



Community Meeting Notes

Project: BBF Pathways Design Update
Date: November 15, 2023
Attending: Lauren Bryant (BPRD)
Shanna Dixon (BPRD)
Rob Barella (KZLA)
Mike Doucette (KZLA)
Jae Lee (KZLA)
Kyle Zick (KZLA)
20+ public community members

Below is a summary of feedback received at this meeting.

1. Could the location of the proposed drinking fountain in the Victory Garden be moved to the central lawn instead of being along the Boylston Street/Park Drive sidewalk? Fountain should include a bottle filler.
The fountain location can be moved there and will include a bottle filler.
2. Will the access for the Victory Garden vehicular route have curb ramps on both ends?
Yes
3. Will trash receptacles be proposed in the Victory Garden central lawn area? and can they be nicer than the steel barrels?
Trash receptacles will be proposed in this area and will be the BPRD standard (not the steel barrel).
4. Are any benches proposed along the path closest to the Muddy River?
No benches are proposed currently. When the temporary fence for the Muddy River project is removed there will be more bench location opportunities.
5. The Fenway Victory Garden had previously seen more design options for the garden entry, are they being considering any more? Can a bench with shade be added?
After review with BPRD staff, it was decided the simplest option was the most in keeping with the character of this historic park. We will look at adding seating.
6. Will gardeners be able to drive on the interior paths or just the path near the river?
Gardeners can still drive on the interior paths, we are only restricting vehicular traffic from the pedestrian entrance on Boylston Street.
7. Will the cobrahead light at the O'Reilly Memorial be replaced?
That light is owned by DCR so it would not be replaced in the BPRD project.
8. The funding for O'Reilly that Fenway Civic helped to secure was for improved access, uplighting and landscaping. Will the designs include all of these? How do we prevent skateboarders or bikes using the back stairs as jumps?
Landscaping improvements are being considered. Uplighting is not something BPRD can do unless there is a friends group who can maintain them. We will study what can be done about the potential jumping of the stairs.

9. As a cyclist I am happy to see the granite pavers being removed at the O'Reilly sidewalk. Beyond the O'Reilly project area, how can the sidewalks be improved for bicyclists and pedestrians to coexist?

The sidewalks are owned by DCR, so any improvements would be determined by them.

10. *I remember seeing a previous O'Reilly option with a speed table in the road, is that still being considered?*

The option that regraded the road (but not as a speed table) involved too much work outside of BPRD property, so it isn't being considered.

11. Can the steel barrels for trash be replaced with better trash and recycling receptacles?

The BPRD standard trash receptacle can be installed. Currently BPRD does not offer recycling in all of the parks.

12. At the crosswalk by the O'Reilly the detectable warning tiles are broken, will those be addressed?

The City of Boston standard recently changed to cast iron tiles instead of plastic. We will consult with DCR on what tiles to use since they own that curb ramp.

13. I like the proposed meadow, bench locations, bike racks, and regrading of the path leading to the southern footbridge.

14. I like the War Memorial option 3NR.

15. At the Victory Garden there is a group of trees along the path near the river that will need to be protected during construction.

We will review those trees and provide the appropriate protection.

16. Will the stone seatwall near Agassiz Road and the Fenway be removed?

Yes, we have determined it is not historic.

17. Will seating be added near the Robert Burns memorial?

We are looking at seating locations near there.

18. Will new tree be proposed?

Yes, we are reviewing the existing trees and proposed tree planting.

19. In the proposed meadow will the 3 existing Willow Oaks remain?

Yes

20. Several trees were planted for Arbor Day this year. Are those in the tree inventory?

We have to confirm if those were inventoried, but we are aware of those new trees.

21. Will age friendly benches be used?

Benches will have armrests, backs and have a companion space to the side.

22. Can a bike rack be proposed for the Victory Garden?

Yes.

23. Where will the accessible bulletin board be located?

It is shown near the proposed path to the Herb and Medicinal Garden. We will develop the details more to share.

24. The Fenway Victory Garden was shown proposed meadow locations between the gardens and path A, are those still being considered? Is the fencing at the composting still being proposed?



Yes, both are still proposed-we weren't able to show that at tonight's meeting given the quantity of topics to cover.

25. Can wifi be added in the Victory Garden?

We can look into that.

26. Will stabilized stonedust be used on the stonedust paths?

The Muddy River project installed unstabilized stonedust and BPRD is not planning on replacing the new paths.

27. What bike facilities are being proposed on Agassiz Road?

We know DCR and the ACOE were discussing, but we have not heard what the final decision is.

28. Will the project include soil stabilization around the mature trees behind the O'Reilly?

As we further develop the project documents we can determine what fits into the scope/budget.

Chat Summary

00:24:25 Joshua Champagne: Hi all, my name is Joshua Champagne here from the office of Councilor Tania Anderson. Nice to be here, if there are any questions or comments please feel free to email the councilor Tania.anderson@Boston.Gov

00:25:13 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks (she/her): Lauren.Bryant@boston.gov

00:25:21 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks (she/her): <https://www.boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/improvements-back-bay-fens-pathways>

00:40:17 Does "existing light pole" allow for a change in the nature of the lighting fixture itself?

00:40:43 are the lights along the A row of the victory gardens going to be changed ?

00:42:24 It is the flood lights that many of us object to.

00:42:54 O'Reilly and Row A by the gardens

00:43:06 Replying to "are the lights along..."

For those of us not familiar with FGS path lettering, is this the path parallel to Boylston from Park Drive to the Boylston St Bridge?

00:43:28 Replying to "are the lights along..."

yes... enter gardens and turn left

00:45:37 One of the paved paths in the Fenway Victory Gardens was recently repaved - the one that goes through the middle but that is somewhat parallel to Park Drive

00:49:46 There is a publicly accessible Herb Garden to the right of this entrance that should be taken into consideration.

00:50:27 Is there a reason why the drinking fountain is on the exterior of the garden as opposed to interior?

00:50:33 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks (she/her): Thank you yes, the publicly accessible plots will have a new accessible path to them.

00:50:40 Terrific!

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00:51:00 Lauren Bryant_Boston Parks (she/her): Thank you for your comment on the drinking fountain, is there a specific location internal to the gardens that you think would be a better location for the gardeners?

00:51:46 Yes, there is a water hookup near the current sign. There used to be a water fountain in the 70's I think.

00:52:30 do you want all the questions on victory gardens now? or during discussion

00:52:59 Great improvement on welcoming and informative signage for the FVG entrance - thank you!

00:53:14 will there be a curb cut at both ends of the back path?

00:53:26 Will there be trash barrels near the entrance

00:54:17 I agree the drinking fountain should be in the interior.

00:54:53 Any progress on recycling receptacles? It is very embarrassing to not have that in a community gardening environment.

00:56:14 There is a large stone in front of the Herb and Medicinal Garden. Would that be able to be moved at the same time as the Memorial Rock?

00:58:57 Acorns (lights) would be great.

00:59:01 I had been concerned at the lack of vehicular access proposed for the internal part of the park, despite supporting the work on the rear path for contractors and dumpsters and large heavy equipment. But we do use the central paths as gardeners for drop-off, and police and EMT vehicles from time to time. Will vehicles will be able to traverse those paths?

01:00:43 Great, thank you! Appreciate that.

01:01:19 The central path is used for when we have very large deliveries from Home Depot and at times other large trucks.

01:05:06 O'Reilly: What color pavement? Can it be light

01:05:35 How far will the sidewalk be widened along Boylston Street? Will it go as far as the Boylston Bridge?

01:05:57 O'Reilly: I like the overall accessibility approach.

01:06:39 What's the plan for pedestrians and cyclists to co-exist safely in this area ?

01:15:30 Kennedy Avery (she/her): Apologies all, I have to be going. I'm grateful for everyone's continued participation in this process. I think tonight's discussion was very comprehensive and detailed. Please feel free to reach out to me with any further comments/questions you would like to relay to Councilor Durkan
Kennedy.Avery@boston.gov

01:20:19 That also would remove several wait times for cyclists between vehicular traffic if DCR could implement that

01:21:49 Thank you for addressing the odd end of the path behind Clemente Field and linking it to other paths and not just the basketball courts.

01:24:52 As a cyclist, I would caution against changing bike access at the O'Reilly crossing before we see how widening the pathways pretty significantly affects the conflicts people have talked about. I haven't seen any such conflicts myself, and I wonder if people are worrying more than actual conditions merit.

01:28:37 O'Reilly: Love universal design!

01:28:38 War Memorial: 3NR - that's beautiful

01:29:18 War Memorial:: Access is worth the money.

01:30:25 War Memorial: Can you remind us of the lighting plan for that space?

01:31:11 War Memorial: Looks good - thank you for reworking the design

01:31:22 War Memorial: Should we take a poll? I like the access improvement!

01:31:41 War Memorial: Very thoughtful design!

01:32:07 War Memorial: 3NR doesn't look like it's patched on and it seems to give the memorial a greater dignity, which it deserves

01:32:19 War Memorial: The largest event I've attended there was on ANZAC day, with elderly vets in wheelchairs, and folding chairs, I believe on the lawn, like the slope towards podium

01:33:03 War Memorial: Agree with other comment, doesn't look like an afterthought and actually reinforces the symmetrical design.

01:33:08 War Memorial:

I didnt know ANZAC day was observed in the US!! was the event at 5 or 6 am , as it is in NZ?

01:33:15 War Memorial: Love the uplight for the amazing winged statue

01:37:10 War Memorial: Thank you for the thoughtful approaches!

01:40:09 Replying to "The largest event..."

No, it was a morning event, maybe 3 or 5 years ago

01:40:32 Perhaps I missed this, but will new benches be age-friendly? Just remembered that Boston has an age-friendly bench program: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/age-strong-commission/age-friendly-boston/age-friendly-benches> Thank you for such well-thought out improvements.

01:40:43 Thank you so much!

01:41:19 Thank you!

01:47:11 Seconding question about soil improvement and trees between O' Reilly and Mothers Rest.

01:48:40 That makes sense about the pathway material! I wonder if we may need a maintenance plan for the stone dust paths

01:49:12 And Jeff Parenti has just left DCR, but that's good to know and we can work with them to continue that conversation

01:49:42 Thank you

01:51:01 Thanks so much - looks great!

01:51:07 thank you!!

01:51:10 Thank you!

01:51:11 Thank you all!