



A Planning Update for the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park

Agencies Cooperatively Develop Planning Principles to Guide the Plan

Planning principles for the National Mall plan / environmental impact statement were developed in cooperation with other federal and city agencies with planning responsibilities for the District of Columbia. The principles are based on significance statements that were developed for the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park, and they respond to observations, issues identified, and comments heard during the initial public scoping process.

Cooperating agencies include the National Capital Planning Commission, the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian Institution, the Department of Agriculture, the Architect of the Capitol, the D.C. Office of Planning, and others.

Overarching Principles

1. The National Mall is the heart of our nation's capital. It is owned by all Americans and cared for by the National Park Service. In keeping with the National Mall's immense value to our nation, park spaces and structures will welcome all, and they will feature the highest quality of sustainable design, construction, and maintenance.
2. Historic and natural resources will be protected and maintained.
3. Managing entities will respect the design, as well as the civic, social, cultural, artistic, political, and symbolic character, of the nation's capital, the National Mall, and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park.

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WHAT WE'VE HEARD FROM THE PUBLIC — CONCERNS AND ISSUES FOR THE NATIONAL MALL PLAN

More than 5,000 people from all 50 states and the District of Columbia commented on 15 scoping questions for the National Mall plan / environmental impact statement on the NPS planning website. While around 4,000 comments were variations of a form letter, the approximately 1,000 communications remaining (including nearly 200 pieces of correspondence sent via e-mail or in letter form) offered a great variety of specific comments, and more than 2,900 separate comments were identified and coded. Topics receiving the most comments included the landscape condition, visitor facilities, and orientation and information needs. George Mason University was contracted to analyze the comments and prepare a report that is now available on the National Mall planning website at www.nps.gov/nationalmallplan.

Comments generally showed differing viewpoints on most topics, and the summary in this newsletter only hints at the diversity. Comments were categorized into seven groupings, as discussed below. *Please note that comments provide information to be considered during the development of alternatives.*

The National Mall

The public was asked what things they considered most important about the National Mall. More than 50% of the comments related to the area's physical openness, characteristics, and accessibility (see the text box on page 5 for excerpts). Other comments related to cultural and historical aspects, where visitors can develop a sense of our history; opportunities to interact socially with other individuals; and the inspiration and emotions that the National Mall elicits, while providing diverse opportunities for reflection and individual experiences.

Landscape

Commenters generally want grassy areas to look better, which would upgrade the overall look and feel of the National Mall. They want better maintenance; trash and debris removal; and healthy trees, plants, shrubs, and flowers. In short they want it beautiful. Comments about sustainable practices focused on conservation, the need for environmental stewardship in terms of development

and maintenance, and the importance of recycling.

Facilities

Many commenters suggested the need for more bathrooms that are adequately sized, well placed and maintained, and open longer hours. Other suggestions for facilities included welcome centers, restaurants, drinking fountains, more seating, shelters and tables, and lighting designed to improve pedestrian safety and convenience. Still others felt welcome centers and restaurants are not needed.

Comments about the appearance of park furniture generally supported complementing the existing character of the National Mall, with a few preferring a modern style.

People want walkways to be aesthetically pleasing and wide enough to keep people off the grass. Many want them paved or to have permeable surfaces so they are easy to walk on and accessible to people with strollers or wheelchairs. Some want to separate

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4. Cooperating agencies will coordinate planning, information, services, facilities, and programs for visitors, residents, and the local workforce.
5. Facilities will be clean, conveniently located, comfortable, and appropriately sized to meet a range of uses.

Context

6. **Urban Patterns:** The National Mall will remain integrated in the urban grid of Washington, D.C. — an open-space oasis that anchors the urban framework, establishes city character, and visually, physically, and symbolically enhances and connects neighborhoods.
7. **Future Memorials:** The National Mall will set a standard of excellence in commemoration, and the National Park Service will continue to play a cooperative role by working with other agencies and project groups to enrich the entire federal city and its neighborhoods as designs are developed to locate future memorials throughout the District of Columbia.
8. **Identity:** The public will know by means of visual clues when they are on the National Mall and within Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park, and they will be able to distinguish between NPS facilities and those managed by others.

Park Resource Protection

9. **Historic Plans and Resources:** The historical significance and character of the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park, the L'Enfant and McMillan plans, and historic and ongoing civic uses will be respected.
 - The social and civic purposes inherent in the historic plans will continue to evolve, including the dispersion of commemorative works throughout the capital.

- Character-defining elements of historic resources and cultural landscapes that have evolved over the last two centuries will be respected as part of the historical context.

10. **Views and Vistas:** Views and vistas are essential components of the historic design and are integral to high-quality visitor experiences. Primary east-west vistas and several north-south views on the National Mall, as well as views toward the U.S. Capitol within Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park, will be retained and protected at all times, including during special events and activities.
11. **Design:** The design of facilities, park areas, and furnishings will be enduring, exceptional, and sensitive to the overall historical context. Materials and workmanship will be of the highest quality suitable for the intended use.
12. **Lighting:** Lighting on the National Mall will evoke emotion, provide enjoyment, and contribute to safe use of park lands while respecting historic fixtures and existing lighting at memorials. The Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and Thomas Jefferson Memorial (as well as the U.S. Capitol and the White House) will continue to be the most prominent nighttime features.

Public Use

13. **Information:** Accurate information will be provided for wayfinding, orientation, and visitor services. Information will be consistent throughout the site, and it will be provided seamlessly through a variety of means, including on the Internet and on site.
14. **National Civic Space:** The National Mall will remain open to groups for political and social demonstrations and for national celebrations. Integral to its signifi-

cance has been its use as a venue for major events that have touched, revitalized, and changed our nation.

- First Amendment rights will continue to be allowed in accordance with court-approved restrictions as to reasonable time, place, or manner.
- Physical and visual openness, access, and freedom will characterize the democratic nature of the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park.
- The National Park Service will strive to manage and regulate special events in a manner that will allow event organizers to achieve their purposes, while also ensuring that the health of park resources is sustained and that the desires of all users are balanced. The Park Service will seek a balance where no one's enjoyment of the National Mall will be unacceptably compromised by others, now or in the future.
- Event security will be managed in the most effective and least restrictive manner to ensure a safe environment and to retain the open, democratic character of the National Mall.

15. **Educational Opportunities:** Learning opportunities will be provided in a manner that engages all ages and abilities of an increasingly multicultural and technologically sophisticated society. Education will inspire current and future generations, including populations that have not typically visited national parks.

16. **Pedestrian Experiences:** Fully accessible and high-quality pedestrian experiences, with appropriate walking surfaces, seating, lighting, and amenities, will offer visitors comfortable and enjoyable opportunities for reflection, commemoration, celebration, and recreation.

17. **Transportation:** Safe and efficient multi-modal travel will be available throughout the area (walking, bicycling, public transit, and sight-seeing services). Transit services will be coordinated with the regional transportation network.

Park Operations

18. **Maintenance Operations:** Maintenance and stewardship will meet desired standards of excellence appropriate for public commemorative and symbolic spaces in our nation's capital. Maintenance and park operations by park staff, as well as by partners

and volunteers, will use efficient, effective, and sustainable practices.

19. **Health, Safety, and Security:** Visitors will have access to safe, clean, sanitary, and well-maintained facilities. Emergency services will be well-planned, quick, and effective. Security measures will be commensurate with needed crowd control or security requirements.

20. **Law Enforcement:** Law enforcement will continue to safeguard lives and will protect our national treasures and symbols of democracy. Enforcement will be achieved

in a manner that exemplifies good communication, causes the least amount of public inconvenience, and raises public understanding of the mission of the park and the National Park Service.

21. **Business Services:** Business services will provide a range of necessary and appropriate commercial visitor services and products of consistent high quality at a range of prices. Business services will support the NPS identity and park resource-related educational themes and events.



Events may block views of the U.S. Capitol or the Washington Monument.



Events are hard on lawns.



Events may need stages or storage.

Clarifying Some Misunderstandings

A few commenters proposed new memorials. Most people supported restrictions that no more monuments or memorials should be built on the National Mall. Some people wanted to limit the type or subject of First Amendment demonstrations. As discussed in the first newsletter, the U.S. Congress and the federal courts have already addressed both of these issues.

No More Memorials on the National Mall — In 2003 Congress designated the Reserve area, which includes the National Mall and the White House, saying this is a "substantially completed work of civic art" and that "no commemorative work or visitor center shall be located within the Reserve." Memorials and facilities that Congress had already authorized for placement on the National Mall before the Reserve was designated include the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

The lands adjacent to the Reserve, referred to as Area I, can accommodate future memorials, including the planned Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial. In addition, the National Capital Planning Commission has identified more than 100 sites throughout the city where future museums and memorials can be located.

First Amendment Demonstrations — A number of court cases have upheld the First Amendment right of citizens to demonstrate, and such demonstrations will continue to be allowed in accordance with court-approved restrictions as to reasonable time, place, or manner, which includes the sale of items.

walkers, bicyclers, and joggers. People suggested emphasizing the pedestrian nature of the Mall, and some suggested tunneling existing cross streets.

Decorative fountains could be added to bring vitality to the area and add to the beauty of the National Mall. They could be designed as sculpture so they would also be attractive in the winter. Small fountains or misters could help keep people cool in the summer.



Visitors want to cool off.

Services

Commenters requested improved information, not only directions, but also more educational/interpretive content. Many said that additional wayfinding signs or kiosks are needed. They should be uniform, well-designed, and universally understandable. Signs should have distances to destinations, and better information is needed about events. Getting information interactively or through some computerized means would reduce the need for paper brochures.

Comments about facilities also related to the types of services that are offered, including food, information, and transportation. Some commenters said more places to eat and drink are needed (including restaurants, sidewalk cafes, snack stands, and ice cream / drink wagons). Suggested additional food service locations included Constitution Gardens Lake, the FDR Memorial, and discreetly placed snack stands by major monuments. Others said there are enough food establishments nearby and not to clutter the National

Mall. Some suggested putting facilities underground or off site.

Commenters proposed various types of retail services (gift and book stores). Others said that street vendors detract from the National Mall.

Many comments about transportation were recently addressed in a plan for personal transportation (such as bicycles and Segway® HTs) and the future bus system. The transportation plan recommends more frequent visitor bus service, improved connection to public transit, increased bicycle parking, and more access for Segway® HTs. Transportation comments also pertained to parking, onsite mobility, a free shuttle between destinations, and public tours.

Suggestions for parking ranged from an underground garage to allowing no parking. Some commenters requested additional bike racks. Once on site, many want access that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly, with safer street crossings. Others felt access needs to be improved for people who have difficulty walking long distances. Some suggested convenient tour bus drop-offs at all the memorials, as well as parking.



People want shade.

Activities

Comments about activities related to entertainment, events, and recreation. Programming ideas included educational activities, plays, concerts, performances by street musicians, and spontaneous entertainment.



Long lines at restrooms.

Comments about events highlighted the Folklife Festival, ranging from support for the diverse crafts, food, music, and dance to complaints about the physical impacts of the festival on the National Mall and how it limits public access. Some suggested more environmental events or arts and crafts.

Suggestions for how events should be managed included restrictions on the types of displays, standards for temporary facilities, and permanently setting aside areas for big events with appropriate facilities and infrastructure. Suggestions were made for a paved central plaza to better accommodate multiple uses.

Many said that national demonstrations should have the highest priority when determining what events can be accommodated, and any activity with commercial implications should be banned. Others said priority should be given to open access and short-term First Amendment and celebratory activities, while long-term events that are "constructed" should be lessened and discouraged. Still others supported increased restrictions for large public demonstrations and events that could be held elsewhere.

People recommended that activities should focus on public issues, education, history, and community. Comments about recreation were divided into the need for open spaces for unstructured recreation, providing infrastructure and playgrounds, and allowing use by organized sports leagues. Some supported continuing



Popular recreation fields.

to allow all casual recreational uses, while others feel such uses should be banned as inappropriate or undignified on the National Mall. Requested recreational facilities included a playground, horse trails, an ice skating rink, a baseball diamond, picnic areas, and places to sail model boats, while others said that all recreational activities should occur only in East Potomac Park

Regulation

Comments about regulations pertained to crowd control, security, and public safety. People felt barriers such as temporary snow fences should be removed because they are ineffective

at keeping visitors off the grass and suggested using natural barriers like hedges. Some said that vehicle security barricades must be discreet and allow pedestrian circulation.

Some commenters wanted a greater park police / patrol presence to enhance feelings of individual security. Others feel that security measures must be considered for specific structures, monuments, and buildings.

The presence of homeless people on the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue generated a few comments about safety and the need to help these people get to city housing shelters.

Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park

A very small number of comments, less than 1%, addressed Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park. People were asked to comment about the same types of issues and concerns as they did for the National Mall. As expected, comments related to services, design, public access, and general awareness.

It was noted that generally this area does not really feel like a park, and many visitors as well as residents are probably not aware of what it represents. The design of Pershing Park was mentioned as an area that makes some people feel unsafe because it is enclosed.

Comments about services reflected a desire for restrooms, informational and educational exhibits at various points along the avenue, and maintenance to replace or repair broken trash cans and drinking fountains.

Commenters said this national historic park needs to be unified through design and purpose, and its history should be retained and enhanced. They stated that planning cannot be isolated from surrounding land use and transportation issues. Visitors want to see this place as part of the city, with clean, conveniently located, comfortable, and appropriately sized facilities.

"What is most important to you about the National Mall?" — Excerpts from What the Public Said

Views, sweeping vistas.

The National Mall is THE LARGEST REASON why many people visit the nation's capital as tourists and citizens. The most important thing is the accessibility to so many different monuments and historical artifacts for free.

The mall is for ALL AMERICANS. . . . It's a place where we are UNIFIED.

Let's rise above the temptation to make this space an amusement park. The Mall should bring out the best in us.

The green space and parks, the museums & monuments, a place that represents the strengths and diversity of the nation, a gathering place for people to be heard by the government.

In its present form the National Mall is a giant open space which symbolizes the freedom we enjoy in our democracy to move about, express our views, and better our individual lives. The flat open plain of the Mall is bounded by government buildings which symbolize the legal and administrative restraints which are imposed on these freedoms. . . . As we see it today, the Mall serves as a perfect and complete embodiment of the balance between our personal freedoms and the institutions of democracy as they have evolved over the past 200 years.

The National Mall should be recognized as a cultural and civic landscape of international importance and, thus, its fundamental character should be preserved and enhanced.

The central grass panel that creates the visual link between the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument is the most valued public space in America. This one-hundred sixty foot wide green space should be considered sacred ground.

To me, of all the National Parks we have in this country, the Washington, D.C., National Mall is the one that should SHINE above all of the rest. It should be this Nation's Pride and Joy!

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What the National Park Service is Doing to Take Care of the National Mall Now and in the Future

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Taking care of the National Mall is a huge logistical operation. The plan will need to address how to improve maintenance operations such as the following:

- The National Park Service regularly mows, trims, edges, aerates, waters, rakes, fertilizes, seeds, and sods around 300 acres. From 15,000 to 20,000 pounds of grass seed are used each year, as well as 2,000 to 3,000 yards of sod.
- Three to four tons of trash, debris, and other solid waste are removed from the park daily, with 25-30 tons of garbage hauled away after a 4th of July celebration.
- Restrooms are cleaned twice daily, and reflecting pools and fountains twice a year.
- The National Park Service has undertaken operational assessments of several major events to provide information to help in developing the alternatives.

What's Next?

The next newsletter will present a range of alternatives and will be published soon. It will highlight concepts and actions in three alternatives. A no-action or continuing current management alternative will also be included. Alternatives are based on public comment, as well as the purpose, significance, and values of the park. You will be asked to tell us what you think of the concepts and the actions within alternatives, and to describe what you would like to see as part of a preferred alternative.

After newsletter 3 is published, additional meetings and consultations will be held to ensure that all observations are considered as the planning process moves forward.

Following consideration of public comments on the alternatives and a preliminary analysis of the range of alternatives, a preferred alternative will be developed. That alternative will be presented in the draft environmental impact statement, which will be released for formal public review next year.