

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Blackstone River Visioning Project

State Border Design Charrette: Blackstone, Massachusetts and North Smithfield, Rhode Island

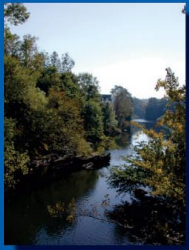
Existing Conditions

A project developed and funded by a partnership of groups led by the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

www.massaudubon.org www.nps.gov/blac/home.htm

Issues

There have been relatively few **cooperative planning efforts** between the two communities. A continuing dialogue will be required for the successful development of a shared vision for the Blackstone Riverway and its significant resources.



The **Blackstone Canal** needs to be cleaned up and become more visually accessible.



Explore the **reuse of existing industrial sites** for recreational uses.



The **auto salvage yard** along Canal Street in North Smithfield is an environmental hazard as well as an eyesore. Significant clean up is required at the site.



The Town of Blackstone has significant **historic and cultural resources** which provide potential attractions for visitors and residents.



There are **existing trails** throughout the area that provide an opportunity to connect to the existing Blackstone Gorge State Park.



There are a significant number of **existing recreational and cultural resources** along the river and along the State border. These provide an excellent opportunity for shared uses and access to the river, especially if combined into a continuous network.



Designs for the **Blackstone Bikeway** include a rest area and parking facility at the former Depot site in the Town of Blackstone.



Orthophoto from MassGIS, April 2001



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Conceptual Design Recommendations

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www.massaudubon.org www.rps.gov/blackstone.htm

Industrial Sites

Clean up auto salvage yard and develop as park land. BFI should be relocated to enable recreational uses including parking.

Multi-Use Trail System

Create a continuous trail system along the river and link Paul Kelly Park with the new open space.

Pedestrian Connections

Create connections between the regional park resources and the fields behind the Blackstone Municipal Center.

Mammoth Mill Site

Clean up the former Mammoth Mill site and incorporate it into the larger park design. Trails and interpretive materials should be created for visitors.

Regional Park

Develop a regional park that crosses State boundaries and provides shared recreational resources and access to the river.

Bikeway Kiosk

The former depot site in Blackstone should be developed into a parking area and visitor kiosk. There are possible improvements to this site already under consideration by MassHighway as part of the Blackstone Bikeway. The Town of Blackstone should be actively involved in programming and design of improvements to the site.

Visual Access

Clear vegetation along the river to improve visual access. Remove invasive species and selectively prune large trees for long-term health.

Blackstone Canal

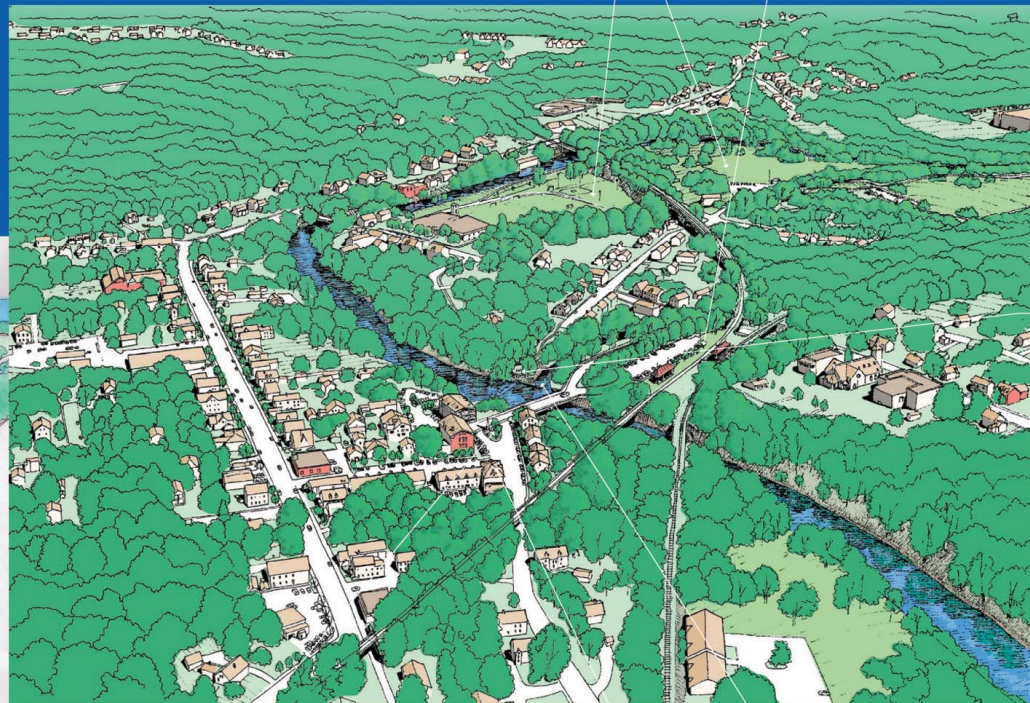
Clean up the canal and make it more visually accessible with more attractive fencing and interpretive signage.

Monument Square

Return Monument Square as a focus of commercial activities. New buildings should be added along the street with parking behind.

Traffic Island

Redesign and landscape the island to improve traffic circulation and protect the historic monument. Improve sidewalks and pedestrian areas to promote public use.



Blackstone River Visioning Project

Lonsdale Bleachery Design Charrette: Lincoln, Rhode Island

Existing Conditions

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www.massaudubon.org

www.nps.gov/blac/home.htm

Issues



Buildings in the mill complex are owned by 6-8 separate individuals or companies. Some are in active use while others are vacant. There are differences of opinion regarding maintenance of roads and infrastructure which can make cooperative action difficult.



Access to the site is inadequate for large-scale development of the complex. The intersection at Carrington Lane is dangerous and not easily accessible to trucks and heavy traffic volume.



Parking within the mill complex is minimal and is limited to each building's immediate vicinity. There is currently no room to expand parking within the main complex.



Opportunities

Blackstone River State Park is a regional recreational resource located north and west of the mill. The Park includes access to the Blackstone Bikeway and a parking area.



The **mill pond** is ideally situated to become a focal point and visual amenity for visitors arriving to and within the complex.



Key buildings within the complex have been rehabilitated and contain thriving businesses and office space.



The **Lonsdale mill village** has been designated a State Historic District and retains much of its historic character and charm. Vacant mill housing awaits renovation.



The **former Lonsdale Drive-in** is currently being restored to wetlands and provides a significant natural area adjacent to the site as well a connection along the Blackstone Bikeway.



Orthophoto from RGIS, 1997



Blackstone River Visioning Project

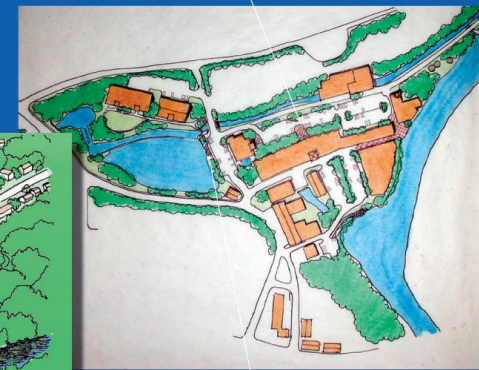
Lonsdale Bleachery Design Charrette: Lincoln, Rhode Island

Conceptual Design Recommendations

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Remove Buildings

Remove buildings in the central portion of the mill complex to provide parking and easy access to the main mill building. This building should be considered for a mix of uses including senior and/or affordable housing.



Conceptual Design #2

Access

Provide additional access into the mill complex from the entry road to Blackstone River Park.

Parking

Provide parking areas along the western portion of the site along the Park entry road to accommodate new uses in the mill buildings. Include a pedestrian access across the canal.

Mill Pond Landscape

Clean mill pond and adjacent canal to create a scenic landscaped area that provides an entry focal point and an enjoyable pedestrian experience within the site.



Conceptual Design #1

Remove Building

Non-historic structures and additions could be removed to provide parking and allow light and air to reach historic buildings.

Site Clean Up

Clean up the sluice way between the buildings.

River Access

Provide canoe launch and riverside pedestrian plaza in the cove area of the river.

Pond View

Provide parking and a viewing area for residents and visitors to the complex.

Architectural Rehabilitation

Revitalize this building or use as a restaurant and visitor center with visual access to the River. A landscaped courtyard adjacent to this building creates a resting and gathering spot.

Courtyard Park

Open up new internal courtyard by removing industrial buildings.

Appendix C: Contacts and Resources

REGIONAL RESOURCES

American Heritage Rivers Initiative

www.epa.gov/rivers/98rivers/blackstone.html

c/o EPA New England, 1 Congress St. (CRI)
Boston, MA 02114

Provides information about American Heritage Rivers including river facts and watershed health indicators and helps river communities seek federal assistance and other resources.

John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, Blackstone Valley Institute,

www.nps.gov/blac/home.htm

Established by Congress in 1986, the Corridor is an affiliated area of the National Park System. Through the Blackstone Valley Institute, the Corridor provides heritage area and land use planning resources and support to communities in the Blackstone River Valley. The Institute facilitates forums and workshops for planners and community officials, provides information and research on planning techniques and models, and cultivates community leaders through a series of training sessions with Leadership Blackstone Valley.

MASSACHUSETTS

Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce,

www.blackstonevalley.org

Encourages business and industrial growth in the Blackstone Valley in Massachusetts while helping to preserve the unique community characteristics of the area.

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, www.cmrpc.org

Assists local governments of the communities of Central and Southern Worcester County in transportation, community development, and geographic information systems.

Executive Office of Economic Development

www.mass.gov/portal/index.jsp?pageID=econhome&L=1&L0=Home&sid=Eecon

The state's main office focused on economic growth in the Commonwealth. Incorporating the resources of the Department of Business & Technology, the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation and the Departments of Labor and Workforce Development.

Massachusetts Audubon Society

www.massaudubon.org

Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center and Wildlife Sanctuary
414 Massasoit Road
Worcester, MA 01604

Massachusetts Historical Commission,

www.state.ma.us/sec/mhc

Established by the legislature in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth.

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

www.mass.gov/envir/eoea.htm

EOEA contains four state agencies and nine offices that coordinate the management and protection of the environmental resources of the Commonwealth. These include the following:

Community Preservation Initiative,

www.state.ma.us/envir/communitypreservation

Tools and techniques to assess the effect of sprawl and achieve growth that is protective of natural resources and consistent with the traditional community character. Includes buildout analyses, Community Development Plans, the Community Preservation Act, and the Green Neighborhoods Project.

Department of Environmental Protection

www.mass.gov/dep

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection is a state agency responsible for protecting human health and the environment by ensuring clean air and water, the safe management and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes, the timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

Department of Conservation and Recreation

www.mass.gov/dcr/index.htm

DCR is made up of three divisions, including State Parks and Recreation, Urban Parks and Recreation and The Division of Water Supply Protection. The Department manages over 300,000 acres of state parks and open space, and protects the drinking water supply watersheds for nearly 2.2 million residents of Massachusetts, primarily in Greater Boston.

Department of Housing and Community Development,

www.state.ma.us/dhcd.

The Office administers the state's public housing programs, coordinates its anti-poverty efforts, allocates federal community development programs and provides a variety of services to local government officials.

Massachusetts Geographic Information System

(MASSGIS), www.state.ma.us/mgis

Geographic and environmental data for Massachusetts.

RHODE ISLAND

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council,

www.tourblackstone.com/council.htm

Oversees development of a coordinated visitor industry in the Rhode Island Blackstone Valley communities through partnerships with intrastate, state, regional, and New England organizations. The visitor industry consists of the Valley's public and private sectors, natural, historic, cultural, ethnic, industrial, educational, special events, and commercial resources.

Department of Environmental Management,

www.state.ri.us/dem/topics/munic.htm

To improve, maintain and preserve high environmental quality, DEM offers a number of programs that benefit communities –from help in creating wastewater management districts to providing grants for recreation. The goal of the Rhode Island Watershed Approach is to preserve, protect, and restore Rhode Island's environment through collaboration and consensus building. This is done by establishing broad-based partnerships, called watershed teams, to include all the key stakeholders within a watershed. This office also coordinates what have traditionally been separate government programs in order to use existing resources more effectively.

Grow Smart Rhode Island

www.growsmartri.com/news.html

Grow Smart Rhode Island is a statewide 501 (c)(3) public interest group representing a broad coalition of partners fighting sprawl by promoting innovative policies and programs to revitalize city and town centers, preserve cultural and natural resources and expand economic opportunities throughout Rhode Island.

Mill Revitalization Program, Statewide Planning Program

www.planning.state.ri.us/ED/Default

Provides tax incentives for rehabilitation or reuse of older mill buildings.

The Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce

www.nrichamber.com

Strengthens the economic climate through business leadership programs, workforce development initiatives and public advocacy.

Statewide Planning Program,

www.planning.state.ri.us

Charged with preparing and maintaining plans for the physical, economic, and social development of the state; encouraging their implementation; and coordinating the actions of state, local and federal agencies and private individuals within the framework of the state's development goals and policies.

Rhode Island Economic Development

Corporation www.ridec.com

Provides policies, programs, and projects, which enhance and enrich the business environment for public and private sectors in order to create prosperity for all Rhode Islanders.

Rhode Island Geographic Information System,

(RIGIS), www.planning.state.ri.us/GIS/GISHOME

Monitors and coordinates activities related to the use of geographic information system technology in Rhode Island, supports initiatives to implement or use this technology, and provides access to a comprehensive data base of geographically referenced information.

Rhode Island Greenways Council,

www.planning.state.ri.us/GreenCouncil/Default

Coordinates state agency greenway efforts, assists local governments and private groups in greenway creation, and provides information to the public on the availability and usage of greenways in Rhode Island.

Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage

Commission, www.rihphc.state.ri.us

Operates the statewide historical preservation program, which identifies and protects historic buildings, districts, and archaeological sites.