CONCEPT PROPOSAL FOR

EAST POTOMAC GOLF LINKS

Submitted for review by the National Capital Planning Commission



EAST POTOMAC GOLF LINKS: Concept Proposal
November 3, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3

- Introduction 3
- The Course 4
- The Vision 5
- The Concept Proposal 7

BACKGROUND 8

- Project Area 9
- Creating East Potomac Park 10
- A Century of Public Recreation 11
- A President on the Public Links 12
- What Is a Links-Style Course? 13
- Historic Photos 14
- Original Intent: Views of the Water 16
- The Current Course: Blue, White, and Red 18

HISTORY OF DESIGN CHANGES 22

- Design Changes, 1917–Today 23
- A Long-Standing Call for a Redesign 25
- The Original Views Have Been Lost 26
- NPS Guidance on Views and Playing Surfaces 27

CURRENT CONDITION OF THE COURSE 28

- The Park and Course Today 29
- 2026 Condition and Safety Assessments 31
- Existing Conditions: Golf Facilities 34
- Existing Conditions: Hains Point 41
- Seawall Condition 43

FUTURE VISION FOR THE COURSE 46

- What the Record Calls For 47
- Concept Plan and Project Elements 49
- Proposed Routing, Scorecard, and Changes 51
- New Seawall 54
- Addressing Affected Recreation Nearby 55

CASE STUDIES: WORLD-CLASS PUBLIC GOLF COURSES 56

- Benchmarks and Economic Benefits 57

REGULATORY AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS 62

SUMMARY: THE CASE FOR ACTION 64

INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Interior is submitting a proposed concept plan for the redevelopment of the East Potomac Golf Links and portions of the surrounding East Potomac Park landscape for review and comment by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) for concept review.

The proposal includes a comprehensive redevelopment of the existing golf course, new driving range and practice facilities, grading and landscape improvements, and changes to existing recreational amenities and landscape features at Hains Point and along the perimeter roadway.

The goal is to turn a dilapidated, unsafe course into a safe, affordable, world-class public golf course and on par with Torrey Pines, Bethpage Black, and Houston's Memorial Park.

The concept is being presented to CFA to obtain feedback on the proposed site planning approach and its relationship to the historic landscape; the approach to existing buildings, as every building on the golf course will be assessed to determine the best course of action, including whether it should be removed; and the potential implications for public recreation, waterfront access, and the overall character of East Potomac Park.



THE COURSE

Broken fencing, bare and worn ground, standing water, and piled debris across the course







THE VISION: FROM DILAPIDATED TO WORLD-CLASS

The current East Potomac course is dilapidated and unsafe.

In the President's words (Truth Social): the course today

"dilapidated, worn out, and very dangerous and outdated"

June 28, 2026

"the greens are virtually unplayable, and the Course is in very poor general condition"

June 28, 2026

"In its current form, the Course is extremely dangerous to play"

October 27, 2026

"a constant barrage of people being hit with wayward shots"

October 27, 2026

"East Potomac Golf Course is highly dangerous, dilapidated, and absolutely disgusting."

October 28, 2026

"The current condition of the golf course is a National Disgrace"

October 28, 2026

"The driving range should NOT be a threat to life and limb."

October 28, 2026

THE VISION: A WORLD-CLASS CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE

We will make it a safe, affordable, world-class public golf course.

In the President's words (Truth Social): the new course

"we will build one of the Greatest Golf Courses anywhere in the World"

June 28, 2026

"this Course will have the ability to host Major Golf Tournaments, including The U.S. Open"

June 28, 2026

"a plan to build a World Class Championship Golf Course"

October 18, 2026

"open to the Public while, at the same time, designed to the Highest Level of Golf"

October 18, 2026

"turn Trash Island into an Island of Beauty and Success!"

October 19, 2026

"one of the Most Wonderful and Spectacular Golf Courses anywhere in the World"

October 19, 2026

THE CONCEPT PROPOSAL

A safe, affordable, world-class public golf course on the Potomac

- Safe, affordable, and open to the public
- A new 18-hole championship layout
- A new driving range and practice facilities
- Reopened views to the water and the monuments
- Holes right on the water, renewing the course's original bond with it
- An assessment of every building on the course to determine the best course of action, including whether it should be removed





BACKGROUND

PROJECT AREA

The project area consists of a portion of East Potomac Park (Reservation 333) outlined in red. This area includes the East Potomac Golf Links, the area beyond the course that includes the road, and the facilities at Hains Point.



CREATING EAST POTOMAC PARK

Park Establishment

- About 329 acres of federal parkland (Reservation 333) between the Potomac River and the Washington Channel, from the Tidal Basin to Hains Point
- A constructed island, built by Army Corps of Engineers dredging that began in the 1880s and held in place by seawalls
- **1897:** Congress designates Potomac Park for public recreation and enjoyment
- **1911–12:** reclamation completed; park transferred to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds

Planning and Landscape Design

- **1902:** the McMillan Plan makes the reclaimed waterfront part of Washington's park system
- Planned as open space with tree-lined drives and waterfront promenades
- **1916:** the Langdon plan, guided by the Commission of Fine Arts and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., lays out golf, athletic fields, tennis, swimming, and a field house
- Active recreation in the interior; roads and walks along the water

A CENTURY OF PUBLIC RECREATION

Recreational Development

- **Golf:** construction began in 1917; the first nine holes opened in 1920, and the facility grew to three courses
- **Field House:** built 1917–1920 to a design by architect Horace Whittier Peaslee
- **1930s:** a miniature golf course (1931) and a swimming pool (1935–36)
- **Ohio Drive SW:** the Speedway, for scenic driving along the water
- **Seawall promenades:** walking, sightseeing, and fishing
- **Hains Point:** waterfront recreation and views; a teahouse built in the mid-1920s served visitors for decades

A PRESIDENT ON THE PUBLIC LINKS



Golfer Harding Pays His Quarter

President Harding, the other day was eager for a game of golf, but it was too late to motor to any of the suburban clubs around Washington. He was reminded that for 25 cents he could play on the near municipal links, and the idea appealed to him. He is seen here paying his ground fee to the keeper of the public course.

Plays Early Game of Golf

Harding Unwearied by N. Y. Trip; Receive D. A. R. Today.

By EVELYN C. HUNT.

Despite his strenuous trip to New York Tuesday, President Harding arose before 7 o'clock yesterday morning and by 8 o'clock was enjoying a foursome on the Potomac Park golf course with the Undersecretary of State, Henry P. Fletcher, as a partner. Their opponents were Senator Frelinghuysen, of New Jersey, and Senator Hale, of Maine.

This afternoon at 3:30 o'clock the President and Mrs. Harding will receive the delegates to the D. A. R. convention.

The President has accepted an invitation to deliver an address in New York City on May 23, at the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the founding of the New York Commercial, one of the oldest newspapers in the country.

Mrs. Harding received several women informally yesterday afternoon, among them Mrs. Stephen Elkins and her guest, Mrs. James Robert McKee, daughter of the late former President, Benjamin Harrison, and Mrs. Bates-Batcheller, of Boston.

HARDING AT GOLF ON PUBLIC LINKS

Plays in Potomac Park As Hundreds on Speedway Watch Game.

President Harding paid a quarter to play golf on the Municipal Links yesterday. Senator Hale was his opponent. The President and Senator were their own caddies, the quarter charge going to the city for the upkeep of the links.

Government clerks, whose salaries don't permit of membership in the numerous fashionable golf clubs around Washington, were out on the course by the hundreds, but courteously moved off the fairway when the President yelled "fore."

No more than two holes had been played before the President and Senator Hale had a "gallery" that would have done credit to a championship match. Hundreds of automobiles, moving along the speedway, stopped and their occupants became interested spectators of the Presidential game. Darkness closed the contest before nine holes could be completed.

Press coverage of President Harding's rounds at East Potomac, 1921

April 1921

President Warren G. Harding arrived unannounced at the field house, paid the 25-cent fee, and played the public links.

He reportedly returned as often as four times a week, playing the same public links as everyday Washingtonians.

A course for everyone: the same public links have served presidents and everyday Washingtonians alike.

WHAT IS A LINKS-STYLE COURSE?

The traditional form of golf, played on open ground along the water

Set along the water

Links-style courses are “typically located along a major body of water.”

2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory; 2019 CLR

Open and largely treeless

Few trees, allowing “broad views to the waterways” and landmarks

2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory

At East Potomac: Walter J. Travis laid out the course “in the links style considered most suited to the flat, waterfront site.”

HISTORIC PHOTOS: VIEWS TO THE WATER AND MONUMENTS

The water and the monuments were part of the golfing experience



1920s: the open course between the Potomac River and the Washington Channel



1930s: across the Washington Channel to the open course and the Monument

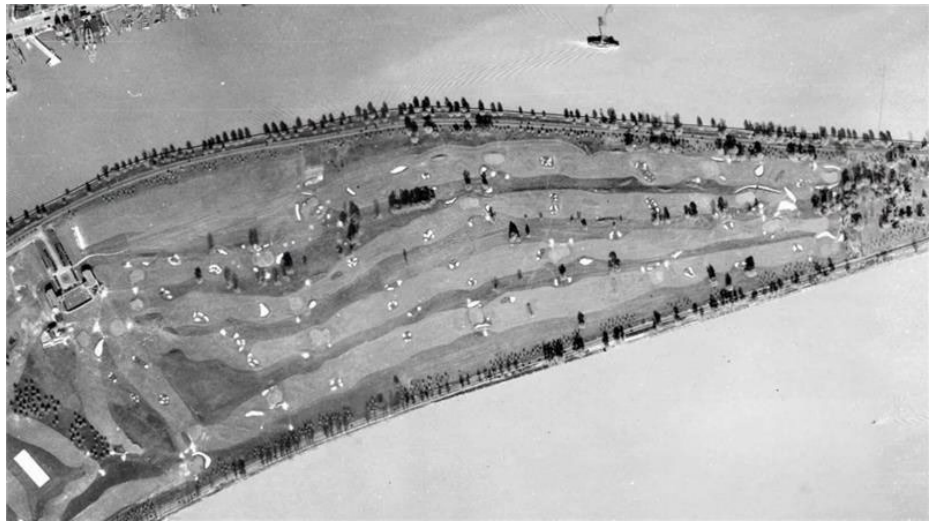
Open lawns and fairways kept the river, the channel, and the Washington Monument in view across the park.

HISTORIC PHOTOS: AN OPEN COURSE ON THE WATER

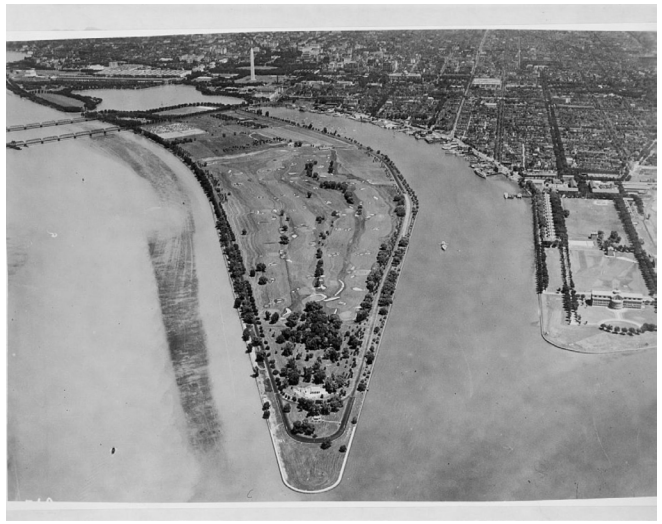
Aerial photographs show a course laid out in the open, edged by the river and the channel



1922: an open course across the island, the Washington Monument on the horizon



1927: fairways and greens in the open, with trees mostly at the edges



1935: open fairways from end to end, the Monument beyond

From the air, the early course was open from end to end with water on every side, a connection the concept renews by placing holes right on the water.

ORIGINAL INTENT: A COURSE OPEN TO THE WATER

The course was designed to be connected with the water, a bond the concept renews with holes right on the water

> *this close proximity to the water was a characteristic feature of Walter Travis' original links-style design*
>
> **2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory**

> *Wide open vistas of grass and views toward the water, were the desired effect at East Potomac.*
>
> **2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory**

> *the river itself may be followed by the eye of a waiting golfer for many miles southward*
>
> **The Washington Post, July 1, 1928 (quoted in the 2017 CLI)**

> *Travis capitalized on the geography, relatively flat topography, and generally treeless areas to offer general views and vistas to the Washington Monument, the Jefferson Memorial, the U.S. Capitol building…*
>
> **2019 CLR Treatment Guidelines**

> *On the "lightning-fast greens" of East Potomac Park Golf Course, a run-up shot often caused balls to go bounding into the Washington Channel.*
>
> **2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory, describing play before the 1934 greens rebuild**

VIEWS OF THE WATER AND MONUMENTS WERE PART OF THE DESIGN

From the start, the course's setting was treated as a major design asset

> *It is doubtful if there is any golf course anywhere that surpasses in the beauty of its surroundings [as] the golf course in East Potomac Park.*
>
> **The Washington Post, July 1, 1928 (quoted in the 2017 CLI)**

> *From the very beginning, views of iconic buildings of Washington, D.C., were recognized as a major design asset*
>
> **2019 CLR Treatment Guidelines**

> *Travis and subsequent designers noted these views as factors in the design of the courses.*
>
> **2019 CLR Treatment Guidelines**

THE CURRENT COURSE: THREE COURSES AND 39 HOLES

Today's layout: an 18-hole course, two 9-hole courses, and a 3-hole practice course, all starting at the Field House



Existing course map showing the Blue, White, and Red Course routing

Blue Course

18 holes · par 72 · 6,599 yards

Walter J. Travis's original course, south of the Field House; the main course for more experienced golfers

White Course

9 holes · par 33 · 2,420 yards

On the site of William Flynn's 1925 course, today following William Gordon's 1950s redesign; favored by seniors and families

Red Course

9 holes · par 27 · 1,142 yards

All par 3s, southeast of the Field House; used for beginners, lessons, and youth camps

Also on site: a two-tiered driving range, a 3-hole practice course, practice putting greens, and miniature golf; about 88,000 rounds are played each year

THE CURRENT COURSE: BLUE COURSE

How play moves through the Blue Course



Blue Course

18 holes · par 72 · 6,599 yards

Walter J. Travis's original course; the main course for more experienced golfers

Front nine

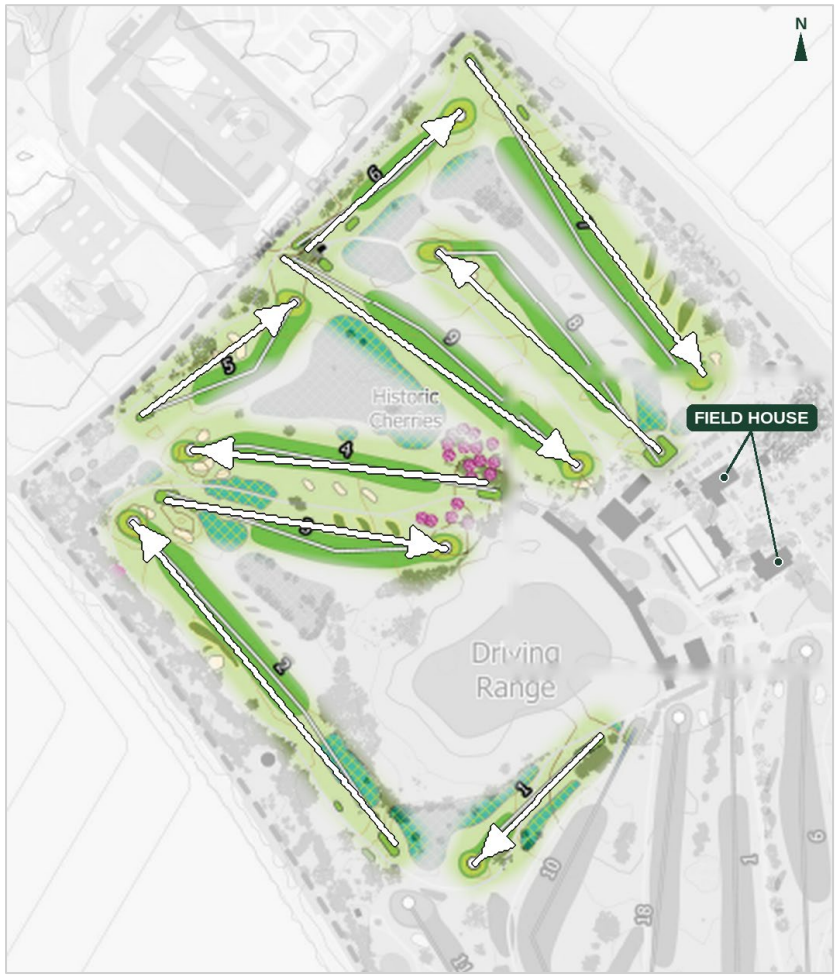
Starts at the Field House. Holes 1–4 play south down the middle of the island; holes 5–9 turn and play back north, with hole 6 along the eastern edge.

Back nine

Hole 10 doglegs west, then south; hole 11 returns north; holes 12–14 work south toward Hains Point; holes 15–18 play back north to the Field House.

THE CURRENT COURSE: WHITE COURSE

How play moves through the White Course



White Course

9 holes · par 33 · 2,420 yards

On the site of William Flynn's 1925 course, north and west of the Field House; today's layout follows William Gordon's 1950s redesign

- Hole 1 starts beside the Field House and plays out past the driving range
- Holes 2–8 work back and forth across the north end of the island
- Hole 9 plays back toward the Field House
- Favored by seniors and families

THE CURRENT COURSE: RED COURSE

How play moves through the Red Course



Red Course

9 holes · par 27 · 1,142 yards

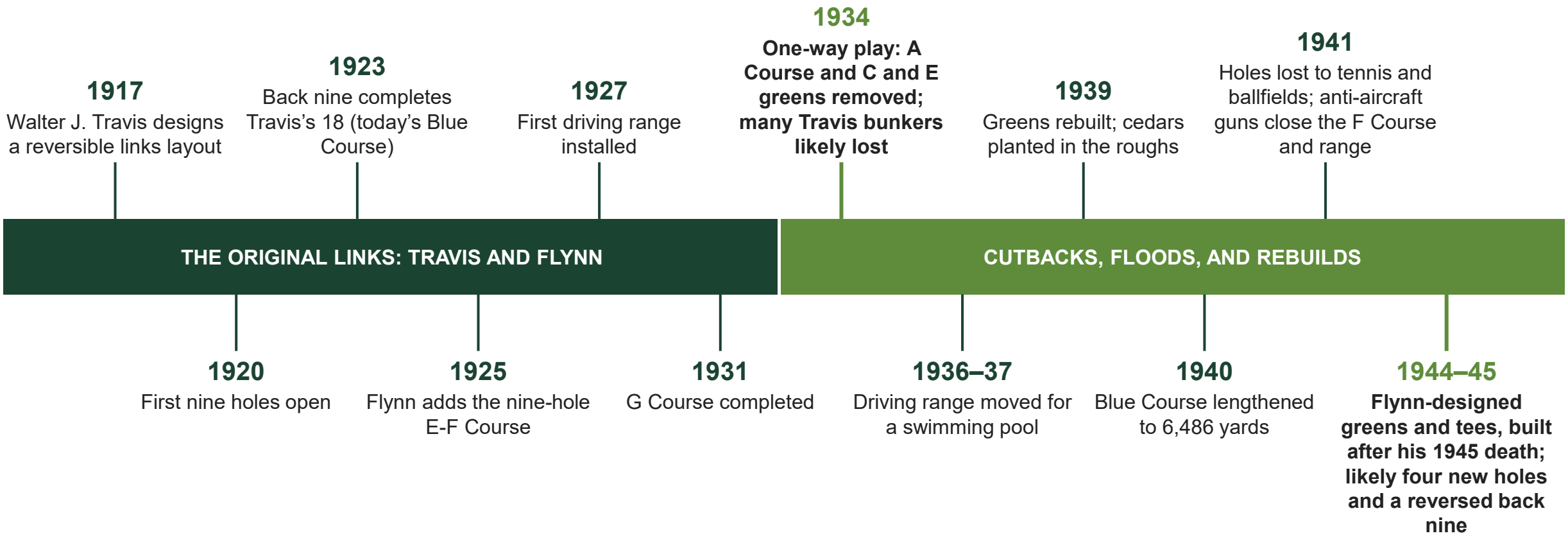
A short course of par-3 holes southeast of the Field House, on the Washington Channel side of the island

- Hole 1 starts just south of the Field House
- Holes 1–4 play south in a line, parallel to Blue Course holes 7–9; holes 5–9 work back north, and hole 9 returns to the Field House
- A 3-hole practice course (1998) sits at its north end
- Used for beginners, lessons, and youth camps



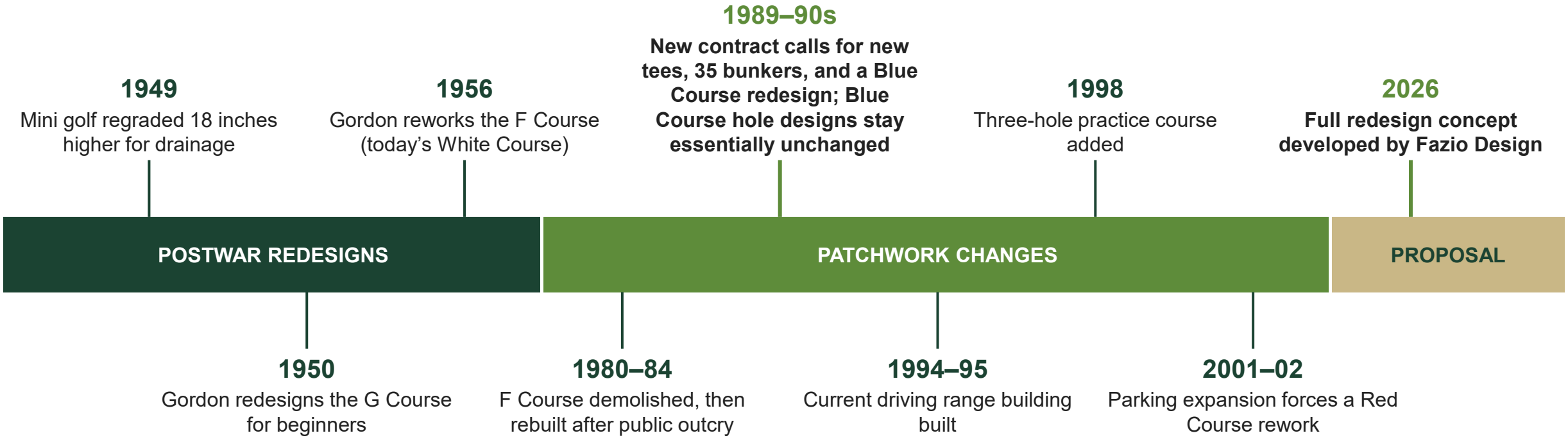
HISTORY OF DESIGN CHANGES

DESIGN CHANGES: THE ORIGINAL LINKS, 1917–1945



Within 25 years, Travis's original reversible layout had been cut back, rerouted, and partly rebuilt.

DESIGN CHANGES: PIECEMEAL REDESIGNS, 1945–TODAY



No comprehensive redesign of the Blue Course since 1945: eight decades of patchwork have left the layout outdated.

A LONG-STANDING CALL FOR A REDESIGN

Critics and NPS have asked for change since 1939

> *flat, uninteresting layouts which could be vastly improved under the supervision of a competent course architect*
>
> **Washington Evening Star, 1939**

> *Fairways too rough. Greens too hard, too small, improperly designed*
>
> **NPS memorandum, December 1940**

> *outmoded and far behind the modern trend. It is too short, not well trapped, and in poor condition.*
>
> **Washington Evening Star, 1939**

THE ORIGINAL VIEWS HAVE BEEN LOST

Decades of planting closed in the open course and cut off the water

> *resulted in the planting of thousands of trees and flowering shrubs…including on…East Potomac, where they were never intended*
>
> **2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory**

> *Tree plantings around the greens in the 1960s and 1970s hemmed in the views and restricted the vistas along the fairways.*
>
> **2019 CLR Treatment Guidelines**

> *screen plantings and encroaching invasive vegetation filled in along the edge blocking the views to the surrounding East Potomac Park, Potomac River, and Washington Channel*
>
> **2019 CLR Treatment Guidelines**

> *The historic view to the Potomac River is obscured by the growth of willows along the edge of the golf course perimeter*
>
> **2019 CLR Treatment Guidelines, Figure 42**

NPS GUIDANCE: REOPEN VIEWS AND REDEVELOP PLAYING SURFACES

The 2019 treatment guidelines call for fixing worn turf and irrigation and reopening views to the water

> *The turf challenges on this property are due to traffic patterns, poor cart paths, poor drainage, tree root competition, poor irrigation system, and shade from trees.*
>
> **2019 CLR, Turf guideline**

> *Existing water supply and irrigation systems are either inadequate or do not work to provide proper irrigation*
>
> **2019 CLR, general guidelines for NPS golf courses**

> *Reinforce the visual connections to the city and river by selectively removing vegetation to open views to the iconic buildings of Washington, D.C., and to the Potomac River and Washington Channel.*
>
> **2019 CLR, Views and Vistas guideline**



CURRENT CONDITION OF THE COURSE

THE PARK AND COURSE TODAY

What is here. The peninsula holds the 18-hole Blue Course, the 9-hole Red and White Courses, a driving range, the Field House, mini golf, and Hains Point's lawns and picnic areas, ringed by Ohio Drive and the seawall promenade.

Historic status. Listed in the National Register in 1973 within the East and West Potomac Parks Historic District; significance rests on the island landform, waterfront, open space and views, and the course's role in desegregating NPS recreation.

Much is not historic. The driving range and its 1994–95 building, the 1998 practice course, and decades of later tree plantings; Travis's layout has been cut back and partly rebuilt many times.



A COURSE AT THE END OF ITS SERVICE LIFE

East Potomac is one of the most-played public courses in the nation's capital, yet it has fallen into disrepair and is unsafe: its playing surfaces, buildings, and the seawall that holds the island in place have reached the end of their service lives. Piecemeal repair will not reverse the decline.

An outmoded course. The Blue Course's hole designs have changed little since William Flynn's 1944–45 revisions; even the redesign called for in the 1989 concession contract left them essentially unchanged.

Failing facilities. 2026 NPS assessments rate the driving range building, driving range, and clubhouse interior Critical, and flag 69 of 110 deficiencies as Critical or Urgent, including 63 fire and life safety hazards, 48 of them in the clubhouse.

A failing shoreline. The seawall is "severely deteriorated in all areas and has failed in some." Tidal water overtops it twice a day, promenade sections are collapsed and closed, and storms close Ohio Drive.

Worn-out grounds. Potholed parking and cart paths, a leaning retaining wall, faded signs, dead trees over parking, standing water, and failing turf.

A neglected Hains Point. Invasive vegetation has built up from deferred maintenance, benches are in disrepair, soils are subsiding, and erosion is exposing tree roots along the Potomac.

Closed off from the water. Fencing and decades of unplanned planting have blocked the course's views of the river, channel, and monuments.

A rare opportunity. A comprehensive redevelopment can deliver a safe, affordable, world-class public golf course that is resilient and built to host championship events.

~88,000

rounds of golf played each year (2014–2016)

2017 Golf Course CLI

69 of 110

facility deficiencies rated Critical or Urgent

2026 NPS Condition Assessment

$31.1M

20-year renewal and deferred maintenance need for East Potomac golf assets

2017 NPS Condition Assessment

20,700 ft

of seawall around the island to be replaced with stamped concrete, at $304.5M

NPS seawall proposal, 2026

2026 CONDITION ASSESSMENT: GOLF FACILITIES AND ASSETS

15 FACILITIES AND ASSETS ASSESSED | **4 CRITICAL** | **10 POOR** | **1 FAIR**

FACILITY OR ASSET	RATING	KEY DEFICIENCIES
Clubhouse interior	**CRITICAL**	Broken floor and ceiling tiles, water intrusion at light fixtures, boarded-up window, trip hazards
Driving range building	**CRITICAL**	Rotten beams and tee-box plywood, spongy upper floor, roof damage, exposed wiring, leaks
Driving range	**CRITICAL**	Turf loss, standing water from failed drainage, damaged ball netting, trash buildup
Parking lot trees	**CRITICAL**	Dead trees and hanging limbs over visitor parking
Clubhouse exterior	**POOR**	Cracked walls and foundation, worn steps; may be Critical pending structural review
Retaining wall at putting green	**POOR**	Leaning wall at risk of partial or complete failure
Golf course parking lot	**POOR**	Potholes, cracking, faded striping, missing light pole
Paved cart paths	**POOR**	Potholes and cracking throughout
Light poles	**POOR**	Missing light covers and deteriorated paint
Wayfinding signage	**POOR**	Signs badly faded and hard to read
Flower beds	**POOR**	Trip hazards, missing mulch, weeds, and overgrown shrubs
Maintenance compound	**POOR**	Clutter and debris, broken irrigation lid, open dumpsters, damaged fencing
Golf cart barn	**POOR**	Missing gutters and shingles; possible collision damage at an entrance
Starter building	**POOR**	Rotten wood and fascia, damaged doors, no gutters
Trash cans	**FAIR**	Aged and not rodent-resistant

2026 SAFETY ASSESSMENT

11 SAFETY HAZARDS IDENTIFIED | **2 CRITICAL** | **9 POOR**

LOCATION	RATING	HAZARD
Golf school (DC Academy) trailer	**CRITICAL**	Door marked EXIT opens onto a drop with no exterior stairs
Clubhouse basement storage room	**CRITICAL**	Wet floor from a clogged drain; slip-and-fall hazard
Clubhouse entrance	**POOR**	Uneven walking surface at the pro shop and dining entrance
Clubhouse basement storage	**POOR**	Cluttered storage and stored food creating pest harborage
Driving range upper deck	**POOR**	Bowing, broken deck surface creating trip hazards
Driving range upper deck	**POOR**	Broken railing panel; fall risk
Driving range stairwell	**POOR**	Standing water from a leak at the bottom of the stairs
Driving range	**POOR**	Five-gallon paint buckets stored at the foot of the stairs
Golf cart storage pavilion	**POOR**	Potholes and uneven walking surfaces around the building
Golf cart pavilion	**POOR**	Cracked and broken exterior materials
Security camera	**POOR**	Camera hanging from a pipe by its wires

2026 FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY ASSESSMENT

84 FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY DEFICIENCIES | **52 CRITICAL** | **11 URGENT** | **4 POOR** | **17 FAIR**

LOCATION	CRITICAL	URGENT	POOR	FAIR	KEY HAZARDS
Clubhouse: basement	11	3		1	Blocked exits and extinguisher, blocked panel, unsecured gas cylinders, flammables
Clubhouse: exterior	8		4	4	Exposed wiring, open junction boxes, propane stored at an exit, blocked balcony exit
Clubhouse: kitchen	7	3		1	No carbon monoxide detector, blocked egress door, slide lock on exit
Clubhouse: electrical room	6			1	Storage against electrical panels, open panels, exposed wiring
Clubhouse: sprinkler room	4			2	Storage in sprinkler room, missing extinguisher, corroded outlet box
Clubhouse: entry and dining	3	1		4	Propane heater indoors, failed emergency lighting, exposed wire at exit
Clubhouse: pro shop	1	1		2	Emergency exit blocked by merchandise; batteries charging on combustibles
Driving range	7	1		1	Generator and combustibles under stairs, missing extinguisher, nests by heater
Golf school trailer / GM office	2	1			Exit door with no stairs, blocked panel, failed emergency lighting
Maintenance building	2			1	Light hanging from junction box; 55-gallon chemical drums without containment
Golf cart storage pavilion	1	1			Blocked electrical panel; unsecured gas cylinder
Total	**52**	**11**	**4**	**17**	**67 of 84 deficiencies are in the historic clubhouse (Field House)**

EXISTING CONDITIONS: DRIVING RANGE



Driving range building with boarded-up openings



Hitting stalls: peeling mats, exposed conduit



Safety netting torn loose along the range



Failed roof shingles, debris and animal droppings



Rotting railing on the upper deck

EXISTING CONDITIONS: GOLF SUPPORT FACILITIES



Golf Course Storage Facility



Golf Course Storage Facility



East Potomac Golf Links Maintenance Facility



Instructional Building



Starter Shed and Beer Garden

EXISTING CONDITIONS: FIELD HOUSE DETERIORATION

Photographs from the 2019 Field House Historic Structure Report



Cracking and spalling below the east loggia at the basement level



Balusters spalled by corroded reinforcement



Standing water in the basement



Site wall with efflorescence, cracks, and spalling



Dislocated corner and cracked parapet



Cracked basement wall and window sill

EXISTING CONDITIONS: FIELD HOUSE (CLUBHOUSE)



East Potomac Park Field House



Field House service entrance

EXISTING CONDITIONS: GOLF COURSE

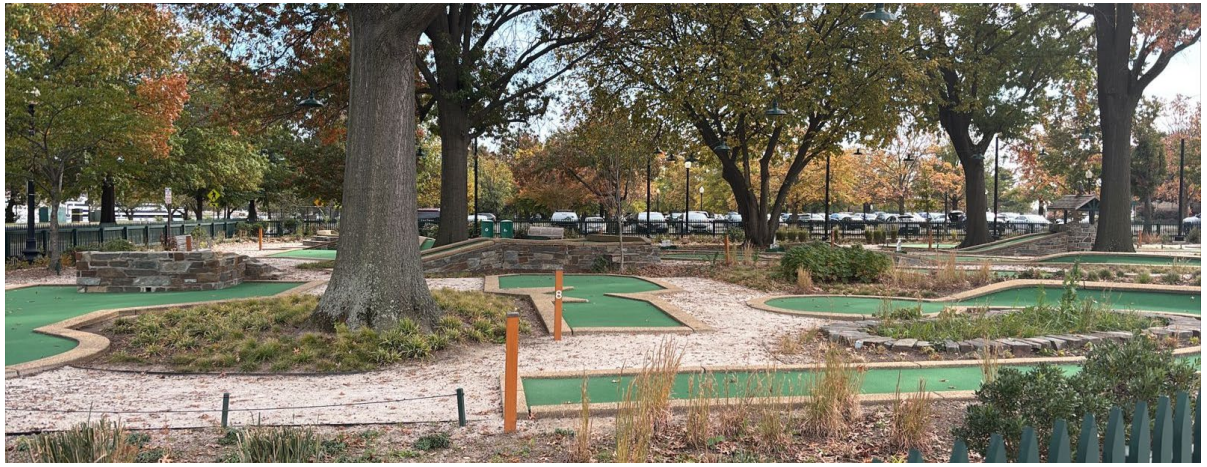








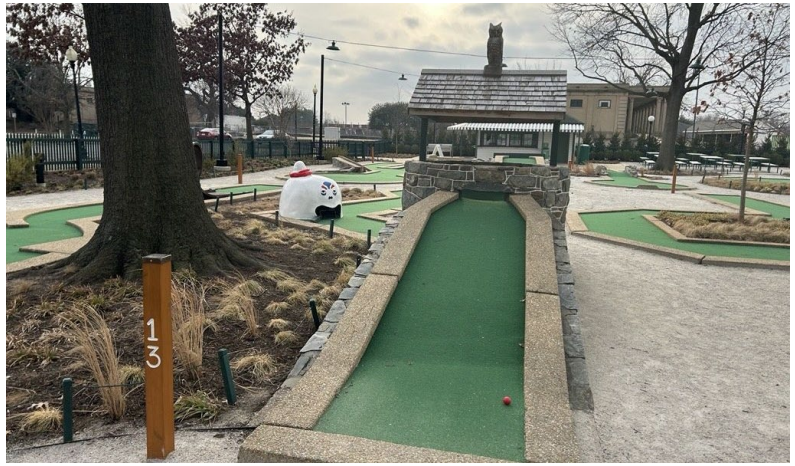
EXISTING CONDITIONS: MINI GOLF COURSE











EXISTING CONDITIONS: COMFORT STATIONS AND RAIN SHELTERS



Comfort station



Rain shelter

EXISTING CONDITIONS: HAINS POINT FACILITIES



Restroom: out of order, failing brickwork, peeling paint



Rusted, broken hot-ash bin



East Potomac Park Playground



Hains Point Picnic Area



Hains Point Picnic Area



Hains Point Parking Area

EXISTING CONDITIONS: HAINS POINT











THE SEAWALL: A FAILING FOUNDATION

2011 Dewberry rehabilitation plan

Voids 6–27 inches deep beneath the promenade; 46% of 412 surveyed topside segments rated deficient (yellow or red); railing posts broken free of the walk.

2019 Seawall Scoping Assessment

“The entirety of the perimeter walkway at East Potomac Park is a safety hazard… uneven, unsupported, damaged, collapsed or underwater.” The seawall’s current state poses “an existential threat”: the park “will eventually become East Potomac Shoal if the waters are allowed to reclaim the land.”

2023 Cultural Landscapes Inventory

The seawall shows “major disturbance and rapid deterioration… Immediate corrective action is required.” Storm flooding intermittently closes Ohio Drive SW.

2026 NPS seawall proposal

Settlement has led to tidal flooding twice a day almost all the way around the island, plus storm flooding, erosion, and local collapses. NPS proposes a new seawall around the full 20,700-ft perimeter.



Collapsed promenade slab with exposed reinforcing steel, October 2026

SEAWALL CONDITION: STRUCTURAL FAILURE



Walkway slab cantilevered over a washout



Collapse hole beside the railing foundation



Heaved, broken promenade behind failed fencing



Collapsed seawall section fenced off at the Potomac



Promenade closed due to unsafe conditions

SEAWALL CONDITION: FLOOD EVENTS



Promenade submerged as the river pours past the closure



Potomac overtopping the seawall onto the lawn



Bench and walkway under water facing The Wharf



Washington Channel promenade flooded end to end



Floodwater at the doorstep of an NPS building



River water flowing through a void beneath the cap



FUTURE VISION FOR THE COURSE

WHAT THE RECORD CALLS FOR

NPS studies point to five changes the concept delivers: three structural design changes, then two landscape actions

STRUCTURAL DESIGN CHANGES	WHAT THE DOCUMENTS SAY	SOURCE
Reconnect the course with the water	Close proximity to the water was a characteristic feature of Walter Travis's original links-style design	2017 Cultural Landscape Inventory
Redevelop the playing surfaces	Poor drainage, a poor irrigation system, traffic, and shade undermine turf and playing conditions	2019 CLR Treatment Guidelines
Redesign the driving range	2026 assessments rate the driving range and its building Critical	2026 NPS Condition Assessment

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS	WHAT THE DOCUMENTS SAY	SOURCE
Remove perimeter trees to open water views	Edge plantings block views to the Potomac River and Washington Channel on three sides	2019 CLR Treatment Guidelines
Thin interior trees to reopen monument views	Decades of planting closed in the open fairways; in places, trees now block views to the monuments	2019 CLR; 2017 CLI

RETURNING EAST POTOMAC TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE

1

A celebrated beginning

Walter J. Travis designed a links-style course laid out along the Potomac River and Washington Channel, hailed in the 1920s for its scenic setting.

It drew President Harding alongside the public, and protests there in 1941 led the Secretary of the Interior to open federally owned golf courses to African American golfers.

2

Decades of patchwork

Over time, fencing and screen plantings along the edge closed the course off from views of the water, while the course was cut back, rerouted, and partly rebuilt.

With no comprehensive redesign of the Blue Course since 1945, piecemeal changes and deferred care have left it in poor condition.

3

A championship future

The Fazio Design concept routes holes along the Potomac and Washington Channel. As on traditional links courses, the water's edge will define the course's boundaries, views, and character.

It is designed to host events such as the U.S. Open, PGA Championship, and Ryder Cup, while staying open and affordable for the public.

The goal: to return East Potomac to its rightful place among America's great public courses, alongside Torrey Pines, Bethpage Black, and Houston's Memorial Park.



THE CONCEPT PLAN

The concept reconfigures the golf holes, fairways, greens, tees, bunkers, and practice facilities, incorporates Hains Point, and improves drainage, irrigation, vegetation, and golf circulation within the historic landscape of East Potomac Park. Holes now sit right on the water, renewing the close connection to the river and channel that characterized Travis's original design.

Overall goal: a safe, affordable, world-class public golf course

Design goals

1. **Restore safe, high-quality playing conditions**
2. **Reopen views to the water and monuments as originally intended**
3. **Route holes along the Potomac and Washington Channel in the links tradition**

PRINCIPAL PROJECT ELEMENTS

A comprehensive golf redevelopment, with new recreational opportunities in nearby parkland

Golf course: existing holes and playing areas rebuilt as a new 18-hole championship layout

Driving range and practice: new range, practice greens, bunkers, and short-game areas

Hains Point: the southern tip is incorporated into the golf course

Landscape and vegetation: selective thinning to fit the new course and reopen views to the water

Course boundary: play extends to the seawall, with holes routed along the shoreline in the links tradition

Grading: regrading for new fairways, greens, bunkers, water features, and drainage

Water and stormwater: new water features and drainage infrastructure

Irrigation and utilities: upgraded irrigation, drainage, and utility systems

Golf circulation: redeveloped cart paths and golf access from park roads

Recreation nearby: new opportunities for biking, walking, fishing, and picnicking, such as at West Potomac Park and the Tidal Basin

THE PROPOSED COURSE: ROUTING AND PLAY

One 18-hole championship course that uses the whole island, with holes along both shorelines



North end: A new driving range (DR) and practice areas at the north end of the island

Front nine: Holes 1–9 loop through the northern half of the island; hole 1 runs along the Potomac and hole 4 along the Washington Channel

Back nine: Holes 10–18 extend south to Hains Point: hole 11 runs down the Potomac side, hole 12 plays to the tip, holes 13–14 return along the channel, and hole 18 finishes along the Potomac

On the water: Holes 1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 18 play along the shoreline

THE PROPOSED COURSE: SCORECARD

An 18-hole, par-72 championship course with four sets of tees, from 6,013 to 8,105 yards

Hole	Par	1st Tee	2nd Tee	3rd Tee	4th Tee
1	5	611	573	532	494
2	4	477	439	400	352
3	4	432	403	358	316
4	5	631	578	519	468
5	4	406	375	334	293
6	4	446	407	370	334
7	3	299	272	241	210
8	4	527	493	460	423
9	3	273	242	202	167
Out	36	4,102	3,782	3,416	3,057

Hole	Par	1st Tee	2nd Tee	3rd Tee	4th Tee
10	5	570	522	477	430
11	4	506	465	421	382
12	3	265	231	203	160
13	4	433	396	351	310
14	4	524	484	443	401
15	5	630	594	550	483
16	4	366	343	311	285
17	3	223	194	189	147
18	4	486	448	405	358
In	36	4,003	3,677	3,350	2,956

Total: par 72 · 8,105 yards (1st tee) · 7,459 (2nd) · 6,766 (3rd) · 6,013 (4th)

Holes along the shoreline (1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18)

EXISTING AND PROPOSED: WHAT CHANGES

A side-by-side comparison of the course today and the concept

ELEMENT	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Holes	36 holes on three courses (Blue 18, White 9, Red 9), plus a 3-hole practice course	One 18-hole championship course
Length and par	Blue Course: 6,599 yards, par 72	Par 72; four sets of tees at 8,105, 7,459, 6,766, and 6,013 yards
Edge of play	Fenced boundary inside Ohio Drive; course stops short of Hains Point	Play extends to the seawall around the island, including Hains Point
Holes on the water	None; the road, promenade, and fence separate holes from the water	Seven holes along the shoreline (1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18)
Driving range	Two-tiered driving range building (1994–95)	New driving range and practice areas at the north end
Hains Point	Lawn, picnic areas, playground, comfort station, parking	Incorporated into the course; hole 12, a par 3, plays to the tip
Trees and views	Dense perimeter and screen plantings block views	Views reopened to the water and monuments

NPS PROPOSAL: A NEW SEAWALL FOR EAST POTOMAC PARK

Full perimeter: about 20,700 ft of new seawall on the historic alignment, so shoreline safety closures can be lifted

Wall types: 19,000 ft of stamped concrete, plus 1,700 ft of stacked-stone Z-panel in the area seen from West Potomac Park

Higher protection: raised an average of 2.3 ft on the Potomac, 2.6 ft at Hains Point, and 1.6 ft on the Washington Channel

Proven design: similar to the wall just completed at the Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park, designed for a 100-year service life

Cost-effective: the same durability as an all-stone wall at about $56M less, and the shortest construction schedule



Example of a stamped concrete seawall, C&O Canal

$304.5M

total cost, including design, project management, and contingency

2.5 – 3.5 years

from funding to completion

ADDRESSING AFFECTED RECREATION NEARBY

The Department of the Interior is identifying, and will undertake, new recreational opportunities to address activities affected at East Potomac Park, located as close to the park as is possible.

Recreation affected by the project

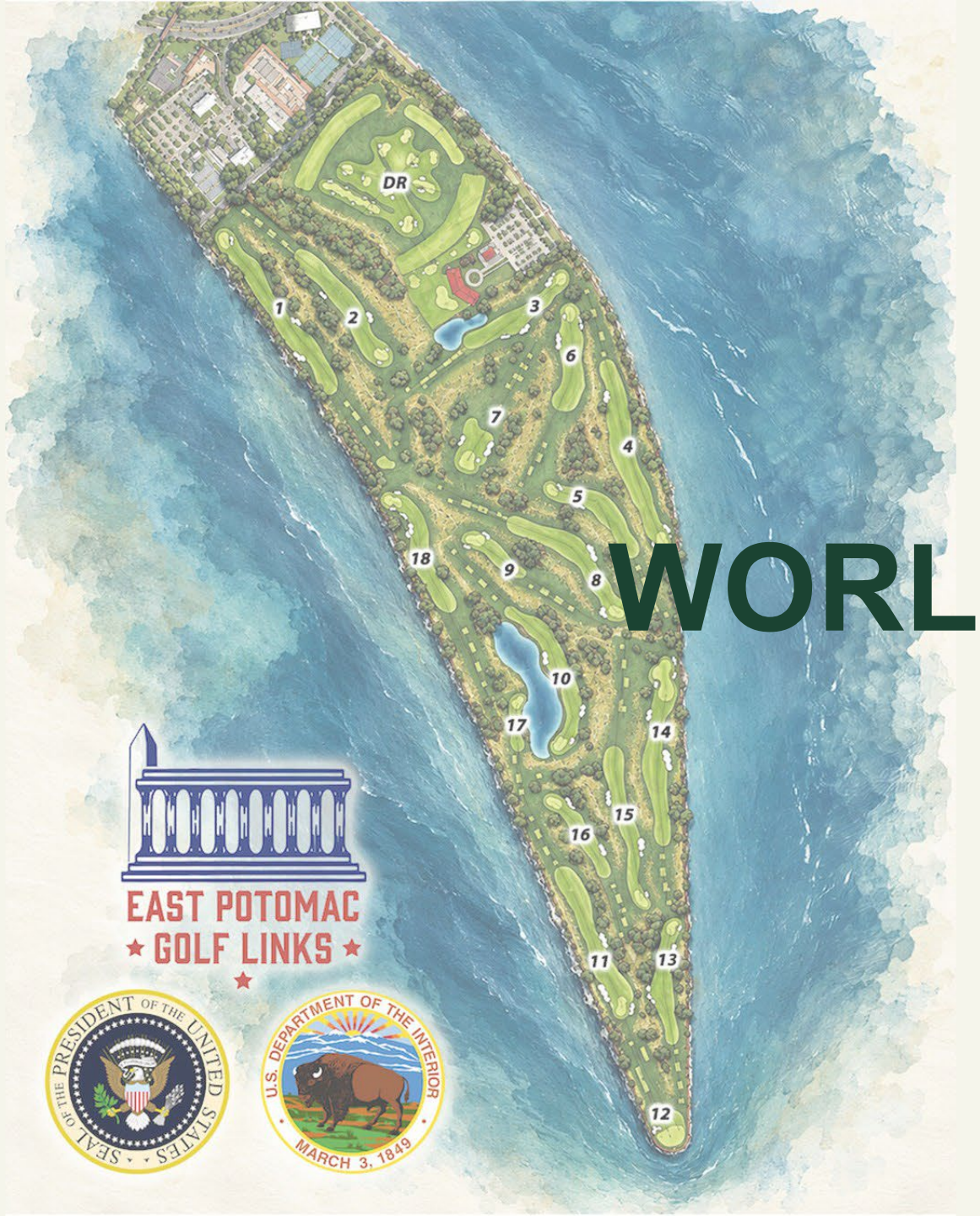
Biking, walking, and fishing along the perimeter promenade and Ohio Drive

Open lawn, picnic areas, and related amenities at Hains Point

Picnic areas and pedestrian facilities along Ohio and Buckeye Drives

Nearby opportunities: new biking, walking, and fishing opportunities will be accommodated nearby, such as at West Potomac Park and the Tidal Basin.

1. **Inventory:** Confirm each activity and amenity the project affects
2. **Identify sites:** Locate new opportunities as close as feasible, such as West Potomac Park and the Tidal Basin
3. **Consult:** Coordinate with the Commission of Fine Arts, NCPC, the District, and the public through the Section 106 and NEPA processes
4. **Deliver:** Develop the new opportunities alongside the golf course project



CASE STUDIES: WORLD-CLASS PUBLIC GOLF COURSES

BENCHMARK: TORREY PINES, SAN DIEGO

City of San Diego municipal golf, 36 holes on the Pacific bluffs

Major championships: U.S. Open in 2008 and 2021

Annual PGA Tour stop: the Farmers Insurance Open is played on the South and North Courses each winter

Reinvestment: South Course rebuilt by Rees Jones (2001); North Course renovated by Tom Weiskopf (2016)

Locals first: a $25-a-year City resident card unlocks resident rates

$90 vs. $322

South Course weekend round: City resident vs. non-resident (2026)

$142M

San Diego economic impact of the 2008 U.S. Open; 273,000 fans, 64% from out of town

BENCHMARK: BETHPAGE BLACK, LONG ISLAND

New York State Parks course, “The People’s Country Club”

Major championships: U.S. Open in 2002 and 2009; PGA Championship in 2019

2025 Ryder Cup: the largest build-out in the event’s history, drawing 244,858 fans over the week

Booked ahead: 2028 KPMG Women’s PGA Championship and 2033 PGA Championship

Locals first: New York residents pay about half the non-resident rate

$80 vs. $160

Weekend round: New York resident vs. non-resident (2025)

$200M+

projected statewide impact of the 2025 Ryder Cup; a projected $160M and 1,000 jobs on Long Island

BENCHMARK: MEMORIAL PARK, HOUSTON

City of Houston course, rebuilt with private funding

The rebuild: Tom Doak redesign with Brooks Koepka, reopened in 2019; fewer bunkers, better greens, and new drainage

Funded privately: about $34M course and facilities project led by the Astros Golf Foundation; the first phase (course, range, irrigation) cost $18.5M

PGA Tour venue: home of the Houston Open since 2020, while still hosting about 60,000 public rounds a year, per architect Tom Doak

Locals first: a resident card keeps Houstonians' rates low

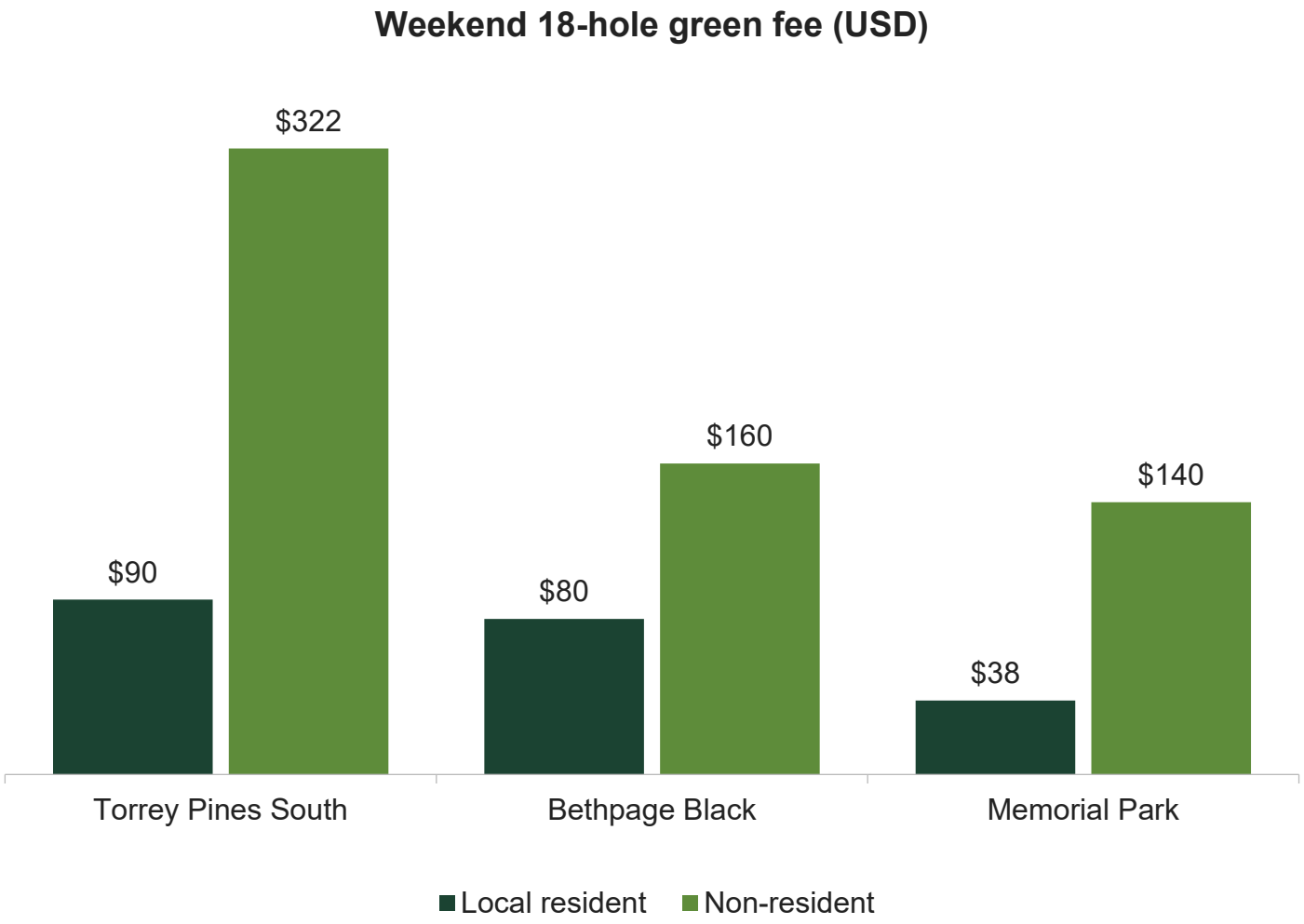
$38 vs. $140

Weekend round: Houston resident vs. non-resident (2026)

Since 2020

annual PGA Tour week in Houston, raising money for local charities

LOCALS PAY LESS AT AMERICA'S GREAT PUBLIC COURSES



Two-tier pricing is standard. Each benchmark charges visitors 2 to 4 times the local rate.

Visitors fund the upkeep. Premium out-of-town fees support championship conditions while locals keep affordable access.

Residency is verified. San Diego and Houston issue resident cards; New York requires proof of state residency.

For East Potomac: a similar structure could keep local rates low.

CHAMPIONSHIP PUBLIC GOLF DRIVES ECONOMIC GROWTH

TORREY PINES

$142M

economic impact of the 2008 U.S. Open at Torrey Pines

As reported by NBC San Diego, 2021

TORREY PINES

~$25M

economic boost of one Farmers Insurance Open week at Torrey Pines (2013 study); about 28,000 hotel room-nights (Century Club)

KPBS, 2015

BETHPAGE BLACK

$200M+

projected statewide impact of the 2025 Ryder Cup at Bethpage Black

Gov. Hochul, 2025

BETHPAGE BLACK

1,000

Long Island jobs projected from the 2025 Ryder Cup at Bethpage Black, plus $160M of local economic activity

LIA Research Institute pre-event estimate, 2025

Beyond tournament weeks: each benchmark stays a working public course year-round. Memorial Park hosts about 60,000 rounds a year alongside a PGA Tour event, and Torrey Pines' tournament week adds tens of millions of TV viewers' exposure for San Diego.

For Washington: a championship-ready East Potomac could draw tournament visitors, hotel stays, and national broadcasts to the District.



REGULATORY AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

REGULATORY AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

National Historic Preservation Act

- Section 106 consultation began July 17, 2026
- NPS will prepare a draft Assessment of Effects and consult the public through meetings and PEPC (parkplanning.nps.gov)
- No determination of effect has been made

National Environmental Policy Act

- An Environmental Assessment (EA) is currently underway

Other Review

- Commission of Fine Arts: November 2026 (anticipated)
- NCPC: December 2026 (anticipated)
- Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is ongoing

SUMMARY: THE CASE FOR ACTION

The current course is falling apart

- The seawall is failing, flooding the promenade and closing walkways
- Fencing and overgrowth block the course's views of the water
- Facility buildings carry 63 Critical or Urgent fire and life safety hazards
- Worn greens, poor drainage, and a dangerous driving range
- Decades of patching have not stopped the decline

We will build a safe, affordable, world-class public golf course

- Built to championship standards, with proposed lower rates for local golfers
- A new seawall built to current codes
- Holes right on the water, with views of the river and monuments reopened
- A peer of Torrey Pines, Bethpage Black, and Memorial Park

CFA feedback requested on

Site planning approach and golf course layout

Relationship to the historic landscape

Views to the water and monuments

Public recreation and waterfront access at Hains Point