



# Arlington County and Vicinity Non-Motorized Boathouse Facility

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Summer 2012

## *You're Invited!*

*Dear Neighbors and Visitors,*

*For more than a decade, rowing enthusiasts in Arlington County have actively pursued the development of a community boathouse to provide a home to accommodate the area's institutional rowing programs, local rowing and paddling organizations and other non-motorized boat users. In August 2002, the National Park Service (NPS) released a study entitled Facility & Site Analysis (feasibility study) for a Boathouse on the Potomac River in Arlington County and Vicinity. This analysis was initiated specifically at the request of Congress to assess potential siting, or location, of a boathouse facility for non-motorized boats within Arlington County along the Potomac River on parkland administered by George Washington Memorial Parkway. The study examined building a facility, which included indoor storage space and floating docks at four possible locations—two on the waterfront near Key Bridge, one south of the CSX/14th Street Potomac River Bridges, and one on Daingerfield Island, south of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.*

*I am now pleased to announce the re-initiation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Arlington County and Vicinity Non-Motorized Boathouse Facility. The goal of the EIS is to study the sites identified in the 2002 feasibility study and determine a preferred alternative that is consistent with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines, and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) as well as NPS policies and mandates.*

*At this time, I invite your participation in the EIS effort. The scoping period will commence on July 2, 2012 and end on August 31, 2012. A public open house will be held on July 24, 2012. The purpose of this meeting is to provide you with an opportunity to contribute ideas and concerns about the proposed boathouse for non-motorized boats. At the open house, NPS staff will be on hand to answer questions and solicit written comments from all interested parties. Interested parties may also submit written comments online, or by mail as described on page 4 of this newsletter. When the draft EIS for Arlington County and Vicinity Non-Motorized Boathouse Facility is produced, you will be invited to review and comment on it.*

*We appreciate and look forward to your comments.*

*Jon James, Acting Superintendent  
George Washington Memorial Parkway*

# Background

Located along the shores of the Potomac River, the historic George Washington Memorial Parkway is one component of a large park system serving the Nation's Capital. Connected by 32 miles of roadway designed for pleasure driving, the Parkway covers approximately 7,200-acres. The Parkway's geography serves to tie scenic, recreational, memorial, and historic features of national significance in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

At the request of Congress, the potential siting of a boathouse for non-motorized boats along the Potomac River within Arlington County, Virginia was evaluated in the feasibility study conducted for the NPS in 2002. The boathouse would include equipment storage and training facilities for area institutional programs, rowers, paddlers and other non-motorized boat users. Currently, institutional programs and members of the public use area boathouse facilities located in Washington, D.C., including the Capitol Rowing Club, Potomac Boat Club and Thompson Boat Center, as well as in Virginia at the Occoquan Boat Club and Alexandria Boathouse. The rowing conditions, potential conflicts with motorized watercraft, and travel times to access the boat houses make some of these locations less than ideal for many institutional programs, as well as for other community users.

The 2002 feasibility study established criteria for the proposed boathouse and identified four potential locations that could accommodate its construction and operation along the Potomac River within the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Congress directed the NPS to identify a preferred alternative from the sites identified in the feasibility study. To make such a recommendation, the NPS must complete an EIS in accordance with NEPA.

# Purpose and Need

The purpose of taking action is to identify a preferred site for construction of an environmentally sustainable public boathouse facility for non-motorized boats along the Virginia shoreline, while ensuring the protection of park natural and cultural resources, as well as visitor safety.

The selection of a preferred site and construction of a boathouse is needed to meet the direction of Congress for providing enhanced public waterfront access in the proximity of Arlington County. The construction of a boathouse facility is also needed to increase access along the Virginia shoreline for non-motorized water-based recreational activities on the Potomac River and to alleviate pressure on other area boathouses, which are currently at maximum capacity.

## Project Timeline

1993	Arlington County completes Arlington County Riverfront Inventory and Analysis Water-Based Recreational Facility Task Force Appointed
1995	Water-Based Recreational Facility Task Force completes Feasibility Study for a Boathouse Facility
1998	Congress directs NPS to study potential sites
1999	NPS begins feasibility study and needs assessment survey
2000	NPS conducts a Public Open House
2002	NPS issues Facility & Site Analysis for a Boathouse on the Potomac River in Arlington County and Vicinity identifying a need for an EIS
May 2004	Notice of Intent for the EIS published in the Federal Register
June 2004	Public Meeting/ Open House for the EIS
Summer 2004	Field Work and Completion of Individual Resource Studies Decision to Prepare Environmental Assessment (EA), instead of EIS.
Summer 2006	EA put on hold
June 2012	Notice of Intent to re-initiate EIS published in Federal Register
August 2012	Public Scoping
Summer/ Winter 2012	Draft EIS preparation
Winter 2012/ 2013	Draft EIS Distribution
Winter/ Spring 2013	Public Review of Draft EIS and Public Meeting
Fall 2013	Prepare and Distribute Final EIS
Winter 2013	Record of Decision

# Preliminary Alternatives



## Action Alternatives

### 1. Lower Key Bridge

A boathouse facility and floating docks for non-motorized boats would be located along the Virginia Potomac River shoreline south of the Key Bridge, east of the Parkway and north of the existing Theodore Roosevelt Island parking lot.

### 2. Upper Key Bridge

A boathouse facility for non-motorized boats would be located on the hillside east of North Lynn Street between Interstate 66 and the Parkway. Docks would be located along the Virginia Potomac River shoreline, east of the Parkway and north of the existing Theodore Roosevelt Island parking lot.

### 3. Combination Upper & Lower Key Bridge

This alternative would be a combination of the Upper Key Bridge and Lower Key Bridge alternatives. Boat storage, floating docks, and staging area would be located on the Lower Key Bridge site, while other support functions would be located in a facility on the Upper Key Bridge site.

### 4. CSX/14th Street Bridge

A boathouse facility and docks for non-motorized boats would be located at an area located east of the Parkway, just south of the CSX/14<sup>th</sup> Bridge and north of Gravelly Point.

### 5. Daingerfield Island

This site would be located on Daingerfield Island, east of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, just south of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, and adjacent to Washington Sailing Marina. Under this alternative, both the boathouse facility and docks for non-motorized boats would be located on the same site, adjacent to the Potomac River.

## No Action

Under the no action alternative, no boathouse facility and docks would be constructed in the vicinity of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Arlington County public high school rowing programs would continue to use area boathouses located in Washington, D.C. Existing and future public demand for rowing programs and related boat storage space would be accommodated by these existing facilities, other planned rowing facilities, or would remain unmet.

# How to Comment...

There are several ways to provide comments:

- Submit written comments at the open house on July 24, 2012, where comment sheets will be available. The open house will be held from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Washington-Lee High School, 1301 North Stafford Street, Arlington, VA 22201.
- Submit comments electronically at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ArlingtonBoathouse>
- Submit written comments by mail to:  
Superintendent  
Attn: Arlington Boathouse EIS  
George Washington Memorial Parkway  
700 George Washington Memorial Parkway  
Turkey Run Park Headquarters  
McLean, VA 22101

The comment period will be open until August 31, 2012.

***Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment -- including your personal identifying information -- may be made publicly available at any time.***



EIS for Arlington County and Vicinity Non-Motorized Boathouse Facility  
George Washington Memorial Parkway  
Turkey Run Park  
McLean, VA 22101