

October 07, 2025

Ronan Park Community Engagement Meeting #3

PRESENT: Kezia Ofiesh and My'Kel McMillen from Boston Parks Department; Thomas Casper from Senator Nick Collin's office; Jessica Correia from Councilor Fitzgerald's office; Kaki Martin, Jennifer Ng, Melita Schmeckpeper, and Dora Mugerwa from KMDG; and Members from the Ronan Park Community

General Notes from the Community

At the start of the community meeting, the hosts asked the audience to share what they look forward to doing at Ronan Park this fall. They were also asked if they participated in past Ronan Park community meetings or if they were joining us for the first time. The meeting then started with introductions and project overview, followed by presentation and discussion. The meeting concluded with discussion and an overview of next steps and the online survey.

The notes below summarize what community members shared during the engagement meeting, questions and comments they brought up, and insight gained from the conversation:

- **The Gathering Space (labeled "Picnic" in Final Concept Design Plan) & other Seating**
 - Gathering Space
 - Several attendees expressed interest in tables and chairs, with one attendee noting that adults enjoy seating with backrests and another stating that this seating type works for smaller groups.
 - Several attendees also expressed interest in family picnic tables, which one attendee stated are ideal for parties.
 - One attendee asked for at least one game table, although another expressed concern that game tables will attract groups of adults drinking near play areas.
 - *KMDG Conclusion: We hear that people want a mix of seating options in the gathering space.*
 - Other Seating
 - Few attendees shared concern for placing seating behind basketball hoops. One attendee asked if they will be situated so that players don't run into them and asked the designers to consider placing seating on the sidelines.
One attendee asked if Artists for Humanity benches are being installed.
 - *City Response: Yes, but in the lower park.*
- **Play Layout**
 - Multiple attendees loved the Slide & Climb feature between the top of the hill and the bottom of the hill in the playground.
 - Many noted that they liked the natural play elements (i.e. the rocks), but disliked the metal slides because they get too hot in the summer.

- One attendee asked which swing location has a better view.
 - *KMDG Response: Play Layout Option 1, with swings at the top of the hill, has the better view.*
 - One attendee noted that water play feels very separate in both scenarios and asked if it can be between the two age groups (in Play Layout Option 2) so that neither age group feels excluded from water play.
 - *KMDG Response: Sometimes caregivers want to bring children to the playground without needing to negotiate bringing splash gear. Having a separate space allows for choice.*
 - Several attendees liked the larger water play area in Play Layout Option 1.
 - Multiple people preferred having 2-5 year olds separated and away from the tricycle loop.
 - *KMDG Conclusion: Majority preferred Play Layout Option 1, with 5-12 year olds and swings at the top of the hill, and 2-5 year olds separate at the bottom of the hill.*
- **5-12 Play Equipment**
 - Do you prefer a tall tower, net, or hybrid?
 - One attendee noted that kids in the neighborhood have asked for a tree house or similar.
 - Several attendees shared that kids love to go up high.
 - Multiple parents in the audience asked their children for input – many said tower or hybrid.
 - One attendee shared preference for an option where a parent can access a child if needed.
 - One attendee asked if a taller tower would provide great views from the top.
 - *KMDG Response: Height helps with the views and this is the intention with a tall tower.*
 - One attendee shared and many agreed that the newly renovated Ryan Playground on Dorchester Avenue near Savin Hill has a great tower structure.
 - *KMDG Conclusion: Majority preferred a tall tower or a hybrid.*
 - Do you prefer a big feature or a medium feature with many small pieces?
 - *KMDG Conclusion: There was a split response between big piece vs many small pieces, with the audience leaning towards including many small pieces and a diversity of play options.*
 - **2-5 Play Equipment**
 - Do you prefer a tall tower, net, or imaginary play?
 - Most attendees preferred a tower that includes imaginary play, specifically a “house tower.”

- Some attendees mentioned including a net and providing play value that helps small kids practice climbing and navigating on their own.
 - One attendee noted that nets can be challenging for toddlers.
 - *KMDG Conclusion: Majority liked a tower that has imaginary play.*
- Do you prefer a big feature or a medium feature with many small pieces?
 - Most attendees stated that for small children, one big piece is best.
- **Swings**
 - Most attendees preferred adding a group swing to the swing combination.
 - One attendee noted that there should be 2 belt swings so kids can swing next to each other.
 - *KMDG Conclusion: Majority want a group swing added to the swing combination.*
- **Water Play**
 - Multiple attendees wanted to combine types of water play.
 - *KMDG Response: This possibility will depend on available space.*
 - Several attendees liked combining In-Ground Spray + Loop or In-Ground Spray + Mist
 - One attendee expressed concern for Loop Spray as it would disrupt the aesthetic of the park and preferred In-Ground Spray as a result.
 - *KMDG Conclusion: Majority liked In-Ground Spray plus a Loop or Mist Spray.*
- **Sensory Play**
 - Most attendees loved the movement and sound option.
 - Several people shared that their kids enjoy the walkie talkie sound horns.
 - One attendee liked the touch and sound option.
 - One attendee noted that the learning panels will probably not be used much.
 - *KMDG Conclusion: Majority like the movement and sound option.*

Questions and comments from the Community:

1. If we go hybrid for the 5-12 play equipment, is there an opportunity for neighbors/orgs/councilors to help apply for additional funding?
 - a. *City response: We want to hear what play equipment people like and then we will work with playground vendors & with funding sources to try to achieve what people hope for. The current overall renovation budget is \$2.35M. This is a budget for the full project, not divided into particular buckets.*
2. Have the drainage issues of the splash pad been addressed?
 - a. *KMDG Response: Yes, we will address the drainage issue. The splash pad will be a completely new, up-to-date system.*
3. Will water fountains also have water bottle fillers as well?

- a. *City Response: Yes, this is BPRD park standard.*
4. Has automobile traversing been considered in regards to the path plans?
 - a. *City Response: We have been working with BPRD to make sure that the park maintenance vehicles can traverse the park. We are looking into adding an additional curb cut at the Mount Ida & Holmes intersection to further improve access for BPRD maintenance vehicles.*
5. Consider keeping a trash can by Percival and Marie is helpful - lots of dogs come by that corner, so not having to pass by the kids play area with poop bags is nice. Will trash cans have lids?
 - a. *City Response: Yes, we will use BPRD standard. They will have lids and be fully anchored to prevent overturning or theft.*
6. Please confirm the flagpole will be full size.
 - a. *KMDG Response: Yes, we will have a full-size flag pole.*
7. Community suggested considering bike rack locations. Sample locations include by the playground for kids who bike to play; by dog park; by garden of peace near Mount Ida; and by blue bikes on Mount Ida.
 - a. *One attendee noted that the Mount Ida intersection is dangerous because of cars. They suggested widening the sidewalk and adding Bluebike station and bike rack.*
8. What is the timeframe for the basketball courts and the mural? Any wall protection?
 - a. *City response: The mural is happening currently. They have prepped the wall and will be painting in the next few weeks. An anti-graffiti seal coat layer will be applied to the mural to help make it easier to clean if graffitied. The mural will be done by the time our renovations begin, and we will fully protect the mural during construction. We will be resurfacing and leveling the basketball courts.*
9. Are there plans for lower park?
 - a. *City response: While the lower park is not part of this project, BPRD is discussing future projects for the lower park.*
10. Consider repair for the stairs from upper park to lower park.
11. Attendees expressed concern about park closure during construction; BPRD clarified that construction does have to happen over a summer because of Boston's cold winter climate. Park closure during the summer unfortunately can't be avoided as a result.