



BLESSING OF THE BAY PARK REVITALIZATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Mystic River Watershed Association, in partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the City of Somerville, is currently seeking proposals from qualified firms for the completion of a schematic design and revitalization plan for Blessing of the Bay Park along the Mystic River in Somerville. We seek a landscape architecture and engineering team to provide a design to enhance the quality, use and ecological value of the park. The value of this contract is Not to Exceed (NTE) \$42,000. The final deliverable will be a schematic design that is the basis for the next phase of work: design development, construction documents and permitting.

Proposals are invited and will be received by **1:00 pm, Tuesday, November 21, 2017** at the Mystic River Watershed Association, either by mail or in-person.

Amber Christoffersen
Mystic River Watershed Association
20 Academy St, Suite 306
Arlington, MA 02476

Please submit 2 hard copies of the proposal and email electronic copies (no more than 10MB) to amber.christoffersen@mysticriver.org, cc: michelle.liebetreu@mysticriver.org

Proposal Package available for Download: mysticriver.org/blessingofthebay

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Blessing of the Bay Park is important open space in Somerville and part of the Mystic River Reservation – a 10 mile, 370-acre linear park system. Community feedback has revealed that this park is underutilized due to limited views and access to the river's edge, deteriorating infrastructure and a lack of amenities. To date, there have been two master plans that have identified how the Blessing of the Bay Park could be improved and become a well-used and attractive resource for nearby communities.

2009 Mystic River Master Plan (DCR and Mystic River Watershed Association)

“The boathouse and surrounding landscape are in poor condition and the existing docks are not ideal for crew activities...A number of new overlooks, as well as selected clearing to open views on both banks of the River, would allow for expansive River views along this entire stretch of the River.”

Recommended improvements:

- New boathouse and dock more suitable for crew activities and storage
- New picnic areas and gathering places
- New overlooks

- New trail alignment
- Selective clearing/pruning to open views to the River

2016 Healy Mystic Master Plan (Friends of the Healy School and Groundwork Somerville)

“Visitors are unsure what the boathouse is and what to do in the park...a few key changes in the layout and additional natural and recreational features would improve the park and connect people to the Mystic River.”

Recommended improvements:

- Removal of invasive species, especially along selected areas of the river’s edge
- Native plantings along the shore and additional trees along the border of Shore Drive
- Viewing decks at the edge of the river
- New path along the river
- Boathouse sign and programming activities (focused on games, art, food)
- Additional recreational amenities
- Long-term volunteer stewardship plan (like a Friends group)

The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) is partnering with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Groundwork Somerville and the City of Somerville to create a comprehensive plan and design – with the input of local residents and stakeholders – to identify the physical features, natural areas, programming and amenities needed to transform this park. This work is funded by the Somerville Community Preservation Act with a matching grant from the Solomon Foundation.

Goals

The long-term goal of this project is to expand both passive and active recreational opportunities and to improve the ecological health of both the shoreline and natural spaces at Blessing of the Bay Park. This park will also promote active transportation within the existing path greenway network, improving mobility and public health. Specific goals include:

- Complete a community-driven vision and design for the park;
- Engage diverse community members and stakeholder organizations in creating the plan;
- Build relationships between DCR, City of Somerville and local nonprofits (MyRWA, Groundwork) to ensure long-term success of this open space and the surrounding greenway network; and
- Catalyze a larger vision and investment in the Mystic River parklands and paths in Somerville and Medford.

This process seeks to identify a cohesive set of design principles to guide the park redesign. The following list will be explored, expanded and refined:

- Balance new amenities that bring greater social use with ecological improvements that restore natural systems on the site
- Ensure that the park meets the needs of local residents as well as the standards and values of the state park system
- Ensure sustainable park operations with a design that minimizes maintenance needs and maximizes opportunities for public-private stewardship efforts
- Create an aesthetically appealing design that uses sustainable materials and enhances safety and ADA accessibility
- Enhance the paths to improve the regional greenway network while providing spaces for local use and passive recreation

- Identify opportunities for surrounding site improvements, particularly mitigation of noise and air pollution from I-93

SCOPE OF WORK

We are seeking a landscape architecture firm, and supporting team, to complete the following scope of work.

Site Analysis – document and analyze existing conditions of the site; consider most efficient use of resources to fit within the overall budget.

Tasks will include:

- Research and review records pertaining to the history, design, environmental health, and unique attributes of the site.
- Conduct a site visit to review and record site context, existing conditions, topography, drainage, plant materials (dominant canopy and understory trees and general locations/massing of these as well as invasive species), utility connections, lighting, and any unique site features. As this park is within the 100' wetland buffer, identify the regulated resource areas.
- Create a base map and initial environmental assessment for design purposes based on site visit/survey and city and state records.*

Deliverables will include:

- Base map and high-level environmental assessment of existing conditions and site context (written and visual).
- Presentations with site analysis at multiple scales. Presentation should incorporate information from public records and archives, public comment, and the greater physical and cultural site context.

*Note on site analysis:

We anticipate that within the NTE budget of \$42,000, an in-depth site survey will not be possible. However, we would welcome proposals that outline the cost of an on-the-ground or aerial survey that will identify key features needed for schematic design. There is also a chance that additional funding will be made available for a survey if the consultants and client team deems this a necessary part of the first phase of this project.

Schematic Design – create a park plan that takes into account recommendations from the previous master planning processes and feedback garnered from outreach (collected to date and ongoing). Community outreach is a particularly important component of this project. The final design will contribute to the stated design principles and will propose new features/amenities, circulation strategy, programming, planting schemes and site materials that meet best practices in sustainable landscapes and shoreline restoration. This preferred scheme will be the basis for the next phase of work: design development, construction documents and permitting.

Tasks will include:

- Review community needs-assessment provided by MyRWA and Groundwork Somerville and incorporate into initial design concepts.
- Advance design principles for use by Steering Committee to evaluate designs.

- Prepare more than 1 and up to 3 distinct schematic designs showing layout, materials, plantings, and site amenities for Steering Committee and public feedback (ensure that materials intended for the general public are easy to read and understand).
- Review schematic designs with Steering Committee and incorporate revisions prior to the second public meeting.
- Present schematic designs to the public and record public comments and preferences.
- Discuss the schematic design alternatives with Steering Committee and select a preferred alternative.
- Prepare graphics and design overview to be posted on the city, state and MyRWA website.
- Prepare cost estimates for preferred schematic design alternative(s).

Deliverables will include:

- Distinct schematic design alternatives. Schematic design must be presented in illustrative plan; provide sections and/or character sketches to help visualize alternatives. Other representation strategies are encouraged.
- Presentations and display boards showing design alternatives, as needed. Consultant must be prepared to answer detailed questions on layout, circulation, materials, program and planting
- 1-2 renderings/perspectives to illustrate preferred alternative.
- Conceptual cost estimate for preferred alternative

Phasing and Next Steps – identify project phasing and next steps as far as funding, permitting and future design work. Take into account short-term, lower-cost improvements (that could potentially be done with volunteers) and long-term, higher-cost improvements.

Deliverables will include:

- Phasing matrix
- Written summary of next steps for permitting and any other issues or regulatory needs
- A list of potential funding sources and organization roles and responsibilities for implementation and maintenance

Meetings – in addition to the work to produce these deliverables, the consultant will participate in a site tour at project kick-off, present at 2 public meetings, participate in 5 meetings with the Steering Committee and regular check-in calls with the project manager (MyRWA).

Additional Notes on Scope:

- (1) We recognize the boathouse has a direct impact on the redesign of the park. Additionally, several studies identified the need for restoration/rehabilitation – this will be done outside of this scope. DCR and MyRWA will provide baseline information on the condition and programmatic needs of this facility. The design consultant may make recommendations to inform a separate redesign process for the boathouse to take place after or concurrently with the implementation of the park design.
- (2) MyRWA and Groundwork Somerville have conducted several months of community outreach to develop an initial needs-assessment. This will be provided upon contract award. These two organizations will continue to lead outreach. Thus, we anticipate some design consultant cost savings as it relates to the public process.

Project Timeline

Develop Outreach Plan:	July-August
Initial Outreach:	August-October
Needs-Assessment:	November
CPA Application Due:	December 7 th (for Phase 2 design work)
Select Consultant:	December
Public Workshop #1:	February 2018 (est.)
Targeted Outreach:	Early Spring 2018 (MyRWA, Groundwork)
Public Workshop #2:	April 2018 (est.)
Outreach Event(s):	Spring 2018 (MyRWA, Groundwork)
Final Design:	May 2018

Steering Committee

Mystic River Watershed Association (project manager and main client point of contact)
Groundwork Somerville
Lawrence and Lillian Solomon Foundation
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Somerville Planning Department
Somerville Conservation Commission

Questions

Questions/inquiries concerning this RFP must be submitted in writing to Amber Christoffersen amber.christoffersen@mysticriver.org by Wednesday, November 15, 2017 at 4:00 pm to be considered. Written responses will be posted on the project website (mysticriver.org/blessingofthebay) by Thursday, November 16 at noon.

Site Visit

A site visit and briefing will be held on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 9:30 am at the entrance to the Boathouse, 20 Shore Drive, Somerville.

Submittal

Please include the following in the proposal.

1. Written proposal that responds to the scope outlined above. Include initial ideas on the project, timeline, and how you plan to engage the public in the design process. Outlining your approach to the scope is particularly important as there are a range of options for site analysis; the Steering Committee would welcome recommendations by the consultants. Limit to 2 pages.
2. Fee proposal showing breakdown by staff and task.
3. Portfolio with 3-6 projects similar in nature to this project, include client and budget.
4. Resume of key personnel and firm qualifications.
5. Name and contact information for two references.

Minimum Criteria/Qualifications

Each applicant must demonstrate that it meets the following minimum qualifications:

- a) The applicant team shall have expertise in the following disciplines: landscape architecture, civil engineering, horticulture/ecology, wetland science, civic engagement, lighting design, environmental permitting, and state and federal ADA regulations and compliance. Specific experience with park redevelopment, sustainable landscape best practices, shoreline restoration, and path design/development preferred.
- b) The applications should have a cost-effective approach to this work; the scope is NTE \$42,000.
- c) The applicant must have a clear understanding of the project goals and describe a sound approach for achieving them
- d) The individual or principal overseeing the project must be a person who is registered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (or an equivalent registration entity; proof of registration must be shown) in her/his field(s) of expertise, and who has at least five (5) years of professional experience in this field or these fields. In documenting this qualification, the applicant must describe the professional background of the firm and the extent of previous experience of firm personnel or consultants to be assigned to the project, and must identify the anticipated role that each will play in the project.
- e) The applicant must have knowledge of, and experience with, applicable legal and administrative requirements, procedures and practices. Experience with public private partnerships preferred.
- f) The applicant must possess all necessary licenses and registrations, either within the firm or through independent consultants, to qualify under Massachusetts' law to undertake this project.
- g) The applicant must provide evidence of insurance for general liability, automobile, workers' compensation (statutory), and professional services liability, as required.
- h) The applicant must not be debarred under MGL c149, §44C or disqualified under MGL c7, §38D.
- i) The applicant must submit all required statements and forms.

Comparative Evaluation Criteria

All proposals meeting the minimum criteria/qualifications will then be evaluated based upon the specific comparative evaluation criteria. The following point schedule will be utilized:

Highly advantageous – Response excels on the specific criterion

Advantageous Response – Response meets evaluation standard for the criterion

Least Advantageous – Response does not fully meet the criterion or leaves a question or issue not fully addressed

- a. **Technical approach to the project**, as well as a demonstrated understanding of all project components and public outreach needs.

Highly Advantageous: The response contains a clear, creative and comprehensive plan that addresses all of the project objectives stated in the RFP.

Advantageous: The response contains a clear plan that addresses most of the project objectives stated in the RFP.

Not Advantageous: The response does not contain a clear plan that addresses most of the project objectives stated in the RFP.

b. **Staffing Plan**, including the professional qualifications of all project personnel.

Highly Advantageous: All of the personnel are proven to possess a very high level of landscape design and construction administration experience and performance. Resumes are included in the RFQ for all proposed personnel. All proposed personnel are currently performing functions similar to those proposed clearly show an adequate level of relevant experience to successfully perform the scope outlined herein.

Advantageous: All of the personnel identified are proven to possess a high level of landscape design and construction administration experience and performance. Resumes are included in the RFQ for most of the proposed personnel. Some of these proposed personnel show an adequate level of relevant experience to successfully perform the scope outlined herein.

Not Advantageous: Most but not all of the personnel identified are proven to possess an adequate level of landscape design and construction administration experience. Resumes are not included not any of the proposed staff.

c. **Past performance** and depth of experience with similar projects. Ability to serve as a resource based on completion of projects that utilize best practices in environmental design, balance ecological restoration and recreational uses and involve public-private partnerships

Highly Advantageous: The consultant demonstrates efficient and effective design and management of five or more projects of similar size and scope in settings similar to Somerville and to the types of projects listed in the scope of services.

Advantageous: The consultant demonstrates efficient and effective design and management of three or four park projects of similar size and scope in settings similar to Somerville and to the types of projects listed in the scope of services.

Not Advantageous: The consultant demonstrates efficient and effective design and management of less than three park projects of similar size and scope in settings similar to Somerville and to the types of projects listed in the scope of services.

APPENDIX

Background Documents

2009 Mystic River Master Plan (reference page 75)

<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/204466/24255935/1390492063733/mysticrivermasterplann-final-11-09.pdf?token=kY9zbKVT9QrsRREPgJalfzHbHPs%3D>

2016 Healey Mystic Plan

<http://www.healeymystic.org/>

2009 Lower Mystic Corridor Strategy (reference page 33)

http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Final_Mystic_Report_June_2009_with_appendices.pdf

Blessing of the Bay Park Stats

5.5 acres, owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Approx. .5 miles of paved paths

Boathouse managed by the City of Somerville with Paddle Boston Rental

Photographs – Page 9

Diagram of existing conditions and master plan suggestions – Page 10



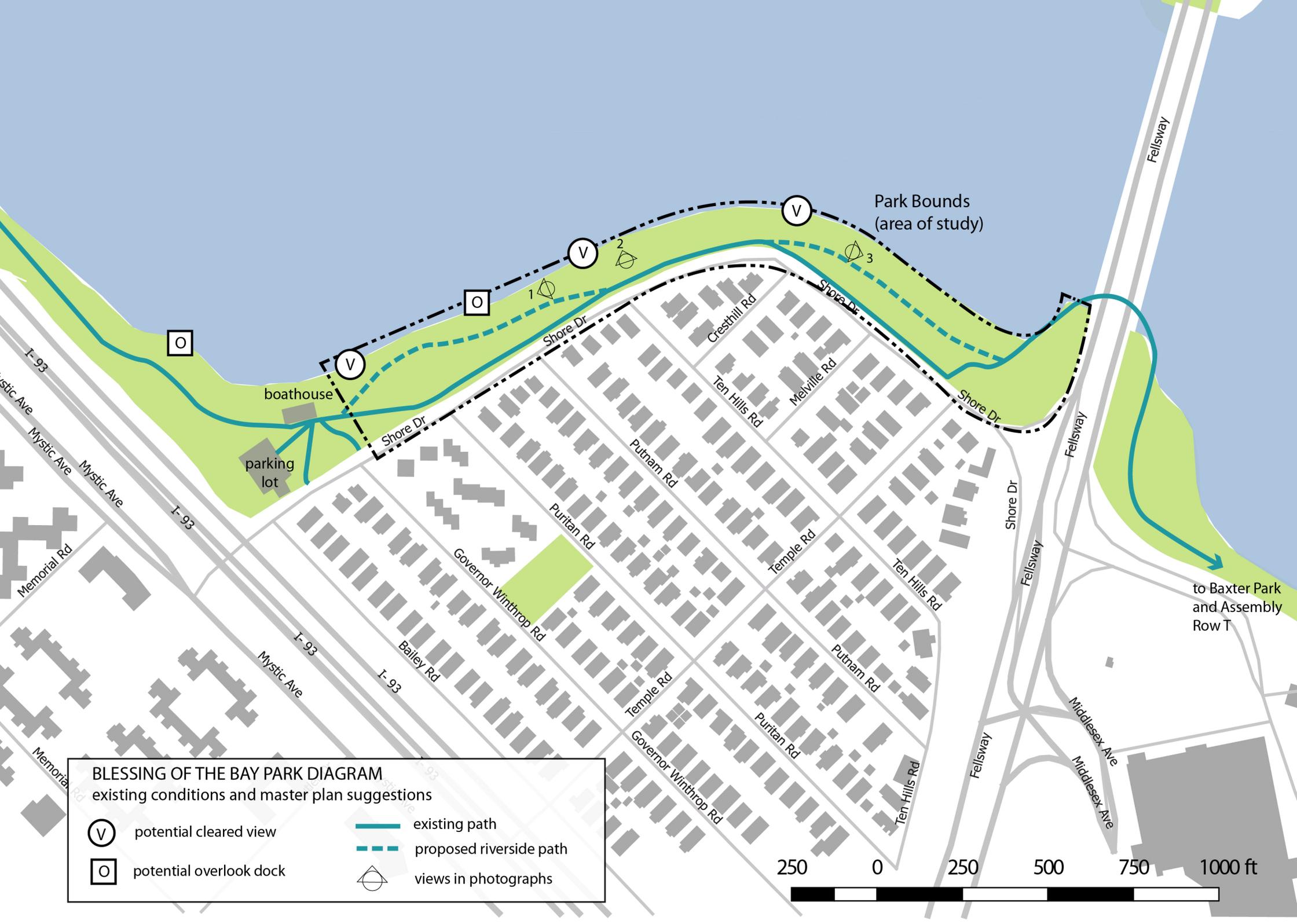
(1) View looking west towards boathouse (river to behind the vegetation on right)



(2) View across the river to Macdonald Park (cleared by neighbors and Goundwork over the years)



(3) View looking south towards Route 28, existing path is to the right of the tree allee, alongside Shore Drive



Park Bounds
(area of study)

to Baxter Park
and Assembly
Row T

BLESSING OF THE BAY PARK DIAGRAM
existing conditions and master plan suggestions

	potential cleared view		existing path
	potential overlook dock		proposed riverside path
	views in photographs		

250 0 250 500 750 1000 ft