

The six-foot width of the walkway in this section is one of the narrowest in the reservation. It is the site of frequent serious collisions between pedestrians, cyclists, and skaters. The location of guardrails on the river-side of the pathway and the lack of any separation between the path and road expose users to traffic. A misjudgment when passing can force path users off the curb into the road. Master plan traffic counts found the two-lane service road underutilized.

A very steep bank and thick vegetation cut path users off from the river both physically and visually. The habitat value of this vegetated bank is quite limited due to its narrowness and vegetative composition.

GENZYME FRONT (5S)

Soldiers Field Road between River Street Bridge and Western Avenue Bridge

KEY RESOURCES

- *Western Avenue Bridge (1924)*
- *River Street Bridge (1926)*
- *Soldiers Field Road (1930)*

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

This area once provided dramatic views northward across the marshes to Mt. Auburn Cemetery. With the filling of the marshes, the establishment of the Harvard Business School campus, and the building of Soldiers Field Road, this sense of expansiveness was lost along this stretch of the river.

GOALS

- **Improve safety of path for users.**
- **Protect pedestrians from traffic.**
- **Open views upriver.**
- **Permit access to the shoreline where possible.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Relocate the existing guardrail to the Service Road side of the pathway.** This short-term solution would improve pathway safety.
- **Add a pedestrian phase to the existing traffic signal at Cambridge Street and Soldiers Field Road** to promote continuity and safety of movement.

A SCULLER IN THE CHARLES, WITH THE GENZYME FACILITY IN THE BACKGROUND.



THE PAVED EXPANSE OF THE LIGHTLY TRAVELLED SERVICE ROADS ALONG THE GENZYME FRONT FORCES PEDESTRIANS, SKATERS, BIKERS AND JOGGERS INTO A CRAMPED STRIP OF RIVERSIDE PARKLAND.



- **Narrow the service road next to the river from twenty-four feet and two lanes to sixteen feet and one lane.** This action would add eight feet of width to the reservation, improving safety significantly.
- **Reconfigure the pathways according to one of four alternatives:**

Alternative A: Shoreline path

Widen the main pathway to a ten-foot multiuse path and shift it away from the road and toward the shoreline. Narrow the existing path along the road to four feet to allow limited use by joggers. Flatten the slope to the river and design a new bank treatment with riprap or granite curbing. Eliminate the guardrail along the service road and create a new shoulder, planted with boulevard trees. This path alignment would allow users to leave parkway noise behind as they drop down the slope to the edge of the river. An embankment is a very effective noise buffer.

Alternative B: Upper path with open edge

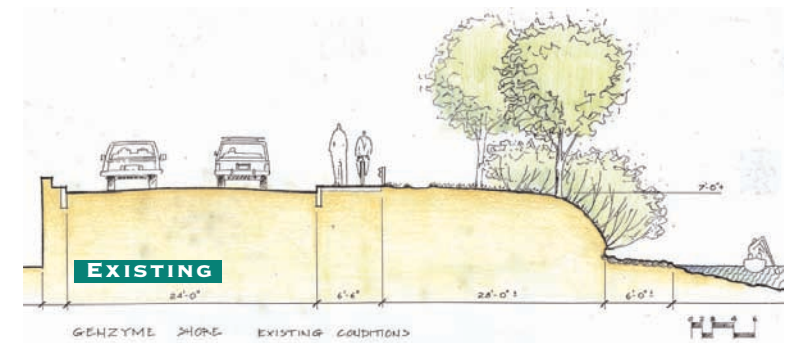
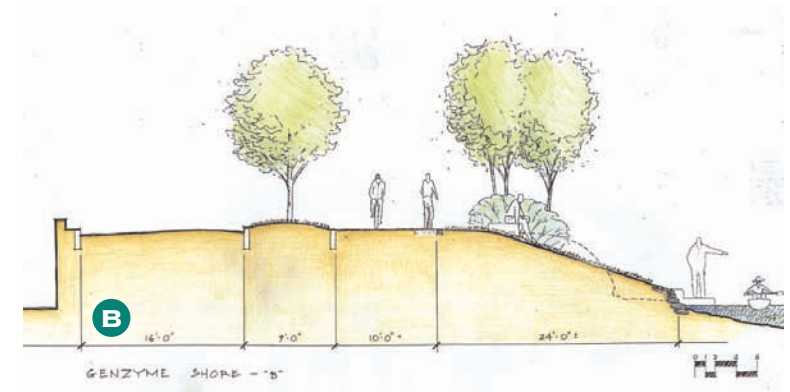
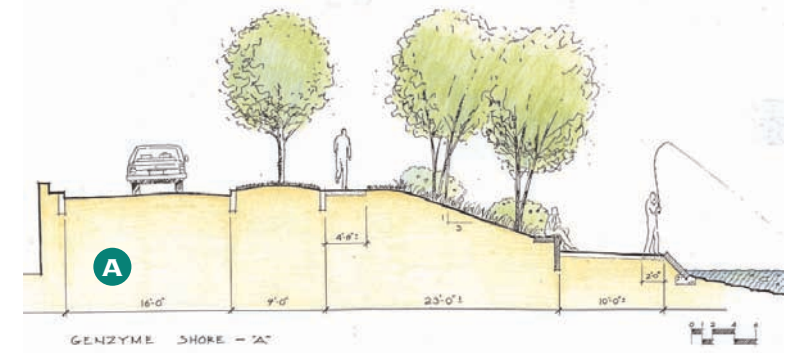
Widen the existing path from six to ten feet. Eliminate the guardrail and create a new eight-foot shoulder for boulevard trees in the space the roadway currently occupies. Flatten the slope to the shore to at least 3:1 for mowing, and rebuild the shoreline with riprap. This scheme would reestablish an adequate buffer of trees and would extend the open character of the banks upstream.

Alternative C: Upper path with vegetative edge

Alternative C is similar to B, but the banks would remain steep and densely covered. Establish at least one scenic overlook with views up and down the river.

Alternative D: Maintain road width and reposition path

Shift the main path back from the curb as in Alternative B or down to the Charles as in Alternative A, but do not narrow the roadway. Preliminary studies conducted by Rizzo Associates for Genzyme Corporation show that this alternative is feasible, but there is less room in this section to accomplish such a move. Some form of retaining wall may be needed, which would increase the cost significantly.



PROPOSALS FOR RESTORING THE BANKS ALONG THE GENZYME FRONTAGE INCLUDE ALTERNATIVE A (TOP), THE SHORELINE PATH AND ALTERNATIVE B (MIDDLE), WHICH WOULD EXTEND THE OPEN BANKS FOUND UPSTREAM. THE EXISTING PROFILE APPEARS AT BOTTOM.

Complete these improvements in conjunction with the future reconstruction of the River Street and Western Avenue Bridges or with future traffic improvements in the area. In addition to providing valuable parkland, this stretch of bank also serves as the front yard of Genzyme Corporation and should attract corporate support.