

District Waterways Advisory Commission

Thursday, June 25, 2026



AGENDA

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Commission Logistics
3. Review Meeting Objectives and Goals
4. Topic Area #5: Safety & Security
5. Topic Area #6: Transportation Gaps
6. Goals and Strategies
7. Next Steps
8. Adjourn



Commission Logistics



Meeting Objectives



Meeting Objectives

Today's meeting is the third of four meetings focused on the eight topic areas.

	Mar 2026 <i>In-Person</i>	Apr 2026 <i>Virtual</i>	May 2026 <i>In-Person</i>	June 2026 <i>Virtual</i>	July 2026 <i>In-Person</i>
Kickoff & Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions and Plan Objectives and Visioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boating and Recreation Uses • Environmental Conservation and Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Growth • Public/Private Uses of Property and Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and Security • Transportation Gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency and Regional Coordination • Opportunities for Local Control
	Sept 2026 <i>In-Person</i>	Oct 2026 <i>In-Person</i>	Jan 2027 <i>In-Person</i>	Mar 2027 <i>Virtual</i>	
Plan Development and Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Decision Matrix and Discuss Goals and Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Draft Implementation Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and Approve Draft Advisory Plan for Public Comment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Plan Approval • Virtual 	

Meeting Objectives

The goal of these topic-specific meetings is to:

1. **Identify existing conditions and key challenges and opportunities** for the topics.
2. **Discuss a set of preliminary goals** for topic areas:
 - Safety and security risks
 - Transportation gaps

Waterways Advisory Plan

Vision

Today's
Meeting

Three Goals Per Topic Area

Three Strategies Per Goal

Mentimeter Instructions

To facilitate reflection and feedback, we will use Mentimeter during our discussions today. Mentimeter is a tool that supports live, interactive polls, rankings, and responses.

Participating in today's conversation:

- Join our Menti tool using the website and code.
- Respond to the live questions when prompted.

Menti Code:

Join at menti.com | use code **5354 2415**

Recap: Preliminary Goals

Boating and Recreation

Goal 1

Increase recreational opportunities and access points along the waterfront

Goal 2

Foster a safe and accessible boating environment for all users

Goal 3

Establish zones for safe swimming in the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers

Environmental Conditions

Goal 1

Reduce sediment, bacterial, chemical, and trash pollution of the waterways

Goal 2

Improve resilience of the waterways to sea level rise, flooding, stormwater, and sedimentation

Goal 3

Restore aquatic vegetation, wetlands, and native fish and shellfish populations

Recap: Preliminary Goals

Coordinated Economic Growth

Goal 1

Ensure that waterways-adjacent developments make the most of proximity to the rivers while preventing undue environmental harm

Goal 2

Increase waterway tourism

Goal 3

Maximize opportunities for District residents to participate in the sustainable growth and development in and around the waterways

Public/Private Property and Infrastructure

Goal 1

Address existing infrastructure weaknesses to enable safe and effective use of waterways and adjacent land (e.g., replace CSOs, repair or remove seawalls)

Goal 2

Fortify infrastructure to protect against current and future climate threats (e.g., improve levees, create living shorelines)

Goal 3

Enhance and maintain property and infrastructure to create new economic opportunities (e.g., build more public docks, activate and maintain public parks)

Topic Areas

Today's meeting will focus on:



Topic 5 – Safety and Security:

Assessments of safety and security risks and needs on and adjacent to the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers and the Washington Channel.



Topic 6 – Transportation Gaps:

Identification of transportation gaps on and adjacent to the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers and the Washington Channel.

Definitions

The topic areas require standard definitions:



Defining Safety

Ensuring environmental conditions, the interaction of waterway uses, natural conditions, and shoreline conditions enhance comfortable access and minimize risks for waterway users.



Defining Transportation

Transportation of people via foot, bike and vehicle to and on the water and transportation of freight across the water (e.g., Long Bridge).

Framing Around Previous Topics



Boating and recreation requires safe connections to the waterways and can directly support transportation needs.



Environmental conditions are key aspects of enabling safe use of waterways. Transportation on and off the water influence these conditions.



Economic growth will not occur if conditions are unsafe. Water-based and water-adjacent transportation can support economic growth.



Infrastructure can either enhance or harm both safety and security and transportation

Topic Area #5: Safety and Security Risks



Context

Ensuring a safe and secure waterfront, including **emergency response, enforcement, and safety awareness**, requires effective prioritization and coordination.

Guiding Questions

Prioritization

What actions should the District prioritize to improve safety on and around the waterways, such as dredging, traffic guidelines, and emergency response?

Enforcement

Can the District improve enforcement of the waterway rules and regulations (e.g., registration requirements)? How should the District take into account federal responsibilities?

Awareness

How could concerted efforts to raise awareness improve safety and security? What needs to be done by whom?

Other Concerns

What other major safety or security concerns (e.g., lighting, seawalls, abandoned piers, river edge improvements) need to be addressed?

Current Conditions

There is a perceived and real need for increased waterway and waterfront safety to support increased recreational activity.

Evidence



Agency and boating stakeholders suggest **increased activity along the waterways has outpaced the capacity** to support safe usage of the waterways.



There were **1,500+ registered vessels in DC** in 2025, with motorboats as the largest share. The number of vessels registered with the DC government **declined by over 24%** since 2019.



From 2020-2024, there were **12 recreational boating incidents** (e.g., sinking, collision, person ejected from vessel) in DC, almost double the previous five years (2015-2019).

Actions To Consider

1. Create protocols for supporting the facilitation of coordinated activity along the waterways to limit conflicts.
2. Increase education about safe usage of the waterways.
3. Ensure appropriate levels of emergency response capacity.

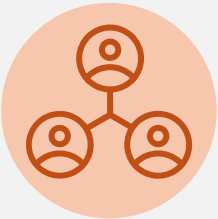
Current Conditions

There is a need for infrastructure and support systems to maintain safety and security on and around the water.

Evidence



According to a survey in the Anacostia River Corridor Restoration Plan, **49% rated safety and security as a high priority while 33% identified not feeling welcome and safe** as an active barrier to accessing the corridor.



The District **lacks sufficient enforcement mechanisms** for individuals and entities that violate vessel registration requirements, and **MPD does not have authority to remove abandoned vessels**. Meanwhile, stakeholders perceive that **federal enforcement is lagging**.



The Anacostia River has **several shallow water spots that are hazards** for inexperienced boaters.

Actions To Consider

1. Assess the need of and capacity for additional safety infrastructure, including physical infrastructure and safety personnel.
2. Update policy to allow for the removal of abandoned vessels within District jurisdiction and to increase fines for improper vessel registration.
3. Work with federal entities to consider the costs/benefits of dredging the Anacostia River and improving waterway signage to indicate shallow waters.

Discussion Questions

Prioritization

What actions should the District prioritize to improve safety on and around the waterways, e.g. dredging, traffic guidelines, and emergency response?

Enforcement

Can the District improve enforcement of the waterway rules and regulations (e.g., registration requirements)? How should the District take into account federal responsibilities?

Awareness

How could concerted efforts to raise awareness improve safety and security? What needs to be done by whom?

Other Concerns

What other major safety or security concerns (e.g., lighting, seawalls, abandoned piers, river edge improvements) need to be addressed?

Mentimeter Questions

NOTE: Interactive slides have to be created in Mentimeter. This is a placeholder slide with the questions we will use.

Free response question: What are the most urgent safety issue on the waterways that this plan should address?

Free response question: Can the District improve enforcement of the waterway rules and regulations (e.g., registration requirements)? How should the District take into account federal responsibilities?

Ranked question: What should the District prioritize for waterway safety in the advisory plan? Options will include: dredging, navigation/traffic guidelines, emergency response, physical infrastructure like seawalls and abandoned piers, boater education and awareness.

Topic Areas #6: Transportation Gaps



Context

Identification of transportation gaps on and adjacent to the water, defining transportation as movement of people via foot, bike and vehicle to and on the water and freight across the water (e.g., Long Bridge).

Guiding Questions

Ferry Service

To what extent should ferry service be a priority, noting that it requires upfront infrastructure investment and ongoing operating subsidy? What do you see as the objectives ferry service would address?

Access to the Water

Where do transportation gaps to the waterways exist and what infrastructure is needed to address them?

Transportation on the Water

Are there constraints on the movement of people or vehicles on the water that need to be addressed? Who/what is constrained? What mobility improvements are needed?

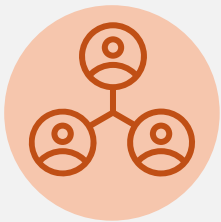
Current Conditions

A growing network of waterfront transportation assets support access to the rivers, including water taxi service, new bridges like the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, and an expanding trail system.

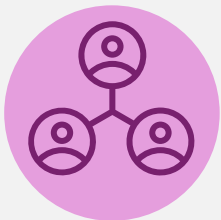
Evidence



In the last decade, the District has **invested in multi-modal waterfront infrastructure**, including the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge and the eventual 28-mile Anacostia Riverwalk Trail.



According to the Anacostia River Corridor Restoration Plan, **69% of respondents identified highways and rail lines** as the primary barrier to access the Anacostia. **67% cited a lack of safe pedestrian and bike connections** from neighboring communities.



Docks, boathouses, and paddle craft facilities have limited storage capacity for additional vessels.

Actions to Consider

1. Continue supporting the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail and related waterfront transportation assets.
2. Continue to build trails that establish new access to the waterfront and seek to mitigate or address transportation infrastructure that cuts access to it.
3. Expand the number of recreational facilities that support watercraft activities along both rivers.

Benefits and Costs of Expanded Ferry Service

A ferry is a passenger vessel operating on a fixed route and regular schedule as a common carrier. The main distinction from a water taxi is a ferry serves a public transit function rather than tourism/leisure.

Pros



Generate an enjoyable experience for tourists and residents



Require much lower capital costs than rail systems or bridges



Create new transportation options for commuters to reduce congestion and redundancies for emergency services

Additional Considerations

1. Consider whether to prioritize the subsidization of ferries for additional transportation optionality, or to allocate that funding elsewhere.
2. Consider the primary user (e.g. tourists, commuters, etc.) of the ferries and their use patterns.

Cons



Operating costs will almost certainly outpace farebox revenue



Ridership often falls short of projections and takes time to build



Difficult to integrate with broader transit network

Benefits and Costs of Expanded Ferry Service

The City Cruises water taxi connects The Wharf, Georgetown and Alexandria. There are no other water taxis in the District.

Poplar Point

1-Stop route · 1 vessel

Poplar Point ↔ Southwest Waterfront
(The Wharf)

Annual Operating Subsidy Required

\$4.5M

Fare

\$2.50

Frequency

30 min

**Annual
Operations**

\$5M

Capital Cost

\$15M–\$28M

River Circulator

6-Stop route · 4 vessels

Georgetown · The Wharf · Buzzard
Point · Poplar Point · Nationals Park ·
The Yards

Annual Operating Subsidy Required

\$2.7M

Fare

\$5.00

Frequency

46 min

**Annual
Operations**

\$4.5M

Capital Cost

\$27M–\$52M

River Circulator

4-Stop route · 4 vessels

Georgetown · The Wharf · Nationals
Park · The Yards

Annual Operating Subsidy Required

\$2.1M

Fare

\$5.00

Frequency

32 min

**Annual
Operations**

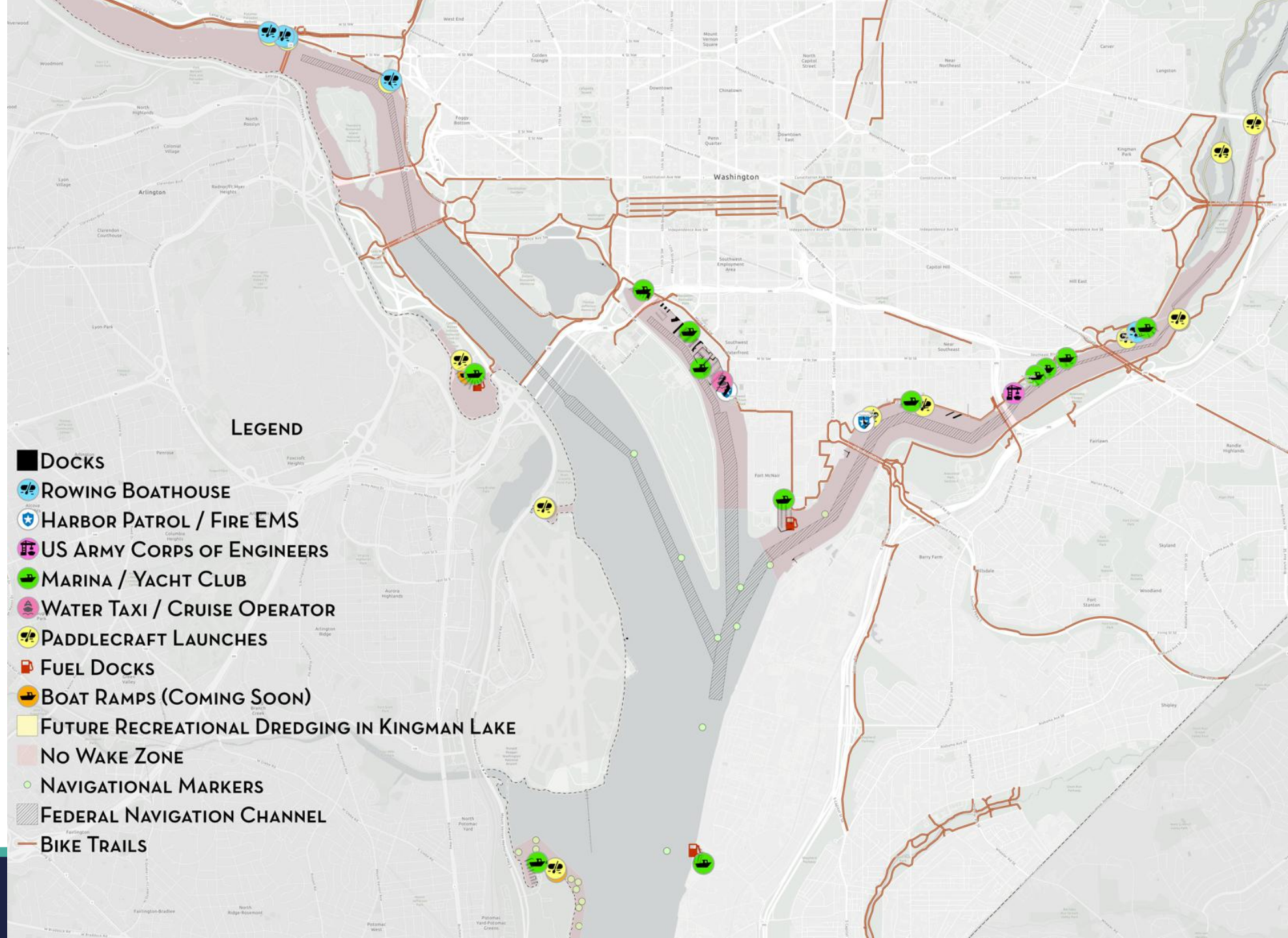
\$3.7M

Capital Cost

\$13M–\$34M

Transportation Infrastructure

The map depicts major recreational and water-based transportation infrastructure.



Discussion Questions

Ferry Service

To what extent should ferry service be a priority, noting that it requires upfront infrastructure investment and ongoing operating subsidy? What do you see as the objectives ferry service would address?

Access to the Water

Where do transportation gaps to the waterways exist and what infrastructure is needed to address them?

Transportation on the Water

Are there constraints on the movement of people or vehicles on the water that need to be addressed? Who/what is constrained? What mobility improvements are needed?

Mentimeter Questions

NOTE: Interactive slides have to be created in Mentimeter. This is a placeholder slide with the questions we will use.

Ranked/Scale: How high of a priority should ferry service be for the District relative to other needs that require funding?

Free response: What and where are the most significant gaps in public access to waterways? What could address these gaps?

Goals and Strategies



Goals and Strategies Discussion

The Advisory Plan Requires:

Vision

Three Goals Per Topic Area

Three Strategies Per Goal

Today's
Discussion

Instructions

1. Reflect on the proposed goals and brainstorm potential strategies – *5 minutes*
2. Share out thoughts with the full group – *30 minutes*

Initial Goals

Safety and Security

Goal 1

Address existing infrastructure weaknesses to enable safe and effective use of waterways and adjacent land (e.g., replace CSOs, repair or remove seawalls)

Goal 2

Foster a safe and accessible boating environment for all users.

Goal 3

Strengthen safety by resolving gaps in enforcement mechanisms and emergency response.

Transportation Gaps

Goal 1

Determine whether water-based transportation could improve the regional transportation system in a financially sustainable way.

Goal 2

Expand safe, equitable transportation access to the waterways.

Goal 3

Enhance property and infrastructure to create new economic opportunities (e.g., reduce trail gaps, build more public docks).

Mentimeter Questions

NOTE: Interactive slides have to be created in Mentimeter. This is a placeholder slide with the questions we will use.

Free response: Do these preliminary goals address the right topics? How would you adjust these?

Free response (for each goal): What strategies should be pursued to achieve Goal X? *[The question will be free response with our drafted strategies already pre-populated. After the Commission adds any other strategies, we will have them vote on all responses]*

Breakout Groups



Next Steps



Next Steps



Community Workshops

- Conducted one virtual workshop (6/23)
- Conducting one in-person workshop (6/25, tonight!)



Public Survey

- Collected over 358 responses to the survey
- Will remain open through the end of June
- **Please share with your networks**



Topic Based Workshop

- Scheduling four workshops to gather targeted feedback on topic areas

Next Steps

During the next meeting, we will work to identify a set of goals for **Interagency and Regional Coordination** and **Opportunities for Local Control**.

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Meeting Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions and Plan Objectives and Visioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boating and Recreation Uses • Environmental Conservation and Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated Economic Growth • Public/Private Uses of Property and Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and Security • Transportation Gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency and Regional Coordination • Opportunities for Local Control • Identify Potential Goals for each topic
	Sept 2026 <i>In-Person</i>	Oct 2026 <i>In-Person</i>	Jan 2027 <i>In-Person</i>	Mar 2027 <i>Virtual</i>	
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Next Steps

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Brent comment – he’s hoping to have confirmation of the Anacostia River Field Trip on July 22 by this week

Image Credit: Stephan B. Goodwin

District Waterways Advisory Commission

Thursday, June 25, 2026

