

September 30, 2025

Penniman Community Meeting #1

PRESENT: My'Kel McMillen and Max Sell from Boston Parks Department, Moira McCrave from Councilor Breadon's office, Kaki Martin, Jennifer Ng, Melita Schmeckpeper, and Hannah Hardenbergh from KMDG, and Members from the Allston Community

Summary

- Max introduced the project and the team at the beginning of the meeting and discussed the agenda.
- This meeting was recorded.
- Kaki Martin presented context to situate Penniman Road Play Area in local transportation routes, nearby open space, and community groups that frequent the park. Kaki Martin also presented initial site analysis observations.
- The meeting concluded with a discussion of each 'section' or 'room' of the park: the lawn, the garden, the playground, and the courts.
- The design team shared the link to the online survey.

General Notes from the Community

At the start of the community meeting, the audience was asked to share where they spend the most time at Penniman Road Play Area, a thread that continued throughout the meeting. These notes summarize what was shared by community members, questions and comments that were brought up, and insight gained from the discussion:

- **The Lawn**
 - Multiple attendees felt the lawn was poorly connected with rest of park, and that the fencing made the area feel hidden away.
 - Multiple attendees emphasized the rats are a concern.
 - One neighbor mentioned an increase in dog walking, and that the lawn needed a more dedicated space for certain activities including for dogs.
 - Not enough shade.
 - Parks staff and community members agree that finding ways to activate the lawn area would be a positive step.
- **The Garden**
 - Several attendees have a plot in the garden. It is well-used adored. Attendees mentioned that gardeners have been struggling with the rat problem for years.

- Several community garden members do not speak English as their first language. Team discussed interpretation and translation resources for future meetings.
- More signage for how to get involved in the garden would be appreciated.
- The wait list for the community garden is quite long.
- **Playground**
 - The playground is well loved. Lots of kids live on Hano Street. BRB Child Care uses the playground daily as well.
 - Some interest in all-age fitness and wellness opportunities. Discussed outdoor fitness opportunities for seniors.
 - One attendee asked for a cooler, more colorful, and safer play surface.
 - One attendee asked for a water play area.
 - One attendee agrees with design team that space gets lost due to the number of fences around the playground. She didn't realize some of the benches were there because they are hidden by fences.
 - Brief discussion on fence types and minimizing chainlink fencing.
 - Playground would benefit from more shade.
- **Basketball courts**
 - One attendee mentioned that it would be nice to have some benches within the fenced area to store bags while they play basketball.
 - One attendee asked to make the hoops the same height, at regulation standards.
 - One member said that adding lights would make the court usable at night and make them feel safer.
 - There is a nearby adult daycare for adults with disabilities that use the court area for exercises

Questions from the Community:

1. Can the basketball court be also used for skating or other activities too?
 - a. *The design team discussed options for multi-stripe painting the court for hopscotch, science & math play, trike trail, etc.*
2. Can the Lawn be connected to the rest of the park?
 - a. *Design Staff and Parks Staff both confirmed that the City is not planning to move the community garden. The location and number of garden plots will not change.*
3. Can you post the flyer for the community meeting survey around the neighborhood?
 - a. *Parks staff mentioned they can do this in addition to making social media posts.*