

5Q: Cliff Wood

Executive director, Downtown Providence Parks Conservancy



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1 Over the past several months, work has been taking place at Kennedy Plaza. Can you describe some improvements?

In Kennedy Plaza several internal lanes of traffic have been removed, creating a true plaza in the center of the city with trees, improved passenger amenities, and new space for public art, programming and performances. In Burnside Park the conservancy is administering a \$395,000 grant to repair infrastructure, update and expand electrical systems, create ADA-accessible passage through the space to the plaza, improve and increase lighting, enhance landscaping and refurbish the Gen. Burnside monument.

2 What is the importance of parks in the urban setting?

The economic and cultural benefits of good, well-maintained and programmed public spaces are widely documented. Real estate values increase. Development becomes more attractive. Culturally, the spaces become an amenity for people living and working in the area, and public safety is improved by the positive activity.

3 What are some of the transportation improvements made at Kennedy Plaza and how has the commuting experience improved?

Several traffic lanes have been removed from the plaza, making it a more pedestrian and mixed-use-friendly environment. Riders have improved ways to buy tickets and track buses, bus shelters have been expanded and improved, and we now have the beauty and shade of new trees. ... There is a renewed commitment to cleanliness and safety in the plaza and the programming ... in Burnside Park offers opportunities for recreation, reading for the kids, lunch at a local food truck, listening to music and more.

4 WiFi is now available in the park for Cox customers. Are there any plans to make wireless available to all visitors?

We are enjoying the generous contribution made to the project by Cox Communications and are always open to new ways to bring amenities to our parks and public spaces.

5 What is coming up in the next year?

Critical to our future success will be building the planned additional RIPTA hubs at the Amtrak station and near the Garrahy courthouse. This will improve rider experience and open up the space of the plaza for multiple, concurrent public uses. •