



Community Meeting Notes

Project: BBF Pathways Conceptual Design
Date: April 13, 2023
Attending: Lauren Bryant (BPRD)
Shanna Dixon (BPRD)
Elena Saporta (ESLA)
Jae Lee (KZLA)
Kyle Zick (KZLA)
25+ public community members

Below is a summary of feedback received at this meeting organized by topic.

War Memorial

1. Interested in the health of the large willow behind the memorial.
A BPRD arborist has reviewed that tree and they address any safety issues.
2. In favor of removing and replanting the yew shrubs to frame the memorial. Who maintains these shrubs?
BPRD maintains these shrubs.
3. Water flows out of the catch basins in the memorial flooding the area, which impacts the condition of the paving.
4. Lights at the memorial don't always work. Consider uplighting to highlight monuments.
5. Like accessibility option 9.
6. Have the accessibility options been reviewed by the Disabilities Commission?
BPRD will review the entire project with them including the war memorial.
7. Like accessibility option 9.
8. Flooding does impact the condition of the memorial materials.
9. BPRD has cut back the willow to the trunk and it keeps coming back.
10. Prefer shrubs to be smaller and to be less of them. Existing shrubs gather trash and needles.
11. Like accessibility option 2, then 9, then 5.
12. This part of the park is discouraging because it is not Olmstedian.
13. Concerned about light pollution from the memorial lighting.
14. Like the edge protection added to the upper level of the memorial.
15. Like to have shrubs but agree they should be lower in height.
16. Lighting should include uplighting and directed flood lights
17. The path leading to the memorial is concrete and should be replaced with concrete.
18. Color of the lights at the memorial is ugly.

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O'Reilly Memorial

1. The crosswalk in front the memorial sees a lot of pedestrian volume. From the Richardson bridge to this area, it is not realistic that the landscape between the sidewalk and road will survive.
2. Prefer option D and like the stair connection at the back of the memorial.
3. Any landscape along the road won't be successful.
4. People will step over any knee high barriers.
5. Could the space between the sidewalk and road be permeable pavers?
6. More pedestrian volume comes from the north-maybe only widen the sidewalk on that side?
7. Would like a better trash receptacle than a 55 gallon drum.
8. Can recycling receptacles be added?

BPRD is rolling out recycling, but not to all parks at once. We are adding concrete pads to accommodate trash and recycling receptacles.

Evans Way Bridge

1. Some bridge options look like homeless could camp under the bridge.
2. Concerned about railing paint failure, could it be Corten steel?
3. What is vision for all 3 bridges? What is the condition of the 2 existing footbridges?
Replacing the 2 existing bridges is not in this project scope. The state inspects all BPRD bridges and determines their condition.
4. Don't like Shurcliff one off, like option C.
5. Secretary of Interior Standards for Historic Preservation advises that new elements in historic sites are of their time.
6. Could pleasure boating happen on the Muddy River again?
7. I really enjoy the passive park experience and want the bridge to have a timelessness.
8. Prefer option A
9. Will the bridge have lighting or just the path leading to it?

Chat

War Memorial

- 00:48:07 Have any veterans' groups asked for acknowledgement of Iraq or Afghanistan deployments?
- 00:49:00 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: No groups have reached out to me, and the Trust office hasn't mentioned anything to me when we have coordinated. But I will check in with them to ask.
- 00:50:18 important to minimize impacts to the willow's roots
- 00:50:59 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: Absolutely!

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- 00:51:13 Has the willow's vitality been assessed by an arborist?
- 00:57:12 I personally prefer that accessibility be obvious directly from the main path rather than requiring folks with mobility issues to have to travel farther than more able-bodied visitors. Option 9 accomplishes this and seems to protect the willow roots, too..
- 01:03:41 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: Lauren.Bryant@boston.gov
- 01:04:15 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/improvements-back-bay-fens-pathways>
- 01:04:26 Could you possibly put up the options of the paths again?
- 01:04:34 Can the options be displayed again?
- 01:04:47 Will the main pathway remain scored concrete, not asphalt?
- 01:06:00 Per my earlier comment, I agree that Option 3 also meets these criteria.
- 01:07:25 Kevin Cranston: A real survivor!
- 01:07:31 the Mighty Willow!
- 01:10:49 sorry-I like option 9
- 01:12:40 My prioritization would be 9, 5, 2 (9 most preferred; 2 least). I think hearing some from folks who would be using the ramps would be important on this decision.
- 01:13:29 With #2 you have to travel all the way to the far end of the circle to enter the accessible route to the lower (?) access path. #9 gives immediate access to both lower and upper portions from the main path. #5 has way too many switchbacks to be functionally or aesthetically pleasing and breaks up the circular form of the memorial.
- 01:13:35 I like 9 as well with curve of the new path..maybe the new entry path be moved to before the willow coming off the foot bridge? 9 in it's current state feels very close to the main entry
- 01:22:43 Is the goal to have wheelchair access from the upper to the lower level and the reverse?
- 01:23:41 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: Yes, the goal is to have access between the levels for wheelchair users.
- 01:24:11 If they repaired specific pads of concrete vs full replacement, can we keep the concrete?
- 01:25:21 I feel as the asphalt is to accommodate the packer trucks

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O'Reilly Memorial

- 01:32:12 The traffic signal across Boylston St. is still an issue (no automatic or timely pedestrian signal).
- 01:32:47 Kennedy Avery: I can check in on that — sorry to hear it's still an issue!
- 01:33:05 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: Thanks Kennedy!
- 01:35:55 I support stair access to the back path, as well as a widened sidewalk. I don't like the barriers to the monument itself.
- 01:36:14 A + B
- 01:38:03 FYI on the stone dust paths next to the sidewalk between the Fenway/Boylston intersection and the Boylston/Bowker intersection was lain down 5 (10?) years ago. Formerly it was grass (that is, dirt). Wider sidewalk all along would work better - to the point of the Red Sox (and even daily) foot traffic.
- 01:39:29 Happy to see the options and truly credit goes to Marie for advocating for this need. Glad to see things moving forward.
- 01:40:32 Making that crosswalk more of a speed hump to also slow traffic some would be great for those of us not in cars there.
- 01:41:09 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: Thanks for that comment
- 01:42:31 I just want to comment that the most beautiful side of this statue is facing the hill. I wish the Poetry and Patriotism figures faced out so that that faced the traffic.
- 01:43:54 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: I did bring up your comments to the Arts Commission. We are excited that the addition of the steps on the back side would help the 'back' not feel so much like the back.
- 01:45:29 Thanks, it's just that the "breadth" of the P&P duo faces a drop off hill, and is now shrouded in trees that have grown since 1915. Facing out would provide a span or breath that compliments the curve of the road there.
- 01:45:36 Kennedy Avery: Though somewhat paradoxical, I will say, PWD often finds that the best way to get rid of trash in a problem area is to remove the bin. Not wholesale but in a specific location

Evans Way Bridge

- 01:56:01 Was boat access in the master plan for the Back Bay Fens, and how do these three concepts fit that ability?
- 01:56:15 I continue to prefer the consistency of the Shurcliff design to the rest of the park.

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- 01:56:24 I like A for consistency with the other bridges in the park and C for the delightful leaf design.
- 01:58:52 I use the Boylston Bridge as the more permanent point of reference.
- 02:01:46 Is it wider?
- 02:02:07 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: Yes, we would make it wider to accommodate wheelchair access.
- 02:07:31 Remember the bridge leads from the museum end of the Fenway to three ugly giant corrugated storage bins in back of the field house plopped against the pathway that exists onto Park Drive. The storage bins are rented by Boston Latin and Emmanuel college and these are permitted by the contract with Emmanuel College with their formal use of the Clemente field house and surroundings..
- 02:07:46 This bridge is a major statement to the adjoining neighborhoods. I am open to all possibilities.
- 02:09:15 What would be the timeline for this bridge funding, design to build?
- 02:09:48 I'd like to hear more from neighbors who live and walk from the Fenway/Huntington side of the bridge.
- 02:10:06 If we do end up with the ash-leaf pattern (Concept C), could we have a plaque/signage linking it to the specimen tree that Elena pointed out? If if we lose that tree int the future, it could still make clear that the pattern was inspired by nearby ash trees (and possibly mention the most common species found in the area). Generally, thinking about ways to link the design explicitly to the surrounding area (and not just a pretty pattern that we liked).
- 02:10:52 CPA funds will be used for design and construction of the bridge.
- 02:12:13 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: Thanks, the ash tree is currently just a conceptual pattern. If we go with option C, the leaf patterns may shift, and interpretive signage related to that pattern and historic bridge information would be a nice add.
- 02:12:29 It was possible to rent small boats when the BB Fens opened. I have a photo of boaters from the 1890s/1900s
- 02:13:03 Thank you very much, exciting to see all these designs coming together!
- 02:13:53 Thanks, everyone. So thrilling to see all the attention to our beloved Fens!
- 02:15:39 Parks need more maintenance funds, thank you, Karen!
- 02:18:02 Can we enlist Volunteers from the many colleges in the area to gather trash, papers, etc?

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02:19:10 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: Lauren.Bryant@boston.gov

02:19:14 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/improvements-back-bay-fens-pathways>

02:19: And enlist Volunteers from Colleges as walking 2 by 2 Greeters. Like a presence, like the Guardian Angels in NYC 1980. Like not police but presence

02:19:56 So appreciative of the access and the transparency!

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