

## Lower Park

### Strengths

Accessible from red and green MBTA lines

Good facility structures in the Teddy Ebersol's Red Sox Fields and the Lee pool (if opened)

Great vistas

### Weaknesses

Lee pool should have activity

Adult use of the sector – and of the fields in particular – is minimal and relegated to the background

Poor connections to the city and the Museum of Science

State police barracks is not the best use for the Locks area

No direct access to the water's edge

Bridges are not in code with the ADA

No winter activities

### Opportunities

Increase adult programs

Better winter activities in the lower park

Better outreach for field access

Improve access to the river, for both boats and pedestrians

Bring back a swimming pool and/or install a sauna

## Center Park

### Strengths

Community Boating

Historic Hatch Shell

Open spaces

Variety of structures

Playground

### Weaknesses

Poor lighting

Lack of children's activities

Restrooms are dilapidated, or in the case of the Dartmouth St pavilion, closed

Café is not appealing

Noise from Storrow Drive, and parking along the park during special events, is unpleasant

Geese presence is a burden to the park

### Opportunities

Nicer, all-season restrooms would dramatically enhance user comfort

Better maintenance of open spaces

Park access from the city should be improved

More bike racks

Winter activities

Better integration between cyclists and pedestrians

Better and more docks

## Upper Park

### Strengths

Long views of the river basin

Pathways seem safer and less crowded than elsewhere in the park

Beautiful flowering trees along the banks of the Charles

### Weaknesses

Swampy in many areas

Sewage discharge into the river

Proximity to Storrow Drive creates noise and pollution in the park

Bowker overpass is awkward and severs any connection to the Fenway

### Opportunities

BU Bridge affords opportunities for pedestrian connections to the city

Make Bowker area a connection and destination

Pedestrian bridge on train trestle near BU Bridge would improve access to and from the park

Collaborative efforts with BU to improve the landscape

Build out into the river to compensate for some of the narrowness of the area

Fun, decorative lighting would make the area more of a destination

## **Programs and Activities**

### **Strengths**

Organized events such as 4<sup>th</sup> of July and charity walks are great

Sports and recreation: sailing; jogging; biking; soccer programs; dancing; model boating; baseball; kayaking; yoga; roller blading; exercise station

### **Weaknesses**

CBI docks are decaying

Lack of public art

Large events overrun the park

Shortage of winter activities

Conflict of usage on the pathways between fast and slow moving traffic

Poor signage

### **Opportunities**

Esplanade should be a Boston destination

More playgrounds

Gardens and improved landscape would beautify the park

Improved boating access (i.e. beyond CBI and the Union Boat Club) would benefit all park users

Pathways should be renewed and redesigned to better separate bicyclists and pedestrians

Better lighting would improve nighttime activities and increase safety

Better restrooms

## Access and Pathways

### Strengths

Proximity to the water

Long pathways for uninterrupted movement

River docks provide access to the water sheet

Access to North Station

Good pathway plowing in winter

### Weaknesses

Poor access for people with disabilities, and questionable ADA compliance, especially on bridges and docks

Lack of separation between pedestrians and bikers

Poor connections to the city at critical junctions: Craigie Dam Bridge (Museum of Science); Charles Circle; Harvard Bridge; Bowker overpass

Encroachment by automobiles into the park due to Storrow Drive

### Opportunities

Reduce the amount of blacktop within the park boundaries

Shrink the travel lanes on Storrow Drive to calm and quiet traffic

Improve pedestrian access to the city and under the bridges

Better park access from Beacon Street

Create access to the Boat Haven islands

## Structures and Architecture

### Strengths

Hatch Shell

Community Boating facility

Water fountains

Benches

### Weaknesses

CBI docks need to be repaired

Restrooms are in poor condition and are difficult to access

Café is terrible, and would benefit from design improvements that might include: plantings and gardens; outdoor fireplaces

Park entry points are poorly defined

There should be more art in the park

Lee pool is a space that should be utilized

### Opportunities

Café redesign would make it more appealing

Bathrooms should be rehabilitated

CBI docks should be a priority

Make the lagoon swimmable and/or skateable

Bring programming to the Lee Pool

Daycare center

## Landscape and Horticulture

### Strengths

- Open space
- City and river views
- Variety of shaded and sunny areas within the park

### Weaknesses

- Tree maintenance is poor
- Park doesn't look loved-for
- River banks are overgrown and wild
- Soil is depleted and turf is tired
- Too few defined spaces off of the pathways
- Noise from Storrow Drive

### Opportunities

- Plantings, burms, and other landforms could mitigate Storrow Drive's negative effects on the park, and simultaneously create a more interesting landscape and topography
- The iconic willow trees should be restored, and more seasonally-varied plantings should be integrated into the park
- Soil and turf would benefit from wholesale revitalization, and more porous surfaces should be considered for pathways and staging areas
- There are ample opportunities for more water features (fountains, etc.), which would better connect the land to the water
- Art installations, such as wind chimes and other environmentally-responsive art, would enhance the sensory experience for park users

## Communication, Wayfinding, and Safety

### Strengths

The Esplanade and its features—most notably the Hatch Shell—are iconic Boston landmarks

Several MBTA stations are located nearby

Charity walks and the Fourth of July draw attention to the park

Social activities represent a marketing and branding opportunity

### Weaknesses

Lack of overall planning and consistency for signage

No directions to public restrooms or other amenities

No comprehensive map of the Esplanade within the park

Lighting and sense of safety are weak

Speed of bicycles and rollerbladers relative to pedestrians is dangerous on mixed use paths

Budget and staff capacity is insufficient to manage wayfinding and safety

### Opportunities

Maps should be created—both for print out, large format display, and web access—and must be multilingual

Directional signage outside of the Esplanade (downtown) would bring more people to the park

Water taxi access would enhance transportation options

The iconography of the Esplanade should be better capitalized upon

Kiosks in the park would allow the sharing of park-related community information