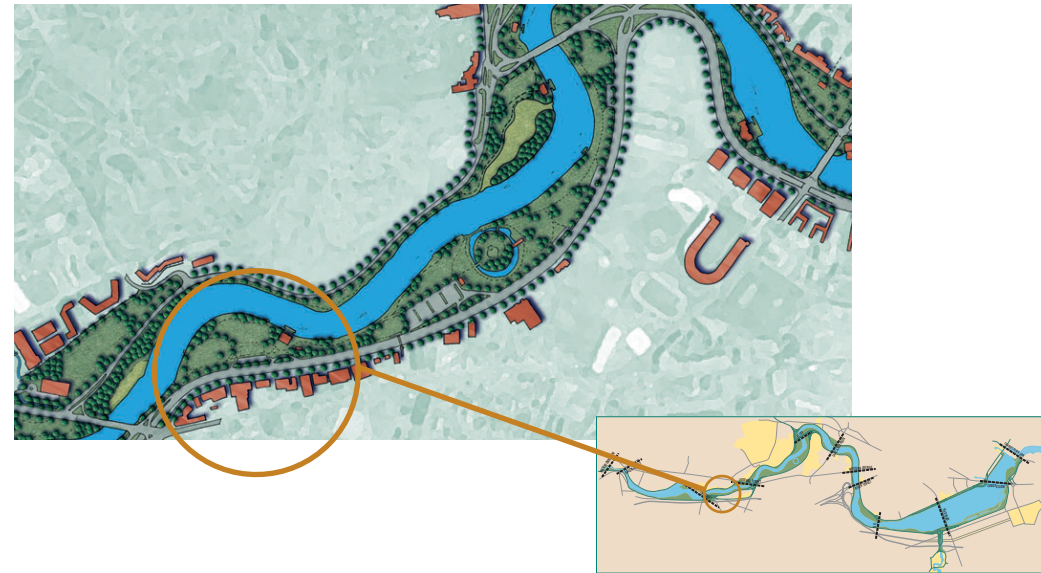


- **Move the community gardens back from the edge of the Charles and permit them to expand toward Soldiers Field Road.** Provide a tool shed, water supply, and a restroom in association with the proposed parkhouse. Enclose the gardens with an attractive fence set back from the path edge to allow ornamental plantings along the outside. Plaques on the fence could help interpret the garden for children. The gardens might provide educational garden plots for the public in conjunction with Herter Center programs.
- **Reset the existing granite armoring with a deeper footing on a gentler slope in order to maintain an open turf edge down to the shore and to prevent erosion.** This will require grubbing out the shrubs and grading back the steep shore slope in places. Supplement the existing pebble beaches with additional coarse stone for stabilization and better launch sites for canoes and kayaks.



HERTER PARK WEST (8S)

Soldiers Field Road between the Richard T. Artesani Playground and the Arsenal Street Bridge

KEY RESOURCES

- *Site of Charles River Speedway (1899)*
- *Speedway headquarters and maintenance yard (1899)*
- *Arsenal Street Bridge (1925)*
- *Henderson Boathouse, Northeastern University (1989)*

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

The Speedway, a 1.75-mile broad walk and race track for horse-drawn carriages, was completed in 1899, drawing crowds for three decades. Part of the Speedway has long since been replaced by Soldiers Field Road, but the Speedway headquarters building remains at the intersection of Soldiers Field Road and Western Avenue. Designed by the firm of Stickney and Austin and completed in 1899, this structure is currently used by the



CARRIAGES GATHER
ALONG THE SPEEDWAY,
CIRCA 1901.

Department of
Fisheries, Wildlife,
and Environmental
Law Enforcement and
by the MDC for the
Upper Basin main-
tenance facility.

Herter Park West
is currently subdivided
by the Dr. Paul Dudley

White bicycle path. The Charles River Community Gardens, the larger of the two community gardens on the river, is located between an open field and a former MDC maintenance yard. The Northeastern University boathouse and an old maintenance structure sit just downriver from the field.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

The former maintenance yard is overgrown with scrub and isolated from the parkland. The area experiences severe drainage problems due to poor grading and a layer of clay that retards water absorption. The banks are heavily wooded in the eastern section, blocking all views to the Charles. The western section is characterized by scrubby volunteer growth.

The main path has very poor drainage and floods frequently in the spring and the fall. Because it is exposed to the heavy traffic on Soldiers Field Road, a second pathway running from the Northeastern Boathouse along the parkway is rarely used. There is a limited amount of parking in a small lot at the western end of the site, near the entrance to the former maintenance yard. Gardeners and boaters use this lot. The drop-off drive at the Northeastern boathouse is not intended for parking, though cars do park there on occasion. There is no handicapped parking designated for the Northeastern Boathouse or the community garden.

GOALS

- **Reintegrate this area into the reservation by restoring it to a healthy and natural condition.**
- **Strengthen the habitat value of the area.**

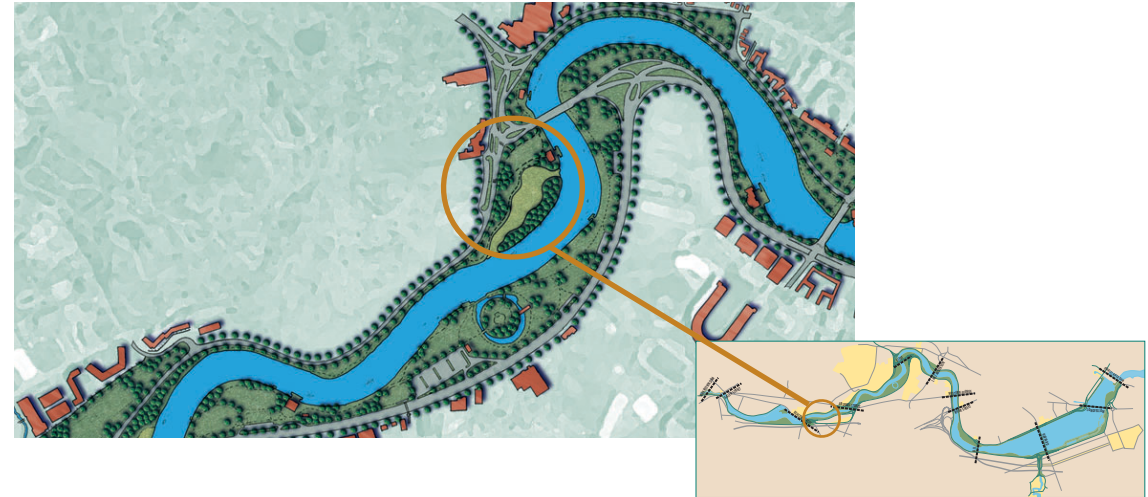
RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Reclaim the west end of Herter Park and transform the former maintenance yard into a naturalized park area.** Together with restoration of Hell's Half Acre and bank restoration along Greenough Boulevard, this would reinforce the Middle Basin as a natural resource area. This proposal would require testing soils for hazardous materials, developing a mitigation plan, removing any hazardous materials and all old construction material and fencing, regrading the area to address its drainage problems, and amending the soil to support healthy plantings. A significant amount of fill could be accommodated here to give a better shape to the land.

THE PHOTO SHOWS EXISTING CONDI-
TIONS; THE CONCEPT DIAGRAM, BELOW,
ILLUSTRATES THE RECOMMENDATIONS.



- **Establish a nature walking loop from the Arsenal Street Bridge to the Eliot Bridge to link Herter Park West and Hell's Half Acre.**
- **Maintain the wooded bank, especially the existing catalpa and birch plantings, but open selected views through to the water to create a sense of connection to the river.** There should also be formal points of contact with the river where paths lead to wooden decks or stone terraces at the water's edge.
- **Establish a wildflower field,** in cooperation with the community gardeners, to diversify the basin landscapes and strengthen wildlife habitat along this section.
- **Separate foot and wheeled uses with a dedicated bicycle-and-skate path along the parkway edge of the meadow and a dedicated soft-surface pedestrian path along the river.** The meadow should remain free of structured paths, although stabilized turf paths may be appropriate.
- **The community gardens should be part of an overall redesign of this area.** The intrusiveness of this facility in an otherwise natural area should be moderated with border plantings. Water and storage space should be provided for the gardens.
- **Redesign the current parking lot for a limited number of park users** in a manner similar to the proposed redesign of the small lots at Herter Park East.



HELL'S HALF ACRE (8N)

An 800-foot section of river bank, marshland, fields, and parkways on the Cambridge side of the river just upstream of the Eliot Bridge

KEY RESOURCES

- *Marshes*
- *Arsenal Street Bridge (1925)*
- *Bath house/American Legion Marsh Post 442 (1941)*
- *Belmont Hill Boat House (1950)*
- *Eliot Bridge (1951)*
- *Greenough Boulevard (1966)*

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Once known as the Riverlands, the marsh at Gerry's Landing was ten times its current size prior to development and the construction of Greenough Boulevard. Aside from a small wetland just upstream, it is the only substantial wetland area in the basin. It is rich with bird life, including red-