Open Space Plan 2008-2012

Section 7
Analysis of Needs

Section 7.2.7 Community Open Space & Recreation
FENWAY/KENMORE

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THE SETTING

History
The Fenway and Kenmore communities date from approximately a century ago, created on the last land to be filled for neighborhood growth in Boston. In the latter half of the 1800s, the tidal swamps and mud flats at the confluence of the Muddy River and Stony Brook had become a sanitary concern due to the city's tremendous growth.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. addressed this concern, simultaneously solving a major drainage/sewage problem and creating a park system for the city, now known as the Emerald Necklace. Tidal gates were installed for the Muddy River and Stony Brook, a sewage interceptor was built below the Fens Basin, and the surrounding land was reshaped to create parkland. Park and streetcar development stimulated the westward expansion of Boston proper. The Fens parkland divided the area: Kenmore and the west Fenway developed to the north and west; the east Fenway and Longwood developed to the south and east.

The neighborhood includes three distinct geographic areas with their own history and identity:

<u>Kenmore</u>
This western portion of the neighborhood is generally bordered by Beacon Street, the Brookline town line, the Allston-Brighton community, the Charles River, and the Muddy River. Kenmore Square developed with fine hotels, shops, and professional offices flanking the streetcar tracks. Close to the river on Bay State Road, townhouses were built for affluent families. The Peterborough and Audubon Circle areas had large apartment buildings along Beacon Street and the streetcar line. The Back Bay West/Bay State Road Historic District and the landmark designation for Commonwealth Avenue Mall recognize the architectural and scenic qualities of this area, and afford these qualities legal protection by the city.

West of Kenmore Square, Commonwealth Avenue was slow to develop. Temple Adath Israel stood virtually alone following the

turn of the century. Automobile showrooms started to line Commonwealth Avenue starting in the teens. Boston University purchased the last unbuilt tract of land in 1920 and raised the residential height limit, but did not begin to build the campus for another 20 years. Many extant buildings, including car showrooms, have been converted to campus and support facilities as well as housing.

As in other parts of this neighborhood, in recent years there has been increasing development in the Kenmore area. Boston University has constructed class and administrative buildings and converted existing structures to university use, a new hotel has been built in Kenmore Square, and some moderately priced residential buildings have been converted to upscale condominiums.

Fenway

This is the central part of the larger community. It is generally bounded by Boylston Street, Massachusetts Avenue, the Southwest Corridor, Mission Hill, and the Brookline town line. Brownstone and brick residences typify the Symphony area and apartment blocks form the streetscape along the Fenway and Park Drive parkways. Institutions including the Christian Science Center, the Massachusetts Historical Society, Symphony Hall, Horticultural Hall, the New England Conservatory of Music, Simmons College, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner House (now Museum) were built starting in the 1890s and early 1900s.

The Fenway also has experienced development pressures in recent years. While the old Fenway Park remains, other parcels in the area haven been or are in the process of development. The former Sears building has been converted into an office/retail/ entertainment complex now known as the Landmark Center: it stands at a critical node in the city's transportation and Emerald Necklace open space systems. In-fill housing, including new residential buildings on Boylston and Peterborough Streets, has added population to an already densely settled residential community.

A long-paved-over portion of the Emerald Necklace – the infamous "Missing Link" in front of the former Sears building –reverted back to green space under the Parks Department's jurisdiction a few years ago. The restoration of this 70,805 square foot parcel was negotiated as part of the former Sears building's re-development into the Landmark Center. This parcel has restored this

easternmost segment of the Riverway and its linkage to the Back Bay Fens.

Longwood

The Longwood Medical Area, or Longwood, comprises the southern portion of this neighborhood. Bounded by the Riverway, the Fenway, Evans Way, Huntington Avenue, and Fenwood Road, Longwood has developed a large institutional presence since the turn of the century. Notable facilities include Harvard Medical School, several major Boston-area hospitals and medical institutions, five schools including three colleges, and Temple Israel. These facilities employ 26,000 people. Longwood has a student population of 10,000. The residential community here is mostly comprised of employees and students.

Building and development also continues apace in this area as area hospitals and colleges construct or seek additional facilities.

Demographics/Housing

From 1980 to 1990, the Fenway/Kenmore population grew from 30,842 to 32,880, a 7% increase versus a 2% increase for Boston as a whole. In the period between 1990 and 2000, population growth accelerated, as the population grew to 36,191, an 10% increase. Household growth was also quite steep: a 10% increase in the number of households versus 5% citywide (1990 Census).

Regarding race/ethnicity, Fenway/Kenmore remains predominantly white (80% in 1980, 71% in 2000) but with an increasing population share going to Asians: 4% in 1980, 14% in 2000.

Density is high as in all downtown core neighborhoods, 29,186.3 persons per square mile, compared to 12,172.3 persons per square mile citywide. This high density may in part help explain the relatively high number of households that do not own vehicles – 63% compared with 35% for the entire city –because there typically is less free on-street parking available in such built-up areas.

The dramatically high proportion of college students in this community is seen in several ways. First, approximately 40% of the population lives in group quarters, including college dormitories, while the citywide figure for this kind of housing arrangement is only 6%. Approximately 46% of the population lives in non-family households while citywide this figure is only 29%. With the student presence so prominent here, it should come as no surprise that 63% of the population is aged 18-24 years versus 16% for this age group citywide.

For the age group 25-64, the percent for the neighborhood is 29% versus 54% citywide; for the age group 65 and over, the neighborhood figure is 5% versus 10% citywide.

The high proportion of college students in the neighborhood population also in part explains the lower median income - $25,356 compared to a city-wide median income of $39,629; and the high percentage of renter occupied housing: 91% versus 68% citywide. The poverty rate for households is higher than for Boston as a whole: 37% versus 20% citywide.

THE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM TODAY

Equity and Investment

A rich and diverse supply of parks, playgrounds, squares, plazas, malls, institutional campuses, regional park systems, and community gardens in the Fenway/Kenmore neighborhood yields 146 acres of open space, of which 108 are protected.

Fenway/Kenmore has 2.98 acres of protected open space for each 1,000 residents compared to 7.47 acres per 1,000 persons citywide. To increase the amount of open space, future efforts will likely include private participation. For example, the developer of the former Sears property returned the parking lot Sears developed on a section of the Riverway back to the city to enable the reintegration of this “Missing Link” in the Olmsted-designed Emerald Necklace park system. Another recent effort was the donation of a 1/2-acre site by a private owner for a passive neighborhood park, named Ramler Park, on Peterborough Street. Other efforts can include public access to college and other institutional recreation facilities.

Fenway/Kenmore Capital Projects 2001-2006	
Back Bay Maintenance Yard	$171,643
Ramler Park	$331,607
Total	$503,250

During the city capital improvement program’s 201 to 2006 period, the city has invested over $0.5 million in Fenway/Kenmore’s parks, primarily focused on the construction of a new park, Ramler Park. The Parks Department also provided project management assistance to the School Department for the renovation of a school playground at Kilmarnock Street.

The city and the Parks Department are seeking to improve water quality and prevent flooding in the Muddy River basin. As a result, the Back Bay Fens and the Riverway have been the subjects of planning, engineering, and environmental study toward a planned $91 million capital improvement project in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The city is awaiting the US Army Corps of Engineers commencement of this significant project that will transform the major park in this neighborhood, the Back Bay Fens.

Assessment
Like Back Bay/Beacon Hill, most of Fenway/Kenmore's parklands and recreational facilities are located in either the Charles River Reservation (DCR) or within the Emerald Necklace park system. There are also several smaller parks and plazas in the Fenway and Longwood areas. The Commonwealth Avenue Mall, the Back Bay Fens, and the Riverway are designated Boston Landmarks and are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There are two community gardens in Fenway/Kenmore, the Symphony Road Community Garden and the sprawling Richard Parker Memorial Victory Gardens in the Back Bay Fens, believed to be the last surviving World War II Victory Garden in the nation.

Kenmore
Usable public open space is limited to the Charles River Reservation and Commonwealth Avenue Mall. The Boston University campus provides some additional open space, such as the Marsh Chapel plaza, various connections and spaces between campus buildings, and Nickerson Field.

Beacon Street can benefit from improved streetscape design and care at Audubon Circle. The Kenmore Square end of the Commonwealth Avenue Mall must continue to be maintained to a high level through the combined efforts of the MBTA, the community, and the city. Due to development-induced changes in Kenmore Square, there has been interest expressed in a re-designed, greener Kenmore Square with a new re-designed MBTA Green Line station headhouse/bus terminal. Extraordinary care, with the combined efforts of the DCR and the community, must also continue to meet the needs of the very heavily used Charles River Reservation. Boston University can help mitigate the stress its student population places on the area's existing public parkland by offering maintenance assistance and also by providing general community access to its own recreational facilities.

The Massachusetts Turnpike Extension cuts through this sub-neighborhood, dividing it into a northern third and a southern two-thirds. The Turnpike Authority has begun a process of disposition of portions of its air rights in Boston. A study completed by the BRA under the auspices of a Strategic Design Study Committee (SDSC), made up of community leaders in the neighborhoods abutting the highway, has outlined an overall development scheme. It has designated on a parcel-by-parcel basis certain uses and heights appropriate to the surrounding neighborhood.

There is public interest in ensuring that Turnpike air rights development in the Kenmore area will promote a re-knitting of the northern and southern portions of the neighborhood. It is also hoped that some open space – perhaps of a linear nature – can be provided with each development or in certain key developments to offset the increase in density and loss of light and air that will result from development over the currently open corridor. The BRA-commissioned study, A Civic Vision for Turnpike Air Rights in Boston, calls for a new public square fronting on Beacon Street, contained and underwritten by new buildings on other parts of Parcel 7 and activated in part by a proposed multimodal Yawkey Station. It also calls for a building on Parcel 9 that will help underwrite a new connection from the Fens to the Charles River through Parcel 10. Parcel 10 represents the section of the Pike that now cuts through Charlesgate, blocking access between the Fens and the Charles River Reservation. Given existing limited access to the Charles River Reservation from the Kenmore neighborhood, this is a critical recommendation of this corridor plan.

Planning in connection to the development of parking lots near Fenway Park may also yield open spaces near the Kenmore Square area.

<u>Fenway</u>
The 56 acres of the Back Bay Fens and an additional 20 acres of associated parkland (such as Lee Playground, Evans Way Park, and Charlesgate) dominate open space in this area. There are also some vest pocket parks and squares. However, a new green spaces has helped relieve some of the density in the Wet Fenway area. A passive neighborhood park on Peterborough Street was developed on a 1/2-acre site donated to the city, called Ramler Park. The substantial private fundraising augmented city capital dollars to support construction and maintenance of the garden-style passive park.

The Fenway has strong access to one of the city's premier parks, the Back Bay Fens. However, the city must equitably manage competing uses and assure that maintenance can address the wear-and-tear caused by heavy use. Broad-based public/private capital investments will be needed to continue to make improvements in the Fens.

One major project in that regard will be the Connecting the Corridors ISTEA project to install a new bike path and restore pathways in the Fens. It will also connect the Fens to the Southwest Corridor. With proposals being looked at for a Fenway Connector to Kenmore Square from the Riverway and a Fens-to-Charles connection possibly underwritten by Turnpike air-rights development, a post-Connecting the Corridors Fens will be a major recreational node for the region as well as the neighborhood. Potential development near Fenway Park includes the possiblility of new publicly accessible open space for this neighborhood.

The City and the community are also considering the creation of a pedestrian/bicycle path from Park Drive to the Kenmore Square area – the "Fenway Connector" – to be located for the most part on an abandoned CSX rail corridor. This is being examined as part of a multi-modal strategy to relieve traffic in the area. Developing new ways for people to travel in this area without cars will help enhance open space and recreational opportunities in this neighborhood. This pedestrian/bicycle path plan will also seek a connection to the paved path on the west side of the Riverway. Commuters and recreational users who want to travel to the Kenmore Square area and Commonwealth Avenue will have a more direct, but off-road route. This plan will make the Emerald Necklace bike and pedestrian paths even more useful. This more direct connection is particularly important given the discontinuity created by the current configuration of the Bowker Overpass/Charlesgate area.

<u>Longwood</u>
The major open space resources near Longwood are the southern Fens and the northern Riverway. Smaller open spaces exist within the fabric of institutional buildings. Open space on member institutions' property is coordinated by the Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization, Inc. (MASCO). MASCO works closely with public agencies such as the Parks Department, the Public Works Department, and the Transportation Department to help provide an open space system with maximum public access to, from, and within Longwood.

Several planning approaches are suggested in this densely-built area. Strengthening linkages from this area to the Emerald Necklace will be one important planning approach. This will also enhance the effort to make this area's streets green, more campus-like, and livable for residential users. Linkages among open spaces within Longwood should be coordinated with the Emerald Necklace linkage approach. Efforts should continue to be made by MASCO and its member institutions to enhance existing plazas and small parks.

Enhanced cooperation and coordination among the interested parties – MASCO, its individual member institutions, the surrounding Fenway and Mission Hill communities, and the city administration itself – will help assure continued open space improvements in Longwood.

The Emerald Necklace
Projects for improvements and restoration will be implemented according to the guidelines in the Emerald Necklace Master Plan. Connections will be made to make the system more unified and legible as a whole to facilitate use, improve public safety, and increase appreciation. Coordination by the Parks Department with city agencies such as the Landmarks Commission, community associations and Friends groups, the DCR, and other non-governmental organizations such as the Emerald Necklace Conservancy and MASCO will assure consensus for improvements in the Riverway, the Back Bay Fens, and along Commonwealth Avenue Mall.

Restoring Emerald Woodlands
A goal of the Emerald Necklace Master Plan is the restoration and improvement of the woodlands of the Emerald Necklace. In Fenway/Kenmore, the woodlands are found in the Riverway and the Back Bay Fens. While the trees help form the dominant visual impression in the Riverway, their presence in a woodland grouping is more limited in the Back Bay Fens. However, two areas in the Fens qualify for woodland status: the one-acre dell at Mother's Rest and the 600-foot-long, three-acre Longwood Entrance (the westernmost, panhandle portion of the Fens).

The Parks Department has begun to undertake an initiative to restore the woodlands in the Emerald Necklace. The Department released a report in 2000 on the woodlands initiative and anticipates further planning for woodland restoration in the Riverway and the Back Bay Fens using the protocols developed for

the Franklin Park woodlands. Fundraising being undertaken by the Emerald Necklace Conservancy (ENC) will help support this effort. With institutional neighbors like the Longwood Medical Area, Northeastern University, Simmons College, and Emmanuel College to assist the ENC, the fundraising should achieve a substantial degree of success.

Advancing Connectivity

Charlesgate, the Back Bay Fens, and the Riverway are part of the Emerald Necklace. Olmsted originally designed this park system as a continuous linear system for ease of travel by pedestrians and horse-and-carriage. The Emerald Necklace Master Plan recommends restoration of this system that re-emphasizes the continuity/connectivity of this park system. Three advances toward that goal have been achieved in the recent past: the award of a federal/state transportation enhancement grant for the Connecting the Corridors project; the improvements associated with the Landmark Center project; and the advocacy of the Emerald Necklace Greenway concept by BikeBoston, the local chapter of the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition. This concept looks to restore the connectivity that Olmsted had designed into the Emerald Necklace park system. Various surface transportation projects in the twentieth century have historically weighed the interests of motor vehicles over those of pedestrians and bicyclists. This has led to gaps and discontinuities in the Necklace's connectivity. It has become exceedingly difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to connect from one part of the system to the other, and their safety has been compromised.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (a predecessor agency to the DCR) awarded a greenway grant several years ago to the BikeBoston group for a schematic conceptual consultant study of these gaps and discontinuities, and a public relations campaign to publicize the study's findings. The group developed an educational poster and a special event to increase public awareness of this issue. This group is continuing to work with the community, the public at large, and such public agencies as the DCR to improve the parkway system and other streets in order to restore its intended multi-modal character. This would restore the parkway system for the benefit of non-motorized transportation and recreation, as well as for motorized transportation.

One gap identified by this study is at the "Sears Rotary." This is the set of traffic intersections where the Riverway, Park Drive, Brookline Avenue, the Fenway, and Boylston Street meet. A major

advance toward connectivity was the return of the “Missing Link” parcel back to parkland. It is currently comprised of a lawn, several trees, and a stone dust path. As the Muddy River restoration project proceeds, the “daylighting” of the Muddy River in this section will take place as part of this project. Daylighting refers to recreating an open-to-the-sky river or stream where it was formerly confined to an underground culvert or pipe.

However, this restored link in the Emerald Necklace is still relatively inaccessible because of the high traffic volumes between it and the rest of the Emerald Necklace parklands. A recently proposed intersection design would reduce waiting times for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing in this area and would add parkland, but it has yet to be funded in the DCR budget. In the interim, as part of its development mitigation program/transportation access plan, the Landmark Center has implemented some signal, sidewalk, and lane striping improvements that have partly improved the crossing situation between the Riverway and the restored link parcel. Another gap identified by the study – which has been well-known for decades – is the Bowker Overpass/Charlesgate area. It is the remaining “Missing Link,” in function if not in ownership, and is located between the Back Bay Fens and the Charles River Reservation. Given the ever-increasing volume of traffic using this area and the advanced age of this overpass, pressure may also increase in the near future to reconstruct the structure with a multi-modal approach including pedestrian and bicycle users. On the other hand, the Emerald Necklace Master Plan calls for its removal. The proximity of the Turnpike – and the lucrative proposed air-rights developments – may also provide an alternative to the state capital budget for addressing this issue (see the Kenmore section of this Assessment section above). The TEA-21 Transportation Enhancements program may also be a funding source for part of this project.

During the latter half of the 1990s, the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) awarded a $1 million federal/state transportation enhancement grant for the Connecting the Corridors project. Combined with over $700,000 in city capital funding and strong support from Northeastern University, this project will convert old bridle paths into multi-purpose paths for use by pedestrians and bicyclists, restore pedestrian paths in the Back Bay Fens, and create a link between the Fens and the Southwest Corridor Park via a redesigned Forsyth Street. As this connection to the Southwest Corridor is also quite near the western terminus of the Melnea Cass Boulevard bike and pedestrian paths, it will provide access to the waterfront if the plans for the South Bay

Harbor Trail are implemented as proposed. The Connecting the Corridors project will thus have multiple benefits for commuter and recreational users of these corridors. The Parks and Recreation Department is undertaking design of the project while it awaits funding activation by the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) through its Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) before proceeding with construction.

Cleaning the Muddy

Another avenue for open space improvement is less immediately visible but is nonetheless vital to the neighborhood's and the city's environmental health. The Muddy River, the waterway connecting Jamaica Pond to the Charles River, has had poor water quality for many years. Heavy flooding along the Muddy in the fall of 1996 and several subsequent flooding events caused significant damage in several Boston neighborhoods – most particularly the Fenway. Homes, businesses, institutions, and the MBTA Green Line's tunnel (including Kenmore Square Station) suffered multi-million dollar losses from these events.

After numerous study reports that recommended a variety of strategies to clean up the river, a consensus has developed. The proposed approach to the river's restoration is a multi-facetted one with five objectives:

- Providing flood control;
- Improving water quality;
- Enhancing riparian and aquatic habitats;
- Preserving historic landscape resources; and
- Instituting Best Management Practices (BMPs).

For greater flood capacity, the proposed plan elements include dredging of the accumulated sediments, daylighting the river at the Sears Rotary and Fens Bridge, and increasing culvert capacity. Dredging will also improve water quality and the aquatic habitat. The removal and replacement of invasive plants with diverse new plantings will improve the riparian habitat while achieving a landscape treatment more in keeping with historic and scenic considerations.

A planning, design, and engineering study based on this approach has been prepared that is examining various alternatives in order to generate a comprehensive, environmentally sound construction project. The study team has worked with a citizens advisory committee to weigh the best course for this highly complex project. The study team submitted a draft environmental impact report in February 2002, and submitted a final environmental impact report in early 2003, with state environmental approval in 2003. Federal

and state funding for construction has been secured. We are now awaiting the implementation of the project by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

On a separate track, but as part of the water quality improvements that affect the Fens, the Boston Water and Sewer Commission undertook a sewer separation project in the Stony Brook watershed. With funding support from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority through its Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Facilities Plan, the project addressed the ongoing CSO discharges to the Fens that have provided a significant amount of the sediment accumulation in the lower Fens basins.

While it will be several years before the Muddy River restoration project is completed, the results will be well worth waiting for. The water and scenic quality of Jamaica Pond has attracted people for strolling, fishing, sailing, and rowing. More users will likely flock to the Back Bay Fens and the Riverway once the water quality, scenic quality, and ecological habitat of the Muddy River – the heart of these two parks – has been significantly improved.

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

To mitigate pressures and stresses from intense use, the Fenway/Kenmore area needs maximum protection and care of its precious existing open spaces. In the near term at least, the overuse and competing use of public parks can be diminished by access to private recreational facilities, particularly for institution-based populations. In addition, development projects should include recreational components that serve neighborhood needs.

The restoration of the Missing Link through the development process at the Landmark Center should be an inspiration for the re-knitting together of the Fens, Charlesgate, Commonwealth Avenue Mall, and the Charles River Reservation in the years to come.

Long-term park improvements projects like Connecting the Corridors and the Muddy River restoration will be a significant focus for the next five years.

Opportunities

Kenmore

- Advocate for protection of the Kenmore Square end of the Commonwealth Avenue Mall during any planning and design processes undertaken for a re-designed, greener Kenmore Square. Support public and private efforts toward a greener, more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly Kenmore Square. Urge planning efforts to improve pedestrian and bicycle accommodations on Beacon Street, complementing the improvements made by the Town of Brookline on Beacon Street.
- Work with the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority and the BRA to ensure that open space amenities are included as part of the future Turnpike air rights developments. Explore the possibility of a linear pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly feature as part of all air rights developments, such as enhanced sidewalks and bike lanes or paths.
- Support implementation of the DCR Charles River Reservation Master Plan, especially for projects to improve access from this neighborhood.

Fenway

- Advance the Back Bay Fens Connecting the Corridors ISTEA project to enable its construction soon after the Muddy River restoration project is completed.
- Improve connections to the Fens via streetscape treatments of Westland Avenue and Ruggles/Louis Prang Streets.

- Enhance or add crosswalks and pedestrian-activated signalized crossings over the Fenway and Park Drive to allow better access to the Back Bay Fens from the neighborhood.
- Work with the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority and the BRA to ensure open space amenities are included as part of the future Turnpike air rights developments. Seek to promote the possibility of a linear pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly feature as part of such developments, such as enhanced sidewalks and bike lanes or paths.
- Support a coordinated effort by DCR and MBTA legal and real estate management staffs to transfer ownership of the Southwest Corridor Park lands from the MBTA to the DCR.

Longwood

- Support the recommendations for which there is general community consensus in MASCO's open space plan for the Longwood Medical Area. Work with MASCO and the DCR for better connections between the Longwood area and the Emerald Necklace. Work with MASCO for better connections between parks and open spaces within the Longwood area.

Neighborhood-wide

- Encourage and coordinate public/private coalitions with institutions, community groups, businesses, and property owners regarding maintenance and programming for neighborhood open space resources.
- Continue to enhance Parks Department maintenance resources, especially for turf management, trees, understory plantings, routine care of park furnishings, and graffiti removal.
- Seek cooperative agreements as well as alternative locations for additional publicly accessible play areas, ball fields, and courts, notably with colleges and hospitals.
- Continue to fund capital rehabilitation of city park facilities as needed in the capital renewal cycle.
- Develop public/private partnerships with area institutions and businesses for park improvement projects.

The Emerald Necklace

- Work with various agencies and community groups to continue to rehabilitate the Riverway, the Commonwealth Avenue Mall, and the Back Bay Fens. Follow the Emerald Necklace Master Plan, the Emerald Necklace Sign Program,

and the Boston Art Commission's Adopt-a-Statue Program. Work with groups such as the Emerald Necklace Conservancyand the Commonwealth Avenue Mall Committee to determine community priorities and to implement specific capital projects.

- Institutionalize care and planting of trees in the Emerald Necklace parks and along the parkways. Use the Emerald Necklace Master Plan to create a planting plan for the Riverway and the Fens and as a shopping list for a plant-giving program. Plant trees in the Fens and the Riverway annually, follow-up with proper care for new trees, and coordinate with the DCR parkway tree planting program. Establish cyclical care for existing trees and understory vegetation including pruning. Remove dead trees.

Advancing Connectivity

- Advance the Back Bay Fens Connecting the Corridors ISTEA project to enable its construction soon after the Muddy River restoration project is completed.
- Improve connections to and between Emerald Necklace parks. Support projects that reduce pedestrian/bicycle waiting times in the Sears rotary area. Continue to reinforce the treatment of parkways as part of the adjacent parks. Designate and mark bicycle paths in the Fens through the Connecting the Corridors project. Support the Fenway Connector proposal with an appropriate connection to the Riverway.
- Work with transportation agencies to use development and roadway projects to improve recreational connections and access, and to resolve conflicts between recreational users and automobiles along the length and at both ends of the Fens.
- Urge the DCR to begin the planning process for re-designing Charlesgate to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle connections from the Back Bay Fens to the Charles River Reservation. Urge the DCR to seek opportunities from the nearby Turnpike air-rights developments or TEA-21 Transportation Enhancements program for assistance in funding this large-scale enhanced multi-modal transportation/open space project.

Cleaning the Muddy

- Support the Muddy River restoration from Wards Pond to the Back Bay Fens (including dredging) as the highest priority of the Parks Department and the City of Boston.

Community Priorities

- Revegetate the Riverway in both the upland and riverine environments per Emerald Necklace Master Plan and Muddy River Restoration Plan guidelines. Continue the MASCO/Parks Department partnership to implement Emerald Necklace Master Plan projects in the Riverway.
- Rehabilitate the Fens pathways. Address over-use issues without creating more active recreation in the Fens. Develop an appropriate signage program for bicycle safety in the Fens, following the Emerald Necklace Signage Master Plan approved by the Boston Landmarks Commission.
- Pursue the improvement of the Muddy River's water quality as a high priority.
- Support the Friends of Ramler Park fund-raising efforts to generate an endowment for this park's operation and care.
- Develop an Adopt-a-Tree program to enlist ongoing assistance from community residents, businesses, and institutions. Maintain and replace street trees throughout the neighborhood on a constituent request basis.
- Support efforts by community groups, institutions, businesses, and public agencies to maintain the image and appearance of the reconstructed Huntington Avenue.