

BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK AREA  
Georges Island Pier Improvement Project  
Boston, MA



Newsletter, April 23, 2009

Greetings,

This newsletter presents preliminary alternatives to replace the pier at Georges Island. We welcome your comments and suggestions on these or other alternatives you may favor.

During the public scoping period we heard from agencies, marina operators, recreational boaters, and non-profit groups. We considered comments and suggestions from those sources in developing the preliminary alternatives. In particular:

- Separate commercial and recreational uses;
- Provide wave protection, such as a floating breakwater or wave fence;
- Maintain the historic character of the island environment;
- Support a variety of uses, including ferry, commercial, and recreational access;
- Allow for future expansion, using floating docks or mooring fields; and
- Meet applicable accessibility requirements.

All of the alternatives under consideration are presented in this newsletter. Later in the planning process we will select a few alternatives for analysis, including a formal public review period. In the meantime, we welcome your thoughts on the preliminary alternatives. Please provide your comments on-line at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BOHA>. Follow the links to *Georges Island – Evaluate and Design Hub Island Pier*. Comments may also be sent by mail to: Boston Harbor Islands, Georges Island Pier Improvement Project, 408 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 228, Boston, MA 02110.

We appreciate your involvement on this project to improve visitor services at Georges Island.



Bruce Jacobson  
National Park Service



Susan Kane  
Department of Conservation & Recreation

## The National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider and document the potential impacts of management actions on the human environment for any federal undertaking. The National Park Service applies NEPA in the planning process to evaluate alternative courses of action and to analyze potential impacts of those alternatives.

The NEPA planning process for this project includes the following steps:

- Scoping – to identify issues and obtain input from the public and interested agencies and organizations early in the planning process (completed November 2008).
- Alternatives Development – to identify a range of alternatives that meets the purpose and need for the action (the current step).
- Environmental Assessment – to analyze the potential environmental impacts of alternatives and identify the agency preferred alternative.
- Decision document – to document a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or, if the potential for significant impacts is identified, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The NEPA planning process will be completed in 2009.

## Georges Island Pier Improvement

The National Park Service (NPS) and Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) are identifying and evaluating alternatives for improving the existing pier facility on Georges Island in Boston Harbor Islands national park area. The existing timber pier is almost 50 years old, and the associated piles and submerged members are in poor condition. The pier facility, owned and managed by DCR, serves as a water transportation hub for the park.

As part of the planning process, an Environmental Assessment is being prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to analyze and disclose potential impacts of alternatives for replacing the pier.



Existing Pier in 2008

## Purpose and Need of the Proposed Action

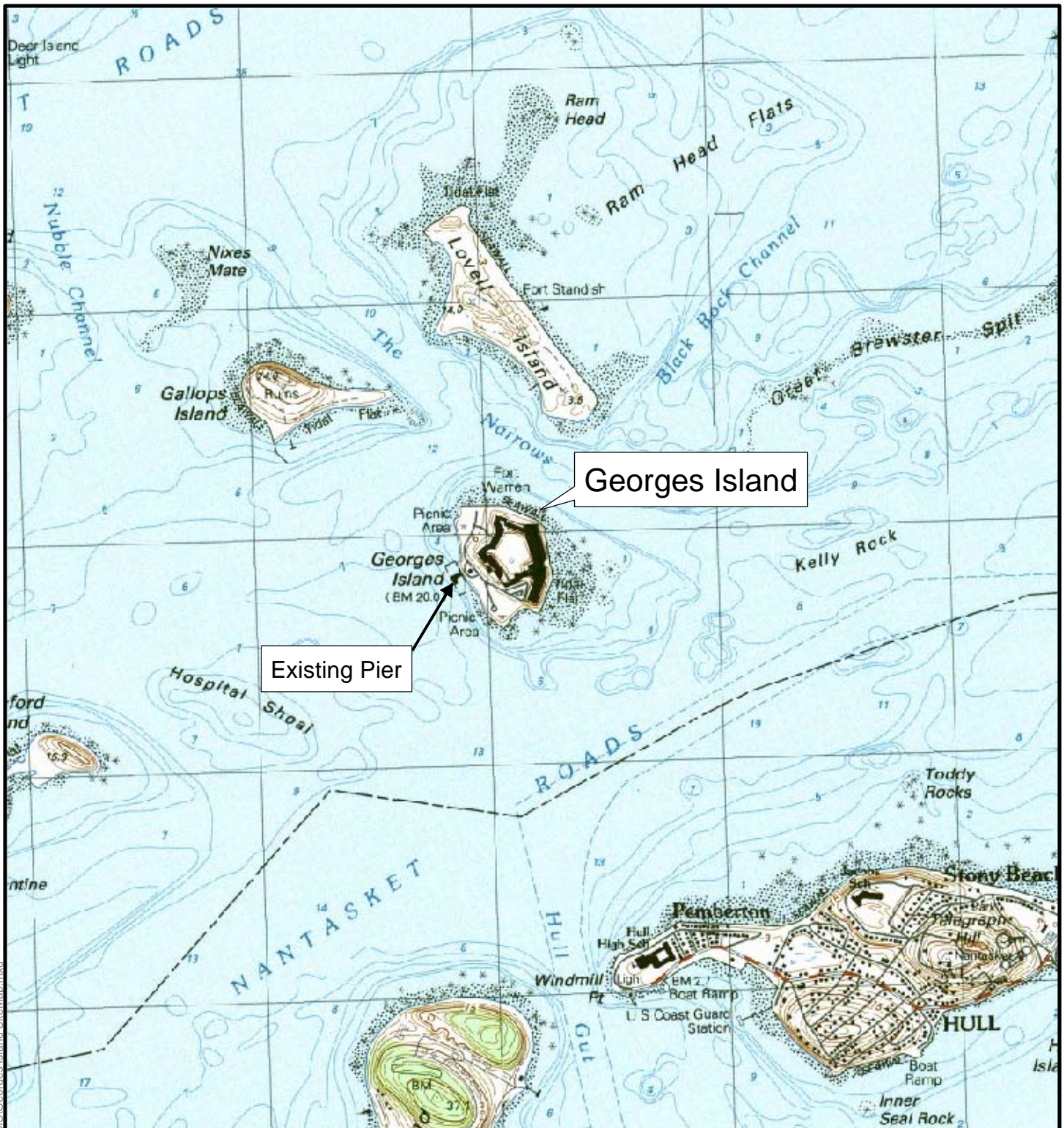
Georges Island pier provides access to a culturally and environmentally rich resource in Boston Harbor Islands national park area. As shown in Figure 1, the pier is the only means of docking at Georges Island and serves as a water transportation hub for visitors exploring the Boston Harbor Islands by ferry, charter boat, and private vessel.

The purpose of this project is to replace the deteriorated pier facility on Georges Island in a manner that protects the cultural and environmental resources of the Boston Harbor Islands national park area. The key objectives of the proposal are to accommodate present and future visitor use, preserve the historical character of the island, enhance visitor enjoyment of the island, and improve public safety.



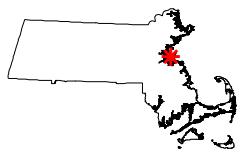
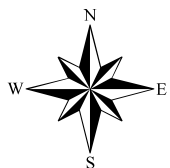
Existing Pier Circa 1890





Georges Island

Existing Pier



**FIGURE 1  
SITE LOCATION**

**GEORGES ISLAND PIER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT  
BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS, MASSACHUSETTS**



260 FRANKLIN STREET, SUITE 300  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
(617) 542-4244

Project No. 10160608

March 2009

This action is needed to:

- Replace deteriorated timber piles and wave fence with a new pier, which will enhance visitor and staff safety,
- Accommodate potential increased visitor use,
- Bring the facility into compliance with current design standards, including Americans with Disabilities (ADA) guidelines and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) requirements, and
- Reduce the escalating cost of maintenance and repair due to continued deterioration of the existing facility.

### **Development of Alternatives**

In 2007, DCR developed five conceptual design options for replacement of the deteriorated pier facility. During the current planning, two additional alternatives were developed. All seven preliminary alternatives are presented below. The following design considerations were used when developing the alternatives:

- Maintain a fixed pier location to mitigate potential historic and cultural resource impacts,
- Provide separation of uses between recreational, commercial, and DCR vessels,
- Provide protection from wave and wake action in the harbor for boats docked at the facility,
- Maximize the use of fixed versus modular dock components, and
- Accommodate recreational vessels with opportunities to expand berthing in the future.

The planning team is considering removing alternatives A, D, and E from further consideration and analysis because the alternatives either do not meet the purpose and need, or they duplicate, to a large degree, another alternative.

The current configuration of the pier facility is shown in Figure 2 for reference.

#### ***Alternative A***

The layout of Alternative A (Figure 3) replaces the existing piers with fixed piers of similar size and extent. This alternative maintains the existing

configuration of the fixed piers currently in place. A wave fence protects the basins from wave action. A floating barge system for commercial vessels in the north basin is the main functional difference from the existing conditions. Recreational vessels and DCR vessels use the south basin. A floating barge system for commercial vessels connecting directly to the shoreline changes the approach to the island from a fixed pier to floating docks.

#### ***Alternative B***

The layout of Alternative B (Figure 4) replaces the existing piers with two piers oriented in similar directions to the existing. The two fixed piers create one large basin to accommodate commercial traffic and DCR vessels, with limited recreational boat access to the north of the north pier. A wave fence protects the basin from wave action, although the layout is exposed to the west.

#### ***Alternative C***

The layout of Alternative C (Figure 5) is a variation on Alternative B. The difference being that the south pier is angled towards the northwest to provide much greater protection with the wave fence. The greater protection comes at the expense of maneuvering room for commercial vessels in the basin. Limited recreational boat access is provided to the north of the north pier. The incorporation of a floating barge system for commercial vessels connecting directly to the shoreline also changes the approach to the island from a fixed pier to floating docks.

#### ***Alternative D***

The layout of Alternative D (Figure 6) uses two fixed piers to create two basins. The north basin contains the floating dock and has some exposure to the north. The floating barge system is pushed well in behind the extended northern leg of the north pier to provide good protection to the southwest. Recreational boats and DCR vessels are protected in the south basin.

Figure 2: Existing Pier Layout

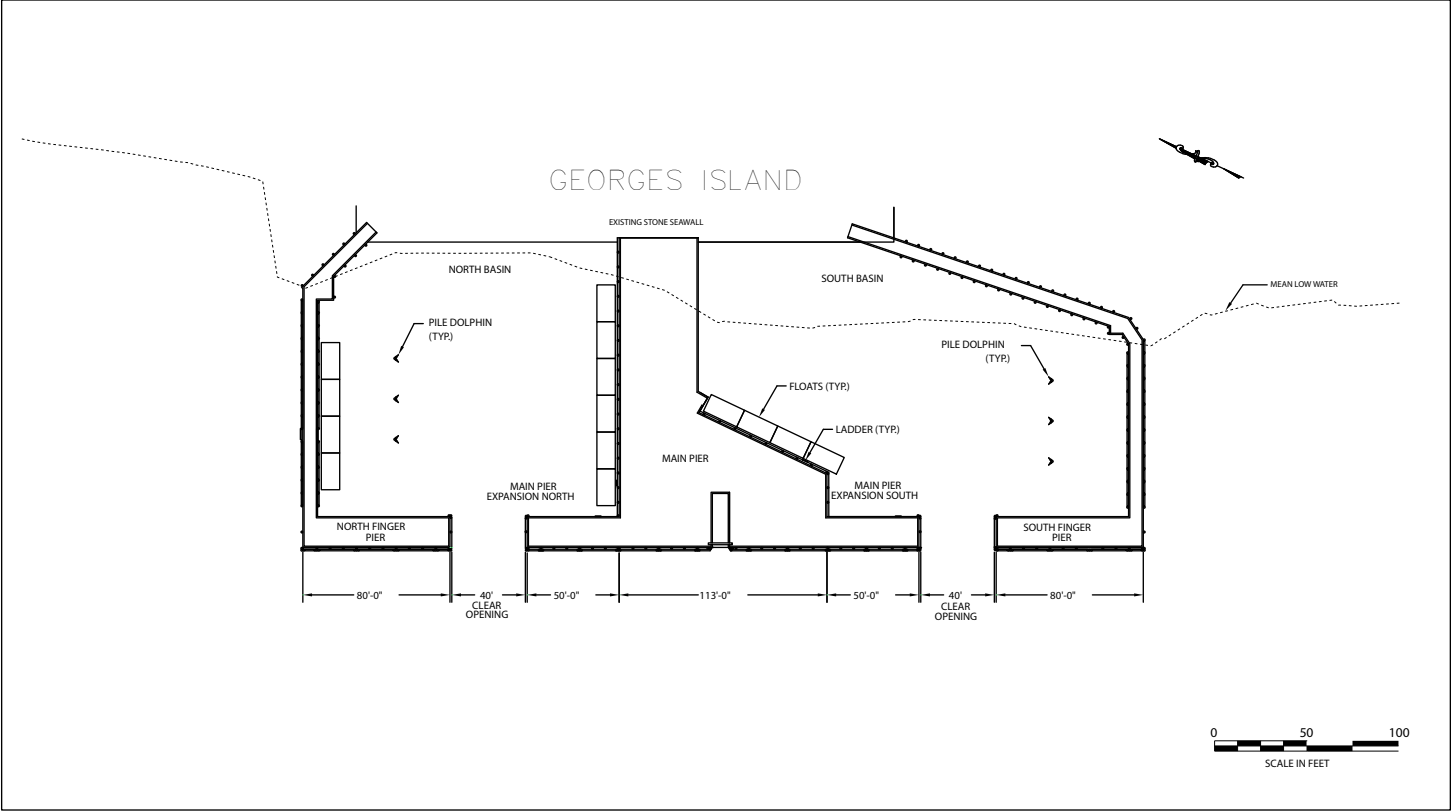


Figure 3: Alternative A

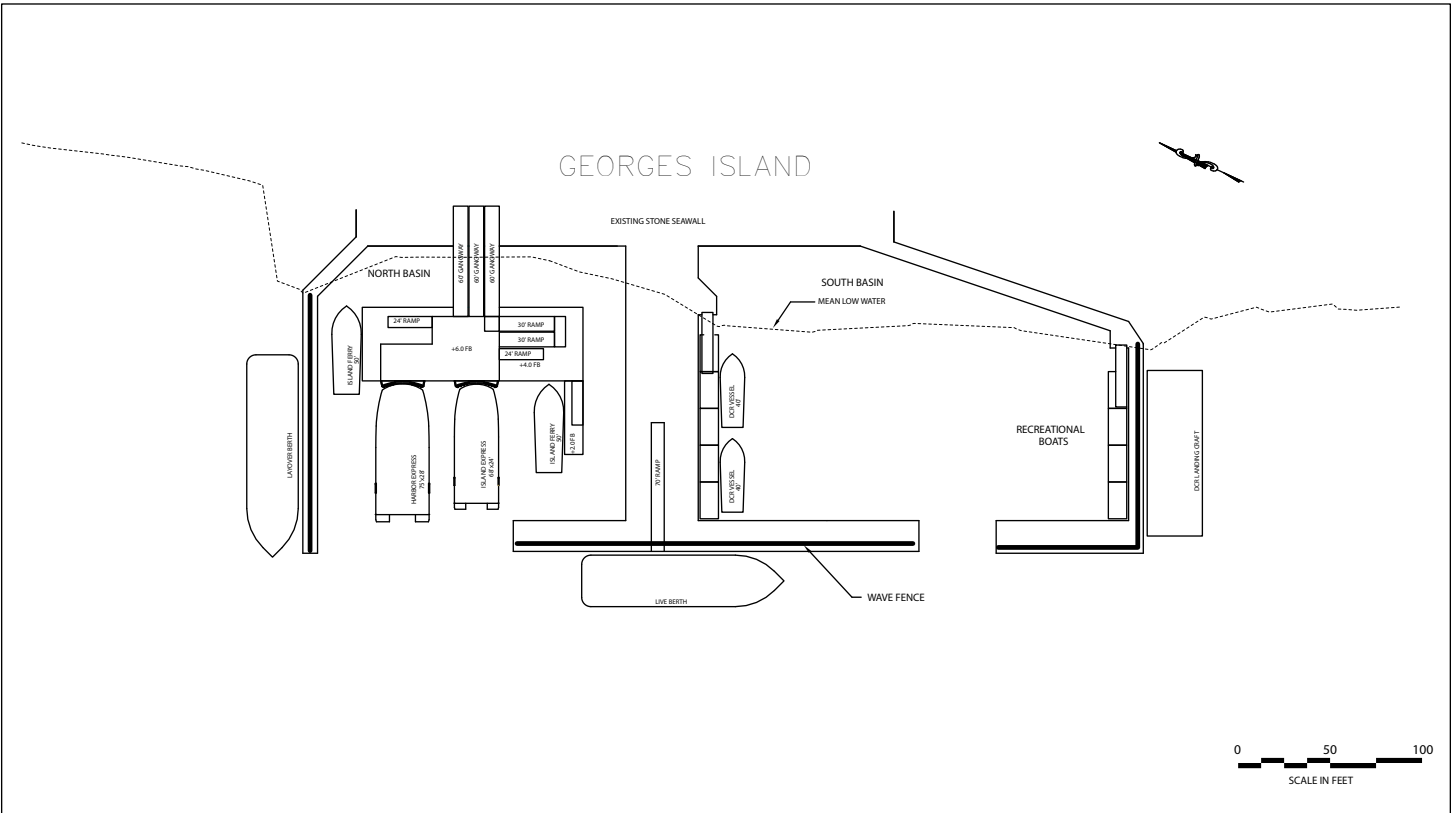


Figure 4: Alternative B

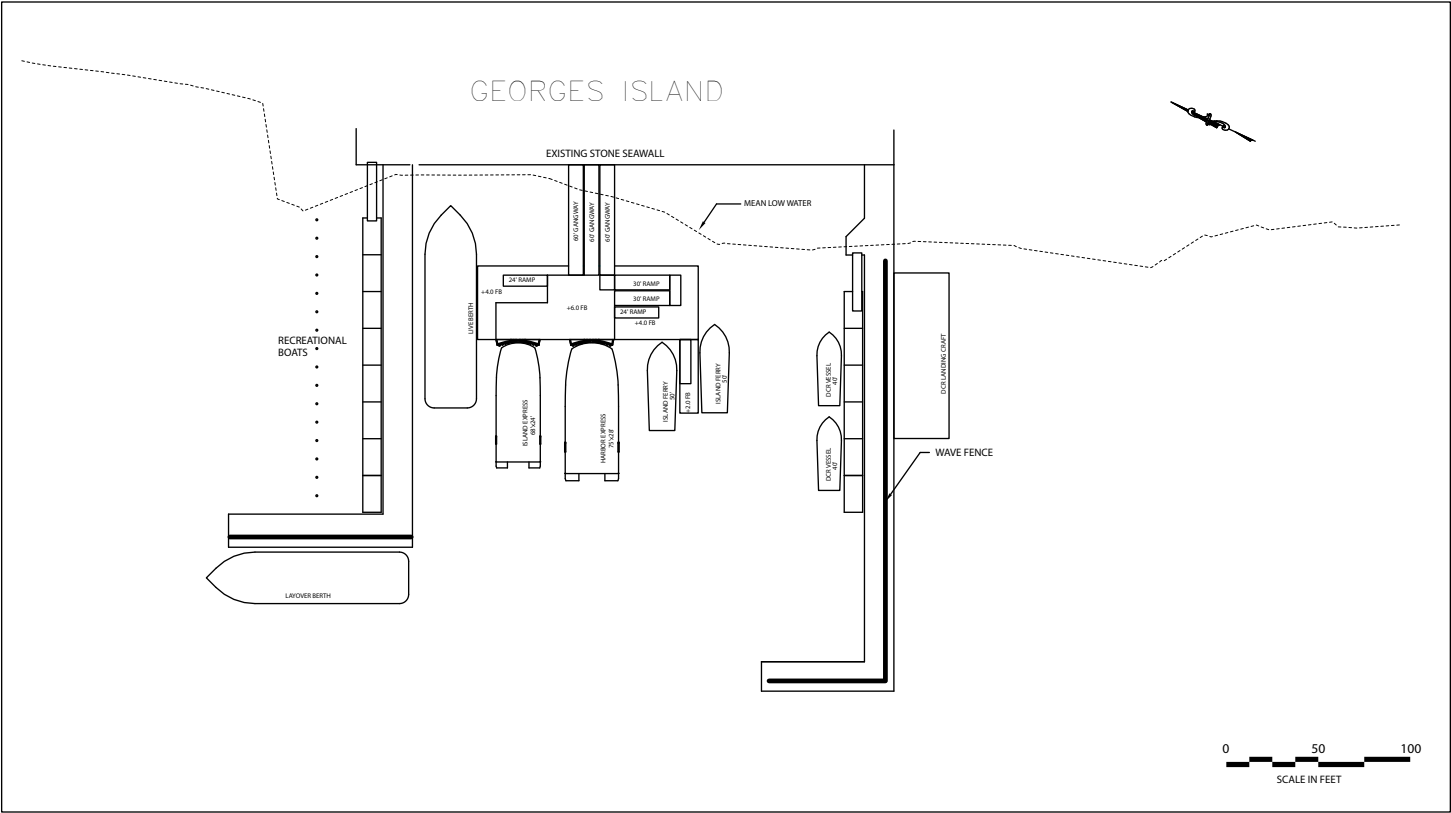


Figure 5: Alternative C

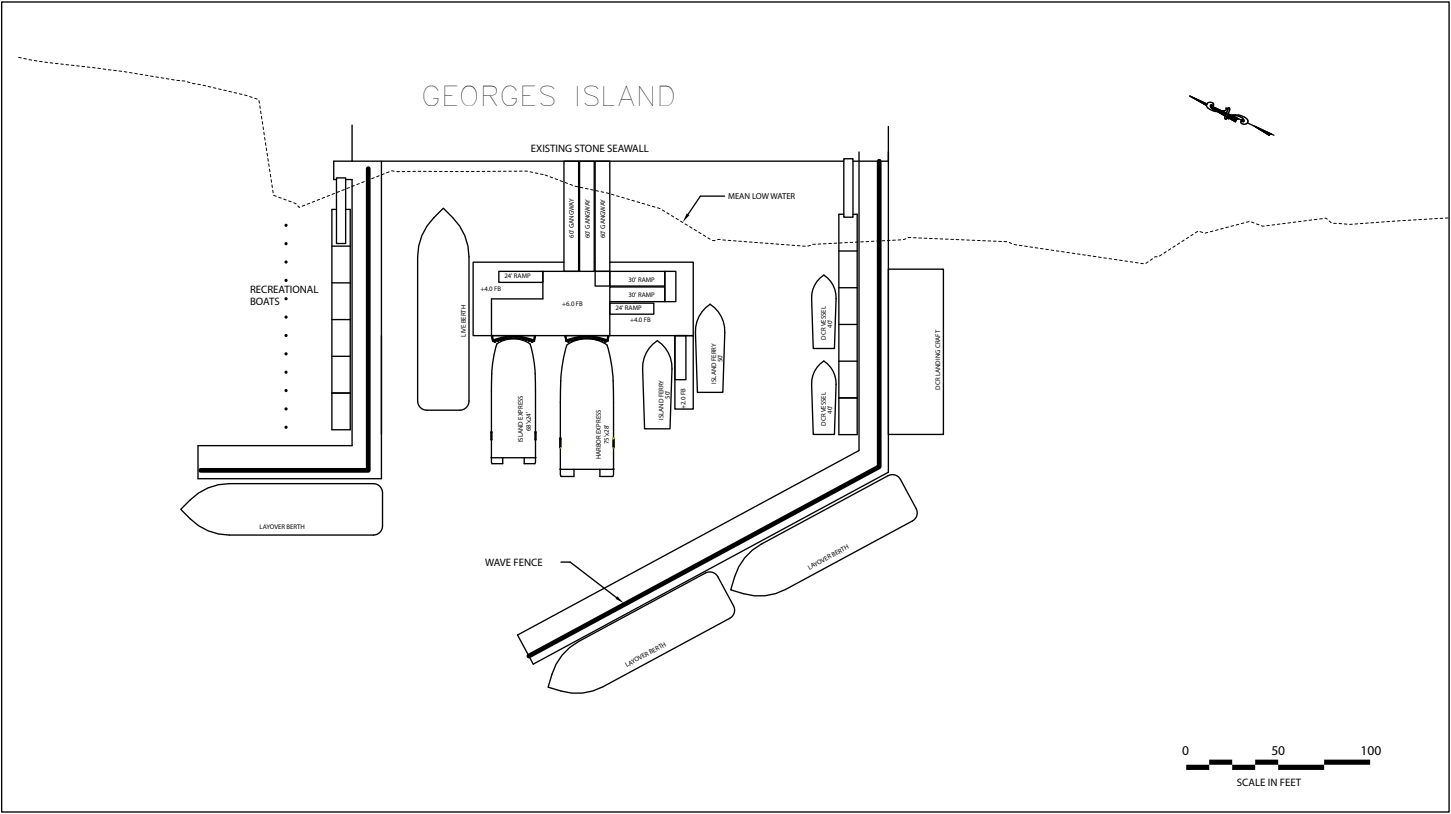
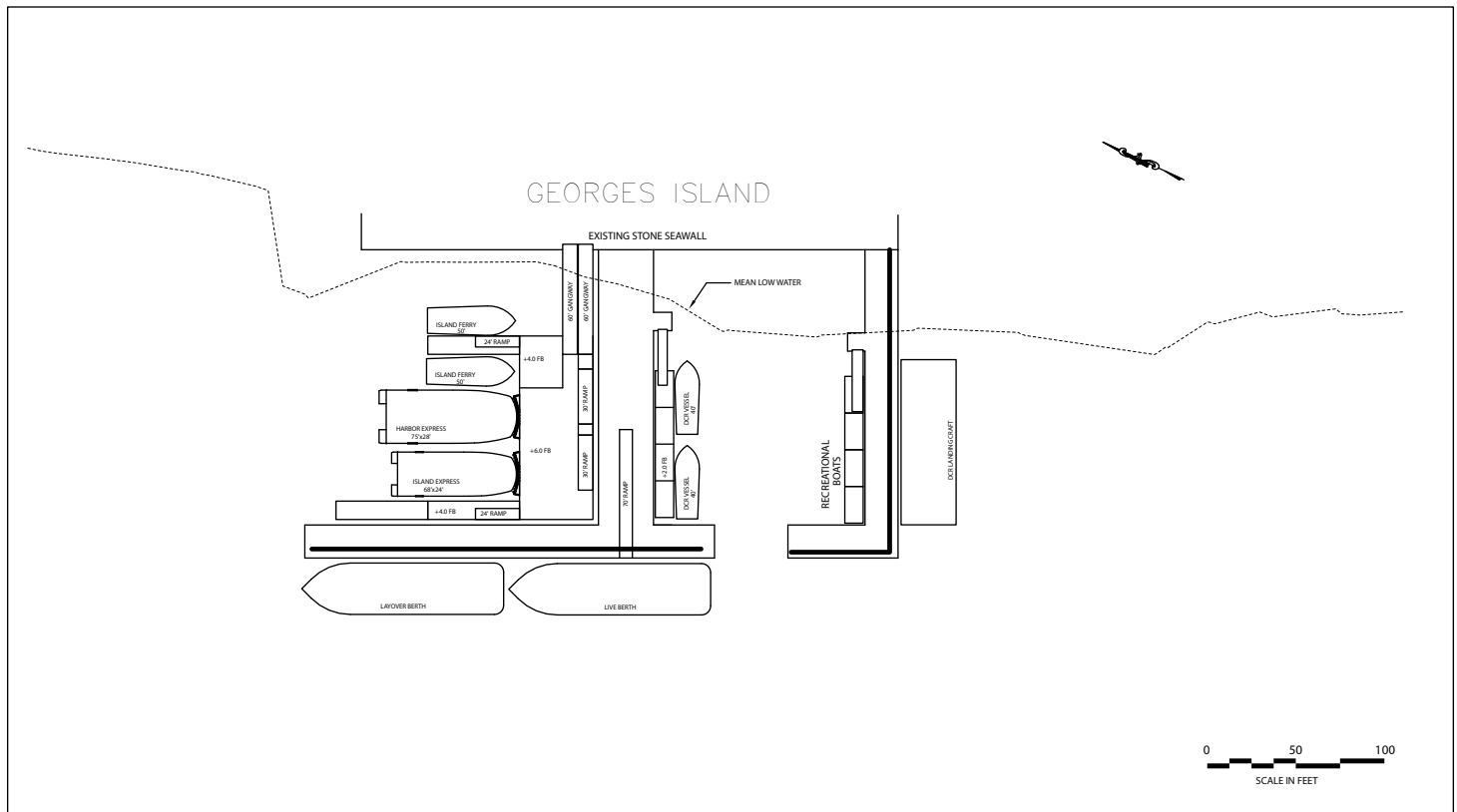




Figure 6: Alternative D



### ***Alternative E***

The layout of Alternative E (Figure 7) is a variation on Alternative C. The barge system is angled to allow it to be located further into the basin for added protection. The angle of the barge system results in a larger fixed pier footprint to provide the shore connection for the gangways. It also provides more direct access for commercial vessels entering the basin. Limited recreational boat access is provided to the north of the north pier.

### ***Alternative F***

The layout of Alternative F (Figure 8) replaces the existing pier with two fixed piers and associated floating docks. The floating docks for the commercial vessels are located in the North Basin, which maintains the location and general historical configuration of the main pier, and replaces the south finger pier with a wider pier oriented in roughly the same direction as the existing structure. A wave fence is provided for the

outer pier portion of the main pier and the south finger pier, which in addition to the angled design provides sheltered berthing for vessels. The south basin contains a marina for recreational vessels.

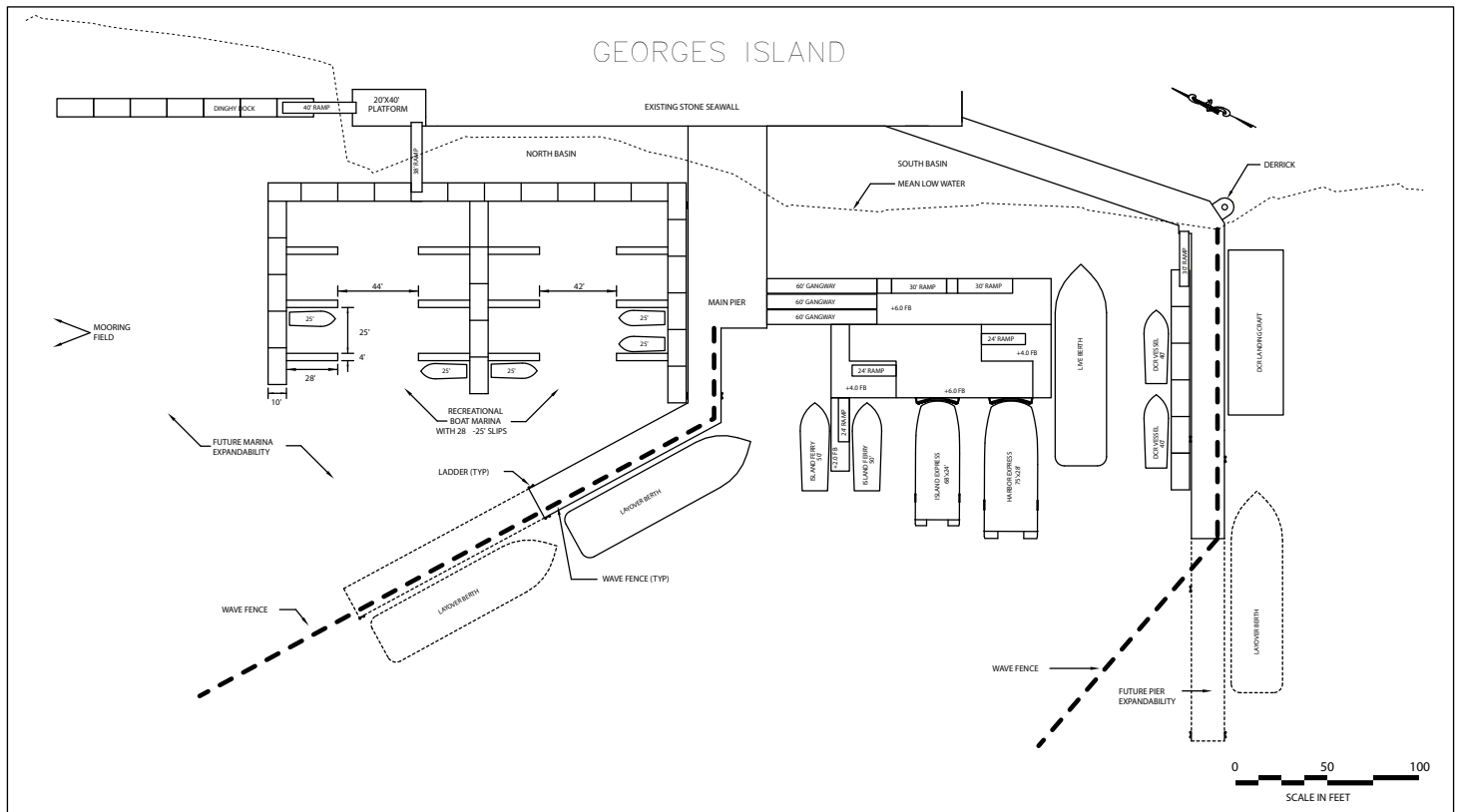
### ***Alternative G***

The layout of Alternative G (Figure 9) also replaces the existing pier with two fixed piers and associated floating docks. The floating docks for the commercial vessels are located in the South Basin, which maintains the location and general historical configuration of the main pier, and replaces the south finger pier with a wider pier oriented in roughly the same direction as the existing structure. A wave fence is provided for the outer pier portion of the main pier and the south finger pier, which in addition to the angled design provides sheltered berthing for vessels. The north basin contains a marina for recreational vessels.

[illegible][illegible]



Figure 9: Alternative G



### Next Steps

The NEPA process was initiated in November 2008, when the NPS held a public scoping meeting in Boston to identify issues and obtain public input.

The information obtained during this meeting and the public scoping period that followed was used to develop the alternatives presented in this newsletter.

We invite you to comment on these alternatives or provide suggestions for other alternatives. NPS and DCR will then further refine the alternatives and prepare the environmental assessment. NPS plans to release the EA for agency and public review and comment early fall of 2009.

Following the public review of the Environmental Assessment, NPS will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or, if impacts are

potentially significant, a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. If pier replacement is the selected alternative for implementation, NPS and DCR will develop design plans for the new facility and seek funding with the goal of starting construction in 2011.

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## BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS



Questions or comments related to Georges  
Island pier improvements should be sent to:

### **Boston Harbor Islands**

Georges Island Pier Improvement Project  
408 Atlantic Avenue  
Suite 228  
Boston, MA 02110

### **Phone**

617-223-8667

### **On the Internet**

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BOHA>

### **For Visitor Information**

<http://www.bostonharborislands.com>