



The view from the cliffs adjacent to the Stop & Shop on American Legion, which residents say is at-risk of becoming dilapidated.

PHOTO BY JEFF SULLIVAN

Residents outline what they'd like on American Legion Parkway

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Residents and Mount Hope/Mount Canterbury Neighborhood Association Members Rick Yoder and Lisa Beatman are trying to preserve the greenery along the American Legion Highway/Parkway, and are hoping to someday connect the Parkway up to Dorchester and in turn, the Emerald Necklace.

Firstly, the pair said they want to preserve American Legion's designation as a Parkway.

Yoder and Beatman said

prime dumping ground for contractors who don't want to pay the dumping fees, and while the mobile application 311 for city services has been very helpful in getting city services out to take care of the material, he said sometimes it can just take a lot of notification before anything gets down about it.

While it may not look it, many areas of the region could be turned into vibrant greenspaces. Yoder said one of the big areas is that of the Canterbury Brook, which is currently blocked off by a guard-rail on its western side.

"Why do you need a guard-

other neighborhoods.

"It's concerning when we see new expensive trees being planted or proposed for areas that are already very developed, which is a fabulous thing, when this amazing greenery is destroyed or proposed to be destroyed," she said. "So establishing this as a corridor and getting the work put in for these protected paths is really important."

And it looks like the efforts of the Mount Hope/Mount Canterbury Neighborhood Association are getting some traction. Just this September, the Boston City Council held

that the designation, while lost in nomenclature as it is referred to as American Legion Highway, is important to the neighborhood's efforts to restore the boulevard to a pastoral jaunt through Roslindale, Mattapan, Dorchester and Hyde Park. Beatman said recent years have seen much neglect on the American Legion.

The pair said, along with many residents in the neighborhood, that the entirety of the American Legion could be transformed into a greenway, much like Jamaica Way or the VFW Parkway, stretching from Hyde Park Avenue into Blue Hills Avenue. They said the area has many greenspaces speckled throughout, like the Mount Canterbury Cemetery.

Yoder said the cemetery has become neglected in recent years and wants to see the area restored.

"It's degradation," he said. "Mount Hope Cemetery has not been getting regular maintenance. The trees die and they are not replanted. They have a hard working staff, there's just not enough of them."

Beatman added that while it is recognized nationally, it lacks certain local protections.

"It's on the National Historic Register, but not designated historic by the City of Boston," Beatman said.

The pair said one of the biggest problems facing the Parkway is that it lies on the borders of several neighborhoods. Yoder said it has become a

rail on a parkway?" he said.

The brook itself is currently polluted, but the pair said they believe it could be a small piece to restoring the area. The brook sits on the northwestern side of the intersection between American Legion and Walk Hill Street, which is a very busy intersection, and continues through the St. Michael Cemetery. They said that the only sit-down restaurant in the neighborhood, an Italian eatery next to Calisi's Flowerland, in the neighborhood used to occupy the space abutting the brook, recently shut down. They said they believed it was lack of pedestrian access (because of the intersection) that led to the restaurant's closure.

Another gem in the Roslindale region of the American Legion, according to Yodel and Beatman, is the former site of the Oak Lawn Golf Range, where Eversource (Nstar at the time) set up an electrical station last year. Yodel said he was angered by the station's construction, as no public process was involved and residents were not even notified. The road leading to the site from the Stop and Shop Plaza leads to a cliff side view of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Beatman said she's concerned with the transformation of the Parkway over the years, and the fact that it's been historically a dumping ground has set it as less of a priority than

a meeting to discuss the possibility of giving the corridor Urban Wilds protections that would give further legal process to any destruction of greenery along the corridor, but a new hearing on the subject has yet to be scheduled.

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