

CHARLES RIVER SKATEPARK UPDATE JUNE 2010

The Charles River Skatepark is a project of the Charles River Conservancy undertaken in close collaboration with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Planning started in 2001 and fundraising started in 2004. The Charles River Conservancy has raised \$2.5 million for this facility to be built under the ramps of the Zakim Bridge in East Cambridge. The design evolved over several years with the input of some 400 skaters, taking into account the many site constraints. The firm Gridline created the current drawings.

As the financial crisis towards the end of 2008 became increasingly severe, concerns such as the long-term maintenance came to the forefront of the skatepark discussions. As a result, the CRC and the state agencies began to work together to resolve these concerns. During 2009, this work consisted of identifying capital funds that could be used for construction, while setting aside the privately raised funds for long-term maintenance. This involved close collaboration with state agencies such as the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Executive Office Environmental and Energy Affairs (EOEEA), and the, now former, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA).

Thanks to a Federal Stimulus grant the North Bank pedestrian bridge that will connect the Northpoint park and Charlestown will now be built, thus allowing EOEEA and DCR to allocate funds from the Big Dig Mitigation to pay for the construction of the skatepark. This was approved by the Citizens Advisory Committee in September 2009. The DCR and the Charles River Conservancy are currently in discussion how best to establish a long-term operation and maintenance plan.