



# WHARF DISTRICT COUNCIL B O S T O N

## A LETTER FROM WDC PRESIDENT MARC MARGULIES

Hurricanes Harvey and Irma had tragic consequences for communities in Texas, Florida, and beyond. Like all of you, my heart goes out to all the people caught in these devastating storms. I feel awful about the lives lost and about the plight of those whose homes and property were destroyed. Then selfishly I wondered—could this ever happen to Boston? Sadly, the answer is: we too are incredibly vulnerable, like many other ocean-front cities around the country and world.

The Wharf District Council is one of the many organizations whose role (among others) is to inform/ remind its membership about the risks posed by storm surges as sea levels continues to rise. While the WDC does not itself have the wherewithal to implement any of the necessary protective measures, it IS our responsibility to make sure we ALL recognize that we are in danger—NOW.

Massive flooding may not be imminent, but the mitigation measures we might employ will take many, many years to plan, negotiate, finance, and install. No property can be fully protected on its own. We must have a regional effort to minimize exposure

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# SEPTEMBER 2017 MEMBER NEWSLETTER

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## WDC LEADERSHIP

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## WDC MEMBERS

A Better City | Boston Harbor Cruises |  
Boston Harbor Hotel | Broadluxe  
Condominiums | Folio Condominiums |  
Friends of Christopher Columbus Park  
(non-voting) | Harborside Inn | Harbor  
Towers I Condominiums | Harbor  
Towers II Condominiums | Greenway  
Conservancy (non-voting) | Greenway Place  
Condominiums | The InterContinental Hotel,  
InterContinental Residences | Marriott  
Custom House | Marriott Long Wharf Hotel,  
New England Aquarium | The Residences at  
Rowes Wharf



*Letter from the President: Continued from Page 1*

and limit catastrophic damage, and we must accept that it will be difficult and expensive. The alternative, we do not take collective action, will have consequences. When Boston eventually experiences a major storm, the damage and costs will be enormous. Presumably we would then be motivated to act, but at even greater human suffering, property damage, and cost.

What can each of us do?

First, find out if there is a plan in place for how your building will withstand storm surges. If there is no plan, begin the discussion. While this is only of localized value, it is at least a recognition of the need to be prepared; hopefully we will not all be scrambling for the same resources for emergency protection when the time comes.

Secondly, become more informed. According to the [Barr Foundation](#), whose Initiative on Climate Preparedness has funded significant research on the subject (Bud Ris shared with the WDC some of their findings at our July meeting):

"Among U.S. cities, Boston is one of the most vulnerable to climate change. Sea-level rise, heat waves, and increased precipitation will profoundly impact the city, its people, physical assets, economy, and culture." [Their website](#) is a great way to access relevant information.

Let's start a dialog. How can the WDC be a more effective advocate for making Boston and the Wharf District less susceptible? Please let us know your thoughts.

Let's work together. The responsibility rests with all of us who care about our community and each other to help protect our future. We hope to make educating our Wharf District Community on Climate Preparedness a key objective of the Wharf District Council.



Marc Margulies, FAIA, LEED AP  
President

## DID YOU KNOW?

### BY CHRIS FINCHAM, WDC TREASURER

There actually was a North/South Station rail link from 1901 to 1938 known as the Atlantic Avenue Elevated.

For nearly 40 years there was passage between North Station and South station, with downtown stops in between. The rail link ran on elevated tracks between North and South Stations, around the waterfront along Atlantic Ave., Commercial St., and Causeway St. However, with the construction of the Sumner Tunnel and decay of the waterfront, ridership dropped significantly and the rail line was stopped due to lack of demand. The El was closed in October 1938 and torn down in 1942 for scrap metal for World War II.

Also, between 1872 and 1969 there was a freight-only Union Freight Railroad line on the surface road running between North and South Stations along the same route as the Elevated rail link.

Later, as part of the planning for the Central Artery/Tunnel Project (the Big Dig), the idea of a North/South Station rail link was revived and a provision was made for it under the Central Artery tunnel. The link would have been a boon for rail travelers going TO destinations from the North to the South of Boston, and vice versa. It would have obviated the need to expand South Station to accommodate increasing ridership. Because of the huge cost overruns of the Big Dig, the North/South rail link was not pursued, although a \$2 million feasibility study on it is now being funded by MassDOT.





## OUR COMMUNITY

"CHANGING COURSE" ART INSTALLATION IN CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS PARK: BY ROBYN REED



With the simple description "I'm going to paint water bottles to look like fish and hang them under the trellis" and a great amount of trust, the Friends of Christopher Columbus Park and the Boston Parks Department graciously granted me permission to install my first piece of public art this year. "Changing Course" is made of zip ties, fishing wire, acrylic paint and almost 2,000 plastic water and drink bottles collected from streets, parks, residents, and businesses in the North End and is currently mounted on the underside of the trellis in Christopher Columbus Park.

I had been astounded by the number of empty water bottles left in the garden where I volunteer as a member of FOCCP. Often, we must pick up trash before we can even begin to trim plants and do our weeding. Each week as I gathered bottles to put them in the recycling bin, I grew more curious about what happens to all the plastic not picked up and recycled. Research led me to learn about Henderson Island, "the most polluted, most remote island in the whole world," a landmass in the South Pacific found by marine scientists to have the highest density of debris recorded anywhere in the world, and 99.8% of it is plastic. When I read that the most common items found on the island were "disposable" or "single-use" items (like water bottles), my question turned from "What happens to these bottles?" to "How can I make a difference in how people see these bottles?" That inquiry became the foundation of this piece of art.

It only took two months to collect the hundreds of bottles I needed, but I knew that cutting, painting, and gluing each one would take hours of work, and I would need assistance. When I reached out to the community to see who could help, I received an overwhelming response.

"Changing Course" will be in Christopher Columbus Park until October 9, 2017. When de-installed, all parts will be recycled.



The first day, I had five people work with me at a small table in the park. The second day, I had even more volunteers at three tables. Even families walking through the park asked if they could join in. After that, people anxiously emailed me to ask for the next times they could come and help. I also recruited students in the after-school program at the Nazzaro Center, residents of the Spaulding Rehabilitation Center, and the neighborhood Daisy Troop, all who eagerly helped paint the bottles. It was as if everyone wanted to get involved in this contemporary quilting bee. These gatherings naturally sparked discussions about recycling. Beyond just being a beautiful new element in the park, people told me the installation alerted them to the impact of plastics on fish in the ocean, and how wildlife is rapidly becoming part plastic because of all the microelements in the water. They talked about how this work made them more aware

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*"Changing Course" Art Installation: Continued from Page 3*

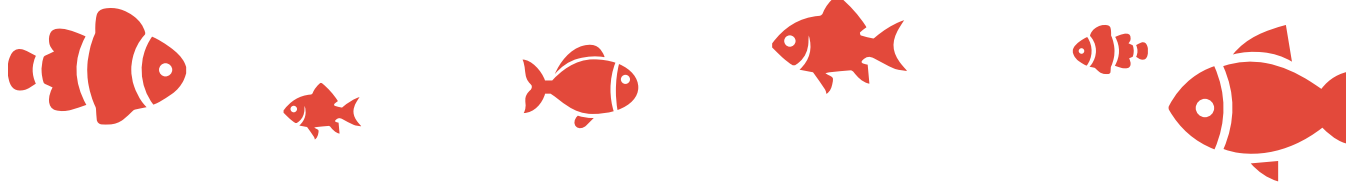
of how much trash is generated every day, and how quickly it can accumulate. The motif of the fish initiated discussions about the cultural relationship between the harbor and the neighborhood. Columbus Park is the site of Blessing of the Fishing Waters for the annual Fisherman's Feast, and the arc of lines of multicolored fish mirror decorations above the feasts of the North End. It also reminded people of the geographical history and possible future of where this art is sited. Until recently in Boston's history, there was no land where the trellis is now, it was the harbor, and fish were swimming right under it. With rising tides already affecting the park, fish could be swimming there again in the next century.

The title "Changing Course" was born of these conversations. It represents my hope that we can change the current trajectory of trash; instead of bottles headed into the ocean, and perhaps eventually to Henderson Island, we can recycle more. Even better, we can limit or eliminate our use of these plastic items. We can also change how we deal with problems in our world – we can all work together

toward a common goal, like educating our neighbors about the threat trash poses to our harbor. We can make art. Art can change how we interact in a public space through shared interests and education, and with awe.

I am stunned each day by the beauty and joy this project has brought to me and others. I am humbled by the thanks and accolades. I am appreciative of the trust of the FOCCP. I am indebted those who held the ladder for me when I hung the lines. I am angered each day by the vandalism that takes them down. I am grateful for the assistance of everyone, even the garbage man who let me crawl into his truck to retrieve five bags of bottles he mistook for trash. I am hopeful we can reduce the amount of trash in the garden. I am confident this art work can make a difference in how people see these bottles.

*Robyn Reed is an artist and Park Art Curator for the Friends of Christopher Columbus Park. She can be contacted at [robynr@foccp.org](mailto:robynr@foccp.org).*



## WDC'S NEXT MEETING



### A *Conversation* WITH *Mayor Marty Walsh*

**WHEN**

Tuesday, October 17, 2017  
4:30—6:30PM

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**WHERE**

The New England Aquarium  
Cafe on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

*Image Courtesy Boston Magazine*





RoseKennedyGreenway.org

## WHAT'S NEW?

### GREENWAY WHARF DISTRICT PARKS PLANT IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

The Greenway, a roof garden atop a highway tunnel, is a contemporary public park in the heart of Boston comprised of a set of parks – North End, Wharf District, Fort Point Channel, Dewey Square, and Chinatown – having a unique design that reflects the distinct character of each Boston neighborhood. Walking through these neighborhood parks along the Greenway, you will enjoy diverse plantings, unique architectural features, historic landmarks, attractions, and the beautiful Boston Harbor and waterfront as you go!

To enhance your experience the Greenway Conservancy now offers Plant Identification Information Sheets. These were created by Greenway Horticulture staff and volunteers to highlight the variety of trees, shrubs and perennials found in each of the park sets. The landscapes of the Wharf District Parks are planted with a selection

of native Northeast plants inspired by the ecology of the nearby Harbor Islands. The staghorn sumac, sassafras and swamp magnolia are unique to this area of the Greenway.

The plant guide and searchable list of plant inventory for the Wharf District Parks on the Greenway lives at [www.rosekennedygreenway.org/plants](http://www.rosekennedygreenway.org/plants). This includes include full color pictures of the plants of each park section. These are a great resource for getting to know the plants and parks better! Please feel free to download the information.

*The nonprofit Greenway Conservancy maintains, programs, finances, and improves the 1.5 mile Greenway on behalf of the public.*



#### **River Birch**

Native to the eastern United States, the River Birch's distinctive bark and outstanding yellow fall color makes it an ideal addition to landscape us.



#### **Giant Hyssop**

Native to New England, the Giant Hyssop is a nectar source for bees. It also attracts both hummingbirds and butterflies.

Bloom Time: July-September.



#### **Butterfly Milkweed**

An orange flowering native milkweed littered throughout the Wharf District Parks. Scientific name *Asclepias* is derived from Asklepios, the Greek god of healing.

Bloom Time: June-August.



#### **Marsh Blazing Star**

With its unique flower shape, the Marsh Blazing Star has become a fast favorite of Greenway visitors.

Bloom Time: June-August.



## SPECIAL PLACES

### BOSTON HARBOR CRUISES: "OUR BOATS. YOUR PLAYGROUND."



Don't frown because summer is over, smile because there are still plenty of activities you can do well into the fall! Boston Harbor Cruises has fall cruise options for everyone!

- Need an escape from the hustle and bustle of the city? You can head to Spectacle or George's Island for hiking and history through October 9th. We've also extended the dates for the Spectacle Island Beer Garden and Clambakes!
- Experience Humpback whales in their natural habitat on our whale watches with the New England Aquarium, running daily through November 19<sup>th</sup>.

- Now is the perfect time to fly on over to Salem, MA and you can avoid all that ghoulish traffic by hopping aboard the Salem Ferry.
- Book your holiday party with Boston Harbor Cruises! With your choice of 3 luxury charter vessels, your holiday event will stun guests with the Boston skyline as its backdrop.

Whether you're just looking to get away for a day or are looking for a memorable experience, Boston Harbor Cruises is here to make sure your fall is just as much fun as your summer! Visit us at [BostonHarborCruises.com](http://BostonHarborCruises.com) OR call us at 1-877-SEE-WHALE to book your cruise today!



Photo by Marc Ehrlich



## SAVE THE DATE!

### FALL FESTIVAL IN CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS PARK



#### WHEN

Monday, October 9, 2017  
Noon—4PM

*Lots of things to do! Join in the fun or just come by, relax, and enjoy the day.*



PUMPKIN PAINTING!



FACE PAINTING!



MAGIC!



BUBBLES!



PARADE AT NOON!