



BOSTON COMMON

MASTER PLAN

FROM: Boston Common Master Plan Team

DATE: September 24th, 2020

SUBJECT: Open House #3 - Discussion Forum #2 Summary Notes: Visitor Activities and Play

Panelists: Liza Meyer, *Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD)*
Liz Vizza, *Friends of the Public Garden (FOPG)*
Gene Bolinger, *Weston & Sampson (W&S)*

This Discussion Forum consisted of a brief panelist introduction followed by a summary with supporting slides of proposed concept areas including the Frog Pond and Visitor Information Center.

Frog Pond

- **Attendee:** The splash pad concept is beautiful and a great way to use all the extra space. About 10 years ago there was a nice restaurant over the water, but it did not last long.
- **Attendee:** I like the multi-use area where the sprays shoot up but perhaps the space could be more activated than just by moveable chairs.
 - **Panelist:** Right, tables are just one example of use. As a large paved footprint, it will be able to support all different types of program activities that require that sort of space which will relieve pressure from other areas. We view it as very multi-purpose use area.
- **Attendee:** The concept of the Carousel is nice, but it is hokey and lacks permanence. Other parks have invested in a more permanent, year-round attraction. Its current location is too much of a focal point. There are also too many cars associated with the Carousel. The trucks driving through the Common twice a day is also too much.
 - **Panelist:** As part of this effort we are thinking about design and management solutions for vehicles on the Common.

Visitor Information Center

- **Attendee:** The proposal for the Visitor Information Center is a great idea. Currently no one knows that it is a Visitor Information Center. Expanding out the back and into the park makes sense. Opening the back encourages visitors to move into the Common rather than just congregate along Tremont Street. It is not just opening the back either, it is a great connection to Mayor's walk.
 - **Panelist:** There is also the possibility of moving the Rangers and making the VIC more focused on visitors.

Site Amenities for Visitors (i.e. Bathrooms, Wayfinding)

- **Attendee:** I want to advocate for 24-hour access to bathrooms on the Common. How can we get the porta potties back out to the Common? The City of Cambridge has been managing porta potties during COVID. It is a pressing 24-hour need, so we should be able to do this in the city of Boston.



- **Panelist:** We will do everything we can to increase restroom facilities. Security is an issue especially with COVID right now. The Friends were disappointed that the temporary restrooms could not happen this year because of Coronavirus. Perhaps City Hall Plaza is a location where we can place them sooner because has more 24-hour surveillance there.
- **Panelist:** Prompting that the Common tends to be a place people move through but there are not many places to see and visit within the Common. There are interior paths in the Common and we can promote people staying a little longer. How can we encourage visitors to take a tour inside the park? Is it an app? Wayfinding?
 - **Attendee:** Is there a wayfinding plan? Lighting and wayfinding could be incorporated to tell people what is in the Common for them to experience. How do you find the Bandstand if you come up from a Garage or are coming up from the T? People just do not know where they are when they emerge on the Common.
 - **Attendee:** Perhaps an art project could be part of this Wayfinding program/installation.
 - **Attendee:** We need educational things at the Visitor Information Center. Yes to maps, but information related to history should also be there.
 - **Attendee:** Maps are great, but we also need hand outs in the VIC. A wayfinding program is certainly important on the Common. The Kiosks out there today are successful, but there could be more! Adding names to the pathways goes along with this program too.

- End of Discussion Forum #2 Summary Notes -