

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review & Historic Preservation

DATE: May 22, 2008

SUBJECT: Public Hearing Report for ZC 08-04
Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) Parcel P, Waterfront Park – Phase 1
Zoning Commission Design Review Under the SEFC Overlay

I. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends approval of the proposed design, subject to:

- Provision of additional bicycle racks in secure and convenient locations; and
- Provision of additional detail regarding the design of the underpass below the pedestrian bridge.

II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Location: South East Federal Center site, Ward 6, ANC 6D
South of Squares 771 and 802 between the DC Water and Sewer Authority (west), the Washington Navy Yard (east), and the Anacostia River (south)

Applicant: Forest City LLC, for the General Services Administration of the USA

Current Zoning: SEFC/W-O (Southeast Federal Center Overlay/Waterfront District)

Proposed Development: The applicant is proposing to create a waterfront park with lawns, a river garden, pedestrian bridge, and promenade along the river, in accordance with the SEFC Overlay.

Review and Relief: Pursuant to 11 DCMR §1805.11, all new structures and/or changes to the exterior design of buildings located within the SEFC/W-O district require design review and approval by the Zoning Commission.

Pursuant to §1809.1, the applicant is also seeking special exception relief from the waterfront setback requirements (§938) for proposed park structures.

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant is seeking Zoning Commission design review approval to construct a waterfront park on the Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) site known as Parcel P. The proposed park will encompass approximately 7.6 acres of land along the Anacostia River, with 5.87 acres devoted to open space.

This phase of the project will not include any new buildings. However, significant grading, construction work, and new structures will be necessary for the development of the park. Proposed structures include a pedestrian bridge, promenade, and overlook area. Other park features that are addressed in this phase of the project include three distinct lawn and garden areas, a water feature, plazas, and bicycle trails. The proposed retail pavilions, public nature educational center, seasonal kiosks, and marina mentioned in the application are not included in the current request and will require separate, future Zoning Commission review. No off-street parking is proposed for the site. Public access to the park will be provided from 2nd Street, SE, the southward extension of 3rd, 4th, and 5th Streets, SE, and from a new public street, Water Street, SE, an east-west street which will form the north boundary of the site. The waterfront park will be a central feature of the proposed Anacostia Riverwalk and Trail and provide linkages to Florida Rock and Buzzards Point on the west and the Washington Navy Yard Waterfront Park on the east. The park design is generally consistent with the objectives and Zoning Commission review standards for the SEFC Overlay. OP supports the application and feels that it will serve as an attractive amenity for the SEFC site and the District overall, as well as support the redevelopment of the Anacostia riverfront.

IV. BACKGROUND

The SEFC site is located in the Near Southeast area and is bound generally by M Street, SE to the north; 1st Street, SE to the west; the Anacostia River to the south; and the Washington Navy Yard to the east. The SEFC is approximately 42 acres in size, excluding an 11 acre parcel on M Street, SE which is the site of the new Department of Transportation (USDOT) Headquarters (ZC Case #03-05). The Zoning Commission approved a comprehensive zoning package for the entire site in 2004, which included the creation of the SEFC Overlay District (ZC Case # 03-06). Since that time, the General Services Administration has selected Forest City LLC as the master developer for the entire site. The proposed waterfront park is located on Parcel P of the larger SEFC site. In addition to the waterfront park, the SEFC development will include approximately 1.8 million square feet of office space, 2,800 residential units, and neighborhood and destination retail uses. A number of historic buildings, including the Lumber Shed building, are to be preserved and incorporated into the plan.

V. SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The Parcel P property on the SEFC site is located immediately north of the Anacostia River between 2nd and 5th Streets, SE with Water Street, SE, a new street, forming the northern boundary. The site is approximately 7.6 acres in size, approximately 5.8 acres of which will be devoted to open space. The only existing building on the site is the Lumber Shed building, a historic building which will be renovated in the second phase of the Parcel P development.

VI. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing to develop a new waterfront park on the subject property. The park will have areas for passive and active recreation, linkages to other planned waterfront features, as well as opportunities for retail. A description of the main elements of the park is provided below:

- *Great Lawn* – a grassed area for passive recreation and large group gatherings along the western edge of the park. The southern part of the lawn is being planned to accommodate a stage and tent for outdoor performances.

- *Stepped Lawn* – a terraced area in the center of the park connecting the retail pavilions and plaza to the promenade along the water. This area would also serve as a seating area for performances held on the promenade.
- *River Street Gardens* – a landscaped area with plantings and benches at the eastern edge of the park immediately south of River Street.
- *Pedestrian Bridge* – a wooden bridge which connects the Great Lawn to the Overlook Area and Promenade. The proposed bridge is located between the canal basin water feature and the river, will have an upper and lower level, and be approximately 20 feet wide.
- *Water Features* – a canal basin and waterfall located in between the Great Lawn and the canal plaza. In addition, a fountain is proposed to be located at the park entrance along Water Street to the west of the Lumber Shed building.
- *Lumber Shed and Canal Plazas* – the area surrounding the historic Lumber Shed building that includes plantings and locations for outdoor seating. The lumber shed plaza is linked to the overlook area via a tree-lined pathway.
- *Overlook Area* – an elevated semi-circular feature with two levels that is located at the western end of the promenade and adjacent to the lumber shed plaza. This area provides enhanced views of the river and may include seasonal kiosks in the future.
- *Promenade* – the central feature of the waterfront park. This feature, similar to a boardwalk, extends for the majority of the site along the riverfront. It connects with the Washington Navy Yard on the east as part of the Anacostia Riverwalk and trail system. The promenade has been designed to accommodate areas for staged performances, a dance floor, and outdoor seating.
- *Development Area*: The existing Lumber Shed building and proposed retail pavilions are located within the Development Area – these buildings as well as any seasonal kiosks and the education center at the south-east corner of the site are not part of this phase of the approval process.

VII. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FUTURE LAND USE AND POLICIES MAPS

The Future Land Use Map in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan designates the site for parks, recreation, and open space. The proposed development is not inconsistent with this designation. The Generalized Policy Map indicates the site for Land Use Change, from federal to private mixed use development.

VIII. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As noted above, the proposed project is generally in conformance with the zoning regulations and with the SEFC Overlay objectives. The proposal is considered not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and would particularly further the following Guiding Principles:

Connecting the City: Guiding Principles 220

- (28) ... creation of new parks along the Anacostia River and enhancement of the federal Fort Circle Parks, should be supported to connect communities and enhance “green infrastructure” in the city. 220.4

Building Green and Healthy Communities: Guiding Principles 221

(36) *The District's parks and open spaces provide health, recreational, psychological, aesthetic, and ecological benefits that contribute to the quality of life. Maintenance and improvement of existing parks, and increased access to open space and recreation across the city are basic elements of the city's vision. The Districts' public open spaces should be protected against exploitation, and their recreational and environmental values should be conserved. 221.5*

By providing a park along the Anacostia River waterfront, the proposal would also further policies of the Land Use, Parks, Recreation and Open Space, and Urban Design elements. The development would also further relevant policies of the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/ Near Southwest Area Element by helping to develop new waterfront amenities (AW-1.1.4), creating a waterfront recreation destination (AW-1.2.3), and supporting the development of Anacostia RiverParks (AW-1.2.4).

IX. ANACOSTIA WATERFRONT INITIATIVE

The subject site is within the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) area. A key goal of the AWI is to create a vibrant waterfront with a variety of uses and places for people to interact. The AWI also seeks to revitalize surrounding neighborhoods, enhance and protect park areas, improve water quality and the environment, and increase access to the water and maritime activities.

The Near Southeast target area of the AWI includes the SEFC site. The proposed development on Parcel P of the SEFC site would further many important planning principles cited in the AWI Framework Plan for the Near Southeast target area including:

1. **Extend Existing Streets to the River.** The proposed waterfront park will be accessed by pedestrian, vehicles, and bicycles via a new street (Water Street, SE) and the southward extension of 3rd, 4th, and 5th Streets, SE;
2. **Create a Great Waterfront Park at SEFC.** The proposed park features a variety of passive and active recreation elements and provides spaces for festivals, community gatherings, and retail uses. The new park will offer enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access to the River and add more than 5 acres of public parkland within the District.
3. **Create an Interconnected System of Parks and Trails.** The waterfront park will be a central element of the proposed Anacostia Riverwalk and Trail system. Ultimately, this waterfront park will be linked to similar uses along the river to the east and west.

X. ZONING

In Case # 03-06 (July 9, 2004), the Zoning Commission approved a comprehensive zoning package for the SEFC site. The SEFC Zoning Overlay was the culmination of many years of planning by the General Services Administration (GSA) and the Office of Planning. The Overlay was intended to help expedite development on the 42 acre SEFC site and to encourage a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly environment. The SEFC Overlay District was also established, "... *to provide for the development of a vibrant, urban, mixed-use, waterfront neighborhood, offering a combination of uses that will attract residents, office workers, and visitors from across the District and beyond*" (§1801.1). While much of the development on this large site will be by-right, the SEFC Overlay stipulates that development adjacent to the waterfront will require Zoning Commission review.

The subject site is within the SEFC/W-O District. The SEFC District is intended to:

- “(a) Encourage open space;*
- (b) Promote a lively, interactive waterfront environment;*
- (c) Discourage parking;*
- (d) Provide a Development Area for retail and cultural uses;*
- (e) Provide an Open Space Area, intended to be the site of open space recreation use as well as limited uses that are directly waterfront dependent; and*
- (f) Allow for a continuous publicly-accessible pedestrian and bicycle trail along and adjacent to the waterfront as part of the Anacostia Waterfront Trail system.” (1805.1).*

Open space and park uses are permitted in this zone. The proposed development does not require a PUD or rezoning, and conforms to most aspects of the zoning regulations. The application is before the Zoning Commission because:

- a) *“All proposed structures in the SEFC/W-0 District, or any proposed exterior renovation to any existing buildings or structures in the SEFC/W-0 District that would result in an alteration of the exterior design, shall be subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission, in accordance with the standards specified in § 927 and procedures specified in § 928 of this title, and the standards set forth in § 1808 and procedures set forth in § 1809.” (§1805.11).* Although no new buildings are included in this phase of review, the park design includes structures that trigger this Zoning Commission review.
- b) §938.1 requires a setback inland from the bulkhead of at least 100 feet to any building or structure, although §938.3 permits special exception approval of a waterfront setback of between 20 feet and 100 feet, subject to the criteria of §927. §1809.1 permits the Commission to consider any requests for relief as part of its review of the project.

An analysis of the project against the relevant zoning ordinance objectives and standards is provided below.

XI. ANALYSIS

A. Proposed New Structures Within the SEFC/W-0 District

1808.1 In addition to proving that the proposed uses, buildings, or structures meet the standards set forth in § 3104.1, the applicant for Zoning Commission approval of a use or structure within the SEFC Overlay District shall further demonstrate conformance to the following standards:

- (a) The use, building, or structure will help achieve the objectives of the SEFC Overlay District as set forth in § 1802;*

Objectives relevant to this proposal include:

1802.4 Encourage a variety of support and visitor-related uses, such as retail, service, entertainment, cultural, and hotel or inn uses.

The SEFC waterfront park would be a recreational use designed to attract users and visitors from the neighborhood, city, and region to the Anacostia River. The

park would include a variety of uses including areas for retail as well as spaces for street festivals and outdoor performances.

- 1802.5 Provide for a reduced height and bulk of buildings along the Anacostia riverfront in the interest of ensuring views over and around waterfront buildings, and provide for continuous publicly-accessible open space along the waterfront.*

The new buildings proposed for the site are not addressed as part of this proposal. The park plan includes a continuous publicly-accessible bike and pedestrian route along the perimeter. Pedestrian access would be available for the entire frontage of the park along the river. Lastly, park features have been designed to enhance views of the river from multiple vantage points.

- 1802.6 Require suitable ground-floor level retail and service uses ... near the SEFC/W-0 District; and at other key pedestrian locations.*

Ground-floor retail uses, while not directly addressed in this phase of the park development, are intended to be mainly sited along Water Street at the north edge of the SEFC/W-O District site. The proposed retail will be located in three buildings, an existing historic structure and two new buildings located on Water Street between 3rd and 4th streets, the main access points for the park from the north.

- 1802.7 Encourage the design and development of properties in a manner that is sensitive to the adjacent Navy Yard and the historically significant buildings within the SEFC.*

The proposed plan includes important river walk connections to the historic Washington Navy Yard to the east. Review of plans for the historic Lumber Shed building within the park area will be part of a future phase of review, but the building is well coordinated into the design of the park that surrounds it.

- 1802.8 Establish zoning incentives and restrictions to provide for the development of a publicly-accessible park along the Anacostia River and encourage uses in that park as permitted in the W-0 District.*

The proposed waterfront park represents the fulfillment of this overlay objective. The park is publicly accessible from a variety of entrance points, one of which will eventually include the water. In addition, the majority of the uses provided on site are recreational areas which are permitted as-of-right in the W-O District.

- 1808.1(b)The proposed building or structure shall be designed with a height, bulk, and siting that provide for openness of view and vistas to and from the waterfront and, where feasible, shall maintain views of federal monumental buildings, particularly along the New Jersey Avenue, S.E. corridor;*

Structures within the park – the bridge, the overlook, etc – are largely intended to facilitate movement to and along the waterfront, and to afford interesting and

varied view opportunities. OP does not believe that the low structures will negatively impact any views to or from federal monumental sites.

1808.1(c) On or above-grade parking adjacent to, or visible from, the street shall be limited. Where parking cannot be placed underground, other uses such as retail or residential shall separate parking areas from the street, or where this is not possible, green landscaping or architectural treatment of facades shall adequately screen parking from the street and adjacent development.

No parking is proposed as part of this phase of review. The SEFC site is currently largely paved over, with extensive parking opportunities available.

1808.2 In evaluating the application, the Commission also may consider:

- (a) *Compatibility with buildings in the surrounding area through overall massing, siting, details, and landscaping;*

This site is part of a larger redevelopment project that will bring new buildings, uses, and residents to this area. The property to the immediate north of the site is currently undeveloped. However, the planned development of this area, per the SEFC overlay, will be high density mixed-use office and residential along M Street SE, and high density residential uses with ground floor retail at the center of the SEFC site. The park will serve to complement these higher density uses, providing important park, open space, and recreation opportunities. Proposed structures on the park site would be much lower in height than those on adjacent properties so as to not obstruct views of the river. Landscaping features and proposed walking paths have also been designed to guide users to and enhance views of the water.

- (b) *Use of high standards of environmental design that promote the achievement of sustainable development goals;*

This project will result in the creation of well over 5 acres of public open space, significantly reducing the amount of hard-scaped area currently on the site. The site design also includes the provision of a continuous pedestrian and bike access route and will not include off-street parking facilities, encouraging the use of alternative forms of transportation to access the park. The applicant notes that they are working closely with District agencies, including the District Department of the Environment, and has indicated to OP that DDOE is supportive of the overall stormwater management concept.

- (d) *Landscaping which complements the building;*

Although this guideline is intended to address landscaping directly associated with a building (as opposed to the park design), the landscaping elements have been designed to complement park structures and uses. Proposed landscaping in the overlook and lumber shed plazas help provide definition for seating areas near the proposed retail buildings. In addition, landscaping is used to define walkways and paths to other park features.

(g) *For development within or adjacent to the SEFC/W-0 District, the Commission may consider whether the project is consistent with the following goals:*

(i) *Providing a wide variety of active and passive recreational uses;*

The proposed waterfront park includes a wide variety of recreational uses, ranging from landscaped gardens to festival spaces to bike routes. The plan incorporates a mix of active and passive uses and has adequate transitional spaces provided between each.

(ii) *Encouraging uses that open to, overlook, and benefit the waterfront park;*

The park has been designed to promote and encourage use and enjoyment of the Anacostia River, with the entire park affording visual and physical access to the water's edge. Plazas have been designed and located to connect street level uses to lawn areas and a promenade along the river. A tree-lined vista of the water has been created, visible from the retail pavilion area, to draw visitors and users towards the water. Finally, an elevated overlook area has also been included to enhance views of the river.

(iii) *Utilizing siting and design of buildings and uses to improve the natural ecology, to illustrate the importance of natural systems, and/or to interpret the historically important maritime context of the site.*

As noted above, the park would revert over 5 acres of currently paved area along the waterfront to a more green and natural environment. The site has been developed for many decades, and the site provides a unique and important opportunity for open park space along the waterfront, so reverting the site to natural ecology is neither feasible nor desirable. However, the applicant is providing invaluable access to the river (with access comes awareness; with awareness comes greater stewardship). Proposed park features have been sited and designed to enhance the maritime context of the site, including the preservation and adaptive reuse of an existing structure. OP anticipates the further development of the public education nature center, marina, and boating activities will provide additional opportunities to expand on the maritime context of the site. OP also would encourage the use of as many native plant species as possible in the landscaping, to minimize maintenance and resource use, and to promote the use of such species in other development.

B. Special Exception Review of Structure Located Between 20 and 100 Feet of the Bulkhead

The proposal includes a number of structures within the setback area, but the applicant notes that some, such as the pedestrian bridge and promenade, are "*directly associated with a public-accessible wharf, dock, or pier*" (§938.2) and are therefore exempt from the setback requirement. OP is not convinced that the promenade would be considered a "structure" at all (if not, it would be exempt from the setback requirement), and acknowledges that the W-0 zoning regulations are vague in terms of what constitutes a public-accessible wharf, dock, or pier or structures directly associated with them. OP is very supportive of both the promenade and the bridge as important features

facilitating the primary objective for the site – to provide convenient and enjoyable access to the waterfront. As the proposal includes the structures which are located between 20 and 100 feet from the bulkhead, Zoning relief is required. If the Zoning Commission determines that relief for these needed, OP feels that they would clearly make the relevant tests, and would be in strong support of approval of such relief.

The overlook and other park space structures do fall within this specified distance and are the subject to special exception approval. The general criteria for special exceptions as well as the §927 special exception criteria for projects located in the W-O district are discussed below.

*“3104.1 The Board is authorized under § 8 of the Zoning Act, D.C. Official Code § 6-641.07(g)(2) (formerly codified at D.C. Code § 5-424(g)(2) (1994 Repl.)), to grant special exceptions, as provided in this title, where, in the judgment of the Board, **the special exceptions will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps and will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map subject in each case to the special conditions specified in this title, as follows:...**”*

The requested special exception for the location of the structures and the proposed overlook area is not inconsistent with the purpose and intent of the zoning regulations. This feature would help promote the development of a “lively waterfront environment” by enhancing views of the river and providing a potential location for future retail or other waterfront related uses. The proposed overlook would not adversely affect the use of neighboring properties, which include the Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) pumping station on the west, Parcels L, M, and N within the SEFC site to the north (future high density residential sites), and the Washington Navy Yard on the east. The proposed overlook area would be located at the south portion of the site close to the water, at least a hundred feet away from any neighboring property. The structure would not impact views of water from any direction and would serve as an amenity for neighboring uses and residents.

§927, W-0 Special Exception Review criteria:

- a) *The buildings, structures, and uses will enhance the visual and public recreational opportunities offered along the waterfront;*

The waterfront park would greatly enhance public recreational opportunities. Features include a pedestrian bridge to facilitate access between the proposed lawn and garden areas, and a promenade to provide space for outdoor performances and support the continuation of the Anacostia Riverwalk. The raised overlook area would provide people with better views of the water, and add both interest and variety to the overall park design.

- b) *The buildings, structures, and uses on land will be located and designed to minimize adverse impacts on the river and riverbank areas;*

The structures located on land have been designed to promote use and enjoyment of the riverbank area. The bike route and proposed festival streets would be located farthest from the water, at the north edges of the site. Both active and passive park space would be located close to the promenade and the water’s edge. The overlook not only provides interesting viewshed opportunities, but also may allow for retail or other waterfront uses on its lower level. No adverse impacts on the river are anticipated as a result of the proposed construction.

- c) *If the proposed use is a boathouse, marina, or yacht club, the buildings will be located entirely on shore directly in front of berths, separated only by the setback area described in 938, unless doing so would result in an infeasible project and would hinder furtherance of the objectives of the W-O District;*
- d) *Buildings, structures, and uses on, under, or over water will be located and designed to minimize adverse impacts on the river and riverbank areas;*

This phase of the park approval does not include any structures located on the water. While the overall plan for the park includes a marina and boating facilities, this phase of Zoning Commission approval does not. As such, this criteria is not applicable. The marina proposed in Phase II of the park development will require separate Zoning Commission review, as would any associated structure.

- e) *All structures and buildings will be located so as not likely to become objectionable to surrounding and nearby property because of noise, traffic, or parking, and so as not to limit public access along or to the waterfront, other than directly in front of the principal building or structure of a boathouse, marina, or yacht club.*

The structures subject to special exception review have been designed to enhance access to the river as well as provide connections between existing and proposed riverfront features. The proposed structures should not be objectionable to neighboring uses with regard to noise, traffic, or parking impacts. Park features that include performance areas, including parts of the great lawn and promenade, are located at the south end of the site, farthest away from residential uses to the north. Water Street, located at the north border of the site, is designed to serve as a public festival street. However, usage of the street for such activities would be limited to specific events and would be coordinated with adjacent street closings to limit its impact on surrounding property.

With regard to traffic, pedestrian and vehicular access is provided from 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Streets, SE connecting to Water Street, SE, a new street proposed at the north boundary of the site. In addition, a Class III bicycle route is proposed along the perimeter of the site connecting the property to the riverfront trails to the east and west of the property. Bike racks are located throughout the park and bike-walk zones have been identified to allow cyclists to navigate through the park with their bikes on foot. OP has suggested to the applicant the provision of additional bike racks closer to Water Street for riders who wish to visit the proposed retail pavilions, particularly near the access point to the park along 4th Street, SE. The applicant has indicated that additional bike rack locations are planned, but OP has not, as of the date of filing this report, been provided with a plan showing their location,

The pedestrian bridge will facilitate the movement of people between the Great Lawn and the overlook and promenade areas. The promenade structure will provide a continuous access along riverfront, extending from the overlook area to the river gardens at the east end of the site. Plazas are appropriately located to serve as transitions between the areas designed for more active uses at the north of site to the passive recreational features at the south of the site. The River Street Gardens will feature landscaped planters, benches, and walking paths to encourage passive usage of the park.

Finally, no parking facilities are proposed for this site. The proposed waterfront park will be within walking distance of the Navy Yard Green Line Metro station and multiple bus routes

along M Street. It is not anticipated that the proposed structures will have a negative impact on parking. The larger SEFC site has been designed to protect the waterfront area from the potential impacts of parking by prohibiting off-street parking areas within the W-O Waterfront District. As such, the impact of the proposed structures with regard to noise, traffic, and parking on nearby property should be minimal.

OP concurs with concerns reflected in the staff report submitted by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) regarding the proposed pedestrian bridge. The pedestrian bridge should be designed to be open and inviting at every level. The Office of Planning recommends continued efforts on the design of this feature to improve the pedestrian experience, particularly on the pathway below the bridge.

- f) *Impervious surfaces will be minimized and buildings, structures, and other uses will be designed and sited to minimize potential for surface storm water run-off directly into the river.*

The proposed park includes several grassed and planted areas which will reduce the amount of hard-surfaced area currently on the site. The boardwalk is designed to be wood decking, and many of the hard surface areas are actually pavers which allow some infiltration of storm water. In addition, a stormwater management concept plan was submitted as part of this proposal. The project is being designed with the input of the District Department of the Environment, to minimize the amount of surface stormwater run-off into the river.

- g) *Screening, coping, setbacks, fences, the location of entrances and exits, or any other consideration for accessory or non-accessory parking spaces will be designed to screen and protect adjacent parkland and the waterfront.*

This criteria is not applicable as no parking areas are included in this request.

- h) *Emergency access will be provided to any buildings, structures, or other space devoted to active public use.*

This should be addressed during the building permit process to ensure that the appropriate building and fire safety codes are observed with regard to the proposed park structures. However, the future retail buildings would all have adequate frontage on a publicly accessible street.

XII. AGENCY REFERRALS

OP has not received comments from other District agencies.

XIII. FEDERAL REVIEW

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and the Commission on Fine Arts have both submitted comments regarding their general support for the proposed waterfront park. Both agencies submitted favorable comments but also expressed specific design-related concerns about the proposed pedestrian bridge, hierarchy of park uses, and handicapped accessibility for the riverfront area to the west of the site.

XIV. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The Office of Planning has received no comments on the project from the community. ANC 6D met regarding this request and indicated unanimous support.

XV. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning would prefer to analyze the development of the entire waterfront park at one time to ensure that potential conflicts among the variety of park uses, buildings, and structures are addressed as early as possible. However, staff understands that a project of this size requires a phased development and, therefore, phased review. While the current phase of the request does not address several components of project, we feel it may be necessary to revisit some park features once these other elements (i.e., the new retail buildings, marina, and boat launching facilities) have been fully designed and brought forward for consideration. While the park features being proposed here meet the objectives and goals of the relevant zoning and planning initiatives for the SEFC site, it will be important to consider how they will function within the context of the entire Parcel P development as the project moves forward.

The proposal for the park open space review as submitted is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and the Near Southeast target area objectives within the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan. The proposal is also generally consistent with the W-O Waterfront district and the SEFC Overlay regulations and guidelines. The development would add a significant and critical public recreation space to the District, and would further the development of the Anacostia River as a community and regional destination. The proposed waterfront park includes a variety of features and structures that support active and pedestrian recreation, retail uses, performance spaces, and public festivals. Finally, the park would support the development of the “Yards” as a vibrant, high-density, mixed-use neighborhood.

As such, the Office of Planning recommends **approval** of the proposed waterfront park development on Parcel P, including the requested zoning relief, subject to:

- Provision of additional sites for bicycle racks, particularly near the intersection of Water Street, SE and 4th Street, SE; and
- Clarification of the pedestrian experience at the lower level of the pedestrian bridge.

JS/ayj