IS THIS THE BEST WE CAN DO?

JUNE 11, 2025

Josephine A. Fiorentino Community Center

Charles River Watershed Association

PURPOSE:

For 60 years I-90 has divided the neighborhoods of Allston and Brighton and, alongside soldiers field road, created a high speed barrier between people and the river.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to make this right!

GOALS:

WE NEED YOU!

- Know whats happening
- Now is the time to push for a better plan
- Focus on key areas where we think change can happen

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Max Rome, PhD
Senior Stormwater Program Manager,
CRWA

Emily Norton
Executive Director,
CRWA

***Other CRWA staff in the audience!**

AGENDA

PRESENTATION (20 minutes)

- History, current status of the project
- Advocacy Priorities
  - Balancing road and river
  - River's edge & parkland
  - Neighborhood streets

TABLE ACTIVITY (45 Minutes)

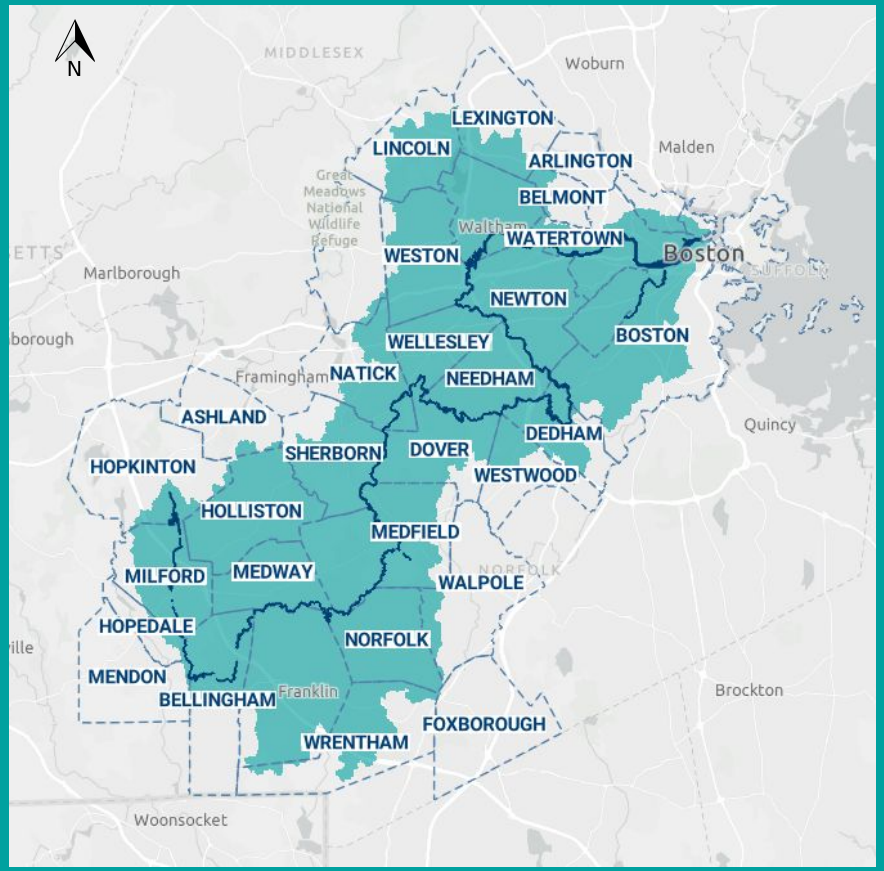
SHARE BACK AND DISCUSSION (15 minutes)

CHARLES RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

MISSION: Protect, restore and enhance the Charles River and its watershed through science, advocacy, and the law.

- 80-mile long river
- 308 mi^2 watershed
- 35 towns & cities
- 1M+ residents
- 60% of Environmental Justice communities in lower watershed

CRWA TAKES A WATERSHED-SCALE VIEW



THREATS TO THE CHARLES RIVER

FLOODING & DROUGHT

WATER QUALITY ISSUES
(bacterial contamination / Cyanobacteria)

ENVIRONMENTAL (IN)JUSTICE

EXTREME HEAT

Charles River
Watershed Association

HISTORY & CURRENT STATUS

PROJECT HISTORY

PROJECT INITIATION (ENF)

- MassDOT Design Team begins conceptual design
- Formation of I90 Task Force

2014

2017

DRAFT ENV. IMPACT REPORT

- Proposed design places temporary road in the Charles River

2021

NOTICE OF PROJECT CHANGE

- Task Force and neighborhood activism secures the at grade option including new pedestrian access to the river

2022

Fall 2025

REFINE ALTERNATIVES & SUBMIT ENV. PERMITTING

- Key design options must be included by this point

Fall 2026

FINALIZE DESIGN & BEGIN PROCUREMENT

- Little room for additional community input

2026-2040?

CONSTRUCTION

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Bank Erosion

No Stormwater Treatment

Low Connectivity & Walk/Bike-ability

Trash/Pollution

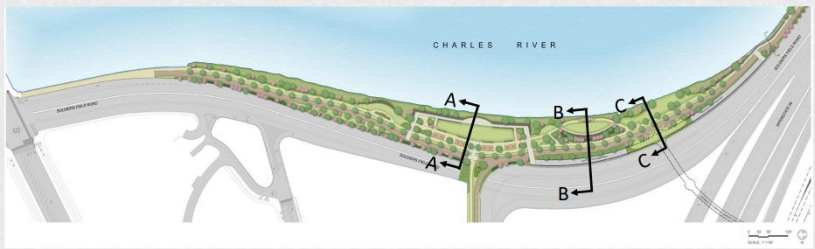
PROJECT SITE

Throat area*

CURRENT DESIGN

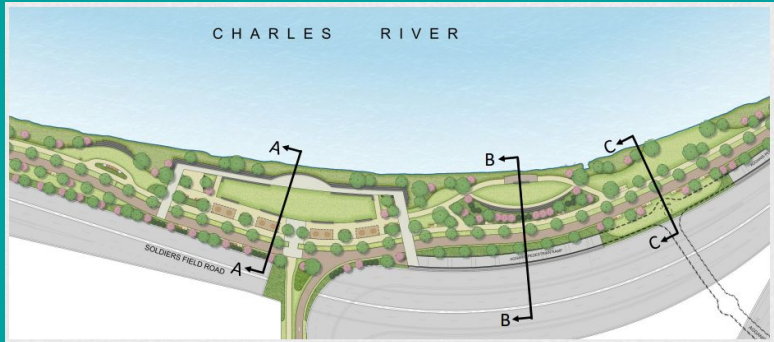
The parkland plan preferred by MassDOT

The plan



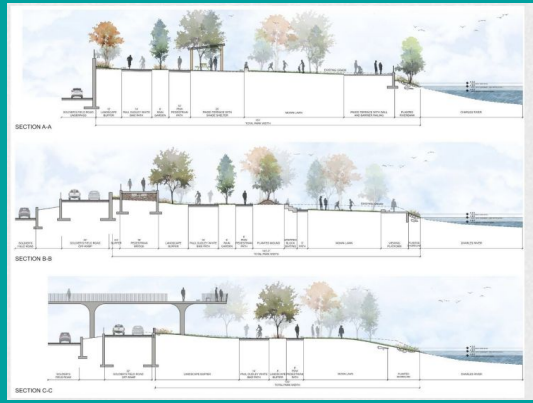
- Central Gathering Lawn with shade structures and river's edge walk
- Bicycle and pedestrian paths separated intersection
- Variety of viewing and accessible seating areas are provided
- Stormwater captured in below ground infiltration chambers
- PDW transitions into shared path before River Street Bridge intersection and at GL/BU Bridge

Plan enlargement



- Central Lawn with shade structures provide main gathering space and river viewing opportunities
- Lower lawn with overlook deck provides opportunity to get close to water's edge
- Additional overlook opportunities exist along path edges
- 14' wide bicycle path, 8' wide pedestrian path (10' wide at central lawn), and 8' wide tree-lined buffer between paths

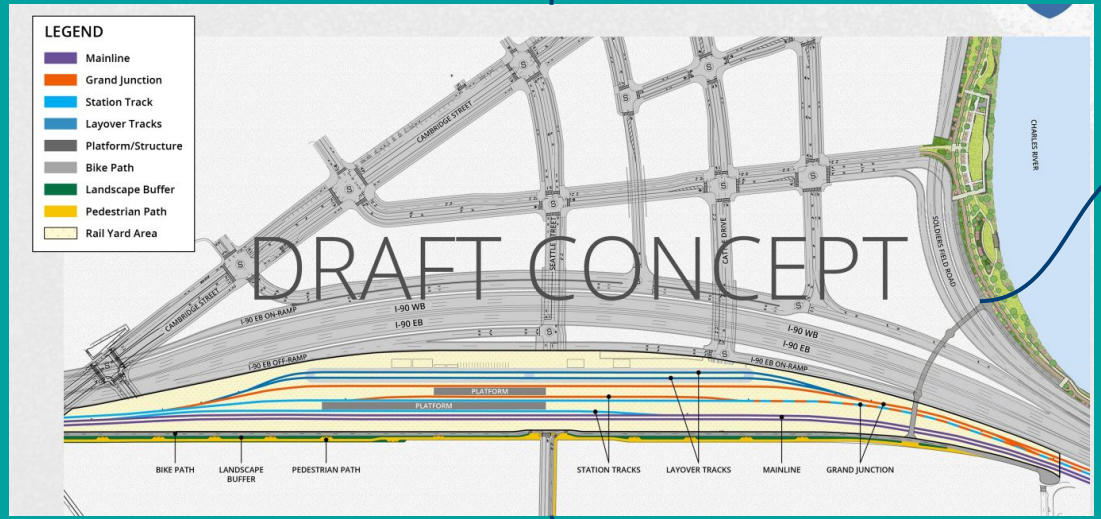
Preferred option sections



- Central Lawn retained at higher elevation to create unique river views
- Lower lawn brings visitors closer to water's edge
- Typically, a dense landscaped buffer along edge of SFR
- Agganis Pedestrian Bridge provides views over the river
- Park lawns slope to river's edge to provide informal water access opportunities

CURRENT DESIGN

A new street grid with many large complex intersections



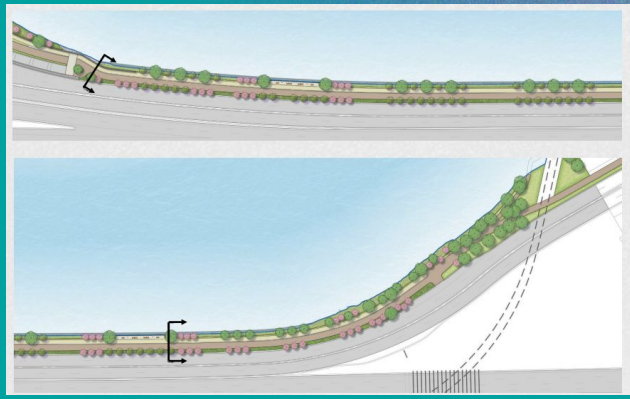
New bicycle/pedestrian connection from Lincoln Street to Cambridge Street to the River

Multiple “Layover” tracks next to the new West Station

CURRENT DESIGN

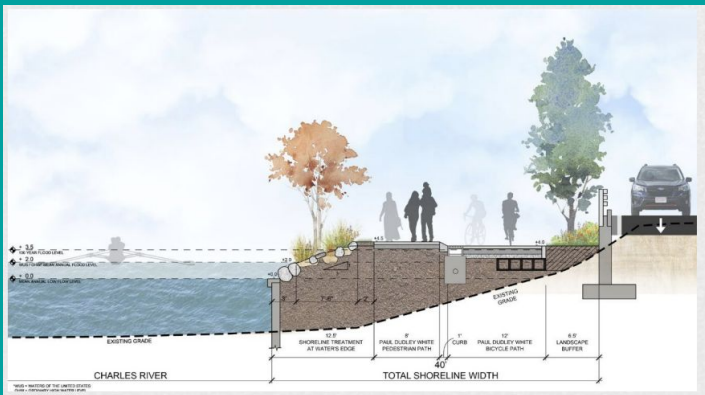
The “THROAT” area preferred by MassDOT

The area



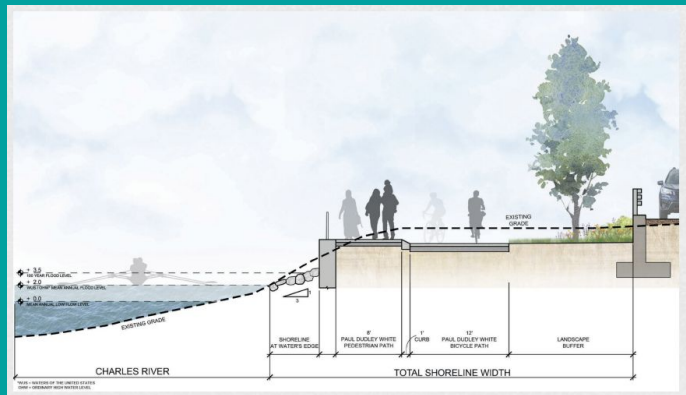
- Typically, a 40' wide land area consisting of a planted shoreline, a separate pedestrian and bicycle path with a narrow, curbed buffer, and a landscaped buffer at the edge of SFR
- A short segment at the west requires a retaining wall at the transition to the Parkland (no wall in river)
- The eastern end merges into a shared path before going under the GJ and BU Bridges.

Sections



- 6.5' wide SFR Landscape Buffer, 12' wide Bicycle Path, 1' wide sloped curb buffer, 8' wide Pedestrian Path,
- 12.5' wide planted shoreline (with no wall) with 3V to 1H planted slope (accessible to DCR maintenance)
- Submerged sheet pile wall with flat cap provide stable river edge and opportunity for safer river rescue
- Silva cells to expand root zone and central drainage structures to capture stormwater
- Sloped curb buffer to reduce tripping concern

Wall section



- Same typical PDW dimensions (i.e., 12' wide bicycle path) Note: section cut at location with wider landscape buffer near Agganis ramp. Typical width is 6.5'
- Rip rap shoreline reinforcement at narrowest location
- Vertical wall to support PDW with railing – No Wall in River

CRWA ALTERNATIVES

With lane reduction

IMPOSSIBLE?

Except - we already did it!

Mass Pike was **6 lanes for 5+ years**

- Will be 6 lanes during years of construction

MassDOT modeling 20% increase in vehicle traffic by 2040, even though…

- **New commuter rail** stop
- Amtrak + MBTA **increasing rail service**
- Mass **climate laws require reduction in VMT**

TABLE ACTIVITY

- **Introduce yourself**
  - *How do you/would you use this area*
- **Review table materials**
- **Share perspective/concerns/vision**
  - What would you like to see for newly created parkland?
  - What is important to you to see prioritized in the throat area?
  - What do you think about a layover yard and proposed street grid?

1 person per group to be spokesperson to share out!

TAKE ACTION & GET INVOLVED

NEXT MASSDOT I-90 TASK FORCE MEETING

WHEN: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 at 6-8 PM
WHERE:
MassDOT Board Room
2nd floor, 10 Park Plaza
Brighton, MA 02215

OR via Zoom

SEND A POSTCARD TO YOUR LEGISLATOR!

Boston Community-Based Flood Resilience and Green Infrastructure Planning Project

Charles River Watershed Association

Is a collaborative initiative between the

- City of Boston's Office of Green Infrastructure
- Charles River, Mystic River and Neponset River Watershed Associations and Boston community groups

The flood survey will

- help pinpoint flooding hotspots for a database and potential concept designs focusing on nature-based solutions, such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavement, to manage stormwater.