

HISTORY ADAPTED FROM TEA'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT by Shary Page Berg

STORROW DRIVE & BEYOND (1950-present)

CONSTRUCTION OF STORROW DRIVE (1950-55)

The demand for a parkway between Back Bay and the Esplanade, proposed in the 1929 plan, increased after World War II. In 1946 the Metropolitan District Commission was directed to prepare plans, estimates and specifications for the construction of a parkway along the Storrow Memorial Embankment from Embankment Road to Soldiers Field Road. Two years later, the Metropolitan Area Highway Plan was completed, with the new parkway (later named Storrow Drive) as an important component. There was strong legislative opposition to construction of a parkway along the Esplanade but ultimately the bill passed. The intent was that most of the road was to be below the grade of the Esplanade and that new parkland was to be created using the fill from the road. Ironically, the new road was named James J. Storrow Memorial Drive, which many observers felt was particularly inappropriate given the Storrow family's history of interest in creating parkland along the Back Bay and Helen Storrow's earlier opposition to the road.

The new highway was located immediately north of Back Street on the 100' strip of filled land that had been created between 1907 and 1909. Near Berkeley Street a tunnel was constructed so that land did not have to be taken from the popular Music Oval. The project was massive in scale and disrupted the entire Esplanade for several years.



Figure 4.1 – This 1951 view shows construction of the Storrow Drive Tunnel with fill from the tunnel used to create additional parkland. (from Mapping Boston)

