



## ANACOSTIA WATERSHED COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*Dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Anacostia River and its tributaries*

April 27, 2018

Mr. Sam Zimbabwe, Chief Project Delivery Officer  
District Department of Transportation  
2000 14th St, NW, 7th floor  
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RE: NCPC 7936 Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Pedestrian Bridge: Kenilworth Park to Arboretum

Dear Mr. Zimbabwe

Thank you for speaking with me last week and for offering to meet regarding this matter. As chairs of the Anacostia Watershed Community Advisory Committee, we write to express our concerns regarding the design of the proposed bridge from Kenilworth Park to the National Arboretum, both in the District of Columbia. The Anacostia Watershed Community Advisory Committee (AWCAC) was formed in 1996 by the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Committee to serve as its citizen arm and principal advisory body to both its Steering and Management Committees. (Anacostia.net) AWCAC is comprised of representatives of the jurisdictions and sub-watershed organizations in the Anacostia Watershed, and advises the multi-jurisdiction restoration effort under the auspices of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

In May of 2011 AWCAC addressed a letter to Karina Ricks, then Associate Director of Policy, Planning and Sustainability for the District Department of Transportation, in support of the proposal to place a bridge across the Anacostia to provide a connection to the US National Arboretum as part of the Anacostia trail system. In addition, we were instrumental in arranging the placement of the first floating dock at the Arboretum put in place by the Park Service, as well as an Arboretum entrance gate near the dock. We are encouraged to see that efforts to complete the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail are being realized. This project will expand access to the Anacostia, create another connection between the east and west river banks, and expand recreational opportunities for local communities and for the region.

It has been brought to our attention by several of our members that plans to construct this bridge are moving forward. We are in receipt of the documents (NCPC file number 7936 [https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/actions/2017December/7936\\_Anacostia\\_Riverwalk\\_Trail\\_Pedestrian\\_Bridge\\_to\\_the\\_National\\_Arboretum\\_Staff\\_Report\\_Dec2017.pdf](https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/actions/2017December/7936_Anacostia_Riverwalk_Trail_Pedestrian_Bridge_to_the_National_Arboretum_Staff_Report_Dec2017.pdf)) approved by the National Capital Planning Commission on December 7, 2017. The proposal as depicted in the NCPC Staff report raise several concerns for members of our community, and we appreciate the opportunity to discuss them with you.

These observations come from the point of view of current river users—over 500 alone from the Port Towns Community Boathouse about 3500 meters upstream. Our view point is from the river, itself, and comes from a community who knows the river very well, appreciates and actively participates in efforts to restore it.

Access to the River from the Port Towns followed completion of renovations to the Historic Bladensburg Marina, in 2000. Since then, our boating community has grown and includes 4 collegiate rowing teams, 5 high school teams, and a rowing school which serves both youth and adult programs. Public pontoon boat rides are offered by MNCPPC, the Anacostia Watershed Society and Anacostia Riverkeeper. These groups also host other boating and

fishing opportunities. The completion of the Kenilworth Segment of the ARWT in October 2016 has attracted even more users to these facilities. The message that the Anacostia is a great place to recreate is spreading. The natural beauty of the upper Anacostia is remarkable given its close proximity to highly developed areas. Several occurrences have returned the River banks to potential opportunities for restoration, including the closing of the Kenilworth Dump and the decommissioning and demolition of the PEPCO Power Plant, both major sources of pollution, degradation and visible symbols of disregard for this important natural environment. The completion of the first segment of the Clean Rivers Project and progress of the Anacostia River Sediment Project give us hope that our goal of a swimmable fishable river is attainable. As efforts to extend recreational opportunities move forward, including the ARWT projects, we hope that the goal of improving the river environment will be foremost in all planning efforts.

*Our concerns regarding the design of the proposed bridge are straight forward:*

- we request that the bridge be designed as a clear span.
- we request that the design respect the beauty and scale of the Anacostia

A clear span bridge at this location will provide access for pedestrians and bicyclists to both shores of the river while allowing safe use of the river by boaters. A clear span will allow the river to flow without accumulation of debris and possible sediment and will minimize impediments to future mitigation projects. A clear span will minimize disruptions for users during the construction period. A light, beautiful open bridge which respects the natural beauty of the River can be a symbol of the return of the Anacostia to a place of abundant life.

It would have been hard to predict, at the outset of planning efforts that all these events would occur to raise the importance and visibility of this bridge. We look forward to participating in efforts to make this project a source of pride for all.

Very Sincerely,



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cc: Dr. Richard T. Olsen, US National Arboretum  
Tara Morrison, Superintendent National Capital Parks East  
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