

Next Step for Boston's Greenway: Activating Surrounding Spaces

THE ROSE FITZGERALD KENNEDY Greenway, a swath of open space that has rejoined Boston's seaport area to the rest of the city, is helping spur development along its urban corridor. The parkland was established as part of environmental commitments for the Big Dig, a \$15 billion project that involved the dismantling of an elevated highway through the city and construction of a central artery tunnel, a third harbor tunnel, and the Zakim Bridge. Replacing the raised highway is the tree-lined Greenway, a boulevard that traverses five neighborhoods—Bulfinch Triangle, the North End, the Waterfront District, the Financial District, and Chinatown. (See "Filling the Cut," March 2006, page 65.)

Three publicly funded parks are also included in the Greenway, along with other smaller, privately funded pocket parks. The North End parks at the northern end of the Greenway and Chinatown Park on the southern end were envisioned primarily as neighborhood parks. The Wharf District parks were designed to serve as meeting places and open space for residents, workers, visitors, and tourists.

Richard Dimino, involved in the Greenway since 1989 with the Artery Business Committee (ABC) and now president and CEO of the restructured ABC, now known as A Better City, reports that work is now underway in response to the ABC's 2005 Edge Study showing ways property owners can change the rear-side facades of their buildings to open to the Greenway.

"You have a series of buildings taking advantage of the Greenway and a strong condo market," notes Lisa Campoli, executive vice president at Colliers Meredith & Grew, a Boston-based commercial real estate brokerage and asset management



The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, open-space parkland created after an elevated highway through the center of Boston was covered, is helping generate development along its urban corridor. It also includes three publicly funded parks, along with other smaller, privately funded public parks.

firm. "Real estate values have risen significantly along the edge of the Greenway," she adds. Before the raised highway was demolished, a seven-story concrete garage filling an entire block beside the New England Aquarium was not seen as having redevelopment potential, reports Ted Oatis, cofounder of the Chiofaro Company, a commercial real estate developer. Earlier this year, Chiofaro purchased the garage and now is in the formative phase of replacing it with a mixed-use project.

The 27 acres (11 ha) at the northern end of the Greenway in the Bulfinch Triangle area is now often referred to as the Bridge District because of its spectacular views of the new Zakim Bridge. Development invest-

ments are now being made where the highway structure, the elevated Green Line, substations, parking, and funky structures once stood, says Dimino. "The reconfiguration of the street grade there has opened up parcels that can be filled in," he says. "At least three development parcels are underway. Some people liken the impact of the project to the filling in of the Back Bay."

Future projects include development of the cultural amenity proposals for a YMCA, a Boston historic museum, a Boston center for arts and culture, and three parcels once designated for use by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, established to maintain and plan for the Green-

way, is developing the programming for the Greenway, including seasonal festivals and events. The Boston Redevelopment Authority will complete a study this spring for zoning along the length of the Greenway, proposing key areas for development.

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