

**Walnut Park Play Area and Crawford Street Playground
Community Meeting #2
Meeting Held Over Zoom on July 20, 2021 at 6:00 pm**

Attendees:

Lauren Bryant, Project Manager, Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BRPD);
Megan Tomkins, Principal, CBA Landscape Architects (CBA);
Jocelyn Wolff, Landscape Designer, CBA Landscape Architects (CBA);
Jessica Choi, Landscape Designer, CBA Landscape Architects (CBA);
Various Community Members.

Presenters:

Lauren Bryant:

- Introduced the meeting and provided a brief overview of the project goals, schedule, and funding allocated for the Walnut Park and Crawford Street Playground renovations.

Megan Tomkins:

- Presented a summary of the first community meeting including: site context, site analysis, and community feedback from the first meeting.

Jocelyn Wolff:

- Presented two schematic design plans for Walnut Park with accompanying precedent images.

Jessica Choi:

- Presented two schematic design plans for Crawford Street Playground with accompanying precedent images.

Community Feedback:

Below is a summary of the questions and comments brought up for discussion during the meeting, organized by park and topic:

Walnut Park:

New Programs and Features:

- Add a path (possibly with a theme or with educational motifs) for children along the perimeter of the park. Path could also be used by caregivers for walking a loop.
- Community members supported the installation of a shade structure because it would make the site more comfortable for gatherings.
- A community member who is / was a teacher requested the use of bright colors to spark

children's imaginations.

- A request was made to maintain an entrance onto Walnut Park (side street).

Play Features:

- Community members preferred the schematic design that kept the Ages 2-5 and 5-12 separate and included dish and belt swings.
- Play sculptures with rope and net play and ADA complaint play features were positively received.

Splash Pad:

- Community members inquired about the proposed splash pad paving. In the past BPRD has used bituminous concrete (asphalt) for splash pads because of its durability. However, BPRD is currently transitioning to using concrete pavement at new / renovated splash pads because it contributes to the urban heat island effect less than asphalt paving.
- Flush spray features were preferred over sculptural spray features. Concerns were raised over sculptural spray features being more easily damaged or vandalized.
- BPRD, CBA, and Community Members discussed creating a theme within the park that could extend to a splash pad motif.
- Flush spray features with varied spray patterns, directions, and sizes were discussed.

Crawford Street Playground:

Circulation:

- One of the overarching design goals for the Crawford Street Playground renovation is to make the pathways ADA compliant. Currently, most of the pathways on the site have a section of path that is non-conforming (too steep). CBA and BPRD intend to make the paths universally accessible through the installation of inclined walks and ramps as needed.
- Lighting: a resident expressed interest in installing recessed / flush lighting into site features such as pavement. BPRD explained that recessed lighting is not used in parks due to maintenance issues. However, pedestrian scale pole lighting throughout the park would be explored in the next iteration of design plans.
- Accessible conditions at entrances, such as ramps / no stairs, was requested.
- A community member brought up that the only park entrance from Walnut Avenue abuts the neighboring apartment building's dumpster area. They asked if the dumpster could be moved or screened.

New Programs and Features:

- Schematic Plan B had an overlook gathering space in the center of the park containing a splash pad, seating, and pergola. The community members reacted favorably to the pergola and an overlook gathering space that establishes a connection to the little league field and playground.
- The existing retaining wall along Walnut Avenue is in poor shape and provides shelter to



rats. A resident asked if this wall or its material could be changed.

- A resident suggested including custom benches that could be labeled with the park's name or other identifying/place-making features.

Play Features:

- Community members reacted favorably to play features that incorporate the site topography (the elevation change of the existing hill).
- Two potential locations for a splash pad were shown in the schematic options: one near the playground and one removed from the playground and located at a gathering space. The community preferred the splash pad and playground to be closer together, so children could play between the two.
- A playground location setback from Crawford Street was preferred.
- A large / tall 5-12 Play Structure with climbing features was requested.
- Musical instruments and other episodic play features that sparked children's imagination was favorably received.

Adult Exercise Equipment:

- Two types of exercise equipment were shown: a large single structure with several functions, and multiple individual stations. Multiple individual station were preferred so people don't need to be too close to each other while exercising.
- The community preferred exercise equipment location to be either closer to the little league field (instead of only near the playground) or separated throughout the site to create a circuit.

General Project Questions and Overarching Requests for both Parks:

- Concerns were raised over maintenance for the renovated parks. BPRD noted that their maintenance department maintains the parks. Lauren at BPRD noted that if a park needs maintenance or repairs, park users should contact 311 (either by phone or via the app), and that 311 will document and track all issues/requests.
- A resident expressed interest in sensory / tactile play equipment or panels on play structures.
- A request was made for community art to be integrated at both parks, either by Ellis School students or local artists. Art created by local artists would trigger the involvement of the Boston Art Commission and is not within the scope of this park renovation project. However, BPRD and CBA expressed interest in getting the Ellis School students involved in the design process and that students could potentially contribute to the development of a creative park feature, once school is back in session in September.

END OF NOTES

Prepared by Jocelyn Wolff, CBA Landscape Architects LLC, 07/21/2021.

