

Make Connections & Activate Edges



FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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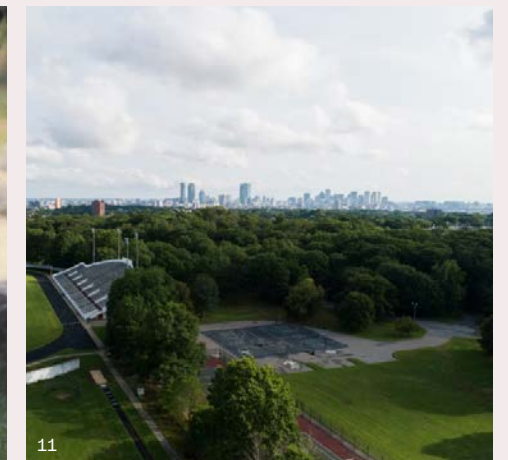
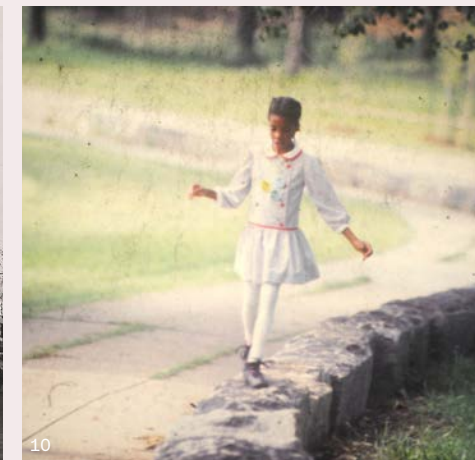
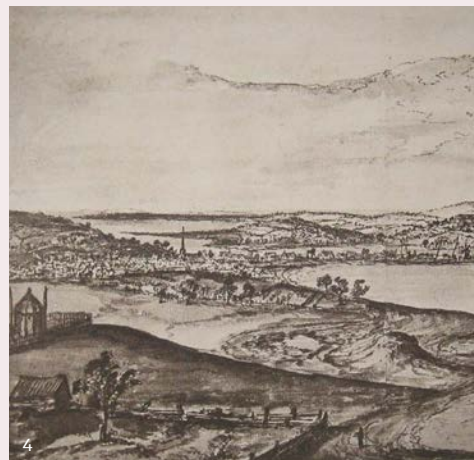
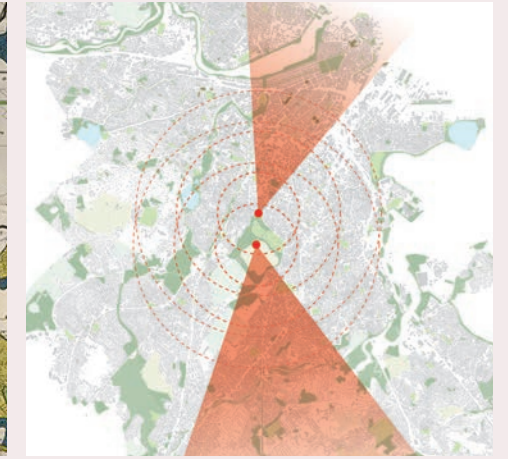
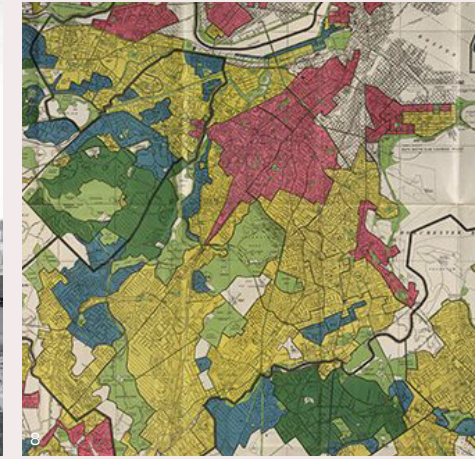
Recommendations

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A Short History of the Park's Context

Development Impacts Access



A CITY OF HILLS Early 1600s

Boston, the homelands of the Massachusetts Tribe, was situated at the end of the Shawmut Peninsula in the harbor, with the only land-based connection to the city being along the 'Boston Neck', a narrow spit of land extending from Roxbury. Roxbury's strategic location and natural resources were used for regional trade and agricultural purposes long before much of the surrounding floodplain was filled to facilitate expanding city development.

RURAL FARMS & ESTATES 1700s & 1800s

In 1875, the Park Act was passed, enabling Boston to obtain land for the West Roxbury Park (the initial name for Franklin Park). Despite opposition from landowners, in 1881, the city acquired enough land for park construction. At the time, the area was mostly comprised of small homesteads and farm roads with little urban development. Much of the soon to be park land and the surrounding areas had been cleared for agriculture and grazing. Boundaries between farms were likely marked with hedgerows or small orchards, and canopy cover was mostly restricted to rocky hills that were not suitable for farming.

IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES 1800s

During the 18th century, Roxbury grew to become a site of industry, including mills and tanneries. By the 1800s, a wide range of immigrant communities had established themselves in the surrounding areas, transforming small farms and estates to neighborhoods. In the late 1800s, construction on the park began. Key to the design was a perimeter field stone wall supported by canopy trees that defined its edge. This boundary created a separation between the respite of the park and a rapidly urbanizing city.

STREET CAR SUBURBS Early 1900s

Providing the convenience of commuting for those that wished to live outside the city center, the development and extension of trolley lines further fueled the growth and development of this area. This new era of travel shaped the park's perimeter roads, as they were widened and straightened to accommodate heavier and faster traffic. These changes increased the separation between the neighborhood and the park, making connections more distant and increasingly difficult.

PROTECTING THE PARK 1960s-1990s

By the 1970s, practices of redlining and block-busting resulted in active disinvestment in the now largely Black and brown neighborhoods surrounding the park and in the city's maintenance of the park itself. The park's planted edge, meant to create green separation from the city, became a wall of overgrown vegetation, contributing to a sense of the park being unsafe and making it even more difficult to access. New barriers within the park emerged as the community rallied to control car access, which had become unregulated throughout the park.

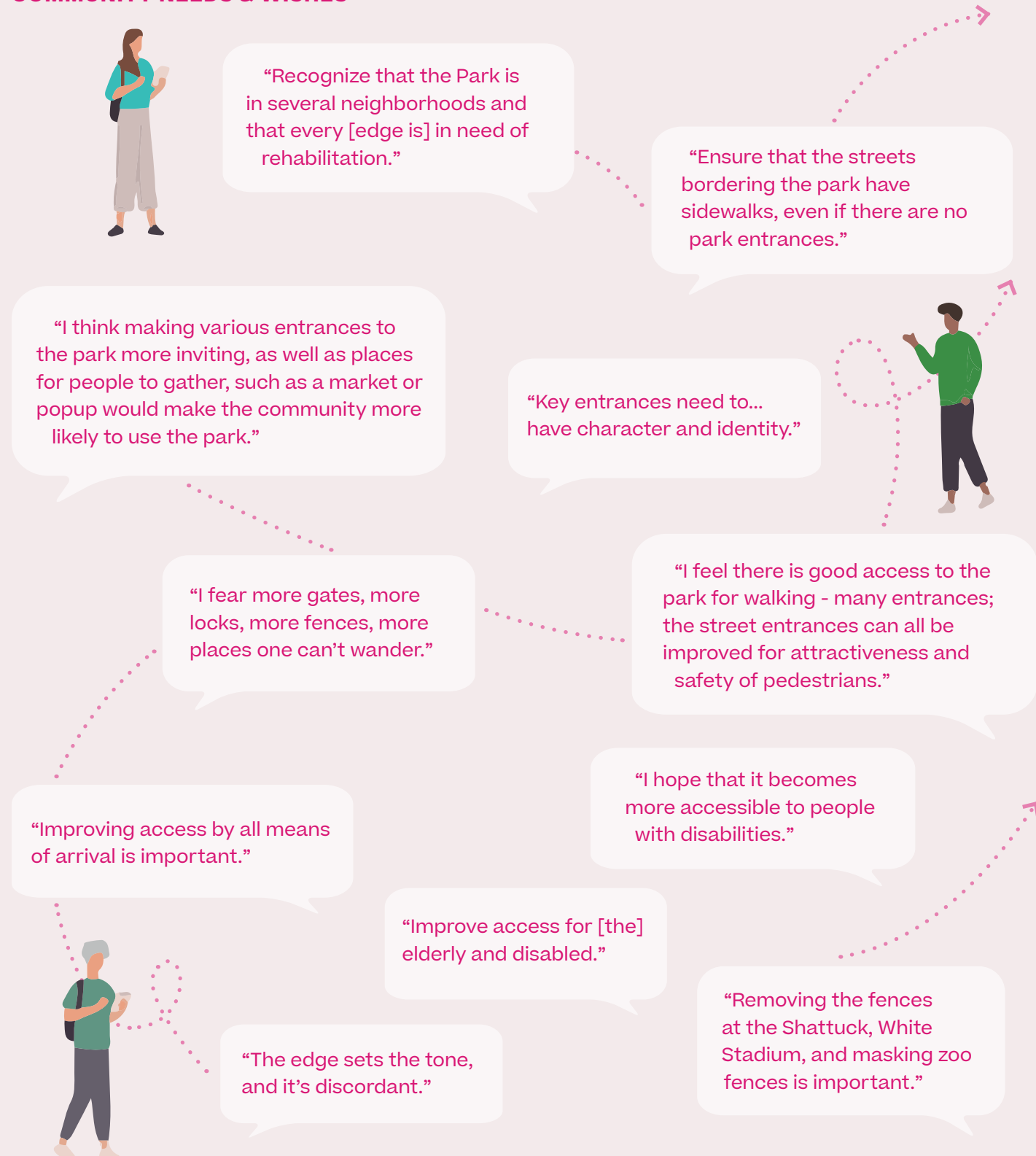
THE CENTER OF THE CITY Looking Forward

As Olmsted anticipated over 100 years ago, the city would eventually meet the park's edges as it does today, making Franklin Park the geographic center of Boston. Consistent care, lighting, and signage, and ensuring frequent and marked crosswalks to entrances will contribute to making a place that feels welcome to all.

What We Heard

Clarify Access & Welcome All

COMMUNITY NEEDS & WISHES



VALUES & GOALS



MAINTAIN THE EDGE

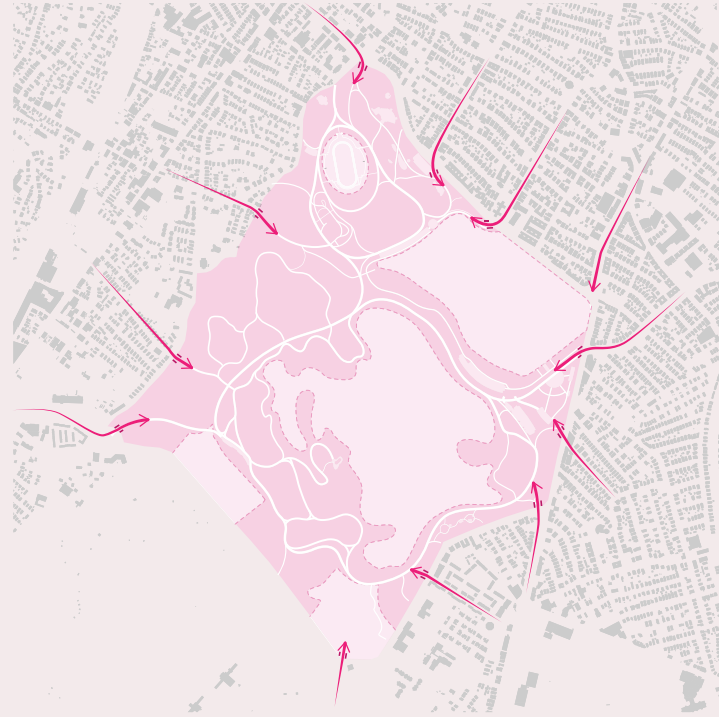
PROVIDE CLEAR ENTRANCES

BREAK DOWN INTERNAL EDGES

The Big Idea

Make Connections & Activate Edges

Olmsted intentionally structured the edge of the park to buffer an open interior from the working life of the city. Today, as neighborhoods have grown, traffic has intensified, and park vegetation has become overgrown. This separation can leave neighbors feeling unwelcome. By thinking more expansively about what constitutes the park's edge - from inside the park to the neighborhood across the street - improvements can be made that create better connections while maintaining the park's historic identity.

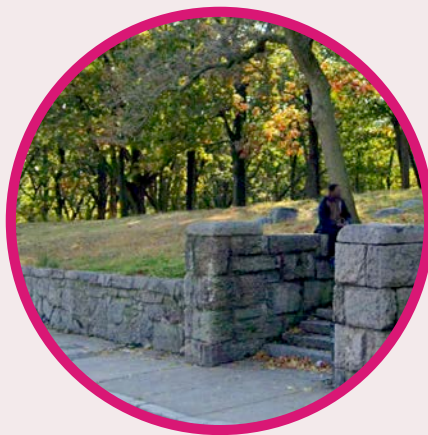


Sending a Welcoming Message

The park presents itself to the larger Boston community, and more importantly, the adjacent neighborhoods, through the reading of its perimeter. The historic fabric — puddingstone ledge rock, designed masonry, and mature canopy — must be respected, preserved, and made legible again. An elevated standard of care that includes better lighting and signage will allow the park to present a welcoming edge that invites all visitors in.



Puddingstone Ledge



Designed Masonry



Mature Canopy



Neighborhood Context

- Park Circulation & Context Streets
- Neighborhood Connections
- Perimeter Wall
- Puddingstone Rock Outcrops

Starting Outside the Park

The experience and approach to the park starts within the surrounding neighborhoods. The streets that bound the park must be considered as part of its design in order to build more robust physical connections to the diverse and active communities at its edges.

Olmsted's Toolkit

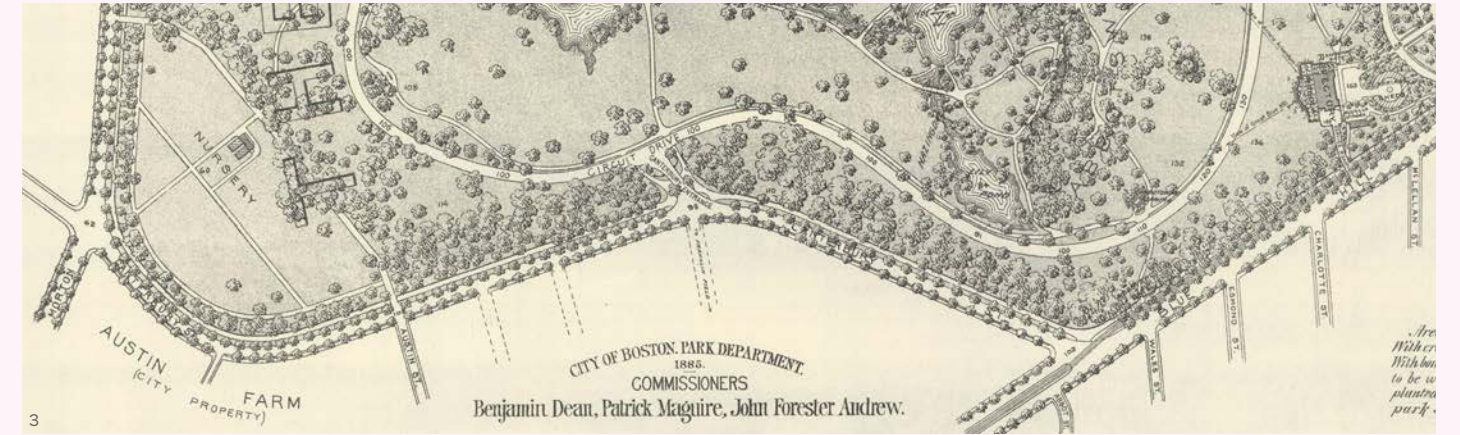
Define the Edge

The park's perimeter, or 'border lands' as they were termed in the general plan, were intentionally designed to form an inside/out condition between the park and its surroundings. This response to a quickly industrializing city and the park's immediate context of small farms made Franklin Park unique. The 'Country Park', reached by a lengthy carriage ride, landed city residents in a rural setting for the day. This sentiment was not naive though, as Olmsted recognized that eventually the city would grow to meet the park's edges. While the walled condition has created issues of access over time, it has also established a unifying element at the edge and, where working as intended, a welcome separation from the park's urban context. Olmsted's design for the scale, character, and frequency of entrances, and separation between modes of travel still serve the park well today, but there are opportunities to provide safer and more equal access to ensure all of the park's neighbors are welcomed.

A HELD PERIMETER

The Rural Edge

A low fieldstone wall, formed from material collected from the site, lines the perimeter of the park — either retaining grade, built into an exposed rock face, or free standing. Particular care was given to the cross section of the edge — with descriptions specifying to set back fences, protect mature trees and natural features in its layout, and to avoid excessive grading. The sidewalk and street were considered as part of the design, specifying sidewalk and road widths, street tree planting, and future transit connections. Views to the neighborhood were considered at entrances.



An enlargement of the American Legion 'borderlands' with future neighborhood street connections noted, from the General Plan for Franklin Park.



Original stone perimeter wall supported by canopy tree planting.



Original stone perimeter wall supported by canopy tree planting.



Trolley line running parallel to the park edge along Seaver Street, with mature canopy trees inside and outside the park.



Field stones uncovered during park construction were salvaged for the perimeter wall.



Parallel paths to separate modes of travel (pedestrian vs. carriage).

Welcome In Maintain the Edge

The historic park perimeter (including rock outcrops, stacked stone walls, and mature canopy trees) is a character defining feature and along most sides announces the park to its communities. Deferred maintenance has resulted in overgrowth and disrepair along certain edges that suggest a lack of care and can feel unwelcoming. Maintaining a consistent historic character while removing barriers (like dense and overgrown vegetation and fences) is critical to increasing comfortable and safe access to the park.

KEY CHALLENGES

- **Unsafe Roadway Crossings**
- **Inconsistent Sidewalks**
- **Dense Vegetation Obscuring Views In**
- **Unwelcoming Barriers**



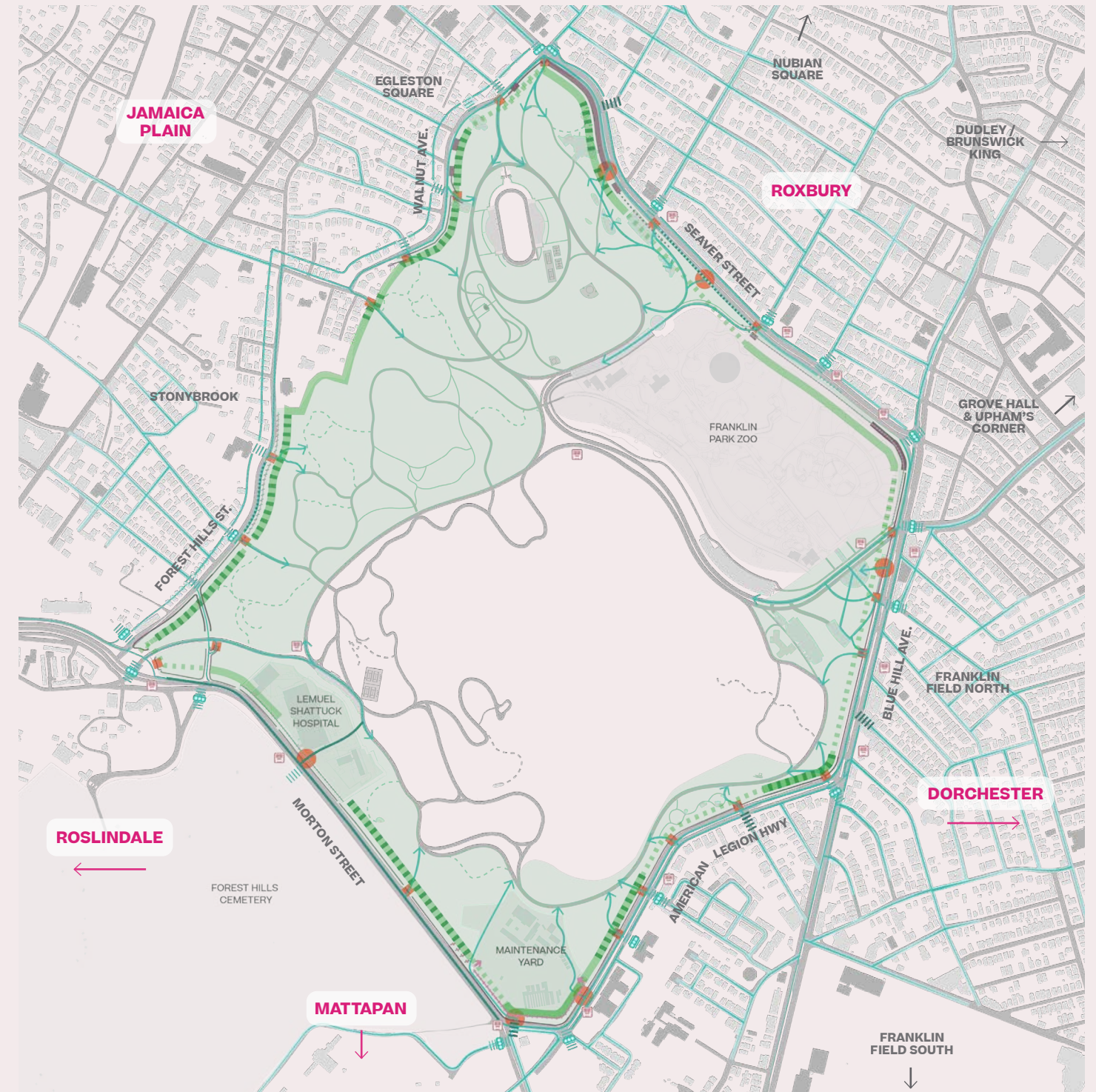
A narrow sidewalk along the Seaver Street edge, with high canopy and open views into the park beyond.



A park entrance along Sigourney Street.

PARK PERIMETER RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Support the Community by Making the Park an Advocate**
- **Increase Pedestrian Access on Seaver Street**
- **Make Places at the Edge on Blue Hill Avenue**
- **Improve Connections to Circuit Loop on American Legion Highway**
- **Make City-Wide Connections on Morton Street**
- **Remove Barriers on Forest Hills Street & Walnut Avenue**



Proposed Edge Treatments

Pedestrian Access from the Neighborhood	Existing Paved Edge	Existing Chain Link Fence
Proposed Crosswalk	Existing Bus Stop	Selective clearing of understory to increase porosity, 15'-20'
Existing Crosswalk	Existing Puddingstone Rock Ledge	Existing Dense Vegetation
Existing Signaled Crosswalk	Existing Stone Perimeter Wall	Existing High Canopy, Open Ground Plane
Proposed Sidewalk	Existing Granite Blocks & Boulders	Proposed Pedestrian Entrance
Sidewalk to be Widened or Repaired	Chain Link Fence to be Removed	Existing Pedestrian Entrance
Existing Sidewalk	Chain Link Fence to be Pushed Back	Neighborhood Institution (w/in a 10 min. walk of the park)



The Park Perimeter: How can the park provide safe and welcoming access to all?

- 1 Increase Porosity and Views**
Address overgrown vegetation, which obstructs views into the park and makes visitors feel uncomfortable, by selectively clearing understory to increase visual porosity.
- 2 Maintain Historic Masonry**
The perimeter walls and steps define much of the outer edge of the park. Their periodic repair and protection is necessary to maintain this historic feature.

- 3 Make Access Equitable & Welcoming**
Provide new entrances where park access is limited, and ensure that each edge has accessible ways in; support key entrances with signage and lighting.
- 4 Make the Sidewalk Comfortable***
Shade, lighting, and seating, including benches and covered bus stops, are all essential elements to making the sidewalk inhabitable. The city should strive for a full 12' sidewalk with tree canopy at the park perimeter.

- 5 Provide Safe Ways to Get to the Park***
Creating a welcoming approach to the park, starts beyond the edge itself. Frequent and signaled crosswalks, traffic calming measures, and designated bike lanes all facilitate safe movement between the park and its surrounding neighborhoods.
- 6 Connect with Neighborhood Resources**
Each edge of the park is bordered by institutions that play important roles within the adjacent communities. Whether that is educational, health and social services, religious centers, or focused on childhood development, opportunities exist to improve connections through better park access and programming.

**Indicates a recommendation that requires City departmental coordination and implementation that would be led by another City agency.*

Support the Community

Make the Park an Advocate

While the Parks Department jurisdiction ends at the park edge, the perception and experience of the park, safe ways to cross perimeter streets, and the park's ability to communicate a level of care does not end there. Collaboration with other City and State departments, in-park stakeholders, and neighborhood partners will be necessary to achieve goals that benefit both the park and its communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS BEYOND THE PARK EDGE

Prioritize Shade & Comfort

- Advocate for wider and continuous sidewalks where possible to provide space for pedestrians separated from the street. Understand impacts to park access or neighborhood businesses if parking is removed.
- Incorporate street tree planting in sidewalks to increase the urban canopy of surrounding neighborhoods.
- Provide street furnishings, including covered bus shelters and benches, to make comfortable, protected places to wait for transit or rest.



Advocate for street trees as improvements to perimeter streets are made.

Establish Improved Connections

- Make convenient connections to public transit, including bus and T; provide signage at nearby stops directing people to the park.
- Provide designated bike lanes on busy perimeter streets and connect to the city's network; provide bikeshare stations at key locations at the edge of the park (see Movement recommendations).
- Implement signaled crosswalks at a regular intervals aligned with key entrances.

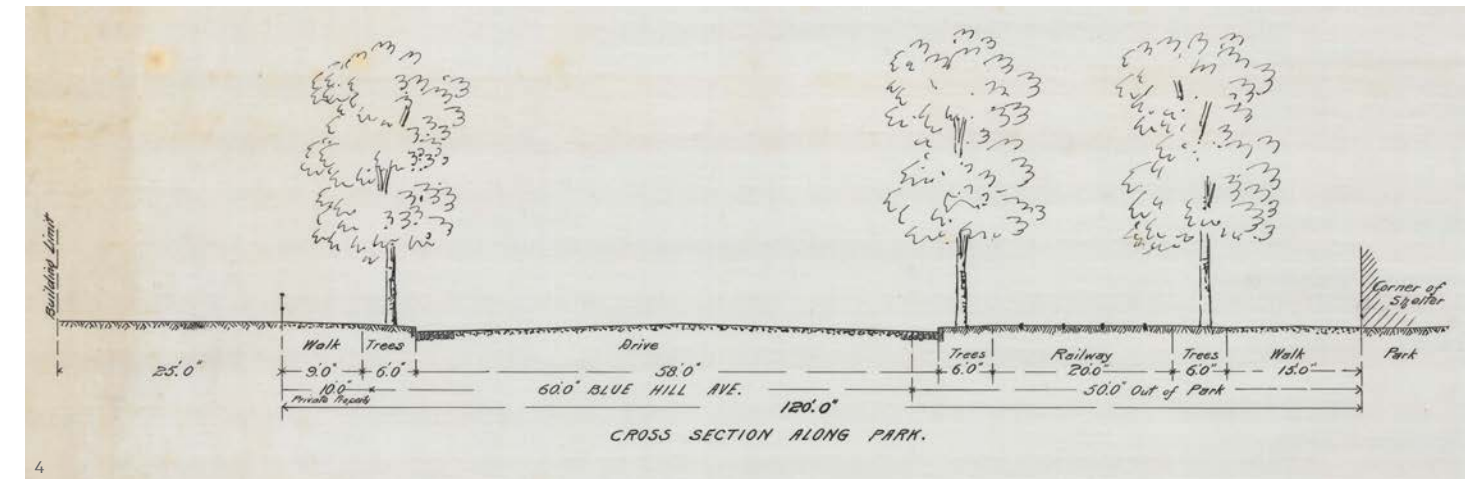


Raise positive awareness of the park through new banner signage on perimeter streets.

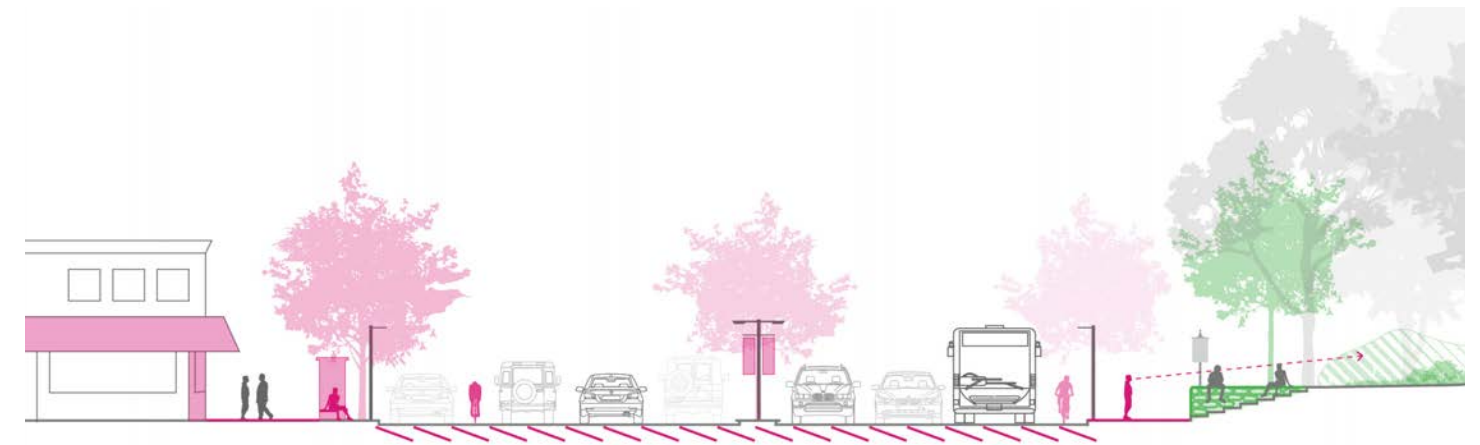
Pursue Partnerships & Invest in the Neighborhoods

- Offer a micro grant program for local businesses around the park for streetscape or storefront improvements, or for organizations to develop programming for the park.
- Support businesses by partnering to provide vending opportunities at events in the park.

BEYOND THE PARK EDGE



An Olmsted sketch suggesting scale and components of a widened Blue Hill Avenue, including separated modes of travel, generous sidewalks, and street tree planting, from park edge to the building limit across the street (1892).



← Neighborhood ----- Perimeter Street ----- Franklin Park ----->

A proposed cross section of a perimeter street recommending elements essential to safe and comfortable streets, including, street trees, bike lanes, signage, lighting, bus shelters, crosswalks, connectivity to transit and relationships with local businesses.



Street Tree Planting

The Boston Heat Resilience Plan states "major streets that link neighborhood destinations could be opportunities for more shade and cooling strategies, including shaded bus stops." Blue Hill Avenue and Columbia Road both had higher heat temperatures measured in their analysis.



Trees and parks have a cooling effect on their surrounding neighborhoods. Increasing tree planting and providing adequate soil volume along adjacent streets can produce healthy robust street trees that provide critical shade and reduce the heat island effect.

Increase Pedestrian Access Seaver Street

The Seaver Street edge is defined by its dramatic puddingstone outcrops. Tall ledge rock borders the sidewalk along much of this edge, providing some of the most dramatic views from the park out to the city. But from the neighborhood side, the rock becomes a wall, limiting points of access for the Roxbury community. New at-grade connections must be established to provide more ways into the park while existing entrances can be better supported by signage, lighting, shade planting, and marked crosswalks from the neighborhood.

SEAVER STREET RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase Access

- Create three new pedestrian entrances, and distinguish the existing Humboldt Avenue pedestrian entrance with new canopy trees that draw visitors in.
- Selectively clear understory vegetation along the park edge 15-20' in to increase porosity and views into the park.
- Work with the Boston Transportation Department to widen the sidewalk to increase accessibility; ensure crosswalks are properly aligned with entrances and sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate necessary street lights, etc.



The varied edge conditions along Seaver Street.

Potential Partners & Stakeholders

- Encourage the zoo to update the outward appearance of their fence along the perimeter of the park to provide a more welcoming face to the community.
- Work with the BTD to implement a new crosswalk.
- This edge of the park is supported by a number of religious institutions, and public resources, like libraries and public assistance centers. There are opportunities to reach out about how the park can be a shared resource.



Inspiration for friendly exterior zoo fence design.

Proposed Edge Treatments

*Indicates a recommendation that requires City departmental or Zoo coordination.

- Pedestrian Access from the Neighborhood
- ||||| Proposed Crosswalk
- ||||| Existing Crosswalk
- ||| Existing Signaled Crosswalk
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Sidewalk to be Widened or Repaired
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Paved Edge
- 🚏 Existing Bus Stop



- Existing Puddingstone Rock Ledge
- Existing Stone Perimeter Wall
- Existing Granite Blocks & Boulders
- Chain Link Fence to be Removed
- Chain Link Fence to be Pushed Back
- Existing Chain Link Fence
- Selective clearing of understory to increase porosity, 15'-20'
- Existing Dense Vegetation
- Existing High Canopy, Open Ground Plane
- Proposed Pedestrian Entrance
- Existing Pedestrian Entrance
- 1 Add a new pedestrian crossing at Harold St.*
- 2 Clear understory vegetation.
- 3 Add a new pedestrian entrance north of Park View Street at Long Crouch Woods; selectively clear or thin understory vegetation to improve views into the park and increase a sense of safety.
- 4 Widen the sidewalk to provide a continuous path along this edge and improve accessibility for a variety of users and abilities.*
- 5 Add a new pedestrian entrance and path at the existing steps.
- 6 If converted to a vehicular exit in the future, retain a complementary pedestrian entrance at Elm Hill Avenue as well.
- 7 Give the zoo fence a friendly outward face, and/or push back the fence to embed it within vegetation where possible.*

Make Places at the Edge

Blue Hill Avenue

A historic puddingstone perimeter wall elevates large, mature canopy trees along Blue Hill Avenue, creating a desirable separation from the street level and the city but results in a long stretch without a way into the park. The entrances that do exist at Peabody Circle are car dominated and unfriendly; the remaining stretch of the road lacks crosswalks, leaving much of the Dorchester neighborhood disconnected from the park. The opportunity exists to engage street life along this edge and improve safe crossings from curb to curb.

BLUE HILL AVENUE RECOMMENDATIONS

Make Connections

- Establish a new pedestrian entrance at Peabody Circle via the new 'front porch'; make some existing entrances pedestrian only as part of redesign of vehicular traffic.
- Address the degrading conditions at the former entrance to The Refectory; relocate utilities and fill in the 'pit' condition between the old Refectory Stairs by connecting entrance pillars with a field stone wall to match existing. Due to the extreme grade change along Blue Hill Avenue in this location, an accessible path would cut deep into the park and disturb the historic high point at the top of Refectory Hill, which can be reached by a new accessible path from Peabody Circle.
- Take advantage of the break in the median at Esmond Street and add a new cross walk to improve connectivity with the Dorchester neighborhood; ensure crosswalks are properly aligned with entrances and that sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate necessary infrastructure (street lights, etc.)



The puddingstone perimeter wall condition.



The existing condition between the old Refectory stairs.

Potential Partners & Stakeholders

- Continue to engage the Zoo, the Boston Transportation Department, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation to coordinate entrances and vehicular circulation at Peabody Circle; coordinate with the Boston Transportation Department on a new crosswalk.
- In addition to many local businesses, this side of the park is home to several schools, and neighborhood advocacy and social services organizations. A redesigned Peabody Circle and expanded park programming could offer additional opportunities for partnerships.

Proposed Edge Treatments

*Indicates a recommendation that requires City departmental coordination.

- Pedestrian Access from the Neighborhood
- ||||| Proposed Crosswalk
- ||||| Existing Crosswalk
- ||| Existing Signaled Crosswalk
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Sidewalk to be Widened or Repaired
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Paved Edge
- 🚌 Existing Bus Stop



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- Existing Granite Blocks & Boulders
- Chain Link Fence to be Removed
- Chain Link Fence to be Pushed Back
- Existing Chain Link Fence
- Selective clearing of understory to increase porosity, 15'-20'
- Existing Dense Vegetation
- Existing High Canopy, Open Ground Plane
- Proposed Pedestrian Entrance
- Existing Pedestrian Entrance
- 1 Maintain the primary vehicular entrance into the park with an associated but separated pedestrian entrance.
- 2 Add a new 'front porch' pedestrian entrance at Peabody Circle.
- 3 Add a dedicated pedestrian entrance at Glenway Street.
- 4 Support the existing Old Refectory entrance with new paths into the park; fill in the 'pit' which poses risks due to steep drop-offs today.
- 5 Add a new pedestrian crossing at Esmond Street to increase access from the Dorchester neighborhood across busy Blue Hill Avenue.*

Improve Connections to Circuit Loop American Legion Highway

A low historic puddingstone perimeter wall with tall, mature canopy with open understory beyond it provides scenic, open views far into the park. There are many entries along this edge that connect to the American Legion playground and popular Circuit Loop; however, pedestrian crosswalks could be improved for better access from the neighborhood.

AMERICAN LEGION HIGHWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritize Pedestrian Safety

- Establish a new pedestrian crossing at Angell Street; ensure crosswalks are properly aligned with entrances and that sidewalks are wide enough to navigate necessary infrastructure (street lights, etc.)
- Selectively clear understory vegetation to the north and south along the park edge 15'-20' in to increase porosity and views into the park.
- Provide ADA pedestrian connections through the maintenance yard that avoid conflicts with park operations to improve access for the Mattapan neighborhood.

Potential Partners & Stakeholders

- Support the ongoing work by the Boston Transportation Department to implement new crosswalks along American Legion Highway.
- Many schools and youth organizations sit adjacent to the American Legion Highway side of the park, suggesting cross-programming and educational opportunities for these groups.



1 The view through the edge to the center of the park.



2 The historic carriage entrance with granite boulders used to block car access.

Proposed Edge Treatments

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- Pedestrian Access from the Neighborhood
- Proposed Crosswalk
- Existing Crosswalk
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- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Paved Edge
- Existing Bus Stop



- Existing Puddingstone Rock Ledge
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- Existing Granite Blocks & Boulders
- Chain Link Fence to be Removed
- Chain Link Fence to be Pushed Back
- Existing Chain Link Fence
- Selective clearing of understory to increase porosity, 15'-20'
- Existing Dense Vegetation
- Existing High Canopy, Open Ground Plane
- Proposed Pedestrian Entrance
- Existing Pedestrian Entrance
- 1 Selectively clear understory vegetation to open views into the park at entrances.
- 2 Add a new crosswalk at Angell Street*
- 3 Update the granite blocks with a more appropriate edge treatment, provide a designated pedestrian crossing, and support the pedestrian entrance with canopy tree planting that matches character of the adjacent grove to embed the wide paving in the park.
- 4 Push the chain link fence on the perimeter wall at the maintenance yard further away from the street edge and remove all overgrown vegetation.
- 5 Add new pedestrian entrances and paths to increase park access from the Mattapan neighborhood.
- 6 Add a new crosswalk at the southernmost entrance. (Exact path alignments to be coordinated with the Maintenance Yard Master Plan; maintain separation between public pedestrian paths and critical maintenance operations for public safety).

Make City-Wide Connections

Morton Street

The Morton Street side of the park is the only side without a neighborhood directly adjacent. Non-public uses (the maintenance yard, the Shattuck Hospital campus, and the Pine Street Inn), fences, and overgrown vegetation reinforce the feeling of this edge as “back of house”, and the state highway’s fast traffic and lack of sidewalks discourages pedestrians and bikes. With a popular T-Stop nearby at Forest Hills and newly improved bike lanes along Arborway, the opportunity exists to improve connectivity and the appearance along this edge of the park.

MORTON STREET

Present an Open Edge

- Selectively clear understory vegetation along the park edge 15-20’ in to increase porosity and views into the park.
- Increase a visible connection into the operations of the maintenance yard by removing vines and overgrown vegetation along the chain link fence, and reducing fencing where possible.
- Establish new critical connections at bus stops into the park at the Shattuck Campus and the maintenance yard.
- Extend a sidewalk along the cemetery side of the road and create a new cross walk at the existing entrance into the park; ensure crosswalks are properly aligned with entrances and that sidewalks are wide enough to navigate necessary infrastructure (street lights, etc.)
- Advocate for the Shattuck Redevelopment to include connections through the campus to the park beyond.
- In the future, study extending separated bike lanes from the Forest Hills T-Stop.



1 The low historic puddingstone perimeter wall with a chain link fence and no sidewalk along Morton Street, a state highway.



2 A bus stop near the Shattuck Hospital bordered by a perimeter fence and overgrown vegetation.

Potential Partners & Stakeholders

- Engage the Boston Transportation Department and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to add new crossings, and Forest Hills Cemetery to collaborate on a public sidewalk along their edge; engage the Shattuck Campus at Morton Street to coordinate new pedestrian connections into the park.

Proposed Edge Treatments

*Indicates a recommendation that requires City departmental or State coordination.

- Pedestrian Access from the Neighborhood
- ||||| Proposed Crosswalk
- ||||| Existing Crosswalk
- ||| Existing Signaled Crosswalk
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Sidewalk to be Widened or Repaired
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- Existing Paved Edge
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- Chain Link Fence to be Removed
- Chain Link Fence to be Pushed Back
- Existing Chain Link Fence
- Selective clearing of understory to increase porosity, 15'-20'
- Existing Dense Vegetation
- Existing High Canopy, Open Ground Plane
- Proposed Pedestrian Entrance
- Existing Pedestrian Entrance
- 1 Remove vines on stone wall and thin understory vegetation to present a managed edge.
- 2 Remove the existing stone wall at the edge of Morton Street; install fieldstone piers set in line with the end of the historic wall to match its character and prevent vehicles from entering. Plant a loose grove of canopy trees along both sides of the path to support the scale of the historic carriage drive paving.
- 3 Transform the street section to extend the two-way bike lane and dedicated sidewalk from Arborway along the park side edge.*
- 4 Add a new entrance and path connection into the park along the hospital edge, near the bus stop, as part of the Shattuck Hospital redevelopment.*
- 5 Maintain and rebuild (where necessary) the continuous low puddingstone wall.
- 6 Reinstate the historic gates at the Forest Hills vehicular entrance.

Remove Barriers

Forest Hills Street & Walnut Avenue

The quiet neighborhood edge along Forest Hills Street has close access to The Wilderness, but dense vegetation at the park edge obscures some entrances. Inconsistent sidewalks at the park edge make crosswalks critical. Along Walnut Avenue dense vegetation and granite blocks at the sidewalk's edge separates visitors from White Stadium and the Playstead and beyond it. By removing unnecessary barriers, opening views through dense vegetation, and clarifying entry points, clearer access to a range of park amenities can be supported.

FOREST HILLS ST. & WALNUT AVENUE RECOMMENDATIONS

Remove Detractions & Barriers

- Selectively clear understory vegetation along the park edge 15-20' in to increase porosity and views into the park.
- Remove the chain link fence and maintain the historic perimeter wall along Forest Hills Street.
- Assess the current need for continuous vehicular controls along Walnut Avenue (granite blocks and bollards, which were once necessary to control vehicular access into the park), and pilot the removal of some sections. Where physical boundaries are deemed necessary, use materials more in keeping with the park palette and historic character.

Potential Partners & Stakeholders

- Engage the Boston Transportation Department to repair the sidewalk along Forest Hills Street, ensure crosswalks are properly aligned with entrances and that sidewalks are wide enough to navigate necessary infrastructure (street lights, etc.)
- This side of the park is also home to several schools and community health organizations. Adjacency to active recreation and nature study resources could be particularly vital connections.



Chain link fence along Williams Street.



Granite blocks and bollards near the School Street entrance along Walnut Avenue.

Proposed Edge Treatments

*indicates a recommendation that requires City departmental coordination.

- Pedestrian Access from the Neighborhood
- Proposed Crosswalk
- Existing Crosswalk
- Existing Signaled Crosswalk
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Sidewalk to be Widened or Repaired
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Paved Edge
- Existing Bus Stop



- Existing Puddingstone Rock Ledge
- Existing Stone Perimeter Wall
- Existing Granite Blocks & Boulders
- Chain Link Fence to be Removed
- Chain Link Fence to be Pushed Back
- Existing Chain Link Fence
- Selective clearing of understory to increase porosity, 15'-20'
- Existing Dense Vegetation
- Existing High Canopy, Open Ground Plane
- Proposed Pedestrian Entrance
- Existing Pedestrian Entrance
- 1 Maintain and rebuild, where necessary, the continuous low puddingstone wall. Thin understory vegetation to increase visibility.
- 2 Repair the crumbling paved edge.*
- 3 Replace the swing gate at the Glen Road entrance.
- 4 Remove all granite blocks and bollards along this edge. If barriers are still required, consider low-profile options that are in keeping with the historic character of the park.
- 5 Selectively clear understory vegetation to increase visibility.

Transform Barriers

Provide Clear Entrances

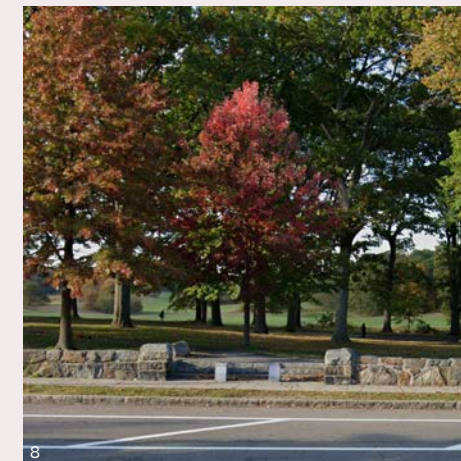
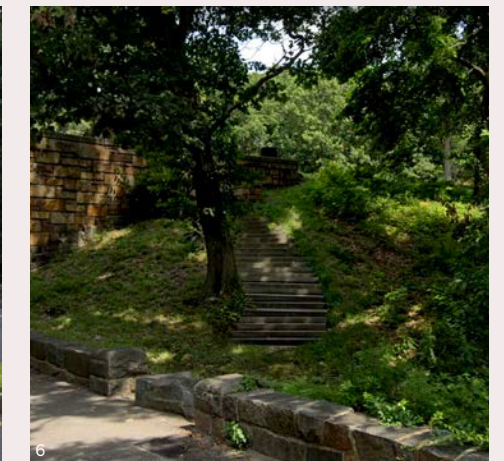
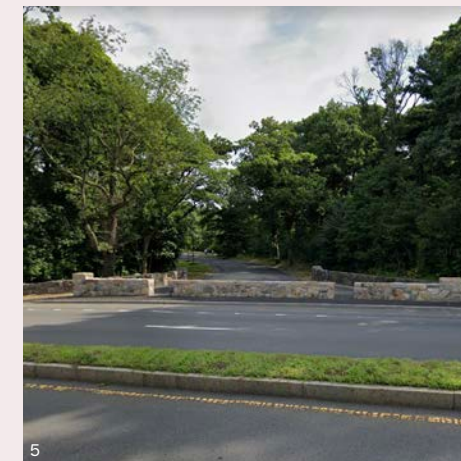
The park includes entrances of various scales and character at each of its edges. Providing frequent entrances is important, but making sure those entrances feel welcoming to all community members is critical. As vegetation management fell behind and entrance use shifted encouraging ad hoc modifications (vehicular entrance becoming pedestrian only) many of the park's entrances now message "stay out" rather than "welcome in." Changes can be made to improve access and reach out to the community.

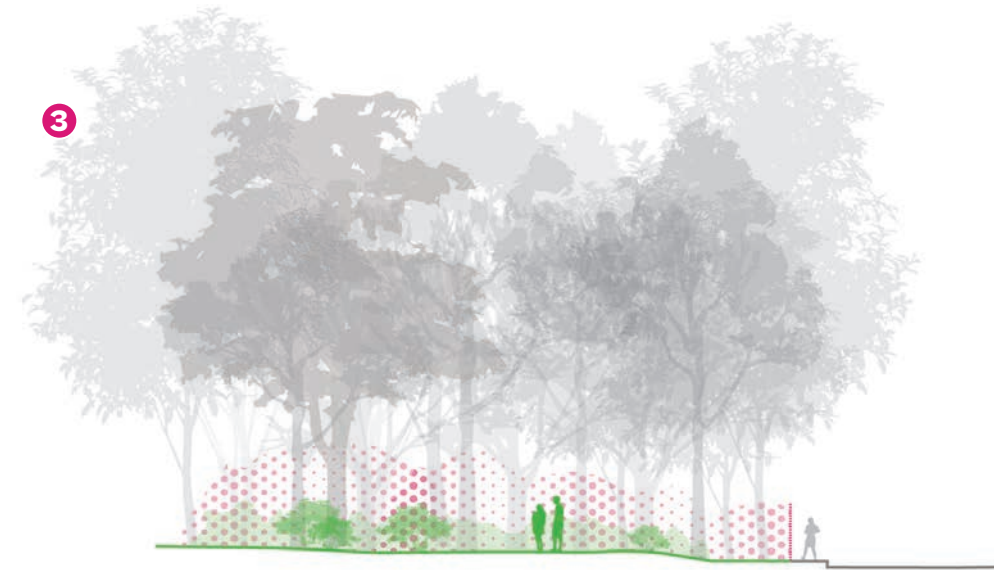
KEY CHALLENGES

- **Lack of ADA Accessibility**
- **Unwelcoming Messages**
- **Unclear Entrances**

ENTRANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Develop Consistent Standards to Maintain Historic Character**
- **Include Entrances that Meet ADA Standards**





Entrances: How can entrances invite use and make connections to park destinations?

1 Make Clear Connections

Existing steps negotiate grade change from the street level into the park, but visitors are met with overgrown vegetation and no path connection at most of these locations. Selectively clear understory vegetation and provide a new path connection.

2 Increase Access

The park has many ways in today, but all edges are not the same. New entrances offer the opportunity to ensure equitable access, including an ADA entrance on every edge. Proposed entrances should lead to a path that feeds into the park's circulation network, leading visitors to a primary loop and park destinations, which should include lighting and signage.

3 Provide Views In

Selectively clear understory vegetation to increase porosity and views in, increasing a sense of comfort upon entering the park, especially along The Wilderness.

4 Support Historic Fabric

Most of the entrances around the park include historic masonry elements that will require regular attention and repair. In some instances, new materials have been added. Historic typologies should guide decisions as updates are made and new entrances are added.

Maintain Historic Character

Develop Consistent Standards

The historic masonry perimeter is a character defining feature of the park. Changes to existing entrances or the addition of new ones that include masonry elements should follow the historic typologies. All entrances should have well-managed vegetation and be supported by signage and lighting where appropriate.

ENTRANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Historic Masonry

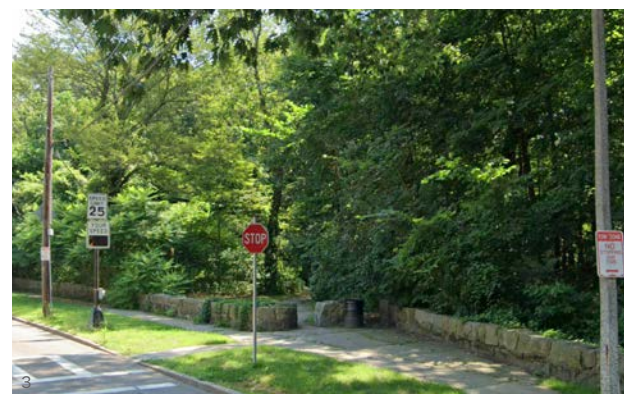
- There is a limited range of ways that the historic masonry is configured at existing park entrances. These typologies establish a specific character to individual entrances, but cumulatively create a sense of consistency at the park edge. Any adjustments or additions of new entrances should obey those typologies and the character of the historic masonry.
- As improvements are made, remove barriers (granite blocks and bollards) that are not in keeping with the historic character or material palette.



Large Entrance: Granite bollards at School Street.



Medium Entrance: Historic stone masonry at the old Refectory.



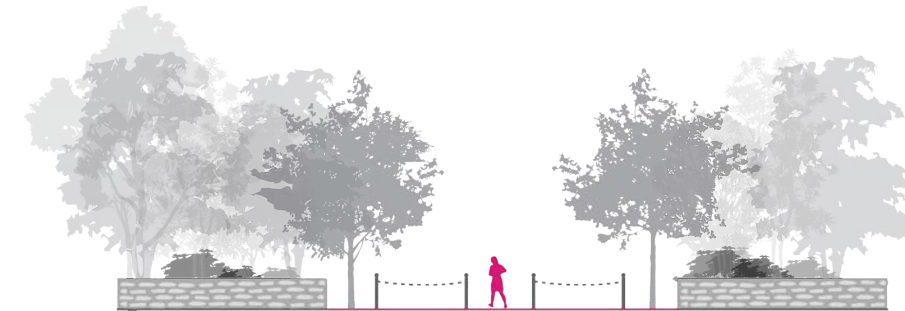
Small Entrance: Historic stone perimeter wall along Sigourney Street.

Vegetation

- In addition to historic masonry, entrances are also supported by the park's canopy - as an open grove, mature canopy at an entrance and along pathways into the park, or as an entrance through a woodland condition; protect and reinforce these typologies at the entrances around the park.

Supporting Elements

- Edge signage should be in keeping with the historic signage to let Franklin Park read as part of the continuous Emerald Necklace park system. More consistent deployment of appropriate signage and lighting typologies will assist with guiding movement, orientation, and a general sense of comfort (see lighting and signage recommendations).



Painted metal bollard and chain precedent.

Large Entrances -Former Carriageways

Modify historic carriageway entrances that are used by pedestrians today by removing granite blocks and bollards and replace them with painted metal bollards and chains, or by using modified stone walls to control clear entrance dimensions. Support the path with canopy tree planting on either side.

Medium Entrances

Maintain masonry walls and steps to protect the historic fabric. Manage adjacent vegetation according to the local park character (woodland vs. open) and provide adequate views into the park; support with lighting (see Movement chapter).

Small Entrances

The smallest of the park's entrances play an important role in providing more intimate and individual connections to community members but their small scale puts even more emphasis on making sure they feel welcoming. Vegetation management is key. The opening should be scaled for ADA access where the path beyond allows.

Make It Accessible

Include Entrances that Meet ADA Standards

While the historic design would not have been focused on accessibility in the same way that contemporary planning is, there are still many locations around the park that are already meeting ADA requirements or could be modified without compromising the historic park fabric and character to ensure that all edges include entrances that are accessible to all users.

ACCESSIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

General

- Enhance ADA compliance for entrances and path connections to the primary park loops where existing or proposed entrances are at grade, by abiding by entrance clear opening and path slope requirements, and using compliant paving materials.
- Address barriers (granite blocks, bollards, and fence posts) that limit ADA minimum distances for clear openings.
- Look for at-grade connections to achieve ADA compliant entrances; do not significantly impact historic entrances.
- Consider adding handrails at stepped entrances; employ historically appropriate standards.
- Ensure any new or renovated parking meets or exceeds ADA parking requirements.
- Future planning and design of The Yard must consider an ADA entrance and path that connects to the Circuit Loop.

Priority Areas

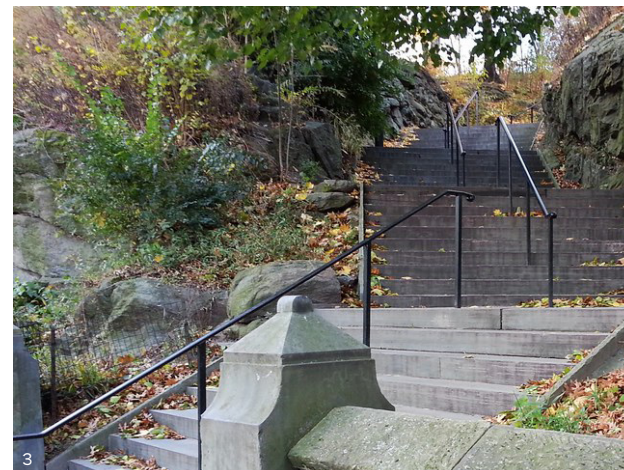
- Currently, the American Legion Highway and Morton Street sides of the park do not have any fully accessible entrances.



1 Accessibility is challenged throughout the park.

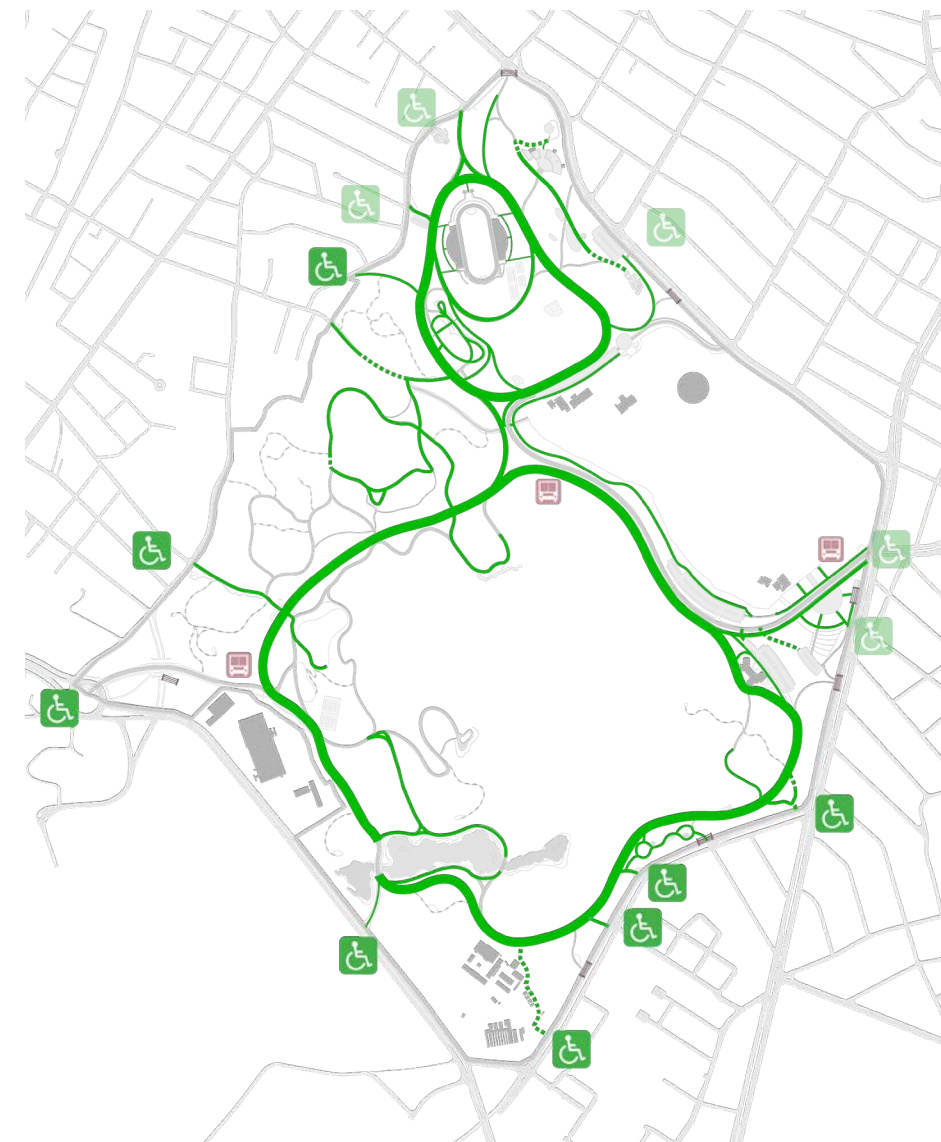


2 The existing entrance on Blue Hill Ave between McLean and Charlotte Streets.



3 Precedent for handrail inserted into historic stone steps; look to park archives or other Olmsted parks for handrail designs.

INCREASE ACCESS



Accessible Entrances & Connections

- Accessible Park Path
- - - Accessibility Achievable
- Park Path
- ♿ Existing Accessible Entrance
- ♿ Proposed Accessible Entrance
- 🚌 Existing In-Park Bus Stop

Accessibility Criteria

Accessibility was evaluated under three criteria: The entrance opening is a minimum of 32" clear, path material is in good condition (ADA compliant material, intact and even surface), and the slope of connecting path is under 5%. Accessible entrances currently meet or could meet all three criteria, with small adjustments or upgrades that do not compromise historic park fabric or character.

Improve All Sides

Recommendations by Entrance

With the exception of a few specific areas, the park provides many pedestrian entry points. Adding new entrances should be carefully considered in the context of the distribution and scale of other entrances along a particular edge to address areas that are underserved and have difficult access. In most instances, the number and distribution of pedestrian entrances is appropriate, but the need to clarify their locations, send a welcoming message, and maintain their historic fabric should be addressed.

ENTRANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Seaver Street

1. At Walnut Avenue
 - Inspect historic masonry and repair if needed.
2. At Park View Street
 - Add new small-scale entrance; selectively clear understory vegetation; add path connection.
3. At Humbolt Avenue
 - Remove granite bollards; if barriers are necessary, replace with historic typology; support with lighting and canopy tree planting along path to draw visitors into the park through this meaningful pedestrian entrance.
4. Between Humbolt Avenue and Elm Hill Avenue
 - Add new small-scale entrance at existing steps; add a path connection into the park; inspect historic steps and reset/regrout if needed.
5. At Elm Hill Avenue
 - If converted to a vehicular exit in the future, remove granite bollards and retain a complementary pedestrian entrance; support with lighting along path.

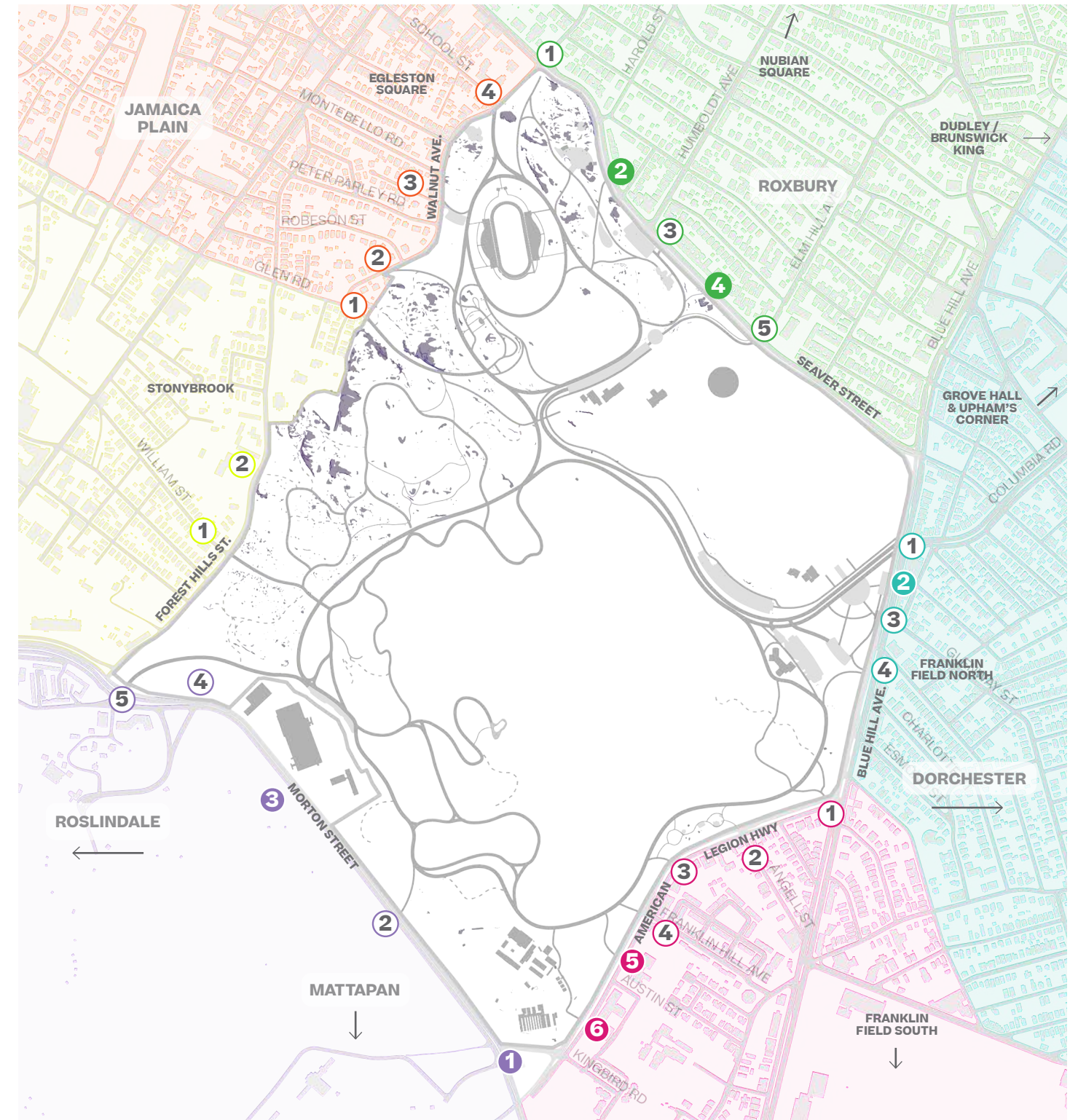
Blue Hill Avenue

1. At Columbia Road
 - Maintain a designated accessible pedestrian entrance separate from vehicular travel; support with signage and lighting.
2. Between Columbia Road & Glenway Street
 - Add the new 'front porch' pedestrian entrance by inserting steps into the stone wall in conjunction with Peabody Circle improvements.
3. At Glenway Street
 - Convert the vehicular exit to a small-scale, accessible pedestrian entrance in conjunction with Peabody Circle & Refectory Hill improvements; inspect and repair historic masonry as needed; support path with lighting.

4. Between McLellan Street & Charlotte Street
 - Provide new path connections at existing Refectory step entrances; fill in the 'pit' condition with new perimeter wall between the steps, in line with the existing wall; inspect historic masonry and repair as needed.

American Legion Highway

1. At Blue Hill Avenue
 - Inspect the historic masonry and repair as needed; remove granite bollard; selectively clear understory vegetation; provide accessible path connection into the park.
2. At Angell Street
 - Remove granite bollards; reset steps and repair historic wall.
3. Between Parkway Street & Franklin Hill Avenue
 - Update the granite blocks with a more appropriate edge treatment, like a painted metal bollard and chain; complete sidewalk connection; support entry path with lighting and canopy tree planting that matches the character of the adjacent grove to embed the wide paving in the park.
4. At Franklin Hill Avenue
 - Repair historic masonry; provide ADA clear opening in wall; selectively clear understory vegetation.
5. Between Franklin Hill Avenue and Austin Street
 - Repair and reset existing steps; selectively clear understory vegetation; provide path connection.
6. Between Austin Street and Kingbird Road
 - Provide pedestrian access path through The Yard.



Entrances



ENTRANCE INDEX CONTINUED

Morton Street

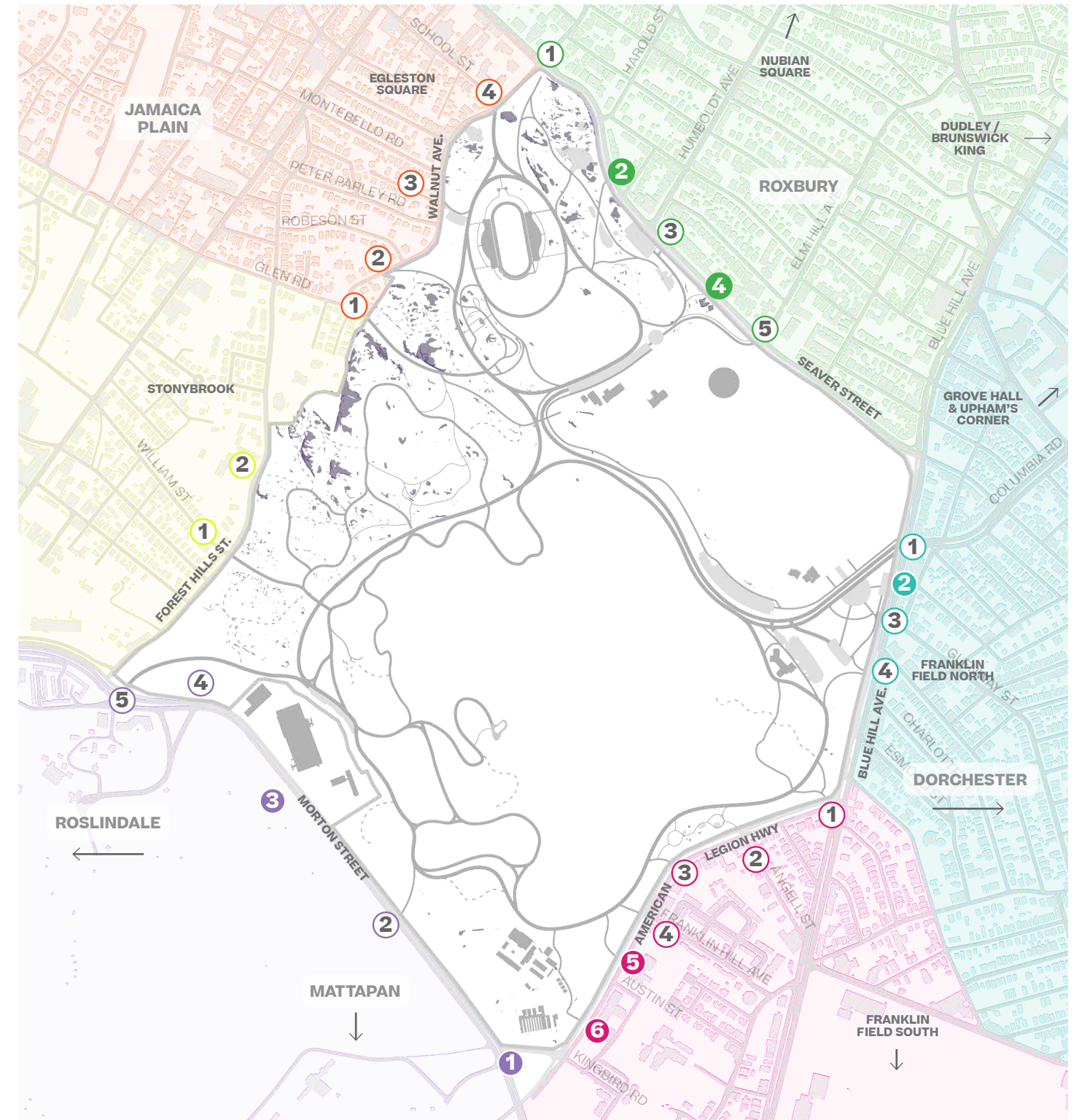
1. At Canterbury Street
 - Provide pedestrian access path through The Yard; exact path alignments to be coordinated with the Maintenance Yard Master Plan; maintain separation between public pedestrian paths and critical maintenance operations for public safety.
2. At Scarboro Pond
 - Remove the existing stone wall at the edge of Morton Street; install fieldstone piers with ADA compliant openings and paving, set in line with the end of the historic wall to match its character and prevent vehicles from entering. Plant a loose grove of canopy trees along both sides of the path to support the scale of the historic carriage drive paving; support entry path lighting.
3. At Shattuck Hospital
 - Provide pedestrian access path to the park.
4. At Cemetery Road
 - Selectively clear understory vegetation; inspect historic masonry and steps, and repair as needed.
5. At Arborway
 - Inspect historic masonry and repair as needed.

Forest Hills Street

1. At Williams Street
 - Widen sidewalk at crosswalk to provide accessible path into the park; remove granite bollards and rebuild entrance to follow historic typologies; support with lighting and canopy tree planting.
2. At The Wilderness
 - Remove chain link fence; selectively clear understory vegetation.

Walnut Avenue

1. At Glen Road
 - Selectively clear understory vegetation; provide sidewalk connection; remove granite blocks and replace the swing gate, and rebuild entrance to follow historic typologies; support with lighting.
2. Sigourney Street at Robeson Street
 - Remove granite block to provide accessible clear opening between existing stone walls; inspect historic masonry and repair as needed; amend existing path to provide accessible path into the park.
3. At Park Lane
 - Provide designated pedestrian path separate from the vehicular drive that meets accessibility standards; selectively clear understory vegetation.
4. At School Street
 - Remove granite blocks and bollards and replace with painted metal bollard and chain; support path with lighting and planting.



Entrances



Unify Park Spaces

Break Down Internal Edges

Built features from the original park design, such as walls, steps, and overlooks, were meant to guide access, curate visitor experience and provide a sense of place. In response to changing uses and programs, incremental solutions meant to control vehicles, restrict access, and improve public safety now form barriers and edges throughout the park, creating visual distractions and an increased sense of division.

KEY CHALLENGES

- **Message of ‘Stay Out’**
- **Visual Clutter**
- **Barriers to Movement**
- **Loss of Larger Spatial Connections**

INTERNAL EDGE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Remove, Relocate & Rethink Barriers to Limit Impact on Park Character**

Security Gates

Freestanding vehicular gates have been added over time to restrict vehicular access. A more systematic and aesthetically-unified approach to the vehicular perimeter can call less attention to these controls while improving their security functions. Existing locations should be evaluated to confirm they are still needed; where vehicular gates and barriers are necessary, pedestrian access should be integrated as part of their design.

Granite Blocks and Boulders

Granite blocks and boulders were once a community-led, low cost way of preventing vehicular access to pedestrian areas. While effective, they do not feel integrated into the design, and, in some cases, actually inhibit pedestrian connections. In other areas, they are located along paths, where vehicular access is already restricted by gates, making them redundant.

Fences

Fencing in the park is necessary to control access to stakeholder properties and/or protect the community. However, its location and character consistently creates problematic visual and physical barriers. One example is the stretch of fence between The Playstead and the Golf Course around the perimeter of the zoo. What was once an orienting and sweeping view south through the Valley Gates is now interrupted by chain link and barbed wire at the edge of a parking lot, making it feel like the sports fields about a service yard rather than being situated with a view to the valley below.



Limit Impact on Park Character

Remove, Relocate, & Rethink Barriers

Fences, walls, and gates define boundaries between use and ownership but disrupt views and restrict access, which breaks down the larger park experience. Rethinking the character of these internal edges can improve visibility between ownership areas and create connections to adjacent landscapes.

INTERNAL EDGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Remove Physical Barriers:

Fences

- Where possible, remove fence and hard barriers between the park and adjacent stakeholders with footprints in the park (White Stadium, The Zoo, and Shattuck Hospital).
- In cases where enclosure is necessary, relocate fences to 'embed' them within vegetation, giving the appearance of a unified park land and to provide a friendly outward appearance.

Gates

- Remove duplicate and unnecessary security gates throughout the park; where they must remain, locate them in a way that feels embedded in the park fabric, part of a planting strategy, and sensitive to pedestrian movement; over time upgrade to a consistent, neutral character (consider if a simple cedar gate is more appropriate than metal).
- For the gates that must remain, enact a plan to manage their daily locking and unlocking to facilitate appropriate access throughout the park.

Granite Blocks and Boulders

- Assess the current need for granite blocks and boulders placed along vehicular drives and other areas that previously controlled car access to park spaces to determine if they still necessary.
- Pilot the removal of some sections of the granite blocks and boulders. Where physical boundaries within the park are deemed necessary, use materials more in keeping with the park palette and historic character, and stockpile puddingstone for reuse in other restoration efforts.



Built Edges

- Fences
- Gates
- Vehicular Barriers (Granite Blocks, Bollards, and Walls)



Embed fences in vegetation where possible to create a soft edge.

INTERNAL EDGE RECOMMENDATIONS



Internal Edge Treatments

- Park Space
- ▨ Understory & Brush Clearing
- Existing Fence or Wall
- - - Existing Fence to be Removed or Relocated
- ↔ Spatial Relationship
- ① White Stadium
- ② The Valley Gates
- ③ Street-Side Zoo Fence
- ④ Park-Side Zoo Fence
- ⑤ Shattuck Hospital

The Valley Gates

- Ⓐ Pull back the zoo fence to visually connect the two sides of the park; selectively clear understory vegetation and brush; consider removing overgrown trees.
- Ⓑ Remove obstacles to showcase the Valley Gates head houses and allow them to bookend the space.
- Ⓒ Remove unnecessary bollards, gates, and granite blocks to allow for easier circulation flow through the area and views to the park beyond.
- Ⓓ Make vehicles aware of pedestrian and bike circulation through the Valley Gates by changing path materials to prioritize their routes of travel.



The Zoo <----- Valley Gates -----> The Wilderness