

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6786



DIAMOND TEAGUE PARK

First Street SE and Potomac Avenue SE
Washington, DC

Submitted by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development

October 25, 2007

Abstract

The District of Columbia's Office of Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development is submitting a concept design for a new public park located on land owned by the District of Columbia along the Anacostia River at First Street SE and Potomac Avenue SE. The proposal for Diamond Teague Park, located on approximately one-third of an acre of land, will incorporate the former Capitol Pumphouse and include new maritime piers for commercial and recreational vessels, a boardwalk that builds a portion of the Anacostia Riverwalk, a garden area and a small plaza that can accommodate events. A memorial to Diamond Teague, a fallen member of the Earth Conservation Corps, is envisioned to be located on the plaza. The gardens, riparian areas, and recreational piers will be designed to showcase the diverse environment of the Anacostia River and educate the public on the challenges of its restoration.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of comments on concept design plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Comments favorably on the concept design plan for Diamond Teague Park, as shown on NCPC Map File No: 41.11(70.00)42392.

Commends the applicant for linking planned open space along the waterfront to provide a continuous public open space system along the Anacostia River; for developing a portion of the Anacostia River as a high-quality urban park with a mix of recreational opportunities that emphasizes the river's ecological and scenic qualities and character; and for providing accommodations for a water taxi system to serve the neighborhood and the Washington Nationals' baseball stadium.

Recommends that the applicant coordinate with adjacent property owners to reinforce the link between the Anacostia River and the grand staircase of the Washington Nationals’ baseball stadium by maintaining and enhancing ground-level pedestrian views and access between the stadium and the river.

Notes that the applicant will need to obtain evidence from the Army Corps that the Army Corps permitting process fully satisfies the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act prior to submitting the project for preliminary and final approval, and that the project will require a special use permit from the National Park Service, the federal agency with jurisdiction over the river bottom.

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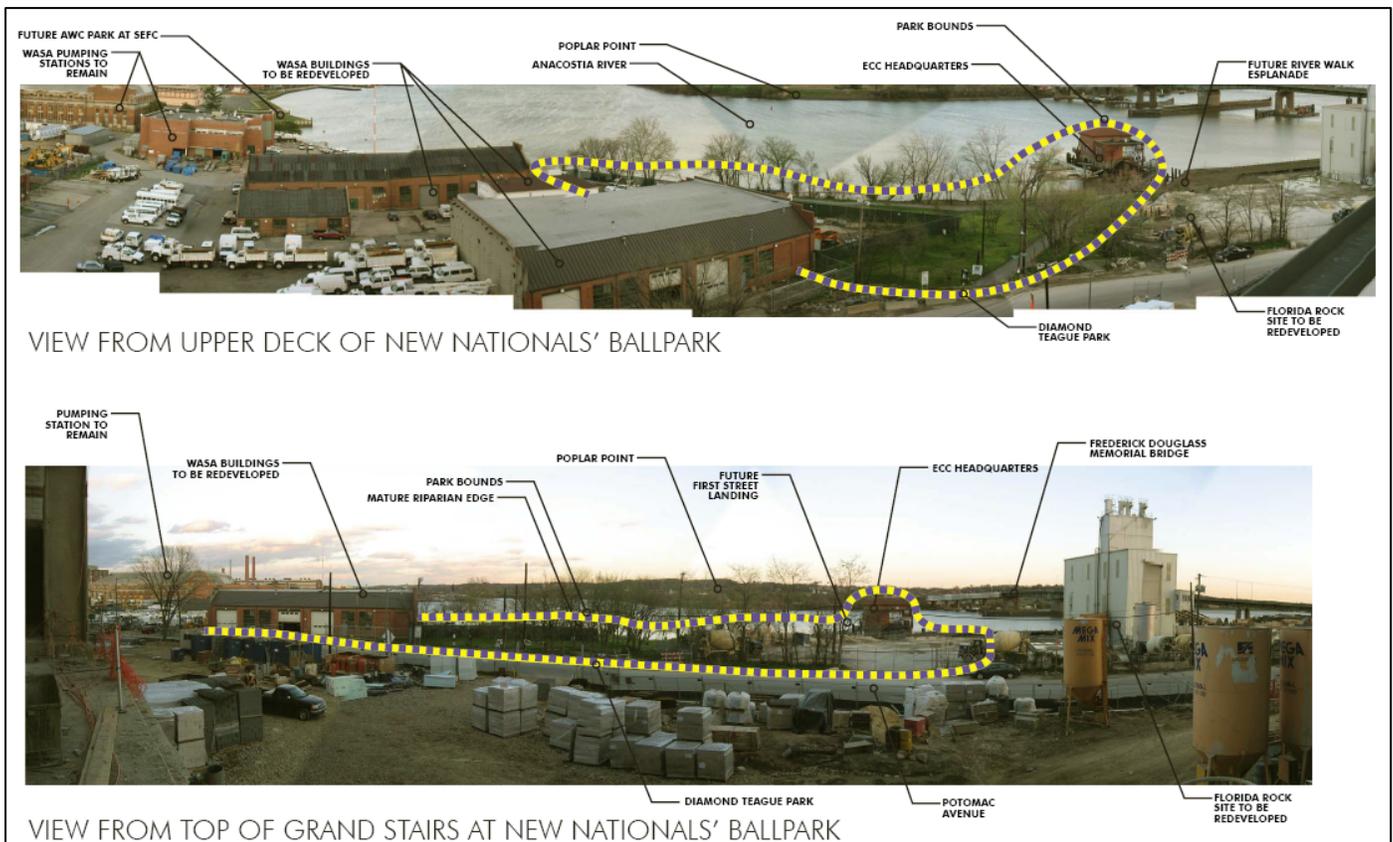
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

The planned park is sited on land titled to the District of Columbia at the terminus of First Street SE along the Anacostia River. The site includes the former Capitol Pumphouse, which is leased by the District of Columbia to the Earth Conservation Corps (ECC), a steward of the Anacostia River and its adjacent parks and open space, for the purposes of environmental education. The new Washington Nationals’ baseball stadium is under construction immediately northwest of the site and across Potomac Avenue SE. Adjacent sites include privately held land to the southwest (Florida Rock Properties) and additional lands controlled by the District of Columbia to the northeast (WASA occupied). Potential redevelopment of the WASA occupied site will allow a future phase of the park to extend northeast and connect with the waterfront park at The Yards development (not part of this submission).



PARK SITE LOCATION



PARK SITE PANORAMAS

Proposal

Diamond Teague Park is proposed to be a key waterfront gateway to the emerging Capitol Riverfront neighborhood, creating a strong linkage between the Anacostia River and the Nationals' stadium. The Park is envisioned as an iconic and welcoming civic gathering space serving as a critical connection and access node along the Anacostia Riverwalk and as a waterfront attraction of diverse experiences and activities for residents, workers and visitors.

The Park will be developed to demonstrate environmental stewardship through the use of sustainable practices and strategies, and its site allows for a unique opportunity to increase public awareness of the riparian environment. As such, the ECC will use the new Park to promote its river restoration mission and activities, and to educate visitors on Anacostia River contamination and trash accumulation problems as well as WASA operations including combined sewer overflow issues.

Elements proposed for the Park in the concept design include the former Capitol Pumphouse, new maritime landings for water taxis and other commercial vessels, a small plaza and garden area that can accommodate events, a boardwalk that continues the Anacostia Riverwalk, and piers for environmental education and temporary moorings of recreational boats in a managed setting.

ECC will retain its activities within the historic pumphouse. A combination of wood composite, aluminum, and concrete piers will surround the Pumphouse and provide space for ECC operations and public outreach, water taxi service, and police, fire and EMS operations. Access to the Pumphouse and piers will be from a patterned concrete and wooden pier that provides space for queuing for the water taxi service.

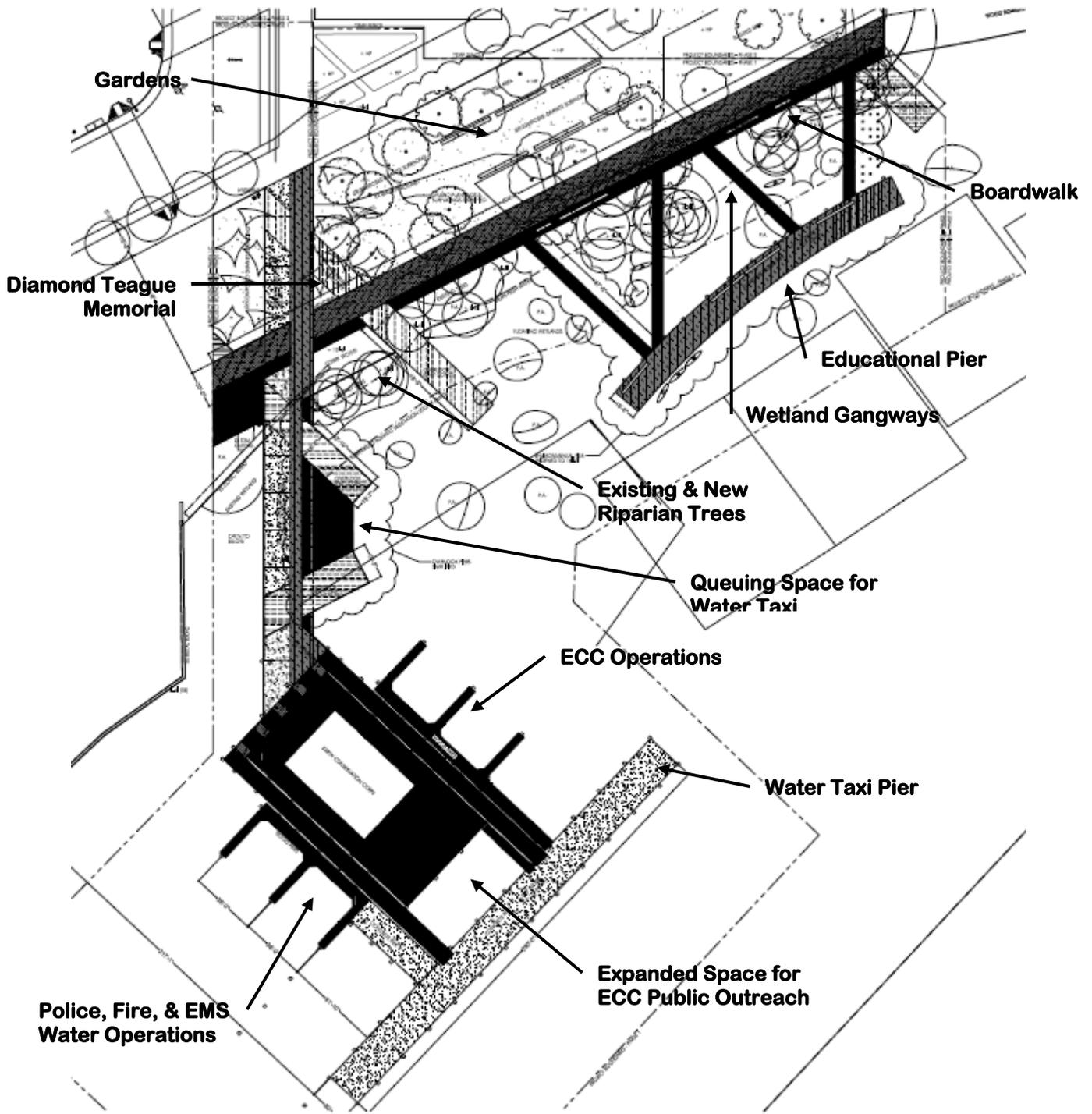
The same concrete and wood materials used on the pier to access the Pumphouse will continue upland across the site to the Potomac Avenue SE and First Street SE terminus, creating a gateway at the streets into the Park. Patterned concrete used for an adjacent overlook pier will also be continued upland to join the other surfacing and create a triangular plaza. A site for a memorial to Diamond Teague, a fallen member of ECC, will be incorporated into the plaza design.

Adjacent to the plaza and across the upland area of the site will be garden areas designed to demonstrate environmental stewardship. Decomposed granite paths through the garden, when combined with the plaza area, will provide space that can accommodate large events or other gathering activities. Benches in this area will provide for passive enjoyment of the Park. The Park's design has followed the assumption that Potomac Avenue SE may be extended along its main alignment following redevelopment of the adjacent WASA occupied site. No major element of the Park would be affected by such an extension. A small triangular shaped portion of the Park in the northwest corner, considered temporary, would be eliminated should Potomac Avenue ever be extended.

A thirty-foot wide boardwalk of wood and metal grating will traverse the site along the river's edge, connecting with the adjacent parcels to continue the plan to complete the Anacostia Riverwalk. From the boardwalk, four small metal piers will connect with a sixteen-foot wide wooden pier. This wooden pier will be used for public enjoyment, ECC education activities, and temporary moorings of recreational craft. Additional benches along the edge of the boardwalk and on the wooden pier will provide another amenity for Park visitors.

The Park site is one of the last waterfront segments in the area not to have been bulkheaded. As such, development of the Park represents a unique opportunity to showcase the diverse environmental restoration challenges faced with the Anacostia River as well as the opportunity to create a "green oasis" in an area which will be likely built out with numerous hardscape waterfront esplanades. To do so, the concept design incorporates the existing mature riparian canopy and sloping riverbank.

The Park's design team includes: Landscape Architecture Bureau LLC, lead designers; PB Americas, civil engineers; and Moffat & Nichol, maritime engineers.



PARK CONCEPT SITE PLAN

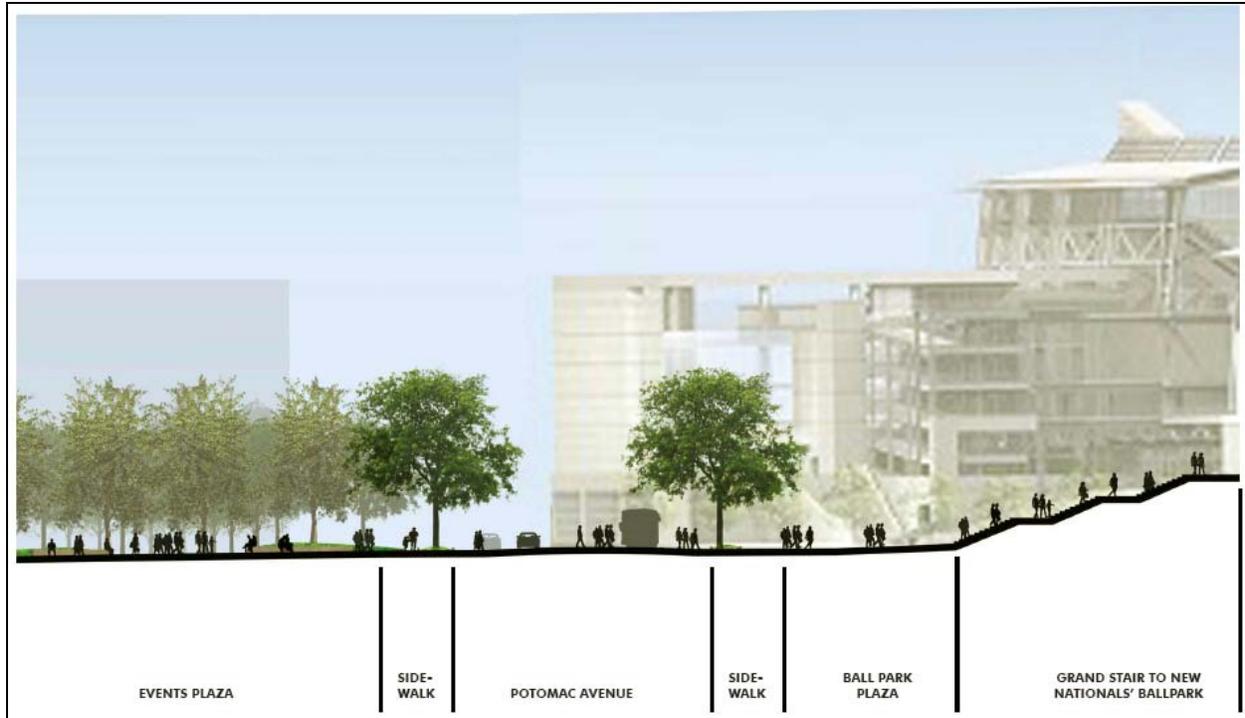


PARK CONCEPT SECTION
RELATIONSHIP OF GARDENS, RIPARIAN AREA, AND PIERS DESIGNED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

PROJECT ANALYSIS

NCPC's *Legacy Plan* envisioned new growth and development south and east of the U.S. Capitol and parks along the Anacostia River to support an associated increase in workers, residents, and visitors. Through the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) the federal and District of Columbia governments have partnered to move this vision forward. A critical component of AWI is providing new waterfront public spaces and developing a riverwalk trail system along both sides of the Anacostia River. Diamond Teague Park contributes to this component by developing a portion of the Anacostia River as a high-quality public urban park and developing a critical piece of the Anacostia Riverwalk that links planned open space along the waterfront.

The Park also provides access from the neighborhood to the river's edge, reinforcing the enhancement of pedestrian links between the National Mall and the Anacostia River as promoted in NCPC's *Legacy Plan*, *Federal Capital Improvements Plan* and *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*. In addition, the program for the Park anticipates high numbers of people recreating before and after ballgames, utilizing the water taxi service, and attending baseball associated events and other gathering activities. **Staff recommends** that the Park reinforces the link between the Anacostia River, the neighborhood, and the grand staircase of the stadium across Potomac Avenue SE with a design of the plaza area that maintains and enhances ground-level pedestrian views and access between the stadium and the river.



PARK CONCEPT SECTION
RELATIONSHIP OF PARK TO GRAND STAIR OF NATIONALS' BALLPARK

Estimating that approximately one-thousand people may arrive for ballgames via water taxis, the concept design for the Park provides for a landing to accommodate these taxis, other commercial vessels, and vessels for police, fire and EMS operations. Staff supports the inclusion of marine landings to accommodate water taxis and associated water operations; the implementation of a water taxi system within the region is encouraged in NCPC's *Legacy Plan*, *Federal Capital Improvements Plan*, and *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff has determined that the concept design plan for Diamond Teague Park is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, in particular the Parks and Open Space Element. The Park promotes public access to the region's waterways and helps to complete connections between other public parks and open space. In addition, the proposed project is consistent with the Transportation Element through its support of the development of a water taxi system serving the District of Columbia and the surrounding jurisdictions. This water taxi system envisioned in the Transportation Element is intended to promote an alternative commuting mode, to coincide with waterfront redevelopment opportunities, and to serve waterfront attractions.

Memorials and Museums Master Plan

NCPC's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* identifies the sites adjacent to Diamond Teague Park as candidate memorial and museum sites. The site of the waterfront park within The Yards development to the northeast of the Park is identified as Site 37 within the *Master Plan* and offers a dramatic waterfront setting. The Florida Rock property to the southwest is identified as Site 38 within the *Master Plan* and offers a location of high prominence at the South Capitol Street terminus and the Anacostia waterfront. While the *Master Plan* does not specifically call out a memorial site at the terminus of First Street SE on the Park site, the design of the Park has been developed to accommodate future commemorative works beyond the elements incorporated in the concept design plan that are dedicated to the memory of Diamond Teague.

CapitalSpace

The CapitalSpace initiative is a multi-jurisdictional effort to improve access, quality, use and management coordination for the federal and local park system in the District of Columbia. Key partners include the NCPC, the National Park Service, and the government of the District of Columbia. Staff encourages the District of Columbia to continue working with the other CapitalSpace partners and coordinate with adjacent property owners to the Diamond Teague Park site to develop, enhance, and connect parks along the Anacostia River and to ensure that they remain important pieces of our local and regional identity, provide for publicly accessible passive and active recreation, and contribute to the restoration and protection of our natural resources.

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

As a significant percentage of the project represents construction in the Anacostia River, the project triggers the Army Corps of Engineer's Section 10 Permit, which anticipates river construction without the alteration of the existing flood plain or flood way and does not include any alteration to the profile of the river bottom. The Army Corps states that granting of this permit constitutes a discretionary federal action and is currently being processed by the Army Corps of Engineers under its nationwide permitting authority for which the Army Corps has fulfilled all compliance under NEPA. Staff will verify this prior to the preliminary and final submission. The project will also require a special use permit from the National Park Service, the federal agency with jurisdiction over the river bottom.

The Section 10 Permit also triggers the review of the Historic Preservation Advisory Council and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been drafted between the Army Corps and the Advisory Council. This MOU must be executed at the time of the issuance of the Army Corps permit. The applicant has actively coordinated this issue between the parties and given that the Capitol Pumphouse building is not being altered as a component of this project, and given that no known archeological resources are present in the areas of construction, there are no known impediments to this agreement being executed.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on October 10, 2007, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies represented. The participating agencies were: NCPC, the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; the General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the proposal at its September 20, 2007 meeting. The Commission members commented that the park should be designed to accommodate large groups arriving or departing the stadium and recommended that the open spaces and internal connections be larger in scale and recommended that simplifying and strengthening these features would improve the design. The Commission supported the concept of maintaining the existing line of the riverbank on the site and did not object to the type and configuration of the proposed piers and floating docks.

In response to the Commission's comments, the proposal has since been revised with a widening of the boardwalk along the river (from 20' to 30'); a widening of the smaller, floating dock to the East; and a simplification of the design of the upland park area.



STONEDUST SURFACING



CABLE RAILING



RIPARIAN PLANTINGS



AREA LIGHTING



BENCHES



RAIN GARDEN PLANTINGS



GRATING

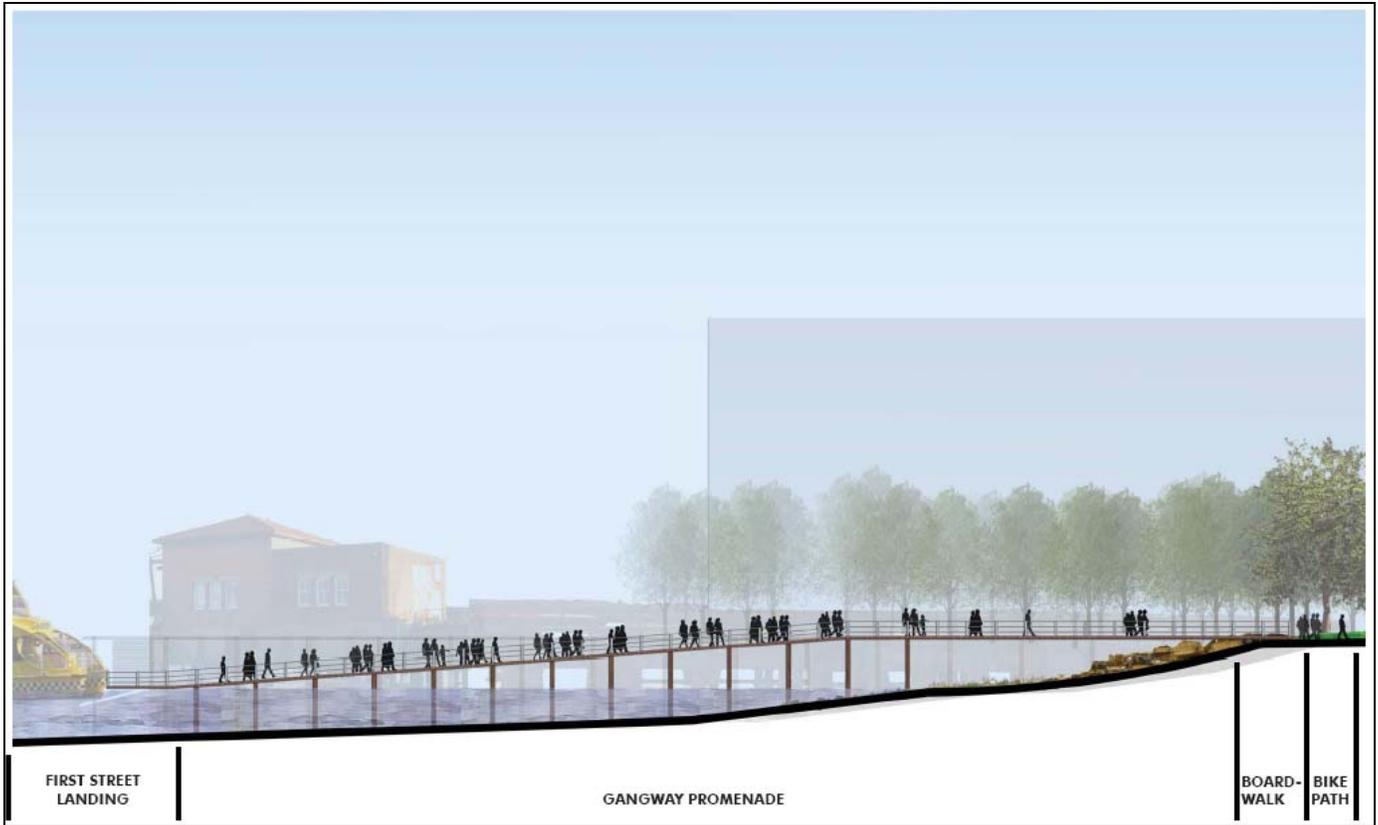


PERMEABLE PAVERS SURFACING



WOOD SURFACING

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIALS AND PLANTINGS



PARK CONCEPT SECTION
RELATIONSHIP OF EDUCATIONAL PIER TO BOARDWALK