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:

Opportunies via site and building redevelopment

CAMBRIDGE RIVERFRONT: Connecting People to the Charles

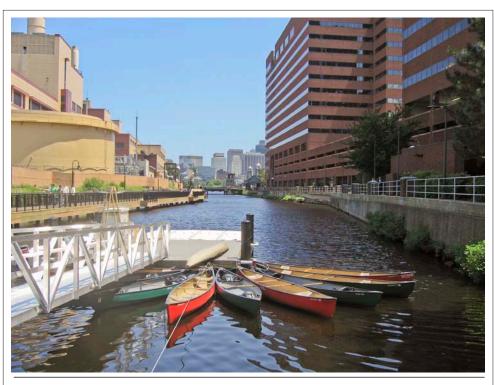
Cambridge Community Development Department, 2010

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 LOCATION-SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES ■ Seek further improvements along the DCR-owned river frontage — benches, kiosks, trees, 1. Bridge to Paul Revere Landing in Charlestown "look-outs" that would provide opportunities to pause and enjoy views of the riverfront **2.** Future Skateboard Park Maintain and enhance tree canopy **3.** Future use of remnant parcel Encourage welcoming and active ground-floor uses along the riverfront **4.** Pedestrian bridge between North Point Park and O'Brien Highway ■ Improve pedestrian flow to the river (street trees, improved sidewalks, and street lighting) **5.** O'Brien Highway pedestrian improvements Improve bicycle flow to and along the river **6.** Reuse of DCR stable and boathouse buildings Analyze feasibility of additional boat access **7.** Museum Point improvements Support regular events and activities that bring people to the river **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 Fresh Pond **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 Dewolfe 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 RIVERFRONT RECOMMENDATIONS LEGEND **26.** Improve connection between Strawberry Hill and West Potential New Water Access Potential New Open Space Cambridge neighborhoods and river Potential Water Access Improvement Potential Open Space Improvement **27.** Potential quiet lookout area near boat club /Jerry's Landing Potential for Site (Re)development **Needs Further Study** historical site Potential New Bicycle/Pedestrian Connection Potential Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvement **28.** Hell's Half Acre wetland and potential open space **Potential Lookout** 29. Vision for Greenough Boulevard