

PRESS RELEASE

Date: October 1, 2007

Contact: Mary Alice Van Sickle, Marketing Director  
Carol R. Johnson Associates, Inc.  
617/896-2650; [mvansickle@crja.com](mailto:mvansickle@crja.com)

**NEW CHINATOWN PARK OPENS ON BOSTON'S ROSE FITZGERALD KENNEDY GREENWAY**

Dedication ceremonies for Chinatown Park, the first of the parks to be completed along Boston's Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, took place on Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. The dedication marked the culmination of a rigorous, five year planning and design effort. Boston based landscape architects Carol R. Johnson Associates, Inc. designed the park, under the direction of client/owner the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority and with the ongoing involvement of the Mayor's Central Artery Task Force and the Chinatown and Leather District Advisory Group. Some 60 members of the community actively participated in public meetings as the design process evolved.

Located just outside the traditional Chinatown Gate at Beach Street, which marks the entrance to Boston's Chinatown neighborhood, the park is approximately 3/4 of an acre in size and is built over an abandoned off-ramp from the Central Artery Dewey Square tunnel. The CRJA design interprets traditional Chinese town and garden design elements in a contemporary fashion, creating a space that is uniquely modern yet with strong references to the past. As the largest open space within Chinatown, the park's design also responds to the vigorous social life of the Chinatown community, providing a framework for the many festivals, celebrations, and daily activities that up until now had inadequate or inappropriate sites and venues.

*Design Features*

*The Public Plaza* - By tradition the public space outside a Chinese village is reserved for festivals and for welcoming visitors. In keeping with this tradition, the large paved open space adjacent to the Chinatown Gate can accommodate a diverse program of public events and celebrations including morning Tai Chi groups, Chinese

New Year's celebrations, the August Moon Festival, public performances and perhaps even the Chinatown Olympic Volleyball finals. The park also serves the diverse Leather District community as well as lunchtime users from Boston's adjacent Financial District office buildings. Plaza lighting has been designed to support the hanging of 1,000 festival lanterns and banners through-out the year.

*The Serpentine Path and Garden* - If the open plaza may be seen as the Yang aspect of the park, the Serpentine Path represents the Yin, with rich planting, a waterfall and stream, and shaded spaces providing enclosure from the busy street. The curving seat walls accommodate socialization and support parade events such as the traditional dragon dance, which will end at the plaza. Along the walk is a changing seasonal array of flowering and foliage plants representing plants associated with Asia, such as ginkgo trees, willows, contorted pines, cherries, bamboo, azaleas, peonies, and chrysanthemums. The plantings display qualities represented in traditional Asian design: Bamboo represents the strength and flexibility of the young man, the cherry trees the youth and beauty of the young woman, the willow represents the grace and beauty of the mature woman, and the lacebark pine represents the long life and endurance of the wise old man.

*Water and Stone in the Park* - Waterfalls and streams are features often found in Asian gardens, as sitting beside a stream is a metaphor for an Asian Scholar's Garden. The park includes a large waterfall and stream, with the water flowing towards Chinatown and the traditional Chinatown Gate. The waterfall's form was inspired by a famous natural waterfall located in the Lushan Mountains Botanical Garden in the People's Republic of China. The park's natural stones are remainders of Fort Point Channel seawalls reconstructed by the Big Dig. The stones may have been witness to early 19<sup>th</sup> century ships from Boston's China Trade. The frequent use of irregular-shaped stone groupings in the garden is a reference to the composition of metaphor figures in Asian gardens.

*The Essex Street Gateway and Sail Sculpture* - The new Essex Street Gateway is a contemporary entrance to the park, a way-finding element designed to be visible on the Greenway from Dewey Square. The sail sculpture evokes Boston's China Trade of the

late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century that was instrumental in the development of Chinatown. From Dewey Square the gate may be seen as traditional gate posts and lintel with the illuminated sail feature in the foreground, but as one approaches the park, the sail becomes a separate element, and the flared lintel is revealed to be a daring cantilever, supported only on one end. As seen from under the large gate, this base stands firmly in a metaphorical field of rice, while the lintel disappears in a grove of tall Stone Bamboo. At night the composition changes again as the Sail becomes a beacon of soft light, while the angular, red gateway glows warmly and invitingly against the illuminated, misty grasses and the green of the bamboo.

*The Project Team*

Client/Owner: The Massachusetts Turnpike Authority

Park Design Carol R. Johnson Associates, Inc., Landscape Architects/Environmental  
Planners

William Taylor, Principal in Charge

Kathleen Lynch, Project Manager

Christopher Bridle, Project Landscape Architect

Associated Landscape Architect: Dr. Yu Kongjian, Beijing

Sculptural Elements: Communication Arts, Boulder, CO; Design Communications LTD

Water feature system design: CMS Collaborative

Structural Engineering: Lim Consultants

Lighting Design: Ripman Lighting / Collaborative Lighting

Electrical Engineering: Shekar and Associates

Civil Engineering: Nitsch Engineering

Irrigation Design: Irrigation Consulting Incorporated

General Contractor: W.T. Rich Company