable materials and practices in the construction of facilities and in its maintenance operations.

The ROD explains NPS's selection of the Preferred Alternative and highlights the goals and objectives of the National Mall Plan. It summarizes general actions for the National Mall (similar to the staff's summary in this report) by topics such as cultural resources, natural resources, the civic stage, access and circulation, visitor experience, and park operations.

NPS's ROD made a finding of no impairment of park resources and values. The implementation of the preferred alternative will not inhibit the park from fulfilling its specific purpose, as identified in the laws and other authorizations of the National Mall and those for specific memorials, monuments, and other features. Some proposed actions have the potential to cause adverse effects on cultural resources. Therefore, NPS entered into a Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA) and pursuant to that agreement further consultation will be required to make a final determination of effect on individual projects and to identify appropriate mitigation measures. A new design for Union Square could result in long-term, minor to major, adverse impacts on cultural resources. The proposed redesign will require further environmental and historic preservation compliance. Impacts on natural resources will be long-term, minor to moderate, and both adverse and beneficial. NPS found that those natural resources that will be adversely impacted by the implementation of the selected action are not key to the overall integrity of the natural resources, nor will the impacts inhibit the overall enjoyment of those resources.

When NPS began planning for the National Mall Plan, it worked with cooperating agencies to develop planning principles that were later refined through public comment and other input into planning objectives. The preferred alternative was compiled from the comparison of analyzed

alternatives against NPS's planning objectives to ensure that most of the objectives were consistently satisfied.

*NPS's planning objectives include:*

- 1) The protection of primary vistas, monuments, memorials, and their settings.
- 2) The management of historic resources to be compatible with the historic plans for the National Mall and the Legacy Plan and related plans.
- 3) The improvement of the condition of natural resources (trees, soil, turf, water).
- 4) The continuation of the Mall as a venue for First Amendment demonstrations and national celebrations.
- 5) The management of special events to sustain the health of park resources, to balance the desires of all users, and to ensure a safe environment by equitable space distribution plus natural resource restoration and time for general visitation and recreation.
- 6) The addition or redesign of high-use venues to meet the needs of demonstrations and special events on the Mall and to reduce impacts.
- 7) The fulfillment of the Mall's symbolic and civic importance by making the National Mall a role model of inclusiveness and universal design for all citizens.
- 8) The improvement of public access and circulation to be convenient, well-marked, flexible, safe for walking and bicycling, and supplemented for mobility-impaired visitors.
- 9) The improved integration of the National Mall with the urban fabric of Washington by providing better pedestrian amenities and entryways.
- 10) The enhancement of visitor services to welcome and inform visitors, an improved Park website, multilingual programs, increased coordination with adjacent museums, the installation of a mass notification system, education and interpretation about the First Amendment and memorials.
- 11) The continued function of the National Mall as an important part of the District of Columbia's park and open space network while balancing recreational opportunities with other uses of the National Mall; the improvement in visitor amenities with new facilities and in visitor safety and comfort.
- 12) The improvement in information for visitors so they can find their way around or receive notification of what to do in emergency situations through the new wayfinding sign program, interagency preparedness programs with safe havens or evacuation plans, emergency call systems, and an emergency notification system.

13) The rehabilitation of the National Mall to be a showcase for inclusiveness and universal design.

14) The rehabilitation of the National Mall as a role model in sustainable urban park development and resource protection management, the design of new facilities that meet or exceed NPS silver LEED requirements, and the improvement in park maintenance and operations.

15) The improvement of cooperation among agencies through coordinated planning, information, services, facilities, and programs for visitors, residents, and the local workforce.

*The natural resources on the National Mall will be preserved and protected to the greatest extent possible. Mitigating measures intended to reduce or eliminate adverse effects on natural resources may include the following:*

**Air Quality:** Implementing a dust abatement program, implementing sustainable management and planting to increase landscape ecology, and reducing auto emissions by improving bus access and parking.

**Water Resources:** Undertaking erosion control measures during construction, minimizing discharge to water bodies, avoiding heavy equipment in waterways, installing a runoff filtration system to minimize water pollution from larger parking areas; taking into consideration the most current data and scientific models related to climate change in any future projects affecting water resources. The Environmental Protection Agency requested that NPS educate the public about graywater use at ornamental water features where it is used.

**Wetlands and Floodplain Management:** Ensuring that all wetlands are delineated, evaluating all plans and actions within the 100-year floodplain or that might affect wetlands, performing construction activities to prevent damage caused by equipment or erosion or siltation. NPS has completed a Statement of Findings for Floodplain Management pursuant to Executive Order 11988.

**Soils:** Building new facilities on soil suitable for development, minimizing soil erosion as required by the Chesapeake Bay Protection Act to buffer waterways.

**Vegetation:** Monitoring areas used by visitors (such as trails) for vegetation disturbance, ensuring that vegetation along the tidal shore conforms to the extent possible with recommendations set by the Chesapeake Bay Protection Act.

**Wildlife:** Using techniques where necessary to reduce impacts on wildlife, implementing a natural resource protection program for construction projects, removing food-related items and rubbish, salvaging topsoil, re-vegetating disturbed areas, addressing the overabundance of native species such as the Canada goose through resource monitoring and specific planning with public

input, minimize impacts to migratory birds, consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on plans that might affect the health of migratory birds.

**Threatened or Endangered Species and Species of Concern:** Consulting with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the District of Columbia Department of the Environment on all projects such as shoreline work that could potentially impact habitat for shortnose sturgeon, minimize immediate and long-term impacts on threatened or endangered species.

The ROD also describes steps NPS will take to monitor the resource standards and user capacities that have been established for venues on the National Mall. Different monitoring programs will be developed for both *normal visitation* and for permitted activities. NPS will continue to improve *normal visitation* counting methodologies and will assess activities to determine if improvements can be made to either visitor experiences or resource conditions. Social monitoring at memorials will track normal visitation and will examine whether desired conditions are being met or exceeded. When it is evident over an extended period that the visitation exceeds desired use levels, NPS will identify adaptive management techniques to mitigate adverse effects on visitor experiences. Elements of visitor experiences deemed desirable to maintain include ease of access, opportunities for contemplation, education, photography, seeing or reading memorial elements, and enjoying a memorial's ambience.

NPS's monitoring of *permitted activities* will track and compile data related to First Amendment gatherings, national celebrations, special events, permitted organized recreation, and commercial filming. Monitoring will include tracking events, events days, and locations, the size of events, weather conditions, related planning documents, and permit compliance. NPS will use incentive programs to encourage shorter, low-impact, green, and sustainable permitted activities. Based on its findings, NPS may revise the required recovery periods after permitted activities to shorten the permitted activities its setup or takedown times, require longer recovery periods between special events and national celebrations, track and enforce compliance with permit conditions, modify regulations for national celebrations, special events and commercial filming (*not* First Amendment gatherings), increase bonding requirements and cost recovery efforts (*again, not* First Amendment gatherings).

Allied to the monitoring and permitting practices summarized above, NPS will also undertake more detailed implementation plans to achieve desired resource conditions. Progress in meeting these conditions will be monitored as part of annual work plans, and will include: 1) a soils and turf management and restoration plan to rebuilt healthy soils and schedules for treatment; 2) a plan to preserve and restore special status vegetation such as trees and other elements that are part of the historic landscape, including measures to increase onsite plant biomass and to reduce the carbon footprint; and, 3) a sustainable water management plan to address water quality, irrigation, water cleansing, minimized use of potable water, use of graywater, and stormwater management.

### National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

NPS executed a Programmatic Agreement (PA) pursuant to Section 106 with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) on November 8, 2010 following final circulation of the draft PA. The Executive Director signed for NCPC as an invited signatory to the agreement. The Smithsonian Institution also signed the PA as an invited signatory and other signatures are anticipated.

Mitigation measures in the Section 106 PA include the further documentation and analysis of the National Mall's features and cultural landscapes, leading to an updated nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the land on the National Mall under the management of NPS. NPS will identify all contributing and non-contributing properties within the boundaries of the updated National Register nomination and will identify National Historic Landmarks and prepare nominations for those properties.

In addition, NPS will lead a process with other agencies to devise the most thorough and efficient approach to completing a new nomination to include non-NPS historic properties on or adjacent to the Mall, such as but not limited to the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian museums, and the Department of Agriculture. A multiple property nomination based upon the historic context of the monumental core is a possible approach and product. A public involvement process will be important to this effort.

The PA mitigation measures are a direct response to requests from consulting parties (including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the D.C. Preservation League, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, and the National Coalition to Save Our Mall) that recommended that a comprehensive National Register nomination for the National Mall be prepared. The mitigation in the PA responds to NPS's acknowledgement throughout the consultation that more research and analysis are needed to complete the National Register documentation of the National Mall and potentially the monumental core.

The National Mall, however, is a well-known and well-documented site of preeminent national interest and significance for historic events and persons, landscape, and architecture. In addition to secondary sources, many primary sources are available for research, including records in the holdings of federal and District of Columbia agencies; at repositories such as the Library of Congress and the National Archives; and in library, university, and private collections. For the purposes of Section 106 review, the consulting parties benefitted from reviewing numerous historic photos of the National Mall that have illustrated the history of the development of the National Mall and how people have used it and enjoyed it in different eras.

NPS led consultation meetings with agencies, organizations, and individuals. The National Mall's component landscapes and its memorials and significant objects have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places over the years. NPS has also produced Cultural Landscape Inventories or Cultural Landscape Reports for portions of the National Mall. The map at Figure 7, below, indicates Identified Cultural Landscapes within the National Mall Plan area. Completed documents relating to the National Register of Historic Places are available to the public on the National Mall Plan website.



NPS invited approximately 60 organizations with an interest in the National Mall Plan or historic preservation to be consulting parties under the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process. In addition to NCPC, the following organizations and agencies responded that they wanted to participate: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, American Civil Liberties Union of the National Capital Area, American Institute of Architects, American Society of Landscape Architects, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, Cultural Tourism DC, District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office, D.C. Preservation League, Downtown Business Improvement District, Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission, Equal Honor for All, Friends of the National World War II Memorial, Guest Services, Inc., Guild of Professional Tour Guides, Landmark Services, Inc., Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, Inc., National Association for Olmsted Parks, National Coalition to Save Our Mall, National Mall Conservancy, National Parks Conservation Association, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Organization of American States, Smithsonian Institution, Society of Architectural Historians–Latrobe Chapter, Trust for the National Mall, Washington DC Convention and Tourism Corporation, and the Willard Hotel.



FIGURE 7: Identified Cultural Landscapes within the National Mall Plan

From 2007 through 2009, consulting parties met with the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the D.C. Historic Preservation Office to examine the ramifications of planning alternatives on cultural landscapes, the NPS List of Classified Structures, historic districts, on sites listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of

Historic Places. Background materials, maps, and studies were posted on the website and handed out at meetings.

Commission staff participated in NPS meetings with consulting parties at each phase of the Plan's development. In 2009 NPS introduced a pre-Draft Preferred Alternative, on which consulting parties provided detailed comments on anticipated effects to historic built features, landscape features, and vistas. Staffs of the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) participated fully in the meetings (as did Commission staff). The PA was developed during the summer and fall of 2010 and circulated in draft to the consulting parties. NPS received comments on the draft PA from the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and from the National Coalition to Save Our Mall.

Staff emphasizes again that the Plan is a long-range framework for potential future improvements and development and that individual projects will be subject to Section 106 consultation. It's not possible to determine conclusively at this time if any of the projects will have an adverse effect, but NPS will lead public consultation on the potential for effects and ways to avoid or minimize them.

## CONSULTATION

### Coordinating Committee

NPS is a member of the Coordinating Committee, which coordinated the National Mall Plan on November 20, 2010. All of the coordinating committee members are either cooperating agencies for purposes of review under NEPA or participated in the planning process. NPS consulted with federal and District agencies throughout the Plan's development. The other Coordinating Committee member agencies are: NCPC, the General Services Administration (GSA); the District of Columbia Office of Planning and Department of Transportation; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

### Consultation and Coordination with other agencies

In April 2006 the National Park Service invited the following federal and District of Columbia agencies to cooperate in the preparation of a National Mall Plan: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Architect of the Capitol, D.C. Department of Transportation, D.C. Office of Planning, D.C. Historic Preservation Office, Federal Reserve Bank, General Services Administration, National Archives, National Capital Planning Commission, National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, U.S. Park Police, U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security, and the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority.

These agencies contributed to the development of goals and planning principles for the National Mall Plan, which were shared with the public on the project website and in public meetings.