



## Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: July 10, 2025

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<b>PROJECT</b> <b>Poplar Point Master Plan</b> Washington, DC	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> MP317
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 00:00(05.00)45996
<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Approval of Master Plans for use by the Commission per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(a) and (b)(1)	<b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b> Approval of comments on revised concept master plan
	<b>PROPOSED ACTION</b> Approve comments on revised concept master plan
	<b>ACTION ITEM TYPE</b> Staff Presentation

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS), in coordination with the District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) and the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP), has submitted a revised concept master plan for Poplar Point in southeast Washington, DC for Commission review and comment. Poplar Point is a 110-acre site located along the eastern edge of the Anacostia River in Ward 8. It is directly adjacent to Historic Anacostia and is bordered by the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge to the west, the Anacostia River to the north, Anacostia Park to the east, and the Bridge District, the Anacostia Metrorail Station parking garage, and I-295 (Anacostia Freeway) to the south. The site is also home to three NPS facilities: the U.S. Park Police (USPP) Anacostia Operations Facility, the USPP Anacostia Aviation Facility, and the National Capital Parks-East Headquarters. These facilities will be relocated to allow implementation of the master plan.

The project site is currently under the jurisdiction of the NPS. The purpose of the Poplar Point Master Plan is to develop a land use plan for Poplar Point, one of the required steps to enable the transfer of the property from the NPS to the District of Columbia. In order to complete the transfer, the Federal and District of Columbia Government Real Property Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-396, commonly referred to as the DC Lands Act) requires the following:

- Provide for the reservation of no fewer than 70 acres of land on site, including wetlands, for park purposes;
- Identify and relocate existing NPS facilities and related properties;
- Determine at least two sites within the park use for the placement of potential commemorative works to be established pursuant to the Commemorative Works Act. The District of Columbia would convey back those sites to the NPS at the appropriate time;

- To the greatest extent practicable, be consistent with the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan

The Commission previously provided comments on the concept master plan at the April 2025 Commission meeting. At that time, the applicant was evaluating three different alternatives for the site. The revised concept master plan proposes a single preferred alternative for Commission consideration. The preferred alternative successfully responds to the Commission's previous comments. Public feedback has been an important part of the planning process. The Commission's comments, along with those from the public, will help further guide the master plan development.

## KEY INFORMATION

- Poplar Point is a 110-acre site located on the southeastern edge of the Anacostia River in Ward 8 of Washington, DC.
- The majority of the site is located within the 100- and 500-year-old floodplains.
- Poplar Point is currently under the National Park Service (NPS) jurisdiction and consists of a mix of accessible open space, wetlands and natural areas, abandoned remains of former greenhouses and other government facilities, as well as the NPS's current administrative and law enforcement facilities.
- In 1902, Congress appropriated funds for the improvement of the Anacostia River mudflats. Three years later, contractors for the U.S Army Corps of Engineers significantly built up and expanded Poplar Point into the river and to the east with mud dredged from the Anacostia River, building a thick masonry wall to separate the land from the water.
- Anacostia Park, including the new and enlarged Poplar Point, was dedicated in a six-hour ceremony on August 2nd, 1923. The western part of the site became a 34.5-acre District of Columbia government tree farm (the Landham Tree Nursery) and the 24.66-acre Architect of the Capitol's Botanic Garden Greenhouse and Nursery at Poplar Point.
- In 2006, Congress enacted legislation (Public Law 109-396, commonly referred to as the DC Lands Act) directing the United States to transfer the NPS property at Poplar Point to the District of Columbia.
- The master planning process is a collaboration between the Government of the District of Columbia (District) and the National Park Service (NPS), which involves preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) and a Master Plan to meet the requirements for transferring the land from the NPS to the District.

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

**Approves** the following comments on the Poplar Point revised concept master plan:

**Commends** the applicant for developing a preferred alternative that successfully responds to the Commission's previous comments.

**Supports** the project goals for Poplar Point to expand the existing wetlands, celebrate the Point, rediscover the shoreline, build upon adjacent projects, focus on Metrorail access, and connect with the Anacostia Community.

**Notes** the plan is a required step in the process to transfer the land from the National Park Service to the District of Columbia outlined in the Federal and District of Columbia Government Real Property Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-396, commonly referred to as the DC Lands Act).

**Supports** the intent to improve and develop Poplar Point into a community amenity by providing a publicly accessible waterfront park with cultural, economic, and recreational attractions and activities, spur revitalization efforts east of the river by providing a mix of residential, retail, and office uses around Anacostia Metrorail Station, and improve access to and expand the recreational amenities within southern Anacostia Park.

### *Preferred Alternative*

**Notes** the submission includes a single preferred alternative for the Poplar Point Master Plan that is guided by robust planning principles.

**Notes** the preferred alternative supports expansion of the wetlands as a focal feature, includes new memorial sites and cultural venues, improves public use of, and access to the shoreline, and improves connectivity to the historic Anacostia neighborhood.

**Finds** the preferred alternative consists of successful components from the previous alternatives, in addition to substantial changes resulting from the Commission's feedback and the input of other stakeholders through the outreach process.

**Supports** the following changes which have been incorporated into the preferred alternative:

- Protecting views of the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument which are important viewsheds that add to the uniqueness of the site.
- Identifying prominent locations for two future memorials, including one at the Point.
- Eliminating development between the wetlands and the river which preserves expansive views and allows for more natural hydrology.
- Relocating the anchor use away from the Point and closer to the community, to help preserve the openness and accessibility of the waterfront and better integrate this use into the neighborhood. This location can be converted into an extension of the surrounding street and block network if an anchor use is not realized.
- Relocating Anacostia Drive from along the river inland to front the proposed development and promote public use of the waterfront.
- Concentrating development close to the Anacostia Metrorail Station and along major roadways.
- Maximizing vehicular and pedestrian connectivity, particularly from historic Anacostia, to ensure the site is well-connected to the surrounding neighborhoods.

- Indicating how the overall flood mitigation approach will address the risk of flooding and any negative impacts to planned development. This consists of gentle terraces to further accommodate floodwater and to raise the elevation of development.
- Providing additional details on height, density, land use and massing to better understand the development dynamics of the preferred alternative. This information indicates heights of 130 feet closest to the Metrorail station and stepping down in height as blocks approach the Anacostia River.

### *Next Steps and Coordination*

**Notes** the applicant will prepare an Environmental Assessment pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate potential impacts associated with the proposed plan. NCPC is a cooperating agency to satisfy its NEPA obligations.

**Requests** the Environmental Assessment evaluate transportation impacts, including vehicular traffic, and how pedestrian and bicycle users will be safely accommodated.

**Notes** the applicant will evaluate impacts to historic properties through the National Historic Preservation Act review process. NCPC is a consulting party in the process.

**Encourages** the applicant to continue coordination and outreach with the community in the development of the master plan, including identifying opportunities for interpretation of the site's history, and other uses that would support local needs.

## PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

<b>Previous actions</b>	April 3, 2025 – Concept Master Plan
<b>Remaining actions</b> (anticipated)	– Review of Draft and Final Master Plan

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### Executive Summary

The National Park Service (NPS) in coordination with the District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) and the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) has submitted a revised concept master plan for Poplar Point in Washington, DC for Commission review and comment and staff recommends the **Commission commends the applicant for developing a preferred alternative that successfully responds to the Commission's previous comments.** The plan is a required step in the process to transfer the land from the National Park Service to the District of Columbia outlined in the Federal and District of Columbia Government Real Property Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-396, commonly referred to as the DC Lands Act).

Overall, staff recommends the **Commission support the project goals for Poplar Point to expand the wetlands, celebrate the Point, rediscover the shoreline, build upon adjacent projects, focus on Metrorail access, and connect with the Anacostia Community; and also support the intent to improve and develop Poplar Point into a community amenity by providing a publicly-accessible waterfront park with cultural, economic, and recreational attractions and activities, spur revitalization efforts east of the river by providing a mix of residential, retail, and office uses around Anacostia Metrorail Station, and improve access to and expand the recreational amenities within southern Anacostia Park.**

The master plan is still in development, and the planning process will include a number of opportunities for public input and engagement moving forward. In addition, the Commission will review draft and final versions of the master plan. The comments on the concept master plan are intended to help frame and identify topics of consideration as this effort moves forward. As such, staff recommends the **Commission approve the following comments on the Poplar Point revised concept master plan.**

## **Analysis**

### *Overview*

Poplar Point is a 110-acre site located along the eastern edge of the Anacostia River in Ward 8, Washington, DC. It is directly adjacent to Historic Anacostia and is bordered by the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge to the west, the Anacostia River to the north, Anacostia Park to the east, and the Bridge District, the Anacostia Metrorail Station parking garage, and I-295 (Anacostia Freeway) to the south. The site is also home to three National Park Service facilities: the U.S. Park Police Anacostia Operations Facility, the USPP Anacostia Aviation Facility, and the National Capital Parks-East Headquarters. The project site is under the jurisdiction of the NPS. The Poplar Point Master Plan is one of the required steps to enable the transfer of the property from the NPS to the District of Columbia.

To complete the transfer of the land from the NPS to the District of Columbia, the Federal and District of Columbia Government Real Property Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-396, commonly referred to as the DC Lands Act) requires the following:

- Provide for the reservation of no fewer than 70 acres of land on site, including wetlands, for park purposes
- Identify and relocate existing NPS facilities and related properties
- Determine at least two sites within the park use for the placement of potential commemorative works to be established pursuant to the Commemorative Works Act. The District of Columbia would convey back those sites to the NPS at the appropriate time. These sites would be for future federal memorials.
- To the greatest extent practicable, be consistent with the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan

The purpose of this plan is to facilitate the conveyance of land from the federal government to the District of Columbia and implement a land use plan to enable redevelopment at Poplar Point. The transfer of the property is needed because the NPS is mandated to do so by Congress through the DC Lands Act. The goal of the DC Lands Act is to improve and develop Poplar Point into a community amenity by providing a publicly accessible waterfront park with cultural, economic, and recreational attractions and activities, spur revitalization efforts east of the river by providing a mix of residential, retail, and office uses around the Anacostia Metrorail Station, and improve access to and expand the recreational amenities within southern Anacostia Park.

The planning approach for the plan is based on an analysis of existing conditions, incorporating ideas from previous planning efforts (including the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan), and identifying general planning principles. The following planning principles guided the development of the master plan:

1. Expand the Wetlands
2. Celebrate the Point
3. Rediscover the Shoreline
4. Build Upon Adjacent Projects
5. Focus on Metrorail Access
6. Connect with Anacostia Comm
7. Establish a Primary Corridor

Currently, the site has approximately 5.7 acres of scattered pockets of non-tidal wetlands and a high-water table. The site is almost completely within the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. It is relatively flat with elevations at zero feet along the shoreline to 31 feet at the eastern end, adjacent to 11th Street Bridge Park. This makes the site vulnerable to flooding. However, unlike the west side of the Anacostia River, this large undeveloped site presents a unique opportunity to connect with the shoreline and model natural flood resiliency in addition to creating a wonderful new neighborhood/amenity.

The site contains extensive infrastructure including the WMATA Metro tunnel for the Green Line station, the Anacostia River Tunnel, the Stickfoot Branch storm drain, and a variety of other utilities. In addition, there are three buildings on the site including the NPS National Capital parks-East Headquarters, the U.S. Park Police Anacostia Operations Facility, and the U.S. Park Police Anacostia Aviation Facility. All three of these facilities are required to be relocated as part of the land transfer and master plan.

The site is accessible from several locations including the traffic oval at the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, Howard Avenue, SE, and the Anacostia Metro Station. The site also has the potential for views to the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument.

### *Preferred Alternative*

The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan proposes to provide open space, including wetlands and parkland along the Anacostia Riverfront; development areas that connect and extend existing

development south of the site, and anticipate a mix of uses including housing and affordable housing; multimodal transportation and circulation, including connections to the adjacent communities and development; and cultural uses, including at the Point. The stakeholder engagement and feedback received during the NEPA public scoping period informed the adaptation of these elements into the Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan. The Plan would establish a connected system of open spaces that provide riverfront access and activation, community recreation, and natural resource areas. The preferred alternative supports expansion of the wetlands as a focal feature, includes new memorial sites and cultural venues, improves use of, and access to the shoreline, and provides improved connectivity to the historic Anacostia neighborhood. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission find the preferred alternative consists of successful components from the previous alternatives, in addition to substantial changes resulting from the Commission's feedback and the input of other stakeholders through the outreach process.**

Further, staff recommends the **Commission support the following changes which have been incorporated into the preferred alternative:**

- **Protecting views of the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument which are important viewsheds that add to the uniqueness of the site.**
- **Identifying prominent locations for two future memorials, including one at the Point.**
- **Eliminating development between the wetlands and the river which preserves expansive views and allows for more natural hydrology.**
- **Relocating the anchor use away from the Point and closer to the community, to help preserve the openness and accessibility of the waterfront and better integrate this use into the neighborhood. This location can be converted into an extension of the surrounding street and block network if an anchor use is not realized.**
- **Relocating Anacostia Drive from along the river inland to front the proposed development and promote public use of the waterfront.**
- **Concentrating development close to the Anacostia Metrorail Station and along major roadways.**
- **Maximizing vehicular and pedestrian connectivity, particularly from historic Anacostia, to ensure the site is well-connected to the surrounding neighborhoods.**
- **Indicating how the overall flood mitigation approach will address the risk of flooding and any negative impacts to planned development. This consists of gentle terraces to further accommodate floodwater and to raise the elevation of development.**
- **Providing additional details on height, density, land use and massing to better understand the development dynamics of the preferred alternative. This information indicates heights of 130 feet closest to the Metrorail station and stepping down in height as blocks approach the Anacostia River.**

Further details on the preferred alternative and plan changes are described in the following sections.

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### Community Parks and Open Space

The Preferred Alternative would provide two sites for federal commemorative works within the project area. One site would be located at the Point along the Anacostia River on axis with New Jersey Avenue. This site would align with views of the U.S. Capitol. The second site would be located at the intersection of Anacostia Drive and Marion Barry Avenue, in a circle, a classic commemorative site form in Washington, linking the two roads.

The riverfront park area would maintain public access to Anacostia Park. The Preferred Alternative calls for a consistent minimum 250-foot setback from the water to development that would include the multi-use Anacostia Riverwalk Trail (ART), locations for commemorative works, and points for park activation. In addition, the riverfront park area could accommodate a marina, fishing pier, water taxi, tidal wetlands, and other water-based activities. The Preferred Alternative also contains the kayak launch included in the adjacent 11th Street Bridge Park plan. Activated areas would be located where the seawall is in good condition or where readily repairable, to the extent practicable. In select areas where the seawall is in poor condition, tidal wetlands would be established. The Preferred Alternative includes other features such as an outdoor area located on the Point that could offer a place for gatherings. The eastern portion of the riverfront would serve as an extension of the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park. Parks with a community-recreation focus would primarily be located in the north-central and eastern portions of the project area. These areas would accommodate neighborhood park uses such as picnics, playgrounds, dog parks, and splash pads. The intent of these areas would be to connect with and complement the recreation opportunities available at 11th Street Bridge Park and Anacostia Park and respond to community needs and preferences.

The Preferred Alternative would also build on the remediated wetlands, retaining approximately seven acres of wetlands and expanding the amount of wetlands to meet the District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) requirements. The Plan would consolidate existing scattered wetlands in a way that would improve habitat. Wooded areas and meadows would buffer wetlands on the north and west; development would be adjacent to wetlands to the east and south. The Preferred Alternative proposes to daylight Stickfoot Branch, bringing the piped stream to the surface. To maintain a constant flow of water, the underground stream may require pumping to the surface and creating a pool, or pond, at the southern portion of the park. Stickfoot Branch would then wind through a natural area north to the Anacostia River.

Within the wetlands, the Preferred Alternative would also offer education and recreation opportunities. Paths and boardwalks would provide public access to the wetlands and interpretation of the ecological value of wetlands. Activation areas, which could include picnic areas, gathering space, and concessions, would be adjacent to the southern and western edges of the wetlands and wooded buffer. Tidal wetlands could be established along the Anacostia River interface. These wetlands could be placed in locations where the existing seawall is in poor condition.

The Preferred Alternative would include 70 acres of open space usable for park purposes including approximately 25 acres of waterfront park, 10 acres of community and neighborhood parks and plazas, and 35 acres of nature park, including wetlands and surrounding areas. The remaining 40 acres would be associated with development and infrastructure, including roadways.



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### Development

The Preferred Alternative features a civic use at the Point, as well as a cultural use, such as a museum. The proposed festival area could include locations for cultural expressions and community gatherings, events space, or other facilities to support events. The plan indicates that if a cultural or civic use is developed, it would be located south of the festival area and would feature a building (or buildings) to maintain the New Jersey Avenue view corridor. To the south of a potential cultural or civic use, two new parcels would flank the New Jersey Avenue view corridor.

Beyond the Point, much of the development at the site would be located near or aligned with the existing Anacostia Metrorail station. New development would include an anchor use, which would serve as a destination to the site, and a series of new development parcels along the southern portion of the site acting as an extension of the existing neighborhood. The exact type of anchor use is not identified in the plan. The primary development area would offer a crescent of development along I-295. The Preferred Alternative includes a mix of uses with an overall residential focus. However, immediately adjacent to the Metrorail station, the mixed-use development would likely include commercial uses. Additional uses would include hotels, ground-floor retail, office, and other supporting uses.

The Plan anticipates development will be approximately 130 feet in height closest to the Metrorail station and step down as blocks approach the Anacostia River. The placement of the development is intended to connect to historic Anacostia and to the newly opened and planned expansion of the Bridge District development. The four development parcels located adjacent to the Oval would also border park space. The parcels would provide a consistent urban experience between the Metrorail station and the anchor use. Because parcels would frame the Oval and existing right-of-way, development at parcels are anticipated to be up to 130 feet in height, buffering public and pedestrian spaces from vehicular noise and maximizing housing units. Development would also ensure streetscape design buffers pedestrians from adjacent traffic and contributes to the quality of the pedestrian experience.

The proposed anchor use would occupy approximately 15-acres near the Metrorail Station. The parcel would be set back a minimum of 250 feet from the Anacostia River, ensuring consistent public access to the water. The placement of the anchor use in close proximity to the other development at the Poplar Point project area would contribute to the planned mixed-use urban environment and commercial activity around the Metrorail station. A publicly accessible arrival plaza would blur the private-public space divide. The proposed anchor use would provide services to the adjacent existing communities and to visitors from throughout the region. The development of an anchor at the Poplar Point project area would support open space improvements and catalyze other development. According to the Plan, if it is determined that an anchor use is not possible, the proposed anchor tenant parcel would be reconfigured and incorporated into the mixed-use development grid of parcels and roadways.

Building heights in the Master Plan and subsequent development may vary based on the design evolution. Height step downs might be included as part of individual building design to increase

massing variation and articulation. While the actual density of Poplar Point will be determined during the Master Plan process, for purposes of the Environmental Assessment, a range of 4 to 6 million square feet is being used to determine impacts. In particular, the traffic analysis used the midpoint of that range, 5 million square feet, for trip generation calculations.

#### Viewshed Protection

The protection and enhancement of important existing vistas are central features of the Preferred Alternative. This includes views to and from the U.S. Capitol, the Washington Monument, and Cedar Hill, the Frederick Douglass home. The Preferred Alternative would enhance the prominence of the New Jersey Avenue view corridor that extends from the U.S. Capitol Building to the Poplar Point site. As part of this prominence, the Preferred Alternative sets aside a site for a future memorial at the point where this axis crosses the shoreline. In addition, the Preferred Alternative proposes to locate a large cultural use, such as a museum, on the axis to more formally recognize the view corridor. The plan also respects views to the Washington Monument by maintaining an open view corridor along the extension of W Street. The preferred plan proposes to protect views from the Frederick Douglass home by stepping down building heights toward the river.

#### Multi-Modal Circulation

The Preferred Alternative features a network of transportation options, including vehicular roads, pedestrian and bicycle pathways, and Metrorail access. The plan offers access to the site at multiple locations including new and improved connections to existing neighborhoods, promoting accessibility. These connections would support easy access to amenities, services, and community spaces. The Preferred Alternative includes simplified roadway configurations, more regular shaped blocks, and a reduced number of intersections. A primary east-west roadway within the site would connect on the west side of the Poplar Point project area at the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge East Oval and extend to Anacostia Drive, northeast of the Poplar Point project area. This east-west spine roadway would run along the southern portion of the site and then north to the Anacostia River and connect with the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park, where it would join the existing Anacostia Drive. The existing Anacostia Drive would be removed between the oval and the intersection with Marion Barry Avenue. Instead, this area would be improved with a pedestrian and bicycle only pathway.

East of the site at W Street, a new primary road would connect the existing W Street across I-295 to the new primary east-west roadway. Marion Barry Avenue would also serve as a primary road and would connect the existing adjacent community to Anacostia Drive, meeting at a proposed traffic circle near the Anacostia River. Secondary roads are proposed to be smaller and intended to provide internal circulation within the development and also accommodate vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation. In addition, the proposed Metro plaza would be pedestrian-focused and connect to the diverse array of sidewalks, pathways, and trails that would traverse the site.

In addition to primary and secondary roads, the plan proposes bicycle and pedestrian shared paths. The ART would continue along the riverfront, linking the site to the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge and Anacostia Park north of the Poplar Point project area. Bicycle and pedestrian shared access would connect the Poplar Point project area to just north of Chicago Street and to V Street,

southeast of I-295. Within Poplar Point, bicycle and pedestrian shared paths would link these off-site connections to the riverfront. Additional shared pathways would link development to the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge East Oval, traversing the wetlands.

A phased parking approach would provide non-surface parking options to access key points in the site for accessibility and to accommodate people of different age groups and physical abilities. Traffic analysis will be included in the Environmental Assessment and the final Master Plan.

#### Floodplain

The overall approach toward flood resilience at Poplar Point is one of 'living with water.' The wetlands and lower elevation areas would connect with the Anacostia River and accommodate flooding. The rest of the site would consist of gentle terraces to further accommodate floodwater and to raise the elevation of development. Given that the future flood elevation is projected at 10.5' Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL), the first floor of development would be at approximately 12.5'. Similar to other waterfront areas in Washington, parking structures would be utilized to raise the elevation of development. The plan indicates that it will include further coordination with Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling (JBAB) regarding potential flooding issues.

#### *Coordination and Outreach*

As part of the Poplar Point Process, the public engagement process has already started and includes a sequence of public meetings. The project began with a kick-off meeting webinar on February 11th, 2025, that introduced the project, reviewed project background, outlined existing conditions, and described public engagement. A NEPA public scoping meeting (the first Open House) was held on March 18, 2025, to review the Preliminary Land Use Plan Alternatives with a public scoping comment period between March 18 and May 7, 2025. A Section 106 consulting parties meeting was held on April 30, 2025. On May 13, 2025, a second Open House was held to present the Draft Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan to the community. Over the course of the Poplar Point Plan process, the project team has engaged with the community at several different touchpoints where community members and the general public were invited to provide feedback on the Poplar Point Plan. These included virtual meetings, in-person events, and the NPS's PEPC website.

Future public engagement will occur as part of the NEPA and Master Plan processes. Staff supports this effort, and recommends the **Commission request the Environmental Assessment evaluate transportation impacts, including vehicular traffic, and how pedestrian and bicycle users will be safely accommodated and encourage the applicant to continue coordination and outreach with the community in the development of the master plan, including identifying opportunities for interpretation of the site's history, and other uses that would support local needs.**

## **CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE**

### **Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital**

The comments above are intended to support consistency with the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. In particular, staff considered policies related to Historic Preservation, Parks and Open Space, the Federal Environment, and Transportation.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

NPS initiated scoping pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and will be preparing an Environmental Assessment. NCPC is a cooperating agency to satisfy any NEPA obligations required pursuant to the planning effort or future projects.

### **National Historic Preservation Act**

NPS initiated the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act in January 2025. This process will allow NPS to evaluate potential impacts to historic properties. This work will also be coordinated with the NEPA process. NCPC is a consulting party in the process.

## **CONSULTATION**

### **Coordinating Committee**

Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed comments on the revised concept master plan to the Commission with the statement that the proposal was coordinated with all participating agencies. SHPO noted that it is still reviewing and commenting on this plan and the related environmental review documents but is coordinating conditioned upon completion of the Section 106 review process, including the development and implementation of the Programmatic Agreement to resolve the adverse effects that are anticipated to result from the project. Participating agencies were: NCPC, the State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO), District Office of Planning (DCOP), District Department of Transportation (DDOT), District Department of the Environment (DDOE), General Services Administration (GSA), National Park Service (NPS), and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

### **U.S. Commission of Fine Arts**

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts heard an information presentation on the proposed planning for Poplar Point at their March 20, 2025 meeting. The Commission members noted the important opportunities afforded at the site and recommended elements of the alternatives that promoted connection, protection of the wetlands, and an expansive exploration of commemorative expression.

## **ONLINE REFERENCE**

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at [www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov):

- Submission Package
- Project Synopsis

Prepared by Jamie Herr  
06/26/2025

**POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)**

# Poplar Point Master Plan

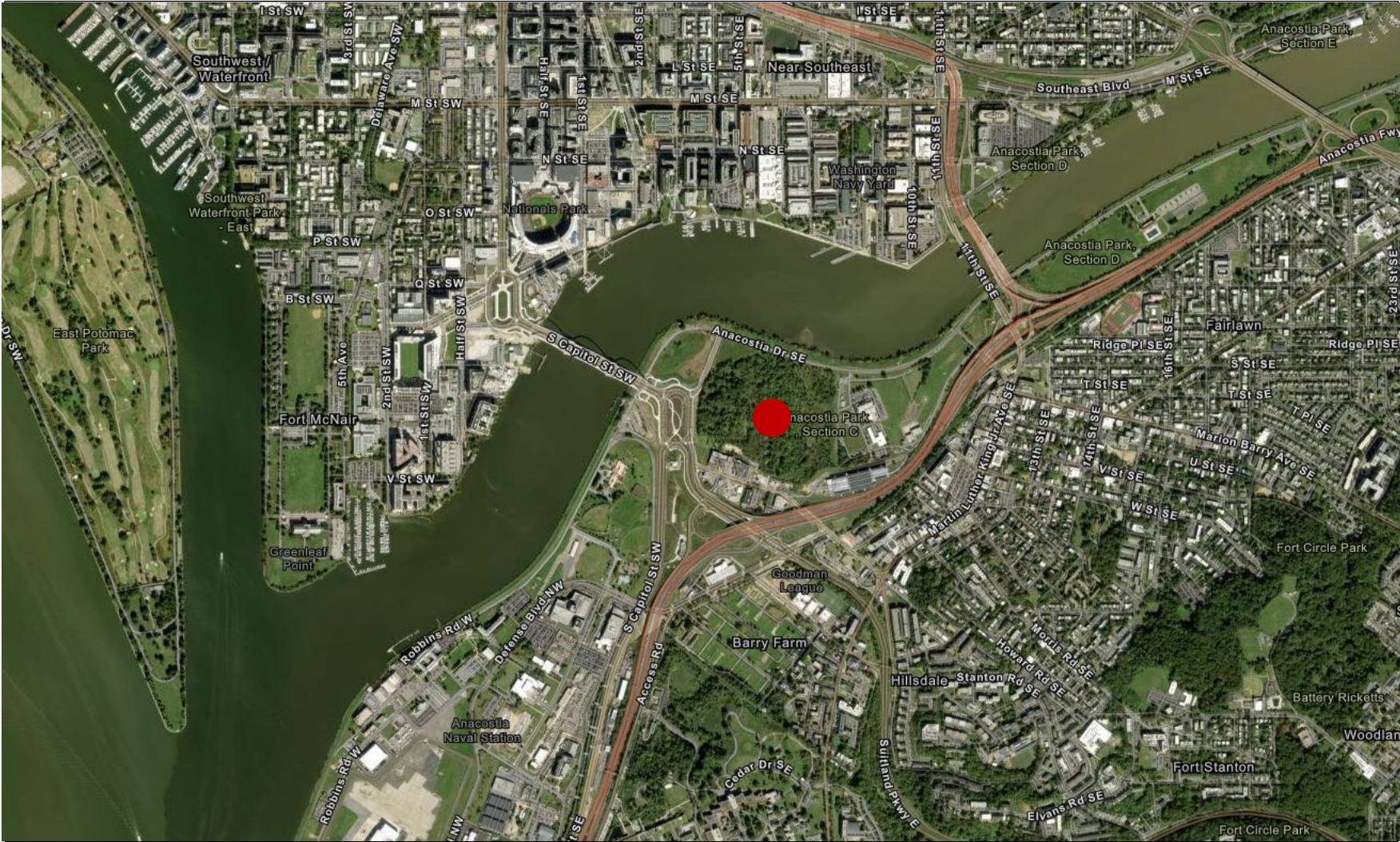
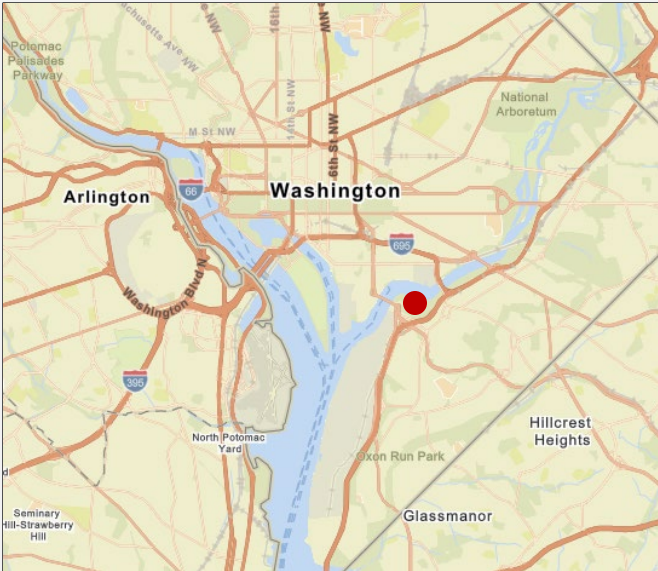
Southeast, Washington DC

Approval of Comments on Revised Concept Master Plan

United States Department of the Interior



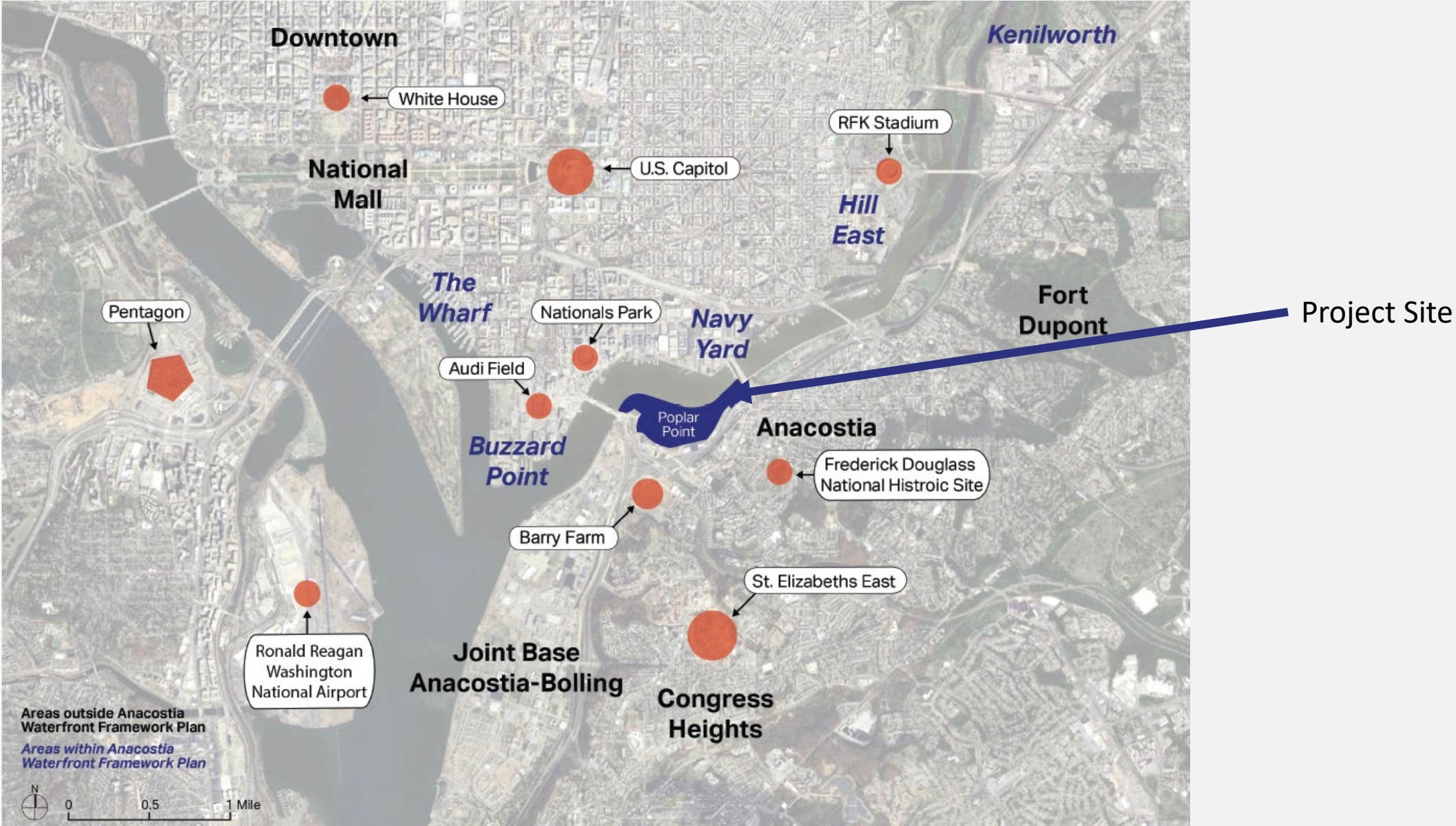
# Site Location



Location Map

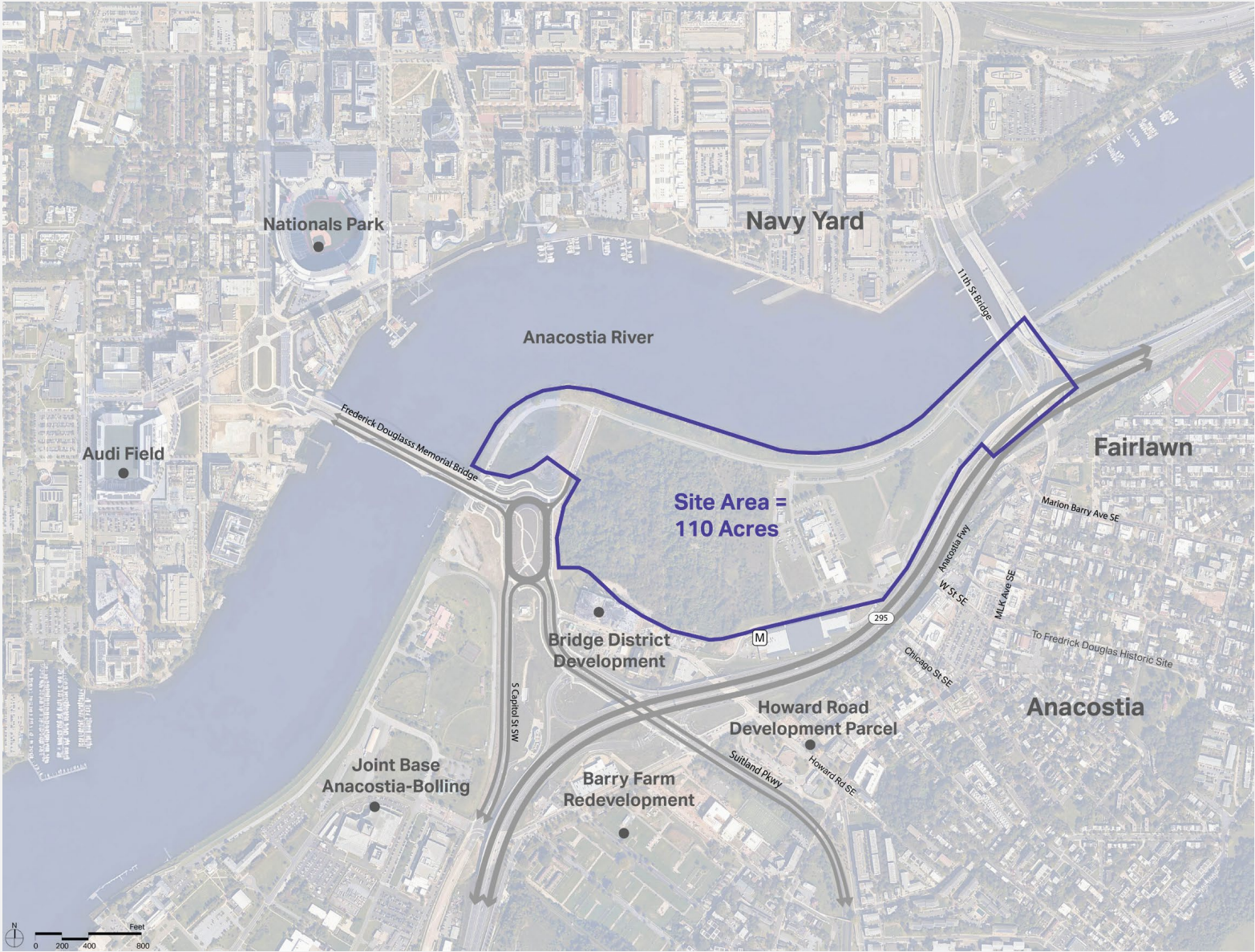


# Site Context





# Site Context





# Site History



1894 – Original shoreline



1922 – Reconfigured shoreline



1946 – Navy use and Lamont nursery

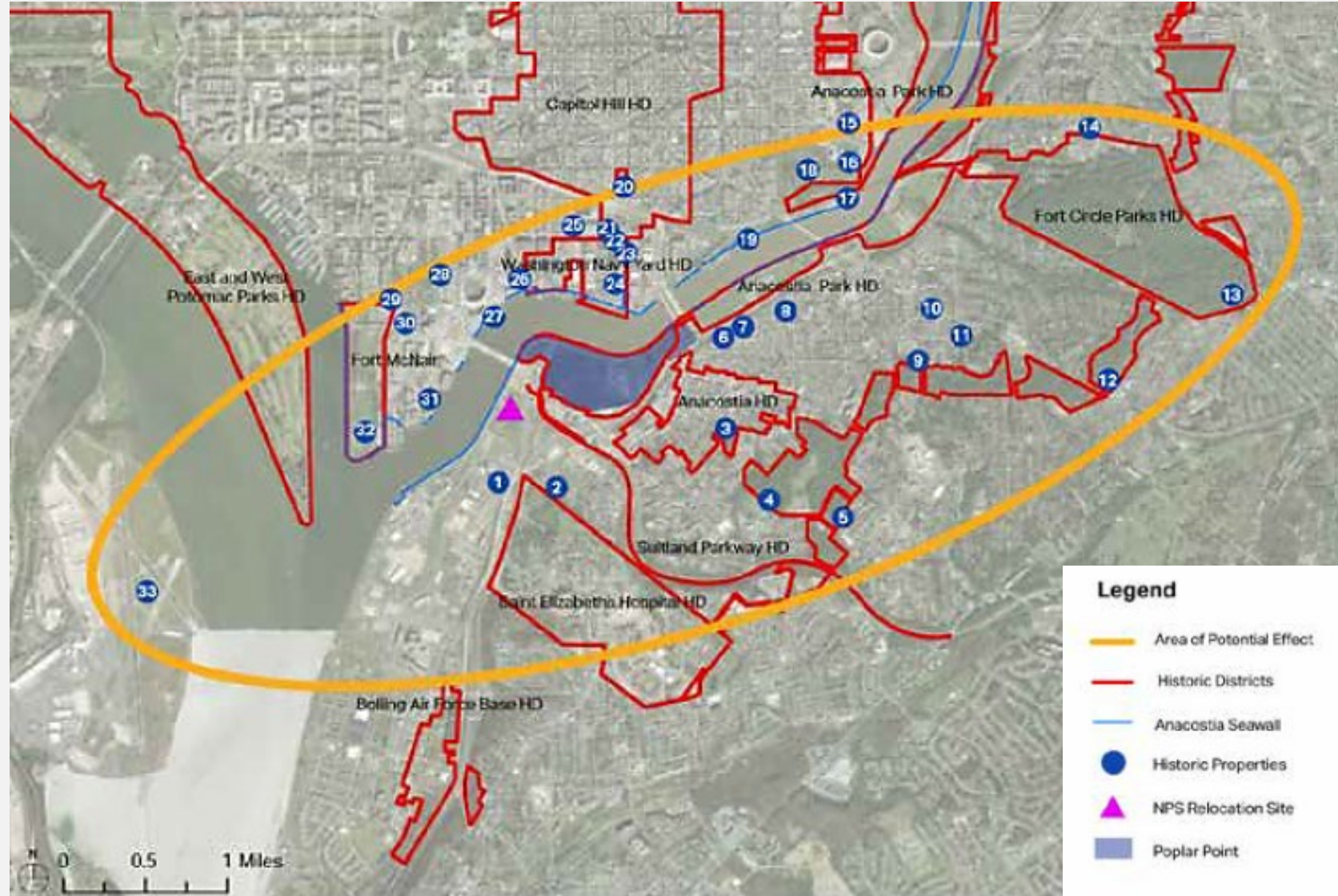


1988 – NPS facilities and Metro construction



# Historic Resources

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Joint-Base Anacostia Bolling Building 168 | 10 Engine Company 19                         |
| 2 Barry Farm Dwellings                      | 11 Randle Highlands School                   |
| 3 Frederick Douglass House                  | 12 Fort Davis                                |
| 4 Fort Stanton                              | 13 Fort Dupont                               |
| 5 Battery Rickets                           | 14 John Philip Sousa Jr High School          |
| 6 Anderson Tire Manufacturing Company       | 15 Anne Archibold Hall                       |
| 7 Anacostia High School                     | 16 Reservation 13 Archeological Site         |
| 8 Kramer Middle School                      | 17 Seafarers Yacht Club                      |
| 9 Texas Garden Apartments                   | 18 Congressional Cemetery                    |
| 19 Washington Yacht Club                    | 28 William Syphax School                     |
| 20 Marine Barracks and Band Hall            | 29 St. James Mutual Homes                    |
| 21 Navy Yard Car Barn                       | 30 James C. Dent House                       |
| 22 Tingey House                             | 31 Pepco Buzzard Pt Power Plant              |
| 23 2nd Officer's House                      | 32 National War College                      |
| 24 Commandant's Office                      | 33 Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport |
| 25 Lincoln Playground Field House           |  |
| 26 Main Sewerage Pumping Station            |  |
| 27 Capitol Power Plant Pump House           |  |



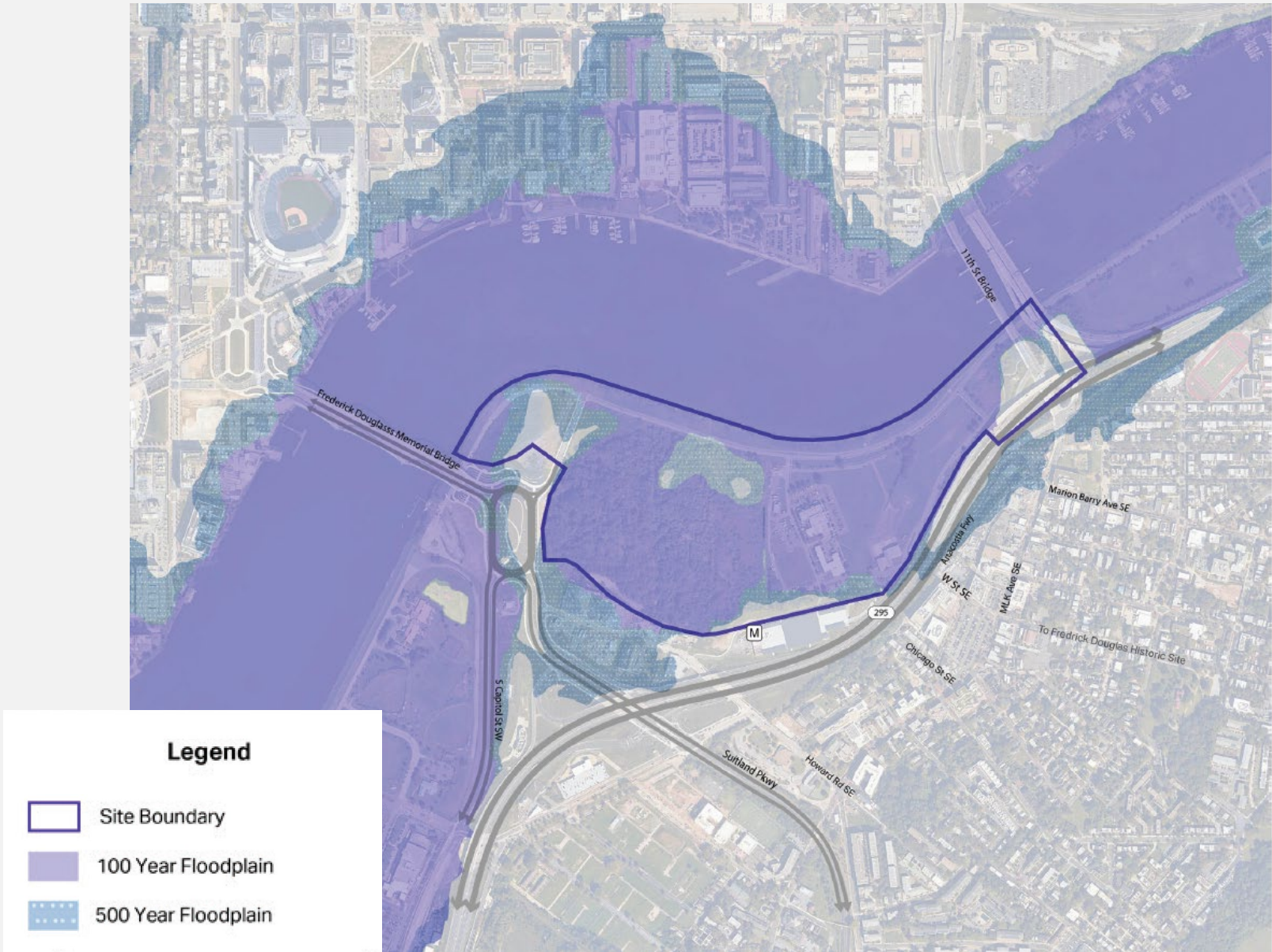


# Existing Conditions



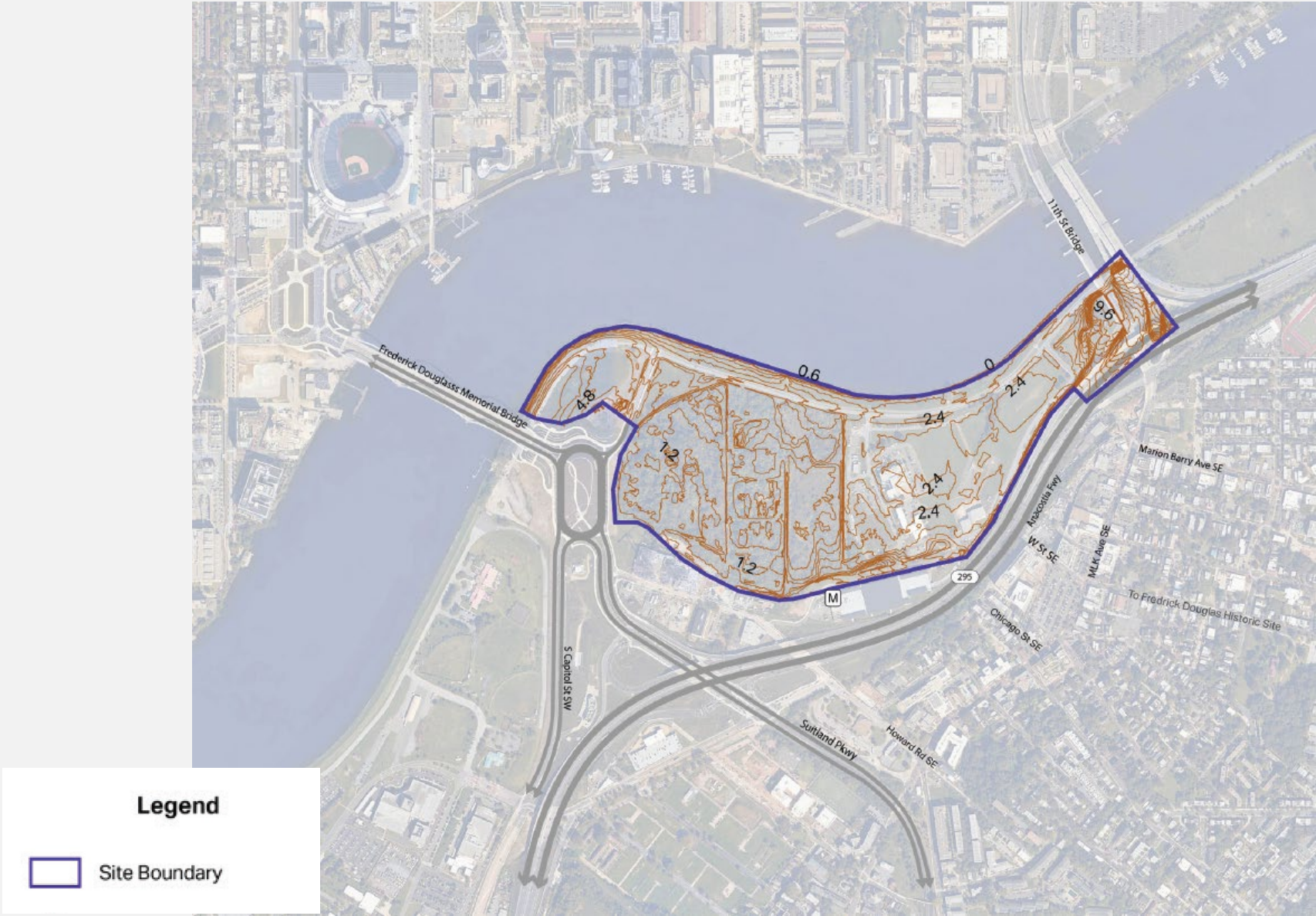


# Existing Floodplains



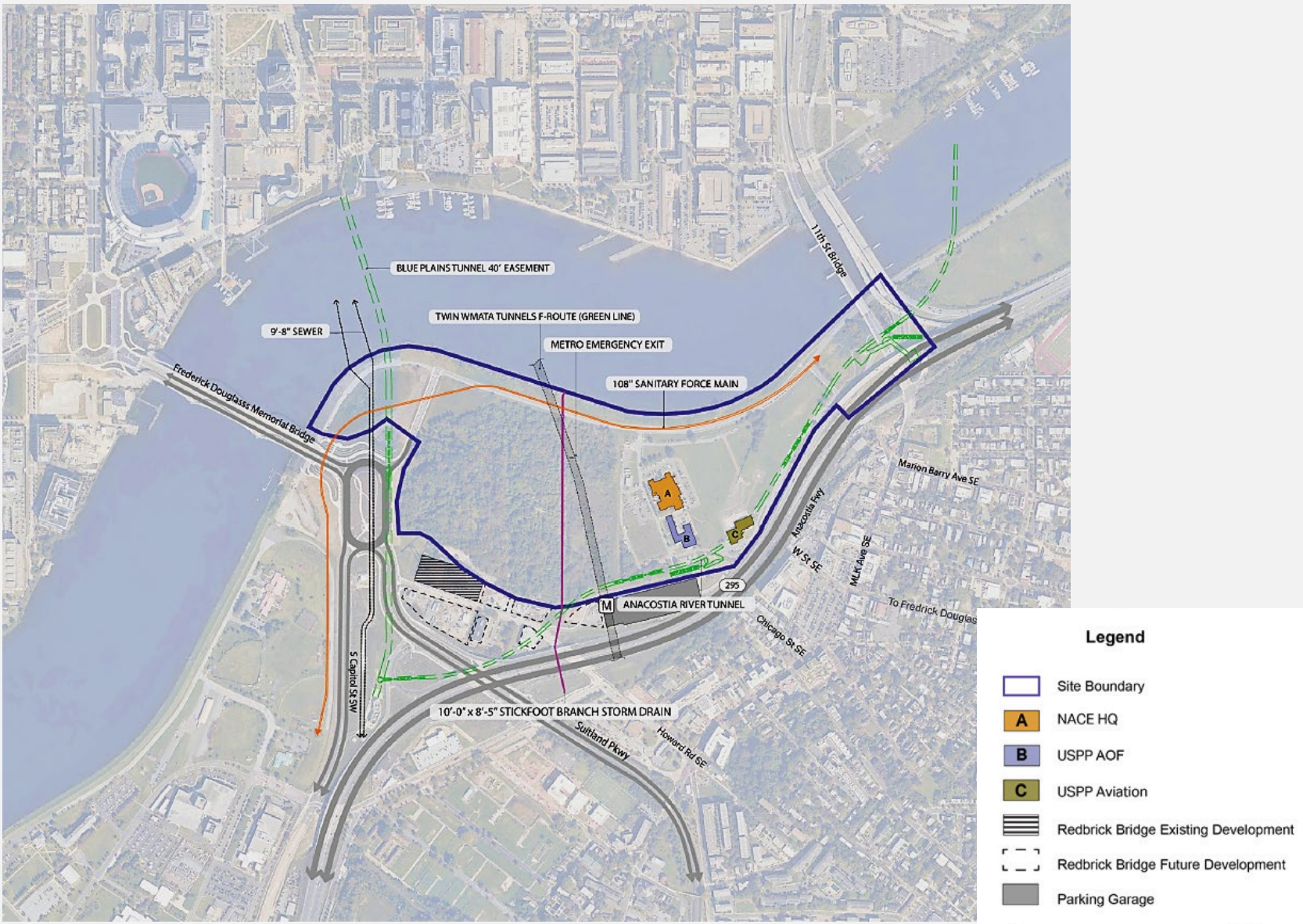


# Existing Topography



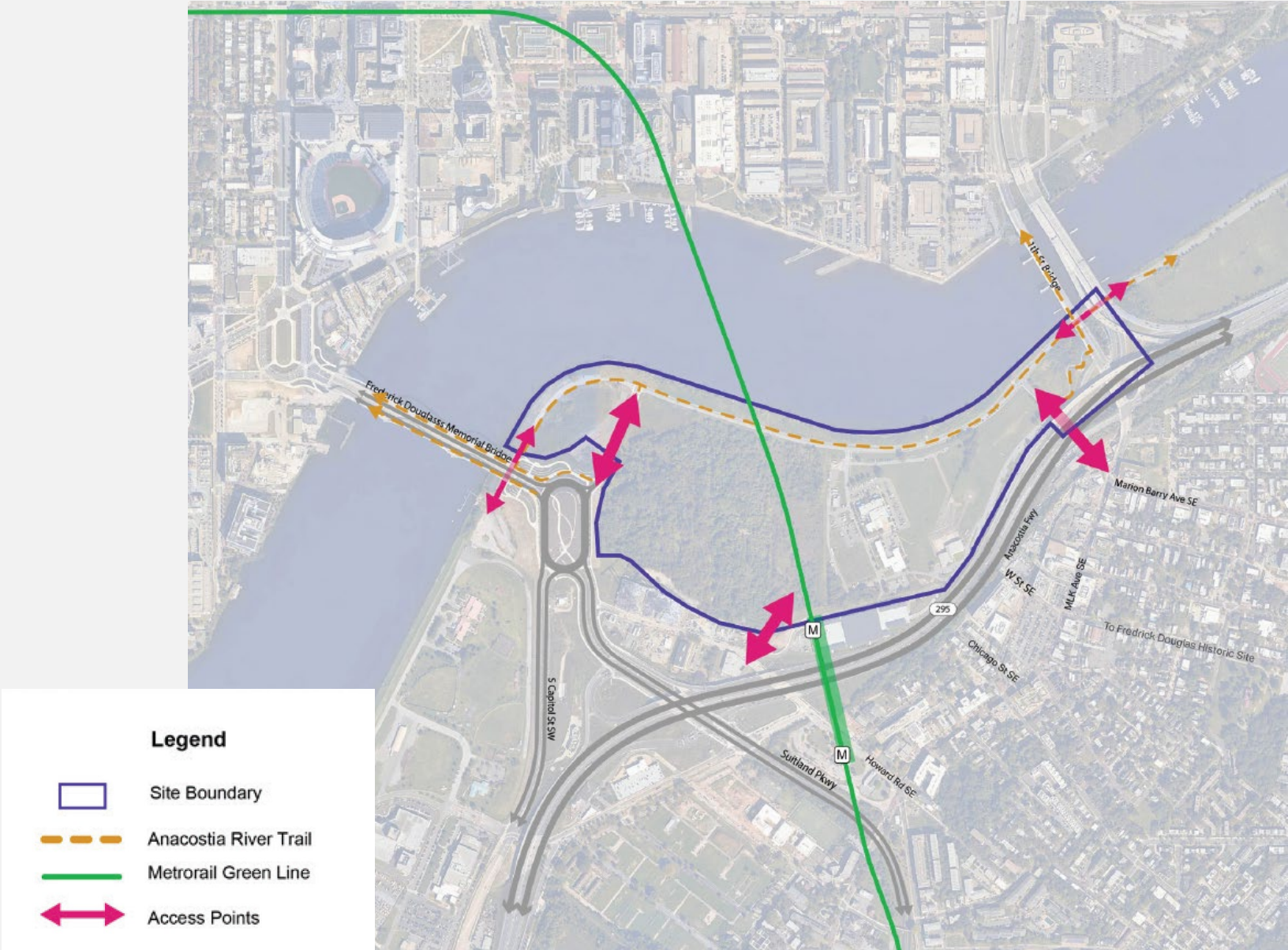


# Existing Infrastructure and Facilities



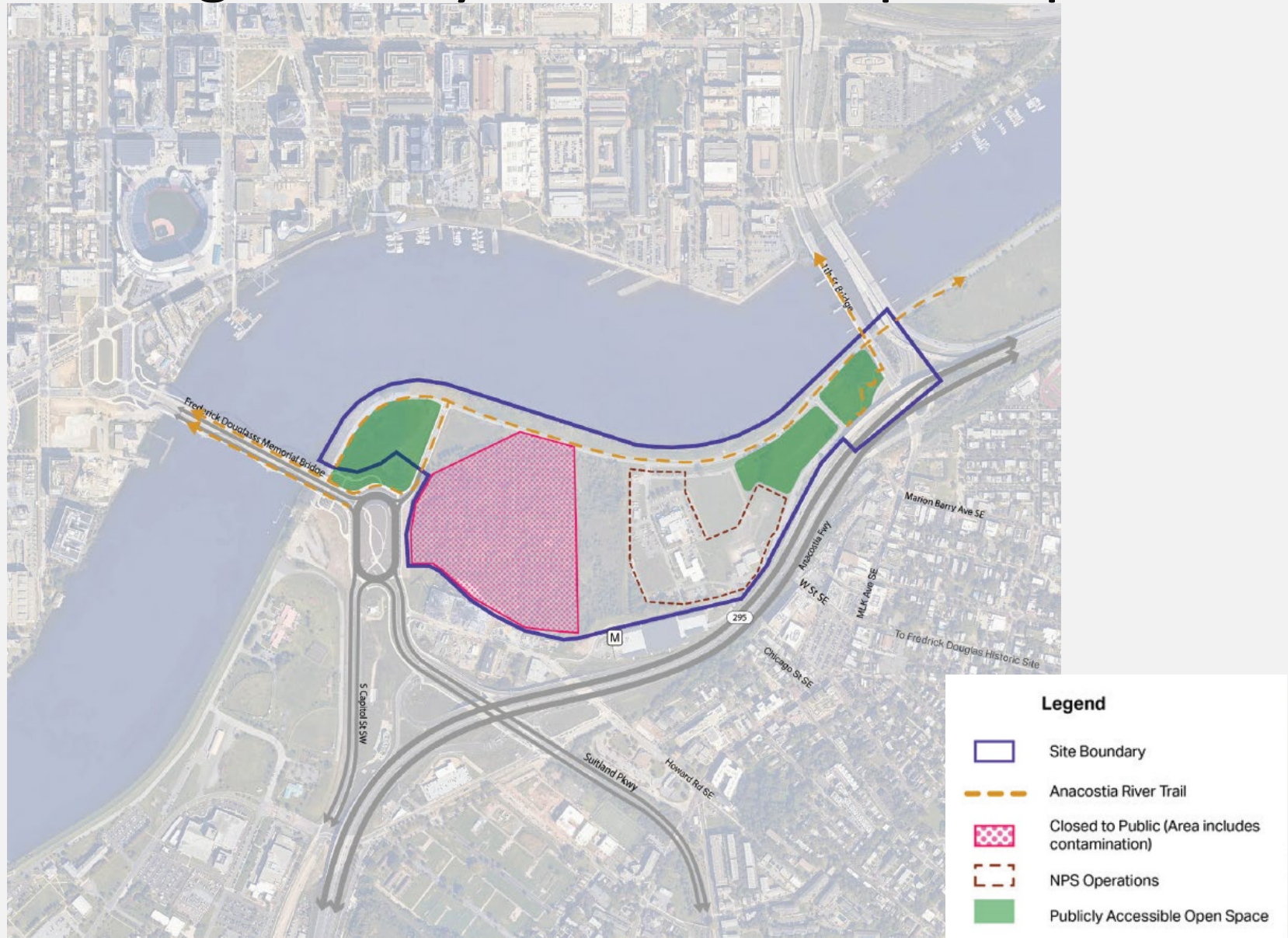


# Existing Transportation Access



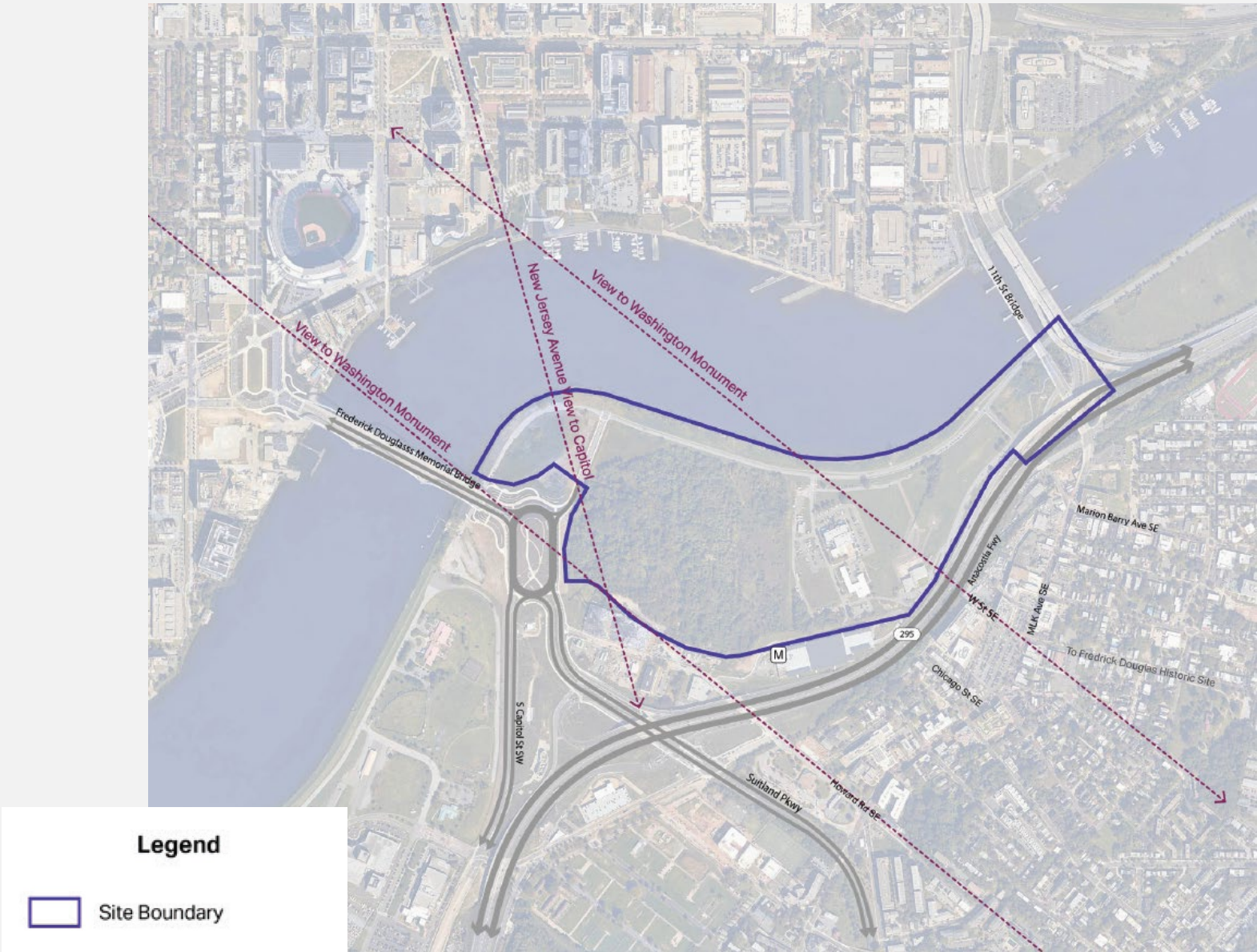


# Existing Publicly Accessible Open Space





# Existing Views and Vistas



# Planning Principles





# Prior Land Use Alternatives

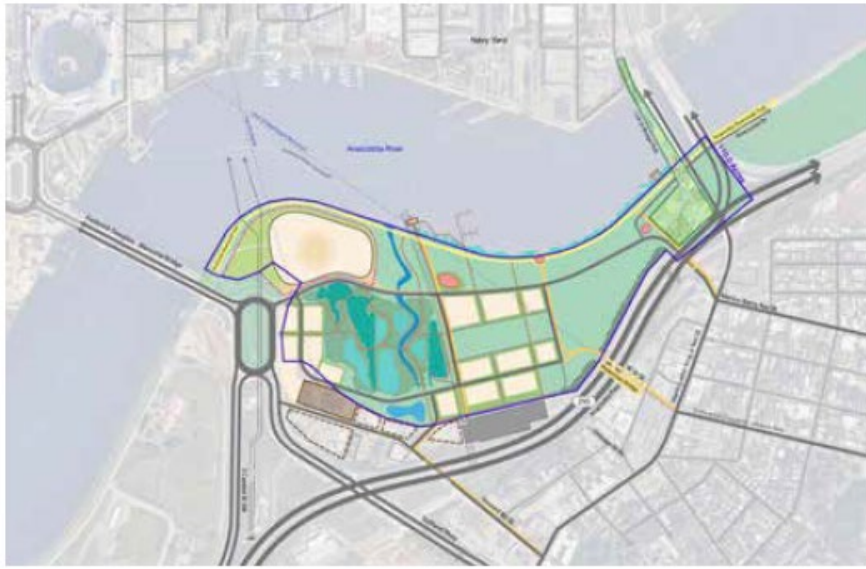
Alternative A: Greenway Connections



Alternative B: Central Wetlands



Alternative C: Anchor Use on the Point



# Commission Recommendations April 2025

**Supports** the applicant’s project goals for Poplar Point to expand the wetlands, celebrate the Point, rediscover the shoreline, build upon adjacent projects, focus on Metrorail access, and connect with the Anacostia Community.

**Notes** the plan is a required step in the process to transfer the land from the National Park Service to the District of Columbia outlined in the Federal and District of Columbia Government Real Property Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-396, commonly referred to as the DC Lands Act).

**Supports** the applicant’s intent to improve and develop Poplar Point into a community amenity by providing a publicly-accessible waterfront park with cultural, economic, and recreational attractions and activities, spur revitalization efforts east of the river by providing a mix of residential, retail, and office uses around Anacostia Metrorail Station, and improve access to and expand the recreational amenities within southern Anacostia Park.

**Notes** the submission includes three alternatives for Poplar Point. The spatial development of each alternative is guided by a key theme.

**Notes** this early concept submission does not include information regarding proposed density, land use, building heights, and future function of the existing seawall; however, this information is anticipated as part of future submission, after consultation with the public and stakeholders.

## Concept Alternatives

**Finds** that all three alternatives would help address expansion of the wetlands as a focal feature, include new memorial sites and cultural venues, improve use of the shoreline, and provide focal uses on the Point.

**Finds** the three alternatives each contain successful components (noted below) that may be interchanged or combined in the development of a preferred alternative.

### Alternative A: Greenway Connections

- Notes** Alternative A:
- Emphasizes greenway connections across the site and into Anacostia, linking the wetlands to the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park.
  - Places a potential memorial and cultural use at the Point with an unobstructed view of the city and the wetland.
  - Places a memorial on axis with views of the Washington Monument and the crossing greenways, ensuring a high level of visibility for a future memorial site.
  - Includes a new stand-alone pedestrian bridge to increase access to the site.

**Supports** the protection of views of the Capitol (New Jersey Avenue) and the Washington Monument, important viewsheds that add to the uniqueness of the site.

**Supports** the prominent locations identified for two future memorials, including one at the Point.

**Supports** the absence of development between the wetlands and the river which preserves expansive views and can allow for more natural hydrology.

**Finds** that the roadway design creates irregular shaped blocks and intersections that will need refinement as the plan progresses.

**Finds** the development pattern results in a potentially unpleasant green space between buildings and the I-295 freeway which is a space that may be better suited for development.

### Alternative B: Central Wetlands

- Notes** Alternative B:
- Frames the wetlands with development.
  - Includes three future memorial sites, one at the Point surrounded by development, another in the center of a public square, and the third at the eastern end of the site, adjacent to the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park.
  - Includes a new stand-alone pedestrian bridge to increase access to the site.

**Finds** Alternative B respects the viewshed to the Washington Monument, but not the New Jersey Avenue view to the U.S. Capitol.

**Supports** the prominent locations identified for the three future memorials.

**Finds** surrounding the wetlands with development limits views to and from the wetlands and reduces the opportunity for natural river flooding into the wetlands.

**Finds** the development pattern to the east is more efficient with smaller blocks allowing greater porosity and more usable areas for recreation.

# Commission Recommendations April 2025

## *Alternative C: Anchor Use on the Point*

- Notes** Alternative C:
- Envisions a large anchor on the Point.
  - Frames the wetlands with development on three sides and the anchor use to the north.
  - Includes two memorial sites and a cultural facility all within the large waterfront park but not at the Point or within the viewsheds.
  - Eliminates the stand-alone pedestrian bridge that is proposed in Alternatives A and B, and instead makes the existing access point at W Street, SE pedestrian only.

**Finds** Alternative C does not respect either the New Jersey Avenue viewshed or the Washington Monument viewshed in the design.

**Finds** the large anchor use on the Point appears disconnected from the rest of the site and depending on the overall massing, could have a significant impact on views to and from the wetlands.

**Finds** Alternative C allows for the greatest amount of recreational space to the east, identified as recreational fields.

**Finds** the elimination of the pedestrian bridge at Chicago Street, SE and conversion of the W Street, SE bridge to pedestrian-only results in the least number of connections to the existing neighborhood.

## *General Recommendations*

### *Flooding*

**Finds** that unlike the west side of the Anacostia River, this large undeveloped site presents a unique opportunity to connect with the shoreline and model natural flood resiliency in addition to creating a wonderful new neighborhood/amenity.

- Requests** the following information as part of the next submission, including:
- The overall flood mitigation approach for the site, including resilient approaches to allow water on-site and flood-proofing.
  - The impacts of achieving the desired elevation of +10 feet on the design of development and open space, particularly the relationship between the ground floor level and adjacent public spaces.
  - The intended future of the existing seawall which is in poor shape, and whether it will continue to provide flood protection and/or be removed to allow more natural hydrology, along with any new flood protection structures.
  - The status of any coordination with Joint Base Anacostia Bolling and if/how flood mitigation proposals at both sites are being considered together.

### *Development/Massing*

**Supports** lining the I-295 corridor and the east oval of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge with buildings given the amount of noise disturbance.

**Notes** it is difficult to assess the alternatives without information on potential massing and land-use which have implications on views, traffic, and flood protection. The alternatives should reflect potential trade-offs between height, building footprints, and location.

- Requests** the following information as part of the next submission, including:
- The proposed development density, heights, and land uses.
  - How the proposed development will respect and enhance existing views and vistas, both from the site and across the site from Historic Anacostia, specifically views along New Jersey Avenue to the U.S. Capitol and from the Historic Frederick Douglass home, as outlined in the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan;
  - How a potential anchor use would be incorporated into Alternatives A and B;
  - Whether the anchor use could work in the green space to the east in Alternative C; and
  - Clarifying what opportunities for public space use could occur in the green spaces based on size, configuration and location.

### *Roadways*

**Notes** all three alternatives show a primary roadway along the riverfront, through the wetlands, and connecting to the Frederick Douglass Bridge south oval entrance.

**Finds** roadways along the shorelines or through wetlands are not desirable but may be necessary given the constraints of the site.

**Requests** more information in the next submission regarding the anticipated volume of traffic for this primary roadway, the proposed design, and how pedestrian crossings to the riverfront trail will be accommodated.

### *Coordinating and Outreach*

**Encourages** the applicant to continue coordination and outreach with the community in the development of the master plan, including identifying opportunities for interpretation of the site’s history, and other uses that would support local needs.

# Public Engagement

Name	Date	Time	Location
Kickoff Webinar	February 11, 2025	6:30pm	Virtual
ANC Briefing #1	March 10, 2025	6:30pm	Virtual
Open House #1	March 18, 20225	5:30pm	1231 Marion Barry Avenue SE
CFA Meeting	March 20, 2025	9:00am	Virtual
NCPC Meeting	April 3, 2025	1:00pm	401 9th Street NW and Virtual
Walkshop	April 5, 2025	10:30am	894 Howard Road SE
NPS PEPC Website	March 18, 2025 - May 7,2025	–	Virtual
Open House #2	May 13, 2025	5:30pm	2427 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE



# Outreach and Engagement

## Summary of Comments

A summary of comments received to date, including those from NCPC, is provided below.

### Natural Topics

#### *Wetlands + Floodplains*

- Preserve wetlands; expand wetlands
- Offer educational opportunities and interpretation
- Offer expansive wetland interaction with the Anacostia River
- Consider how the site can incorporate flood resiliency
- Ensure a suitable buffer between wetlands and development
- Daylight Stickfoot Branch
- Realign Anacostia Drive and don't allow vehicles to cross wetlands or a day-lit Stickfoot Branch
- No turf fields next to the wetlands

#### *Riverfront Park*

- Maintain open access to waterfront
- Provide active waterfront amenities, e.g. water taxi and recreation opportunities
- Provide relaxed waterfront setting
- Connect Poplar Point with the green corridor along the Anacostia River, including the National Arboretum

#### *Open Space Activities/Amenities*

- Provide links to the existing adjacent community
- Maintain and expand Anacostia Riverwalk Trail
- Balance ecological enhancements, community connections, and recreation improvements
- Establish an interconnected network of open spaces
- No sports fields
- Include native plants that accommodate pollinators
- Provide community park amenities that are not available elsewhere in Anacostia Park or 11th Street Bridge Park
  - Children's playground
  - Splash park
  - Dog park
  - Picnic gazebos
  - Shaded areas
  - Meadow areas
  - Flower garden (pollinator)
  - Community gardens
  - Town square
  - Fishing piers
  - Swimming hole/beach
  - Multi-generational features



# Outreach and Engagement

## Natural Topics

### ***Wetlands + Floodplains***

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### ***Open Space Activities/Amenities***

- Provide links to the existing adjacent community
- Maintain and expand Anacostia Riverwalk Trail
- Balance ecological enhancements, community connections, and recreation improvements
- Establish an interconnected network of open spaces

## ***Development***

- Development should integrate natural features and vegetation
- Offer affordable housing
- Provide economic development opportunities for businesses in adjacent neighborhoods
- Place development near Metro
- Place development near Marion Barry Avenue
- Create a walkable neighborhood
- Build community amenities such as a grocery store and library
- Provide development at the Point
- Do not develop the Point
- Do not develop Poplar Point; keep the point open

## ***Anchor Use***

- Provide an anchor use
- Do not provide an anchor use
- Anchor use should not be located on the Point and oriented solely to the north

# Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan

The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan proposes to provide:

- Open space, including wetlands and the Anacostia Riverfront;
- Development areas that connect and extend existing development south of the site, and anticipate a mix of uses including housing and affordable housing;
- Multimodal transportation and circulation, including connections to the adjacent communities and development; and
- Cultural uses, including at “the Point.”





# Preferred Alternative – Open Space

The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan would establish a connected system of open spaces that provide riverfront access and activation, community recreation, and natural resource areas. Features located within open space could offer interpretation of the environment; historical themes, including but not limited to Native American and Civil Rights history.

## **Community Parks**

Parks with a community recreation focus would primarily be located in the north-central and eastern portions of the Poplar Point project area. These areas would accommodate neighborhood park uses such as picnics, playgrounds, dog parks, splash pads, and other recreation. The intent of these areas would be to connect with and complement recreation opportunities available at the 11th Street Bridge Park and Anacostia Park and respond to community needs and preferences.

## **Federal Commemorative Works Sites**

The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan would provide two sites for federal commemorative works within the Poplar Point project area. One site would be located at the Point along the Anacostia River on axis with New Jersey Avenue. This site would align with views of the U.S. Capitol. The second site would be located at the intersection of Anacostia Drive and Marion Barry Avenue. As identified in the Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan, the second commemorative work would be located in a circle, a classic commemorative site form in Washington, linking the two roads.



# Preferred Alternative – Open Space

## *Riverfront*

- The riverfront park area would maintain public access to Anacostia Park.
- The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan calls for a consistent minimum 250-foot setback from the water to development that would include the multi-use Anacostia Riverwalk Trail (ART), locations for commemorative works, and points for park activation.
- In addition, the riverfront park area could accommodate a marina, fishing pier, water taxi, tidal wetlands, and other water-based activities.
- The Plan would also accommodate a kayak launch included in the adjacent 11th Street Bridge Park.
- Activated areas would be located where the seawall is in good condition or where readily repairable, to the extent practicable.
- In select areas where the seawall is in poor condition, tidal wetlands would be established.
- An outdoor area located on the Point would offer a place for gatherings.
- The eastern portion of the riverfront would serve as an extension of the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park.

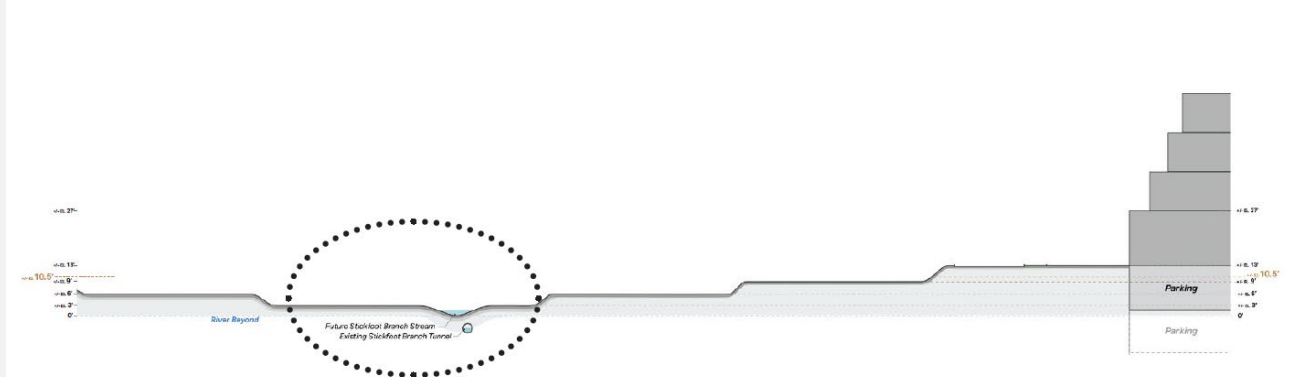




# Preferred Alternative – Open Space

## ***Wetlands and Stickfoot Branch***

- The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan would build on remediated wetlands, retaining approximately seven acres of wetlands and expanding the amount of wetlands to meet DOEE requirements.
- The Plan would consolidate existing scattered wetlands in a way that would improve habitat.
- Wooded areas and meadows would buffer wetlands on the north and west; development would be adjacent to wetlands to the east and south.
- The Plan proposes to daylight Stickfoot Branch, bringing the piped stream to the surface.
- To maintain a constant flow of water, the underground stream may require pumping to the surface and creating a pool, or pond, at the southern portion of the park. Stickfoot Branch would then wind through a natural area north to the Anacostia River.
- Within the wetlands, the Plan would offer education and recreation opportunities.
- Paths and boardwalks would provide public access to the wetlands and interpretation of the ecological value of wetlands.
- Activation areas, which could include picnic areas, gathering space, and concessions, would be adjacent to the southern and western edges of the wetlands and wooded buffer.
- Tidal wetlands could be established along the Anacostia River interface. These wetlands could be placed in locations where the existing seawall is in poor condition.



Site Elevation Conceptual Approach

# Preferred Alternative – Open Space

- The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan would include 70 acres of open space usable for park purposes, as shown in the attached graphic.
- This would include approximately 25 acres of waterfront park, 10 acres of community and neighborhood parks and plazas, and 35 acres of nature park, including wetlands and surrounding areas.
- The remaining 40 acres would be associated with development and infrastructure, including roadways.





# Preferred Alternative - Development

## ***The Point***

The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan would feature a civic use at the Point, as well as a cultural use, such as a museum. The festival area could include locations for cultural expressions and community gatherings, events space, or other facilities to support events. If a museum or other civic use is developed, it would be located south of the festival area, and would feature a building (or buildings) that would maintain the New Jersey Avenue view corridor. To the south of a potential museum or civic use, two new parcels would flank the New Jersey Avenue view corridor.

## ***Neighborhood***

Beyond the Point, much of the development at the site would be located near or aligned with the existing Anacostia Metrorail station. New development would include an anchor use, which would serve as a destination to the site, and a series of new development parcels along the southern portion of the site acting as an extension of the existing neighborhood. The primary development area would offer a crescent of development along I-295. The development is anticipated to be approximately 130 feet in height closest to the Metrorail station, and step down as blocks approach the Anacostia River. The placement of the development would connect to historic Anacostia and to the newly opened and planned expansion of the Bridge District development. The anchor use would provide services to the adjacent existing communities and to visitors from throughout the region. The development of an anchor at the Poplar Point project area would support open space improvements and catalyze other development.



## Preferred Alternative – Development

## ***Development Land Use, Height, and Density***

- The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan anticipates development to be approximately 130 feet in height closest to the Metrorail station, and step down as blocks approach the Anacostia River.
- Building heights in the Master Plan and subsequent development might vary based on design direction.
- Height step downs might be included as part of individual building design to increase massing variation and articulation.
- While the actual density of Poplar Point will be determined during the subsequent Master Plan process, for purposes of the Environmental Assessment, a range of 4 to 6 million square feet was used to determine impacts. In particular, the traffic analysis used the midpoint of that range, 5 million square feet for trip generation calculations.
- The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan for Poplar Point would include a mix of uses with an overall residential focus.
- However, immediately adjacent to the Metrorail station, the mixed-use development would likely include commercial uses. Additional uses would include hotels, ground-floor retail, office, and other supporting uses.





# Preferred Alternative – Development

## ***Neighborhood (Continued)***

The proposed anchor use would occupy an approximately 15-acre parcel near the Metrorail Station. The parcel would be set back a minimum of 250 feet from the Anacostia River, ensuring consistent public access to the water. The placement of the anchor use in close proximity to the other development at the Poplar Point project area would contribute to the planned mixed-use urban environment and commercial activity around the Metrorail station. A publicly accessible arrival plaza would blur the private-public space divide. If it is determined that an anchor use is not possible, the proposed anchor tenant parcel would be reconfigured and incorporated into the mixed-use development grid of parcels and roadways. In addition, four development blocks would be located along the transportation oval (Oval), west of the Poplar Point project area, aligned with the New Jersey Avenue corridor. Specific uses of the potential development are undefined, but are anticipated to be a mix of residential, commercial, and/or institutional uses. The location of mixed uses would be maximized near public transportation. The four development parcels located adjacent to the Oval would also border park space. The parcels would provide a consistent urban experience between the Metrorail station and the anchor use. Because parcels would frame the Oval and existing right-of-way, development at parcels are anticipated to be up to 130 feet in height, buffering public and pedestrian spaces from vehicular noise and maximizing housing units. Development would also ensure streetscape design buffers pedestrians from adjacent traffic and contributes to the quality of the pedestrian experience.



# Preferred Alternative - Viewshed

## ***Viewshed Protection***

- The protection and enhancement of important existing vistas are central features of the Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan.
- This includes views to and from the US Capitol, the Washington Monument, and Cedar Hill, the Frederick Douglass home.
- The Plan would enhance the prominence of the New Jersey Avenue view corridor that extends from the US Capitol Building to the Poplar Point site.
- Primarily, the Plan would set aside a site for a future national memorial at the point where this axis crosses the shoreline.
- In addition, the Plan proposes to locate a large civic building, such as a museum, on the axis to more formally recognize and receive the view corridor.
- The Plan would respect views to the Washington Monument by maintaining an open view corridor along the extension of W Street.
- The preferred plan would also protect views from the Frederick Douglass home by stepping down building heights toward the river.





# Preferred Alternative - Transportation

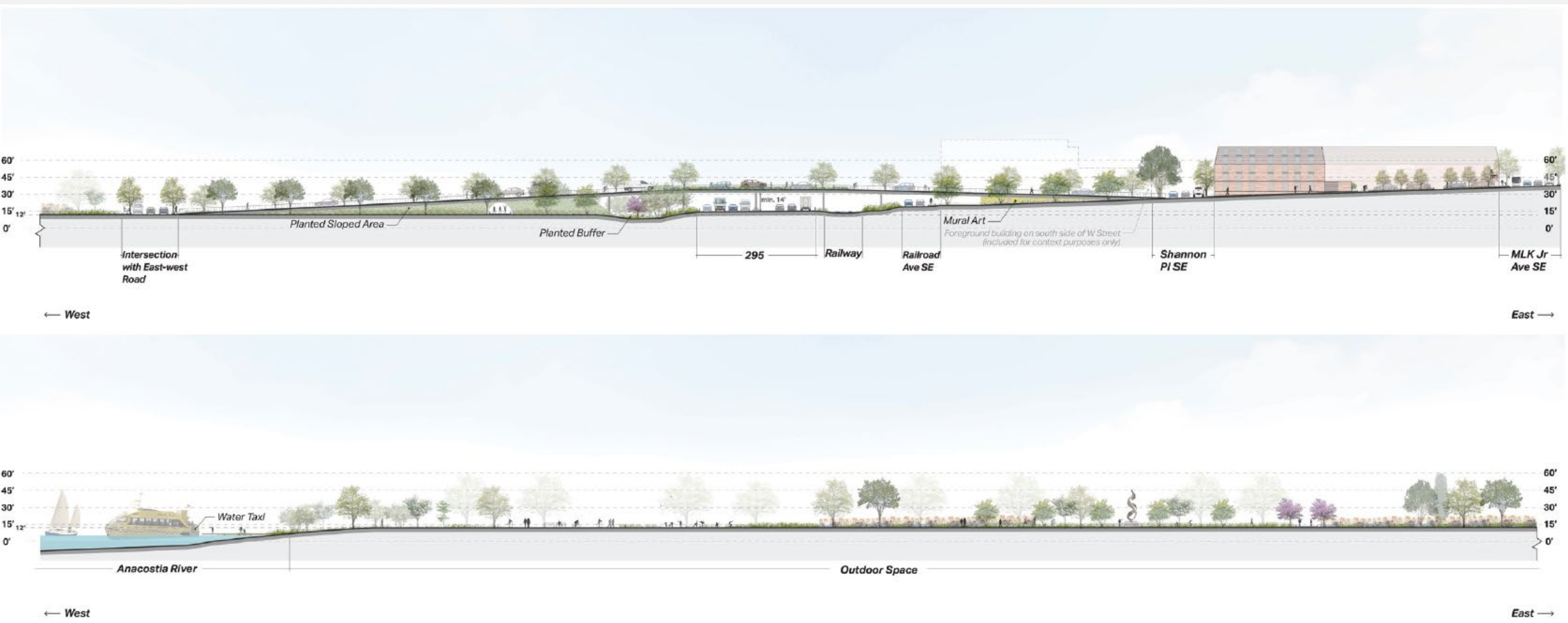
- The Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan would offer access to the site at multiple locations.
- The access and circulation network would offer new and improved connections to existing neighborhoods, promoting accessibility.
- These connections would support easy access to amenities, services, and community spaces.

## **Multi-Modal Circulation**

- A primary east-west roadway within the site would connect west of the Poplar Point project area at the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge East Oval and extend to Anacostia Drive northwest of the Poplar Point project area.
- This east-west spine roadway would run along the southern portion of the site and then north to the Anacostia River and near the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park, where it would join the existing Anacostia Drive.
- The existing Anacostia Drive would be removed between the oval and the intersection with Marion Barry Avenue. It would also accommodate bicycle and pedestrian connections.



# Preferred Alternative - Transportation



# Preferred Alternative - Flooding

The overall approach toward flood resilience at Poplar Point is one of 'living with water.' The wetlands and lower elevation areas would connect with the Anacostia River and accommodate flooding. The rest of the site would consist of gentle terraces to further accommodate floodwater and to raise the elevation of development. Given that the future flood elevation is projected at 10.5' Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL), the first floor of development would be at approximately 12.5'. Similar to other waterfront areas in Washington, parking structures would be utilized to raise the elevation of development. The Master Plan will include Further coordination with Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling (JBAB) Regarding potential flooding issues.

Floodplain Conceptual Section





# Preferred Alternative – Open Space Details

