



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION *for*
OLMSTED
PARKS

**Arborway Parkway Improvements Project
NAOP ABRIDGED COMMENTS SENT VIA WEBSITE, July 10, 2020,
<https://www.mass.gov/dcr/public-comment>**

I write for the National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP), the only national organization dedicated to protecting Olmsted parks and places.

The Arborway Parkway Project provides a timely opportunity to recapture Frederick Law Olmsted's design intent for this section of the Emerald Necklace. Providing dedicated paths for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as busy traffic routes, will immeasurably improve the safety and quality of life for numerous users and visitors.

In his design, Olmsted wanted the Arborway to be more than a mere a road. It was an integral part of a continuous, linked linear route into and out of the city center, connecting parks and neighborhoods.

In developing the design, Olmsted focused on functional and aesthetic concerns. Travel was separated into routes for pleasure drives by carriage, with outer routes for more functional wagon traffic. Tree-lined grassy strips separated these ways, serving as sidewalks or equestrian routes. By separating conflicting uses, Olmsted gave users a safe, efficient, and restorative experience.

As Olmsted saw it, all Bostonians deserved access to the recreational opportunities that the Emerald Necklace offered—whether they traveled in his day by carriage, horseback or foot; or today, by automobile and by bicycle.

Viewing the Arborway through this lens underscores the importance of accommodating cyclists and pedestrians as well as automobiles. A priority improvement should be dedicated and continuous spaces for cyclists and pedestrians (in both directions) throughout the Arborway. The bike network has a dangerous gap which should be eliminated.

In this way, the Parkway would more fully achieve Olmsted's vision of an accessible democratic space – one where residents of different neighborhoods and from different backgrounds meet.

NAOP encourages DCR to see this project as an opportunity to more fully realize the park-system that Olmsted created and that Bostonians continue to enjoy.

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