

Stage 2 General Design Guidelines

In Stage 2, the jury would like to see a deeper level of visionary thinking about the future of this symbolic landscape. Each of you has received specific comments related to your own idea proposal. In addition, all Stage 2 submissions should develop the original idea in a way that shows clear attention to the historical, cultural, and ecological context of the Monument and grounds.

The following are some themes you may wish to take into consideration as part of the Stage 2 submission. Additional historical and background information is posted on the Resource page of the Competition website www.wamocompetition.org.

- I. **Visionary Thinking:** *Consider how your idea will fit into a long-term vision for the Washington Monument grounds. As you now move to another level of thinking, you may find your idea is transformed. This is an opportunity to be bold.*

Visionary ideas can inspire change and development for generations. In addition to the historic visions -- L'Enfant's 1791 vision that placed the monument to George Washington at the center of the Mall's symbolic landscape embodying principles of the US Constitution, or the 1902 McMillan vision of the Washington Monument as the centerpiece of a great American landscape rivaling the royal gardens of Europe --, modern designers sometimes refer to the Mall as a "sacred space" or "civic stage" or "America's front lawn." Each metaphor implies attitudes towards the past and aspirations for the future. As you refine and develop your idea, how do you imagine it supporting or transforming the Monument grounds and its role in American democracy for the next 30 to 50 years and beyond?

- II. **Historic Visions and Mall Cross-Axis:** *Consider how your ideas recognize the historic L'Enfant and McMillan visions, and the significance of the Mall cross-axis at the Monument grounds. This does not mean any strict adherence to those earlier concepts. Rather, it calls for an awareness of the symbolic thinking that informed them.*

Congress has defined the National Mall as the "great cross-axis... from the United States Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial, and from the White House to the Jefferson Memorial." The L'Enfant and McMillan plans are the historical basis for that definition, and for the importance of the Washington Monument and the Jefferson Pier at the center of that cross-axis, but these plans were never implemented. Visitors walking on the Monument grounds today have no way of knowing about or experiencing the significance of the cross-axis.

- III. **Interpretation:** *Show some understanding of the power of the great obelisk in establishing the iconic character of the Mall and the Monument grounds and in contributing to the way visitors experience the Monument grounds as an architectural space, a place to remember American history, and as an expression of American identity.*

Jury members remarked that two crucial factors and challenges are the overwhelming scale of the Monument and the blankness of the obelisk with regard to what it says about Washington.

- IV. **Public Use:** *Develop or confront the broad level of public use on this site. Address human scale within the monumental nature of the obelisk and the great expanse of the grounds. Show how your idea retains the openness of the site and avoids clutter. Reflect on which amenities (food, shade, water, vending, etc...) are to be included within your vision of the grounds.*

Historically, the Mall has evolved from the original 1791 concept of a lively public promenade at the center of urban activity, to the 1901 idea for a grand formal landscape separate from the messiness of urban life, to modern times where this landscape supports a wide range of activities including First Amendment, July 4th fireworks, civic gatherings, cultural and educational events, and recreation.

- V. **Changes in Grade:** *Be aware of that much of the landscape is composed of landfill that has been shaped and re-graded continuously. Potentially it could be altered in the future.*

Historically, the western portions of the grounds were along the Potomac River and the obelisk foundation stood on level ground. In the 1890s the foundation was covered over with about 20 feet of soil to create the mound, and the western and southern areas of the grounds were filled in with landfill. In 2004, the entire mound was re-graded for the new security walls and walkways. Historically, limits have been placed on what designs are feasible on the Monument grounds because of fears cutting into the mound could undermine the Monument's foundation. For purposes of this Competition, these considerations are not primary. The Steering Committee believes, based on advances in engineering and the fact that federal agencies have proposed a number of projects that would cut tunnels and underground visitors' centers into the landscape, that any visionary ideas could be accommodated.

- VI. **Flooding, Engineering, and Sustainability:** *Be informed by the ecological history and most recent studies relating to flooding, flood plains, and the levee that soon will be constructed at the northwest corner of the Monument grounds at 17th Street and Constitution Avenue.*

There are both problems and opportunities associated with the ecological history of the site at the banks of the Potomac River and Tiber Creek. The new FEMA flood map is posted on the Competition website. One resource for learning more about the proposed levee is the website of the National Capital Planning Commission, which gave final approval to the project in 2010: <http://www.ncpc.gov/ncpc/Main%28T%29/YourCapital%28Tr%29/Featuresiframepages/FloodControl.html>

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