

THE FAIRMOUNT GREENWAY CONCEPT PLAN

MARCH 2011
THE FAIRMOUNT GREENWAY TASK FORCE

CROSBY | SCHLESSINGER | SMALLRIDGE
WITH BRYANT ASSOCIATES



A CKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Fairmount Greenway Concept Plan is the result of a collaborative effort with the dedicated members of the Fairmount Greenway Task Force and the wider community over the course of the past year and a half. This Concept Plan would not be possible without the generous contribution of time and insight from these participants.

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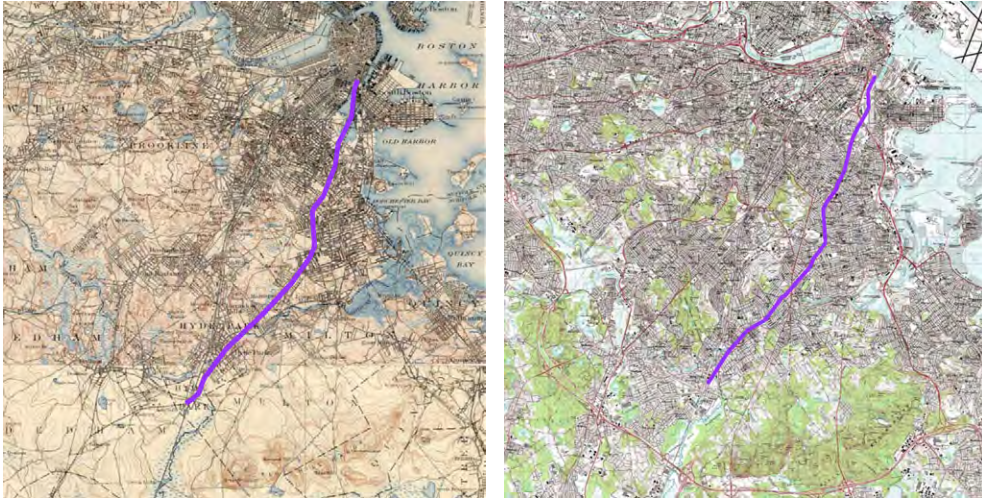
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1 INTRODUCTION



As early as 1903 (left) the Fairmount Railroad Line was adjacent to some of the most densely developed areas of Boston. Today (right) the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line runs through the heart of many of Boston's urban neighborhoods.

The Fairmount Commuter Rail line runs for approximately nine miles through several of Boston's most densely populated urban neighborhoods, from South Station to Readville Station in Hyde Park.

The Fairmount neighborhoods historically have been beleaguered by high crime, environmental injustice and unemployment. And, recent studies by the Boston Department of Public Health show that the neighborhoods have high rates of obesity and diabetes. As a result of ongoing organizing activities by the CDCs, community organizations and residents, these issues are being addressed on a number of fronts:

- In the early years of this century, the Greater Four Corners Action Coalition (GF-CAC) and other neighborhood and transit groups created the Fairmount Coalition to begin organizing to bring transit equity to the Fairmount line with four new stations, increased service and uniform fair fares. The goal of the transit equity campaign was to make the Fairmount line better serve the 180,000 low and moderate income and minority residents in Dorchester, Mattapan and Hyde Park; to reduce reliance on slow and polluting buses and private car transportation that also impacted environmental quality in the neighborhoods; and, to advocate for a single rapid transit fare at stations, instead of the current tiered fare system.

The Vision

It's Saturday morning. Keisha wakes up in her Mattapan home and walks along The Fairmount Greenway along the Neponset River to the Shops at Riverwood where she runs her errands. Pablo and Bob meet at the Fairmount Station, pick up food in Logan Square, and follow The Greenway to the Reservation Road Skate Park. Susan and her kids ride their bikes from the new Newmarket Station to Readville, stopping for ice cream along the way. They're tired at the end, but can't wait until they're old enough to continue riding along Mother Brook. Jose and Maria take their children on The Greenway from their Bowdoin/Geneva home to the Grove Hall Library, and then ride their bikes down Columbia Road to the Franklin Park Zoo. Judy and Joan stroll down The Greenway for their weekly coffee and chat, stopping to admire the new community garden. Marcos has ridden his bike on the Greenway from Morton Street to South Station every day this week to get to work, so he's sleeping in.

The Greenway has become an integral part of the community.



The Greenway provides the residents who reside in our neighborhoods an opportunity to share our common heritage.

- Robert Thompson,
Community Organizer, Quincy/
Geneva CDC

- In 2004, four CDCs (Dorchester Bay EDC, Codman Square NDC, Mattapan CDC and Southwest Boston CDC) that share contiguous boundaries along the 9-mile Fairmount Commuter Rail Line formed the Fairmount/Indigo Line CDC Collaborative. The CDCs saw the opportunity to augment the transit improvements through a Smart Growth, Transit-Oriented-Development (TOD) initiative to create new affordable and mixed-income housing, commercial development, jobs, and open space clustered around the new and existing Fairmount stops. By marshalling the CDCs' development capacity and additional organizing resources, the Collaborative strongly supports the Coalition transit campaign while promoting new mixed-use transit-oriented-development to take advantage of the planned transit upgrades. Each CDC is pursuing targeted clusters of properties within ½ mile of each of the Fairmount line stops for new mixed-use, higher density transit-oriented-development and preservation of key multi-family properties. The combined pipeline now includes 1,200 new or preserved units of affordable and mixed-income housing, up to 224,200 square feet of commercial space, and 1,250 new jobs. The bottom line for the CDC Collaborative is to prevent potential speculation and displacement and to insure that the communities surrounding the Fairmount line will benefit from the new transit improvements and will not suffer from gentrification.

Creating, preserving and integrating open space is a core principle of transit oriented development (TOD) planning. In 2007-2008, the Collaborative completed four major neighborhood charrettes around four of the stops to amplify the "urban village" mixed-use scenarios first presented in Boston's Newest Smart Growth Corridor planning document in 2006. Residents along the line are adamant about the need to integrate more open space into TOD plans.

- The Fairmount Corridor has been designated as one of five pilot corridors by the Partnership for Sustainable Communities program, an interagency program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Transportation. This program supports metropolitan and multi-jurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments to help communities become economically strong and environmentally sustainable. Investments from the Partnership are helping to turn the rail line into an engine of economic development and community revitalization. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provided financial support for the renovation of two existing stations in Uphams Corner and Mattapan.. EPA has provided funding to clean up more than 30 brownfield sites within a half-mile of the new and renovated stations and will be providing technical assistance to a Green Jobs Incubator on a former brownfield. HUD's funding provided support for a significant portion of the more than 2,000 new housing units that are being built along the corridor. The Partnership is working with the city, the CDCs, The Boston Foundation, and other partners to help avoid displacement of existing residents as the area is revitalized, to create job and recreational opportunities for residents, and to encourage development of affordable and mixed-income housing near transit.

- The Circle of Promise, which encompasses a number of schools within the Fairmount neighborhoods, is a City of Boston and Boston Public Schools initiative “to provide greater opportunity for young people and their parents by implementing place-based supports, boosting student achievement and eliminating the cycle of poverty.” The Circle of Promise connects the comprehensive resources that are already in place to seamlessly deliver services to the community. The plan calls for city programs and community organizations to share data and become one integrated network that educates and guides students and families throughout their development and education – from birth to college, dawn to dusk.
- In 2008, the Coalition community organizations and the CDCs created the Fairmount Greenway Task Force including the four Collaborative CDCs, the Quincy/Geneva Housing Corporation and five “Partner” neighborhood groups and open space advocates to help build the constituency for the Fairmount Greenway. The Task Force is directing the community organizing and planning for a nine-mile new Fairmount Greenway that will link existing and new open spaces along the Fairmount line creating a new ribbon of green space that weaves back and forth and along the Fairmount line. It will be a catalyst linking the dynamism, vitality, and ethnic diversity of all the Fairmount Corridor neighborhoods.

The Task Force CDCs and corresponding community organizations include:

- Dorchester Bay EDC - Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
- Quincy/Geneva Housing Corp. - Project RIGHT
- Codman Square NDC - Greater Four Corners Action Coalition
- Mattapan CDC - Boston Natural Areas Network
- Southwest Boston CDC - “02136 All Things Hyde Park”

Together, the Fairmount Greenway and improvements to and around the Fairmount Line will address issues of transit equity, access to jobs, public health, housing affordability, quality of life and neighborhood pride. The Greenway will provide a healthy and attractive route connecting residents to jobs, schools, new and existing open space, community centers and other neighborhood destinations, as well as to the regional open space system. It has the ability to transform the neighborhoods through which it passes - providing places for people to gather, projects around which to organize and rally and healthy transportation options. The Greenway is simultaneously both a very big project - connecting the Fairmount communities to the region, and a very local project – greening neighborhood streets and creating new parks. The Greenway as a whole, and individual new open space resources alongside it – such as the proposed Peace Park at Flint and Astoria Streets in Mattapan - will allow residents to reclaim their neighborhoods and will provide tangible evidence that people can make a difference in their communities.

Neighborhoods that make it easy to walk or bike to work, school, stores, parks, and other destinations help people stay healthy by incorporating regular exercise into their daily routines. Parks, open space, and recreational opportunities make communities more attractive and help keep residents healthy by giving them places to exercise, play, or just relax.

- Partnership for Sustainable Communities.



Livability means being able to take your kids to school, go to work, see a doctor, drop by the grocery or post office, go out to dinner and a movie, and play with your kids at the park, all without having to get into your car. Livability means building the communities that help Americans live the lives they want to live.

- Secretary Ray LaHood, U.S. Department of Transportation

In April 2009, the Task Force hired Crosby | Schlessinger | Smallridge and Bryant Associates to develop a concept plan for both The Greenway alignment and design, and a framework for continuing implementation activities. This report documents the concept plan and implementation framework.

2 THE PROCESS



Community residents examined display boards and discussed the plans with the project team at public meetings.

The Fairmount Greenway Task Force became the Steering Committee for The Greenway Concept Plan, overseeing the work of the consultant team, and taking responsibility for organizing community meetings. The Steering Committee met with the consultants regularly over the course of the project.

Prior to the Consultant Team being hired, the Community Organizations worked with each of the communities to identify existing and potential open spaces that residents would like to see incorporated into The Greenway. The consultants located these sites on the project base maps.

Two community-wide meetings were held in each of the four neighborhoods. At the first meeting, the project was introduced, large maps of the project area were displayed and the residents were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. Are there additional potential/desirable open space sites that should be incorporated into The Greenway?
2. Are there other Community Destinations that should be linked via The Greenway?



When you're in the city its nice having places like this where people can go to and hang out at. When people don't have that it's kind of sad for them.

- Hyde Park Green Team member

3. How would you use The Greenway (for recreation, to get to school, to run errands, etc.)
4. Is there a particular Neighborhood Identity (e.g., the Garden Neighborhood, the Green Neighborhood, etc.) that should be used considered in The Greenway design?

At the second meeting, the draft concept and alignment for The Greenway were presented and attendees were invited to ask questions, give comments, and make suggestions.

The input from both of these meetings is reflected in the Conceptual Plan presented in this report.

The Consultant Team also met with representatives from the City of Boston Transportation and Public Works Departments, the City's Boston Bikes Program, the MBTA and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

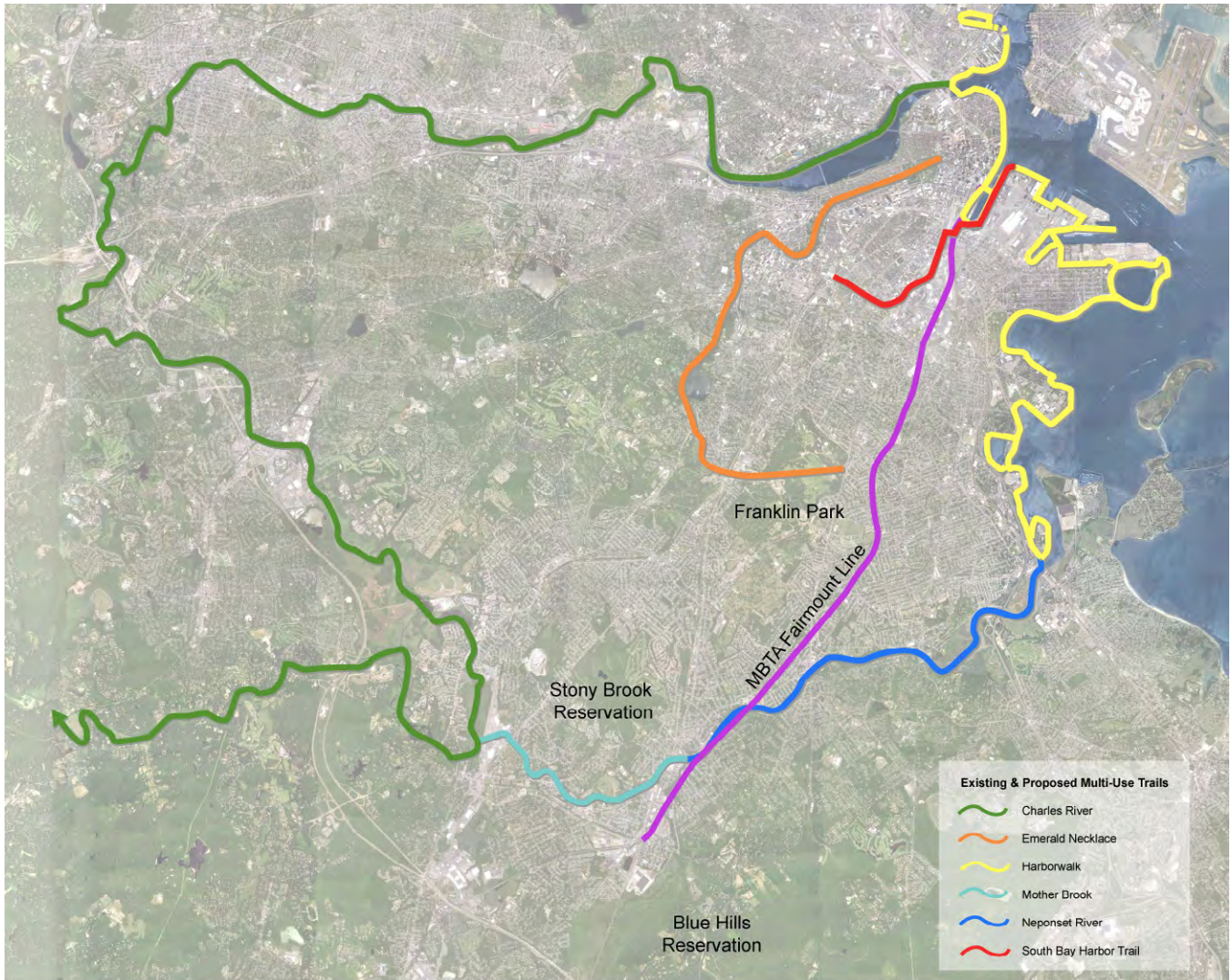
3 CONTEXT



Map of Fairmount Line showing existing and proposed stations.

The Project Area includes the land within one half mile of either side of the Fairmount Line tracks from South Station in downtown Boston to Readville Station in Hyde Park, although because of the desire to connect to other neighborhood open spaces and destinations, the project maps encompass a larger area. The MBTA Fairmount Line right-of-way, property owned by the Boston Department of Neighborhood Development, existing open space, property owned by the Community Development Corporations and priority open space parcels identified by the communities were all included on the project maps.





The Greenway will become an integral part of the regional system of multi-use trails circling the Boston metropolitan area.

Meetings were held with the MBTA to gain an understanding of where it might be possible to develop The Greenway within the MBTA right-of-way, and where, because of issues related to grade changes and/or limited right-of-way it would be necessary to develop The Greenway outside of the MBTA right-of-way. Through these meetings it became clear that there were very few, if any, locations where the right-of-way can accommodate The Greenway.

The Department of Neighborhood Development owns approximately 162 parcels within the Project Area, as a result of tax foreclosures. It is DND's goal to put these parcels back into productive use, through the disposition process. Thirty five of these parcels were identified by the community as Priority Open Space Parcels adjacent to The Greenway. Another 43 DND parcels are adjacent to The Greenway and could potentially be used to enhance The Greenway. In addition, the Collaborative CDCs are interested in developing

some of the other DND-owned parcels. The Collaborative has requested that DND put a temporary hold on the disposition of parcels within the Project Area pending further discussions with the Collaborative.

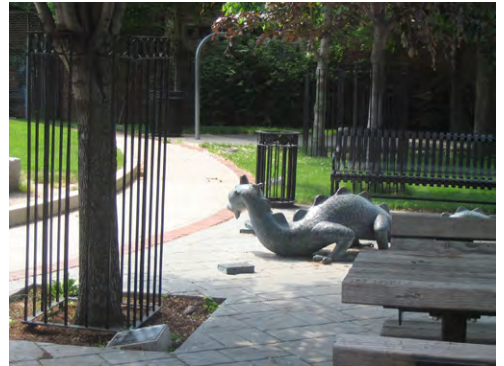
The Greenway is surrounded by a network of existing and proposed multi-use paths, and will provide a link from the Fairmount communities to this regional network, which includes the Neponset River Reservation, the Emerald Necklace, the HarborWalk and the Charles River Reservation. It will link to existing and proposed bicycle lanes on area streets such as Blue Hill Avenue, Columbia Road and Talbot Avenue. And, it will link to other regional open space resources like Franklin Park, and Stony Brook and Blue Hills Reservations, as well as to neighborhood parks such as Walker Playground, Harambee Park, Nonquit Street Green and Iacono Playground.

The Greenway will provide access to important community facilities such as the Blue Hills boys and Girls Club, the Mildred Street Community Center, the Grove Hall Library and shopping districts like Logan Square in Hyde Park and the South Bay Shopping Center.

*A clean, green,
healthy community
is a better place
to buy a home
and raise a
family; it's more
competitive in the
race to attract
new businesses;
and it has the
foundations
it needs for
prosperity.*

- Administrator Lisa P. Jackson,
U.S. Environmental Protection
Agency





The Greenway will provide links to neighborhood open spaces, community centers, libraries, schools and shopping districts.

4 THE CONCEPT



A Greenway Street (described on the following page) with widened sidewalks, bump outs on the corners for traffic calming, new open space and a shared bicycle/vehicular travel lane. The existing condition is shown on the inset.

The concept for The Greenway is a linear greenway along the Fairmount Corridor that will link nearby existing and new open spaces, creating a new ribbon of green space that weaves back and forth through the adjacent neighborhoods. The multi-use pedestrian and bicycle path will span the length of the Fairmount line and provide connections between parks, community gardens, schools, historic sites, community centers and shopping districts.

Project Goals/Principles

The Draft Fairmount Greenway alignment was developed based on the following principles:

- The Greenway should provide a safe, convenient and attractive path for both pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The Greenway should loosely follow the MBTA Fairmount Commuter Rail Line.



- The Greenway should connect directly (or via neighborhood “loops”) to priority open space parcels and destinations identified by the communities, as well as to regional multi-use trails.
- The Greenway should accommodate family and recreational cyclists in addition to commuter cyclists, and should therefore, to the extent possible, avoid use of on-road bicycle lanes, particularly on busy streets, which can feel unsafe to less experienced riders.
- The Greenway should follow a reasonably direct route, to discourage cyclists from switching to other more direct, less safe streets.

The proposed alignment for The Greenway is shown on the map on the following page. Creating the alignment involved numerous site visits, discussions with the community and the City of Boston, looking at traffic patterns and adjacent uses, and measuring the width of many streets. It is, however, a conceptual alignment. As the project moves forward, more detailed analysis of each segment will be required (see Chapter 5) and it is likely that the alignment will shift in some locations as the result of these analyses. Because of the lack of pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets, or off-road options, north of the Newmarket Station, it is recommended that Greenway users follow Massachusetts Avenue west to the South Bay Harbor Trail which they can they follow north to South Station.

Greenway Streets

Because of the lack of available off-road right-of-way adjacent to the Fairmount Commuter Rail line and the lack of existing open space on which to site The Greenway, the draft alignment shows much of The Greenway following existing streets. The concept for these streets is that they will become “Greenway Streets” with new pedestrian/bicycle accommodations and amenities.

Whenever possible, The Greenway trail for both pedestrians and cyclists should be off-road, with the curb line moved to accommodate an off-road facility. The preferred minimum width for a multi-use off-road trail is 15 feet, which includes a 10 foot wide path and five foot separation from the road and cannot be accommodated on many of the proposed Greenway Streets.

The conceptual Greenway alignment is located on streets that either have enough width to accommodate designated bike lanes or can be made quiet enough for shared use between bicycles and cars.

In those cases, the bicycle facilities will include on-road bicycle lanes (some one-way, some two-way). Traffic calming measures such as sidewalk bump-outs at the corners to slow drivers and alert them to a change in the character/use of the street would be implemented to discourage use of the street by drivers not trying to access a specific destination on that particular block. On quiet, local, narrower streets, where there is not room to accommodate a separate bicycle lane, there will be shared use of the road.



A plan view of The Greenway Street shown on page 11.

Corner bump-out areas of considerable length, and adjacent vacant corner parcels, could accommodate benches, bicycle facilities and signage announcing The Greenway and providing “rest stops.” Street tree plantings and widened sidewalks (where possible), along with new landscaping will provide additional amenity and a stronger, more distinct character to Greenway Streets. In addition to providing the multi-use trail, these improvements will create a ribbon of green through the project area, serving as a neighborhood beautification project, increasing community pride, encouraging improvements by adjacent property owners and raising property values, in addition to providing the multi-use trail.

Other vacant parcels on these streets have been identified for potential incorporation into The Greenway, and could be developed for neighborhood totlots, community gardens and other community-identified uses.

Other Design Issues

The proposed alignment and drawings included in this report are conceptual. As the design of the Greenway becomes more detailed in subsequent project phases, the following design issues will need to be addressed in greater detail.

Neighborhood Character/Identity

The individual neighborhoods through which The Greenway passes each have their own history, character and identity. For example, front yards in Dorchester Bay are filled with flowers, obviously a source of pride for community residents, while the Codman Square/ Great Four Corners area identifies itself as a “green community” with larger community gardens or neighborhood farms. Residents of Dorchester and Hyde Park expressed great pride in the rich industrial and cultural history of their communities. The special characteristics of the neighborhoods will provide valuable material for interpretive elements. At the same time, residents were anxious to ensure that maps and other signage include the names of individual neighborhoods.

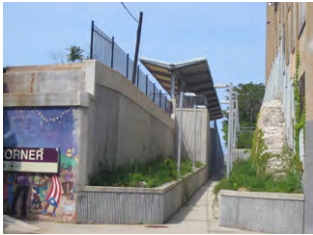
Connectors/Connections/Loops

Although The Greenway will be fairly linear, one of the key uses will be to connect users with a variety of destinations including existing and planned open spaces, commercial districts and public facilities such as schools, community centers and libraries, as well as to the more regional trail network described in Chapter 3. In many cases, these destinations are not immediately adjacent to the proposed Greenway alignment. It is envisioned that a secondary trail system will be identified to provide these connections. Some of these neighborhood loops were recommended at community meetings and are illustrated on the conceptual alignment drawings. Others will be developed over the course of the project. These loops should be shown on all Greenway maps and may be called out with pavement type and markings, plantings and wayfinding signage where appropriate.



Historic buildings like the Shirley Eustis House on Shirley Street (top), The Food Project farm on West Cottage Street (middle) and the community garden in Dorchester Bay (bottom) all contribute to the character of the neighborhoods.





The proposed alignment at Uphams Corner will bring people to the station as well as the new Kroc Center.



The proposed alignment will bring users to the Morton Street station via Flint Street (top). Ideally, people on The Greenway could use the MBTA ramp (bottom) for a connection to Morton Street.

Signage

A signage system should be developed for The Greenway, incorporating:

- Greenway Identification Signs which announce to individuals that they are on or adjacent to The Greenway. These signs would be prominently placed at strategic corners throughout The Greenway.
- Wayfinding signs can include both maps and directional signs indicating both The Greenway and the neighborhood loops, as well as other destinations.
- Interpretive signs can include information about the neighborhoods through which The Greenway is passing and the history of the Fairmount Corridor.
- Kiosks with temporary signs that announce Greenway/neighborhood events such as farmers markets and art displays.

The signage will help to highlight the strengths of the individual neighborhoods and important destinations throughout the project area. Many different languages are spoken throughout the project area as well as throughout the greater Boston region. It will be important to ensure that information on signs is translated into the appropriate languages.

Access to MBTA Stations

Although for the most part The Greenway will not be on the MBTA right-of-way, it should provide easy and direct access to each of the Fairmount Line stations. Crosswalks and other pedestrian and bicycle amenities to facilitate access should be incorporated as appropriate. The Stations should be featured prominently on all maps and wayfinding signage.

Adjacent Parcels

As described earlier, a number of vacant parcels have been identified by both the community and the consultant team for incorporation into The Greenway. The parcels are shown on the project maps. The list of potential uses for those parcels includes: skate park, passive recreation, game tables, community gardens, orchard, farmer's market, picnic tables, play equipment, seating areas, environmental education, interpretive elements featuring the community's cultural and historic legacy; and public art. The neighborhoods have begun to suggest specific uses for specific parcels, and those parcels and uses are summarized in Appendix X. The table below summarizes the proposed uses and the general requirements for those specific uses. As further design work begins on specific segments of The Greenway, the future use of each parcel will require a more detailed study based on parcel size, location, and configuration, as well as community needs and interest.

While many of the specific uses identified by the community can serve both local and regional users, they are geared toward local community needs. The Greenway will also be a regional resource and parcels at entrances to Greenway Streets, particularly where The Greenway intersects with neighborhood loops, bicycle lanes or multi-use paths, play a



Examples of a variety of styles for wayfinding, identification and interpretive signage and kiosks.





Different user groups require different amenities. The Greenway should be visible from adjacent streets and buildings (above right).

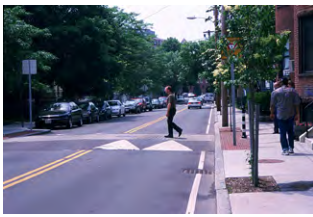
significant role in the identification of The Greenway. These are key locations for Greenway identification and wayfinding signs, public art, pedestrian seating, bicycle facilities and rich plantings.

Users

The users that will need to be accommodated on The Greenway will range from commuters traveling very quickly by bicycle - sometimes at night, to people strolling who want to stop and sit on a bench, to pedestrians using The Greenway to access specific destinations – including MBTA stations, to recreational cyclists, to families with young kids who may need to pull over frequently. The Greenway will focus on users that are not comfortable using existing city streets. Rest stops with seating will be provided and traffic calming devices will make the streets safer for pedestrian and bicycle use.

Safety and Security

This includes both safe access to The Greenway and safe use of The Greenway. Because most of The Greenway will be on or adjacent to public streets, pedestrians and cyclists on The Greenway will be very visible from cars and adjacent buildings, greatly increasing security. Lighting along The Greenway streets also will improve visibility. For those segments which are not adjacent to public streets, care must be taken to ensure that frequent views to The Greenway are available from adjacent streets and buildings, that there are no places where users can be trapped, and that The Greenway is well-lit if it is to be used after dark. Crosswalks and pedestrian signals should be added where appropriate to ensure both safe access to and use of The Greenway. As discussed earlier, where the bicycle path is on road, every effort should be made to minimize vehicular traffic; traffic calming devices such as corner bump-outs and clearly designate (and perhaps raised) crosswalks should be incorporated to reduce vehicle speed. Clearly identifying Greenway Streets so that drivers know to be particularly watchful for pedestrians and cyclists will also increase safety.



Traffic calming elements include raised crosswalks, special crosswalk paving materials and corner bump outs.

Use	Size Requirement	Other Requirements
Playground	6000 sf	Good visibility, fenced from street
Totlot	2500 sf	Good visibility, fenced from street
Benches	300 sf	Good visibility and/or lighting
Picnic area	.01 acre	Some shade trees
Shelter	300 sf	Good visibility and/or lighting
Skate park	7000 sf	
Community Garden	8-10,000 sf, w/ paths and common spaces - about 15-20 plots (@ 150-300 sf)	Needs water, storage shed, access for farmer's vehicles, Location visible and identifiable, shade - natural or manmade, solid waste disposal nearby parking
Farmers market	Tent size per vendor is standard 10 x 10'	Needs water, storage shed, access for farmer's vehicles, visible and identifiable location, shade - natural or manmade, solid waste disposal, nearby parking

Requirements for specific uses on adjacent parcels



Proposed uses for adjacent lots include community gardens, totlots, farmers markets and seating areas.





Lighting should be consistent with City of Boston decorative street fixtures (top and middle). Banners or metal cut-outs (bottom) with The Greenway logo can be used to identify Greenway Streets.

Lighting

Because most of The Greenway will be on city streets, new decorative lighting will need to be consistent with the decorative fixtures used by the City in individual neighborhoods. Elements such as banners could be used to identify Greenway Streets.

Accessibility

The Greenway will be designed to meet all ADA guidelines, as well as state and city access requirements. Consideration should be given to ensuring that signage and interpretive elements be designed with accommodations for visually impaired users.

Access

Access issues relate to how to get to The Greenway. A variety of measures including signage at transit stops and other key locations, painted prints on sidewalks and entry signposts will help to direct people to and along The Greenway. The need for new crosswalks and other pedestrian and bicycle amenities on key routes to The Greenway will have to be addressed as each section is designed.

Paving Colors and Materials

The identification of The Greenway, particularly when its location is on city streets, will be important to its success. All design elements must contribute to that identity. Pavements (roads, crosswalks, bike lanes and sidewalks) will greatly contribute to the overall look and feel of The Greenway. Paved surfaces which are distinctly for pedestrians will be identified as such. Crosswalks will be pattern and color imprinted asphalt (streetprint) or pavers suitable for vehicular or pedestrian use. Crosswalks provide an opportunity for graphics or signage that are associated solely with The Greenway. Roadway surfaces on Greenway streets or bicycle lanes can be paved with bituminous concrete with integral colored aggregate that will clearly identify the streets.

Seasonality

As a major neighborhood connection between destinations, The Greenway will be used year-round. Care should be taken to ensure that, to the extent possible, plantings provide interest through all seasons. Shade areas should be provided at regular intervals on the adjacent parcels to enhance and encourage use on hot summer days. The path should be designed to allow for easy snow removal to encourage year-round use.

Screening of the Rail Line

Although the proposed Greenway is not within the MBTA right-of-way, the right-of-way is visible from many of The Greenway Streets. Where there is sufficient space, trees and other planting should be used to provide a visual buffer between the active tracks and The Greenway. In some locations where space is more limited, planted “green screens” may be desirable. This planted Greenway edge could become an identifiable feature of The Greenway.



Crosswalks and maps at key locations help users to find The Greenway (above left). A project logo on sidewalks or crosswalks using streetprint (above right and far left) can be used to identify the alignment. Plantings can be used to screen views of the railroad in places like this open lot (near left).

Shelters

Shade shelters can help to promote year-round use, and should include benches so that users can stop to rest or enjoy the larger open spaces on adjacent parcels. A consistent shelter design can be used throughout The Greenway, or they can differ from site to site, providing an opportunity to incorporate site specific architectural or interpretive details and public art.

Interpretive Elements and Public Art

Community members expressed a strong interest in incorporating local history and culture, as well as environmental education pieces into The Greenway. Interpretive information can be included in The Greenway in a variety of ways. Interpretive elements can range from stand alone signs to more integrated elements such as public art or materials embedded in the paving. Open space parcels at intersections are key locations for public art, including both permanent and temporary installations. Public art can play a role in the design of The Greenway elements (i.e., benches, signs, bicycle racks, crosswalk and sidewalk pavements, and other furnishings).





Public art can include temporary installations, strong sculptural pieces and interpretive elements incorporated into site amenities.

Parking

The Greenway concept does not include parking facilities. It has been assumed that local users will walk or cycle to The Greenway. Users coming from further away can access The Greenway from other regional multi-use trails or via the Fairmount Line MBTA stations. There are few opportunities for developing parking, but it may be desirable to include a few spaces at limited locations to accommodate users with limited mobility. Weekend use of the parking lots at the Fairmount and Readville stations (the only two stations on the Fairmount Line with parking) may be possible; further coordination with the MBTA will be required to determine feasibility.

Sustainability

The residents of the neighborhoods through which The Greenway passes are proud of the strides being made in improving the sustainability of the neighborhoods, including extensive community garden programs. The Greenway should contribute to the ongoing greening of the communities. All Greenway Streets should be developed in adherence to sustainable design principles such as the reuse of stormwater for irrigation, the use of permeable surfaces wherever possible, and the use of indigenous, low maintenance plantings.

Commercial Opportunities for Existing Businesses

The Greenway follows primarily quiet residential streets, so although it can be linked via neighborhood loops to commercial districts, it passes through very few commercial areas. In most instances, users who want to stop for beverages, ice cream or food will have to detour from The Greenway. Signage can help direct people to nearby commercial districts. In limited locations where existing vacant corner parcels (particularly at crossings with major streets) are being incorporated into The Greenway, it may be possible to include spaces where small vendors could set up carts on busy weekends to sell drinks, etc. Potential locations would have to be thoroughly vetted with the community.

Traffic Implications

Conceptual roadway sections were developed for a number of The Greenway Streets to assess the ability of the streets to accommodate The Greenway. These sections were reviewed by the traffic consultant. The majority of the roadways included in the proposed alignment are located in low-volume residential areas, which will be able to accommodate a shared vehicular/bicycle use. There are a few roadways, however, that are located in busier commercial areas, which may require additional improvements in order to provide a safe path for bicyclists and pedestrians. The feasibility of eliminating parking spaces in some of these areas will need to be examined. These roadways include Fairmount Avenue, River Street, Blue Hill Avenue, Morton Street, Washington Street, and Massachusetts Avenue. Milton Street, Neponset Valley Parkway, and Cummins Highway also have relatively heavy traffic volumes that would not be conducive to “calming”.

Unresolved Segments

Although every effort was made to identify a feasible route for a continuous multi-use path, there are several locations where alternative routes are shown. These alternative routes could potentially provide a more desirable path but require further study, either because acquisition of (or an easement across) private land is required; further coordination with the MBTA is required to determine the feasibility of using MBTA right of way; or more detailed engineering analysis is required. This further analysis will need to take place during the next phase of this project. These locations are described in more detail on the following page:



Rain gardens with low maintenance plantings support sustainability.



North of Norfolk Avenue

The alignment is shown going down Toland Court, crossing the Fairmount Line tracks via an existing (closed) under pass to the NStar Property and hugging the railroad edge of the NStar parcel to Massachusetts Avenue and the New Market Station. Alternatively, the alignment could follow Toland Court, and then run north on the MBTA right-of-way on the west side of the tracks to Massachusetts Avenue. These alignments would require more detailed investigation to determine if the underpass can be reopened, whether it is possible to use any of the MBTA right-of-way, and whether NStar would provide an easement on their property. The advantage of both of these alignments is that they provide the most route, and they provide an improved neighborhood connection to the South Bay Shopping Center, a connection that is strongly desired by the community. If neither of these routes proves to be feasible, the alignment will follow Norfolk Avenue to Proctor Street to Massachusetts Avenue, following along the edge of William Eustis Playground. This is a less direct route and Norfolk Avenue and Proctor Streets are busy, narrow streets.

South of Geneva Avenue

The alignment is shown following Geneva Avenue west to Columbia Road, south on Columbia Road to Washington Street and east on Washington Street to Norwell Street. This route is fairly circuitous, taking users several blocks out of the way, to keep The Greenway on streets that are relatively flat and have sufficient width. Alternatively, the alignment could use the Eldon Street Park Land adjacent to the rail line to connect to Washington Street, greatly shortening the route and utilizing an existing green space. This route would be steeper, and therefore more difficult for users. There is a significant grade change between the tracks and the park land; The Greenway would be at the park level. More detailed analysis of the ability to provide an accessible route in this location will be required. It may also be possible to route The Greenway on a series of streets through Bowdoin Hill, although finding a continuous accessible route in this location will require more detailed analysis.

South of Washington Street

The alignment is shown following Norwell Street to Southern Avenue. Although most of Norwell lends itself nicely to becoming a Greenway Street, the very northern end by Washington Street is narrow. It would be desirable to run The Greenway on the Fairmount Line right of way for a short distance at the northern end of Norwell Street. More analysis and discussion with the MBTA of the feasibility of this alternative is required.

South of Morton Street

The alignment is shown following Astoria Street south, which would allow the alignment to then run through Walker Playground and behind the Mildred Avenue Middle School and Community Center, making a direct connection to important community facilities. A connection from Flint Street to Morton Street, the northernmost block of this segment, would have to occur on MBTA or private property. This connection requires more detailed



The Greenway could provide a connection between the Neponset River and the Mother Brook, an open important open space link both for the community and the regional open space system.

analysis and coordination with the MBTA and private property owners. Alternatively, the alignment could follow the new access drive to the Morton Street MBTA Station, and then following the drive along the east side of the parcel to Henrici Street which leads to West Selden Street.

South of Fremont Street

The alignment is shown going south on Babson Street to Blue Hill Avenue to River Street to Edgewater Street. Edgewater Street is bordered to the east by a stone wall which separates the street from DCR-owned land along the Neponset River. The alignment is shown on the DCR land, continuing south to Osceola Street, and then following Belnel Road to River Street. This would require creating a break (or breaks) in the stone wall which is historic. Although this alignment would provide a lovely stretch of Greenway on publicly-owned land along the river, breaching the stone wall will require coordination with the Massachusetts Historic Commission. In addition, users on the path in this location may not be visible from adjacent buildings or a public road. Security issues will have to be studied in more detail. Alternatively, the alignment could follow Woodhaven Street south from Blue Hill Avenue, continuing south on Fairlawn Avenue and Oakcrest Road to River Street.



From Mattapan Square South to Neponset Valley Parkway, the Neponset River multi-use trail follows the east bank of the river and the Fairmount Line. The trail runs through portions of Mattapan, Hyde Park and Milton. Much of it has been constructed and the remaining segments are in design. This trail can provide an important link in the Fairmount Greenway until a new trail can be constructed on the west side of the river.

South of Fairmount Avenue

The alignment follows Walnut Street to Dana Avenue crossing the Neponset River on the Dana Avenue Bridge and then crossing the River again to follow the southern edge of the Mother Brook across Hyde Park Avenue and the MBTA Needham Line to Reservation Road Park, and a lovely Greenway section along the Mother Brook, a beautiful natural resource that is currently largely inaccessible. The Greenway alignment would provide a connection from the Neponset River to the Mother Brook, long desired by the community.

It requires a water's edge easement on property belonging to the Blake Estates Urban Wild, the 1691 Artist Loft building, the Renaissance Academy and the Westinghouse Lofts property south of Reservation Road Park, to provide a connection to publicly-owned land on the Mothers Brook Mill Pond. It also requires crossing over or under the MBTA Needham Commuter Rail tracks. Additional investigation is needed to determine the clearance of the railroad bridge over the Mother Brook - if sufficient clearance is available, ideally the rail crossing could occur in this location. If the clearance is not sufficient, an underpass somewhere in this vicinity would be required. Going over the tracks would be difficult because of the high catenary equipment. This section will require additional analysis and coordination with property owners and the MBTA.

The Neponset River multi-use trail on the east side of the river provides an alternative to this section of the alignment and could be used until the issues described above can be resolved. Providing an accessible river crossing south of Dana Avenue, perhaps near the existing Glenwood Avenue pedestrian bridge, would provide access to the trail for residents west of the River.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

This report provides a framework for future phases of The Fairmount Greenway Project, but there is still much work to be done regarding funding, design, ownership/management structure, phasing and eventually construction and ongoing operation/administration.

The following outlines the implementation issues to be addressed and next steps. Work can move forward simultaneously on several tracks at once.

Because The Greenway is primarily on public streets, implementation will have to be closely coordinated with the City of Boston. It is recommended that The Fairmount Greenway Task Force initiate discussions with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Boston Transportation Department and the Boston Department of Public Works regarding establishing a partnership to realize The Greenway. This partnership could be modeled on the City's Crossroads Initiative, in which the City of Boston agrees to fund construction of improvements typical in City roadway projects. Local property owners are responsible for paying for elements above and beyond that level of design. Maintenance agreements are worked out with adjacent property owners to maintain elements that are above and beyond the standard City maintenance.

In the case of The Fairmount Greenway, elements not funded by the City likely would include acquisition of and open space improvements to any adjacent parcels, as well as extensive plantings, custom furnishings and specialty pavements.

Meeting early with the City of Boston will help to clarify what issues need to be addressed in order to gain City support for The Greenway, and the activities in which the City may be willing to assist.

Ownership, Management & Maintenance

The key implementation issue involves determining the entity and structure for Greenway ownership, management and maintenance. The City of Boston, as well as other potential partners and/or funding sources, will need to be assured that there is an entity in place with the capacity to see planning, design and implementation through to completion; to own property not publicly owned; and to take responsibility for the ongoing management and maintenance of The Greenway. Ongoing management will include activities such as continuing to raise funds and overseeing any endowment as well as programming events on The Greenway, and managing short and long-term maintenance and improvements.



Initial research on models for this entity was undertaken several years ago. That research can provide the basis for further study. The Collaborative has made some initial contacts with the Trust for Public Land (TPL). TPL might be able to assist on this issue.

Funding

The Fairmount Greenway Task Force has been very successful to date in obtaining grants to fund early planning and community organizing tasks related to The Greenway. Additional funding will be needed for design, acquisition and construction activities, as well as for ongoing management and maintenance.

A cost estimate for The Greenway was developed using costs from recent comparable on and off-road projects in the City of Boston. For the off-road portion, costs for an underpass or bridge across MBTA property and the rehabilitation of an existing underpass have been included. The on-road estimate includes:

- moving and replacing curbing on one side of the street
- neckdowns at all intersections
- utility work associated with curb line changes
- resurfacing of roadways with special aggregate top course
- “Street Print” at intersections
- new lighting
- new street trees, plantings and signage
- new street furnishings including benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks
- new concrete sidewalks
- some signal work at intersections

The estimate does not include the design and construction of the adjacent parcels. The cost for parcels will depend on the program for each site. A detailed estimated budget is available from the Fairmount Greenway Task Force.

The Collaborative should continue to pursue funding sources, using this report as background information for grant applications.

Agency Support

There are several public agencies with whom The Collaborative has made initial contact and with whom they should continue to meet.

Boston Transportation Department, Department of Public Works and Redevelopment Authority

As described earlier, one potential implementation option is that The Greenway be developed in partnership with the City of Boston. This partnership would most likely involve

all three of these agencies. Under any implementation scenarios, ongoing coordination with these agencies will be required for any work on city streets. These agencies also can provide valuable information on upcoming bike lane, roadway and development projects on proposed Greenway Streets, which may provide opportunities for collaborating on implementation.

Boston Department of Neighborhood Development

The Fairmount Collaborative should continue to coordinate with DND on potential acquisition of DND parcels adjacent to the Greenway, as well as other parcels identified by the community as priority parcels.

Boston Parks and Recreation Department

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department reviews all roadway reconstructions; as a result, BPRD will review the design of all of the Greenway Streets. BPRD also is responsible for street tree plantings. The Fairmount Greenway Task Force should coordinate design of the tree plantings with BPRD. Additionally, BPRD should be included in the design and development of new open spaces on adjacent parcels.

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Discussions with the MBTA regarding those limited locations where access to MBTA right of way would greatly help with The Greenway alignment should continue. Also, discussions with the MBTA should continue to ensure that design of The Greenway is coordinated with the most up to date station planning, design and construction details.

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Some sections of The Greenway adjacent to the Mother Brook and the Neponset River are on property owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Discussions should be initiated with DCR regarding those segments, and what role DCR would consider taking in their implementation and long term maintenance.

Phasing

The Fairmount Greenway is a large project that will require significant fundraising and coordination. It is anticipated that implementation of The Greenway will need to be phased over a ten to twenty year period.

The Greenway can be built in segments, as funding allows. Once organizational issues regarding ownership and management have been resolved, and funding has been secured, a key early step will be to select the first segment, which will function as a pilot project.

Pilot Project

The first step will be to determine the budget for the pilot project. Once the budget has been determined, a segment can be selected.



Project Selection

An initial set of criteria for evaluating potential segments includes the following:

- **Funding availability:** The length and complexity of the segment must be workable within the available budget.
- **Usable segment:** The segment must be long enough to attract users prior to the implementation of other segments. It will be very important to ensure that the Pilot Project segment generates enthusiasm for The Greenway, to create support for the ongoing implementation.
- **Good connections:** One way to increase the attractiveness of the initial segment is to choose a segment that connects to existing multi-use trails and or bike lanes, as well as to important destinations.

Two potential segments that would meet the criteria for usable segments and good connections include:

- **The segment from Mattapan Square north to Talbot Street.** At the southern end, this segment would connect to the Neponset River Greenway, and at the northern end it would connect to the bicycle lanes on Talbot Street leading to Franklin Park.
- **The segment from the proposed Columbia Road Station north to the Newmarket Station.** At the southern end this segment would link to the proposed bicycle lanes on Columbia Road, which could connect users to both Franklin Park and the Harborwalk. At the northern end, it would link to the South Bay Harbor Trail via Massachusetts Avenue. This segment would provide access to the new Kroc Center and to the South Bay Shopping Center, important destinations highlighted in community meetings.
- **Adjacency or connection to other planned improvements:** Coupling The Greenway implementation with planned improvements by others could both help to reduce construction costs and eliminate the potential for causing construction disruption twice or changing recently constructed elements.
- **Community support:** Strong community support for the selected segment will help to ensure that the project goes smoothly. Once a segment has been successfully implemented and is well-received and well-used, it will be easier to build community support for future phases.
- **Visibility:** To attract users and fans, the first segment should be visible to people traveling from various parts of the City. Again, the success of this pilot project will greatly help subsequent phases.

It is important to note that this first segment should not preclude the implementation of smaller, individual projects that can happen independently of, and/or simultaneously with, this first segment.

Next Steps

It is recommended that a staff person be devoted full time to overseeing and coordinating the numerous implementation activities. Next steps to be undertaken include:

- Secure funding
- Review Pilot Project with City, MBTA and other stakeholders to ensure support
- Determine the scope of the pilot project – the physical boundaries of the segment, including the adjacent parcels to be included
- Issue a Request for Proposals and select a design team
- Begin design work
- Begin a community process to discuss the program for any adjacent parcels, as well as the design of The Greenway
- Continue to meet with City, MBTA and other stakeholders

Ongoing Activities

Fundraising and coordination with stakeholder agencies will continue throughout the life of the project.

As more funding becomes available, work can begin on the next segment. At the same time, as the first segment is completed, programming and maintenance activities will begin for the completed segment.



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