

Appendix B. Comments Received on the
Draft Environmental Assessment

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Housing and Community Development



Office of the Director

JUN 7 2010

Ms. Pat Daniels
Senior Project Manager - PBS
U.S. General Services Administration
301 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20407

RE: Comments on Draft Environmental Assessment for In-water Development of
Three Acres in Anacostia River

Dear Ms. Daniels:

This responds to the letter of May 24, 2010 from the Regional Commissioner, Public Building Service, regarding the submission of comments on the above draft Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by the U.S. General Services Administration in coordination with Forest City Washington, Inc. Mr. Bart Bush requested that comments be submitted to your attention as the GSA project manager on this project.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) understands that the purpose of the project requiring the EA is to provide clear and open access to the Anacostia River waterfront and support recreational water-dependent activities. DHCD further understands that the EA is a supplement to the 2004 Development of Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that analyzed the environmental effects associated with upland development of the Southeast Federal Center.

DHCD supports the development of the three acre in-water development of two fixed piers and bracketing 49 recreational boat slips located in the marina between the two fixed piers. DHCD understands that the 10 foot setback development action option being proposed will maintain and not obstruct the Anacostia River Federal Navigation Channel. DHCD understands and agrees that three major benefits stated in the EA will result from the construction of the pier marina in-water facility. Those benefits are:

1. The in-water facility will provide a needed recreational marina and pier facility not presently available in the SEFC portion of the Anacostia River waterfront;
2. The in-water facility piers and marina will contribute to the water-based community public safety services of the new SEFC residential neighborhood; and

3. The in-water facility will include facilities to accommodate water-based mass transportation and water taxi operations on the Anacostia River to make SEFC more accessible by water to other parts of the District and northern Virginia.

DHCD looks forward to the Final EA being completed and a Finding of No Significant Impact being issued which will permit development of this needed pier and marina facility to proceed on the Anacostia River.

Sincerely,



Leila Finucane Edmonds
Director

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001



June 17, 2010

Ms. Pat Daniels
Senior Project Manager - PBS
General Services Administration
301 7th Street, S.W., Room 2021
Washington, DC 20407

**Re: DC Fire & EMS Review of Environmental Assessment (EA) Southeast Federal Center
In-Water Development at the Yards in the Anacostia River.**

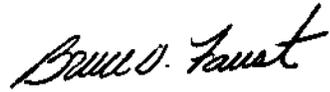
Thank you for your letter and GSA submission of Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate potential effects of in-water development at The Yards. The project development is in coordination with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), and the Forest City SEFC LLC (Forest City), the developer selected for the project. The DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Office of the Fire Marshal has reviewed the impact to public safety that could result from the proposed action alternatives. The proposed construction would take place in-water near the sea wall. No roads would be closed and there would be no impact to DCFEMS' inland emergency response times for the mixed-use development project. The construction of a marina and public pier at The Yards would provide an additional access point for emergency services at the Anacostia River.

The DCFEMS provides fire and rescue services for the District of Columbia and Anacostia River waterways. The closest DCFEMS station to the SEFC site is Engine Company 7, located at 1101 Half Street, S.W. The DCFEMS Fireboat station is located at 550 Water Street, S.W., and responds to waterfront fires, as well as water and ice rescues.

The DCFEMS concurs with the EA Public Safety: 4.B.3.b, Action Alternative, stating "as the demand for emergency services may result in a negligible to minor long-term adverse effect to public safety as a result of minor increases for emergency services as more residents and visitors utilize the public piers and marina." However, the DCFEMS supports the EA's accompanying public safety plans, policy objectives and regulatory requirements of an active Anacostia River waterfront neighborhood community. The proposed marina and pier would represent an improvement in DCFEMS public access to waterway emergencies.

If you have any question concerning this review, please contact Captain Chris Roggeron at 727-1600.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce D. Faust".

Bruce D. Faust
Deputy Fire Chief
D.C. Fire Marshal

IN REPLY REFER TO:
NCPC File No. 7122

June 24, 2010

Ms. Patricia Daniels
Project Executive
US General Services Administration
National Capital Region WPC
301 7th Street, SW, Room 2002
Washington, DC 20407

Re: Review of the Draft Environmental Assessment for The Yards In-Water Development,
Washington, DC

Dear Ms. Daniels:

The NCPC staff has completed its review of the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed in-water development at The Yards, formerly known as the Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) and the Washington Navy Yard Annex. NCPC is providing comments on the draft EA in anticipation of the report's being used as the basis for the Commission's future review of a project submission. The draft EA considers the environmental effects of implementing a No-Action Alternative and an Action Alternative of In-Water Development, with a 10-foot setback from the Anacostia River Federal Navigation Channel.

This draft EA serves as a supplement and is tiered to the 2004 *Development of the Southeast Federal Center Final Environmental Impact Statement* (SEFC EIS), which analyzed the environmental effects of the transfer of the 42-acre waterfront SEFC site by sale and/or ground lease to a private developer for a mixed-use development with residences, offices, shops, a waterfront park, and cultural amenities. The SEFC EIS stated that the proposed development "may include In-Water Development, such as marinas, boathouses, or water taxi facilities. However, this type of development is outside the scope of this EIS . . . the effects of any In-Water Development will be addressed in supplemental NEPA documentation."

The Commission reviewed a revised Master Plan in 2007 for the development by Forest City SEFC LLC of The Yards. Since then, the Commission has reviewed and commented on the site and landscape plans as well as development plans for some of the parcels within The Yards. In particular, in 2008 and 2009 the Commission reviewed and approved plans for the public waterfront park and related commercial development adjacent to the Anacostia River with the understanding that the in-water elements would be developed and submitted for review at a later date, following environmental analysis and any necessary historic preservation review. The in-water development complements the design and program of the waterfront park, now under construction and shortly to be completed.

Both the ecological preservation and the appropriate activation of the Anacostia Riverfront are long-term goals envisioned in the Legacy Plan. The Action Alternative responds to policies of the Parks and Open Space Element of the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*, including policies to “protect, restore, and enhance” the Anacostia River “as a great open space resource and recreational amenity” and to manage lands along the Anacostia River “in a manner that encourages the enjoyment and recreational use of water resources while protecting the scenic and ecological values of the waterways.”

The Action Alternative would take place entirely within the Anacostia River and would result in the construction of one commercial fixed pier measuring approximately 185 feet by 30 feet, one public fixed pier measuring approximately 135 feet by 30 feet, and 49 boat slips. The Zoning Commission’s action for The Yards (named the Southeast Federal Center at the time), Order 03-06, established zoning for the site, including the W-O zone, which is a low density zone for waterfront-related uses by right, with additional uses such as a marina by special exception.

We note that the EA states that the proposed features would be designed and constructed in such a manner that would be consistent with the requirements in the SEFC Historic Covenant and would not obstruct any views to or from the Historic Zone. The fixed piers and boat slips would be at or lower than the height of the seawall and would not visually obstruct The Yard’s site from the water or nearby parkland at Poplar Point. The draft EA states that the marina and boats would be consistent with other views from Anacostia Park further north of the project area. We agree with GSA’s analysis that the Action Alternative would have a long-term minor adverse impact to views to and from The Yards because of the introduction of new piers and boat slips to the viewshed, and also that new features would not change the visual character of the Anacostia Riverfront.

Staff commends GSA and Forest City for their intention to manage the recreational water activities associated with The Yards. We note that bringing water taxis and larger recreational boats to this portion of the Anacostia River shoreline will involve coordination with users of smaller boats such as canoes and kayaks. The draft EA notes that the number of boats the marina would serve is low within the context of boat usage on the Anacostia River, thus minimizing the potential for conflicts between motorized and non-motorized watercraft.

The Monumental Core Framework Plan (MCFP) proposes greater recreational, commercial, and cultural activity along the nearby Washington Channel, including new residential development and improvements to open space and transportation infrastructure. The MCFP envisions the southern portion of the Washington Channel being quieter and less commercial, suitable for personal watercraft and passive recreation. The northern portion of the Washington Channel is intended for commercial activities, including marinas and piers, and for a water taxi pier or terminal. The Action Alternative for The Yards’ in-water development mirrors and complements this range of activities and infrastructure and the draft EA analyzes the alternatives in that context.

We agree with GSA’s assessment that the proposed new marina and piers would be a benefit, serving current and future residents and employees, as well as visitors and regional users of recreational infrastructure, and adding to the inventory of available boat slips on the river. The

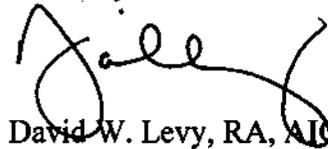
benefits extend to transportation impacts, as well, as the District Department of Transportation is currently studying a potential water taxi service along the Anacostia River as another mode of transportation within the District of Columbia.

We endorse the comments of the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office regarding the Section 106 consultation between that office and the Navy regarding the disposition of two historic piers at the Washington Navy Yard. We encourage all possible exploration of ways in which the management of the two adjacent properties can complement each other and the expansion of useful and beneficial waterfront activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on GSA's analysis of impacts resulting from in-water development at The Yards. We conclude that the draft EA is a useful document for the National Capital Planning Commission to reference in its future project review.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Nancy Witherell at (202) 482-7239 or nancy.witherell@ncpc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Levy", written over a horizontal line.

David W. Levy, RA, AICP
Director, Urban Design and Plan Review