

# Moving the Plan Forward

Now that the planning process of CapitalSpace is complete, it is time to focus on moving the Six Big Ideas forward. As with any complex planning effort, the CapitalSpace planning process evolved and adapted over time to allow for the understanding of distinct but complementary missions among the key partners. The overarching goal is clear: parks and open spaces must be better managed and maintained within Washington.

There is now an increased awareness and appreciation of this goal by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), the National Park Service (NPS), and the District's Office of Planning (DCOP) and Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and other District agencies. A renewed commitment has been fostered toward a common vision whereby each partner can work both independently and collaboratively toward implementing the CapitalSpace actions.

## Working Together

Ongoing communication and strengthened relationships between the partner agencies have been successful, valuable consequences of the CapitalSpace initiative. The partners have agreed to continue the established communication and working relationships to ensure parks and open spaces remain a primary component of a growing and sustainable city.

Analyses within CapitalSpace can be used to better understand community needs and inform decision-makers on ways to improve access to and the capacity of parks and open spaces. Individual partner agencies that undertake future planning initiatives and projects internally may use CapitalSpace to inform project outcomes.

CapitalSpace will actively guide policy decisions for updating the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: District Elements* and developing small area plans by DCOP, and NCPC will use CapitalSpace to inform policy updates within the *Comprehensive Plan: Federal Elements*, particularly the Open Space Element.

DCOP can use CapitalSpace as a guide to understand the types of community recreation amenities needed as it works with developers who are going through the Planned Unit Development or large tract review processes. Similarly, NCPC can use CapitalSpace to provide guidance in reviewing and evaluating federal and District project proposals. Information within CapitalSpace can be used by DCOP and NCPC on both District and Federal projects to encourage certain types of park and recreation public benefits to meet an increasingly diverse constituency. The NPS and DPR can use CapitalSpace to better coordinate and inform the development of park planning across Washington.

## Working with Others

CapitalSpace recognizes and values the role that a diverse range of stakeholders have in realizing the CapitalSpace vision. Within Washington, a number of organizations actively promote and support efforts intended to benefit the city's network of parks and open spaces by providing advocacy, funding, sweat equity, and passion for the benefit of all Washington residents and visitors. These organizations have collaborated with federal and District agencies in

- ◆ Restoring and revitalizing major city parks, such as what the nonprofit Washington Parks and People is implementing at Marvin Gaye Park.
- ◆ Providing support for park maintenance, programming and financing of capital improvement projects, as multiple Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have done for many downtown parks.
- ◆ Planting trees and providing technical assistance and training to support the expansion of the District's tree canopy; as the nonprofit Casey Trees has done throughout Washington.
- ◆ Providing support through park maintenance, beautification, programming, and provision of equipment for recreational activities as "Friends of" and athletic organizations have done at many of Washington's parks and open spaces.

Strong partnerships, both formal and informal, will remain a major element by which the CapitalSpace priority action items can be realized. Through the framework of CapitalSpace, federal and District agencies will cooperatively engage in partnership building by reinforcing existing stakeholder relationships and forming new ones as they collectively implement CapitalSpace. Advocacy for parks, open space, and recreation is a shared responsibility that will become a by-product of implementing CapitalSpace. CapitalSpace's recommendations can be used by park stakeholders to invigorate related efforts, thereby increasing the Plan's endurance for years to come.

## Funding the Vision

The Capitalspace initiative has highlighted areas where agency coordination may be particularly beneficial. The Partners will continue to actively coordinate park and open-space planning, design, and programming wherever possible. The Partners recognize that working together may help leverage limited budgets and resources and bring additional resources from new partner agencies and external groups providing the "critical mass" to advance projects, programs, and activities that may be difficult to achieve individually.

Implementation, however, is not reliant upon only coordinated funding. Progress will occur as individual agencies continue their own on-going work to improve and plan for parks and open space.

Specific projects may be submitted by a federal agency or listed as recommended by NCPC in the Federal Capital Improvements Program and the District can influence the type of park and open space projects that are funded in the local government agencies' annual Capital Improvement Plan budgets in support of CapitalSpace.

Many projects implemented as part of CapitalSpace will have components that could be funded by other partner agencies, including the District's Department of Transportation and Department of Environment, Public Schools, and Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization. Funding potential for projects can also expand to include other non-government partner organizations as a more holistic approach to parks, recreation, and open spaces is pursued.

For the purposes of this Draft Plan, the partner agencies seek public input on the priority action items listed below, and welcome suggestions on how to move them forward effectively and in a collaborative manner.

## Taking Action

Partner agencies are committed to regular recurring meetings, project collaboration, information dissemination, and monitoring progress on implementation of CapitalSpace's eight priority action items, including:

- ◆ Improving overall access to our public open space
- ◆ Improving the availability and use of our playfields
- ◆ Completing the Fort Circle hiking trail
- ◆ Promoting the value of the Fort Circle Parks
- ◆ Ensuring our schoolyards are considered to meet community recreational needs
- ◆ Making our downtown parks more inviting and active
- ◆ Launching a District-wide ecosystem consortium
- ◆ Improving the maintenance and use of our small parks

## Public input

Public input is essential to the success of CapitalSpace. To develop the CapitalSpace plan, numerous interviews, consultations, focus group meetings, workshops, and presentations to stakeholders, local civic groups, and public officials were conducted.

A citywide public outreach event was also held on April 2007, to introduce CapitalSpace, followed by an update meeting May 2008.

A CapitalSpace website was launched in April 2008, as a means of maintaining continuous communication with the public plan development and meeting announcements.

Written comments may be sent to [capitalspace@ncpc.gov](mailto:capitalspace@ncpc.gov) or submitted through the National Park Service's Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) Website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>.

Public comments will be accepted through December 8, 2009. A final document will then be completed that incorporates necessary changes. For more information, visit <http://www.capitalspace.gov> to view this document electronically and review extensive background information.

Please contact us at 202.482.7200 or visit our Website: <http://www.capitalspace.gov>.



