

## ***Fairmont Corridor Bridges Aesthetic Design***

**PROJECT TEAM:** Cesar Vergara, National Principal Design, Jacobs (2003-2009)  
MBTA Engineering, Design and Construction  
Edwards & Kelcey (Boston) *Now part of Jacobs*

**CLIENT:** MBTA

**COMPLETION DATE:** 2008

The Fairmont corridor rail line was built during the 1800's at street level through Boston's Dorchester section. At the turn of the last century, the rail line was elevated onto bridges over Massachusetts Avenue and Columbia Road. The low clearances of the bridges added to their overwhelming character within the neighborhoods and after 100 years their steel structures had rusted, further aggravating their appearance.

When the bridges were determined to be beyond repair, MBTA engaged CESAR VERGARA, then at Jacobs, to assist in the project with a simple mission: Create a highly aesthetic set of bridges without increasing the project cost or delaying its schedule. Working directly with the Edwards & Kelcey and MBTA engineering teams, Mr. Vergara explored how a more exciting aesthetic might be accomplished. The structures' clearance, only 17 feet above ground, added to their immediacy in the neighborhood and was a major consideration in the design process.

Without affecting the structural qualities of the bridges, CESAR VERGARA's design transformed the web structure stiffeners into decorative elements. The rhythmic continuity of their curved shapes, enhanced by a longitudinal curve of the span, combine to make the bridges truly sculptural. The new bridge seats were built behind the abutments, enabling the original stark granite abutments to be cleaned, repaired and conserved as retention wall. This design element provided both savings and an understated visual link to the past. The bridge piers are of a simple design that does not compete with the structure. Together with the re-alignment of the piers, the bridges have been a very welcome and long overdue improvement in the South Boston cityscape.

