



Lighting & Pathway Improvements Image Credit: Greenway Conservancy Staff

The Greenway Unveils Major Park Improvements as Boston Welcomes a Historic Summer in 2026

*New lighting, accessible pathways, and illuminated public art transform Downtown Boston park
for FIFA World Cup, Sail Boston, Mass 250, and year-round programming opportunities*

JULY 2026 — BOSTON, MA —FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - The [Massachusetts Department of Transportation](#), the [Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy](#), and the [Greenway Business Improvement District](#) are proud to announce the successful completion of major lighting and pathway improvements across Parcels 19, 21, and 22 of The Greenway, marking a transformative new chapter for one of Downtown Boston's most beloved public spaces.



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Arriving as Boston experiences one of its most vibrant and internationally celebrated summers in recent history, these newly completed improvements enhance The Greenway as millions of visitors gather in the city for the **FIFA World Cup**, **Sail Boston**, and **Mass 250 celebrations** while simultaneously extending the park's long-term capacity for year-round public programming, cultural activation, and community gathering.

"This summer is an incredible opportunity to showcase Massachusetts to the world, and we're making sure our public spaces are ready to welcome everyone," **said Governor Maura Healey.**

"By investing in places like The Greenway, we're creating vibrant, accessible spaces where people can gather, enjoy our communities and support local businesses for years to come."

"The Greenway has become one of Boston's most important public spaces — connecting neighborhoods, welcoming visitors, and creating opportunities for community gathering in the heart of our city," **said Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair of Ways and Means, Massachusetts House of Representatives.** "Seeing these improvements completed during such an exciting moment for Boston ensures this park will continue serving residents and visitors alike while strengthening the downtown experience for years to come."

The newly completed project represents a major milestone in the continued evolution of The Greenway as a modern, resilient, and accessible public space. Designed to improve long-term park operations while enhancing the visitor experience, the improvements reflect a collaborative investment in infrastructure that will support both everyday community use and Boston's growing role as an international destination. This milestone project was made possible by an initial design study funded by the Greenway BID, which laid the critical groundwork for these infrastructure upgrades.

"MassDOT is proud to collaborate with the Greenway Conservancy, an instrumental partner in shaping the experience of Downtown Boston, creating welcoming public spaces that encourage people to spend time exploring the surrounding neighborhood," **said Interim Secretary of Transportation and MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng.** "These improvements will enhance the beauty, accessibility and functionality of one of Boston's treasured destinations while supporting the city's ongoing growth and vitality. We encourage everyone to visit these upgraded spaces, enjoy the parks, art and programming as we all support the local businesses that help make Boston thrive. By working with the Greenway, we are helping the city shine and ensuring these public spaces remain an asset for generations to come."

"MassDOT is proud to support projects that strengthen the infrastructure serving residents, workers, and visitors throughout Downtown Boston," **said Undersecretary and State Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver.** "Transforming highway infrastructure into open, accessible public spaces is a nationwide aspiration, and the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway has long

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been the model for how to achieve that goal. These improvements enhance accessibility, improve safety, and ensure this important public space continues to evolve and remain equipped to serve the public year-round while supporting the city during an especially significant and historic summer.”

The completed project introduces significant infrastructure upgrades designed to improve accessibility, sustainability, safety, and visitor experience across some of the park’s largest and most heavily trafficked parcels stretching from Seaport Boulevard to Dewey Square.

New **permeable pathways** now provide smoother, more accessible routes through the park while helping absorb stormwater and reduce flooding during inclement weather. For the first time since The Greenway opened in 2008, these well-loved and heavily trafficked pedestrian pathways will remain open and accessible throughout the winter season. The addition of new permeable surfaces will also allow for snow and ice removal that will keep these spaces available year-round, which was not possible with the stone dust composition of the last 18 years.

“The Greenway BID Board, representing the businesses along The Greenway, is proud to support the lighting and pathways project, making the park safer, more accessible, and more welcoming for everyone who visits this area,” said **Stephen Faber, Chairman of the Greenway Business Improvement District**. “The Greenway is already one of the region’s premier destinations, and these enhancements will help these spaces reach their full potential. We are grateful to partner with the Conservancy and MassDOT on this project, and we look forward to seeing people enjoy the park during this extraordinary summer for Boston and Massachusetts.”

In tandem with pathway improvements, the installation of **new interior parcel lighting** dramatically enhances evening visibility and safety, transforming these spaces into welcoming destinations after work hours and extending the ways visitors can experience the park in the evening.

“The completion of this project fundamentally changes what is possible for us as park stewards,” said **Robert Stigberg, PLA, Director of Maintenance and Capital for the Greenway Conservancy**, who has worked to care for the park nearly since its inception. “For the first time, these spaces can remain active, safe, and accessible throughout every season, giving us entirely new opportunities to welcome visitors and build community in ways we simply couldn’t before. We’ve waited a long time to see these parcels come to life, and I believe these improvements will transform the way this area of the park is experienced by neighbors and visitors alike.”

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Illuminating Public Art in the Heart of Downtown Boston

One of the most visible and striking outcomes of the project is the new lighting features for the **Dewey Square mural wall**, where visitors can now experience **Rixy's newest mural installation, *The Midnight Ride***, spectacularly illuminated for evening viewing ahead of Boston's upcoming **Fourth of July celebrations**.

The large-scale mural — positioned at one of the city's busiest downtown gateways — now takes on an entirely new presence after dark, further reinforcing The Greenway's growing role as a cultural destination where public art, history, and civic gathering intersect.

Building a More Vibrant Downtown Experience — All Year Long

In addition to upgraded infrastructure, new electrical improvements throughout these parcels now allow the Greenway Conservancy to expand programming possibilities significantly, reducing reliance on temporary generators while creating new opportunities for performances, winter events, community gatherings, and cultural programming.

As Boston celebrates an extraordinary summer filled with international tourism and landmark moments, these improvements ensure The Greenway remains a central gathering place connecting neighborhoods from Chinatown to the North End while serving residents, workers, and visitors alike.

Perhaps most significantly, the completion of these upgrades marks the beginning of something entirely new: **The Greenway's first winter season, where Parcels 19 and 21 will remain fully accessible and available for seasonal activation, programming, and community use throughout the colder months.**

Creating Spaces for Gathering, Connection, and Everyday Community

Beyond critical infrastructure improvements, the completion of this project introduces thoughtful new amenities designed to transform how visitors experience some of Downtown Boston's most beloved public spaces. In Dewey Square Plaza (Parcel 22), newly installed tables and chairs create flexible gathering spaces that invite visitors to experience The Greenway in new ways.

Whether enjoying lunch outdoors, meeting with friends or colleagues, taking in surrounding public art, or simply finding a quiet moment amid the energy of downtown Boston, these new

seating areas reinforce The Greenway's role not simply as a pathway through the city, but as a destination designed for gathering, connection, and everyday community life.

Thoughtfully designed public seating plays an important role in fostering vibrant civic life. By creating welcoming spaces where people can comfortably linger, gather spontaneously, and share everyday moments of connection, these enhancements strengthen The Greenway's role as an inclusive public commons for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

In addition to the seating enhancements, the Conservancy has also refurbished the functional Conex storage units located throughout the park, repainting and adding multilingual wayfinding and directional signage to support the visitor experience throughout the season. Additional permanent directional signage is also planned for later this summer.

Cultivating a Living Landmark in Dewey Square

Further transforming Dewey Square into one of Boston's most dynamic civic spaces, The Greenway is also currently partnering with internationally acclaimed topiary artist **Michael P. Gibson** on an extraordinary new living art installation that will become a long-term feature of the park for years to come.

Known for his extraordinary large-scale topiary sculptures and recognized internationally for advancing the art form in contemporary public spaces, Gibson carries forward a powerful artistic legacy through his close connection to legendary American topiary artist Pearl Fryar, whose groundbreaking work transformed the horticultural world and demonstrated how gardens themselves can serve as powerful expressions of creativity, identity, and community.

Currently underway in Dewey Square, the installation reflects The Greenway Conservancy's growing commitment to pushing the boundaries of what urban public space can offer, transforming traditional park landscapes into immersive destinations that inspire curiosity, wonder, and repeat visitation from residents and travelers alike.

The installation arrives during an especially exciting period of growth for The Greenway's horticulture program. Earlier this year, the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy earned ****Level I Arboretum Accreditation****, formally recognizing the organization's commitment to professional tree stewardship and ecological excellence. With plans already underway to pursue ****Level II Accreditation**** in the coming months, these newest landscape additions represent another step forward in cultivating one of Boston's most thoughtfully managed and innovative urban green spaces.

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Together, these investments signal an exciting future for The Greenway — one where public art, world-class horticulture, environmental stewardship, and free public experiences work in tandem to create a downtown park that continues evolving alongside the city itself.

Growing a Greener Future for Boston's Urban Canopy

Complementing these broader park enhancements, newly planted trees throughout Dewey Square further advance The Greenway's long-term commitment to thoughtful urban horticulture, sustainability, and creating more welcoming green spaces in the heart of Downtown Boston.

As these trees mature, they will provide expanded shade coverage for visitors utilizing the newly installed seating areas, creating cooler and more comfortable spaces for rest, recreation, and gathering during Boston's warmer months. Beyond visitor comfort, these plantings support biodiversity, improve air quality, strengthen stormwater resilience, and contribute to the long-term ecological health of Boston's urban environment.

Together with new public seating, expanded pathways, interior parcel lighting, and upgraded infrastructure that now allows for year-round activation, these enhancements represent a major milestone in The Greenway's continued evolution as one of Boston's premier public destinations — a vibrant, accessible civic landscape designed to serve residents, workers, visitors, and future generations alike.

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.

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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](http://www.rosekennedygreenway.org) 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](http://www.rosekennedygreenway.org), a non-profit responsible for the administration and care of the park. The majority of the Conservancy's annual budget is made up 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.

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