



BOSTON COMMON

MASTER PLAN

FROM: Boston Common Master Plan Team

DATE: September 29th, 2020

SUBJECT: Open House #3 - Discussion Forum #3 Summary Notes: Performances and Active Recreation

Panelists: Nate Frazee, *Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD)*
Bob Mulcahy, *Friends of the Public Garden (FOPG)*
Cheri Ruane, *Weston & Sampson (W&S)*

This Discussion Forum consisted of a brief panelist introduction followed by a summary with supporting slides of proposed concept areas including the Parkman Bandstand, and the area spanning the Athletics Fields to the Earl of Sandwich plaza.

Dog Park

- **Panelist:** Through our observations and comparisons between other dog parks, you are looking at a standard use area of roughly 12-15,000 square feet which seems to align with the amount of space that can be made available for dogs on the Common.
 - **Attendee:** I disagree with the size of the enclosed dog park. The space north of the bandstand is large and heavily used and it was not in the analysis. I feel that the proposed space of the dog park is too small. My recommendation is that the dog park be expanded toward the Earl of Sandwich and provide a longer run and allow the dog area to include hillside as dogs can handle grade change. That hillside could easily be included in a dog run as it is not well utilized today and the proposed seating in the hillside can be shifted toward the fields more.
 - **Panelist:** This concept will be further refined through this master planning process and will undergo a more detailed design process when this area is funded for improvements down the road. There will be more opportunities for public comment as part of that process.

Bandstand

- **Attendee:** I am wondering how close the Athletics field is to the Bandstand.
 - **Panelist:** It is about 300'. We are not proposing moving any existing features, instead we are just reconfiguring the field-use and improving existing spaces.
- **Attendee:** Why were the trees and benches removed from the bandstand in the past?
 - **Panelist:** They were Elm trees and succumbed to Dutch Elm disease so had to be removed due to decline. Benches were slowly removed over time due to changing use and maintenance requirements.
- **Attendee:** The Bandstand does not have much shade so maybe that is why it is not very well used.
- **Attendee:** Shakespeare on the Common leaves a large mark on the Bandstand area. What can be done to reduce this heavy use footprint on the grass during and after an event?



- **Panelist:** We are building in designated back-of-house areas to relieve some of the heavier use from the grass areas. In the plans, you can see it along larger malls and in front of the tennis courts. Paved areas for staging vehicles and heavy equipment has been incorporated into the proposed plan.
- **Attendee:** I am all for more trees but am worried that if we line paths with trees and add them within the Bandstand area, the heavy vehicular use will damage them, and they may not survive.
 - **Panelist:** We are aware of this and our goal is to mitigate those issues. We are trying to manage how and where events set up and reconsider vehicular routes and use. Enforcing vehicle use and movement through the Common not even just during events is something we are focused on as part of the solution.

Parade Ground

- **Panelist:** The Parade Ground is highly used and permitted but not all events that happen on the Parade Ground need to happen there. Providing other areas to distribute the load would help. The maintenance and needs of the soil in that area compound to make the Parade Ground a place we need to be careful about piling events onto. We are looking at adding in trees to frame the Parade Ground area.
- **Panelist:** There will be discussion in the report on how use of the Parade Ground can be more sustainable and if some of the events that happen there now should be relocated.
- **Attendee:** Why are there floodlights all over the Common right now? They are pointed in strange areas and are bolted down. Wondering what the boundaries of temporary fixtures are because sometimes things are installed and stay for so long.
 - **Panelist:** They were installed temporarily so attendees of protests could have a safer experience on the Common. I believe The Parks department has them there for protest preparation, but BPRD will investigate this and find out when they will be removed.
- **Attendee:** I suggest more benches be added facing the park on both sides of Charles and Beacon St. sides of the Parade Ground.
 - **Panelist:** Agrees that benches looking into the park are nice. We are looking to line pathways and malls with benches and finding a balance between access and useability.
- **Attendee:** Public monuments need to be thoughtful on the Common. They have sometimes found a home on the Common because there was no other logical location. In other cases, they are very deliberately designed for and placed on the Common. I would like the city to be more deliberate about what monuments go on the Common and support contemporary work.

Athletics Area

- **Attendee:** I like the location of the new public restroom just north of the athletic fields and near the Charles St. mid-block entrance as they would also benefit users of the Public Garden.
- **Attendee:** How does Tenacity feel about the tennis courts being end to end? Also wondering if tennis courts could lend themselves to being used for pickleball and other sports.
 - **Panelist:** Tenacity seems to be more focused just having two courts available for use rather than orientation. Yes, pickleball can be on tennis courts. The City is working to bring them into every neighborhood. Pickleball courts can be striped onto tennis courts for multi-use. More detailed decision-making like striping locations will take place during design development of the project. There will be an opportunity for public comment at that time.



- End of Discussion Forum #3 Summary Notes -