

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Committee on Public Works and Transportation

The Year of the Anacostia

Statement of Beth Purcell

On behalf of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society

January 11, 2018

My name is Beth Purcell, and I am testifying on behalf of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS), the largest civic organization on Capitol Hill. Since 1955 CHRS has advocated for the welfare of Capitol Hill.

Today I would like to talk to you about one of DDOT's most significant accomplishments, the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, particularly the section near RFK Stadium, and a threat to the trail, ironically coming from DDOT itself.

Anacostia Riverwalk Trail

The Anacostia Riverwalk Trail is a backbone of the Anacostia Waterfront, connecting residents, visitors and communities to the river, to one another and to numerous commercial and recreational destinations. All of the 20 planned miles are complete, and the trail is offers seamless, scenic travel on both sides of the river for pedestrians and bicyclists between Nationals Park, Historic Anacostia, RFK Stadium, Barney Circle, and the Navy Yard. The attached map shows part of the completed trail route (in red), running on the east and west side of the Anacostia River.

Threat to the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail from DDOT's proposed "Park Road"

But DDOT and EventsDC threaten Anacostia Riverwalk Trail by their plans to build a new road, called the "Park Drive," from Benning Road to Barney Circle, through Anacostia Park along the west bank of the river, running through the natural resource areas adjacent to RFK Stadium and Congressional Cemetery.¹ Many of us on Capitol Hill believe that the so-called Park Drive will be a commuter road. The proposed route is shown on the attached map.

¹ DDOT, "Middle Anacostia Crossings Study," p. 7-1 (2005). www.rfkcampusfuture.com.

The road would block access to the waterfront and to the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, and in one area, would be directly next to the trail, endangering pedestrians and cyclists moving to and from the trail through Capitol Hill. In addition --

- The proposed road is in a 100-year floodplain. No road should be ever be built here.²
- This is a natural resource area and roads are a danger to wildlife.³
- Residents of eastern Capitol Hill have repeatedly opposed the "Park Drive" in public meetings.

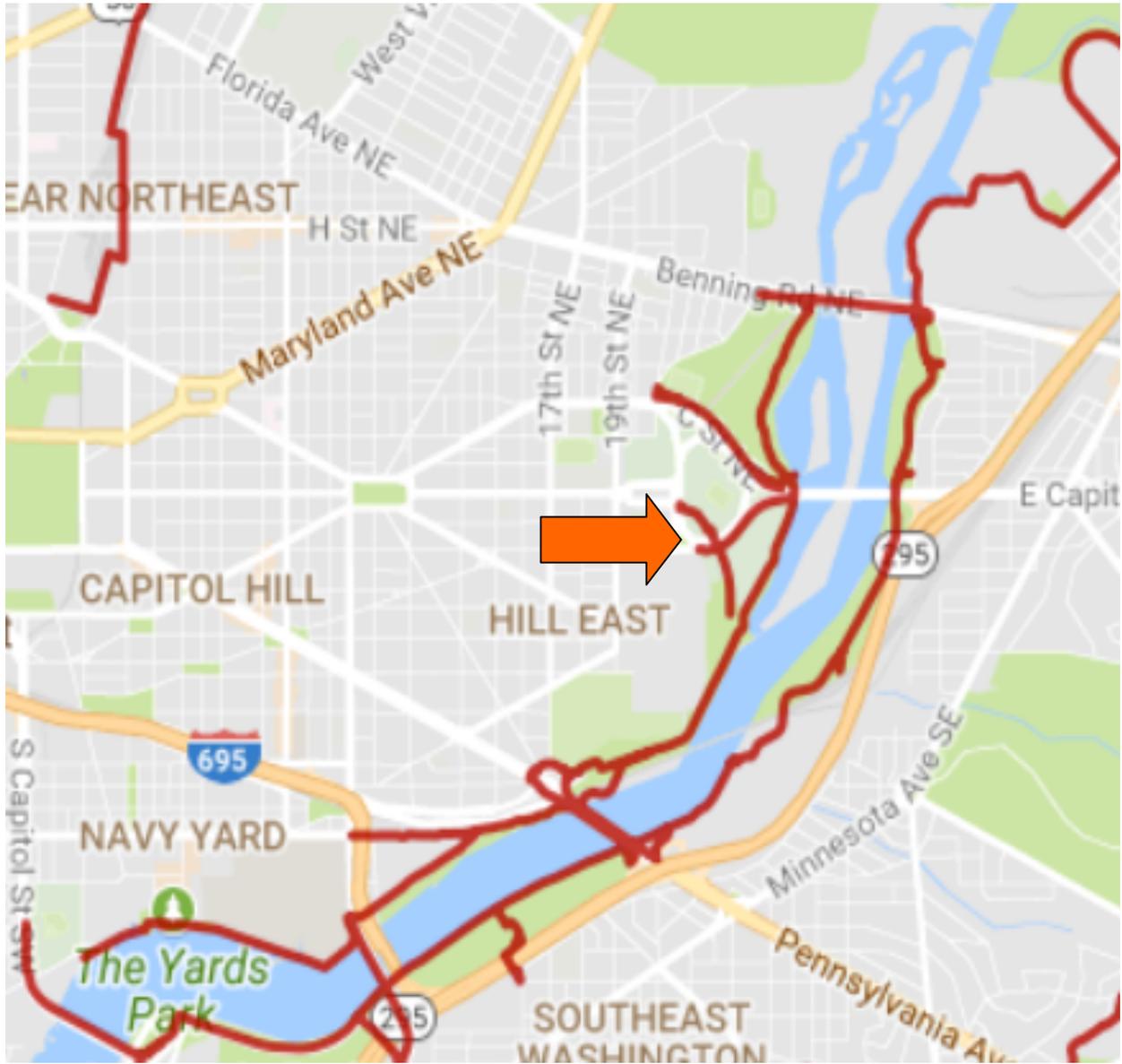
Just as important are the negative effects on the trail itself. As you can see from the map, the proposed road would block access to the waterfront and to the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, and in two sections the road would be directly next to the trail, endangering pedestrians and cyclists using the trail, or moving to and from the trail through Capitol Hill. The road would replace the trail's peace and quiet with noise and pollution.

For all these reasons we urge that the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail be safeguarded from this proposed new road.

² DOEE, "Vulnerability & Risk Assessment: Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the District of Columbia" (2016), Map 4 (500-year flood plain, 2080). DOEE, "Relative Sea Level Rise inundation predictions in Washington, DC for 2018, 2068, and 2100." US Army Corps of Engineers, from DOEE, "Wildlife Action Plan," 124 (2015). Present-day Storm Surge From Category 1, 2, and 3 Storms. DOEE, "Climate Ready DC," 4.

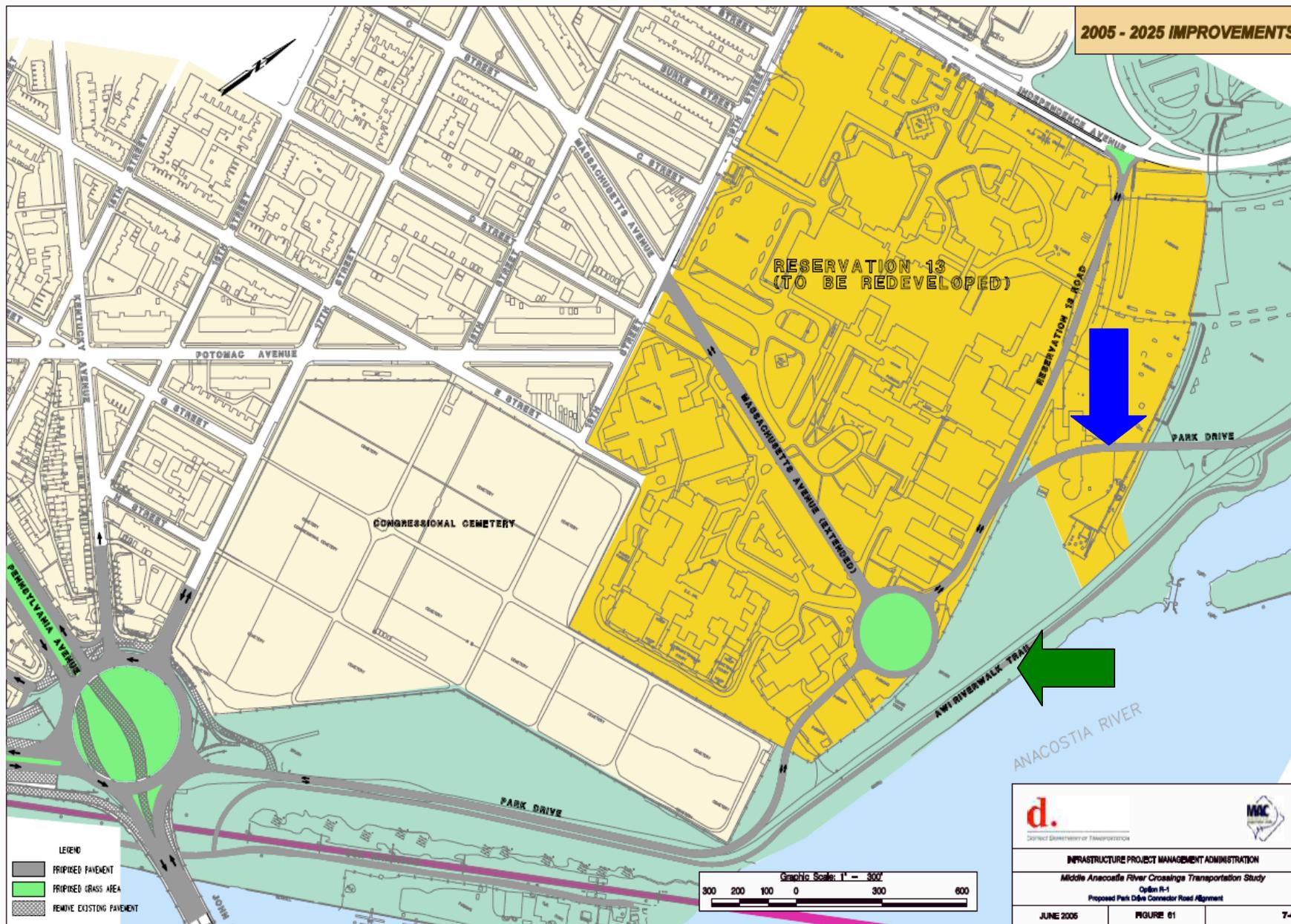
³ Capital Space report, "Ecologically Sensitive Areas" (2010). Roads and walkways reduce habitat connectivity, are an impediment to dispersal and foraging, and are a source of polluted stormwater runoff. DOEE, Wildlife Action Plan, ch. 4, p.101 (2015).

Anacostia Riverwalk Trail - in red. Source: DDOT



Orange arrow = RFK Stadium

Proposed Park Drive, DDOT Middle Anacostia Crossings Study (2005)



Blue arrow = Park Drive Green arrow = Anacostia Riverwalk Trail