U.S. Capitol Grounds Strategic Plan
2016-2020
I am pleased to share with you our first Capitol Grounds Strategic Plan that will serve as a roadmap for the next five years. The components of this plan demonstrate our commitment to operational excellence and to our employees, who are our most important resource. We work as a team to fulfill our mission to provide the daily care and maintenance, implement improvements, and champion historic preservation of the U.S. Capitol grounds.

The creation of this strategic plan began last fall, when we developed our mission, and held a creative working session to develop our vision. In the spring of this year we held sessions with each shop to get input on what we should keep doing, stop doing, and start doing. This plan is the culmination of all of this work and reflects your input and ideas for the future of the Capitol grounds.

Two of our three Goals focus on our employees: improving communication and collaboration and increasing knowledge throughout Capitol Grounds about our historic landscapes and best practices. These efforts will combine with the third goal of attaining organizational excellence and put us well on our way to reaching our vision of inspiring the world by nourishing Fredrick Law Olmsted’s vision for the historic landscape which supports and enhances the symbolic character of the U.S. Capitol. Through our hard work and dedication to this plan and to each other, we will continue to grow as an organization of innovative and empowered employees who are respected leaders in their fields. Our work will be rooted in sustainable practices to ensure the Capitol grounds are preserved at the highest level for future generations.

We’ve developed a detailed operations plan for FY2016 that will focus our day-to-day efforts over the coming year and we will revisit this annually. With the participation of all Capitol Grounds staff, we will use this plan to elevate our organization and showcase the important work we currently do, while at the same time working to accomplish our long term goals. Working together we will make amazing progress towards our vision. The U.S. Capitol grounds deserve nothing less than our best!

Looking Forward,

Theodore R. Bechtol Jr.
Superintendent, Capitol Grounds
MISSION

Rooted in sustainable practices, Capitol Grounds cares for, improves, and maintains the landscapes surrounding the U.S. Capitol to preserve their historic character for future generations.

VISION

Capitol Grounds inspires the world by nourishing Fredrick Law Olmsted’s vision for the historic landscape that supports and enhances the symbolic character of the U.S. Capitol.

Capitol Grounds is an organization of innovative and empowered employees who are respected leaders in their fields.

GOALS

- Improve communication and collaboration

- Increase staff knowledge about cultural heritage assets, horticulture, and arboriculture best practices

- Attain organizational excellence to maintain an awe-inspiring setting for the U.S. Capitol
Goal 1: Improve communication and collaboration.
Aligns with AOC Goals: Innovative and Empowered Workforce, and One Team, One Mission

Objective 1.1: Evaluate underlying barriers to effective communication and collaboration, and develop an approach and implementation plan to improve communication and collaboration.

Strategy 1.1.1: Conduct facilitated focus groups with all Capitol Grounds shops to assess current challenges and opportunities. (April-June 2015)

Strategy 1.1.2: Incorporate input from focus groups to inform Capitol Grounds leadership’s prioritization of actions addressing current challenges and opportunities for improving communication and collaboration. (June 2015)

Strategy 1.1.3: Create a communication plan to address communication challenges and leverage opportunities. (2017)

Objective 1.2: Develop systems to facilitate the two-way flow of information sharing and feedback.

Strategy 1.2.1: Create a system for better reporting out to staff from leadership meetings. (2017)

Strategy 1.2.2: Develop a rotational work program within Capitol Grounds to foster collaboration, teamwork, and continual learning. (2017)

Strategy 1.2.3: Conduct regular meetings as a means of disseminating pertinent information and receiving input from all Capitol Grounds staff, and allowing shops to foster collaboration by communicating work plans. (2016)

Objective 1.3: Expand and improve monthly all-staff meetings.

Strategy 1.3.1: Expand monthly safety meetings to include other topics, thereby transforming meetings into a forum for information sharing and discussion. (2016)

Strategy 1.3.2: Distribute meeting agendas in advance. (2016)

Strategy 1.3.3: Create means to collect suggestions and future agenda items. (2016)

Objective 1.4: Improve appreciation and understanding of different working styles to strengthen teamwork and collaboration within Capitol Grounds.


Strategy 1.4.2: Develop and implement a system of friendly competitions between shops to allow Capitol Grounds staff to showcase their work and take pride in new installations or projects. (2016)

Strategy 1.4.3: Develop and implement a system whereby Capitol Grounds staff can assist each other across work areas when additional help is needed. (2016)
Objective 1.5: Provide leadership development to supervisors and encourage its practice specifically to improve communication with Capitol Grounds staff.

**Strategy 1.5.1:** Supplement AOC Supervisory Academy with executive coaching and additional supervisory training opportunities. (2017)

**Strategy 1.5.2:** Position Capitol Grounds’ leaders as ambassadors of the grounds management program. (2018)

**Strategy 1.5.3:** Establish a method by which Capitol Grounds can partner with the Architect of the Capitol’s Planning and Project Management division (PPM) on planning and review initiatives to ensure that PPM projects are aligned with Capitol Grounds projects and operational planning. (2016)
Goal 2: Increase staff knowledge about cultural heritage assets and horticultural / arboricultural best practices.  
Alignment with AOC Goals: Awe Inspiring Facilities, Innovative and Empowered Workforce, and Extraordinary Services

Objective 2.1: Develop resources for Capitol Grounds to educate staff about Capitol Grounds history and operations.

   Strategy 2.1.1: Compile cultural landscape reports, annual reports, and standard operating procedures into an accessible and available format and location. (2016)


Objective 2.2: Improve Capitol Grounds staff knowledge of horticultural topics.

   Strategy 2.2.1: Create collaborative opportunities with the United States Botanic Garden to share knowledge and best practices. (2016)

   Strategy 2.2.2: Develop an in-service training program to promote continual learning in horticultural topics. (2017)

   Strategy 2.2.3: Establish a budget and create an execution plan to support the in-service training program. (2017)

   Strategy 2.2.4: Utilize American Public Gardens Association (APGA) membership to provide professional development and training to Capitol Grounds staff. (2016)

   Strategy 2.2.5: Ensure industry best practices are met in service to the Architect of the Capitol’s mission by leveraging opportunities such as membership with the Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS) and utilize PGMS programs such as the Landscape Management and Operations Accreditation and/or Certified Grounds Manager credentialing. (2018)

Objective 2.3: Expand interpretation opportunities for the enrichment of visitors and congressional staff.

   Strategy 2.3.1: Create training opportunities for Capitol Grounds staff to enhance their outreach skills. (2017)

   Strategy 2.3.2: Develop an in-house tour program for Capitol Grounds staff to give tours of their areas of responsibility. (2016)

   Strategy 2.3.3: Expand Capitol Grounds staff-led tours for the benefit of visitors to the Capitol Complex. (2018)
Goal 3: Attain organizational excellence to maintain an awe inspiring setting for the U.S. Capitol.
Alignment with AOC Goals of Awe-Inspiring Facilities, and Innovative and Empowered Workforce

Objective 3.1: Document and communicate long range organizational planning.

Strategy 3.1.1: Create a one-year business plan in support of the Capitol Grounds Strategic Plan. (August 2015)

Strategy 3.1.2: Compile equipment inventory to assist with the fleet and equipment management plan. (2016)

Strategy 3.1.3: Create a Capitol Grounds staff-generated operational handbook for major areas of responsibility. (2018)

Strategy 3.1.4: Conduct a staffing analysis to assess current and future staffing needs and compare against organizational priorities. (2018)

Objective 3.2: Further sustainable practices.

Strategy 3.2.1: Develop an approach and implementation plan to further sustainable practices. (Sept 2015)

Strategy 3.2.2: Create a baseline study for irrigation, fountain, and pool water usage. (2016)

Strategy 3.2.3: Quantify composted yard debris. (2016)

Strategy 3.2.4: Research, acquire, and utilize alternatively fueled equipment wherever possible. (2020)

Strategy 3.2.5: Conduct a study of mowing practices to assess possible sustainability improvements. (2016-2017)

Objective 3.3: Attain arboretum status for Capitol Grounds.

Strategy 3.3.1: Assess applicable accreditation programs. (2016)

Strategy 3.3.2: Initiate accreditation process. (2017)