

SOLDIERS FIELD (7S)

Soldiers Field Road between Anderson Bridge and Eliot Bridge

KEY RESOURCES

- *Newell Boathouse, Harvard University (1900)*
- *Eliot Bridge (1951)*
- *Soldiers Field Road (1899)*

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

In the eighteenth century, the Longfellow House on Brattle Street commanded sweeping views across the marshes. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow donated the marshland to Harvard University in the 1870s. Harvard filled the marshes by the turn of the century to construct athletic fields and a stadium.



STRENGTHEN TREE ALLÉE ALONG PARKWAY AND PATH.

EXISTING CONDITION AND ISSUES

The open athletic fields and the wooded banks of this segment signal a transition from an urban to a more rural riverfront. The pathway is exposed to traffic on Soldiers Field Road until it reaches the open field beyond Newell Boathouse. The parking lots and guardrails around the boathouse detract from this attractive and historic landmark and from the reservation. Oversized and poorly laid out, the lot forces pedestrians to walk too close to the parkway.



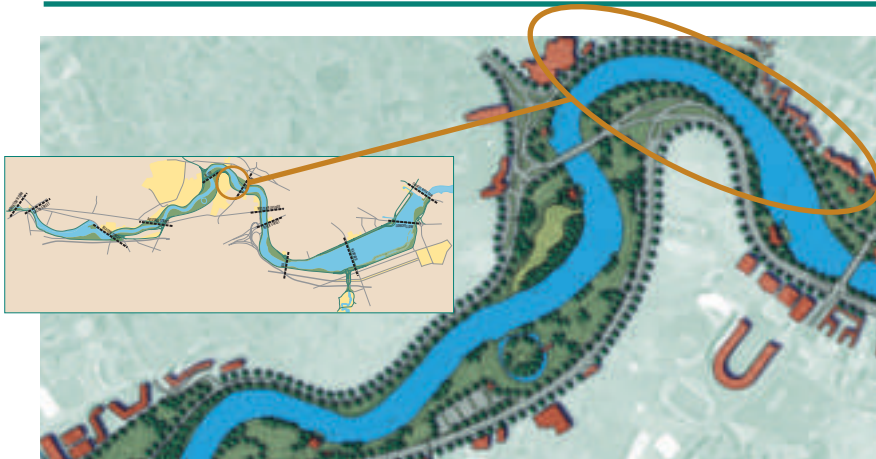
NEWELL BOATHOUSE, TOP. ITS PARKING LOT, ABOVE, FORCES CYCLISTS, JOGGERS AND PEDESTRIANS PERILOUSLY CLOSE TO PARKWAY TRAFFIC.

GOALS

- **Restore the openness that once characterized this area.**
- **Improve the pathway.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Remove or redesign intrusive elements** such as the guardrail and reconfigure the boathouse parking lot to provide more room for the pathway and for tree plantings along the parkway. Harvard University should take the lead on this project.
- **Provide a path and overlook just west of the parking lot** to provide views back to the boathouse and the Anderson Bridge.
- **Establish a wildflower meadow in the open field next to the parkway.** Mowed edges should give it an intentional appearance. With fewer regular mowings, greater attention to trash removal will be necessary.
- **Selectively clear small viewing spots to the river and provide places to sit along the shore.**
- **Manage the stands of river birch to preserve framed views of the river.**



KENNEDY PARK/ LONGFELLOW PARK (7N)

Memorial Drive between Anderson Bridge and Eliot Bridge

KEY RESOURCES

- *Memorial Drive to Ash Street (1897)*
- *London planetrees (1897)*
- *Memorial Drive from Ash Street to Fresh Pond Parkway (1949)*
- *Eliot Bridge (1951)*
- *John Fitzgerald Kennedy Park (1987)*

EXISTING CONDITION AND ISSUES

Longfellow Park extends along one side of the river, the Harvard athletic fields along the other. The park was established to protect the sight lines from the Longfellow House to and across the river. The towering embrace of the London planetrees, the sweeping curve of the embankment, and the broad expanse of green lawn down to the water's edge are character-defining features of this segment. In the spring, the riverbank is

covered with hundreds of blossoming bulbs planted by volunteers. As they die back, however, weedy growth springs up at the edge of the water. The banks along this segment are cut back in the fall, but are soon choked again by false indigo, jewelweed, and other invasive species.

The trees along Memorial Drive are in decline due to soil compaction, automobile damage, a 1978 sewer project that severed tree roots, pavement that limits the passage of water to roots, soil with high salt content, and a high water table that may be drowning the roots of some trees.

The playground between Mt. Auburn Street and Memorial Drive, one of the few in the Middle Basin, is well maintained by volunteers. It is located next to a residential neighborhood and has ample parking on Mt. Auburn Street. Volleyball is popular in Longfellow Park, but because courts are not moved around, bare spots have appeared in the turf.

The signals at the intersection of John F. Kennedy Street and Memorial Drive are among the few along the river to have an automatic dedicated pedestrian phase. Vehicles queuing in the intersection to make left turns conflict with pedestrian movements. Pedestrians find it difficult to cross Memorial Drive to get to the river between the Anderson Bridge and the Eliot Bridge because of traffic speed, limited driver sight lines, and the lack of pedestrian crossings. Many elderly people living in the



vicinity no longer attempt to cross the parkway, nor do they walk the narrow, six-foot path because of potential conflicts with bicyclists and skaters. Joggers wishing to

avoid the paved pathways have seriously eroded the bank and compacted soil around tree roots. In other places, tree roots have heaved the path pavement, creating a dangerous surface.