Public Meeting on Charlestown Park
October 15, 2019
Harvard Club, Estabrooks Room
374 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215
6:30-8:30pm

The Charlestown Alliance, Emerald Necklace Conservancy, Landing Studio, and DCR have been meeting for a few months now, and want to share results as well as seek public input as we move forward with design and engineering of the Charlestown Park Revitalization Project.
Public Meeting on DCR Charlesgate Park
Schematic Design Phase – Charlesgate Revitalization Project
Oct. 15, 2019

Convening organizations:
Charlesgate Alliance
Emerald Necklace Conservancy

Thanks to:
Many, many community members for donations
Boston’s Community Preservation Act
former Rep. Byron Rushing
The Solomon Foundation

Agency involvement:
Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Massachusetts Dept. of Transportation (MassDOT)

Design team:
Landing Studio
Gill Engineering
Howard-Stein Hudson
Weston & Sampson
Agenda

6:30 – 7:30 PM

• Welcome
• Background:
  • History of Charlestown
  • The Charlestown Alliance and Emerald Necklace Conservancy partnership
• Brief overview of the process to date
• MassDOT updates
• Design Development updates – Charlestown Park south of Beacon

7:30 – 7:40 PM – BREAK

7:40 – 8:30 PM

• Open house style break-out areas – for questions and feedback
• Report-out and notetaking
• Looking ahead
If you have questions or concerns about the park, here are ways to reach DCR:
Mass.Parks@mass.gov
or call 617-626-4973
Naturalistic Urban Infrastructure
Charlesgate: The “Critical Link” Connecting Olmsted’s Boston Linear Park System
Section of New Highway in the Back Bay, Boston, Mass.
In 1951, Storrow Drive blocked the flow of the Muddy River.
“One Kenmore” Hotel Project with “Fenway Center, Phase 2” in the Background
Fenway Center, Phase 1 (Meredith Management)
“One Kenmore” Hotel Project (Mark Development)
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Kenmore Mall Redesign Project (Friends of the Public Garden)
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“Parcel 12” (Samuels and Associates)
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Getting Things Right:

• Transit-Oriented Design
• Affordable Housing
• Attention to the Public Realm
• Revitalizing Olmsted’s Charlesgate Parkland
Overview of process to date
The Charles River Basin

New Boston and Charles River Basin, as proposed by Charles Davenport and drawn by Albert Coolidge (1875)
Section of New Highway in the Back Bay, Boston, Mass.
1963 Charlesgate Park plans by Morice & Gary Landscape Architects
Charlesgate Park today
Laydown and access
Laydown and access
Water quality issues at the Muddy River

- Storm water from street
- Untreated drainage from Bowker
- Armored shore
- Bottles, debris in the water
- Duckweed bloom = pollution indicator
Partially buried Olmsted Era bridge
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

IMPROVE MUDDY RIVER WATER QUALITY AND HABITAT
- manage storm water with landscape systems
- provide habitat-rich landscape design

CELEBRATE CHARLESGATE'S HISTORY
- incorporate significant built elements and flora
- develop a language that complements Charlesgate's design legacy

RECONNECT BOSTON'S 3 PARK SYSTEMS & NEIGHBORHOODS ACROSS CHARLESGATE
- add bike accommodations
- safe pedestrian connections
- open up views

ACTIVATE THE SITE WITH NEW USES
- provide amenity spaces that invite a variety of uses
- dog park!
- flexibility
Existing conditions at Charlesgate Park
The North Field: Fitness/Play area, rain gardens
The Grove: Plaza restoration, new seating, trees
The Patio: New crossings, trees, seating, rain gardens
The South Field: Dog Play area, rain gardens
Ped/Bike improvements to Charlesgate East/Newbury St area
The Bridge

2018 Charlesgate Public Concept Plan
Existing: west edge of the Muddy, North Field
Proposed: west edge of the Muddy, North Field
Existing: from Commonwealth Ave looking south
Proposed: from Commonwealth Ave looking south
Existing: looking south from Storrow EB ramp area
Proposed: looking south from Storrow EB ramp area
Existing: from Beacon St looking south
Proposed: from Beacon St looking south
Existing: looking south at South Field
Proposed: looking south at South Field
Good news and some improvements already underway!
Olmsted rail replacement: Thank you DCR!

Lighting fixed: Thank you DCR!

Charlesgate Chairs, photo by Jules Milner-Brage

Charlesgate Movie Night, photo: charlesgatealliance.org:
Thank you Emerald Necklace Conservancy & Solomon Foundation!
$250,000 earmark for design

"... not less than $250,000 shall be expended for design and engineering work by the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, inc., for improvements to the Charlesgate park in the city of Boston...“

Thanks to elected representatives Brownsberger, Livingstone, and Rushing!

$400,000 Boston Community Preservation Act grant for design

“to complete the design for Charlestown Park, a 13-acre historic park, part of the Frederick Law Olmsted original Emerald Necklace, that will transform the area and connect the Back Bay Fens and the Charles River.”
MassDOT updates
Storrow Drive East Bound Bridge Replacement Project, Boston MA
October 15, 2019
Project File No. 606728
Team

MassDOT project lead:
   Steve McLaughlin
   Alwin Ramirez

Bridge Engineering:
   Scott Carpenter, Gill Engineering

Landscape & Public Realm Design:
   Marie Law Adams & Dan Adams, Landing Studio

Traffic Engineering:
   Jessica Lizza, HSH Associates

Permitting Consultant:
   Epsilon Associates
Project Setting
Purpose and Need

Replace Bridge B-16-365(4FK), Storrow EB over Ramps
- Severely Corroded Steel
- Deteriorated Foundations, Settlement Issues
- Limited Remaining Service Life

Opportunity: Reconnect Emerald Necklace
- Esplanade, Fenway and Commonwealth Mall
- Connection Severed since 1951
- Restore Usable Open Space Along Charles River
- Improve Storm Water Management for Impaired Waterways
Existing – roadway geometry / traffic

Storrow Drive/Bowker Interchange

- Left exits
- Difficult merges
- Low clearance(s)
- Missing ped – bike connections
Existing – Open Space/Paths/Landscape/Storm Drainage

1. Dead-end pedestrian pathways
2. Trapped historic monuments
3. Buried Muddy River
4. Unmitigated drainage into impaired waterways
5. Fragmented and inaccessible landscape areas
6. Minimal connection to Esplanade
Alt. 1A Footprint EB Bridge, w/ Temp Br
Alt. 1A – Footprint EB Bridge, Temp Br
Alt. 1A – Footprint EB Bridge, Temp Br

Advantages
• Short project development, design and construction schedule
• Low cost to re-establish groundcover landscape

Disadvantages
• Minimal Storrow EB roadway improvements
• Storrow Drive WB left-hand exits remain
• Esplanade and Emerald Necklace remain disconnected
• Emerald Necklace remains inaccessible to the urban context
• No improvement to stormwater run-off water quality
• No new recreation opportunities
Project Background and Scope
Alt 2A EB/WB Bridge, Storrow WB to Span 1, Move BMC
Alt 2A EB/WB Bridge, Storrow WB to Span 1, Move BMC
Alt 2A EB/WB Bridge, Storrow WB to Span 1, Move BMC

Advantages
- Eliminates left-side exits
- Water quality improvements w/planted bio-swales, retention basins
- Provides new bike/ped connections between Emerald Necklace and Esplanade
- Provides direct bike/ped access between Mass Ave and Esplanade
- Provides 4.0 acres of new landscape areas for riverfront and near river recreation
- Reduces constriction of Esplanade pathways between Charles River and Storrow Drive
- Improves accessibility to Boston Marginal Conduit for maintenance and repairs
- Enables possible daylighting of Muddy River under Storrow EB bridge

Disadvantages
- Entrance ramp onto Storrow EB from Charlestown E/Beacon St is forced to merge sooner, west of Mass Ave Bridge, degrading safety and operations along ramp
- Vertical clearance for Storrow WB beneath Mass Ave bridge will be reduced.
- New Storrow WB exit to Fenway/Kenmore Square will be constructed through existing parkland
- Land manipulation required between Storrow Drive and the Mass Ave Bridge
- Added costs for new urban connections and land-forming
- Significant costs for reconstruction of Boston Marginal Conduit
Alt 3A EB/WB Bridge, Storrow WB to Span 2, Elim Mass Ave Exit
Alt 3A EB/WB Bridge, Storrow WB to Span 2
Alt 3A EB/WB Bridge, Storrow WB to Span 2

Advantages
• Longer entrance ramp merge from Storrow EB to Charlesgate E/Beacon St than Alt 2A, 2B
• Water quality improvements w/planted bio-swales, retention basins
• Provides new bike/ped connections between Emerald Necklace and Esplanade
• Provides direct bike/ped access between Mass Ave and Esplanade
• Provides 3.6 acres of new open space for riverfront and near river recreation
• Reduces constriction of Esplanade pathways between Charles River and Storrow Drive
• Avoids added cost and complexity of reconstructing the Marginal Conduit.
• Enables possible daylighting of Muddy River under Storrow EB bridge

Disadvantages
• Cost of construction of earthen berms between Storrow Drive and Mass Ave Bridge
• 0.4 acres less open land is provided than Alt 2A immediately east & west of Mass Ave Bridge
• Eliminates direct access ramp from Storrow WB to Mass Ave (peak hr volume <200 vehicles)
Alt 3A EB/WB Bridge, Storrow WB to Span 2
Recommended Alternative

Questions?

&

We’ll be available during breakout sessions.

&

Keep an eye out for announcement of future public meetings.
MassDOT - Storrow Eastbound Replacement
Result: ~15 acres improved parkland

Emerald Necklace Conservancy & Charlestage Alliance - Charlestage Revitalization Project
Result: 5+ acres improved parkland
Charlesgate Park south of Beacon – Design Development updates
The Design Development Process

Phase 1: Schematic Design [we are here: Fall 2019]
• Dog Play Area focus group meeting: Sept 2019
• Public Meeting #1: Oct. 2019

Phase 2: Design Development and Permitting (Winter/Spring 2020)
• North Field / Play Area focus group meeting: Dec. 2019 / Jan. 2020
• Public Meeting #2: Spring 2020

Phase 3: Construction Documents (Spring/Summer 2020)
• Public Meeting #3: Summer 2020
• Shovel-ready documents for construction Summer/Fall 2020
The South Field – Current design

- Dog Play Area
- Shared-use pathway
- Nature-based stormwater management
- Remove & recycle wall for greater visibility
- New pedestrian bridge
- Enhance tree canopy
- New sidewalks

COMMONWEALTH AVENUE
CHARLESGATE WEST
CHARLESGATE EAST
MASS TURNPIKE (I-90)
Commonwealth Avenue area – Concept Design
Commonwealth Avenue area – Current design

- Enhance tree canopy
- Nature-based stormwater management
- New pathway configuration to reflect historic design and Comm Ave Mall
Fundraising for Implementation Funds

Emerald Necklace Conservancy and Charlesgate Alliance Fundraising on going

Estimated Total Cost for Physical Improvements: $10,000,000
Estimated Cost of Maintenance Fund, to ensure high level of maintenance, TBD (estimated up to $2,000,000)

Emerald Necklace Conservancy and Charlesgate Alliance Fundraising now from various sources

• Public /City – new application before the Community Preservation Act Committee Spring 2020 Consideration
• Public/ Commonwealth (State) – meeting with various departments and elected officials
• Local Development Projects – some funds already pledged from local projects
• Foundations and Private Individuals – some funds have been given for design process, we think more can come!
• People like you!

Developing Approved Donor Recognition Opportunities with DCR/Commonwealth

Upcoming Fundraising Committee Meeting October 29th, 2019, 7pm
Madeline Segal’s Apartment on Comm Ave, email: abbyreichl@aol.com to RSVP
Part 2

7:30 – 7:40 PM – BREAK

7:40 – 8:10 PM

• Open house style break-out areas – for questions and feedback
  • South Field and Dog Play Area
  • Connectivity
  • Water Quality

8:10 – 8:30 PM

• Report-out – 3 highlights from each theme
  • Looking ahead
Report-out

3 highlights from each session:

- South Field and Dog Play Area
- Connectivity
- Water Quality
Looking Ahead

• Charlesgate Play Area focus group meeting – Dec. 2019 / Jan 2020, more info to follow

• Charlesgate Public Meeting #2 (Design Development phase) – early spring 2020, more info to follow
There are several great ways you can get involved and support this effort:

1) Tell your neighbors about this process, ask them to join the Charlesgate Alliance.

2) Join Charlesgate Alliance online:

   https://charlesgatealliance.org/join-us-2/

   You will then get an invitation to join our Google group to discuss Charlesgate Park.

3) Follow us on social media:

   facebook.com/charlesgatealliance/
   @charlesgatealliance
   @CharlesgateAll1 on Twitter

   facebook.com/theemeraldnecklaceconservancy/
   @EmeraldNecklaceConservancy
   @EmNecklaceBos

4) Consider a tax deductible donation. Your company may also offer financial support.

   https://www.emeraldnecklace.org/charlesgate-alliance/

5) Tell your elected representatives that this matters to you!

6) Come to our events and bring friends!

   See our calendar at charlesgatealliance.org
Send us feedback:

Email any comments to:

Charlesgatealliance@gmail.com

Visit:

Charlesgatealliance.org

Also:

Learn more about the Emerald Necklace!

Visit:

emeraldnecklace.org/

And visit the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, at the Shattuck Visitor Center at 125 The Fenway, open 7 days a week!