



**Dorchester Park Pathways
Tree Community Meeting
Meeting Notes**

Date: September 17, 2024
Time: 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Location: Zoom

Attendees

Nellie Ward - Project Manager, Boston Parks and Recreation Department [BPRD]
Liza Meyer, Chief Landscape Architect, BPRD
Todd Mistor, Director of Urban Forestry Division, BPRD
Shana Dixon, Graphic Arts Technician, BPRD
Madison Foley, Liaison, Office of Neighborhood Services, City of Boston
Ray Dunetz - Principal, Ray Dunetz Landscape Architecture [RDLA]
Community Members

The following summarizes the meeting discussion:

1. Presentation of the PowerPoint
 - a. Nellie welcomed the Community to the fourth public meeting, which focused on tree removals. This was the first Community Tree Meeting for the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. Nellie will be the PM and primary contact for the project.
 - b. Nellie will post the presentation and meeting notes on the project website in about a week.
 - c. Nellie instructed attendees on how to type comments in the chat room, and we will address them in the Q and A section of the presentation.
 - d. Nellie reviewed virtual meeting etiquette, zoom tips, project overview, agenda, team introductions, project schedule, and project scope of work. Refer to the attached PowerPoint for detailed text content relating to these topics.
 - e. Nellie presented the agenda, including project team introductions, the project schedule, an overview of tree removals, trees that may be removed for canopy health and management, trees that may be removed for design and accessibility, listening and discussion and next steps.
 - f. Nellie introduced the design team and Todd Mistor, Director of the Urban Forestry Division.
 - g. Nellie clarified this is a Pathway renovation project focusing on path renovation and accessibility.
 - h. Nellie reviewed the project schedule:
 - i. We have three community meetings before this meeting.
 - ii. The design team provided cost estimates, and more funding [\$500k] was added to the project.
 - iii. We worked with the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board to permit Variances where required due to site limitations and the project budget.
 - iv. We are now in the 60%Construction Documentation phase.
 - v. If everything goes according to plan, we hope to wrap up the construction documents and bid on the project this winter/spring 2025.
 - vi. Construction is anticipated in 2025.
 - vii. Construction is anticipated to last 9 to 12 months.
 - i. Nellie stated the purpose of this meeting is to notify the public of which trees will be removed for Design purposes as part of the City of Boston Tree Ordinance.

- j. Nellie presented the definitions of Type 1 Removals - trees that may be removed for canopy health and management and Type 2 Removals - trees that may be removed for accessibility and design. Nellie shared images and diagrams for each type of potential removal. The Urban Forestry Department will remove the Type 1 trees, budget allowing, on a separate schedule and budget. The Pathways project will focus on Type 2 tree removals for trees susceptible to construction within the critical root zone.
 - k. Bartlett Tree Experts provided an assessment and recommendations for all trees within 15' of the path. Nellie, Max Ford-Diamond, BPRD Tree Warden and RDLA walked the site to review the trees Bartlett proposed for removal. Based on this meeting, RDLA adjusted the planned removals.
 - l. Nellie presented a graphic of the potential trees requiring removal for accessibility near the ballfield and the Richmond Street entrance. They stated that the Richmond Street entrance will likely be an alternate in the Bid as it may fall outside the budget.
 - m. Proposed improvements include repaving and new ramps at critical locations in key residential areas and within the park. The budget for pathway projects typically doesn't include renovations to seating site furnishings, lighting, new planting, playgrounds, and sports courts, which generally are part of a complete park renovation project.
 - n. BPRD wants to ensure the park program is accessible from different points around and through the park.
 - o. BPRD may only be able to afford some of the improvements. If the bids exceed the project budget, the area at Richmond Street may not be included.
 - p. Nellie reviewed the current accessibility diagram.
 - q. Nellie reviewed the two areas where trees may need to be removed. BPRD's goal is to save as many trees as possible; trees are essential to the city, the community, and climate resilience, but sometimes we have to remove healthy trees in order to meet other community needs and to make the parks more equally accessible to all levels of physical ability.
 - r. Nellie explained the impact of construction on trees within the critical root zone. In situations where damage to a Critical Root Zone is inevitable and the impact of construction causes severe stress, we need to plan for that tree's death and subsequent removal.
 - s. The bid specifications will provide tree protection measures in order to try to save as many trees as possible in keeping with BPRD goals.
 - t. Nellie reviewed the new walkway to Hutchinson Street and the access ramp proposed for the back of the retaining wall to provide universal access to the tennis courts and the rest of the park.
 - u. Nellie reviewed the trees near the playground that the proposed ramps at the Richmond Street entrance may impact.
 - v. The Urban Forestry work may take several years.
 - w. No funding is set aside for replanting new trees for this Pathways project.
2. Nellie reviewed the questions that were submitted via chat.
- a. A community member mentioned walking in Dorchester Park and noticing the signs on the old, beautiful trees by Richmond Street. They recognized that BPRD was making its best effort to save them. One tree near this area was identified with a sign on it. Nellie mentioned that the design team further studied a tree at the corner of this intersection that we think we can save which needs further study by the Design team.
 - b. A community member asked if the design team considered a plan that minimized tree removal. Nellie responded that this set of design, construction drawings, and specifications will include many protection measures for the existing trees so that the contractor is held to specific requirements when working on the site with construction vehicles and material storage to minimize any impact on the existing trees.
 - c. Richard stated that two new trees were planted near the Richmond Street entrance. Nellie mentioned they would need to look at those if they were planted after the Tree Survey was completed.

- d. A community member asked if the design team plans to diversify species as new trees are planted. Nellie responded that the Urban Forestry Division's goal is to plant a diverse canopy. The attendees mentioned that the park is mostly Oak. The Beech trees are diseased and will eventually die. There are some cherries and locusts as well.
 - e. Richard mentioned that the park may qualify for Arboretum grants if it plants over 100 different species.
 - f. A community member asked if the cobblestone gutter would be protected as part of the work. RDLA responded that the cobblestone gutters would not be removed. If the Alternate ramp at Richmond Street is approved in the bids, the cobblestone will be renovated, and new cobblestone gutters will be added to direct the runoff to the existing catch basins. RDLA also mentioned that crowning the paths will help slow water down and improve drainage.
 - g. A community member asked how the design respects the Frederick Law Olmsted plan. Nellie responded that the path would remain the same, with paths to Hutchinson and access ramps added. Richard, president of the Friends of Dorchester Park, believed the plan was respectful of Olmsted. He also mentioned that the stone wall was built during the WPA era, and he couldn't think of a better solution for access than the one that the designers came up with.
 - h. Richard also stated that the Friends have some money in the bank that could be used to pay for the park. Nellie will follow up with him after the meeting.
 - i. Richard planted three dogwoods at the South Dot Ave. entrance, but they are not doing well and may suffer from Anthracnose, a common disease affecting this species.
 - j. A community member stated that there was universal access from Richview close to the ball fields, but she didn't see it in the new plans. Nellie confirmed the ramp was included in the plan.
 - k. A community member was concerned about the mature trees at the Richmond Street ramp.
 - l. A community member expressed concern about the poison ivy in the park.
 - m. A community member expressed concern about the vine growth "smothering" the trees.
 - n. A community member stated that "the enjoyment of Dorchester Park comes from the sense of being immersed in the quiet green around a relatively populated area. Removing trees in sections 3 and 7 seems like we'd lose a significant amount of canopy."
 - o. A community member asked if the closing of Carney Hospital factored into the design. Would the design provide access from the parking lot? Ray stated that park visitors often park in their parking lot and enter the park through a breach in the fence. Liza said she was unaware of this and would investigate it. She mentioned it is certainly a possibility in the future.
 - p. A community member asked if the path would remain open if the City could not afford the Richmond Street entrance. Nellie responded affirmatively.
 - q. A community member mentioned that they heard there was a lead line to the bubbler. Nellie thought those were replaced, but they will follow up.
 - r. Someone mentioned a gentleman sleeping in the woods. Nellie will look into it.
2. Nellie provided their email address for anyone asking questions after the meeting.
 3. Nellie thanked attendees for all the feedback they provided.

The author assumes this to be an accurate transcription of this meeting unless notified otherwise in writing by those present within five business days.

Prepared By:



Ray Dunetz, PLA, ASLA
Principal