Proliferation of digital billboards could mar character of nation's capital

The iconic streetscapes and unique visual character of Washington, DC are known all over the world and are a source of pride for all Americans. Over the years the city's visual character has benefited from a longstanding ban on billboards and the efforts of residents like Lady Bird Johnson and others who worked hard to beautify the District.

But in recent years Washington has started to suffer from the kind of sign blight that homogenizes and diminishes the visual character of so many American cities.

The leading local advocate for protecting the city's visual character is the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and its vice-chair Meg Maguire. Click here to read the Committee's report to city council on the threats from billboard blight currently facing Washington.

Scenic America is working with the Committee of 100 and other likeminded groups to protect the character of our nation's capital and we will give our members an opportunity to make their voices heard when the time is right – stay tuned!

Click here to read more about this issue.

National Summit for Gateway Communities announced

The 100th anniversary of the National Park Service put a spotlight on the iconic parks that Americans love and cherish. It also directed attention to the need to invest in America's gateway communities, which welcome and serve the needs of visitors and residents drawn to the magic of our public lands.

Gateway communities steward the heritage and resources of public lands while providing lodging, food, and services to residents and visitors from around the world. However, many gateway communities are facing challenges: some loved so deeply that they are being overwhelmed, with degraded resources and natural beauty, while others suffer

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To help address these issues Scenic America is partnering with the Conservation Fund to produce a National Summit for Gateway Communities this December at the National Conservation Training Center in Sheperdstown, West Virginia.

Click here to learn more about the goals and objectives of the summit and click here to learn about sponsorship opportunities.

Scenic America has started a Facebook group to help connect representatives of gateway communities. Click here to join the conversation, and stay tuned for more information about the December summit coming soon.

MIT project explores tree canopies in cities around the world

The Senseable City Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has launched Treepedia, a new website that catalogues the density of tree canopies in two dozen global cities.

Treepedia uses information from Google Street View to create what it calls the Green View Index -- a rating that quantifies how green a streetscape looks according to the number of trees it contains. The website also allows users to click on a series of dots that reveal street view images of that location.

It is well established that trees and greenery are essential to making cities healthy, livable and prosperous places where people want to live, work and visit.

Scenic America has long advocated for tree preservation and in our Taking the Long View white paper we promote expanding parks and open spaces in and around American cities.