

Elements of the Riverfront Vision



As Community Development Department staff continue to study possible improvements to the Cambridge Riverfront, there are three types of opportunities that will help for the riverfront vision.

◀ MORE AND BETTER OPPORTUNITES FOR ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION:

Linear spaces and parks that form nodes of activity



◀ ENHANCED CONNECTIONS:

Identifying and strengthening the streets, sidewalks, and pathways that enable people to access the riverfront



◀ FOCUS ON POSITIVE CHANGE:

Opportunities via site and building redevelopment

CAMBRIDGE RIVERFRONT: Connecting People to the Charles

Cambridge Community Development Department, 2010

The Cambridge Community Development Department is studying ways to improve the Charles Riverfront, which was given its urban form more than a century ago through the filling of Back Bay, the construction of seawalls along the main basin, and the creation of bridges connecting Cambridge to Boston. This evolution of a swampy area to a beautiful urban riverfront has enabled city residents to access the water, with its dramatic vistas and opportunities for recreation. The riverfront is a complex urban space that can be analyzed from many perspectives. This study will look at the Charles from the point of view of a wide variety of people (residential neighbors, students, office workers, visitors, etc.) who want to move easily from sites in Cambridge down to the river, and to spend time enjoying the many pleasures of the open vistas of water, sky, and cityscape, whether quietly reading at the water's edge, walking with friends in conversation, or bringing a family picnic to enjoy while watching sailboats gliding across the river.

While the City of Cambridge does not directly control much of the riverfront, the study aims to articulate a vision that should be helpful over the coming years, as opportunities for collaborations arise. Although the Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns the water and most of the direct frontage on it, the designs of a multitude of adjacent uses in Cambridge (MIT buildings, Harvard buildings, hotels, office buildings, housing, retailing, etc.) influence how people get to the river, and how they use it. The underlying goal is to expand the formal and informal use of the riverfront through enhanced connections, more and better recreational opportunities, and a focus on positive change when development opportunities arise.



Going from the upper left, this aerial view of the riverfront shows North Point and the Museum of Science, East Cambridge, the Longfellow Bridge going into Kendall Square, and the MIT frontage near the Sloan School on the lower right.



The Broad Canal walkway, which opened in 2009, makes an important new connection between Kendall Square and the Riverfront.

RIVERFRONT-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Seek further improvements along the DCR-owned river frontage — benches, kiosks, trees, “look-outs” that would provide opportunities to pause and enjoy views of the riverfront
- Maintain and enhance tree canopy
- Encourage welcoming and active ground-floor uses along the riverfront
- Improve pedestrian flow to the river (street trees, improved sidewalks, and street lighting)
- Improve bicycle flow to and along the river
- Analyze feasibility of additional boat access
- Support regular events and activities that bring people to the river

LOCATION-SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES

1. Bridge to Paul Revere Landing in Charlestown
2. Future Skateboard Park
3. Future use of remnant parcel
4. Pedestrian bridge between North Point Park and O'Brien Highway
5. O'Brien Highway pedestrian improvements
6. Reuse of DCR stable and boathouse buildings
7. Museum Point improvements
8. Pedestrian connection along Museum of Science
9. Land Boulevard crossings
10. Front Park improvements
11. Planned new Rogers Street Park
12. Planned new triangle park at Binney and First St
13. Broad Canal improvements
14. DCR's Phase II plan —benches, kiosks, etc.
15. Grand Junction multi-use path
16. Improve existing and evaluate new crossing of the Grand Junction railroad track
17. Improve pedestrian and bike crossing of Memorial Drive at Magazine Beach
18. Phase II of Magazine Beach improvements – tot lot, pathways, improve lookout/river viewing area
19. Create vision for the Trader Joe's/Microcenter site -- Riverside Road
20. Create vision for gas station parcels at Memorial Drive and River Street
21. Open space improvements at Memorial Drive and Dewolve St
22. Utilize opportunities for scenic lookout using existing outfall areas
23. Improve Memorial Drive crossing
24. Improvements at Sekler Playlot
25. Pedestrian and bike improvements at intersection of Memorial Drive and Greenough Boulevard– crossings, sidewalks
26. Improve connection between Strawberry Hill and West Cambridge neighborhoods and river
27. Potential quiet lookout area near boat club /Jerry's Landing historical site
28. Hell's Half Acre wetland and potential open space
29. Vision for Greenough Boulevard



RIVERFRONT RECOMMENDATIONS LEGEND

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|---|--|
|  Potential New Water Access |  Potential New Open Space |
|  Potential Water Access Improvement |  Potential Open Space Improvement |
|  Potential for Site (Re)development |  Needs Further Study |
|  Potential New Bicycle/Pedestrian Connection |  Potential Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvement |
|  Potential Lookout | |