



Muddy River Restoration Project
Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee
68 Harvard Street
Brookline, Massachusetts 02447
www.muddyrivermmoc.org

FEDERAL FUNDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION IN PHASE 2 OF THE MUDDY RIVER PROJECT

Issue

Implementation of the comprehensive Muddy River Project,¹ as conceived and permitted, is at risk because the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) cannot construct the critical environmental restoration aspects of Phase 2 of the Project without direction from the White House, or federal approval of a budget specifically appropriating funds for environmental restoration. Given congressional gridlock, the second option is not likely to happen. We need to press for the first.

Goal – Have the President of the United States direct the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to perform the environmental restoration portion of Phase 2 of the Project as well as the flood damage reduction portion.

Timeframe – Immediate Action Needed

The Corps will need two (2) years to design Phase 2 of the Project, which includes both flood damage reduction and environmental restoration. It is anticipated that this design work will begin shortly, so that construction of Phase 2 can begin upon completion of Phase 1 construction. However, in order for that to occur, the Corps must receive specific direction to proceed with the construction of the environmental restoration aspects of Phase 2 of the Project. This must occur in sufficient time to ensure that the Corps can include the Phase 2 environmental restoration work in its work plan for FY2016 so that necessary federal funding will be available as needed. Without the specific direction, construction of a full Phase 2 is at risk.

Impact of No Federal Funding for Environmental Restoration

Without environmental restoration, Phase 2 of the Project will be much more limited, as described below, and the maximum flood control benefits of the Project as originally conceived will not be achieved. The differences are described below and shown on the attached conceptual maps.

¹ Referred to as the “Muddy River Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Project” by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the “Muddy River Flood Control, Water Quality and Habitat Enhancement and Historic Preservation Project” by the Commonwealth, the City of Boston and the Town of Brookline

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Comprehensive Phase 2 Project Flood Damage Reduction and Environmental Restoration (See 2-page schematic entitled “Figure 2 - Recommended Plan”):	Limited Phase 2 Project without Environmental Restoration:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full bank to bank dredging of the entire length of the Fens and the Riverway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dredging of only a narrow channel in the Fens and the Riverway, except for five (5) choke points in the Riverway which are shown in yellow on the attached sheets (See Plans No. 3 and 4, Sheets 26 and 27 of 32 of Corps’ Plans)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dredging will remove approximately 200,000 cubic yards of sediment (including contaminated sediment) and debris 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dredging will remove only approximately 65,000 cubic yards of sediment (including contaminated sediment) and debris
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete removal of invasive phragmites from river and pond edges and replanting with appropriate species to restore landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No removal of phragmites or replanting of river’s edge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full dredging of Leverett Pond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited dredging of Leverett Pond, only from the Village Brook downstream to eliminate accumulated island
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full dredging of Willow Pond and remediation of environmental contamination in Willow Pond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No dredging of Willow Pond or remediation of contamination in Willow Pond
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full dredging of Wards Pond (to be paid for by Boston but performed by Corps’ contractor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No dredging of Wards Pond

Background

The source of the federal share of the costs of the Muddy River Project is the Water Resources Development Act (2000) (WRDA 2000). The language of WRDA 2000 authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) to “carry out the project for flood damage reduction and environmental restoration at Muddy River, Brookline and Boston, Massachusetts.”

The Corps prepared its Decision Document for the Project, and in 2004 recommended that both flood risk management and environmental restoration be implemented as a part of the Project. However, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (for Civil Works) approved only the flood control portion of the Project. He did not approve the environmental restoration work citing the high unit cost of the environmental restoration work in an urban environment.

As a result, in order to authorize the Corps to proceed with the construction of the environmental restoration aspects of Phase 2 of the Project, it must receive a direction to do so. This has been done in the past through the successful efforts of the

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Governors of the Commonwealth and Massachusetts' Congressional delegation to add the words "and environmental restoration" to the relevant sections of annual appropriations bills. Unfortunately, there has been no appropriations bill in several years and the language is critical for the construction of Phase 2 of the Project, for which environmental restoration is a significant component. So now, we need the direction from the White House to the Army Corps.

Summary

Climate change has affected the way in which flood damage reduction is now analyzed. Much has changed since the Project was initially analyzed by the Corps prior to 2003. Rising sea levels, stronger winds, higher tides, and more frequent and more severe storms all point to the importance of environmental restoration to ensure the most robust flood damage reduction in urban environments.

The Muddy River Project was conceived and permitted in Massachusetts as a comprehensive project with a number of goals, including both flood damage reduction and environmental restoration. The planned environmental restoration contributes significantly to the flood control benefits of the Project, and without it those benefits will not be fully realized. In addition, if Phase 2 does not include environmental restoration, Boston and Brookline will be left with the full financial responsibility for maintenance of a system that has not been adequately restored to meet the realities of current stormwater management needs.

For more information, please contact the MMOC Chair, Fran Gershwin, at fgershwin@muddyrivermmoc.org

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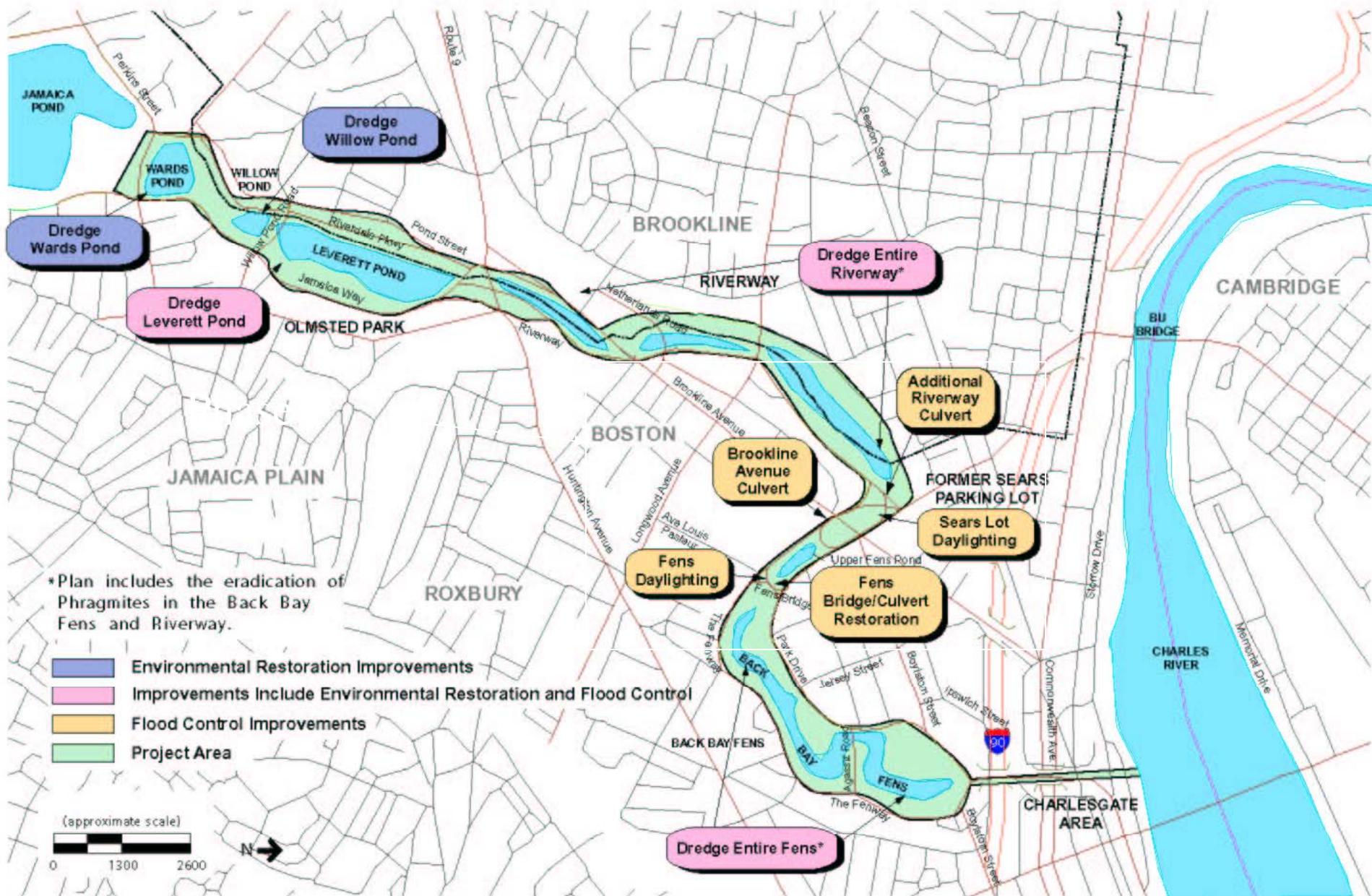
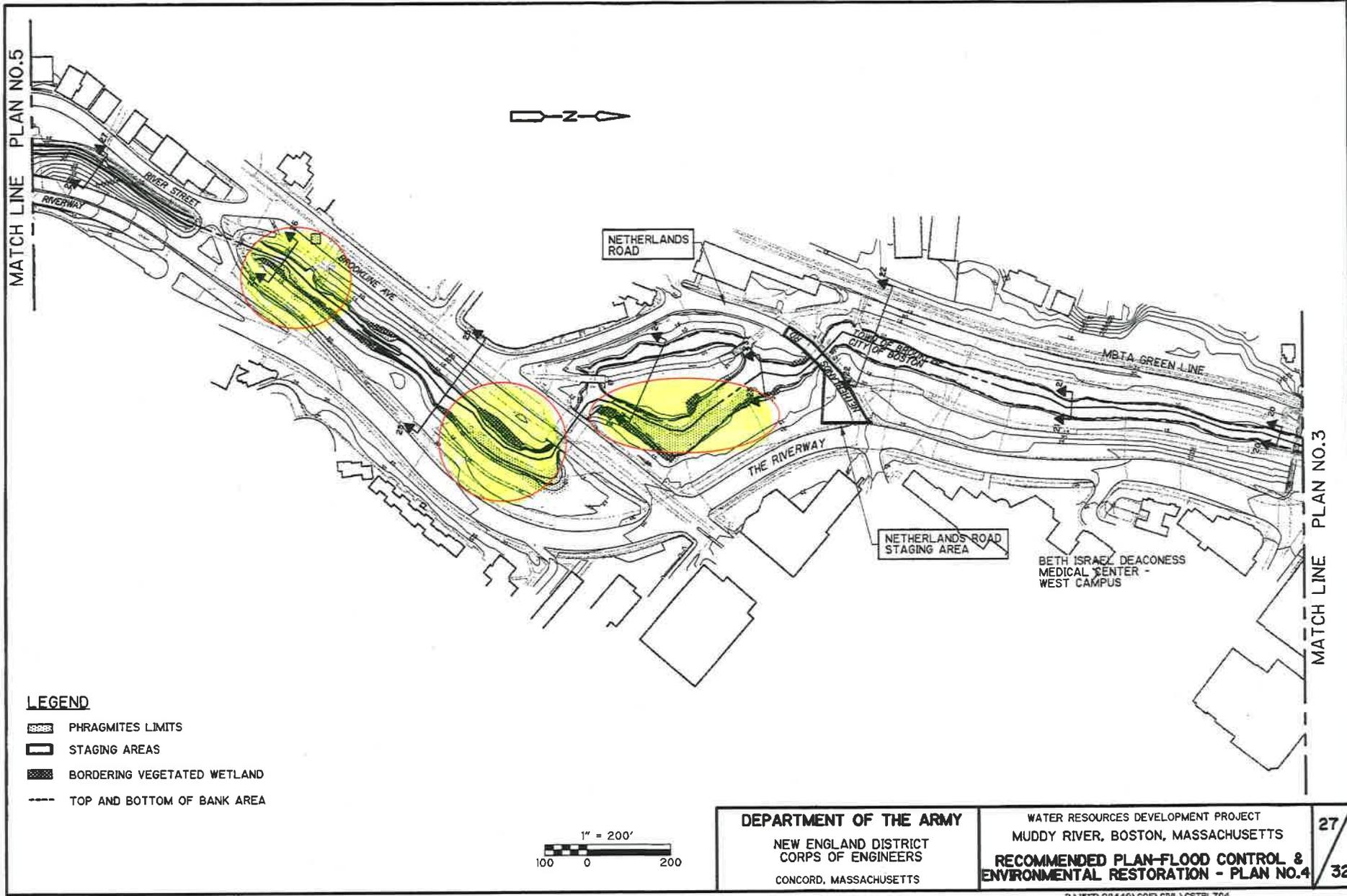
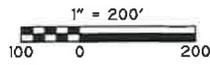


Figure 2: Recommended Plan



LEGEND

-  PHRAGMITES LIMITS
-  STAGING AREAS
-  BORDERING VEGETATED WETLAND
-  TOP AND BOTTOM OF BANK AREA



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT
 CORPS OF ENGINEERS
 CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
 MUDDY RIVER, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
**RECOMMENDED PLAN-FLOOD CONTROL &
 ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION - PLAN NO.4**

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