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DCR Operations Building

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Introduction

The Southwest Corridor Park operations are based in a one-story building at 38 New Heath Street. This 11,288 square foot building includes office space, a garage, and storage for park maintenance equipment, and is situated on a 44,147 square foot L-shaped site. The site is largely paved and used for employee parking, equipment parking, and storage of bulk materials.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has hired an architect to study the building and make recommendations for improvements. These improvements aim to address building code, life safety, and accessibility compliance, as well as enhance energy efficiency.

Although the building is immediately adjacent to the corridor, it has no direct connection to the park since it is west of the rail corridor and at a lower elevation than the park. Staff access the building from New Heath Street, and park maintenance equipment is transported to various park locations via vehicles pulling landscape trailers.

The building was constructed as an egg processing facility around 1972. The building was transferred to the MBTA for parkland maintenance in 1994. Since the building was not constructed as a maintenance building and not intended for public access, the entrances are understated, and the facades are deliberately subdued. However, the site could benefit from the introduction of shade trees to help mitigate the heat island effect, provided they are placed in locations that do not interfere with site function or any solar potential.

Stormwater from the roof and site should be captured, treated, and infiltrated as much as possible before being released into the drainage system.

In the future, if additional decking over the rail corridor is possible and the parcel from Heath Street to Cedar Street is considered, the Operations Building should be reimagined to include more publicly accessible features, such as visitor information and restrooms. It should also be designed to have a presence and public access at the park level.

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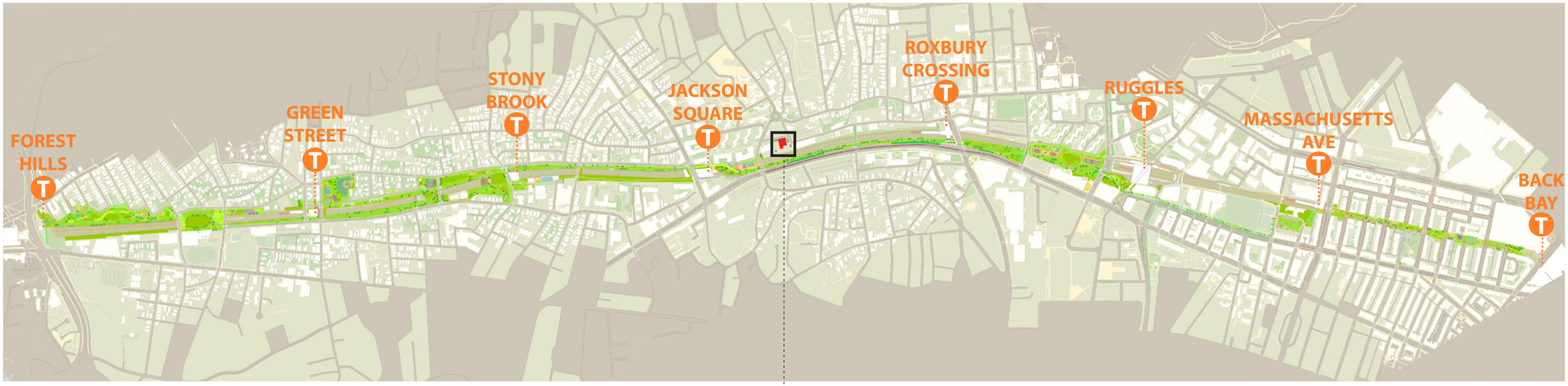
The Southwest Corridor Park is fortunate to have an operations building located adjacent to the park. Positioned near the midpoint of the linear park, this building serves as a central hub for the park's maintenance operations. It houses the staff, materials, and equipment required to support the ongoing care and upkeep of the park.

Having this facility adjacent to the park is a significant advantage, allowing the maintenance team to quickly respond to any issues that arise and ensuring the park remains a safe, clean, and enjoyable space for the community.



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The operations site could be significantly improved to make the space more efficient, attractive, and to help mitigate urban heat. Adding shade trees around the site perimeter would contribute to the public realm by providing shade and enhancing the visual appeal of the area. This greenery would not only create a more pleasant environment for employees but also benefit the community by reducing the urban heat island effect.

Where the parcel meets Heath Street, the chain link fence should be pulled back to create a public pocket park. This new green space would serve as a small urban oasis for local residents and visitors, offering a place to relax and enjoy nature.

In addition to these aesthetic and functional improvements, environmental sustainability should be a key focus. Stormwater from the paved surfaces and building roof should be infiltrated on-site. This practice would improve water quality by filtering pollutants before they enter local water bodies and decrease the volume of runoff, reducing the burden on the drainage system and helping to prevent flooding.