

National Coalition to Save Our Mall

The National Mall Third Century Initiative

www.nationalmall.net

The integrity of the National Mall is threatened by continuing calls for new museums and memorials, haphazard growth, uncoordinated security, and poor maintenance. There is no up-to-date master plan, no unified management or Congressional oversight, and not even agreement on the Mall's definition. Lacking visitor amenities, transportation systems, and convenient parking, the Mall is uninviting, cut off from the rest of the city and the local community. A commission is needed with the ultimate authority to unify management and create a comprehensive, forward-looking vision for the National Mall in the 21st century—the Third Century Mall.

WHO WE ARE

The **National Coalition to Save Our Mall**, a nonprofit citizens group, was founded in 2000 to protect and enhance the integrity of the National Mall, a national treasure, for future generations. Our national membership includes historians, planners, educators, designers, architects, cultural leaders, and recreational enthusiasts.

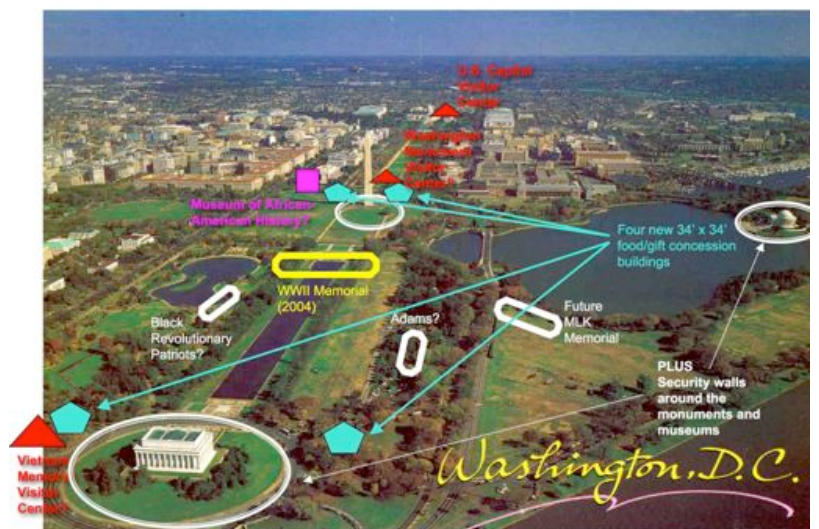
WHY WE'RE NEEDED

The National Mall's symbolic meaning, beauty, and function as a national gathering place, the legacy of the historic L'Enfant Plan (1791) and McMillan Plan (1901-1902), are threatened by haphazard growth and poor maintenance. The Mall lacks visitor amenities including places to sit and rest, quality food service, restrooms, public transportation to and around its vast area, and convenient parking. Fragmented management and Congressional oversight, uncoordinated security, and conflicting philosophies of public use prevent unified planning.



WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

In 2004, the Coalition launched the **National Mall Third Century Initiative** to promote short-term and comprehensive long-term planning for the Mall's continued vitality as a great landscape symbol of our country's founding ideals and a stage for America's evolving democracy. The Coalition held five public forums in 2004; published the findings in *The Future of The National Mall* report (October 2004); presented these ideas in over 60 venues on Capitol Hill, to government agencies, and to the public in 2005; and on December 7, 2005, presented "Designing for Democracy" at the Corcoran Gallery of Art to open a dialogue about far-ranging ideas for the Third Century Mall. The report, a video production of the Future of the



Recent and proposed additions to the National Mall (2005)

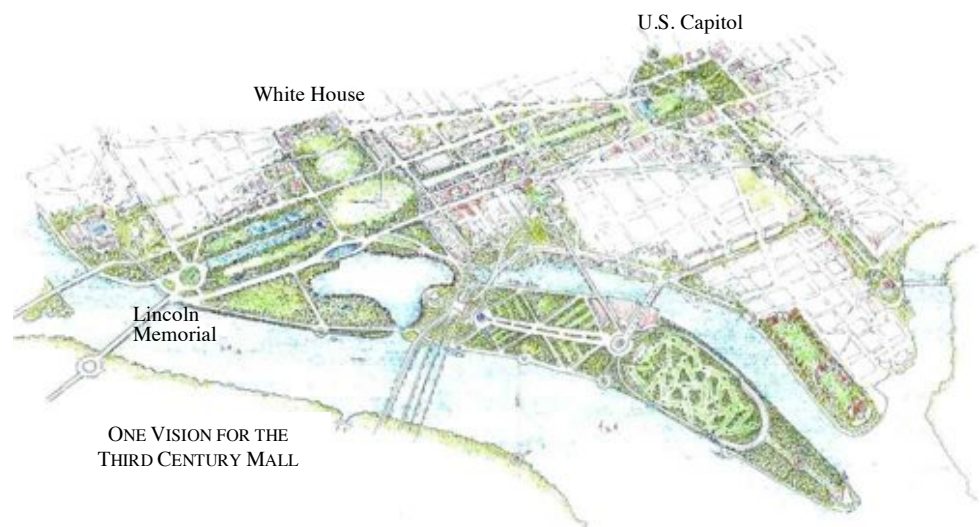
Mall presentation, educational materials, media coverage, and editorial support of these ideas are available on the web at <http://www.nationalmall.net>.

The Coalition has developed nine Task Forces and an Advisory Group and is forming a Third Century Mall Committee to support the Third Century Initiative:

- The **Task Forces**, small ad hoc groups of Washington area Mall enthusiasts, are studying different aspects of the Mall's life, identifying needs not currently being addressed by Mall managing agencies, and proposing solutions. Topics include visitor orientation, transportation, public amenities, sustainability, cultural and recreational activities, and educational programs that explore American democracy through the Mall's history, monuments, and public spaces. The Mall Map Task Force completed a map and historical guide in May 2005 and has distributed free over 90,000 copies to Washington visitor centers, hotels, and Congressional offices.
- The **Advisory Group** consists of citizens and organizations representing diverse expertise to serve on call regarding a range of specific issues confronting the Mall including planning, design, history, cultural programming, recreation, community development, sustainability, information technology, and transportation
- The bipartisan **Third Century Mall Committee** is being formed to work with Congress, the White House, the DC Government, and the public to further the immediate goals and long-term vision of the Third Century Mall Initiative. Committee members will include nationally prominent citizens and opinion shapers conversant with the history, problems, and needs of the National Mall. The Committee is meeting for the first time in early April 2006. Members will
 - develop and promote the vision for the next century of the National Mall so that its preservation and use remain important to local citizens, citizens from the 50 states, and visitors from abroad;
 - seek endorsement of the vision by Congress, the White House, the DC Government, and the public;
 - urge Congress to establish a Third Century Mall Commission to oversee the preparation of a Master Plan, with unified management, and its adoption by Congress with necessary funding.

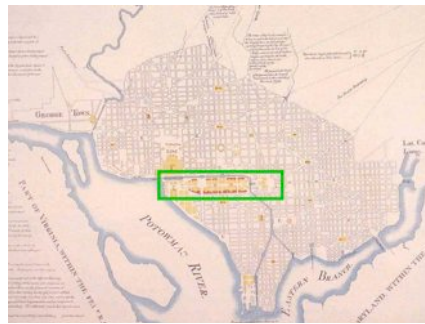
VISION AND GOALS

The Vision: In its Third Century, the National Mall's historic landscape can enlarge its role as grand stage for democracy where Americans learn, meet, celebrate achievements, play, and seek redress of grievances in a national spotlight. It can be expanded onto contiguous and other federal lands and incorporate abundant frontage on the Potomac River. The expanded Third Century Mall can create inviting new public spaces, strengthen the Mall's connections with the



Washington metropolitan community and surrounding neighborhoods, and make room for future museums, monuments, and cultural and recreational activities, while extending and reinforcing the Mall's

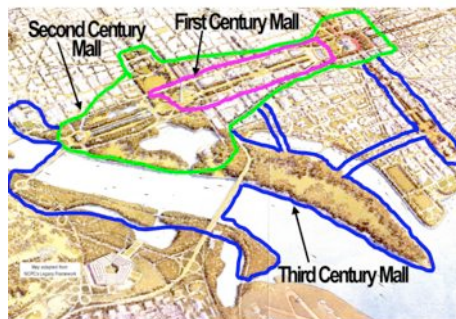
symbolic narrative. More than ever, it can showcase American founding ideals, history, art and culture, technology, and sustainable landscaping. The Mall in its Third Century can fulfill its intended role as the people’s place by continuing to embody, as it did with civil rights and other public events great and small in the twentieth century, the centrality of the people in America’s ever-evolving democracy.



Pierre L'Enfant's 1791 Plan for Washington envisioned the Mall (outlined in green) as a grand public promenade connecting the U.S. Capitol and White House at the heart of the symbolic meaning of the new capital city.



After a century of neglect, the McMillan Commission designed a Plan that restored L'Enfant's concept and expanded it onto landfill west and south of the Washington Monument for new parkland and memorials to Presidents Lincoln and Jefferson. This great public space became in the 20th century the stage for public gatherings, civil rights demonstrations, July 4th celebrations, and recreation.



Since the 1970s, when the McMillan vision was largely achieved, growth has been haphazard lacking a guiding vision. Increasingly, memorials and museums replace public open space. The Third Century Mall can grow again, making way for museums, memorials, and open spaces that reinforce and extend the symbolic narrative of America's constitutional democracy and opening up new areas for recreation, commemoration, and celebration.

The Goals: The Coalition has identified four main goals:

1. Establish meaningful and continuous public participation in planning, management, and financing of the Mall
2. Develop programs to maximize the value of public uses of the Mall, by local citizens and national and international visitors, for building awareness of the value and history of democracy
3. Create an updated, comprehensive Master Plan and design framework that enables the Mall to expand and enlarge its symbolic meaning and to integrate into the city and the local community
4. Unify management and financing of the Mall under a single entity



Mall management is divided among six federal and local government agencies. The fragmentation is mirrored in Congress where eight different committees and subcommittees have oversight over Mall agencies and matters. There is no meaningful public involvement. Successful models of coordinated management should be consulted to create a single Mall management entity that includes public representation and participation.

HOW THESE GOALS CAN BE ACHIEVED

- Forming a Third Century Commission composed of nationally prominent cultural leaders to articulate the 21st century vision and develop the long-range, comprehensive master plan
- Fashioning a comprehensive program for the Third Century Mall that identifies short-term as well as long-term Mall needs and that completes, reinforces, and extends the symbolic narrative of American democracy that the city and the Mall are meant to express
- Identifying federal lands available and relevant for Mall expansion
- Researching models for creating a single entity to manage the Mall and implement the Third Century Plan
- Evaluating successful models of citizen participation across the country to develop a meaningful role for the public in Mall decision making
- Reviewing and amending where necessary existing Mall policies to provide early, continuous, and meaningful public involvement
- Developing visitor amenities and cultural and recreational programs that will draw visitors day and night to the Mall's open space
- Reconciling public uses policies that pit large public gatherings and mega events against preservation of turf grass and trees
- Creating informational and educational materials, tours, and programs to inform visitors of the Mall's historic importance and draw them into an understanding of American constitutional government through the Mall's monuments and museums, public buildings, and civic activities
- Producing multi-lingual materials for international visitors

Congress, the Mall's ultimate steward, will have to authorize the Third Century Commission and adopt its master plan. An Act of Congress will be required to consolidate Mall management into a single entity.

The Coalition's Task Forces are already working on several of these objectives. Our first public service project, a "The National Mall: Stage for Our Democracy" map (right) is available free throughout Washington; a much-requested Mall Recreational Use booklet is being developed. We will make available to Congress and the Third Century Mall Commission the set of program and design guidelines developed over the past two years in our forthcoming "Designing for Democracy" report.



A PROGRAM FOR THE THIRD CENTURY MALL MASTER PLAN

The **Coalition** proposes a forward-looking planning and design framework for this unique national resource:

1. **To repair, restore, and revitalize** the National Mall's historic open space, landscape, architecture, and Constitutional symbolism
2. **To improve and expand visitor amenities and public programs** for a vibrant and inviting urban park with orientation and signage, pedestrian and bicycle paths, places to buy and enjoy

food at picnic tables, benches and chairs, cultural and recreational activities, transportation to and around the Mall, and convenient parking

3. **To expand the Mall** onto contiguous federal land, especially along the underutilized waterfront, so as to realize the Mall's potential as a grand stage by providing much needed space for public activities, modern nationally-important mega-events, and future museums and monuments
4. **To integrate the Mall** with the city's neighborhoods, circulation and transportation systems, and greater metropolitan park complex, as originally intended by the L'Enfant Plan and McMillan Commission
5. **To provide areas for celebration, commemoration, and healing** for 21st century events which are bound to be as potentially important and challenging in our culture as those of the twentieth century
6. **To design an overall Third Century Mall concept** that unifies the First and Second Century Mall, the new areas of expansion, and the extensive Potomac waterfront, into a comprehensive, symbolically cohesive whole



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