

## The New Deal in Washington DC

The Living New Deal's Map and Guide to the New Deal in Washington DC is third in a series highlighting the Roosevelt Administration's legacy in the nation's largest cities. These maps make visible what a strong, enlightened, and democratic government can achieve when it strives to serve the needs of *all* the people. They are meant to remind Americans of their past accomplishments and give them faith in the country's ability to do the same today and in the future.

On taking office in the midst of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt launched the New Deal (1933-1942), an unprecedented program of economic reform, public works, job creation and investment in the health, education and economic security of the American people.

The New Deal transformed the nation's capital in a brief decade of intense activity. It realized the long-delayed civic dreams of the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans for the city: completing the Federal Triangle, development of the capital parks systems, and renovation of the National Mall as the monumental centerpiece.

The New Deal rebuilt city infrastructure from the bottom up. It expanded the sewerage and treatment system to clean up the Potomac River and polluted creeks. It funded the municipal government to improve miles of city streets, erect bridges, expand schools and upgrade hospitals. The New Deal built scores of ballfields, playgrounds and trails, and ameliorated a segregated city by making recreation facilities like Langston Golf Course open to all.

The New Deal added to the cultural endowment of the city with hundreds of murals and sculptures for new office buildings and the National Zoo, as well as building the Jefferson Memorial, restoring the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial, and adding a new wing to the Library of Congress.

These accomplishments pumped money into the local economy through local government, private contracts and wages. Jobs programs, relief and public housing brought an end to the national shame of veterans' encampments and squalid Hooverilles in the nation's capital. Most important, Washington DC was transformed by the labor and talents of tens of thousands of unemployed men and women of all races from the city and beyond.

In less than a decade the New Deal renewed America and its capital city, leaving a healthy economy, stable democracy, social safety net, and modern infrastructure that would be the foundation for victory in the Second World War and the Golden Age of postwar prosperity.