

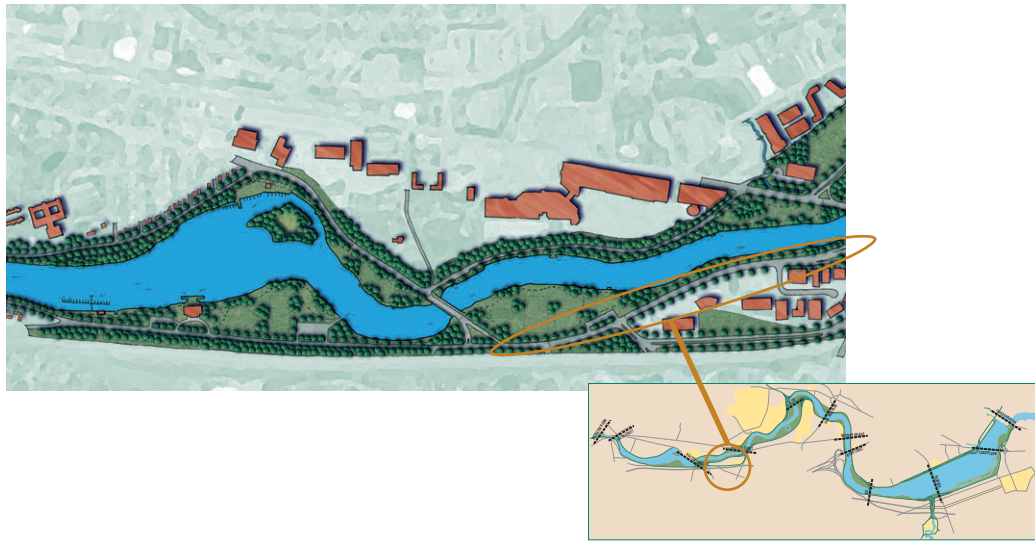
RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The GSA should work with the MDC** to plan for future buildings, parking areas, playgrounds, and athletic fields as part of its effort to mitigate hazardous materials and to restore the site fully.



- **Provide an alternative trail connection through the GSA site crossing Arsenal Street to Greenough Boulevard** at the base of the large retaining wall on the north side of the site. Provide a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Greenough Boulevard and Arsenal Street.

- **Use the GSA site for athletic fields and a multiuse athletic facility to replace the aging Daly Rink and the Brighton/Allston Pool** (segment 10S). Accommodation of displaced athletic fields and facilities here would clear the way for the restoration of the old pool site and Daly Field as pastoral park areas.



SOLDIERS FIELD ROAD/BIRMINGHAM PARKWAY (9S)

Soldiers Field Road between the Arsenal Street and North Beacon Street bridges

KEY RESOURCES

- *North Beacon Street Bridge (1917)*
- *Arsenal Street Bridge (1925)*
- *Birmingham Parkway (1933)*
- *Brighton/Allston Pool and Bath House (1951)*
- *Soldiers Field Road (1955)*

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Formerly the location of the Brighton Abattoir, owned by the Butchers' Slaughtering and Melting Association, this site is the only extensive Basin property that the Metropolitan Park Commission could not acquire when it began assembling land along the Charles River. The Brighton Abattoir used the site for dumping slaughterhouse offal. The Birmingham Parkway was built not along the shore but skirting the side of the abattoir away from the river to allow carriage access to the Upper Basin. The



of the few places where commercial development directly abuts the reservation.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

With the construction of Soldiers Field Road extension, the Birmingham Parkway became redundant and is underutilized today, while numerous curb cuts make Soldiers Field Road a driving hazard. Five roadways converge at the North Beacon Street Bridge intersection, creating complex driving conditions and a no-man's land for pedestrians. Citizens of Brighton—one of the primary neighborhoods served by the Basin—are blocked from using the reservation by the Massachusetts Turnpike, commercial development, and a complex parkway system. The three Turnpike underpasses connecting Brighton with the Basin are narrow and unsafe for pedestrians.

The suburban quality of the commercial development here is completely out of character with the rest of the Basin and with nearby city neighborhoods. The Soldiers Field Road extension lacks suitable parkway landscaping. Only a five-foot asphalt sidewalk on the commercial side separates the parkway from the parking lots along much of the frontage. International House of Pancakes and Days Inn have no trees or landscape treatment along their front edge, Martignetti's Liquors maintains a three-foot strip with mulch and struggling junipers, and McDonald's has a gen-

Commission was later able to acquire land immediately adjacent to the river to accommodate the Soldiers Field Road extension in 1933. After the abattoir closed, the land was sold to private owners; it remains one

erous lawn but no trees. Acura of Boston maintains a small planting strip. Staples has set a higher standard, with linden trees planted thirty-five feet on center in a six-foot planting strip edged by sloped granite curbing. This last treatment should be the recommended minimum. Unsightly wooden poles with cobra-head lights take up limited space in the narrow walkway. Light pollution from parking lots spills into the reservation at night.

The eight-foot-wide multiuse path along the river is closer to the parkway than the shore. Long segments of the pathway are depressed three or four feet below the level of the road, making the presence of cars particularly oppressive. The strip of land between the path and the shore widens to 90 feet and in places is higher than the path by two or three feet. This heavily disturbed piece of land is dissected by gullies and hummocks and is overgrown by short-lived pioneer species such as birch and invasive plants such as jewelweed. Views to the river are blocked along the entire segment.

The Brighton/Allston Pool is isolated just west of the commercial strip. The lack of good pedestrian access, public transportation, and parking are major drawbacks for this facility. It is an aging facility. The *MDC Pools and Rinks Master Plan* recommended that it be phased out of the system rather than rebuilt at its present location.



GOALS

- Acquire private commercial parcels and establish a substantial new park within the reservation.
- Simplify and improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation and safety.
- Strengthen the parkway character of Soldiers Field Road.
- Reestablish direct visual and physical connections to the river from the parkway

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Work with existing commercial businesses to establish a twelve-foot-wide “front lawn” along Soldiers Field Road. Replace the asphalt along the front edge with granite curbing. Use the linked parking lots



EXISTING CONDITION

as a walkway in case of vehicle breakdowns along the parkway.

- **Narrow Soldiers Field Road where possible to establish a planting lawn for trees.** The excessive width of roadway in front of the Acura dealership holds potential for landscaping.
- Replace existing wooden poles and cobra-head lamps with a more attractive MDC standard.
- Improve access to the shoreline by adding a pedestrian phase to the existing signal at Arsenal Street. Add a crosswalk to serve Brighton residents at the intersection of Soldiers Field Road and Parsons Street.
- Establish special plantings of perennials, ornamental grasses, and shrubs at the Arsenal Street Bridge and the North Beacon Street Bridge.

- Move the multiuse path back from the parkway and establish a landscaped berm between the parkway and riverside path.

Establish a second soft path closer to the river. Some filling of old gullies may be necessary to achieve a maintainable area.

- Clear discrete views from the parkway to the river while maintaining the overall wooded character of the banks.

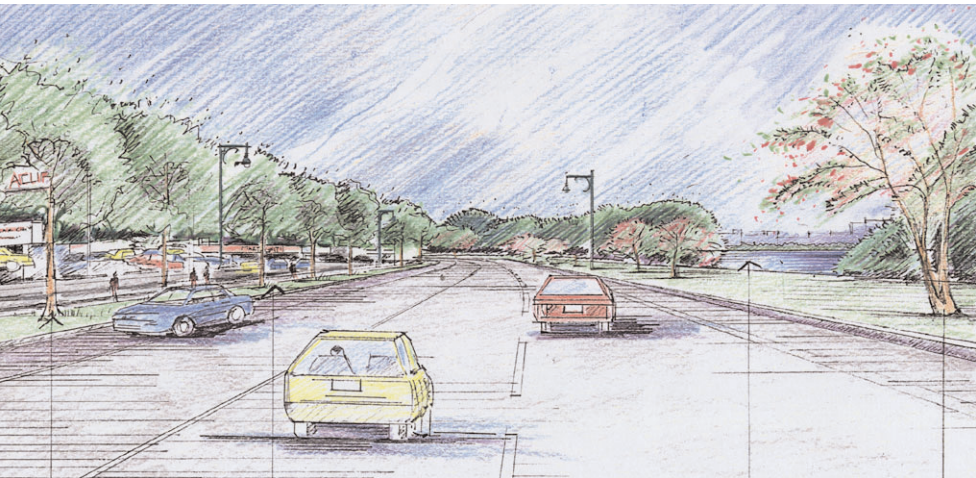
Remove red cedar and arborvitae that have suffered from snow damage and replace them with clusters of flowering understory trees. Maintain the large oaks near the North Beacon Street Bridge and clear out the volunteer vegetation around them.



LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Acquire a significant portion of the commercial strip between Soldiers Field Road extension and Birmingham Parkway and fully restore it as a park. Acquisition and conversion of these strip commercial parcels to parkland would complete the Charles River Basin and remove a glaring intrusion into the park setting. A new twenty-acre park in this location, with athletic fields and river paths, would compensate for the loss of the aging pool structure. Improvements at the three underpasses linking the park to Brighton would unlock new recreational resources for the neighborhood. A phased approach to land acquisition would start at the western end of the commercial strip,

NARROWING SOLDIERS FIELD ROAD WOULD ALLOW CREATION OF A WIDER, MORE HEAVILY LANDSCAPED STRIP TO SCREEN BUSINESSES ON THE INBOUND SIDE. CLEARING UNDERBRUSH AT INTERVALS ON THE OUTBOUND SIDE WOULD OPEN “WINDOWS” OFFERING VIEWS OF THE RIVER.



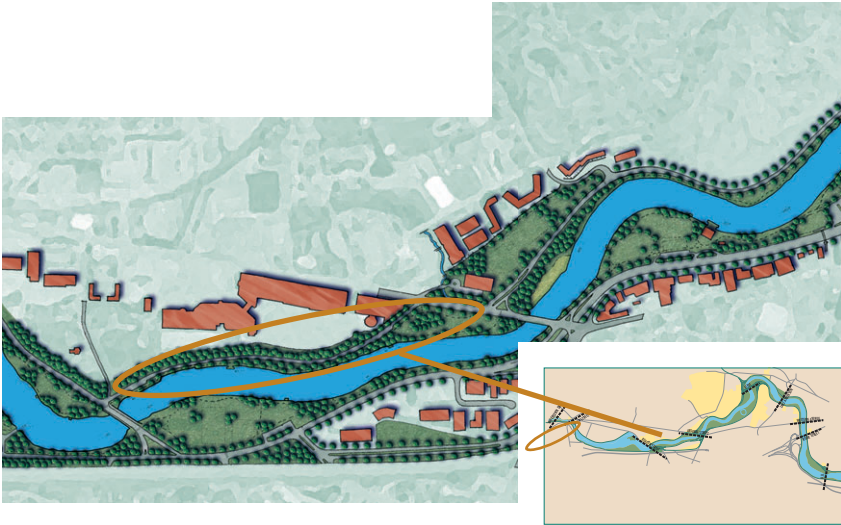
where the development screens Birmingham Parkway from view and is most intrusive. Because the two parkways are to some extent redundant they could be reconfigured or partially eliminated. Material from the cut embankment behind the commercial strip could be used to grade the entire area. The landscaped slopes would provide a stunning setting for the pathway and parkway along the river and for several athletic fields.

- **Relocate the Brighton/Allston Pool complex and reconfigure the road system in front of it to improve the safety and the image of the parkway.** Relocate the pool to the GSA site. Further study is required to evaluate potential roadway configurations.



This long-term alternative would involve acquisition of up to four private properties, demolition of five structures and 5,000 linear feet of parkway, construction

of 3,500 linear feet of new parkway, provision of new signage and signals, and creation of a new, twenty-acre park. This alternative could cost between \$30 million and \$40 million to implement and more than doubles the cost of revitalization for the Basin.



GREENOUGH BOULEVARD, WATERTOWN (9N)

Greenough Boulevard between Arsenal Street and North Beacon Street

KEY RESOURCES

- Possible prehistoric sites
- Seawall (prior to 1906)
- Seawall extension (1907)
- Greenough Boulevard (1909)

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

This section of Greenough Boulevard, once named Charles River Road, comes close to the vision of the original planners: a tree-lined pleasure drive with views of the river. It is spared from heavy traffic because of its location. Small turnouts provide limited parking facing the river.