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Image Credit, Anthony Crisafulli

Winter 2025 Lighting and Pathways Improvements on The Greenway

*Enhancements to evening safety, electrical improvements, and new outdoor seating will revive
Downtown Boston's popular green spaces*

OCTOBER 28, 2025, BOSTON, MA The Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, and the Greenway Business Improvement District are pleased to share upcoming improvements to Parcels 19, 21, and 22 of The Greenway. These updates will make the park safer, more accessible, and more welcoming for visitors.

Highlights include new permeable pathways for improved accessibility and stormwater management, upgraded lighting to enhance evening safety, and electrical improvements to support more community events and activities on The Greenway.

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“With visitors from around the world arriving in 2026 for the FIFA World Cup, Sail Boston, and the commemoration of Mass 250, we're proud to invest in the public spaces that define our Commonwealth. The Rose Kennedy Greenway has set the standard for how highway infrastructure can help catalyze the transformation of downtown urban areas into places that are inviting, active, and vibrant,” said Massachusetts Department of Transportation Undersecretary and State Highway Administrator, Jonathan Gulliver. “By focusing on accessibility and sustainability, the addition of these upgrades will ensure The Greenway remains a defining feature of downtown Boston.”

For many community members and residents who call this neighborhood home, these improvements are personally meaningful in a variety of ways.

“The Greenway is more than just a park—it’s a connector for our neighborhoods and a beloved space for city residents,” says Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair of Ways and Means, Massachusetts House of Representatives. “These improvements will enhance safety, accessibility, and quality of life for the people who live, work, and play in the Downtown area every day.”

For the Downtown community, green space has often been instrumental to bolstering both social connection and economic vitality, encouraging workers, residents, and visitors to meet and engage outdoors. For decades, The Greenway has set the scene for countless daily interactions and moments of community, and in 2026, this public space will take center stage as Boston welcomes international visitors from around the world.

“The Greenway is a vibrant part of our Downtown, bringing together visitors and residents alike,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “I am thankful to our partners for working to bring these meaningful investments to life. By implementing permeable pathways and upgrading lighting, we are creating resilient and safe green spaces that protect against flooding and create access to beautiful parks for generations of residents and visitors, especially as we prepare to welcome several major events to our city next summer.”

Businesses abutting The Greenway are also anticipating myriad benefits from the park improvements, pointing to enthusiasm for a brighter, safer, and more vibrant streetscape that invites people to linger and enjoy downtown well into the evening hours.

“The enhanced pathways and lighting will not only improve the visitor experience on The Greenway, but also bring tangible benefits to abutting businesses, restaurants, and office workers,” said Stephen Faber, Executive Vice President of Related Beal and Chair of the

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Greenway Business Improvement District Board of Directors. “A safer, more accessible Greenway draws more foot traffic, extends hours of use, and makes this district an even more attractive place to work and invest.”

“We’re thrilled to partner with MassDOT and the Greenway BID on these much-needed improvements to The Greenway,” says Robert Stigberg, PLA, and Director of Maintenance and Capital for the Greenway Conservancy. “The permeable pathways and upgraded lighting align with our mission to create a sustainable, inclusive, and welcoming park for all. These enhancements will have a transformative impact on the visitor experience and our ability to host dynamic public programming.”

Enhancing Accessibility and Safety with Pathway and Lighting Upgrades

Parcels 19, 21, and 22 of The Greenway stretch from Seaport Boulevard to Dewey Square, making them some of the largest spaces in the 1.5-mile park. First created in partnership with the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, these parcels are home to wide green lawns, native plants, vibrant demonstration gardens, and the well-known Dewey Square mural.

Pathway and lighting improvements will make these areas more enjoyable and accessible for everyone. New permeable pathways in Parcels 19 and 21 will create smoother, more welcoming routes through the park. These paths won’t just make it easier to get around—they’ll also help absorb rainwater, reduce flooding, and limit the need for park closures during inclement weather. For the first time since The Greenway opened, these paths will also be cleared of snow and ice, keeping the parks open and inviting throughout the winter.

Infrastructure Upgrades Expand Programming Potential

The Lighting and Pathways upgrades to The Greenway also include adding new interior lighting and power to the park space, which will illuminate these parcels in the evenings and enhance safety for everyone who lives near, works by, or visits them.

While The Greenway already welcomes more than 400 events each year, these upgrades will make it even easier to bring people together, no matter the season. By adding built-in performance power to these parcels, the Greenway Conservancy will reduce its reliance on noisy, less-efficient generators. In-park power opens the door to new possibilities—like winter programming that will allow the park to be activated year-round.

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One of the most notable lighting improvements resulting from this public works effort will be the illumination of the Dewey Square Mural—the iconic, large-scale canvas that greets millions of visitors to downtown Boston each year. This new lighting will ensure the mural remains a vibrant focal point both day and night, enhancing its visibility, impact, and accessibility. By highlighting this ever-changing public art installation after dark, the lighting upgrade will not only elevate the nighttime atmosphere of Dewey Square but also reinforce The Greenway’s role as a dynamic cultural destination in the heart of the city.

“Public art is meant to be experienced by everyone,” notes Dr. Audrey Lopez, Curator and Director of Public Art at the Greenway Conservancy. “The lighting improvements on The Greenway, especially around Dewey Square, ensure that our signature mural can be appreciated well into the evening hours. This investment not only enhances safety but also deepens cultural engagement, allowing more people to connect with the vibrant, rotating artworks that define The Greenway’s identity.”

Creating Community and Connection Through Outdoor Seating Enhancements

In addition to the pathway and lighting enhancements of Parcels 19 and 21, the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy will also be installing new tables and chairs in Dewey Square Plaza (Parcel 22). These furnishings play a vital role in creating an inviting and comfortable atmosphere for park visitors. By providing flexible seating options, The Greenway encourages people to relax and enjoy the space at their own pace—whether they're eating lunch, meeting with friends, or simply taking in the surroundings. The presence of tables and chairs also supports spontaneous social interaction, helping to foster a sense of community among both regular visitors and passersby. When thoughtfully arranged, such amenities can transform open areas into lively public gathering spots that accommodate a variety of activities, from casual conversation to informal meetings, making The Greenway not just a transit corridor but a vibrant civic space.

New Trees Add to Diverse Canopy of The Greenway

New trees will also be planted as part of these improvements, complementing the addition of tables and chairs in Dewey Square. These plantings will not only enhance the visual appeal of the plaza but also provide much-needed shade and natural comfort for visitors using the seating areas. The increased canopy will help create a more inviting and relaxing atmosphere, encouraging people to pause and enjoy the space throughout the warmer months. Over time, the trees will contribute to a greener, more sustainable urban environment—supporting biodiversity,

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improving air quality, and reinforcing The Greenway's commitment to creating vibrant, welcoming public spaces for all.

Timeline and Next Steps

Construction fencing will be installed in these parcels beginning in early winter, and all exterior sidewalks will remain open for the duration of the project. Visitors will also continue to enjoy access to the temporary art installation, *Big Hoops to Fill*, by artist Ja'Hari Ortega, throughout the entire construction period.

The project is scheduled for completion in Spring 2026, aligning with the arrival of millions of visitors to The Greenway for major events including Sail Boston, Mass 250, and the FIFA World Cup.

About MassDOT

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is responsible for the planning, construction, and oversight of the Commonwealth's transportation infrastructure, including highways, transit systems, aeronautics, and Registry of Motor Vehicles services. Committed to safety, accessibility, and sustainability, MassDOT works to provide a reliable, resilient, and equitable transportation network that connects communities and supports economic growth across Massachusetts. Through strategic investments and community partnerships, MassDOT is helping to shape a more connected and livable Commonwealth.

About the Greenway Business Improvement District (Greenway BID)

The Greenway Business Improvement District (BID) is a public-private partnership dedicated to enhancing the vibrancy, safety, and economic vitality of the Rose Kennedy Greenway and its surrounding neighborhoods. Funded by abutting commercial property owners, the BID supports capital improvements, programming, and maintenance efforts that elevate local businesses, office workers, residents, and visitors. By investing in Boston's premier linear park, the Greenway BID plays a key role in shaping a more dynamic, welcoming, and sustainable downtown.

About The Greenway and the Greenway Conservancy (www.rosekennedygreenway.org)

The Rose Kennedy Greenway is a contemporary public park in the heart of Boston and one of the most visited attractions in the Commonwealth, welcoming millions of visitors annually. The Greenway is managed by the Greenway Conservancy, a non-profit responsible for the administration and care of the park. The majority of the Conservancy's annual budget is made up



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of generous donations from the community, and it is with their support that the Conservancy cultivates a gathering space where all are welcome and celebrated.