



## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

### Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Section 3 Realignment

JUNE 2012

The National Park Service (NPS) National Capital Parks – East, in collaboration with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, is proposing to realignment Section 3 of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail through the Kenilworth portion of Anacostia Park. This section of trail is a realignment of a trail section previously identified in 2004. It is located east of the Anacostia River in the northeast section of Washington, D.C., and extends into Maryland. A pedestrian bridge located across the Anacostia River will connect Anacostia Park with the U.S. National Arboretum. This section of trail will also serve to link other sections of the Anacostia Riverwalk (ARW) Trail, as well as other District tie-ins.

The purpose of the project is to realign Section 3 of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, which had previously been identified and analyzed in the 2004 *Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Environmental Assessment* that covered three sections of the trail. The Anacostia Riverwalk provides a safe and convenient means for Park visitors to access the Anacostia River waterfront and enjoy Anacostia Park. The realignment of Section 3 of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail is needed based on additional site investigations and reviews that were conducted after the completion of the 2004 environmental assessment. A field assessment showed that the previously identified alignment had security and construction feasibility issues that had not been known or anticipated. The realignment will avoid these issues and will also provide a more natural visitor experience for users. The realignment will provide better connectivity for visitors, including a pedestrian bridge across the Anacostia River, connecting the Park with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Arboretum. In addition, there is a possibility of crossing a portion of the Kenilworth Park South Landfill located in the Park as part of Section 3, which would keep the trail closer to the riverbank. NPS is currently working to complete the Feasibility Study for cleanup of the landfill. A second phase of the trail location can now be accommodated and has been considered and analyzed along with the realignment.

The NPS completed an environmental assessment (EA) that provides an analysis of the environmental consequences of the alternatives considered for the project. This EA was prepared in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), its implementing regulations by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Director's Order 12, Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision-Making, and accompanying Handbook.

#### SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

Based on the analysis presented in the EA, the NPS has selected alternative B, Realignment of Section 3 of the Anacostia Riverwalk, for implementation. The selected alternative is a revision of the preferred alignment of Section 3 (alternative 3A) as presented in the 2004 *Anacostia Riverwalk Trail EA*. The project includes two phases. Phase I will use portions of the existing roadway network in order to bypass the southern portion of the Kenilworth Park Landfill, located in the project area, which is not available for immediate use due to remediation activities that are underway.

The realigned Section 3 trail will then head west on Hayes Street, wrapping around Hayes Street and Mayfair Terrace. In this section, Anacostia Avenue is 34 feet wide and is composed of two 12-foot travel lanes that will be shared by vehicles and bicycles and two 5-foot unmarked parking areas, one on each side of the street. Pedestrians will use the existing sidewalk areas. Along Hayes Street, existing parking will be eliminated and a barrier will be put in place on the street to protect trail users from traffic and existing bus routes. Hayes Street is currently 36 feet wide, including the on-street parking. The trail width will remain at 10 feet with a 4-foot barrier, allowing for 22 feet of roadway.

The trail will then leave Hayes Street, turn north, and cross over the Watts Branch creek on an existing pedestrian bridge. The proposed trail will traverse Deane Avenue and continue north toward the Kenilworth Recreation Center and the intersection of 40th Street SE and Anacostia Avenue. The trail will

then turn west toward the river, traversing the northern edge of Kenilworth Park North (KPN) Landfill and just south of the boundary to the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. The capped KPN Landfill is open to the public and provides recreational opportunities. In this section, the trail will again be built on 1-2 feet fill to prevent any soil disturbance on top of the landfill. Information from the Remedial Investigations for the Kenilworth Park, which is currently underway, will indicate any additional work needed at the site to provide long-term protection from landfill material associated with the site.

If funding is available, under phase I, the trail will include a bridge across the Anacostia River to provide connectivity between Anacostia Park and the National Arboretum. The bridge abutment on the eastern bank of the Anacostia River will be located on top of the northern portion of the Kenilworth Park Landfill. Steps to remediate the land will occur prior to bridge installation. Additionally, a small dock (12-foot by 12-foot) will be installed in the area of the bridge to accommodate safe landings and entries into the Anacostia River.

Phase II is a final alignment that would be constructed after the completion of CERCLA remediation activities occurring at the existing Kenilworth Park South (KPS) Landfill, which is currently closed to the public. The alignment would avoid the use of any existing streets and would continue the ARW Trail along the east bank of the Anacostia River. The phase I alignment will remain open and will allow local residents more direct access to the entire ARW Trail.

The selected alternative consists of multi-use trail options that generally parallel the Anacostia River. The typical construction needed for the realignment of the trail (e.g., the width, material, and landscaping) will vary by location. For example, in areas that are currently maintained as turf, the section will consist of a 12-foot-wide asphalt path that meanders around existing trees and wetlands. The trail will be reduced to 10 feet wide in the area of the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. The trail will be landscaped with additional trees and plants. In environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and river edges, the walkway will be constructed as a boardwalk. Other portions of the trail will include reconstructing existing roadways, and constructing the trail in existing sidewalk areas. In areas of potential contamination, the trail will be built upward by 1-2 feet to prevent any soil disturbance. The shoulders of the path will be widened in these areas, allowing for a gentle slope from the raised trail.

## **OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

In addition to the NPS selected alternative described above, the EA analyzed a no action alternative. Under the no action alternative, the NPS would not construct a new trail or make any enhancements to existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Visitors would continue to use the River Trail to access the river and the trail around the historic ponds, but there would be no other routes used by visitors or Park neighbors to access the Park. The NPS would continue to maintain and operate Anacostia Park and implement minor improvements as part of its normal maintenance and safety operations. Sections 1 and 2 of the ARW Trail would be completed as planned.

## **ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE**

The NPS is required to identify the environmentally preferable alternative in its NEPA documents for public review and comment. The NPS, in accordance with the Department of the Interior policies contained in the Departmental Manual (DM; 516 DM 4.10) and the CEQ *NEPA's Forty Most Asked Questions*, defines the environmentally preferable alternative as the alternative that best promotes the national environmental policy expressed in NEPA (section 101[b][516 DM 4.10]). In its *NEPA's Forty Most Asked Questions*, the CEQ further clarifies the identification of the environmentally preferable alternative, stating, "Ordinarily, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources" (CEQ n.d).

After completing the environmental analysis, the NPS identified the selected alternative as the environmentally preferable alternative in this EA because it best meets the definition established by the CEQ. The selected alternative improves visitor use and experience in Anacostia Park and the District as a

whole, while avoiding culturally sensitive areas. The selected alternative provides beneficial uses of Anacostia Park, allowing for a regional bicycle and pedestrian connection without degradation of Park resources. The selected alternative minimizes impacts on wetlands, forests, and trees and places a priority on retaining highly desirable native tree species. Additionally, the no action alternative (alternative A) would not meet the goals of this project and would not be able to provide a link between the first two sections of the ARW and other District tie-ins.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES OF THE ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

The NPS places a strong emphasis on avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potentially adverse environmental impacts. To help ensure the protection of natural and cultural resources and the quality of the visitor experience, the following protective measures will be implemented as part of the selected alternative. The NPS will implement an appropriate level of monitoring throughout the construction process to help ensure that protective measures are being properly implemented and are achieving their intended results.

### **SOILS**

During the construction period, the NPS will follow all applicable federal and District regulations and implement the following mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts on soils:

- The NPS will adhere to an erosion- and sediment-control plan completed in accordance with chapter 5 of title 21 and chapter 31 of title 20, District of Columbia Municipal Regulations.
- The NPS will reduce or minimize adverse impacts by employing best management practices to prevent and control soil erosion and sedimentation during the construction and operation of the trail.

### **VEGETATION**

- The NPS will minimize cutting trees whenever possible. Preliminary trail design was routed to avoid healthy native trees. Instead, unhealthy or invasive trees are slated for removal wherever feasible.
- The NPS will clearly note vegetation clearing limits on construction documents and will mark them in the field to minimize the disturbance and alteration of vegetation and wildlife habitat.
- The NPS will incorporate native tree planting along the new trail.

### **WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT**

- Vegetation clearing will be outside the breeding season for birds (typically April through August) and/or will not remove occupied bird nests.

### **WETLANDS**

- The NPS will use appropriate erosion and siltation controls during construction, including stabilization of all exposed soil or fill material at the earliest practicable date, and use silt fence and other appropriate sediment control BMPs.
- The NPS will avoid the use of heavy equipment in wetlands to the greatest extent possible.
- The NPS will place excavated material on an upland site.
- Work will be coordinated to avoid impacting resident amphibians during their breeding seasons (late February to early November).
- The NPS will minimize shade impacts, to the extent practicable, in the northern portion of the realigned section.

### **VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE**

- The NPS will avoid construction during peak visitor use periods (e.g., weekends, holidays, and summer months) to avoid disruption for visitors.

### **HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- The NPS will develop a safety plan prior to the initiation of construction to ensure the safety of Park visitors, workers, and Park personnel.

- The NPS will place construction fencing at the intersections of the construction area and anywhere else visible to visitors to discourage visitors from entering a construction site.
- The NPS will elevate trail in areas of known or potential contamination to avoid ground disturbance and mobilization of soils.

#### NEIGHBORHOODS

- The NPS will conduct all construction activities during daylight hours to avoid noise impacts on Park neighbors.

#### CULTURAL RESOURCES

- If archeological resources are discovered during construction, the NPS will halt all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery until the resources can be identified and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed. The NPS will consult with the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office (DCHPO), the NPS, and/or the NPS regional archaeologist to ensure that the protection of resources is addressed. In the unlikely event that human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered during construction, the NPS will follow provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 USC 3001) of 1990.
- A geoarchaeological survey will be conducted on the west side of the Anacostia River, adjacent to the National Arboretum, prior to the trail bridge being built. If archaeological resources or buried land surfaces are identified, these locations will be protected during construction activities. This will be followed by appropriate documentation for any National Register-eligible resources that cannot be avoided during construction.
- The Anacostia seawall will be protected during any adjacent construction activities and during any temporary berthing and loading/unloading of construction equipment.

#### WHY THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

As documented in the EA, the NPS has determined that the selected alternative, alternative B (NPS preferred alternative), can be implemented without significant adverse effects. As defined in 40 CFR §1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

*Impacts that may have both beneficial and adverse aspects and which on balance may be beneficial, but that may still have significant adverse impacts that require analysis in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):* Soils, vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, wetlands, visitor use and experience, human health and safety, neighborhoods, cultural landscapes, historic structures and districts and archaeological resources will experience both beneficial and adverse impacts as a result of implementing the selected alternative; however, no significant impacts were identified that will require analysis in an EIS. There will be short-term negligible to minor adverse impacts and long-term minor adverse impacts on soils from earth-moving activities during construction and stormwater runoff from the increase in impervious surface. Adverse impacts on vegetation from construction staging areas will be short-term, adverse, and negligible. There will also be long-term moderate adverse impacts on vegetation from tree removal along the trail alignment, however a full tree survey was completed, and healthy, mature trees will be avoided when feasible. Trees slated for removal were chosen based on their condition, size, and whether or not they are native or invasive species. The selected alternative will result in short-term minor adverse impacts on wildlife during the construction period from the noise and activities associated with construction equipment and there will be long-term minor adverse impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat from the removal of trees along the alignment. Wherever possible, the trail alignment has avoided wetlands, however the selected alternative will result in long-term minor adverse impacts on approximately 0.029 acres of wetlands.

Impacts from constructing the realignment of section 3 of the ARW Trail will result in short-term negligible to minor adverse impacts on visitor use and experience and human health and safety during the

construction period due to equipment noise and closure of some areas of the Park. The selected alternative will have long-term beneficial impacts on visitor use and experience due to the increased trail access. There will be long-term beneficial impacts on human health and safety from formalized river access and improved pedestrian and cyclist access throughout Anacostia Park. The implementation of the selected alternative will result in short-term minor adverse impacts on neighborhoods as a result of the construction activities but long-term beneficial impacts to neighborhoods from access improvements. Impacts to cultural landscapes will be long-term, negligible to minor and adverse from the introduction of a new visual element. Similarly, the impacts on historic structures and districts from the selected alternative will be long-term, minor and adverse. Impacts on archaeological resources under the selected alternative could range from negligible to minor, depending on the relative loss of integrity and information potential.

***Degree of effect on human health or safety:*** The selected alternative will not adversely affect public health or safety. During the construction of phase I, clear closure signs will be posted in order to prevent visitors from inadvertently entering the construction site, and the NPS will formulate a health and safety plan. With these mitigation measures, impacts on health and safety during the construction period will be short-term, negligible, and adverse. In areas of potential soil contamination, the trail will be elevated from grade and constructed on 1-2 feet of fill material to avoid disturbance of any soils. Phase I will provide a direct connection between the end of Section 2 of the ARW Trail, through Anacostia Park, to the Bladensburg Trail, improving visitor safety by eliminating the need for trail users to be routed onto public roads without a separate trail lane. Additionally, the inclusion of a formalized launch location (dock) on the eastern bank for kayakers and canocists will improve human health and safety in the project area. Due to these improvements, phase I will result in a long-term beneficial impact on human health and safety.

The construction of the phase II alignment will provide visitors with a continuous trail along the riverside after the remediation at the KPS Landfill has been completed or once the landfill area has been cleared for public use, similar to KPN Landfill. Since phase II will not be constructed until the remedial investigations have been completed and proper remediation and mitigation measures have been developed, phase II will have no long-term adverse impacts on human health and safety. Short-term impacts during construction will be similar to phase I. Phase II will eliminate the need for Park users to use the existing road network, further improving the safety of users on the trail.

The implementation of the selected alternative will result in short-term negligible adverse and long-term beneficial impacts on human health and safety. There will be long-term beneficial cumulative impacts on human health and safety, with the selected alternative having a noticeable beneficial contribution and slight adverse contribution to human health and safety.

***Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, wetlands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas:*** The project area does not contain any prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, ecologically critical areas, or Park lands other than the NPS property that is the subject of this EA.

Phase I will occur within the boundaries of National Register-eligible Anacostia Park and adjacent to the potentially eligible Anacostia River Seawall. On the east side of the Anacostia River, the trail will run adjacent to the Anacostia River Seawall in the Kenilworth Marsh directly northwest of the Aquatic Gardens. The construction of the trail adjacent to Anacostia Seawall will not result in a loss of integrity because the proposed action will not involve physical changes to the seawall. These actions will somewhat alter aspects of the setting of Anacostia Park and the Anacostia Seawall; however, they will not diminish the integrity of character-defining features or compromise the overall integrity of historic resources, resulting in indirect long-term minor adverse impacts, or *no adverse effect* under section 106, on historic structures and districts.

Phase I will also include a pedestrian bridge, which will cross the Anacostia River at the location of Kenilworth Park on the east side of the river and at the southwest corner of the National Arboretum on the west side of the river. The pedestrian bridge will not directly damage the fabric of the Anacostia Seawall

because the pilings and the bridge itself will bypass the seawall. However, mitigation measures will be implemented during construction to ensure that the seawall is not damaged indirectly. The design of the bridge will be completed in consultation with the DC HPO and will undergo review by the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission, ensuring the bridge design will minimize any impacts to cultural landscapes and the viewshed of the vicinity. Short-term and long-term minor adverse impacts will be mitigated in the construction permit and will involve fencing off and protecting the seawall during construction activities.

The construction of the bridge will introduce a new visual element adjacent to the National Arboretum property and the adjacent Langston Golf Course. While the trail will follow an existing gravel road, approaches to the bridge and the temporary staging area will require minimal clearing of trees and vegetation directly adjacent to the National Arboretum property near the terminus of Holly Springs Drive, a road accessible to visitors. Overall, these activities under phase I will not significantly diminish the integrity of character-defining features or compromise the overall integrity of these historic resources. Trees remaining along the road in the National Arboretum and trees along the edges of the Langston Golf Course will serve as a buffer and for the most part will obstruct views of the bridge and the staging area. The staging area will be removed after construction. While the views of the bridge, trail, and dock, and the loss of vegetation will somewhat reduce the integrity of setting, the integrity of the districts as a whole will be retained. Therefore, these activities will have short-term and long-term minor impacts, or *no adverse effect* under Section 106, on historic structures and districts.

Phase II will occur within the boundaries of National Register-eligible Anacostia Park and adjacent to the potentially eligible Anacostia River Seawall in Anacostia Park. While these actions will somewhat alter aspects of the setting, they will not diminish the integrity of character-defining features or compromise the overall integrity of these historic resources. Therefore, these activities will have long-term minor adverse impacts, or *no adverse effect* under Section 106, on historic structures and districts.

Phase I will occur in the marshland adjacent to National Register-listed Kenilworth Gardens Cultural Landscape. On the east side of the Anacostia River, the trail will run adjacent to the Anacostia River Seawall in the Kenilworth Marsh directly northwest of the Aquatic Gardens. Although the trail will be located in Kenilworth Marsh, a contributing feature to the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens Cultural Landscape, the trail will not compromise the integrity of the marsh because trails and paths are already present in Kenilworth Marsh. These actions will somewhat alter aspects of the setting; however, they will not diminish the integrity of character-defining features or compromise the overall integrity of the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens Cultural Landscape, resulting in indirect long-term minor adverse impacts, or *no adverse effect* under Section 106, on cultural landscapes.

Phase II will follow the eastern bank of the Anacostia, joining the phase I alignment south of the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. Phase II would occur adjacent to National Register-listed Kenilworth Gardens. While these actions would somewhat alter aspects of the setting, they would not diminish the integrity of character-defining features or compromise the overall integrity of the Kenilworth Gardens Cultural Landscape. Therefore, these activities will have indirect long-term negligible adverse impacts, or *no adverse effect* under Section 106, on cultural landscapes.

Wetland impacts are estimated to be approximately 1,260 square feet (0.029 acre). Most impacts on wetlands and waterways resulting from construction will be temporary. Boardwalks through wetland areas will be constructed in a low-impact manner. Low-impact construction methods include setting the first boardwalk pilings from an adjacent non-wetland area and then proceeding with construction of the trusses and planking to complete an initial portion of the boardwalk. The work will then proceed linearly, with all construction equipment using the newly constructed section of boardwalk as a working platform to extend the trail through the wetland area. All construction equipment will remain within the ultimate footprint of the trail. The activities in these areas may cause a temporary disturbance; however, the construction of the boardwalk areas will not lead to a substantial loss of wetlands. Wetlands WA, WD, and WI (see chapter 3 of the EA) are expected to experience long-term localized minor adverse direct impacts from the construction of the proposed trail (1,200 square feet or 0.027 acre). All actions will incorporate mitigations to minimize the impacts to wetlands. Such mitigations include avoiding the use

of heavy machinery within wetlands to the extent possible; utilizing best management practices (such as silt fencing) to minimize permanent impacts on wetlands and to prevent sediment and fill material from accumulating in wetlands as well as downstream from the wetlands; and coordinating the construction to avoid impacting resident amphibians during their breeding seasons.

The construction of a pedestrian bridge across the Anacostia River will impact an additional 40 square feet of wetlands from two of the bridge pilings in the river where the average low water level is less than 2 meters deep. Similarly, the construction of the small dock will displace up to an additional 20 square feet of wetland due to pilings. The additional impacts on wetlands increase the combined impact to 0.029 acre.

As the result of increased impervious surface area from the proposed trail, wetlands adjacent to the trail may experience increased stormwater runoff, resulting in long-term minor adverse impacts. Overall, impacts from phase I will result in long-term minor adverse impacts on wetlands.

A Statement of Findings (SOF) for wetlands was not required for this EA because it would involve a foot/bicycle trail or boardwalk where the primary purpose includes public education, interpretation, or enjoyment of wetland resources and where the total wetland impact from fill placement would be 0.1 acre or less. This is an excepted action per section 4.2.1(g) "renovation" in Procedural Manual 77-1: *Wetland Protection*. Because of the construction of the bridge and boat launch within the floodplain, an SOF for floodplains was completed per Director's Order 77-2: *Floodplain Management Guideline* (see attached). However, the bridge and boat launch will not impede or accelerate high flows or inhibit the ability of the floodplain to disperse the volume and energy of floodwaters from the Anacostia River. The Floodplain SOF concludes that impacts to floodplain functions and values would be negligible, and the topic of floodplains was therefore dismissed from further analysis in the EA.

***Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:*** No highly controversial effects in terms of scientific uncertainties as a result of the selected alternative were identified during the preparation of the EA or by the public during the public comment period.

***Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks:*** No highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks were identified during either preparation of the EA or through public comment.

***Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration:*** The selected alternative neither establishes a NPS precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

***Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts:*** Implementation of the selected alternative will have no significant cumulative impacts. As described in the EA, past, present, and future actions and projects within the project area that could affect soils, vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, wetlands, visitor use and experience, human health and safety, neighborhoods, cultural landscapes, historic structures and districts and archaeological resources include the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) response actions at Kenilworth Park Landfill, Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO), the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Plan, reconstruction of Kenilworth Avenue NE (I-295) at Foote Street, completion of sections 1 and 2 of the ARW Trail, the 11<sup>th</sup> Street bridges project, CERCLA response actions at Poplar Point and Poplar Point redevelopment.

Projects that could affect soils in or around the project area include the completion of Sections 1 and 2 of the ARW Trail, the CSO project, the reconstruction of at I-295, and the remediation of the Kenilworth Park Landfill. Impacts on soils from these cumulative actions will result in short-term and long-term minor adverse impacts. When combined with the localized short- and long-term negligible to minor adverse impacts of the selected alternative, cumulative impacts on soils will be long-term, minor, and adverse.

Projects that could affect vegetation include the completion of Sections 1 and 2 of the ARW Trail, the CSO project, and the remediation of the Kenilworth Park Landfill. Impacts on vegetation from these cumulative actions will result in short-term and long-term minor adverse impacts. When combined with the localized short-term negligible impacts and long-term moderate adverse impacts of the selected alternative, cumulative impacts on vegetation will be long-term, moderate, and adverse.

Projects that could affect wildlife and wildlife habitat include the completion of Sections 1 and 2 of the ARW Trail and the restoration of the Anacostia River Watershed. Impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat from these cumulative actions will result in short-term and long-term minor adverse impacts from increased visitor access and disturbance in areas that were previously undeveloped. When combined with the short-term and long-term minor adverse impacts of the selected alternative, cumulative impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat will be long-term, minor, and adverse.

Impacts on wetlands from projects, including the construction of Sections 1 and 2 of the ARW Trail and the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Project, would be long-term, minor, and adverse and long-term beneficial. When combined with the long-term minor adverse impacts of the selected alternative, cumulative impacts on wetlands will be long-term, minor, and adverse.

Projects that could affect visitor use and experience include the completion of Sections 1 and 2 of the ARW Trail and the CSO project. Impacts on visitor use and experience from these cumulative actions have had a beneficial impact as well as short-term, moderate adverse impacts. When combined with the short-term, moderate and long-term minor adverse impacts and long-term beneficial impacts of the selected alternative, cumulative impacts on visitor use and experience will be long-term and beneficial.

Projects that could affect human health and safety include the remediation of the Kenilworth Park Landfill and the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Project and are expected to have long-term beneficial impacts on human health and safety by removing contaminants and improving water quality. When combined with the long-term beneficial impacts and short-term minor adverse impacts of the selected alternative, cumulative impacts on human health and safety will be long-term and beneficial.

Completed NPS projects in the vicinity of the project area, such as the construction of Sections 1 and 2 of the ARW Trail, have had a beneficial impact on neighborhoods by improving Park access to the Park and riverfront below the project area. Future projects in the study area, including AWI projects and the remediation of the Kenilworth Landfill, will have beneficial impacts on neighborhoods by removing contamination and improving water quality in the vicinity of the neighborhoods. When combined with the short-term intermittent minor adverse impacts and long-term beneficial impacts of the selected alternative, cumulative impacts on neighborhoods will be long-term and beneficial.

Projects that could have impacts on cultural landscapes and historic structures and districts in the study area include the 11th Street bridges project, the Poplar Point redevelopment project, and the Poplar Point restoration project. The NEPA compliance for the Poplar Point redevelopment project is not yet available, but the EIS for the 11th Street bridges project determined that the project will result in an adverse effect on Anacostia Park because 1.5 acres of open recreation area will be lost. While the project will not impact the seawalls themselves, it will impact land close to the seawalls on both sides of the Anacostia River. Thus, a finding of *adverse effect* was recommended. Given the magnitude of these three projects in Anacostia Park, especially the 11th Street bridges project, adverse impacts on historic structures and districts are expected for Anacostia Park and the Anacostia River Seawall, which extends into the present study area. As a result, cumulative impacts for the selected alternative for both cultural landscapes and historic structures and districts will be long-term, minor, and adverse.

None of the projects considered in the cumulative impact analysis will have any effect on archaeological resources. The presence of National Register-eligible archaeological resources in the study area is not known; however, mitigation measures will likely include an archeological inventory and evaluation study that will include a geoarchaeological investigation, followed by appropriate documentation for any National Register-eligible resources that cannot be avoided during construction. Therefore, no significant cumulative effects will be anticipated as a result of the selected alternative.



***Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources:*** As stated in the EA, the project area is adjacent to a number of historic resources that are listed on, or considered eligible, for the NHRP. The Section 106 process was used to define the area of potential effect and identify cultural resources within it, analyze the alternatives and determine effects of the selected alternative, and identify minimization and mitigation actions.

All consultations with the DCHPO, as mandated in Section 106 of NHPA, occurred as part of the development of the EA. The activities associated with the selected alternative have the potential to impact two National Register-listed or National Register-eligible properties and two properties that may be National Register eligible but which have not been formally evaluated:

- Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens (National Register listed)
- Anacostia Park (National Register eligible)
- Anacostia River Seawall (potentially National Register eligible)
- Langston Golf Course (National Register listed)

Archaeological sites may exist in the project area as well.

The NPS began coordination with the DC HPO regarding the Section 3 ARW Trail realignment in 2010. A revised section 106 consultation letter to include the pedestrian bridge was sent to the DCHPO in April 2011 (see appendix A of the EA). In a letter dated June 21, 2012 and follow-up e-mails dated June 27, 2012, the DCHPO concurred with a “no adverse effects” to historic resources within the project area, with the condition of future geoarchaeology taking place in area of the trail bridge landing on the west bank of the Anacostia River, adjacent to the National Arboretum, prior to any construction work. The DCHPO stated concerns about potential adverse effects because the precise location of the identified site in the project vicinity is only vaguely known, 51NE012, a Woodland period village in this area of Anacostia River bank. Due to the potential for archaeological resources in this area of the project, the proposed undertaking will include a geoarchaeological survey requirement in any construction permit or authorization prior to any work taking place on the trail bridge on the western bank of the Anacostia River, near the National Arboretum.

The EA includes an assessment of effect under Section 106 of the NHPA in the “Environmental Consequences” section under “Cultural Resources,” and a copy of the EA was sent to the DCHPO to complete the Section 106 compliance. The DDOT previously consulted with the Maryland Historic Trust in 2004, and the proposed Section 3 alignment in Maryland has not changed. The Maryland Historic Trust responded that no historic resources would be affected.

***Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat:*** In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, in April 2009 the NPS sent a letter to solicit comments from the USFWS regarding the existence of threatened or endangered species in the project area. In April 2009, the USFWS responded, confirming that there are no threatened or endangered species in the project area (see appendix A of the EA).

In April 2009, the NPS sent a letter to the MDNR Wildlife and Heritage Division and the District Department of the Environment to request information on rare, threatened, and endangered species in the project area. The MDNR responded in April 2009, stating “there are no State or Federal records for rare, threatened, or endangered species within the boundaries of the project site” (see appendix A of the EA). The District Department of the Environment has not yet responded.

***Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law:*** The selected alternative violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

NEPA regulations require an “early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action.” To determine the scope of issues to be analyzed in depth in this plan, meetings were conducted with Park staff and the public.

Public scoping for this EA began February 3, 2011, and concluded March 4, 2011. Notice of the public scoping period was posted on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website (PEPC), and the NPS sent email notices of the meeting to individuals and organizations.

During the 30-day public comment period, comments were received from five community members that were in support of the proposed trail alignment and pedestrian bridge. One commenter had several concerns about security on the bridge and provided suggestions for lighting and emergency call boxes, and also requested the inclusion of a monitored security system.

The EA was made available for public review and comment on December 20, 2011 through January 31, 2012. The EA was also placed on the NPS’s PEPC website. During the public comment period, the NPS received 13 pieces of correspondence commenting on the proposed action. All 13 commenters were in favor of the new alignment and bridge connecting Anacostia Park to the National Arboretum. One commenter also requested that the trail include wayfinding/signage to direct users as well as a safety plan including cameras, lighting, and emergency call boxes. The same commenter requested the trail incorporate art and two commenters, including the District Office of Planning, requested that access to local communities be incorporated into the design of the trail.

Friends of the National Arboretum, in addition to their support of alternative B, noted that there is an additional entry point to the Arboretum, where pedestrians could enter directly into the Chinese Gardens and also noted an existing floating dock on the west bank of the Anacostia River at this location. The Friends of the National Arboretum also requested the NPS conduct more frequent maintenance where the trail will be located adjacent to the Arboretum boundary as well as requested coordination with the National Arboretum if any construction equipment will need to be brought in through the Arboretum.

The District Office of Planning also provided their support for the construction of the realignment and bridge as described under alternative B, but also requested the NPS provide additional analysis for other recreational facilities that may be impacted by the trail. The District also suggested additional related plans that were not included in the EA (Chapter 1) and requested that the importance and significance of Anacostia Park be emphasized in the EA. No changes have been made to the EA as a result of the comments received. All comments, including the NPS response to comments, are provided in attachment 1 to this FONSI.

## CONCLUSION

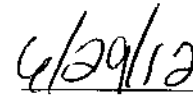
The NPS has selected alternative B for implementation. In light of the impacts described in the EA for the project and with guidance from NPS *Management Policies 2006*, natural and cultural resources information, professional judgment, and considering agency and public comments, the impacts that will result from the selected alternative will not impair any Park resources and values. The selected alternative does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an EIS. The selected alternative will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Negative environmental impacts that could occur to Park natural and cultural resources are negligible to moderate in intensity. There will be no significant impacts on soils, vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, wetlands, visitor use and experience, human health and safety, neighborhoods, cultural landscapes, historic structures and districts and archaeological resources. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the selected alternative will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

Based on the foregoing an EIS is not required for this action and thus will not be prepared. This is a finding of no significant impact.

Recommended:



Alexcy Romero  
Superintendent  
National Capital Parks-East




Date

Approved:



Stephen Whitesell  
Regional Director  
National Capital Region



Date

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## **IMPAIRMENT DETERMINATION**

The determination on impairment has been prepared for the selected alternative. An impairment determination is made for all resource impact topics analyzed for the selected alternative. An impairment determination is not made for visitor use and experience, human health and safety, or neighborhoods because impairment findings relate back to Park resources and values, and these impact areas are not generally considered to be Park resources or values according to the Organic Act, and cannot be impaired in the same way that an action can impair Park resources and values.

The NPS has determined that the implementation of the selected alternative will not constitute an impairment to the resources or values of Anacostia Park. This conclusion is based on consideration of the thorough analysis of the environmental impacts described in the EA, relevant scientific studies, the comments provided by the public and others, and the professional judgment of the decision-maker guided by the direction in *NPS Management Policies 2006*. Implementation of the NPS preferred alternative will not result in impairment of Park resources or values whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the Park's establishing legislation, (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the Park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the Park, or (3) identified in the Park's management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents as being of significance.

The selected alternative will result in short-term to long-term negligible to moderate adverse impacts on some of the Park's resources, which include soils, vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, wetlands, cultural landscapes, historic structures and districts and archaeological resources (subsurface resources).

### ***Soils***

Part of the purpose of Anacostia Park is to protect and preserve the Park's natural resources, which includes stabilized soils that support natural vegetation and wildlife habitat. Construction activities associated with the selected alternative will involve ground disturbances such as grading, leveling, and filling, which would result in disturbance of soils. Although the selected alternative will include the clearing of vegetation and exposure of soils, the impacts will be limited to the project areas and soil productivity and characteristics will not change outside of the limit of disturbance. The use of permeable materials and erosion control measures will ensure the alternative will not increase sedimentation in the Anacostia River. Soils throughout the project area are mostly previously disturbed and will not experience significant adverse impacts as a result of implementation of the preferred alternative. Since the selected alternative will not inhibit the Park's ability to protect natural resources, including stabilized and productive soils, the selected alternative will not result in an overall impairment of soils.

### ***Vegetation***

One purpose of the Park is to preserve the natural scenery and forest while providing recreational activities. While activities associated with the selected alternative will involve the removal of turf and native vegetation including trees, vegetation in the proximity of the proposed boardwalk will experience only slight impacts to a relatively small portion of plants proposed to be affected. Although an estimated 200 trees will be removed through the selected alternative in currently undisturbed areas, the population of these vegetative species will not be significantly compromised and the overall natural scenery will be preserved. Additionally, preliminary trail design was routed to avoid healthy native trees. Instead, unhealthy or invasive trees are slated for removal wherever feasible. Therefore, impacts of the selected alternative will not constitute an impairment of vegetation.

### ***Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat***

Construction elements and visitor activities associated with the selected alternative will displace species that currently use the areas of the proposed trail, resulting from human activity and noise associated with construction activities. The mortality or injury of smaller, less mobile species could occur as a result of construction; however, impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat resulting from construction are expected to be minimal due to the relatively small area being affected and the ability of adjacent areas to provide adequate habitat. Wildlife disturbed in the area of the boardwalk are expected to be temporarily displaced due to construction; however, wildlife habitat in these areas will not be significantly modified, and upon

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the completion of construction, it is expected that wildlife will resume utilizing the area in a similar manner as before. In previously disturbed areas, short-term affect to wildlife are expected during construction, however, because of the pre-disturbed nature of these sites, once construction is completed it is expected that wildlife will continue utilizing the area as before. In addition, construction will be coordinated to avoid resident and migrant bird breeding seasons. Overall, activities associated with the selected alternative are not likely to constitute an impairment of wildlife or wildlife habitat.

### ***Wetlands***

Part of the purpose of Anacostia Park is to preserve the natural scenery and forests within the Park while providing recreational opportunities and river access to the community. Part of the protection of natural resources includes the protection and preservation of wetlands contained within the Park. The construction of the realignment of Section 3 of the ARW trail was designed specifically to avoid pocket wetlands existing within the Park. Phase I of the trail will impact approximately 1,200 square feet of wetlands, including the boardwalk section near the Maryland border. Approximately 60 square feet of riverine wetlands will be impacted within the Anacostia River from the bridge and dock pilings. A total of 1,260 square feet or 0.029 acres of wetlands will be impacted. All work will be coordinated to avoid impacting resident amphibians during their breeding seasons (late February to early November).

Additionally, the ARW trail will help fulfill the Park purpose of providing recreational activities and river access. This project is exempted from the statement of findings requirement because it is an "excepted action" under Director's Order #77-1, since it will involve a foot/bicycle trail or boardwalk where the primary purpose includes public education, interpretation, or enjoyment of wetland resources and where the total wetland impact from fill placement will be 0.1 acre or less.

While there will be direct impacts to wetlands, the impacts will not be significant, and the wetlands are not key to the natural or cultural integrity of the Park outside of the Kenilworth Aquatic Garden area. The Park will continue to be able to protect natural resources and will use mitigation measures to limit impacts. Because the Park will continue to be able to meet the Park mission and fulfill the Park purpose under the enabling legislation, the selected alternative will not result in impairment.

### ***Cultural Landscapes***

Portions of the trail will occur in the marshland adjacent to National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listed Kenilworth Gardens and within the boundaries of NRHP eligible Anacostia Park. While the construction of the trail will alter aspects of the setting, the trail will not diminish the integrity of character-defining features or compromise the overall integrity of Kenilworth Gardens or Anacostia Park since trails and paths are already present. Since the selected alternative will not diminish the historical integrity of Kenilworth Gardens, there will be no impairment of cultural landscapes.

### ***Historic Structures and Districts***

The construction the ARW trail will occur within the boundaries of NRHP-eligible Anacostia Park and adjacent to the potentially eligible Anacostia River Seawall. The construction of the trail adjacent to Anacostia Seawall will not result in a loss of integrity, as the proposed action will not involve physical changes to the seawall. These actions will somewhat alter aspects of the setting of Anacostia Park and the Anacostia Seawall; however, they will not diminish the integrity of character-defining features or compromise the overall integrity of historic resources.

Under phase II, the footbridge constructed over the Anacostia Seawall will not destroy the fabric of the Anacostia Seawall as the pilings and the bridge itself will bypass the seawall. However, the construction of the bridge will introduce a new visual element to the National Arboretum property and the adjacent Langston Golf Course. While the trail will follow an existing gravel road, approaches to the bridge and the temporary staging area will require the clearing of trees directly adjacent to the National Arboretum property near the terminus of Holly Springs Drive, a road accessible to visitors. Overall, these activities will not significantly diminish the integrity of character-defining features or compromise the overall integrity of these historic resources. Trees remaining along the road in the National Arboretum and trees along the edges of the Langston Golf Course will serve as a buffer and block views of the bridge and

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staging area. While the loss of vegetation and views of the bridge will somewhat reduce the integrity of setting, and the integrity of the districts as a whole will be retained and, therefore, will not impair historic structures and districts.

### ***Archaeological Resources***

Archaeological sites in surface or near-surface settings may be disturbed and experience adverse impacts from new construction; however, it is assumed that most archaeological resources are buried beneath fill deposits or modern floodplain deposits, so the impacts will be minimized. The phase II alignment will involve new construction for a segment of trail that will run very close to the Anacostia River shoreline. The new bridge will also require construction of abutments on both sides of the river, which will involve relatively deep ground disturbance. On the east side of the river, it is assumed that there is little potential for preservation of archaeological resources, given the previous construction of the seawall and the landfill. On the west, prior construction of the seawall would have presumably resulted at least a partial loss of any archaeological resources in this area, assuming any ever existed in that location. The nearest previously recorded archaeological site along the western shoreline of the river is Site 51NE012, and its location might be somewhere within one half mile from the bridge crossing. On the west side of the river is an active floodplain where potential archaeological resources may have been buried by recent flood-deposited sediment or dredging from river channel maintenance.

While it is unknown whether NRHP-eligible archaeological resources exist along the trail alignment, it is anticipated that the trail will be elevated along this portion of trail and, therefore, no ground-disturbing activities would occur. If needed, mitigation of potential impacts to archaeological resources from the selected alternative will be accomplished by future studies to identify and document NRHP-eligible resources in the affected area. In specific regard to the trail bridge landing area on the west bank of the Anacostia River, adjacent to the National Arboretum, a geoarchaeological survey in advance of any construction work there, will be a requirement of any permit or authorization. Given these mitigation measures, no impairment to archaeological resources will result from implementation of the selected alternative, as all resources will be documented and preserved

**Attachment 1: NPS Response to Comments**

Comment	Commenter	NPS Response
<p>Alternative B does several great things for resident cyclists, commuters, runners, walkers, nature lovers and tourists. It continues the riverwalk path along the RIVER instead of dumping you out in the neighborhood near the 295/Nannie Helen Burroughs Ave interchange. It is a direct bike commute to Pennsylvania Ave /Souza Bridge, RFK Stadium/ East Capital Street bike lanes, and National Ballpark /South Capital Street, SE. from Bladensburg, Maryland. This really opens up cycle commutes into the city from the east side of DC. It brings a commuter experience similar to the Bethesda to Georgetown route provided by the Capital Crescent Trail. Proposal A does not invite the same kind of solitude and ease that the commuter trail provides in Proposal B. Also, it connects the Aquatic Gardens by bridge to the National arboretum. <b>OUTSTANDING!!!</b></p> <p>I am a cycle commuter and a resident of Marshall Heights, SE. For exercise, I travel a 7.5-mile loop along the River by bike from Benning to the Souza Bridge. I stop at the new Yes Natural Foods, and head back down Pennsylvania, east on Minnesota Ave cutting up Ridge Road to access East Capitol Street and back to Benning Rd. Three times I cross highway on/off ramps at Benning, and on both sides of the Souza Bridge. I look forward to the completion of the River trail to minimize my time in street traffic and increase my safety riding. Proposal B provides a traffic free loop that is long enough to actually get a work out.</p> <p>I got rid of my car 12 months ago and have saved over \$6000 in car payments, maintenance, insurance and fees. I have a zero emission 12-mile daily commute up and down Benning Road to McPherson Square. To date the maintenance on my bike has been less than \$50. When I don't bike, I use the circulator bus, metro, zipcar or a taxi which I have been able to budget at \$120/month. My friends without bikes use Capital Bikeshare. When I lost my job this past summer, my unemployment was able to cover my expenses because I had already eliminated my car. For low-income people, affordable transportation is imperative. I truly believe that great public transport is the lifeline of Washington. City dwellers in all quadrants don't need cars. The transportation improvements in this city have made my life economically viable and enjoyable. I have more money to buy healthier food. I exercise more and I have lost 20 lbs without dieting. As an African-American resident from one of the lowest income areas of DC, it is imperative to our survival. In addition, our neighbor commuters from the PG County into Washington need more oil independent travel options. We NEED safe economical transportation options to exercise, commute, and enjoy the environment. Proposal B provides that.</p> <p>The National Arboretum and the Aquatic Gardens are the jewels of this city. Sadly, many residents still do not enjoy either. At present, it is challenging to bike to the Aquatic gardens because Minnesota Ave and Nannie Helen Burroughs are in close proximity to highway on/off ramps. Trust me: cars are not in the mood for a 12mph bike upon exiting a 60mph highway. Proposal A runs too close to the highway exchange and unknown territory for most folk. If I do not feel safe, I don't go. The proposed alternative B, will alleviate this notion because the River trail is tucked further away from high stress traffic intersections and alleviates navigating unknown neighborhoods. Proposal B creates an entrance to both parks for tourists and residents by bike or foot and I can't express how exciting that is!</p> <p>Lastly, the River trail pays homage to our water source. It is important for all residents and guests to SEE IT and care for it. I love that it goes through a landfill. We need to see that too! We must connect the</p>	<p>kuaosei@gmail.com</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

<p>choices we make to their effects. Many folks still do not understand why there is a 5 cent charge for a plastic shopping bag. A short walk along the river will tell you. The more that we do as a community, the more consciousness grows. So happy that my city is considering this betterment and I pray that Proposal B is approved.</p>		
<p>I would like to add my support for a bridge across the Anacostia River connecting the U.S. National Arboretum and the Aquatic Gardens as part of the comments about the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Anacostia River Trail, Section 3. The USNA is a wonderful facility and a bridge would provide access to its trails and roads for hikers and bikers.</p> <p>Thank you for your work on this project!</p>	<p>Paul Sweet                  [nps2020@aol.com]</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>The Friends of the National Arboretum, a non-profit group that supports the scientific, educational, and other program activities of the arboretum for the benefit of the general public, is pleased to comment on the environmental assessment for the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Section 3 Realignment. In general, we are pleased with the progress made by the National Park Service in providing these improvements to public access and use of the river and its environs.</p> <p>In particular, we are delighted to see that the bridge from the east bank to the foot of the arboretum property is included in your proposed alternative for the next phase of trail development. This will result in substantial improvements in public access to the National Arboretum, as well as for the first time allowing a trail connection between the arboretum and the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, a sister facility with common interests and similar opportunities for public education. With respect to the overwhelmingly beneficial impacts this will have, we have a number of specific comments for your consideration and possible inclusion in the final environmental assessment.</p> <p>First, in addition to trail access to the terminus of Holly Springs Drive in the arboretum as you outline, there is an additional gate directly into the Asian Gardens during regular visiting hours. Located near the west end of the proposed bridge, this gate provides a pleasant alternative to the main trail for walkers; however it is too steep and winding for bicyclists; they should enter at Holly Springs Drive.</p> <p>Second, in addition to the dock you are proposing for the east end of the bridge, there is already in place a floating dock on the west shore near the arboretum entrance. This facility was the result of the work of a number of organizations, including the National Park Service and has become ever more popular with boaters. Having an additional dock on the east side will provide a welcome increase in docking capacity for the trail and arboretum users.</p> <p>Third, we are encouraged that the Park Service is committed to build and maintain the 1,000feet of trail from the west end of the bridge along the river and Hickey Run to the gate entrance at Holly Springs Drive. At the same time, we hope this will result in improved mowing and maintenance of the length of Park Service property between the Park Service and the river. Frankly, in recent years this area has been neglected and left to grow over with weeds, which has been of concern to the arboretum and to FONA, as we have tried to encourage access from the river.</p> <p>Finally, there are comments in the environmental assessment that suggest there may be a need to cut some trees and shrubs for a staging area to erect the bridge. However, it is not clear if the National Park Service expects to access the staging area through the arboretum. If the latter is the case, it is important to make early contact with arboretum personnel to discuss feasibility and impacts of such access.</p> <p>In sum, we are impressed by the progress you have made to date on the trail and grateful for your positive response to proposals for the bridge</p>	<p>Linda Dooley, Friends of the National Arboretum (Official Rep)</p>	<p>The National Park Service appreciates the comments from the Friends of the National Arboretum and has the following responses to your four main comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The planned trail access is the fork off Hickey Hill Road (service road), which is gradual and will lead to the bridge (trail will tie into the existing road).</li> <li>2. NPS agrees.</li> <li>3. NPS and National Arboretum will continue to work together, in conjunction with managing this riparian area between the river and Arboretum property. The 1,000 feet of trail will improve opportunities for NPS maintenance in that area. However, it is currently mostly kudzu, and NPS doesn't anticipate a lot of change in that area.</li> <li>4. As stated in the EA, a temporary staging area would require minimal clearing of trees and vegetation directly adjacent to the National Arboretum property near the terminus of Holly Springs Drive. Early contact would be established between NPS and the National Arboretum.</li> </ol>



<p>to the arboretum. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance. You may contact either FONA Executive Director Kathy Horan at 544-8733 and khoran@fona.org, or FONA Environment Committee Chair Bill Matuszeski at 544-2691 and bmat@olg.com.</p>		
<p>Dear Mr. Romero:</p> <p>Thank you for your correspondence dated December 19, 2011, announcing the availability of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Section 3 Realignment Draft Environment Assessment (EA) for public review and comment. The Office of Planning enthusiastically supports the National Park Service's proposal to make improvements to the network or trails along the Anacostia River, including the realignment that shifts Section 3 closer to the River. The Anacostia River is one of the city's great-untapped natural resources for recreation, as well as a vital resource in understanding the city's heritage.</p> <p>Our comments fall into four categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Additional analysis of recreational facilities in the park potentially impacted by the trail realignment;</li> <li>2. Improving connections to adjacent neighborhoods;</li> <li>3. Studies or concurrent planning efforts that need to be added or updated; and,</li> <li>4. Emphasizing the importance of Anacostia Park in the broader context of the District of Columbia's park system.</li> </ol> <p><b>Additional Analysis of Recreation Facilities Potentially Impacted by Trail Realignment</b>          The EA does not include an inventory and analysis of the trail's impact on existing athletic fields, courts, trails, pavilions, or other recreational amenities in Anacostia Park. The trail's realignment has the potential to detract from these resources if any are to be removed or decreased in size to accommodate the trail, or to enhance if the trail provides improved or additional routes of access to an existing facility.</p> <p><b>Improving Connections to Adjacent Neighborhoods</b>          The proposed trail realignment increases access from the Eastland Gardens neighborhood to Anacostia Park, but the realignment abandons the northernmost section of the trail linked to the Kenilworth Terrace neighborhood. Both Eastland Gardens and Kenilworth Terrace should have trail connections that ensure residents in the neighborhood adjacent to the park have immediate access to Anacostia Park.</p> <p><b>Relationship of Proposed Action to Policies, Agreements, and Other Plans</b>          There are several existing agreements or ongoing planning initiatives that should be cited in the EA. Additional review needs to be completed to see if any further coordination is necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CapitalSpace              Adopted by the National Capital Planning Commission in April 2010, this plan takes a comprehensive approach to establishing a vision for the District of Columbia's park system. There are several key planning concepts that relate directly to the work proposed in the EA, including "Increase Access to Local Parks," "Connect with Rivers," and "Expand Park System Capacity."</li> <li>- MOA between the DC Recreation Board and the National Park Service              In this 1949 agreement, Anacostia Park is included in a list of 19 parks that are "suitable and desirable units of the District of Columbia Recreation system" where the District can conduct programs of public recreation. Language in the agreement also allows the District to transfer funds to the National Park Service for specific park</li> </ul>	<p>Christopher Shaheen,          DC Office of Planning</p>	<p>The National Park Service appreciates the comments from the DC Office of Planning, and has the following responses to your four main comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The trail would impact some of the current athletic fields, and NPS might have to consider adjusting the current perimeters of the athletic fields after trail installation. The current alignment was chosen, however, to avoid the nearby woods, so it is the preferred alignment.</li> <li>2. Following the remediation and installation of phase II, further opportunities will be evaluated to connect adjacent neighborhoods. But, at the moment, that part of Kenilworth South is closed.</li> <li>3. Not every policy is mentioned in this EA, but most of the policies addressed in this comment, this project achieves those goals (for example, the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail).</li> <li>4. NPS agrees, Anacostia Park is one of three large parks in the District.</li> </ol>

<p>improvements for reservations included in this agreement.</p> <p>- Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail          The Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail is a 290-mile land and water route that traces the major events of the Chesapeake Campaign of the War of 1812. This ongoing planning initiative included a series of meetings in spring 2011 to discuss alternative concepts for the trail and a scenic byway that could develop over the next twenty years. Anacostia River is identified as a recommended water trail segment from the Potomac River to Bladensburg, Maryland.</p> <p>District of Columbia Planning Initiatives and Development Plans on Adjacent Sites          There are two development projects on adjacent sites that will increase residential population and change the built environment on land immediately adjacent to Section 3 of the Anacostia Park trail. Any realignment of the trail should ensure that pedestrian connections to these two areas are enhanced and maintained. The Parkside Planned Unit Development, approved by the Zoning Commission in April 2007, includes 1,500 to 2,000 residential units; 30,000 to 50,000 square feet of retail; 500,000 to 700,000 square feet of office; a 42,000 square feet medical facility; and, a 260,000 square feet elementary school.</p> <p>Also, the D.C. Housing Authority (DCHA) recently won a \$300,000 competitive HUD grant to fund an intensive planning process to renovate much of the area alongside the section of trail that is proposed for realignment. This planning process will result in a plan that outlines the development of a sustainable, mixed-income community for Eastland Gardens and Kenilworth Terrace with increased housing density, the introduction of new uses, and possibly realign existing streets and introduce new roads. DCHA anticipates the planning process will start in spring 2012. This process may run concurrently with an Office of Planning small area planning process that could recommend land use changes to accommodate increased density and mixed uses.</p> <p>A reference to Strategic Neighborhood Actions Plans (page 37) is out of date. While these plans were instrumental in engaging residents, summarizing citizen issues, and providing general overviews of neighborhoods, they have largely been superseded by plans that are more recent.</p> <p>Emphasize the Importance of Anacostia Park Within the District's Park System          The EA should acknowledge that Anacostia Park is one of the three large parks in the District along with the National Mall/Haines Point and Rock Creek Park. While the creation of the Park was the result of dredging in the Anacostia River, once established, it created a balanced park system with a large natural area in the eastern half of the city. Both Rock Creek Park and Anacostia Park play complementary roles in providing residents and visitors to the capital city with two very different natural park experiences – one with steep topography and naturally wooded slopes surrounding Rock Creek, the other with a broad river bed centered on the Anacostia River.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Section 3 Realignment Draft EA. The District's State Historic Preservation Office will forward its comments separately. For further coordination on this project, please contact Chris Shaheen of my staff at (202) 442-7616 or chris.shaheen@dc.gov.</p>		
<p>The proposed pedestrian bridge will provide a direct connection between the US National Arboretum and Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, a connection that has been needed for decades as both federal facilities are off the beaten path. Users of the Anacostia trail should have access</p>	<p>David Healy,          davidhealy@dcaccess.net</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

<p>to both of these federal park-like facilities. Both facilities are important components of the Anacostia watershed and both need to be better connected to the users of the river and the river walk.</p>		
<p>I am a resident of Fairfax Village in the Hillcrest neighborhood and I'm commute via bike on a regular basis. I support <b>ALTERNATIVE B: REALIGNMENT OF SECTION 3 OF THE ANACOSTIA RIVERWALK TRAIL (NPS PREFERRED)</b>. This alternative would provide much needed connections along the Anacostia River. It would be a safer north to south route for cyclists than along the local roads.</p> <p>As you move forward with design please consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wayfinding: Many of the designated bike routes in Ward 7 are not intuitive or obvious is someone isn't a regular user. Please ensure adequate signage and other visual clues to guide cyclist safely through the area.</li> <li>- Safety plan: Safety is a concern for many cyclist. Given some of the safety challenges along the Met-Branch Trail, please ensure that a safety plan is developed, funded, and implemented as part of this project. This includes, but not limited to, adequate lighting, emergency call boxes, security cameras, snow/ice removal, and US Park Police bike patrol.</li> <li>- Incorporation of art: Final design should incorporate art that celebrates and reflects the history of the river.</li> <li>- Accessibility to the path from the local neighborhoods: As mentioned in the background, accessing the river is a challenge. Please include paths that connect the local community to this trail</li> </ul>	<p>Veronica Davis,                  veronica_o_davis@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Thanks for your support of this project. There will be signs installed throughout the trail, but as far as adding additional wayfinding and art, that would involve separate approvals and is beyond the scope of this project. Regarding safety, NPS is currently reviewing a lighting plan, and overall safety is always a priority of the NPS for both contractors and the public.</p>
<p>On behalf of the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) we would like to express our endorsement of 'Alternative B: Realignment of Section 3 of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail' under the larger Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Section 3 Realignment Environmental Assessment.</p> <p>Since our founding over 20 years ago AWS has worked hard to highlight the many beautiful parks that line the shores of the Anacostia River. Our biggest challenge in doing this important work has always been insufficient access. We see an extension of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail linking the District of Columbia and Maryland as a huge leap forward in terms of connecting local and regional citizens with the river and its shoreline parks.</p> <p>We also appreciate the thorough work that has been done in studying this opportunity by the National Park Service. We're confident that as the project moves forward, every effort will be made to protect the environment, the areas cultural resources and local communities from any adverse impacts related to the project.</p> <p>In closing, we look forward to supporting this effort by highlighting its benefits to watershed residents. For AWS that means continuing to conduct educational programming that utilizes the trail and leading stewardship events that help maintain the trail, the river, and its adjacent parks for future generations.                  Please feel free to contact us with questions.</p> <p>Sincerely</p> <p>James Foster                  President</p> <p>Brent Bolin                  Director of Advocacy</p>	<p>James Foster, President,                  Anacostia Watershed Society</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

<p>Eric Sibley                  Manager of Stewardship &amp; Recreation Programs</p>		
<p>Think of other cities all over the World that have taken advantage of a river and what it brings in enjoyment.....Been here and in the city for 75 years and the Arboretum has always been important .....Please stop talking and give it to the people to enjoy...We are out there....</p>	<p>Ann C. Gardenhour                  NCAGC, Cheverly                  Garden Club</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>A potential bridge from the Anacostia River Walk, the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, and the U.S. National Arboretum is a win-win-win idea! Finally, easier access between some of DC's more remote parks. I'm constantly astonished by how many local residents in the DMV have never been to the USNA or Kenilworth; this bridge will draw many more visitors to both locations.</p>	<p>Kathy Jentz,                  Editor/Publisher                  Washington Gardener                  Magazine</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>I would like to support the link between the National Arboretum and the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail through the proposed pedestrian bridge being planned by the National Park Service and the District of Columbia.</p>	<p>Terry R. Lewis, DC                  Resident</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>I would like to support selection of Alternative B, the preferred alternative, as evaluated in the draft environmental assessment. Realignment of the Anacostia Riverfront Trail and construction of a pedestrian bridge to the National Arboretum would be a significant step forward and would provide meaningful community benefits. Thanks!</p>	<p>Matt Klasen</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>The bridge idea sounds great. Connecting the Kenilworth Garden area with the National Arboretum is a win-win.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>I would like to comment favorably on the realignment of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Phase 3. The more direct route through the parkland makes much more sense and will deliver a much better experience for walkers and bikers of the trail. I particularly am pleased to see the pedestrian bridge that will link the National Arboretum with the trail. The National Arboretum is a national treasure, yet it is extremely difficult to access at the current time except by car. There is no public transportation and bikers must risk their lives by biking on major thoroughfares such as New York Avenue and Bladensburg Road. This bridge will make the National Arboretum accessible to thousands of people who would otherwise not be able enjoy the 446 acres of green space encompassed by the Arboretum and its many world-class Gardens and Collections. The bridge will also link visitors to the Arboretum with the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens which also has accessibility issues. Allowing visitors to go back and forth between these two sites via a pedestrian bridge provides an essential link to two key environmental visitor experiences in the heart of the city. This is one of the most exciting developments in enhancing the city that I have seen in many years.</p>	<p>Jeanne Connelly,                  Federal City Council</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

H4217 (NCR-NACE/RM)

May 29, 2012

Mr. David Maloney  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Historic Preservation Office  
D.C. Office of Planning  
1100 4th Street, S.W.  
Suite E650  
Washington, D.C. 20024

Attention: Andrew Lewis

Subject: Continued 106 Consultation-Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, Section 3 Realignment

Dear Mr. Maloney:

In response to correspondence from your office dated April 4, 2012 we submit further explanation of the no adverse effect determination to the historic Anacostia Seawall and potential archeological resources identified in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail (ARW) Section 3 Realignment.

**Archeological Resources**

As previously stated in the Environmental Assessment, the preferred alternative (Alternative B) proposes the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the Anacostia River in Kenilworth Park. Our Anacostia Riverwalk Trail partners at the District's Department of Transportation (DDOT) developed the current basic bridge design (~30%) to support environmental impact analyses and compliance. More detailed design plans will be available in the coming months.

At present, the proposed bridge, supported by two piers in the Anacostia River, will span the seawall on both sides of the River avoiding any impacts to the seawalls. Suitable fill material will be placed to support bridge approaches on both sides of the River, thereby avoiding the need to excavate below the existing grades. Moreover, we are working to restrict any excavation on the east side of the Anacostia River to avoid exposing the former, unregulated Kenilworth landfill. The site is currently undergoing Comprehensive, Environmental Restoration, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) investigations.

For these reasons we believe the proposed actions will not affect archeological resources. If previously unrecorded and/or buried cultural deposits are encountered during any portion of the project, work at that location will immediately cease. The park will conduct an assessment by a qualified archeologist and promptly report findings to your office.

Mr. Alexey Romero, Superintendent  
Proposed Construction of the Anacostia River Walk (ARW) through Kenilworth Park – Realigned Third Section  
June 21, 2012  
Page 2

For the purposes of the project we could issue a finding of *Conditional* No Adverse Effect for historic resources with the condition of continuing consultation on having a geoarchaeological survey conducted on the western, Arboretum side of the river.

Please contact Andrew Lewis at [andrew.lewis@dc.gov](mailto:andrew.lewis@dc.gov) or 202-442-8841 if you should have any questions or comments regarding the historic built environment. Questions or comments relating to archaeology should be directed to Ruth Troccoli at [ruth.troccoli@dc.gov](mailto:ruth.troccoli@dc.gov) or 202-442-8836. Otherwise, we appreciate your cooperation in this matter and thank you for providing this additional opportunity to review and comment.

Sincerely,



Ruth Troccoli, Ph.D.  
Archaeologist, District State Historic Preservation Office.

11-147

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER



June 21, 2012

Mr. Alexcy Romero, Superintendent  
National Park Service  
National Capital Parks-East  
1900 Anacostia Drive, SE  
Washington, DC 20020

RE: Further Section 106 Comments Relating to the Proposed Construction of the Anacostia River Walk (ARW) Trail, Section 3 Realignment

Dear Mr. Romero:

Thank you for responding to our April 4, 2012 letter regarding the above-referenced undertaking. We have reviewed your most recent submittal and are writing to provide further comments regarding effects on historic properties in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR Part 800.

Since we now understand that the proposed bridge will span the historic seawalls and that the previously referenced "mitigation measures" actually consist of temporarily covering the seawalls with a material to protect them during construction, we are now able to concur with the National Park Service determination that the undertaking will have "no adverse effect" on historic built environment resources. We do, however, request to be kept informed of any concerns that may be expressed by the National Arboretum or other consulting parties with regard to effects on such resources.

With regard to archaeology we still have concerns about potential adverse effects because the precise location of the identified site in the project vicinity is only vaguely known, 51NE012, a Woodland village on the Arboretum shoreline. Because the plans are only at about the 30% level, we feel there is potential for the imprecisely located site to be affected by the project, including any construction staging areas, sediment and erosion control measures, and drainage/ surface runoff measures that would likely be a part of the undertaking. These additional construction activities need to be included in the assessment of effects in the high potential location.

The suggested measure of stopping the project only after archaeological resources are affected to record and document is insufficient protection for a highly sensitive area with known resources present. Resource identification should occur first, and then avoidance if possible. For this project, we recommend a basic geoarchaeological survey, which we find is a fast, cheap, and effective method for determining whether intact archaeological soils are present in a project area. The rationale for geoarchaeological survey and avoidance over Phase I identification survey is because the full plans are not yet available and because there is the possibility that the archaeological soils are covered by an unknown amount of fill or alluvium.

Another possible result of the geoarchaeological survey is that archaeological soils or resources are identified at or near the existing ground surface (including in the construction staging areas). If this is the case, then those locations would need protection during construction activities.

referenced letter. Please respond to this email to confirm receipt and the NPS' intention of meeting the conditions and retain a copy for your records. We look forward to continuing consultation with the NPS and other parties, as appropriate.

Best regards,

C. Andrew Lewis  
Senior Historic Preservation Specialist  
DC State Historic Preservation Office  
Office of Planning  
1100 4th Street, SW  
Suite E650  
Washington, DC 20024  
Phone: 202-442-8841  
Fax: 202-442-7638  
[andrew.lewis@dc.gov](mailto:andrew.lewis@dc.gov)  
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NPS Anacostia River Walk Trail through Kenilworth Park - Realigned Third Section SHPO Letter 3.pdf



Stephen  
Syphax/NACE/NPS  
06/27/2012 11:33 AM

To "Lewis, Andrew (OP)" <andrew.lewis@dc.gov>  
cc "ADAM\_DAVIS@nps.gov" <ADAM\_DAVIS@nps.gov>, Ebonee Davis <ebonee\_davis@nps.gov>, Gopa  
<gopaul\_noojibail@nps.gov>, Robert Mocko  
bcc  
Subject Re: Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Project - Section 3  
Realignment, □

Andrew,

We have received your email of this morning on the subject. The National Park Service concurs with the conditions specified in the attached June 21, 2012 letter from Dr. Troccoli of your office. We too look forward to continuing consultation with your office as this important project progresses.

Stephen Syphax  
Chief, Resource Management Division  
National Capital Parks-East  
National Park Service  
1900 Anacostia Drive, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20020

Office: 202-690-5160  
Fax: 202-690-0862  
Email: stephen\_syphax@nps.gov

"Lewis, Andrew (OP)" <andrew.lewis@dc.gov>



"Lewis, Andrew  
(OP)"  
<andrew.lewis  
@dc.gov>  
06/27/2012  
07:52 AM

To "Stephen\_Syphax@nps.gov" <Stephen\_Syphax@nps.gov>  
cc Gopaul Noojibail <gopaul\_noojibail@nps.gov>, Robert  
Mocko <robert\_mocko@nps.gov>,  
"ADAM\_DAVIS@nps.gov" <ADAM\_DAVIS@nps.gov>,  
Ebonee Davis <ebonee\_davis@nps.gov>, "Troccoli, Ruth  
(OP)" <Ruth.Troccoli@dc.gov>  
Subject Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Project - Section 3 REalignment

Hello Stephen:

Based upon your voice mail messages, we understand that there is considerable urgency to complete the Section 106 process so that DDOT can obtain "TIGER" grant funds to implement the project. We also understand that the NPS is willing to meet the conditions outlined in our letter of June 21, 2012 (attached) with regard to the project. Therefore, we have determined that the project will have "no adverse effect" on historic built environment or archaeological properties *conditioned upon* fulfillment of the conditions specified in the

Mr. Alexey Romero, Superintendent  
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Sincerely,



Ruth Troccoli, Ph.D.  
Archaeologist, District State Historic Preservation Office.

11-147

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER



June 21, 2012

Mr. Alexcy Romero, Superintendent  
National Park Service  
National Capital Parks-East  
1900 Anacostia Drive, SE  
Washington, DC 20020

RE: Further Section 106 Comments Relating to the Proposed Construction of the Anacostia River Walk (ARW) Trail, Section 3 Realignment

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Another possible result of the geoarchaeological survey is that archaeological soils or resources are identified at or near the existing ground surface (including in the construction staging areas). If this is the case, then those locations would need protection during construction activities.

### **Anacostia Seawall**

The Anacostia Riverwalk Trail does not require any alteration of the Anacostia seawall. The elevations of the proposed pedestrian bridge and its supports will, as mentioned earlier, allow the bridge deck to span and avoid the seawalls. To avoid impacts to the seawall during construction activities and any temporary berthing, the contractor will be instructed to cover the seawall with an appropriate material in the staging and construction areas. In the NPS letter dated February 18<sup>th</sup> we identified "mitigation measures" should direct and/or indirect impacts occur to the seawall; to further clarify this point the proposed project does not include any actions that require adding to or removing any features of the seawall.

### **Consultation**

In addition to ongoing coordination with DDOT, we have also been working with the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail on this, and a number of other park projects. During the Public Comment period for this project (December 20, 2011 to January 31, 2012) were received 13 written comments, including positive comments from the Anacostia Watershed Society. None of these comments were specific to effects to cultural resources.

### **Finding of Effects**

After further analysis we continue to believe that the proposed undertaking would have *no adverse effect* upon historic structures or archeology in Anacostia Park, Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Garden, or Langston Golf Course. However, should subsequent NEPA/106 steps be required to implement specific components of this project we will continue consultation. We are enclosing historic maps documenting the change in grade; please direct your inquiries to Eola Dance, Cultural Resource Specialist at (202) 692-6038, eola\_dance@nps.gov.

Sincerely,



Alexey Romero  
Superintendent

bcc:

NCR Gorder  
ANAC Kutruff  
NACE Dance  
RM File