

INTRODUCTION

The location of chanceries in Washington is a problem that has plagued foreign governments, as well as the residents of the Capital, for many years.

When the situation became critical several years ago, the Secretary of State named a special committee to seek a solution. The committee developed the concept of an International Center. The National Capital Planning Commission, in cooperation with the State Department, took this concept and initially prepared a plan for a Center in the area between New Hampshire Avenue and Rock Creek Parkway, Washington and Dupont Circles. This proposal was part of the Proposed Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and legislation was introduced in the 89th Congress in 1966 to establish an International Center, northwest of Washington Circle, to house chanceries, international organizations and related facilities.

Although this area had mixed land uses, blighted and deteriorating conditions, and was already beginning to change to other more intensive uses, the total cost of the proposal and the resulting displacement presented problems with this site.

Consequently, the Commission, in conjunction with the Department of State and the General Services Administration, developed an alternative proposal, described in this report, for an International Center on a portion of the old Bureau of Standards site.

The proposed site at the old Bureau of Standards is well located in relation to the major concentrations of embassies, chanceries and international organizations along Connecticut and Massachusetts Avenues, northwest of the White House.

The site is situated on top of a hill overlooking Melvin Hazen Park in Northwest Washington, and would provide a very attractive setting for the new Headquarters of the Organization of the American States and for chanceries of foreign governments.

The site is located along Connecticut Avenue, N.W.—one of the “special streets” in the National Capital and a principal radial avenue extending from the White House to the District Line. It is now well served by bus and is to be served by the initial rapid rail subway system authorized by Congress. A subway station is planned at Connecticut Avenue and Van Ness Street—immediately adjacent to this site. The Connecticut Avenue Line, as shown on the map on the adjacent page, is currently being designed and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority expects service to begin late in 1974.