



Community Meeting Notes

Meeting Number: 2
Project: BBF Pathways
Date: January 10, 2023
Attending: Lauren Bryant (BPRD)
Christine Brandao (BPRD)
Elena Saporta
Mike Doucette (KZLA)
Kyle Zick (KZLA)
30+ public community members

Below is a summary of comments received during the meeting.

1. Reporting from the Fenway News
2. For inventory, believe there is a monument to the composer of America the Beautiful on Agassiz Road.
3. Is the Fire Dept land City of Boston?
4. When did you assess the lighting? The lights along the Victory Garden and O'Reilly Memorial were recently replaced with extremely bright LED lighting.
 - a. Inventory was completed this summer, and the lights along the Victory Garden walkway were no working at the time. We can update this to reflect anything that has changed.
5. At the end of the presentation could we see the slide with the site furnishings map again?
 - a. Yes, we can look at that slide again.
6. What about a connection to Boylston Street? There doesn't seem to be any proposed bike paths on that side?
7. Identifying myself as an organizer with the Boston Cyclists Union. Happy to chat anytime about bike stuff if it's ever helpful!
8. Some of the lights in the Victory Garden aren't working again. Last two closest to the river.
 - a. Hi! I work for Councilor Kenzie Bok, we are working with the Street Lighting Division to get these lights repaired in the Fenway Victory Gardens
9. There's a great deal of foot/bike traffic at the Forsyth Road bridge and always will be - think Red Sox, Target, Star Mkt, etc. (and vice versa to Symphony Hall, Whole Foods, etc.) A wider Evans Way bridge won't, I think, reduce the Forsyth traffic. A wider bridge would be useful.
 - a. Glad for the comment, follow up with DCR/BTD how that connection could be made
10. I find the replacement LED lighting unpleasantly (even blindingly) garish.
11. Some of the park benches along the Fenway are sunk deeply into the soil (almost to the ground).
12. Please be aware in your planning: MassDOT is expected to propose a new shared-use bike/ped connection along the west side of the Bowker Overpass. That will connect directly to the Esplanade and Paul Dudley White bike path via Charlesgate Park.

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- a. Thank you. We have been hearing about that during our DCR meetings. It is important to make sure all of these different efforts are being coordinated so I appreciate you bringing this up.
- 13. Picnic table proposed in the Victory Garden may be in conflict with compost location. Could it move to other side of path closer to river?
 - a. Thank you for the comment on the conflict with the compost, we will make sure to work with the Victory Gardens to coordinate any site furnishing locations.
- 14. I don't know if it's appropriate to put this in the chat, but there were some activities taking place on existing furniture in the FGS that caused the furnishings to be removed. I think talking with BPD might be a good idea in assessing planning there.
 - a. Thank you, I appreciate the heads up. We didn't add BPD and the rangers to our list of people we are coordinating with, but we are setting up meetings with them now. This history will be good to talk through with them.
- 15. That spot used to have beautiful forsythia that were cut to the ground and died. (in response to vegetation management comments).
- 16. When is the Army Corps work wrapping up?
 - a. When we met with them, they shared that they will be opening sections on a rolling basis with the later sections possibly being opened in 2024
- 17. Restoring this bridge would be an act of racial/ethnic justice.
- 18. Is there any barrier as to why this bridge would not be built to largest capacity possible? This is a huge corridor connection to/ through the park... The Boylston Street side is DCR right? This is a huge connection from current and growing Fenway commercial corridor to downtown as well as over to the Longwood Medical and points south/ east via the SWC.
 - a. Width and capacity of Evans Way Bridge? Great point, something we need some feedback on. dedicated pedestrian or multi-use, likely not to accommodate maintenance or emergency vehicles, etc.
- 19. Open Space plan for BBF, what updated numbers will be, low ratio of open space per residences, about half of the norm. Park system in the resource to enjoy passive, stroll, jogging, Not a lot of choices; primary concern – with traffic becoming a corridor for bike travel. Bike path on DCR Parkways, Connection from East to West. Boylston St. bridge used heavily by walkers. Have concerns who look to park if it changes due to bike. Work with DCR for bike traffic to work this out.
- 20. Stonedust paths – any talk of stabilized materials for use?
- 21. So excited for Evans Way Bridge - #16, footbridge number 2, 4' wide, passive ped use is a very important part of how this park is experienced. Narrower bridges are important. Access to bridge, steep grade/slope that people slide down. Could you talk more about the slope? If we think of all bridges together, coordinating uses for ex crosswalks, traffic signals, future btd bike plans for roadways, that will help form a background on planning. Reassurance that there are more than 3 meetings? This project deserves more than 3.
 - a. Absolutely, this project will have more than 3
 - b. Comment about footbridge is important. Biggest challenge in terms of accessibility. During site walk, this area was pointed out particularly, sight lines, slope, etc. This area will be studied, coordinate with DCR.

22. Additional bike racks in the basketball court /Clemente areas would be valuable. Community members coming to the field often leave their bikes lying on the bleachers or ground, posing multiple risks.
23. Bridges are the greatest character defining feature for the park here. A nod to the historic character per Shurcliff design would be most fitting here. Would prefer that the bridge reflect a similar post and beam structural design.
24. Importantly to distinguish, obligated to provide transportation to or through the park? Major pathway between Forsyth and Jersey, is used by students. Bike riders need to be careful, they general go slow going across the bridge. Not sure we have an obligation to provide access thru, but to protect people in the park. People can absorb and enjoy the park. Area between 15/16 is only quiet area in the park. When bridge is built, can't see the need to speed people along the interior. Outer path, asphalt path instead of stonedust. Need to preserve the area to be a quiet passive place within the park. As much as we can, halt active encouragement thru the park, not used as a demand path.
25. Just quickly want to share re: bikes, I showed up to this meeting tonight because a lot of people who live in Fenway asked if would since they are excited about the possibility of being able to more easily bike in their home neighborhood! If anyone has questions about anything bike related please be in touch with me.
26. Maybe there is a way to get our state representatives to move parkway bicycle infrastructure development forward.
27. Another DCR coordination would be to have DCR consistently put up pedestrian signage crossing at all of the Park Drive and Fenway pedestrian crossings. Some have signage and some do not (and some have non-standard Ped-Xing signage.)
28. Is there any way we could see what the DCR's bikeway plan looks like?
29. Master plan with Fenway section here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcr-parkways-master-plan-2020/download>
30. Agassiz Road conceptual plan here: <https://fenwaycivic.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/conceptual-design-report-3-2012.pdf>
31. Echo statements that Freddie just said, passive space so precious. Agree make progress with city to get them on the roadways. Slow the traffic with bike use. Old bridge photos, old Shurcliff design , size keep to minimum to keep it pedestrian traffic. Bike rides respect the pedestrian traffic. Furniture, kept natural areas would add to the passivity, meadow, public garden, no tables in open areas. Bike racks to entries
32. Not sure I'm going to get to speak live, so putting some comments here that I hope get captured: I got to take a tour of the Fens in the spring during the Olmsted bicentennial conference with Karen Mauney-Brodek from the Emerald Necklace Conservancy that was very insightful. One of the things we noticed was that historic remnant are everywhere, even along the curbing along one of the paths just upstream of the Boylston Bridge. I'm sure you're considering this, but I hope your inventory items include those remnant elements so that you can protect them and not wipe them out or cover them up with planned improvements.
33. Thanks for expanding the project. These areas are important. Open space, meadow is nice, personal experience, lower end of gardens, If Just grass – gathering area. That use may be used as a passive place for picnics. Phragmites leaving opens it up to new use.....Evans Way,

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encourage traffic calming to slow bike traffic – other development, hope to expand connection with the star market bike path, hope the city continues it. Worries about the bike path going through the park to save 60 seconds. Park is designed to be a passive park, bollards could work at the ends of the bridge. Bike to perimeter would be great.

34. That's a good point, and I don't see it done too well around town that reminds bicyclists the need to go slow around slower moving traffic like pedestrians and strollers. But also at the end of the day, people are going to pick the routes they want, so signage/ design could go a long way in protecting pedestrians from this. I'm thinking of students, LMA bound folks, Fenway games/ concerts foot traffic....etc...
35. Also, regarding bikes, one of the aspects of all the Emerald Necklace parks is that they are heavily used by joggers and walkers, so the more you put bikes and walkers/joggers together it's a recipe for trouble. That is all the more so with the growing use of e-bikes, which are high-speed. I hope that there are plans in the works to develop protected bike lanes on the routes like the Fenway, Riverway, Jamaicaway, etc. because as other commenters mentioned, through-bikes can use those safely and still have a ride in a beautiful environment. As you all know, a signature of Olmsted parks was the "separation of ways" to keep different types and speeds of uses from conflicting with each other. Multi-use paths are great, but perhaps not something to create intentionally in this environment.
36. I have biked and walked across and along the Fenway for decades, I think that the Forsyth to Jersey path is always going to have to accommodate groups of pedestrians as well as the occasional bicyclist. As a serious amateur trail planner, I think that every pedestrian path needs to be at least 10 feet wide (and preferably 12) to allow two couples to pass holding hands. this also allows bicyclists to pass pedestrians without having to ride on the grass of force pedestrians onto the grass. The Forsyth St. bridge doesn't really allow two pedestrians going in opposite directions to pass, and it should to be useful to bikes as a corridor, the "bike"/multi-use trail along the Fenway needs to be better drained, which can only be accomplished, with the amount of foot, let alone bike traffic it get, with pavement.
37. Safe bike infrastructure along the perimeter would attract a lot of the Fenway bike users. Most bicyclists just want to be safe.
38. Perimeter use versus cutting through the park is what I'm advocating for.
39. As for the bridges, another commenter noted how the bridges are signature elements of this landscape. Last spring, after the tour with Karen Mauney-Brodek, I walked the entire necklace all the way to Jamaica Pond and noted how the bridges along the way gave so much consistency to the landscape, adding an important "sense of place." Almost all of them took design cues from Richardson's Boylston bridge, with the arch and the face-sawn Cape Ann granite. I believe most of them were designed by Richardson's successor firm. I mention this because the more recent bridges, like those designed by Shurcliff and Carol Johnson & Associates, are frankly poor substitutes and feel incoherent. This is such a very special place, and one of the most important landscapes created by not only Olmsted, but Olmsted in partnership with Richardson, so when it comes to new bridges or replacing more recent bridges you should really consider finding ways to use historic design elements even if it takes very careful design & fabrication.
40. Whole EN is recreational users. People ride the park not to go places but to view the EN. Castle Island to Blue Hills, For bikes it is a destination place to go. Walking for transportation,

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pathways need to be wide enough that 2 people can walk together and pass another group of 2. Minimum of 10-12' paths to not constantly get out the way.

41. Agree to incorporation of meadows and low glades along the river. Increase biodiversity and aid maintenance and invasive management through seasonal mowing.
42. The park and its adjacent parkways were designed for recreational transportation as well as passive use, and the Emerald Necklace still serves bicyclists, as today's urban equestrians, as a transportation corridor.
43. Flag areas for more attention; 1. #11 Mother's Rest, how to protect trees and restore the soil, any more attention to that area would be great. #2 More coordinate with DCR the better. #3 Charlesgate and north area of BBF.
44. A final comment on bridge design: Above all, no modernist designs should be considered. I realize that fitting new projects into heritage buildings and landscapes can be tricky because the current preservation thinking is to build new things that are architecturally distinct from what exists, and not to build new things that could give the appearance of being historic features. But in this case, I think that using historic design precedents and materials needs to be paramount.
45. ENC has a program to take care of that area. But it was abandoned about 19 years ago. I think it is still or should be on the ENC's plate.
 - a. Hi, I do not personally know of this plan, but I will look into it and would be happy to connect about it! It is my understanding that BPRD conducts routine maintenance here, but I'm happy to explore how the ENC can fill in
46. Evans Bridge – Environmental Justice to restore that. Raised pathways terminates oddly at the BBALL court. Wonderful if this more naturally connected. VG- path along the river, east virtually not passible. Justice issue, this will be a premier area with ACOE work. Lighting – bright isn't always the best. New LED lights are blinding, less safe. Environmental quality and safety. Fenway Dog Park? Any life in discussion?
 - a. ACOE project will impact water levels and flooding.
 - b. Lighting – parks close at night. Light for safety, not for use.
 - c. Dog Park – first time it has been brought up at a meeting for this project.
47. The beautiful specimen Ash tree needs help soon. It is beginning to suffer and become diminished. Send Norm Helie to look at it and treat if he advises. There are also dead/diseased limbs on it needing to be removed.
 - a. We (Emerald Necklace Conservancy) have been treating that tree to help prevent emerald ash borer infestations, but I will look into its condition and connect with Norm as well.
48. I believe a dog park is an element of current Charlesgate concepts.
49. The path around the gardens is used by emergency vehicles, BPRD trash vehicles, police, and arborists. They have gotten stuck delivering wood chips.
50. #8 icon, pathways was redone about 6-8 years ago. Still floods, grading issues.
 - a. We don't want to leave puddles on paths, as a part of this project.
51. Process – next meeting February 16. Many subtopics, shrub/trees – will there be any tree loss? People would be interested in talking about more. Keep in mind. Outreach, didn't see it on the City website or Parks, how are you getting the word out?
 - a. posted on both websites.



52. As a walker and biker, I feel horribly guilty going off path to avoid a muddy puddle, so thank you for addressing this
53. We want to new Charlesgate/Bowker bridge to be so attractive and appealing to use that it will integrate our two neighborhoods seamlessly.
54. I got the meeting announcement in many different ways, and from multiple folks. FCA sent it out to all its members.
55. I'd like to add one comment the crosswalk near #5. Cars really don't slow down here and it's hard to cross safely. It would be great to have a crossing light, or at least a flashing yield sign there.
56. Walk through the Necklace to Fairsted from BBF. Observations – how many users were jogging. Bikes – find a way to go where they want. Give many safe alternatives, protected bike lanes along the roads. Consistent design was from Fens to JP with bridges. New bridges have to keep an eye on that as a paramount. Furnishings are easy to default. This landscape is worth a specially commissioned design.
57. Please join the MassDOT “Bowker” public meetings and help us advocate for a greener, wider, better connection.
58. Is there a way to upgrade our 50 gallon trash bins?
 - a. And locate them more equitably around the park?

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