



Responses to Frequently Asked Questions Received During the Arboretum Bridge and Trail Project Comment Period:

1. How was the location for this project determined, and were other locations considered?

As part of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, DDOT is pursuing a plan to reshape the area's transportation infrastructure into a network that improves access for residents, commuters, and visitors while also improving the area's environmental quality. DDOT's objective is to reconnect communities through the replacement of outdated and deteriorating facilities with innovative infrastructure solutions. AWI transportation goals include:

- *Provide continuous pedestrian and bicycle access along and across the entire waterfront;*
- *Aggressively promote modal shifts to public transit, cycling, walking and other shared transportation modes (e.g., carpools, car-sharing, taxicabs, etc.);*
- *Create urban boulevards with mixed uses, landscaping and great civic spaces;*
- *Redesign bridges across the Anacostia River in the tradition of great civic architecture;*
- *Redesign highways and freeways to reduce barriers between neighborhoods and waterfront parks;*
- *Reconnect the city street grid to waterfront parks; and*
- *Support and foster economic development in the AWI neighborhoods.*

To enable DDOT to achieve these goals, the Anacostia River Trail (ART) network is being implemented sequentially, and this portion of the trail, known as Arboretum Bridge and Trail, is the next segment. The existing Benning Road crossing of the Anacostia River includes an 8-ft-wide trail, and DDOT are currently developing improved safety conditions and accessibility throughout the corridor as part of the Benning Road Transportation Improvement Project. However, the need of this project is to provide a link across the river for the neighborhoods north of Benning Road, and specifically provide direct and safe access from the eastern side of the river to the National Arboretum and western side. The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan from 2003 first identified the need for a pedestrian bridge at this location to connect trails on either side of the river, and the proposed alignment is in accordance with moveDC, DC's 2014 transportation master plan, which is the result of multiple planning studies that carefully vet needs and feasibility.

Additionally, the proposed location of the bridge abutments results in the least adverse impact on surrounding wetlands, contaminated land in Kenilworth Park South and potential archaeological sites (see Figure 1).

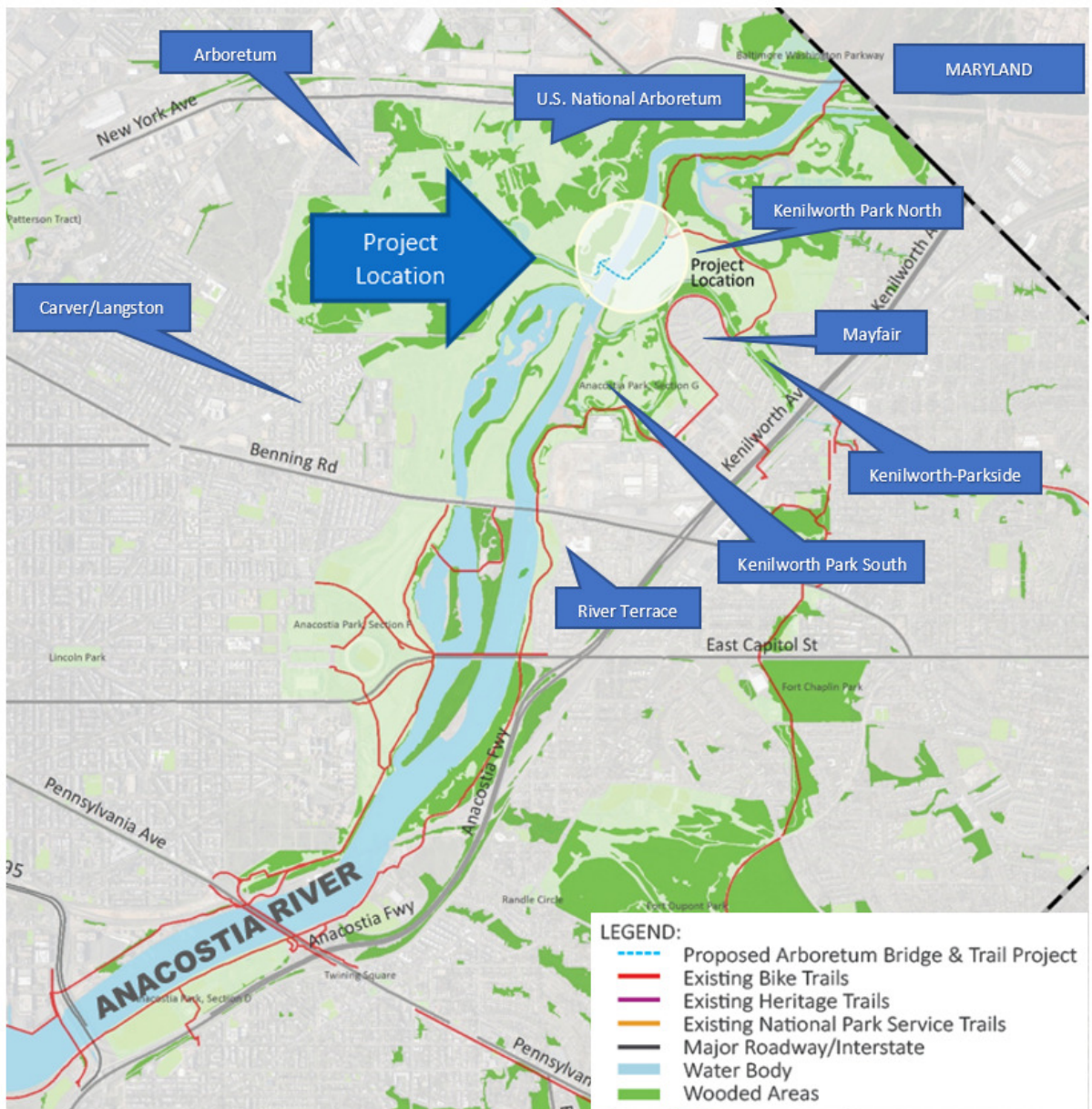


Figure 1: Location of Project and Associated Neighborhood Connections

2. **How has DDOT coordinated with other agencies that have authority over other Anacostia River projects, such as those involving the Arboretum, the Anacostia Riverwalk, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Langston Golf Course, and numerous dock proposals? One particular concern is the bridge's landing at the Arboretum gate, which is closed between 4:30pm and 8am every day.**

Numerous stakeholders and agencies that have authority over other Anacostia River projects were consulted during the EA process and the project team continues to engage with residents, ANC Commissioners, civic organization leaders, businesses, and other stakeholders to provide periodic updates on the status of the project.

3. Where will the new boat launch for kayaks and canoes be placed?

Since the start of this project, several boat launches/docks have been installed or are proposed in the Anacostia River, making the need for this boat launch redundant. As a result, NPS may remove the boat launch from this project and consider alternate installations as a separate project.

4. What provisions will be made for access to the trail network on the west side of the Arboretum. The trail on the west side of the river is gated at the arboretum, which closes at 5 PM daily. Does this mean that access will be restricted when the arboretum is closed?

Yes, for now. As with many similar projects, the ART is being developed segmentally. For example, the trail terminated at Benning Road for several years while the next segment went through the requisite planning and development phases, and finally construction. On the east side of the river, the bridge will provide direct connection to Phase I of the existing ART, and in the future will also provide a connection to the Phase II realignment of the ART (see Figure 2). On the west side of the river, connecting the trail through the Arboretum is another segment in the moveDC plan. Funding is available to develop this segment and it is currently in the planning stage. DDOT has met with NPS, the National Arboretum, Federal City Council, and others to develop this segment which shall connect the trail to Maryland Avenue NE and allow access regardless of the Arboretum's hours.

The NPS recreational land on the immediate west bank of the Anacostia at the proposed bridge location will be accessible during regular park operating times. The project includes an additional 1,000 feet of paved trail construction on the western bank of the river and will connect with an existing gravel service road that connects the National Arboretum and NPS property. It should be noted that the park and all trails within it are currently closed after dark.

Further, the National Arboretum is a research institution managed by the US Department of Agriculture and is not a park, although it welcomes visitors during open hours much like a park. As such, any decision to extend the operating hours would be taken by the Arboretum.

Another DDOT project currently being examined, the New York Avenue NE Streetscape and Trail Concept, will improve pedestrian facilities, bicycle accommodations, and safety along New York Avenue NE between Florida Avenue NE and Bladensburg Road NE, connecting with the Metropolitan Branch Trail at NoMa-Gallaudet Metro Station and the Arboretum.

Additionally, the Lincoln Connector Trail project is in the planning stage. This will provide a trail from Bladensburg Road NE, through the Fort Lincoln neighbourhood, and cross the Anacostia River to connect with the ART in the vicinity of the New York Avenue NE/US-50 bridge. Final feasibility study documents are due winter 2019/2020.



Figure 2: Proposed Alignments

5. Has the project team considered siltation and debris build up that could be caused by placing piers in the river?

The bridge is designed in conformance with the approved Environmental Assessment (December 2011) and FONSI (June 2012) and the design team explored several alternatives and due to the shallow river depth and site location; channel intrusion, bridge footprint, impacts to the hydraulic efficiency of the channel, debris collection under the bridge, and fu-

ture maintenance were key factors in determining the superstructure depth and profile. Further, NPS and Commission of Fine Arts have instructed DDOT to design the lowest profile bridge possible so that the viewshed obstruction will be minimized. While a clear span bridge would remove obstructions from the river, its design would directly conflict with viewshed preservation due to the height of the vertical support structures required to support such a span. A clear span is also technically infeasible given the constrained site and adjacent landfill.

Bridge pier spacing and orientation is designed to prevent debris accumulation during construction and upon completion. While the bridge is not required to be designed for the 500-year flood elevation, due to recent flood events, the 500-year flood elevation (El. 16.3) was determined and the proposed structure profile is above this elevation. The sides of the bank or embankment will be lined with rip rap and large stones to mitigate risk of erosion. With respect to sediment, the Anacostia River is a slow flowing river. The design team's hydrological and hydraulic analysis determined that the bridge piers would have minimal impact on river velocity, and therefore any change in sediment would be insignificant. The design team is currently investigating the elimination of Pier 3 completely from the waterway. The EA/FONSI concept places Pier 3 in a deeper portion of the river and relatively close to the East Sea Wall. By making Pier 3 integral with the East Sea Wall, future debris accumulation at this pier is eliminated.

During construction, there would likely be a barge on the river and additional disturbance of the riverbed during installation of the pilings; however, the EA found that these impacts would be of short duration and not likely measurable. During this work, DDOT will require a combination of turbidity curtains and air bubble curtains as needed to protect aquatic life. Additionally, adherence to an erosion and sediment control plan will mitigate potential impacts from stormwater runoff during construction. The EA determined that the project would not result in changes to floodplain function or increases in upstream or downstream flooding. The project will be designed in a manner that would 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. Thus, there would be negligible impacts on floodplain functions or values from the proposed construction.

In addition, DOEE's Anacostia River Sediment Project is currently investigating remedial and restoration efforts to treat sediment in the river. This effort includes gathering information from all river users to help establish a recreational depth for the river.

It should also be noted that the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) Baltimore District's Potomac and Anacostia Rivers Drift Collection and Removal Unit operates out of dock facilities adjacent to the Washington, DC, Navy Yard and conducts year-round drift removal operations. The Anacostia River area extends from the head of tide (Bladensburg Bridge) to its confluence with the Potomac River at Fort McNair. The collection and removal effort is intensified following storms, extreme high tides and high river flows. More information can be found on the 2019 Drift Collection and Removal Unit Factsheet: <https://cdm16021.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16021coll11/id/543>

6. Why is a clear span not being considered?

A clean span, meaning a bridge supported only on abutments and having no intermediate piers, is not feasible for several reasons. First, the Environmental Assessment states that a cable-stayed bridge, which appears similar to a suspension bridge, would be highly visible and would be inappropriate in a park setting. The US Commission of Fine Arts has also made strong objections to large structures that would visually compete against the park setting. They are in support of the currently proposed option as it best compliments the natural setting. Second, the bridge is constrained by the US Arboretum on the west and trail

alignment on the east. A clear span would require much larger abutments to be placed on the river banks and would require much larger construction equipment on the river banks and within the river. Finally, the currently proposed option will minimize excavation to protect the natural environment from potential pollution reaching the river.

7. What are the effects upon wildlife in the vicinity of the project?

The bridge is designed in conformance with the approved Environmental Assessment (EA) (December 2011) and FONSI (June 2012). The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) design team reviewed these documents concurrently with their investigation to ensure the recommended design met all design requirements and considered all design constraints presented in the documents.

The EA states that the project would result in short-term minor adverse impacts on wildlife during the construction period and long-term minor adverse impacts during the operation of the trail due to increased visitor accessibility. The EA states that following construction activities, it is expected that any displaced species would likely return to the area. Construction of the proposed trail through areas that are currently undisturbed natural wildlife habitat would result in the loss of those habitats; however, impacts would be minor because of the relatively small area being affected when compared to Anacostia Park as a whole. Additionally, the EA states that there would be short-term minor adverse impacts on those species inhabiting wetland areas that lie within the footprint of the trail. The EA finds that cumulative impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat would be long-term, minor, and adverse, with the proposed alignment having a noticeable contribution to adverse impacts.

With this in mind, the design team undertook a bridge type study and evaluated several bridge types, and the selected option creates the least impact to the environment. For example, clear spans would require larger footprint and excavation, and a truss would require larger piers. The preferred option is streamlined and creates the lowest environmental impact, especially during construction due to minimized use of heavy equipment. During construction, measures will be taken to mitigate any adverse effects upon wildlife, such as; vegetation clearing will only occur outside the breeding season for birds, occupied bird nests will not be disturbed, and work will be coordinated to avoid impacting resident amphibians during their breeding seasons.

The EA requires that avoidance and minimization measures shall be applied throughout the project design and construction to reduce impacts on sensitive resources. As a result, the trail will be routed to minimize disrupting existing trees and will be landscaped with native plants. Final site restoration shall include seeding all pervious areas that were disturbed by construction.

The project is located within a unique area of the District that provides a variety of educational opportunities regarding the natural and cultural heritage of Anacostia River. As part of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI), DDOT is pursuing a plan that improves that area's overall environmental quality. The Anacostia River Trail (ART) has brought a renewed interest in the Anacostia River and as such, the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) has documented a renewal of the river's water quality, health of the river and ecosystem in general.

The EA requires that avoidance and minimization measures shall be applied throughout the project design and construction to reduce impacts on sensitive resources. The trail will be routed to minimize disrupting existing trees and will be landscaped with native plants.

8. I live in the Mayfair or Paradise neighborhood. What affect will this have on bicycle and pedestrian traffic passing through the neighborhood on the temporary on-street trail?

We expect an increase as bicyclists and pedestrians use the new trail segment; however, the arboretum closes at 5 PM daily, so commuter volume after 5 PM should be what it is currently. A permanent trail segment along the river, through Kenilworth Park South, is planned and will be coordinated with ongoing NPS environmental clean-up activities. NPS has assessed the environmental hazards associated with Kenilworth Park South and summarized this assessment in the Final Remediation Investigation Addendum Report. NPS is currently preparing a Feasibility Study Addendum Report which will evaluate multiple clean-up alternatives to address any unacceptable human health or environmental risks determined to be associated with Kenilworth Park South. Additional information regarding the NPS environmental work at Kenilworth Park South and a copy of the Final Remedial Investigation Addendum Report can be found here:

<https://www.nps.gov/nace/learn/management/kplsh.htm>

Upon completion of the remediation activities, the existing alignment could remain open and allow local residents more direct access to the entire trail network. Further discussion separate from this project could be held with the local community.

9. What considerations are being made for emergency response?

The MPD harbor patrol and DCFEMS marine unit have been engaged and have given DDOT direction on what is needed for emergency response. The trail and bridge will be wide enough for DC FEMS ATVs, and the bridge will have life rings available to anyone in case of a water rescue. DDOT and NPS have been working on mile markers along all trails for location identification in an emergency.

10. What about river user safety?

Bridge layout options were evaluated against several factors outlined in a matrix. Among factors such as Pier Footprint, Constructability, and Bridge Profile, the River User Experience factor, i.e. safety, was a key consideration in the decision process. Based on feedback received from the rowing community on the evaluation, the original bridge design was revised. The recommended design now includes two approximately 132 ft long spans between piers that can accommodate river users. One of these spans, provides the 80 ft navigable channel as required by the US Coast Guard. To accommodate these larger spans, the bridge piers have been aligned to avoid primary rowing lanes as provided by the rowing community. The revised design has essentially one bridge pier in the river if it is assumed that the pier closest to the US Arboretum is placed in shallow and generally unnavigable waters as expressed by the rowing community and the east pier is constructed integral with the sea wall. The bridge will also include navigation lighting as required. The project team continues to discuss other possible safety measures such as pier buffers, shallow water signage and railing lighting options.

11. How is the project funded?

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is funding 83% of the design, with DC funding the difference in accordance with standard FHWA requirements. Total design cost is approximately \$1.5 million. The project has been granted \$6,600,000 for construction from FHWA's Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, which specifically directs funding for ac-

cess to parks and federal land. DC's local capital budget will fund the balance of the estimated \$11,000,000 needed for construction.

12. What is the project schedule?

We will develop an updated schedule based on community input received. Generally, we anticipate completing the design within the next year, with construction starting in 2021 and finishing in 2022.

13. How can I get project updates?

The project fact sheet is posted on the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative website. As the project progresses, updates will be provided here: www.anacostiawaterfront.org. You may also contact Ms. Stacey Hemby at stacee@tbaconnects.com or by calling 202-688-5904.

Additionally, there will be public meetings held in both Wards 5 and 7, held at the 65% design stage where the latest project plans and design will be presented and there will be an opportunity to provide feedback/comment.

14. The Environmental Assessment was carried out in 2011. Will this be updated?

NPS's NEPA Handbook addresses the scenario of old and outdated analyses, recommending that the agency complete a memo to file "when an NPS NEPA review was previously completed for a specific proposal, but its implementation was delayed because of unavailability of funds or other reasons." This memo to file is meant to "document the adequacy of the existing NEPA review" by considering a number of questions, including "Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts associated with the action as currently proposed the same or essentially the same as those described in the existing NEPA document and associated decision document?" NPS has considered these questions and does not believe that there have been any significant changes since the Environmental Assessment was undertaken. A memo will be provided with further information. The Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact documents, which include a public scoping and comment period, can be found on the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment site here: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?parkID=428&projectID=25872>

15. Why is the bridge being designed to carry a vehicle?

The bridge is designed to carry an H-10 vehicle (single unit maintenance vehicle weighing up to 20,000 pounds) per American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) design criteria. Regardless of AASHTO criteria, DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS) requires that a pedestrian bridge be able to carry an ATV for emergency response. This is exclusively a pedestrian and bicyclist bridge with those two rare exceptions for maintenance and emergency access.

16. Could you include signs prohibiting fishing from the bridge?

The trail will include signs prohibiting fishing from the bridge.

17. What will be the vertical clearance from the water?

The distance from the river water surface level to the bottom of the girders is designed to provide 16 feet of minimum clearance above the mean high water level.

18. How will maintenance be managed on this new trail section?

DDOT will discuss adding this segment to the trail ranger program. Similar to other ART segments traversing land managed by NPS, DDOT will be responsible for infrastructure maintenance and NPS will be responsible for landscape maintenance.

19. Are any trails connections planned on the east side of Kenilworth Avenue?

DDOT has early stage plans to connect the ART with the Marvin Gaye Trail as part of the Parkside Circulation Study. The study investigates a few options including widening the sidewalk under DC-295 and other possible bridges or tunnels over/under the freeway. Information on the study can be found here: <https://ddot.dc.gov/page/parkside-access-study>

20. Where can the public find comments made on the project?

*DDOT will post all public comments to the Anacostia waterfront website found here: <https://www.anacostiawaterfront.org/arboretumbridgeandtraildocuments>
Posted comments will not include individual names or personal information.*