

Dear Franklin Park neighbors and friends,

A Plan for Action

With \$28 million in funding from the City of Boston dedicated to improvements in the park (including \$5 million for a maintenance endowment), the purpose of the 18-month planning effort is to understand the plans that have come before it, what is working and isn't working in the park, and how surrounding neighborhoods want to make investments for its future. Ongoing community engagement is designed to enable park users and neighbors to become partners in creating a shared vision for the future and determining how that money is spent.

The following pages are a working draft of the Action Plan team's analysis of historic and existing conditions in Franklin Park. This draft is a preview of the work that will be discussed in the upcoming public workshop and engagement throughout the summer. For more information on upcoming engagement and feedback opportunities, visit the project website: www.FranklinParkActionPlan.com.



Created from your feedback

Beginning in November 2019, the Action Plan team reached out to the communities surrounding Franklin Park to understand how people use the park, hear favorite memories, and gather ideas for how their experiences could be improved through future investment. Community partners and neighbors have been instrumental in spreading the word and expanding our reach— thank you! We have connected with you through the following outreach efforts:

- Over 6,000 responses to the community survey
- 2,900 households by neighborhood canvassing
- Over 300 people by attending community and park events
- Nearly 300 people at community workshop #1
- ...and many others through park signage, comments sent through the project website, and the online mini-poll

Understanding the Park

These summaries capture our current understanding of the park's historic and existing conditions through four themes. We have separated the work for clarity, but each theme informs the other so you will find some overlap between the summaries. Below is a quick list of what you'll find highlighted in each theme as a starting point.

The Action Plan does not formally include all areas of the park (as shown on the map). However, it is important to understand the park as a whole. The work reflects the relationship between these elements to inform future decision making.



In the summaries, you will learn about:

History

- Pre-park history & the original character of the land
- The park's design intent & its relationship to the city
- How the park and the surrounding communities have evolved over time
- Key challenges and opportunities as we think about the park's next century

Communities

- Engagement and outreach to date
- Surrounding demographics and public health
- Community and park stewards
- Places, programs, park architecture, and utilities

Connections

- Regional and city open space systems
- Transit connectivity
- Park edges and entries
- Park circulation and parking
- Public awareness and wayfinding

Ecology

- Drainage and infrastructure
- The park's urban forest
- Ecological habitats and soils
- Heritage trees
- Park maintenance



Communities

At Heart, a Neighborhood Park

Listening to the Community

Engagement Approach

The Action Plan began with a five month planning and programming analysis - which included developing a robust, working engagement strategy and an inventory of the users, available activities and various destinations in Franklin Park. The following section describes the analysis of existing park conditions and includes an understanding of all of the ways the park is used compiled through a community survey and several engagement activities.

The primary goal of the engagement strategy is to facilitate an equitable and inclusive planning and decision-making process that cultivates a shared vision for the future of Franklin Park. The relationship with the park's neighbors is built on listening, learning, and gathering and integrating feedback throughout the planning process.



Trolley Tour Pop-up



Trolley Tour Pop-up

Education & Inspiration

Promote a greater understanding of Franklin Park at a local and city-wide level.



Public Workshop



Turkey Trot

Keep It Fun!

Make participation in the engagement process an enjoyable activity.



Public Workshop



Trolley Tour Pop-up

Grow Stewardship

Build a community of civically engaged residents for the long-term success of Franklin Park.

Broad, Diverse Input

Obtain feedback from all communities who currently enjoy Franklin Park and who could in the future. Special efforts continue to be made to engage historically under-represented communities who live next to the park, such as: lower-income residents, non-English speaking residents, and local youth.

Out and About Engagement to Date

Between August 2019 and April 2020, the action plan team has reached out to the communities surrounding Franklin Park to understand how people use the park, hear memories of experiences in the park, and gather ideas for how their experiences could be improved through future investment. Thanks to community partners and social media, many neighbors and park users took the survey, stopped by at pop-up events, and attended the community workshop.

- What we've learned from the public so far:
Franklin Park is a critical, yet often under-appreciated green oasis in the middle of the city.
- Park users value connections to nature and access to large and small celebrations.
- The community would like to see new amenities and programs that support a wider range of users and make the park safer for everyone.
- Many want to preserve the role the park plays in their lives and in their communities.



Digital Presence & Community Survey

The action plan has its own website with updates, content from the public meeting, and the online survey. Over the winter of 2020, **over 6,000 people participated in a survey** to share how they use the park, their memories, and their ideas for the future.

Canvassing

Over the weeks before the Community Workshop, members of the design team knocked on doors in the neighborhoods around Franklin Park to raise awareness about the planning effort, workshop, and the survey.

To Date

- Reached **2,917 households**
- Talked with **597 people directly**

Community Workshops

On January 28th, the team held the first community workshop at the William Devine Golf-course Clubhouse.

To Date

- 1st workshop completed
- 211 sign-ins** and more people who didn't wait in line to sign in
- Over half of the attendees** live in Jamaica Plain
- The **majority of people** found out about the event through social media.
- 20 people** found out about the event from flyers or "meeting the team."



Pop-up Events

During the fall and winter, members of the Parks & Recreation Department and the design team attended events in and around the park to announce the planning effort and collect initial feedback through conversations, an interactive model, and feedback activities.

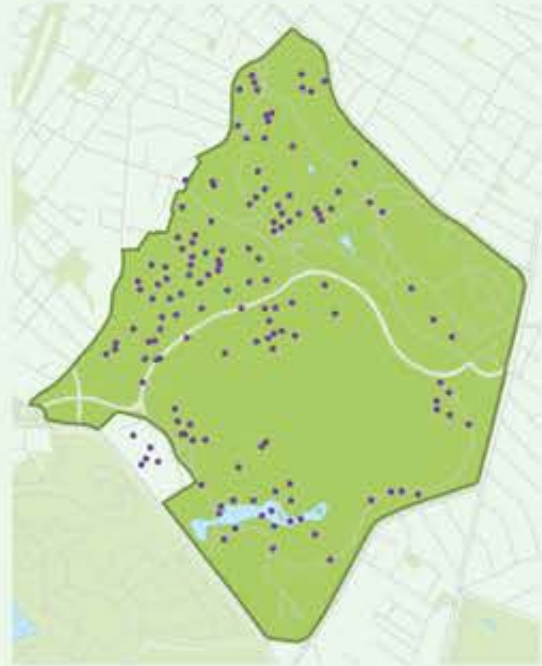
To Date

- 4 events:** Turkey Trot, FPC Winter Fest Meet and Greet, Three Trolley Tour Stops
- Shared approximately **650 postcards**
- ~300 people** commented or placed flags to identify their favorite places or ideas for improvements

Community Use

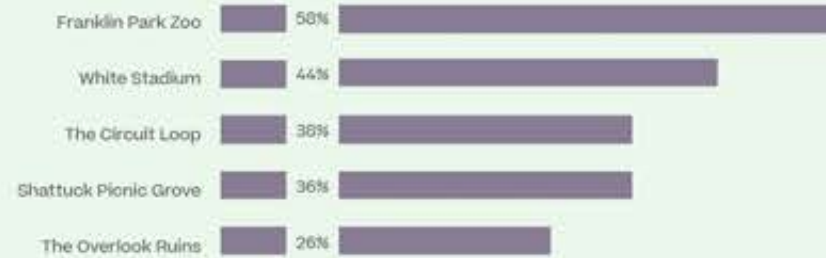
Feedback on Places & Improvements

Conversations with surrounding neighborhoods and other park visitors offer a lens into the various ways that the community uses Franklin Park. They also helped to reveal differences in opinions about the park's needs and future. Through feedback at pop-up events, the public workshop and the community survey, community members reflected a shared vision for an improved space that everyone can enjoy; yet, they offered a variety of different ideas to create that.



Most Frequented Places

The top places survey respondents say they typically visit in the park are:



Favorite Places

In the first community workshop, 143 responses highlighted:

The Playstead & Stadium

- Frisbee
- BAMS Fest
- Cross Country

Circuit Loop

- Exercise
- Getting Around

Shattuck Picnic Grove

- Disc Golf
- Tennis

The Wilderness

- Wild Space

New Ideas

In the first community workshop, 61 responses highlighted:

The Playstead & Stadium

- Dog Parks
- Interpretive Trail
- Black History Walk
- Skate Park at Bear Dens

Circuit Loop

- Close to Traffic

Shattuck Picnic Grove

- Picnic Shelters & BBQ
- Playground

The Wilderness

- Nature Play
- Rock Climbing
- Snowshoeing



Places Needing Improvement

In the first community workshop, 136 responses highlighted:

The Playstead & Stadium

- Public Access to Stadium
- Clean-Up Trails

The Wilderness

- Invasive Species
- Widen Paths
- Lighting
- Fix Picnic Tables
- Remove Fences

Circuit Loop

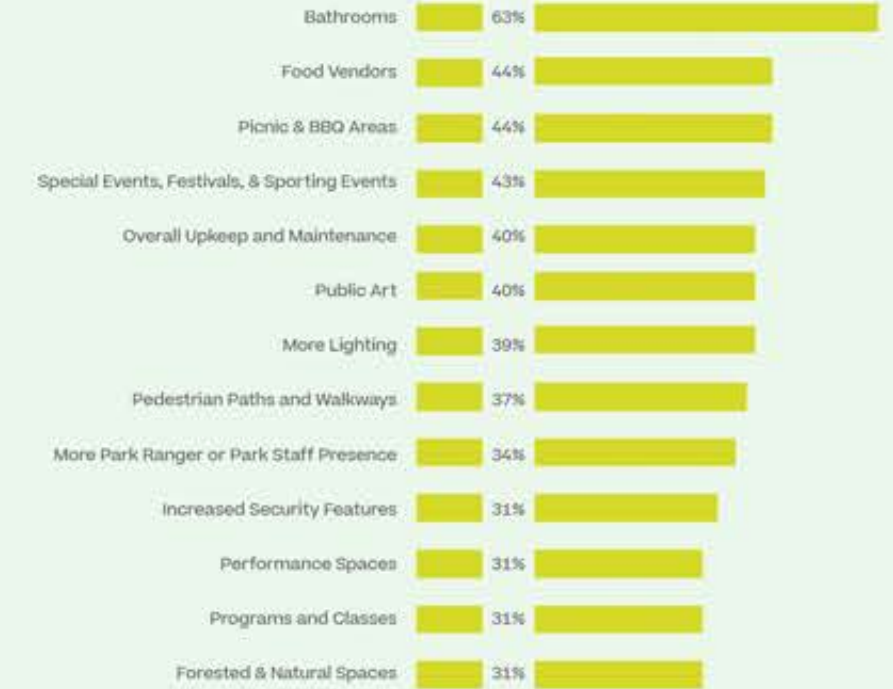
- Crossing the Street
- Dark at Night

Shattuck Picnic Grove

- Repair Courts & Fields
- Disc Golf

Physical Improvements

Many of the top 10 improvements and investments prioritized by survey respondents indicate an appetite for increased passive and active programming. A secondary theme is improvements to maintenance and increased security.



Between Many Communities

The Park's Neighbors

Nestled among many different neighborhoods, Franklin Park is surrounded by communities with a range of demographic patterns. Across multiple data points, the neighborhoods north and east of Franklin Park are home to higher percentages of communities of color, households with children, and with generally lower income than the neighborhoods to the west of Franklin Park. Despite this divide, Franklin Park's open spaces and programs welcome neighbors from all areas.

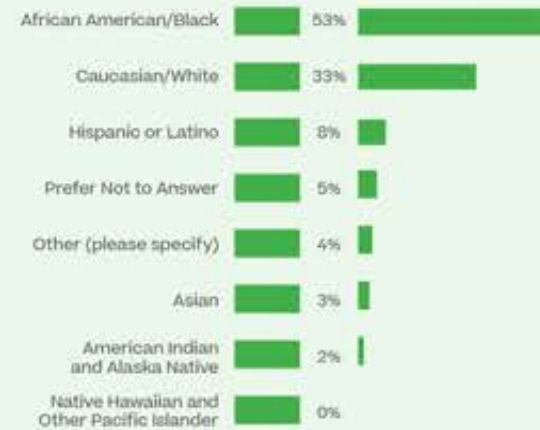
The park's amenities and programs draw visitors from across the region, but perhaps its most important role is as a neighborhood park for the surrounding communities. Engagement feedback described its ability to welcome people of all backgrounds and identities. But, access to certain amenities within the park are more proximate for some than others.

Community Memory

"Franklin Park has been an urban respite for black and latino families when we weren't welcomed at other city parks. Any improvements, should engage people from black and latino communities to ensure the traditions and needs of our communities are continued to be met."
 -Dorchester Resident, Action Plan Survey

Survey Respondents

Over half of the survey participants identify as African American or Black.



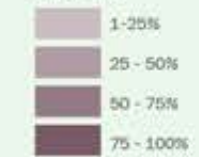
of survey respondents live in a neighborhood that touches Franklin Park



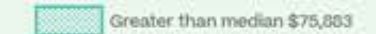
Race and income are inverted on either side of Franklin Park

72% of the surrounding residents are persons of color, with the most communities of color living to the North and East of the park. In contrast, the West has a higher concentration of households with above median income.

Race excluding "white alone" ACS 2017



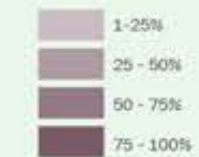
Median household income, 12 months ACS 2017



More renters live on the North and East sides of Franklin Park

Over 75% of housing units along much of the North and East edges are renter occupied. In these areas, rapid growth can create challenges related to displacement and inequity. On the lower East edge, there is also a concentration households with limited English.

Renter occupied housing units ACS 2017



Households with limited English speaking status ACS 2017



Supporting Healthier Communities

Public Health Around Franklin Park

Health disparities across most issues mirror the historical inequities brought about by generations of institutional racism, structural barriers, and discriminatory policies. Health clinics surrounding the park expressed that if investments in Franklin Park increase gentrification-related displacement of existing neighborhoods, this will significantly damage public health outcomes. Franklin Park could provide a location for programming and partnerships that address health disparities and the top factors contributing to healthy communities.

Parks have long been understood to be contributors to community health. With increased traffic, urban density, and a prevalence of stress and addiction in daily lives, we see this need perhaps more than ever. For the communities around the park and the broader city, there are many opportunities to increase health-related programming and partnerships.

What is the relationship between public health and parks?

While public health is always a key consideration for Franklin Park, during the time of this action plan, the issue was brought into the forefront through the presence of a new virus, Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). It resulted in a global pandemic that changed day-to-day life for Bostonians and, at the same time, made the role of large public parks like Franklin Park more important than ever. To limit the spread of the virus, many restaurants, retail stores, offices, and neighborhood services closed or dramatically restricted their ability to welcome in the public, leaving the City's essential services open, but adapted. Within this void, Franklin Park's significance – both to the immediate neighborhood and the broader region – was amplified as an open, public space that people can more safely visit outside their homes. On a warm spring day, the team observed the park used in new ways with many people taking a family walk along Circuit Drive and others appreciating the golf course's open greens. Beyond these simple, but critical, pleasures preliminary studies are also pointing to the increased public health value of large parks like Franklin Park in the context of COVID-19. A recent study from the Harvard School of Public Health has connected higher rates of death for COVID-19 to air pollution. Another study has linked higher rates of death to underlying inequities, discovering that the disease is killing the Black community at a higher rate than whites. With all of these factors in the background of the action plan, Franklin Park's importance for recreation, environmental benefits, and physical and mental health seem more clear than ever.



Residents in the five neighborhoods around Franklin Park listed either **outdoor air pollution from vehicles** or **outdoor noise pollution from vehicles** as the top environmental health concern at home.

Source: Boston CHNA Community Survey 2019.



When surveyed by the Boston Public Health Commission, Boston residents rated **environmental quality as their 5th most important concern.**

Source: Boston CHNA Community Survey 2019.



Residents in the five neighborhoods around Franklin Park listed either **affordable housing** or **access to health care** as the most important factor that defines a "healthy community." Green space was not ranked in the top factors.

Source: Boston CHNA Community Survey 2019.



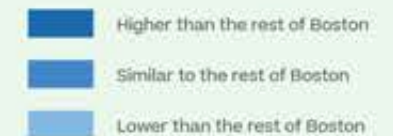
Health Outcomes

The neighborhoods around Franklin Park see some of the highest chronic disease hospitalization, overcrowding, mold hazards/violations, and asthma emergency department visits among 5-17 year-olds. Additionally, relief from environmental concerns (noise, fumes, and heat) is also needed in the neighborhoods surrounding the park. These health outcomes existed before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mold Hazard/Violations by Neighborhood, 2012-2016



Asthma Emergency Department Visits among 5-17 Year Olds by Neighborhood, 2014-2015



Programs and Opportunities

Existing health-related activities in the park include walking groups, line dancing, and occasional nature-education cross-programming with the Appalachian Mountain Club for youth. Clinics have expressed openness to provide support for health-related programming, including trauma management and youth "greencorps" jobs on park stewardship and safety.

A Call to Action

Community Stewards

The work of local activists and organizations that dedicated their time and energy has left a long-lasting impact on the park. Witnessing disinvestment in their communities in the 1970s and 1980s, these individuals and groups self-organized to maintain facilities, manage crime, develop programming, and engage youth in paid training programs in response. Their legacy of stewardship and action has influenced generations of community-building and inspired the events that continue to activate the park today.

In response to disinvestment in the park, people in the surrounding communities self-organized to ensure that local residents were still served. These individuals and the organizations and partnerships they formed were instrumental in the advocacy, stewardship, and action that brought the park out of a state of neglect.



Augusta Bailey & The Roxbury Beautification Project
 Founded in 1960s as a community garden movement, Augusta Bailey formed the Roxbury Beautification Project. The group advocated for a Roxbury heritage trail connecting Franklin Park to destinations throughout the neighborhood.



Elma Lewis & The Playhouse in the Park
 Elma Lewis was an artist, educator, and bridge leadership activist. In the 1950s, she founded the Elma Lewis School for Fine and Performing Arts, dedicated to teaching thousands of local African-American children and adults creative arts and cultural history. She was instrumental in reintroducing programming into the park for all ages through her 'Playhouse in the Park', which combined educational, cultural, and vocational initiatives.

The Franklin Park Coalition
 In 1978, a small group of community advocates and neighbors formed the park's first constituency group. After watching the park degrade due to a lack of funding and park staff, the coalition was established to advocate for funding for park maintenance, improvements, and programs. FPC continues to promote a vibrant and welcoming park, with programs like the Elma Lewis Playhouse, summer concerts, the Bike Festival, Art Grove, and many other activities to connect people with the park.



Boston Zoological Society
 For over a decade, the Boston Zoological Society (1970) supported upkeep of the park's entrances and woodlands around the zoo, while the state continued to provide funding for the facility.



The Neighborhood Arts Council & Summerthing
 Modeled after the Elma Lewis Playhouse in the Park, the Summerthing concert series was initiated by The Neighborhood Arts Council. Focused on bringing art, theater, and music into Boston's neighborhoods, this organization brought programming to Franklin Park beginning in 1968.

Paul Washington & The Boston Pro-Am Golf Association
 The club was founded in 1953 by Black pro-golfer Paul Washington. The inclusion of Black golfers in Franklin Park was also reflected in the visitors to the park itself in the mid-1960s.

Bob McCoy & The Franklin Park Golfers Association
 A primarily a Black golfers organization was founded in 1967 to maintain the defunded golf course. In 1982, they teamed up with Bob McCoy, the highest-ranking African-American ever in the City of Boston government, to leverage funding to revive the golf course. It officially reopened on July 31, 1989.

Many Parks in One Places in the Park

Within Franklin Park itself, there are a variety of places, each with its own character and landmarks. In addition, there are other entities and stakeholders that have a place within the park.



El Parquesito Play Area



The Bear Dens



White Stadium



Tiffany Moore Play Area



Overlook Ruins



The Playstead



The Wilderness



The Franklin Park Zoo



Schoolmaster Hill



99 Steps



Ellicottdale



Refectory Hill



William J. Devine Golf Course



Shattuck Picnic Grove and Tennis Courts



Scarboro Hill



Circuit Path



Shattuck Hospital



American Legion Play Area and Picnic Area



Scarboro Pond



Maintenance Yard

Distributed Assets

Park Resources

Not only does Franklin Park touch various neighborhoods and communities, but it also encompasses other entities including the Golf Course, the Franklin Park Zoo, Shattuck Hospital, and the maintenance yard. The remaining parkland includes miles of trails and roadways, nine recreation fields and courts, and approximately one thousand parking spaces. The mapping inventory of Franklin Park illuminated the spatial organization and relationships of all of the park's amenities and will highlight opportunities for future investments.

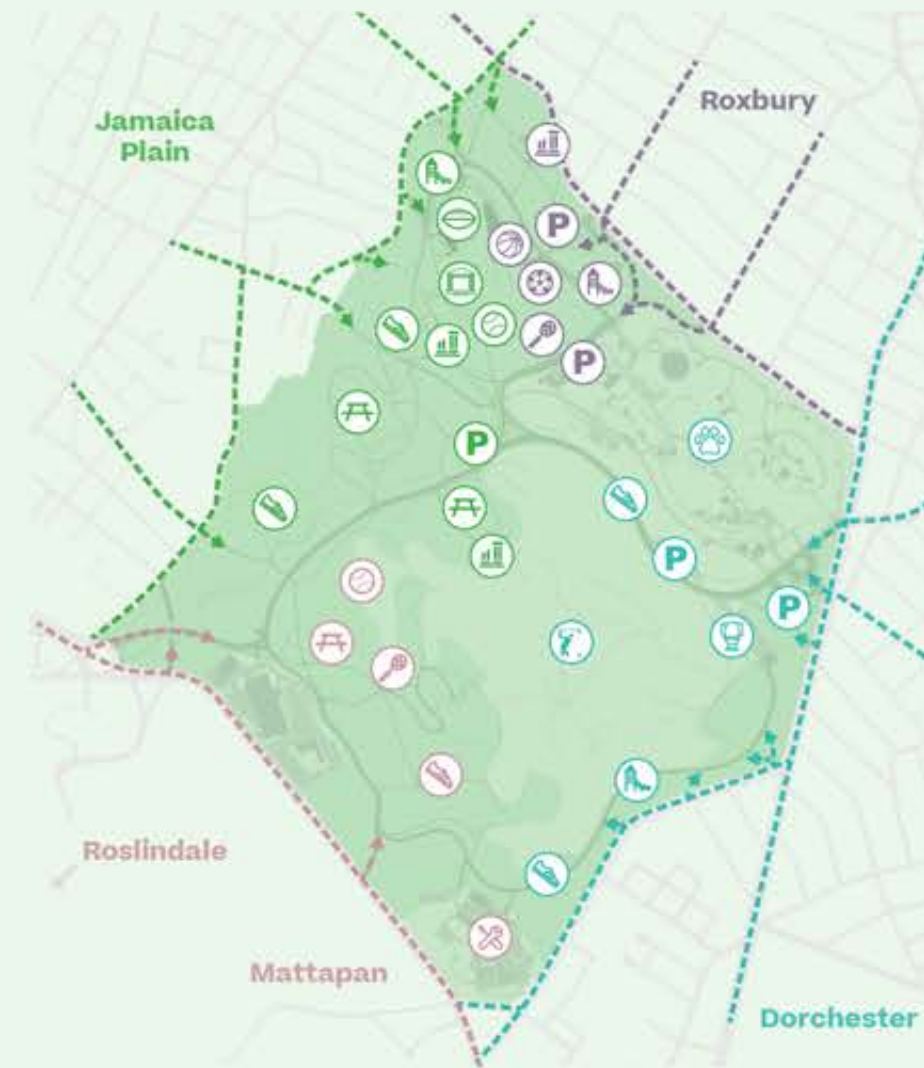
The array of programming and experiences to be had at Franklin Park is unparalleled in Boston or Greater Boston, yet some activities are closer and more convenient depending on where you enter the park. Survey responses showed a clear pattern that proximity to park entrances and amenities had a strong impact on what spaces different neighborhoods use the most.

55%

of survey respondents want Franklin Park to continue to be a magnet for diverse groups, a meeting ground for neighbors, and a unifying destination for area residents and visitors.

Community Memory

"I remember Mayor Menino having handful of middle school students in Boston to the Franklin golf course to learn how to golf. It was amazing,"
 -Mattapan Resident,
 Action Plan Survey



Park Breakdown by Acres

- Park Space - 289 Acres**
 - 220 acres of wooded area
 - 19 acres of mown lawn
 - 7.5 acres of water bodies
 - Golf Course***
 - 107 acres
 - Franklin Park Zoo***
 - 72 acres
 - Shattuck Hospital***
 - 12 acres
 - White Stadium***
 - 8.5 acres
 - Maintenance Yard***
 - 17 acres
- *Outside the scope of the Action Plan

Amenities

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|---------------|---|---|
| 3 | ⊙ | Baseball & Softball Fields | 1 | ⊞ | Stages |
| 2 | ⊙ | Basketball Courts | 3 | ⊞ | Structures (including ruins) |
| 1 | ⊙ | Multi-Purpose Fields | 4 | ⊞ | Tennis Courts |
| 5 | ⊞ | Picnic Areas | Access | | |
| 3 | ⊞ | Playgrounds | 2.6 miles | ⊞ | Limited Access Road (pedestrian & service vehicles) |
| 1 | ⊞ | Public Restrooms | ~1,000 spaces | ⊞ | Parking |
| 1 | ⊞ | Golf Course | 2.55 miles | ⊞ | Public Vehicular Road |
| 1 | ⊞ | Zoo | 11.5 miles | ⊞ | Trails/Sidewalks |
| 1 | ⊞ | Maintenance yard | | | |



A Slow Fall and Winter Seasonality of Programs

The 2019 park reservations and events, including those organized by park partners like the Franklin Park Coalition, show a concentration of programming in the spring and summer months and more limited park activation in the fall and winter. Other stakeholders including White Stadium, the Golf Course, and the Zoo provide parallel programming that impacts the use of the park and has a similar seasonal pattern.



86% of users visit in the summer. Many respondents cited limited programming for not visiting year-round.



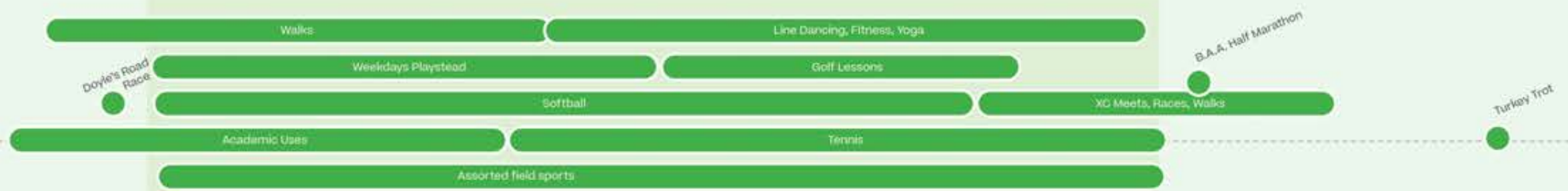
The afternoon is the most popular time to visit the park, followed by the morning, and lastly the evening.



Festivals & Gatherings



Athletics & Fitness



Park Events by Others



Proximity Determines Use

Accessing Key Sites

While many sides of Franklin Park are technically accessible on foot, almost two thirds of survey respondents stated they entered through Blue Hill Avenue - the majority of which arrived by car. There is an opportunity for improvements along the edges and connections across the park, which are reviewed in more detail in the Connections analysis. Increased communications about special events, as well as everyday park destinations could encourage exploration and enjoyment of all the park has to offer.

Neighbors entering on the West and North are within a close walk to secluded natural areas and active playspaces and sports fields. East arrival puts visitors in close proximity to special attractions, but lacks an easy route to a quiet walk in the woods, unless traveling along Circuit Path to Scarborough Pond. Equal access to the Circuit Loop, makes it a popular destination and a place for neighbors to come together.



Arriving from the West



Arriving from the North



Arriving from the East



Walk Times to Park Destinations

Distance mapping to primary park destinations and points of interests from each edge helps to interpret why some neighbors use certain parts of the park more than others.

From the West

Visitors approaching from the West are primarily neighbors, as there is no perimeter though-traffic on this edge. They have the fastest escape to a more secluded experience in nature, yet fewer destinations.

From the North

The North edge only has two main entries, but both are an easy and fast route to The Playstead and the Stadium. Entering from the North also brings you to Long Crouch Woods and the edge of the Wilderness.

From the East

The East edge boasts the main entrance to the park and zoo, but access to quieter walking trails is limited. The main Circuit Loop Path is a popular destination.



Walking to the Park



70%

of survey respondents said that they thing they appreciate most about Franklin Park is the **proximity to where they live**. This was the 3rd overall.

35%

of survey respondents who live close to the park visit at least weekly

Active Edges

Programs, Events, and Intensity of Use

The Boston Parks Department accepts reservations for requests ranging from events to athletics to cookouts in Franklin Park. The reservations are one way to look at park use and show how different areas within the park attract the most visitors and create pulses of activity. Overall land area and amenities inform, but do not directly relate to the most active areas. There is a concentration of activities along the western edge as well as the north and east. Along the southern boundary, the hospital and parks maintenance yard limit public access and use.

The variety of programs on the western side of the park spans the broadest range of offerings, from solo hikes and cross-country meets to youth play spaces. In contrast, the narrower band of park on the eastern edge offers a more focused set of activities, tied to families, play, and the zoo. The action plan is a chance to explore bringing the experience of nature more directly east as well as improve connections across the park.

Top Festivals and Events

The top 5 special events or festivals survey respondents said they attend:



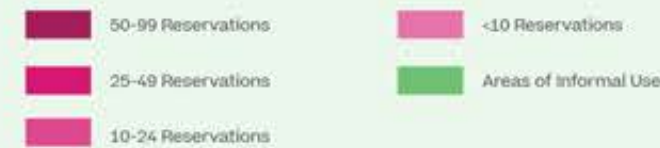
Community Memory

"Every memory there is important. When we had no car, the park was our fun. We created games, ran track and had family barbeques. The kite festival was always huge for us growing up!"

-Dorchester Resident,
Action Plan Survey



2019 Park Reservations



Distributed Events

The trails and less structured green spaces offer areas for people to engage in infrequent or seasonal park-wide events and festivals, athletic competitions, and larger gatherings of family and friends. These happen alongside more unstructured uses including bird watching, exploring, disc golf, cross country skiing, and informal housing.

Green Spaces and Trails

Park reservations data shows that 20% of events use green spaces and trails, engaging 44% of participants. The Cross Country Course sees seasonal use in September and October while the other places have more use year-round.

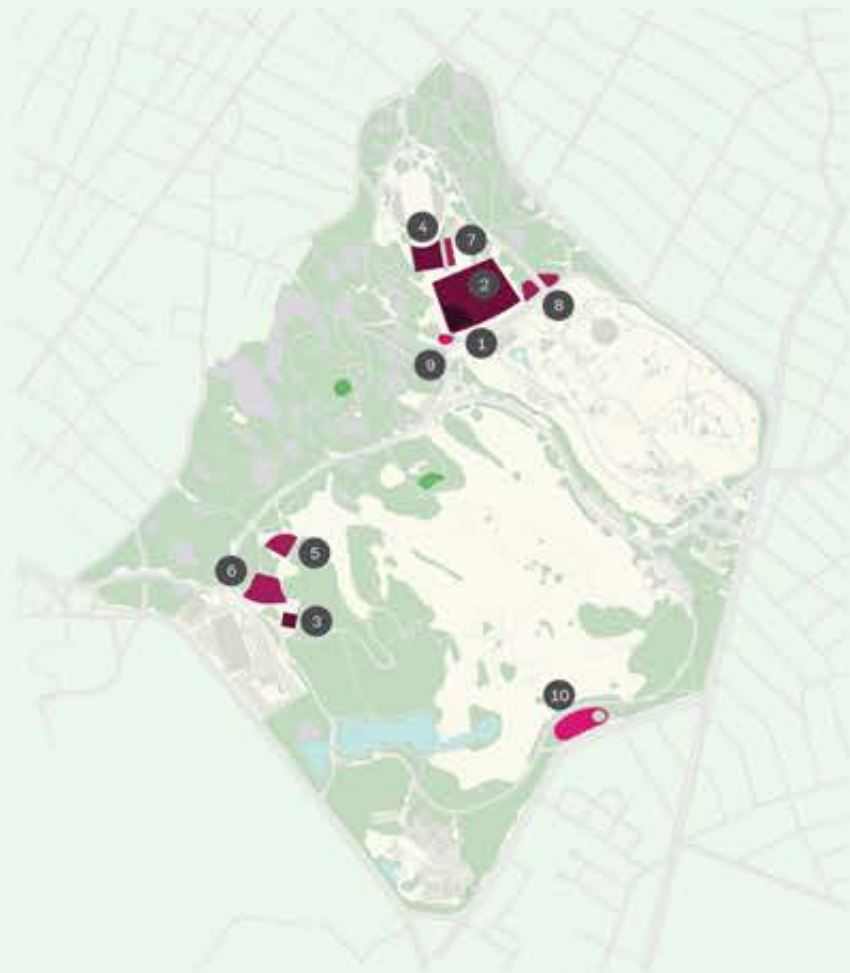
Park Places

- 1 Cross Country Course
- 2 Schoolmaster Hill
- 3 Refectory Hill
- 4 Adj. White Stadium
- 5 The Overlook
- 6 Circuit Loop
- 7 Scarboro Hill and Paths
- 8 Playstead
- 9 Bear Cage Hill
- 10 Ellicott Dale
- 11 The Wilderness

Park Places: White Stadium

The George Robert White Schoolboy Stadium, named for a local philanthropist, was built in 1945 and can hold up to 10,000 people. It is owned and operated by Boston Public Schools and has hosted hundreds of high school sporting events. White Stadium hosted Black Panther rallies and big concerts in the 1970s and partnered with the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts to host a 1974 soul concert with big names like Sly and the Family Stone.





2019 Park Reservations



Concentrated Activity

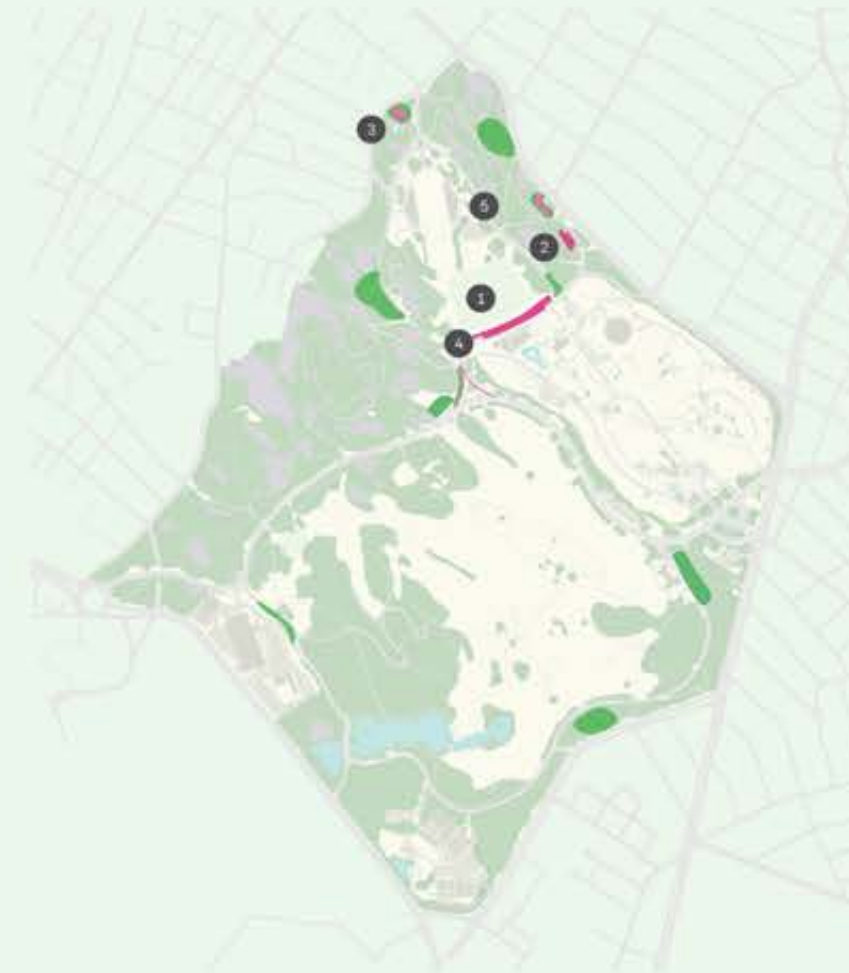
Some of the smallest areas in the park receive the most intense and consistent number of reservations. The events that occur here range from youth and adult sports to family barbecues, reunions, and birthday parties.

Sports and Picnic Spots

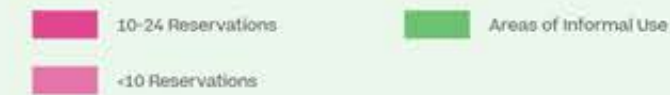
The park reservations show that 76% of the events occur here with 50% of stated attendees. There are more events during the spring and summer. There is more softball use in the spring while tennis reservations peak in August.

Park Places

- 1 Softball
- 2 Softball / Cricket Playstead
- 3 Shattuck Tennis
- 4 Playstead Athletic Field
- 5 Softball Ellicott Dale
- 6 Shattuck Picnic Area
- 7 Playstead Tennis
- 8 Playstead Picnic Area
- 9 Valley Gates Picnic / Parking
- 10 American Legion Picnic Area



2019 Park Reservations



Pockets of Informal Use

Some of the locations that saw the fewest event reservations in 2019 are supplemented by other spaces that provide similar activities. For example, the Wilderness and the Bear Cages can be places for play and exploration. Additionally, parking lots and roadways provide space for other uses like car cleaning or tailgating.

Playgrounds, Parking, and Roads

The park reservations show that <4% of the events occur here with 8% of stated attendees. The parking lots see the most reservations in May and June when they are reserved for park-wide festivals.

Park Places

- 1 Playstead Parking (White Stadium)
- 2 Tiffany Moore Playground
- 3 El Parquesito de la Hermandad
- 4 Jewish War Veteran Memorial Drive
- 5 Seaver Street Parking

Park Places: Elma Lewis Playhouse

The Elma Lewis School of Fine and Performing Arts erected the Playhouse stage to create an outdoor venue for students to perform for visitors. The Elma Lewis Playhouse continues to host events for children and adults throughout the summer months.



Park Places: Schoolmaster Hill

Schoolmaster Hill marks the location where Ralph Waldo Emerson lived for two years while a school teacher in nearby Roxbury before the park was constructed. A plaque with a segment of one of his poems commemorates his time there. Today, Schoolmaster Hill is a place for informal gathering and self-guided adventures.



Community Activities

Feedback on Current and Future Use

The experiences people have in Franklin Park have changed over time in response to evolving community needs and amenities the park offers. To understand how people use the park today, questions about park experiences, memories, and favorite activities were posed in the community survey, public workshops, and other forms of engagement. The responses captured a range of past, present and aspirational uses of the park.

While exercise is the top activity people typically enjoy in Franklin Park, users also consistently attend special events or festivals. These two patterns - the everyday visitor and infrequent user - were also reflected in other outreach. Better communication and more everyday activities for all seasons were requested, along with more events and event spaces.

Community Memory

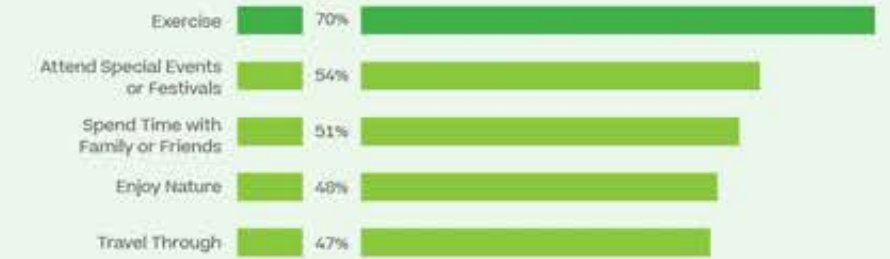
"As a young boy, I often walked around the park with my grandparents for exercise. I often tried to learn how to ride a bike there. Still haven't figured it out but will be good for my kids to try just like I once did."

-Dorchester Resident,
Action Plan Survey



Current Park Uses

Exercise is the top activity that people usually do in Franklin Park. The only other activity that is consistently in the top 5 across demographics is attending special events or festivals.



Neighborhood Favorites

People from all neighborhoods often visit The Zoo and Circuit Path, while Jamaica Plain residents are the primary visitors of the Western edge of the Park, including the Wilderness. When asked which places they typically visit in the park, more than 30% of survey respondents from each surrounding neighborhood said they visit these locations.



Encouragement to Visit or Spend More Time in the Park

Raising awareness of the park's offerings paired with more opportunities for people to visit the park daily and year-round would encourage visitors to come and spend more time in Franklin Park. Bathrooms scored high in another survey question and may reinforce the need for everyday amenities.



Answers prioritized by more than 25% of respondents.



Provide Shelter & Refreshment

The Role of Park Architecture Past & Present

The buildings that emerged out of the original plan and constructed within the first 30 years of the park's history had a prescribed set of uses based on Olmstedian values and were intentionally sited in the northern areas of the park. Constructed on a bed of puddingstone, built elements in the park used the material in their design, harvesting and blasting the stone out of the building site itself. Today, a shortage of viable indoor and covered space in the park, as well as the historical preservation of relevant existing structures and ruins, need to be considered.

The design of early built elements in the park was discrete in character. Location was carefully considered, both in how it was fitted to the site, and in its distribution, providing refreshment and comfort to visitors throughout. Today, the vast majority of these buildings and the resources they provided - food, water, restrooms, and shade - do not exist.



Park Amenities

Resources that were intended to be repeatedly distributed throughout the park for easy access, are primarily concentrated in the Golf Course Clubhouse today.



Park Architecture & Structures

- Existing Park Architecture & Structures
- Former Park Architecture & Structures (includes items intended, but never constructed)



The Golf Course Clubhouse

The original Golf Course Clubhouse was built in 1911 and was subsequently destroyed in WWII by artillery practice. The second clubhouse was built in 1949 and burned down suspiciously in 1975. The clubhouse operated within the burned out shell of the building until the current clubhouse was built anew in 1998. Today, it provides an event rental space, a cafe, golf and other equipment rental, and offices for the golf course. It houses the only public restroom within the entire park.



The Overlook Shelter

The Overlook Shelter, constructed on and of a puddingstone ledge overlooking the Playstead, was the only building Olmsted ever designed in his career. Serving as a base for park police, it also provided lockers, equipment storage and rentals, and restrooms at the basement level which could be accessed from the Playstead. A promenade with seating provided a viewing area for activities occurring on the fields below.



The Refectory

The Refectory was conceived by Olmsted as a place where, "refreshments [would] be served... under a large pergola or vine-clad trellis..." It was open between 1896-1906, after which it became a branch of the Public Library and eventually closed due to maintenance issues.



Cottages

Cottages, including the one on Schoolmaster Hill, were located near programmed and activity areas. Often multi-use, they served as small offices and meeting places, offered food and free hot water, and provided equipment rentals for lawn sports and changing rooms. In 1930, the Schoolmaster Hill Cottage succumbed to fire.



Springs

Drinking fountains, the 'utilitarian equipment of the place', were distributed throughout to provide a source of water to park visitors. They also provided neighbors with running water, which many of them did not have in their homes. The Abbotswood Spring, was referred to as the 'Healing Spring' and was believed to have restorative qualities.



Supporting Activity & Use Infrastructure & Utilities

There are four main utility dense areas: White Stadium, the Parks Maintenance Yard, the Golf Course, and the main entrance at Peabody Circle. Electrical infrastructure runs along major roadways and walking trails around the golf course and stadium. The Wilderness does not contain any infrastructure. Water lines are located near buildings, like the Stadium, Zoo, Clubhouse, and Circuit Drive, and sewer is available in Ellicottdale and the Playstead.

With major events, festivals, and plays, there is a need for utilities and services to support programming as well as meet the essential needs of visitors. Today, a lack of infrastructure - lighting, water fountains, bathrooms, and electrical jacks, among others - deters individuals and organizations from using the park, and places extra stress on maintenance staff.

#1

Bathrooms were the top investment prioritized by survey respondents (63% overall), and was consistently the top across demographics.

Places Needing Improvement

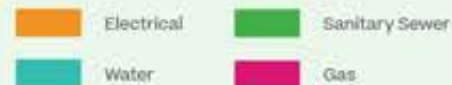
In the first public workshop, meeting participants mapped and commented on places within the park that need improvement.

Among the ideas were suggestions to make the park more hospitable through the following:

- Consistent lighting throughout the park to support evening or nighttime activities
- Ways to address places like the Wilderness where participants felt unsafe during evening hours.
- Lighting for Circuit Loop - which was described as 'dark at night' even for car traffic.
- Add bathrooms in areas of the park well-used by visitors, especially permanent bathrooms.



Park Utilities



Temporary restroom facility at Ellicottdale

Water/Sewer Utilities

Existing water infrastructure is located adjacent to existing buildings; White Stadium; the zoo; the golf course clubhouse; and within Circuit Drive. There is also an extensive irrigation system that serves the golf course.

Sewer infrastructure is available, but may be difficult to access in Ellicottdale and The Playstead. There is only one location with permanent bathrooms (Golf Course Clubhouse) and existing temporary toilets were observed in Ellicottdale and other permitted spaces indicating a possible need for rest room facilities in places that are often reserved for special events and other gatherings.



Lack of lighting or water fountains at Shattuck Tennis Courts

Electric Utilities

Electric infrastructure covers the major roadways and walking trails around the golf course and White Stadium, but no electric infrastructure is apparent in the Wilderness.

Inconsistent & Limiting Safety & Lighting

Lighting should enhance a sense of security by allowing pedestrians to easily perceive their immediate surroundings. The perception of safety is highly dependent on uniformity, clear viewsheds, reduced glare, quality and color of the light, and visual hierarchy to support wayfinding. Lighting challenges in the park today include varying light fixtures with different color temperatures, a lack of uniformity and hierarchy, overgrown vegetation and dark areas, broken fixtures, and glare.

Lighting in the park inconsistent and absent in key areas, like entries, parking, and main pedestrian paths, contributing to perceptions that visiting or travelling through the park in the evening is unsafe. Improving the quality, distribution, and uniformity of lighting can guide use and circulation, and enhance a sense of safety in the park.

#5

A greater feeling of safety was ranked fifth at 42% for what would encourage survey respondents to visit and spend more time in the park.



Light Fixtures

- Parking and Roadway Lighting - Inside Park
- Pathway Lighting
- Parking and Roadway Lighting - Outside Park
- Service and Stadium Lighting

Top Park Improvements

The following were listed in the top 10 park improvements:



Circuit Drive

The street lighting on Circuit Drive is not consistent. In some areas, the poles are spaced more than 200 feet apart. Large stretches of darkness, contrasted by small pockets of bright light create unsafe conditions for drivers and increase the possibility of car accidents. The pedestrian path does not have concentrated light at all, making bus stops and walking to parking lots in the evening unsafe.



Pathways & Parking

The majority of areas around walkways adjacent to Circuit Drive are completely dark, increasing the sense of insecurity and discouraging pedestrian use at night. Areas at the park's main entrance, including the bus stop and parking lots at Peabody Circle are unlit, which creates a significant sense of unease at an important threshold where visitors should feel welcomed.



The Playstead

Six different combinations of fixtures and poles with varying light quality are in use around the Playstead. This variety makes it difficult to achieve a unified aesthetic in the park. The combination of different solutions creates a visual discomfort that fatigues visitors' eyes and decreases their sense of safety. Popular areas such as the Seaver St. playground and Overlook ruins are surrounded by overgrown vegetation that blocks lighting.