



## Kennedy Center Potomac River Pedestrian Access

Washington, DC Public Scoping – February 2011



# Scoping Newsletter

## Environmental Assessment

National Mall and Memorial Parks

### Kennedy Center Potomac River Pedestrian Access

Washington, DC Public Scoping – February 2011

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

## Public Scoping Period and How to Comment

The Superintendent has announced a 30-day public scoping period to solicit comments on the Kennedy Center/Potomac River Pedestrian Access Improvement. During this scoping period, the public is invited to comment on the proposed action, and identify potential issues or concerns for consideration in the Environmental Assessment (EA). Interested parties are also invited to participate in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

Comments can be submitted electronically at the National Park Service's Planning, Environmental and Public Comments website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/NAMA>). Written comments may be mailed to:

Greenhorne & O'Mara  
Attn: Alexis Morris  
810 Gleneagles Ct., Suite 106  
Baltimore, MD 21286

NPS requests that mailed comments must be postmarked by **March 14, 2011** to receive consideration. Your input will allow us to comprehensively address all potential impacts as the process moves forward.

## Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in conjunction with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (the Kennedy Center) is proposing to provide pedestrian access between the Kennedy Center River Terrace and the Potomac Riverfront in Washington, DC; providing a direct link between the Kennedy Center and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Trail, part of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and other applicable laws, regulations, and policies; the NPS and FHWA are initiating work on an Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA will evaluate the potential impacts of various alternatives of the proposed project to the natural, cultural, and human environments.

## Project Background

In October 2003 the FHWA; in cooperation with the Kennedy Center, the NPS, the National Capital Planning Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts, and DDOT; prepared *Kennedy Center Access Improvements Environmental Assessment and 4(f) Evaluation* (2003 EA). This document analyzed the potential environmental impacts of implementing two action alternatives and the No

Action Alternative for improved access to the Kennedy Center. The action alternatives in the 2003 EA proposed pedestrian, vehicle, and bicycle circulation management improvements, including pedestrian access from the Kennedy Center River Terrace to the Potomac Riverfront and Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Trail.

Since the completion of the 2003 EA, concept level designs for the proposed pedestrian access from the Kennedy Center River Terrace to the Potomac Riverfront have been developed, resulting in a change in impacts from those which were considered in the 2003 EA. These concept designs have prompted NPS and FHWA to evaluate the need for a jurisdictional transfer of lands to accommodate the proposed staircases and elevators.

## Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve pedestrian access between the Kennedy Center River Terrace and the Potomac Riverfront in Washington, DC. The action is needed because physical barriers and safety concerns currently discourage pedestrian traffic between these two resources.

Pedestrian access to the Kennedy Center is available only on the opposite (east) side of the building via the Entrance Plaza or the North Plaza. Furthermore, while visitors to the Kennedy Center are currently able to

enjoy views of the Potomac River from the River Terrace, an unrealized potential exists to unite these two resources. Pedestrian access improvements would enhance the aesthetic connectivity of the Kennedy Center to the Potomac Riverfront, while providing a safe pedestrian access facility, fully separated from the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway.

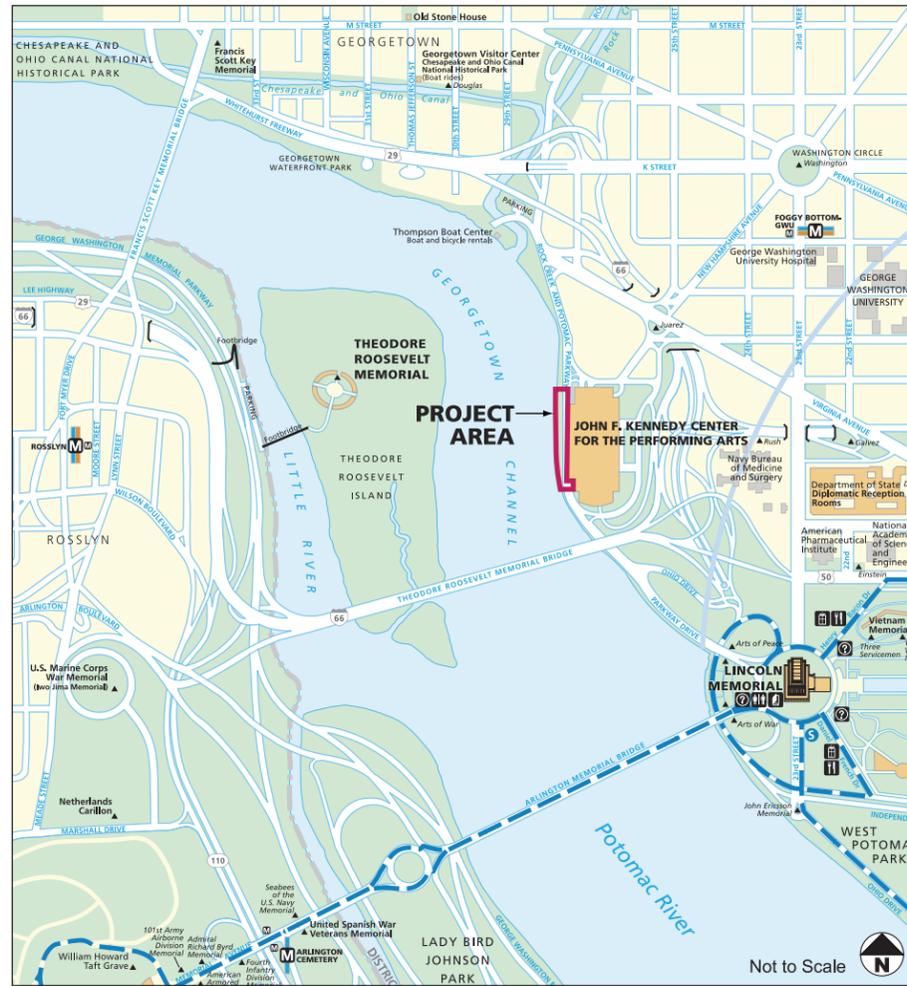
## Project Objectives

1. Provide a direct pedestrian route between the Kennedy Center and the Potomac Riverfront.
2. Enhance the visitor experience by encouraging interaction with the Potomac Riverfront and promoting walk-ability in and around neighborhoods, including Georgetown and Foggy Bottom, and their amenities.
3. Minimize disruption to Kennedy Center and park visitors during construction.
4. Minimize user conflicts by reducing pedestrian and vehicle conflicts and providing a clearly defined throughway for bicyclists using the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Trail.
5. Preserve and minimize impacts to the integrity of the Kennedy Center, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, and other area resources.

## Project Location

The Kennedy Center is positioned east of Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and west of Interstate 66, along the waterfront of the Potomac River, in Washington, DC. The Kennedy Center River Terrace overhangs the northbound lanes of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. The Kennedy Center is bounded to the north by F Street NW and to the south a parking area serves as a buffer between the Kennedy Center and Interstate 66/US Route 50 (the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge).

The project area is defined as the area between the existing Kennedy Center River Terrace and the Potomac River edge, running the length of the Kennedy Center River Terrace. The proposed action, constructed directly adjacent to the Kennedy Center River Terrace, would cross over the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and tie into the existing Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Trail. Some trail rehabilitation/resurfacing could occur in association with the proposed action.



## Preliminary Resources and Impact Topics

Initial internal discussions by the NPS and FHWA will consider a number of physical, biological, cultural, socioeconomic, and operational resources that could potentially be affected by the proposed Kennedy Center/Potomac River Pedestrian Access Improvements. The following resources and impact topics were identified for evaluation in the EA:

- Floodplains
- Vegetation
- Scenic Resources/Viewshed Analysis
- Visitor Use and Experience
- Park Operations and Management
- Transportation
- Land Use
- Historic Structures
- Cultural Landscapes

### Project milestones include:

February 14, 2011	Initiate Public Scoping
February 22, 2011	Public Scoping Meeting
March 14, 2011	Public Scoping Period Ends
March 2011	Analysis of Scoping Comments
April 2011	EA available for Public Review
April/May 2011	EA Public Comment Period (30 days)
May/June 2011	Analysis of Public Comments
July 2011	Preparation of Decision Document

## Next Steps

### Public Scoping Meeting

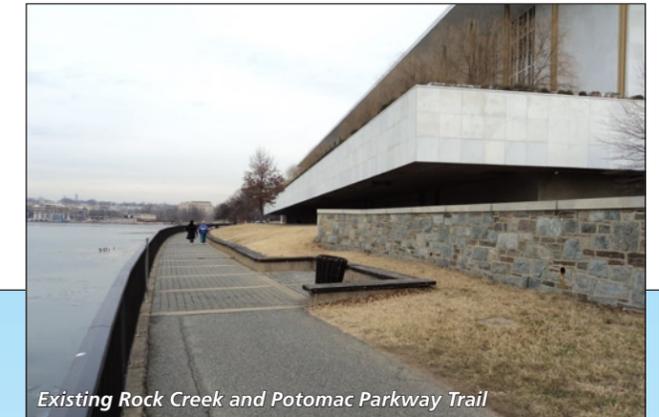
A public scoping meeting will be held **February 22, 2011**. This public scoping meeting will include an “open house” format that will include a brief presentation about the project. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. NPS and planning staff will be on hand to visit with you and answer questions. The location, time, and date are presented below:

**February 22, 2011**  
 Open House: 6:00-8:00 p.m.  
 Presentation: 6:30 p.m.  
 The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts  
 2700 F Street, NW  
 Washington, DC 20566

A court reporter will be available to transcribe oral comments submitted during the open house portion of the scoping meeting. Only written comments or oral comments transcribed by the court reporter will be accepted during this meeting.



Kennedy Center River Terrace



Existing Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Trail

