

# NONANTUM ROAD (IOS)

*Newton Yacht Club to Galen Street Bridge*

## KEY RESOURCES

RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE PLANTING MORE TREES ALONG THE PARKWAY AND OPENING VIEWS ONTO THE RIVER AT SELECTED POINTS.

- *Prehistoric site*
- *Nonantum Road (1920, 1932, 1935)*
- *Newton Yacht Club*



## INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Begun in 1920, Nonantum Road was built incrementally over 20 years. The completion of the last section in 1935 established a continuous

drive along the river from Bay State Road in Boston to Galen Street in Watertown.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The portion of the reservation above the Newton Yacht Club narrows to a curving, four-lane parkway, a six-foot path, and a thin strip of heavily wooded bank. The low traffic volumes and generous road width promote excessive speeds along this stretch of parkway. People on the narrow path are dangerously exposed to automobile traffic. A guardrail runs intermittently along the inside edge of the path, which not only leaves people on the path vulnerable but also cuts off any possible escape from a car out of control. Light posts and other obstacles placed in the pathway further narrow the functional width of the path in the stretch immediately downriver from Watertown Square

The bank, though narrow, is steep and thickly wooded and offers no views of the river. The land side of the road is a steep, wooded embankment, providing a pleasant sense of separation from developed areas.

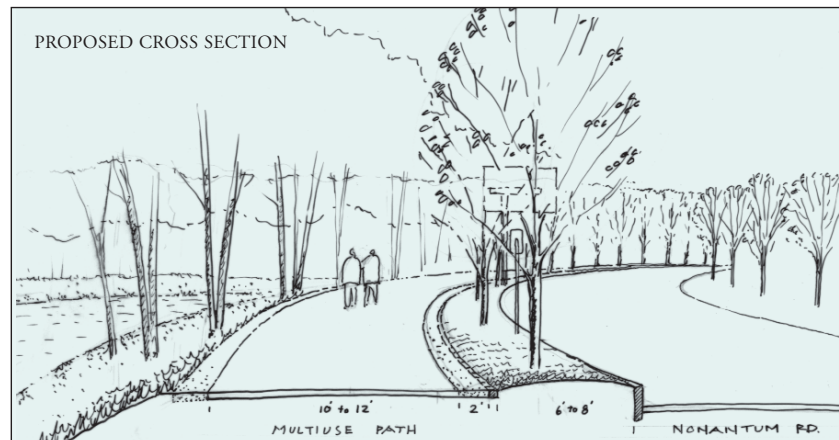
## GOALS

- **Improve pedestrian safety and experience along Nonantum Road.**
- **Open views to the river.**
- **Increase the riverbank width where possible.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Relocate Nonantum Road to the south to create more open space next to the river if the MBTA bus yard at Galen Street becomes available.**
- **Eliminate one eastbound lane of Nonantum Road between Galen Street and Charlesbank Road.** Widen the pathway to a ten-foot multi-use path. Provide a six- to eight-foot planting strip with a continuous row of street trees to protect and separate the path from the parkway.

- **Eliminate guardrails made obsolete by this additional setback from the embankment.** Where guardrails are necessary, use the recommended MDC standard to blend well with the landscape.
- **Establish a new pedestrian bridge in the vicinity of Maple Street or at the bend in the river where long views are afforded in two directions.** This new bridge would shorten the walking loops in the

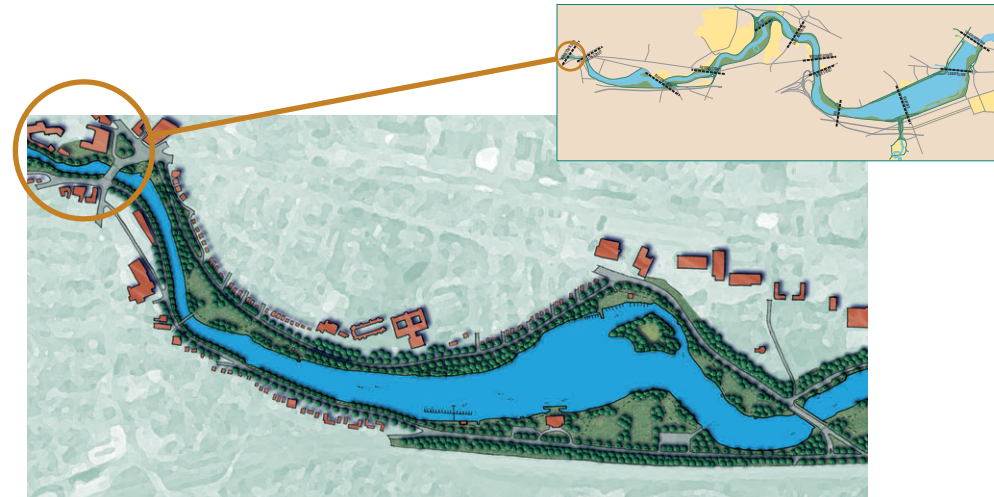


THE EXISTING CONDITIONS ALONG NONANTUM ROAD NEAR THE GALEN STREET BRIDGE.

Upper Basin and mark the transition from the open boat basin to the narrow river channel at Watertown Square. The bridge design must reflect the special character of the Charles River Basin.

- **Add a pedestrian phase to the existing signal at Galen Street and place a pedestrian crosswalk across Nonantum Road.**

- **Establish and maintain scenic vistas at bends in the Charles to capture long views up and down the river.**
- **Develop a memorandum of understanding with abutters—including the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, the Perkins School for the Blind, and the Arsenal development group—that supports maintenance of the wooded banks on the landside of the parkways that give the Upper Basin its rural feel.**



## WATERTOWN DAM (IIN&S)

### KEY RESOURCES

- *Possible prehistoric sites*
- *Possible industrial and historical archeological sites*
- *Watertown Dam (pre-1893, 1966)*
- *Galen Street Bridge (1907)*
- *Fish Ladder (1972)*
- *Boardwalk and dam overlook (1999)*

### INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

As the head of tide on the Charles, this site has been intensively used. Native Americans set up temporary fishing camps here, and early industrialists dammed the river for waterpower. This long-active stretch of river is now quiet and intimate. The short segment of river between the Galen Street Bridge and the dam marks a fundamental shift in character from the Basin to the Upper Charles River Reservation with its wooded banks, narrow channel, and absence of parkways. Old mill buildings, converted