



Meeting Notes

Franklin Park Tennis Improvements Meeting #1

October 28, 2024

Attendees:

+/-54 public attendees
Lauren Bryant, BPRD
Cathy Baker Eclipse, BPRD
Luke Hines, City of Boston Mayor's Office
Avery Esdaile, BPS
Liz Sullivan, City of Boston
My'kel McMillen, City of Boston
Kyle Zick, KZLA
Yongjae Lee, KZLA
David Nardone, Vision Sports Design

Community Meeting #1 Summary

Overview:

The meeting provided an overview of scope of the Shattuck tennis courts project. The presentation noted recommendations from the Franklin Park Action Plan applicable to this project, historic design plans, and existing conditions. BPRD shared updates on ongoing and upcoming improvements in Franklin Park.

Project Design and Timeline:

A rough project schedule was outlined with 3 community meetings, city approvals, bidding and construction timeframes. Once a concept is finalized, a more precise schedule will be shared. Construction could start in the summer, 2025, but after Juneteenth.

Summary of Feedback:

- BPS high school tennis teams would like to utilize the courts for practice and matches. Some were concerned this could limit the use by the community. BPS use would be 3-6pm weekdays March to June.
- There were comments about tennis court removal by White Stadium.
- Comments for and against pickleball courts in this location were voiced.
- Court lighting is desired to extend playing time. Light pollution should be controlled.
- Can BPRD remove snow from the courts? BPRD has to prioritize snow removal from paths and other features.
- Expansion to 4 or 5 tennis courts is desired. The design team will review to see what can be accommodated given the vegetation, topography and other site features.
- Existing trees should be preserved. Some noted the dead trees east of the tennis courts. An arborist will review all of the trees within the project area.

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- Concern about lower meadow and changes to drainage that would limit water to the wetland. The design will not change drainage quantity to any adjacent areas of the park.
- Franklin Park tennis has been advocating for court expansion for years. They would like to see lighting, restrooms, water service, a shelter, community gathering space, and parking improvements.
- Shade structures will be incorporated per the action plan.
- Requests were noted for a tennis backboard and an equipment storage unit.
- The project requires City of Boston Landmarks Commission approval but not Conservation Commission approval.
- Can the gate to Scarboro Pond be opened to allow access to the parking and pathways? BPRD will look into.

Chat Log:

Lauren.Bryant@boston.gov

Franklin Park Tennis website <https://www.boston.gov/franklin-park-tennis>

Franklin Park email list sign up: <https://forms.gle/dQkZTounxc84wn9J6>

Bear Dens website: www.boston.gov/bear-dens

Overlook project website: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/franklin-park-overlook-shelter-programming-and-design-study>

- How many tennis courts will be removed with the new white stadium project? It is important to know that the white stadium proposal does result in the loss of those courts as far as we have seen.
- Hello all, I am representing the District 7 office for Councilor Anderson. If anyone has any feedback that they would like to share, feel free to also share it here along with the organizers of this meeting: Tania.anderson@boston.gov
- This is the first time I'm hearing of the school system to be involved in the use. So, that would limit the use of these courts for the community!
- Could you clarify the financing structure for this project. Also where are BPS tennis matches held now?
- Simply: right now there are 4 courts in total in Franklin park. If we are in fact Expanding, does that mean more than 4 courts in all of Franklin park??
- I have that same question and have reached out to Avery (BPS) for last year's schedule
- Will the courts be purely for tennis ie no sharing with pickleball.
- Please don't tell us that looking at the entire park is beyond the scope of this project: if White Stadium plan takes 2 courts out of FP, and "expansion" adds 2 courts, total is 0 gain.
- Interesting- glad to hear these trees will be protected. The white stadium demolition will take down between 70-140-157 trees- we can't find a final number.
- Courts should be available to a variety of walksheads.
- Adding thanks for avoiding tree removal.

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- Can city do something that allows to play in snow or winters
- I thought city policy was that all re-lining of courts must include pickleball: is this the current rule?
- So, will the BPS only need two of these courts at any given time during the March-June season? Otherwise, we will be diminished from the current two we use, when we are overflowing with demand in the afternoons and evenings.
- The current white stadium proposal removes the 2 courts. So 4 courts would not be a gain for the park overall. The plan did want to increase the number overall.

Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks 6:39 PM

Summary of Existing City Pickleball Courts

Existing Pickleball courts standalone

English High School (4) - Jamaica Plain

Moakley Park (2) - South Boston

Existing Pickleball courts that you have to bring your own nets

Billings Playground (3) - West Roxbury

DeFilippo Playground (1) – North End

South Street Mall (6) – Jamaica Plain

Boston Common (2) - Downtown

Malcolm X (2) - Roxbury

Existing Pickleball courts that utilize the tennis net

Fallon Field (1) - Roslindale

Walker Playground (1) - Mattapan

Dorchester Park (2) - Dorchester

Ramsay (1) - South End

Cassidy Playground (2) - Allston/Brighton

Orchard Park (1) - Roxbury

Peters Park (1) - South End

Malcolm X – (1) Roxbury

Boston Common (1) – Downtown

- A lot of the children who play tennis in HS learned to play tennis with the Franklin Park tennis association.
- How about lawn tennis lines on the ball field????
- I can't figure out how to raise my hand. Sorry. I'm concerned that you are not expanding courts but only relocating them,
- Will there be lights
- How about indoor courts or shed
- When the Action Plan called for the 4 tennis courts at Shattuck the White Stadium project was not on the table. With the White Stadium courts there would have been six courts. So is there any way to expand to six in Franklin Park

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- Keep it clean
- Add more parking
- How about installing lights for the tennis courts to enable evening plans?
With regards to pickleball courts in FP, PB players do not want to interfere with tennis at all. But the tennis courts near White Stadium were previously earmarked by the city to be lined also for pickleball. One was marked by the city. Now we hear that the courts near White Stadium are to be eliminated. So that's a net loss of pickleball courts. Are there any plans to rectify that?
- The picnic area has actually very few picnic tables, and that should be reviewed.
- I really like Jeannine's idea of a community space as well.
- Might it be possible to include a backboard or hitting wall in conjunction with the tennis courts?
- If twice as much space is to be paved can we get a reduction of paved area at the sadick?
- Great idea: show us what 4-5 courts would be...on site.
- I like the idea of some sort of shelter, congrats on lights, with more courts need more seating, also access to parking- can you open the locked gates near the courts?
- WOW! That's a lot of trees!
- If you go to the South to see parks that incorporates tennis courts, or pickleball courts, some are covered so you can play in the rain, or at least there is a covered area where people can go to escape the rain.
- The fence needs to be higher so tennis balls don't go out the court as much
- So this project is proceeding w zero current info about the disposition of the Shattuck?
- Please pull down all the dead trees that have been in front of the tennis courts for quite a few years. They are an eyesore to the Park.
- It's a shame that after Aurthur Ashe that people of color still don't have the same access of this sport. Tennis is an excellent sport that you can play for life, when our bodies get too old for other sports.
- Wouldnt it be nice if the Shattuck parcel had tennis courts :) I do wonder what the State can do, to support this neighborhood.
- ADA accessibility
- Port-o-potty is far less desirable than permanent toilet facilities...but much better than nothing.
- Lights will certainly expand access to tennis later after sundown.
- There are guidelines about the orientation of the courts with regard to the sun. Current courts are not properly oriented, can we explore that as part of the process.
- Please make sure any lighting is dark sky compliant, and directed down on the courts, not spilling out to the side and up
- Will there be planned maintenance of these courts and funding to do so
- What about a grass or clay court?
- Is there a Franklin Park master plan? It seems like this is happening in isolation from White Stadium and Shattuck.
- Just concerned about making such an investment and not maintaining it
- A separate backboard that has a fenced area would make a lot of sense, similar to the backboard at Almont Park.

Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks to Everyone 7:14 PM

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/franklin-park-action-plan>

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- Was water fountains discussed? I joined a bit late.
- Know that every space on the grass and concrete is used during Juneteenth, so I'm really interested to see what changes to that area will impact that event and others
- Thanks to all the FPTA players and supporters who joined the meeting today and shared their comments!
- What about fixed place for equipment storage?
- I may have missed this, but once construction starts, then how long will it take to have courts back in use?
- I believe she said construction will start after Juneteenth until end of 2025
- If porta potties, at anytime will they be locked?
- Thanks for spending significant time on simply listening to public...before proceeding. And the city really needs to look at the entire park vs only the area inside the red lines we saw earlier.
- Yes thank you for listening to the community.
- What would be something to derail or block the project? New courts has been a discussion for A LONG time.
- I agree with the previous comment. Looking at each of these projects as discrete activities rather than a comprehensive whole has potential for great conflict.
- This does sort of feel like displacement when you can use the space. Hopefully construction will be fast
- Can you make sure the walkway isn't blocked and still available for walkers/runner
- Correction: This does sort of feel like displacement when you can't use the space. Hopefully construction will be fast

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