

South Mall Campus Master Plan

Proposed Action

The Smithsonian Institution proposes the development and implementation of a Master Plan to guide future development of the South Mall Campus (“Proposed Action”). The South Mall Campus Master Plan (the “Master Plan”) will integrate existing buildings and new program space to create a campus that is visually, spatially, and functionally unified, while preserving and reusing historic resources to the maximum extent feasible.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of a proposed South Mall Campus Master Plan is to guide future short-term and long-term renovation and development of a 17-acre area known as the South Campus, which includes the Smithsonian Institution Building (the Castle), the Quadrangle Complex (the Ripley Center, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, the National Museum of African Art, and the rooftop Enid A. Haupt Garden), the Freer Gallery of Art, the Arts and Industries Building, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Kathrine Dulin Folger Rose Garden and the Mary Livingston Ripley Garden.

The Master Plan is needed to meet the Smithsonian’s long-term space requirements and to address physical and operational deficiencies across the campus that impact visitor use and experience as well as the Smithsonian’s ability to effectively and safely implement its programs. The Smithsonian identified the following needs for the campus: restore, repair and rehabilitate historic properties; replace roofs and building systems that are at the end of their useful lives; improve accessibility and usability by individuals with disabilities; improve circulation throughout the campus, including creation of a clear east-west at-grade pedestrian connection from the east side of the Freer Gallery to the Hirshhorn Museum entry plaza and improved access and visibility from the Mall and the Castle for the African Art Museum and Sackler Gallery entrances; create expanded and linked centralized visitor services and education spaces; provide additional museum and event space; establish a new central utility plant and related infrastructure to reduce energy and operating costs and greenhouse gas emissions; provide expanded below grade loading and delivery facilities serving the Quadrangle, Castle, AIB and Freer buildings; and update security measures to meet Smithsonian and federal requirements.

Master Plan Elements

The Master Plan will be based on holistic planning principles and objectives for supporting the mission, responsibilities and functions of the Smithsonian Institution; it will document existing conditions and proposed developments and changes. The Master Plan will provide a cohesive urban design framework to guide land use and the character of future individual projects and historic preservation for buildings and landscapes. The Master Plan will include analysis of and a physical planning approach to address the needs for:

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- Additional and repurposed space
- Land and building uses
- Adjacency requirements
- Projected visitor and staff populations
- Sustainable traffic, service and parking solutions
- Coordination for consistency with relevant Smithsonian, federal and local plans, regulations and policies;
- Analysis of the effects on Historic Resources; and
- Proposed strategies for energy conservation and storm water management

Finally, the Master Plan will include a proposed implementation plan for projects. This will help inform the Smithsonian's capital plan for federal and trust (private) funding, including projects related to temporarily or permanently relocating programs, staff and collections as necessary to implement the Master Plan.