

MacDonald Park Improvements

Public Comments

deadline May 26, 2016

Date and Time	Topic on Which You are Submitting Your Comment	Comment	Name	Address	City	State	Zip	Email	I would like to receive future DCR updates
4/26/2016 21:49		<p>Proposed Improvements to Macdonald State Park, Medford</p> <p>We have not yet seen details but understand that there is a budget to upgrade the paths in the park.</p> <p>As a resident of 3920 Mystic Valley Parkway, I visit the park almost every day and really appreciate it as an amenity. We have a 2 year old son, and he loves to visit there to play, meet other children, and look at the wildlife.</p> <p>However, we have long discussed that there are some things that could be improved. Our priorities would be:</p> <p>1) a children's playground, probably located along the banks of the main area of the park opposite Gold's Gym , near the Mystic river by also near the parking lot so that it is easily reached by those who drive there. (We are lucky enough to walk but often meet visitors who drive.) .This should be shaded in summer and sunlit in winter. (Annual trees please!)</p> <p>2) A dog run so that owners can exercise their pets and not have an excuse for not leashing them.</p> <p>3) a moratorium immediately on any further use of park grounds for week clearing from the river. This is an abomination and every summer makes most of the central area of the park unusable due to the smell.</p> <p>4) a boat dock.</p> <p>5) path upgrades as needed.</p>	Michael Gresty	3920 Mystic Valley Parkway, Apt 1111 Boston, MA 02155 US	Boston	MA	02155	michaelgresty@gmail.com	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic

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4/26/2016 21:49		<p>McDonald's Park Comments:</p> <p>There are over 50 children (and that number is rapidly growing given the demographic shift in Medford as well as the other communities nearby) only in the 2 buildings of 3920 Mystic Valley Parkway, Medford, it makes sense to create a playground for children in the McDonalds Park. There is no such space today where children from very early age can gather and play in a safe environment. We need something that would work for infants, toddlers, and small children who cannot necessarily bike on their own or play with balls in the green areas. That would also create more of a gathering place and sense of a community, which is generally lacking given the sheer size of the park as well as the lack of any basic infrastructure.</p> <p>One of the main reasons I bought a condo in the building was the park right across with the hope my infant can make great use of it.</p> <p>This playground should be located far from the highway and the cars, far from the exhaust gases - there are few very good locations for such a playground towards the river that are flat and sheltered.</p> <p>Pavement needs to maybe be changed at some point but it really is NOT a big priority and we can leave with the current pavement for few more years. New pavement will not make the park more desirable, lively, or used.</p> <p>Please also stop the removal of weeds in the park. this has happened for the past few years exactly in the only place where you have a vista towards the water. This has cut the connection of the park to the river entirely and the sharp smell repelled users of the park for months at a time. This should be made illegal or heavily penalized.</p>	Irina Mladenova	3920 Mystic River Parkway, apt 1111 Medford, MA 02115 US	Medford	MA	02115	mladenova@post.harvard.edu	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic
4/27/2016 18:57	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>We need a playground in the park - away from the cars and the exhausts. There are 60+ children in the 3 tall buildings right next to the park. Yet no facilities in the park that can also act as a focal point for building a community. Today we walk with my son around the park to find other children to play with. There are good spots in the flat areas towards the river that are safe and far from the heavy traffic for a playground.</p> <p>We heard there is a re-pavement initiative. That is not a priority by any means. We can live with the paths as they are as long as the park is activated by a playground. In addition, please do not repave or take out weeds in the summer and spring when the park is most heavily used. Weed removal there should be not authorized and heavily penalized - this is happening now several years in a row exactly at the only place where water and land meet and the best vista point in the park. THe grass cannot regrow - we took pictures. It used to smell very badly for months.</p>	Irina Mladenova	3920 Mystic River Parkway, apt 1111 Medford, MA 02115 US	Medford	MA	02115	mladenova@post.harvard.edu	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic
5/10/2016 22:46		Needs increased security. I never use the park currently because as a single female I do not feel safe. (Might be helpful to have more emergency call boxes at least?)	Helaine D	50 station landing , Apt 601 Medford, MA 02155 US	Medford	MA	02155	ddonnell@uchc.edu	

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5/14/2016 20:21	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	I was walking through McDonald park on a regular basis but the last 2 visits (may 10 and 13th) my dog had multiple ticks on him in minutes. The first time I thought it was a fluke, second time there were 3 on him, luckily when I saw the first one I checked him, none were able to attach. He is leashed and only goes to the edge of the vegetation. I am hoping there will be some efforts to eradicate them in some way. I will be skipping the park on my walk and stay out at the street. Also the water need the small wooden look over closest to the police station is the worst I have ever seen it. I am glad to hear they are planning to erradicate the invasive species in the area, the vines are horrible to look at among other things. Thank you for your time, Lisa Freedman	Lisa Freedman	82 myrtle st Medford, MA 02155 US	Medford	MA	2155	firebus1@yahoo.com	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic
5/17/2016 18:23	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>In your effort to remove opportunities for "inappropriate activities", please don't flatten or remove all the quiet areas of the park. Increasing the number of visitors will do a great deal to decrease unsavory loiterers. The crumbling asphalt path behind the State Police barracks could be left as a dirt path--once you take up all the asphalt, you will also have removed the fallen trees that are the main reason people avoid it now. The phragmites, even if non-native, are also beautiful, and children love running through the tunnels. Despite being a defenseless middle-aged woman, I have often taken walks in the reeds myself. Replacing the reeds with an impenetrable tangle of native vines and thorny bushes (as exists further north along the Mystic) would be throwing out the baby with the bathwater.</p> <p>To increase the number of visitors means increasing awareness and also, I'm afraid, parking spaces. As you said at the meeting, the existing lot is typically full on nice days. But the end of the Meadow Glen shopping mall close to the park is never crowded. If you put a big sign there, with a big arrow saying something like "MacDonald Park This Way" people could park there. I guess you would probably need an on-demand pedestrian light, as there is at Fresh Pond by the Dunkin Donuts.</p> <p>Similarly, people at Hormel Stadium and the McGlynn School could be reminded of the lovely park just a little way down the path. So putting signs there would help increase visitors.</p>	Alice Flaherty	22 Union St. Cambridge, MA 02141-1332 US	Cambridge	MA	02141-1332	flaherty.alice@mgh.harvard.edu	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic

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5/17/2016 19:54	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>As residents (and condo owners) of 3920 Mystic Valley Parkway, directly opposite the viewing platform in the Park, my wife and I, along with our 2 year old son, are frequent visitors to the Park and have a great interest in the proposed improvements.</p> <p>We are very pleased that the State and DCR have committed to making improvements, and many of them are well considered. The improvement we have the most interest in and where we disagree with the proposal put forth is for the location of the playground.</p> <p>The playground is proposed to be located behind the state police building, near the parking lot. This is the area of the Park that is most exposed to noise and air pollution, being at the intersection of routes 28 and 16. This is the LEAST SUITABLE location for a playground for both reasons.</p> <p>We recommend that the DCR reconsider this, and explore options to locate the proposed playground as far from route 16 as possible. The good location would be in the area of the park further west, across the stormwater inlet from the proposed location. This would put it in closer proximity to other proposed amenities and still be quite close to the existing parking lot.</p> <p>We would also highly recommend that the location be well-shaded in summer and more exposed to good sunlight in winter. Too many playgrounds are too hot in summer, lacking shade. The shade could come from new annual trees that shed leaves in winter.</p>	Michael Gresty	3920 Mystic Valley Parkway, Apt 1111 Medford, MA 02155 US	Medford	MA	2155	michaelgresty@gmail.com	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic
5/18/2016 14:26	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	Replace signs next to all beach entrances. Particularly with regards to dogs on the beach and the responsibility of owners to pick up after their dogs on both sidewalks and the beach.	Charlotte Ryan	36 Charles Street Winthrop, MA 02152 US	Winthrop	MA	2152	cryan@revere.mec.edu	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic
5/19/2016 14:46	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>One of the biggest gaps on the Mystic is that there is no canoe/kayak rental as on the Charles. As a result, very few people use the river. There needs to be a place where Charles River Canoe and Kayak can rent boats.</p> <p>Might this be possible here? Or, even better would be an upriver location such as the Bandshell park in Medford or the Mystic lake dam. I lead historic kayak trips for MyRWA but they are generally limited to people who have their own boats.</p> <p>Please also consider adding good signage in this park on the history of the Mystic and this area, and plants, birds, and environmental issues. The model would be what is one at the park near the Medford Middle Schools or Piers Park in Chelsea. As the author of the only guide to the Mystic- "The Mystic River" (available on Amazon), I would be happy to assist with this.</p> <p>thank you for your consideration.</p>	Richard Beinecke	28 Fairmont Street Arlington, MA 02474 US	Arlington	MA	2474	rickhbeinecke@comcast.net	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic

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5/22/2016 8:32	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>I have used this park area for fishing access for over 30 years. I note with dismay residential High end development and see the general use access and parking becoming more difficult and preferential too the well heeled. I say the answer is follow the money. Forget my concerns as they mean little compared to the Winns of the world.</p> <p>I see a working class area long neglected now discovered by the wealthy . I can only imagine the power and influence this group has over this and many decisions of DCR. I am an avid sportsman and have witnessed many decisions swayed by special interests . I only wish that the average user of our resources John Q Public Is of as much of a consideration as the special interests.</p> <p>Thank You Bill O Connor</p>	Bill O Connor	1 Glenwood st Woburn , MA 01801 US	Woburn	MA	1801	bocgjr@gmail.com	
5/25/2016 11:31	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>:: Entrance Improvements ::</p> <p>1. Recommend that a clear view of open meadow and flagpole is left from entrance triangle, rather than blocking view of this meadow with three trees as shown in rendered plan. The current layout directs people only to the paths. Removing the trees would make a gateway for children to run freely into the grass and would give the "entrance" a true gateway quality.</p> <p>2. Area of concrete and bench length shown for gathering appear too small to accommodate multiple groups, which could result in spillover onto adjacent areas, blocking of path</p> <p>:: Paths ::</p> <p>1. Investigate and consider an asphalt alternative that reduces impact stress for runners - perhaps similar to section of Charles River running path outside Cambridge Boat Club.</p> <p>:: Labyrinth ::</p> <p>1. There is not a clear connection between this concept and the cultural or natural history of Medford and the region. Look into a different experiential environment that is related to this specific place.</p> <p>:: Pollinator Meadow ::</p> <p>1. Great concept but no need for fence surrounding it. Plant robust species instead. The height of the plant species will form a natural "fence." The fence shown looks like a low-cost budget measure.</p> <p>2. Location may not be right. Isn't this a place where people would want to put blankets to sit and look at the water while picnicking?</p> <p>:: Playground ::</p> <p>1. Good location option since near housing - however there will be a lot of traffic fumes and noise here, and danger of children running into traffic.</p> <p>2. Play structures shown seem generic and have no connection to this specific place. Recommend a purpose-built play structure with an overall theme and multiple related elements.</p>	Marie S.A. Sorensen, AIA	Sorensen Partners Architects + Planners, Inc., 15 Remington St. #1 Cambridge, MA 02138 US	Cambridge	MA	2138	info@sorensenpartners.com	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic

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5/26/2016 10:36	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>Selected Friends of Malden River comments; letter follows in mail.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider providing pedestrian access to and from Meadow Glen Mall via a new crosswalk (or even a pedestrian/bicyclist ramp/bridge system of the type found along Storrow Drive in Back Bay). 2. Facilitate extension of the river path so that it aligns with Presidents Landing or Earhart Landing roads at Station Landing across Route 28. 3. Reduce the number of paved pathways. Dirt pathways are better for water cleansing and soils, and they help visitors feel closer to nature. Contrary to what some may think, strollers and wheelchairs do move easily on well-made dirt paths that are free of rocks and roots. 4. Include educational signage, as well as plaques or other signage highlighting the area's rich natural and human history. 5. Make the park's shoreline accessible to kayakers and canoers. 6. Include an adult parcourse installation for outdoor exercise. This has been a wonderful addition to the trails near the Flynn Rink in Middlesex Fells. 7. Preferably, exercise stops should be placed at intervals throughout the park, instead of at a centralized location. 8. Spots should be designed and designated for family gatherings and picnics. In its 2015 Advisory Services Panel Report for Everett and Malden, the Urban Land Institute found a strong public desire for this type of park amenity (see http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/MaldenEverett_PanelReport_web.pdf). This will bring families together in an outdoor setting. 9. Include art installations, both permanent and temporary. 10. Consider constructing a performance stage or small arena to host cultural events. 11. To reduce fertilizer use and required mowing, replace existing turf in selected areas with low-maintenance native meadow plantings (similar to what is proposed for the pollinator meadow). 12. Remove the existing closed subsurface drainage system and rework drainage to include best management practices (BMPs). 	Rober Russell	9 Spruce Avenue Cambridge, MA 02138 US	Cambridge	MA	2138	rr-enviroconsult@comcast.net	

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5/26/2016 10:57	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>I value MacDonald Park as a green space that balances human uses and wildlife habitat in a way that is unique along the Mystic River. I welcome improvements that could make this a vibrant public space that still retains great value as urban habitat.</p> <p>I go most frequently as a birder, often with friends. More than 140 species of birds have been observed at the park over the past few years (see data from Cornell University's eBird project here, which lists citizen scientists' observations in the park: http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L2477842).</p> <p>The key to the variety of bird species here is the variety of habitats: from river, to wetland, to upland forest, to shrub borders and open grass and meadow areas. I would hope that the unique value of each of these habitats in the mosaic of habitats can be respected and even enhanced.</p> <p>The features of the plan I find most exciting are: bicycle parking, signage, pollinator meadow, invasive plant removal (especially Oriental Bittersweet, which directly threatens trees).</p> <p>Native trees are the backbone of this space as wildlife habitat especially for birds. It is important that tree removal is balanced (or exceeded) by planting of new native trees that will have maximum ecological value when mature--especially oaks.</p> <p>I understand the need for removal of some dead trees, but these are valuable sites for birds and other animals. One specific idea: Tree swallows use the space and nest in dead tree holes. Tree Swallow boxes can be hugely successful replacements (see Fresh Pond), and I encourage their installation as dead snags come out.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p>	Andrew Hrycyna	22 Union St. Cambridge, MA 02141 US	Cambridge	MA	2141	andrew.hrycyna@gmail.com	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic

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5/26/2016 12:44	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>May 25, 2016 Medford Bicycle Advisory Commission</p> <p>DCR RE: MacDonald Park Improvements</p> <p>We were very pleased to learn of the planned improvements to MacDonald park that were presented in the public meeting on May 11, 2016.</p> <p>Below are our comments and additional items we recommend be considered in order for bicycle riders in Medford to safely and effectively make use of the improved park:</p> <p>The perimeter path around the outside edge of the park is used as a travel and commuter route. We are very pleased to see that repaving it and making it ADA compliant will be one of the first parts of the project to be completed. We suggest that the perimeter path be striped and signed to encourage users to stay to the right.</p> <p>The point where the path passes between the drainage inflow and Rt. 16, roughly opposite Commercial St., is currently very narrow and has a blind curve due to overgrown vegetation. Improving site lines and adding appropriate markings and signage at this point could make it less of a hazard.</p> <p>The multi-use path that is located next to MacDonald Park along I-93 is an important bicycle commuter route and also provides easy access to the park for riders coming from Somerville. We wish to encourage our neighbors to access the park via this mode and providing signage at access points along the path indicating that it leads to the park and to Medford would be most helpful. We would further recommend providing distances and average times to reach key destinations.</p> <p>We anticipate that bike riders will be accessing the park via Locust Street, Commercial Street, Middlesex Avenue and Presidents Landing. Providing bike riders with safe crossings and transitions from these streets to the path within the park are important.</p> <p>We encourage the installation of secure bicycle parking facilities at featured destinations.</p> <p>We see MacDonald Park as having great potential for providing healthy outdoor recreation for our residents, but also as a destination that can attr</p>	Patrick Bibbins	77 Stanley Avenue, Medford MA, MA 02155 US	MA	MA	2155	patbibbins@gmail.com	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic

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5/26/2016 15:16	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>Below is a portion of the comments from the letter sent on behalf of the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), by mail and email (EkOngKar Singh Khalsa).</p> <p>MyRWA is pleased to see that DCR is committed to revitalizing Macdonald Park. This effort underway underscores the value of public-private partnerships. Together, we are able to bring more resources to the table and engage local stakeholders. MyRWA is interested and well-positioned to support this ongoing work as a community partner vested in the future success of the park. This is opportunity to build off of the Mystic River Master Plan and thoroughly assess the needs and desires that will make Macdonald Park a destination. We believe a more substantial master planning effort will result in a park that is well-used and well-maintained, setting a new standard for urban riverfront parks.</p> <p>MyRWA recently launched the Mystic Greenways Initiative, a multi-year, multi-stakeholder effort to renew and stimulate more active use in waterfront lands. One of the goals of this initiative is to engage a broad constituency in planning and programming of parklands. To work towards this goal at Macdonald Park, we circulated a survey to garner feedback on the improvements that are most important to current users. MyRWA received feedback from 107 community stakeholders, which included local residents and constituents of more than a dozen organizations.</p> <p>The presented plan has many compelling elements. Removing invasive plants and repaving the deteriorating paths are crucial first steps. We thank you for prioritizing these improvements. The full letter has the feedback from the surveys on which proposed designs are most appealing to people as well as specific design comments.</p> <p>In closing, MyRWA is thankful for this work and urges DCR to lead a master planning process that will inform and prioritize elements of the overall park design and ultimately, foster a strong network of stewards.</p>	Amber Christoffersen	Mystic River Watershed Association , 20 Academy Street, Suite #306 Arlington, MA 02476 US	Arlington	MA	2476	amber.christoffersen@mysticriver.org	

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5/26/2016 16:50	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>Commissioner Leo Roy The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation 251 Causeway St. Boston, Massachusetts 02114</p> <p>Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Macdonald Park Improvements presented at the May 11 meeting. We appreciate DCR's intention to revitalize this park and commitment to the public process and are very excited by the designs we had the opportunity to review. As the largest park along the Mystic River, this important open space is a community asset that can be improved, enhanced and maintained to reflect the environmental and health benefits it brings to surrounding communities, many of which include environmental justice populations.</p> <p>We are delighted to see that DCR is committed to revitalizing Macdonald Park. This effort underway underscores the value of public-private partnerships. Together, we can bring more resources to the table and engage local stakeholders. MyRWA is interested in and well-positioned to support this ongoing work as a community partner vested in the future success of the park. Robust partnerships will create, we believe, an opportunity to build on the Mystic River Master Plan and provide incentive to more thoroughly assess the needs and desires that will make Macdonald Park a destination. We believe also that a more substantial master planning effort will result in a park that is well-used and well-maintained, setting a new standard for urban riverfront parks.</p> <p>MyRWA recently launched the Mystic Greenways Initiative, a multi-year, multi-stakeholder effort to renew and stimulate more active use in waterfront lands. One of the goals of this initiative is to engage a broad constituency in planning programming and maintaining local parklands. Consistent with this effort, we've submitted, under separate cover, additional comments that include results of our survey of local interest in this important new initiative.</p> <p>EkOngKar Singh Khalsa, Executive Director Mystic River Watershed Association</p>	EkOngKar Singh Khalsa	Mystic River Watershed Association, 20 Academy Street, Suite 306 Arlington , MA 02476 US	Arlington	MA	2476	ek@mysticriver.org	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic

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5/26/2016 17:58	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>to Dan Driscoll & Pamela Shadley, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the MacDonald Park improvements. The best thing about MacDonald Park is that, for an urban DCR park it remains relatively undeveloped. Any plan to "improve" MacDonald Park needs to keep this character. In addition, large sections of MacDonald Park are designated as wildlife sanctuary areas. Those areas should remain as such, and once the invasives, such as phragmaties, knotweed and others are controlled, then efforts should be made to improve these areas for native wildlife using native species.</p> <p>MacDonald Park should be a major urban migratory songbird stopover, and plantings should be planned accordingly. An emphasis on oaks and maples is important. Other native species such as Shadbush, American Holly and Snowberry. Cover trees such as White Pines or Eastern Red Cedars should also be considered. There should also be areas of cover for existing species such as rabbits, coyotes and other mammals that occur in the park. All of this should be done in consideration with the improvement to the bike paths and other improvements.</p> <p>I would say that MacDonald Park is not appropriate for such things as playing fields or other such intentional developments. The open areas of MacDonald Park should remain as open, undeveloped or unimproved areas. MacDonald Park is an important open space, and any improvements should be oriented toward keeping its character as a park, and wildlife sanctuary.</p> <p>Thank you. Michael Fager, Somerville, MA</p>	Michael Fager	31 Partridge Avenue Somerville, MA 02145 US	Somerville	MA	2145	Michaelfager@rcn.com	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic
5/26/2016 18:42	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>Mr. Driscoll & Ms. Shadley,</p> <p>There is one additional comment I wish to make concerning the MacDonald Park Improvements. There should not be any development of a leash free area within MacDonald Park. Any and all dog walking should be subject to the leash laws, and all dogs should be leashed and under their owner's control. It is not a good idea to concentrate dogs in any parkland along a wetland resource such as the Mystic River. In addition, unleashed dogs pose a danger to people who are running and on bicycles.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Michael Fager, Somerville, MA</p>	Michael Fager	31 Partridge Avenue Somerville, MA 02145 US	Somerville	MA	2145	Michaelfager@rcn.com	Please add my contact information to an outreach list on the selected topic, in order to receive future DCR updates and public meeting notices on the topic
5/26/2016 18:48	MacDonald Park Improvements - deadline May 26, 2016	<p>Please plant trees in MacDonald Park that will encourage the stopover of migrating birds. Trees such as oaks and maples will attract them. Other native shrubs should be considered also like shadbush, holly and snowberry.</p> <p>I am in favor of keeping this area as wild as possible. I am against any playing fields of any type. I am especially opposed to off leash areas for dogs. These areas are smelly and noisy and put pollution into the river. Do not even consider it!!! This will completely ruin the character of what you are trying to do.</p>	Kathryn Foley	31 Partridge Ave Somerville, MA 02145 US	Somerville	MA	2145	kathyfoley@rcn.com	



Mystic River Watershed Association
your community • your watershed

May 26, 2016

Commissioner Leo Roy
The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway St.
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Dear Commissioner Roy,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Macdonald Park Improvements presented at the May 11 meeting. We appreciate DCR's intention to revitalize this park and its commitment to the public process. As the largest park along the Mystic River, this important open space is a community asset that must be preserved, enhanced and maintained to reflect the environmental and health benefits it brings to surrounding communities, many of which include environmental justice populations.

The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) was founded in 1972 "to protect and restore the Mystic River, its tributaries and watershed lands for the benefit of present and future generations and to celebrate the value, importance and great beauty of these natural resources." MyRWA accomplishes its mission through a combination of science, advocacy, and public engagement. We involve 1,200 volunteers annually and forge links with citizens' groups, universities, businesses, municipalities and government agencies.

We are pleased to see that DCR is committed to revitalizing Macdonald Park. The effort underway **underscores the value of public-private partnerships**. Working together, we are able to bring more resources to the table and engage local stakeholders. MyRWA is interested in and well-positioned to support this ongoing work as a community partner vested in the future success of the park. In addition to the specific feedback we provide herein we suggest that the project under review points to a great opportunity to build upon the Mystic River Master Plan and provides a moment to more thoroughly assess the needs and desires that will ultimately make Macdonald Park a destination. **We believe a more substantial master planning effort will result in a park that is well-used and well-maintained, setting a new standard for urban riverfront parks.**

MyRWA recently launched the Mystic Greenways Initiative, a multi-year, multi-stakeholder effort to renew and stimulate more active use in waterfront lands. One of the goals of this initiative is to engage a broad constituency in planning and programming of Mystic River parklands. To work towards this goal at Macdonald Park, we circulated a survey to garner feedback on the improvements that are most important to current users. **MyRWA received feedback from 107 community stakeholders, which included local residents and constituents of more than a dozen organizations.** The results of this survey are further down in the text and in the appendix (page 5-7).

I. Feedback on Concept Designs

The plan presented on May 11 has many compelling elements. Removing invasive plants and repaving the deteriorating paths are crucial first steps. We thank you for prioritizing these improvements. As far as the proposed designs, we used the survey to find out which of the proposed park improvements were most appealing to respondents. Given the ability to choose one or more options, the responses are as follows:

70% Pollinator Meadow

59% Boat Launch and Seating

53% Playground

40% Labyrinth

25% Enhanced Entrance

In addition to sharing this feedback to help prioritize improvements, we encourage DCR to consider several specific suggestions to ensure that the design successfully revitalizes the park.

River Overlook and Boat Launch- We believe that this element will enhance the existing conditions and draw additional visitors to this area of the park. We encourage DCR and Shadley Associates to widen the boat landing area (increase the width of cleared vegetation and gravel shore) to increase access and views to the river, the main draw for this area. The seat wall is a nice addition to the space but if this needs to be paved for ADA, the seating area could be made more into plaza - the asphalt path along the front edge of the plaza is superfluous as it doesn't continue to existing paths. We also continue to hear that people want more stone dust paths rather than asphalt and urge this to be included where site conditions allow.

The rain garden placed near the river does not appear to be useful, aesthetically or functionally. It will not filter runoff from adjacent pervious surfaces nor does it appear to have a visual benefit as the primary attraction is along the water's edge. The budget allocated for this element may be better served in enhancing the river's edge with native vegetation and/or providing additional seating.

Entrance- As a substitute for just widening the path, a design more similar to a plaza would be advantageous. The atmosphere of an entry plaza could be further enhanced with less asphalt and additional trees/plantings, creating a gateway. Public art that references the history of the park would help to create a sense of place within the park and could engage local artists.

Stormwater Infrastructure and Maintenance- It's a priority to insure that proposed rain gardens within the park have an aesthetic value as well as functional (see comment on River Overlook), while still acknowledging the constraints on maintenance labor for the DCR. We encourage that implementation of these rain gardens be strategic, as to maximize visual and ecological benefits. We've also heard lots of positive responses to the idea for a pollinator meadow for increasing plant and animal diversity, and want to emphasize the importance of having a solid maintenance plan for such a park element.

Playground- We appreciate the proposed playground elements that stimulate different types of play and integrate with the landscape. We are encouraged to hear that a new DCR hire with playground expertise will be assisting with this design – best practices in playground design continue to change and thus looking to examples, bringing in experts and gaining feedback from focus groups will make this an

amenity that will bring families from around the area. There are many successful models to reference, including the new playground on the Esplanade. As much vegetation as possible, existing or newly planted, should be used to screen noise and pollution from the road. Lastly, there should be several bike racks and ideally a picnic area and/or small pavilion for adults, as well as children, to use.

Path and Signage- Currently there is no signage system within the park, making way finding difficult. For example, those traveling West-to-East within the park are often unsure about how to get to Wellington T Station and Station's Landing. We appreciate the idea to emphasize the path along the road as the primary route but also believe that one path could be selected within the park as the primary travel lane. This can be done with signage and with a wider path (as compared to the secondary paths that circulate through the park).

II. Feedback on the Overall Park Design

MyRWA, its partner organizations and local citizens have shared their ideas for the types of activities and elements that would allow this park to thrive. **Given this feedback, MyRWA urges DCR to lead a master planning process that will inform and prioritize elements of the overall park design and ultimately, foster a strong network of stewards.** This will set the stage for a successful park that is used, maintained and loved. At well over 100 acres, we believe there is ample space to accommodate many of desires expressed in the survey, a few key themes are as follows:

Connectivity

Several of the park entrances are disconnected from development that has occurred over the past decades, including:

- The Mystic River Condos and Meadow Glen Mall should have a safe connection to the park such as crosswalk (preferably signalized or a HAWK, High-intensity Activated crosswalk).
- Station's Landing connection to the park needs to be vastly improved. The park entrance along 28 should be moved or made more visible from Presidents Landing Road. Both this road and Earhart Landing need better pedestrian crossings across Route 28.
- The pinchpoint on the path at the stormwater outfall near the parking lot on Mystic Valley Parkways should be addressed.

Amenities

Additional programming and amenities called-out in the survey include:

- Desire for playgrounds/play areas for children, potentially with water features and away from noisy and polluted areas such as the roadways.
- Permanent and temporary public art installations to facilitate use and programming within the park.
- Removal of invasive species, dead trees and debris; addition of native trees and perennials to increase the diversity and quantity of plants and animals in the park.
- Better signage throughout the park, informing visitors of relative distances to other nearby locations and of the history of the area they are visiting.
- More paths and seating along the river to prioritize vistas; boat/canoe/kayak launch and potentially a rental station to encourage the public to engage the water directly.
- Safety needs- Increased lighting for walkers and cyclists, removal of garbage with the addition of more garbage cans and trimming back of vegetation from pathways would all add to a safer atmosphere.

DCR Macdonald Park

May 26, 2016

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- Due to the often observed dog-walkers at the park, a designated, enclosed off-leash area, or stronger leash regulation with more doggy bag stations, is encouraged.

In closing, **we appreciate the excellent work that DCR has started to revitalize Torbert Macdonald Park and hope to support ongoing design and planning efforts for this important open space.** It's time to thoroughly evaluate how the park looks and functions – it has the potential to provide physical and mental health benefits for tens of thousands local residents and contribute to the health of the Mystic River which continues to improve each year.

If you have any questions or require additional information please contact MyRWA at (781) 316-3438 or by emailing EK@mysticriver.org.

Sincerely,



EkOngKar Singh Khalsa
Executive Director
Mystic River Watershed Association



Amber Christoffersen
Mystic Greenways Director
Mystic River Watershed Association

cc:

Department of Conservation and Recreation, Dan Driscoll, Director of Recreational Facilities Planning
City of Medford, Alicia Hunt
City of Medford, Mayor Burke
Friends of Malden River, Rusty Russell
Friends of the Mystic River, Mary Werowinsk
Groundwork Somerville, Chris Manchini
Medford Bicycle Advisory Committee, Bruce Kulick
Metropolitan Area Planning Council, David Loutzenheiser
Mystic River Watershed Association, Policy Committee
Solomon Foundation, Herb Nolan
State Representative Christine Barber
State Representative Paul Donato
State Representative Sean Garballey
State Senator Ken Donnelly
State Senator Pat Jehlen
WalkMedford, Syrah McGivern

APPENDIX

Below is a summary of the 107 responses to other survey questions.

Zip Codes

The responses represent the following 16 zip codes, in order of frequency:

02155, 02145, 02148, 02143, 02144, 01801, 02474, 02138, 01821, 02150, 01890, 01845, 02129, 02115, 02421, 02122

How often do you visit the park?

41% 2+ times per month
13% once a month
32% 2-3 times per year
14% hadn't been or selected "other."

How do you get to the park?

29% drive and park in the main lot
27% walk
27% bike
8% drive and park in another lot
2% transit
7% other

What do you do in the park?

65% run/walk
57% access nature/wildlife
43% bike
36% picnic/relax
24% play area for children
10% boating

What do you want to see changed in Macdonald Park?

Playground/Play Areas - 31 Instances

Children

"Play Area for my kid" (2)

"Water sprinklers, features would be a tremendous asset"

"Sprayground/water feature"

"Natural playground"/"Natural landscape playground" (2)

Rethink playground location

"American Woodpecker" consideration and "pollution from 16 & 28"

"Need a playground in safe location near the river, far from route 16 - safe, not noisy and not polluted area."

Adults

"Adult Playground: ParCourse" (1)

Paths/Connections - 26 instances

"Improvements/repaving of paths" (3)

"More trails"

Bikes

"Bike path connections to flow freely through this [park]"

"Thoughts on use for Bike commuters...Designated bike path"

"Easy bike access and connectors to other bike trails"

Connections - 26 Instances

"See it be connected to Medford Sq."

"Pathway from Shore Drive in Somerville and Rt 16"

"I would like to have a path connection the length of the Mystic."

"Connect all river paths to Fellsway"

"Access to Wellington Station"

"Provide additional pedestrian crossing from Meadow Glen Mall"

Material

"Eliminate the cement walkways, put down stone dust instead"

"No new asphalt (dirt paths are best for runners and walkers and the environment)"

"Not too many paved pathways. The dirt pathways are better"

Size

Wider sidewalks

"8'-10' path"

Other

"Update walking path with clear views of the river"

Water - 14 instances

"Access to water"

"...tables for picnics along the waterline"

"More fishing areas (we love the little dock) & access for canoe/kayak & bubbler to refill water bottles"

"Water access & seating"

"Seating area along the water"

"Trails closer to the water"

"Access to water and restored shoreline with salt marsh and shellfish beds; educational labs for kids and schools"

"...picnic benches by the water would be nice/also a boat launch"

"Improve water access/visibility (sometimes hard to know you're right next to the river)"

"Boat rentals"

Public Art - 9 instances

"Public art should be programmed into the park"

"Have public art in this park"

"Nature-related public art would be cool"

"Public art - yes (sculpture garden)"

“Public art (permanent and temporary)”

Plants and Habitat- 8 instances

“Native plants” (2)

“Remove invasive plants”

“More colorful blooming plants”

“New Entrance with flowers”

More diversity of native plant and animal species

“Maintaining variety of trees with mixed open space will keep the park a good habitat for birds.”

“More space for wildlife”

Dogs - 8 instances

“...posted signs for dog waste clean-up”

“Dog park” (3)

“Dog waste trash can or bags to use”

“Off leash dog area”

“An enclosed dog park”

“Designated off leash dog area”

Signage

“Better signage that directs to other destinations and routes of access with time and distance indicated”

“Including a map or other information on the signage about other parklands along the Mystic “

“Educational signage about the environment”

“Entrance signage with map and history of the river”

“...some historic facts on plaques around the park about the Mystic”

Other

“Better lighting for evening walks”

“Improved collection and removal of [garbage]”

“[Removal of] dead tree debris”

“Food truck area in the parking lot”

“Timer and motion detection lighting for dusk”

Do something about the sexual activity in the park

“Improve entrance from west side”

“More trash cans”

“I’d like to see it get use more”

“Removal of trash/graffiti and making the park feel safe”

“Place designated for family gatherings and picnics”

From: Michael Gresty [<mailto:michaelgresty@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 18, 2016 8:53 PM
To: Parks, Mass (DCR)
Cc: Irina Mladenova
Subject: Proposed upgrades to Macdonald State Park (Mystic River, Medford)

To whom it may concern

As residents of 3920 Mystic Valley Parkway, directly opposite Macdonald park, my family and I are enthusiasts, frequent visitors to the park. We learned recently from the City of Medford about a proposed upgrade to pathways. While we welcome any effort to improve usability, especially in wet weather, there are at least three other issues we would like to see addressed as soon as possible:

- 1) The absence of a playground for children. This is sorely lacking in such a large, popular park. We request that you get community input on the location and type of playground. There are more and more families with young children moving here, and we often encounter visitors from Somerville and elsewhere.
- 2) The horrific mess made every summer when the weeds from the river are cut and piled up to dry. The smell is nauseating, and make a large area of the park unusable. This activity should cease, starting this summer.
- 3) Dogs unleashed while being walked. Rather than police and punish owners for not leashing their dogs, rather provide a simple dog run (fenced area) so they will not be tempted to unleash them during their walks.

Thank you for your attention to the above.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Gresty
Resident, apt 1111

Comments on Proposed Park improvements for Macdonald Park

presented by Shadley Associates on May 12, 2016
at 200 River's Edge Drive, Medford MA

Submitted by the Solomon Foundation
May 25, 2016

Introduction

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Having collaborated with the MyRWA for several months now, we see great potential in the parklands along the Mystic River. The Mystic River parks deserve the kind of attention that the Charles River Parks have been receiving for years. A deliberate and open process that taps the ideas and resources of all stakeholders should be put in place to achieve that end.

Torbert Macdonald Park (note the lower case d) is one of the largest river parks in Greater Boston. Despite being a short distance from tens of thousands of people it is largely empty on most days. In that respect it is a failed park. It lacks easy access and the types of amenities that would attract a diverse group of users. To fully understand this problem will require a careful analysis of the entire park, including its urban context, and involve the many stakeholders who use it now or might be willing to use it. What we have in the Shadley plan, so far, is a collection of intriguing but somewhat disparate elements. If nothing else the Shadley plan illustrates the need for a ***park master plan***.

A piecemeal approach inevitably results in mistakes and lost opportunities. More importantly, it lacks ambition. Given the development dynamic at work in the Mystic River communities right now and the potential for investment from non-government sources, the state will undoubtedly have opportunities to partner on ambitious park and greenway projects in the future.

The need for the DCR to spend down allocated funds by the end of June drove this fast pace. Those funds are now being spent on restoration of existing paths and landscape reclamation which is a wise move. The other elements proposed in the multiyear plan ought to be considered early concepts and folded into a deliberate master planning process for Macdonald Park. An oversight committee made up of private and public stakeholders should be formed to help fund and guide that effort. It is not often that we suggest the DCR slow down rather than speed up and get more done on the quick. In this instance we think a more comprehensive approach is called for.

The following detailed comments underscore the need for a master plan.

Access

- Extremely poor access to and through Macdonald Park is one of the reasons the park is deserted much of the time. This key aspect of the park was not addressed by the Shadley plan. More than anything else Macdonald Park needs active users to bring it alive and make it safe and friendly. The greatest concentration of people live and work just across the street at Station Landing, yet they are not finding their way to the park. We met a gentleman who works at Station Landing who walks everywhere BUT MacDONald Park. A moat and a wall of

green cuts off access. The existing pedestrian bridge is out of the way, out of sight, and out of compliance with current ADA standards.

- A direct link from Station Landing and the Wellington Train Station to the park would dramatically enhance access. If the existing pedestrian bridge has to be replaced anyway at some point, why not build a modern bridge where it does its job best - directly inline with the crosswalk. It's a narrow leap across the canal and the bridge would be relatively inexpensive.
- Likewise access across the Mystic Valley parkway on the north side of the park is frustrated. That edge is redeveloping quickly and we can expect a growing residential neighborhood to spring up in the years ahead.
- Macdonald Park is divided almost entirely in half by a brook that emanates from an outfall at the Mystic River Parkway. As a result visitors are forced out to the edge of the parkway to get around the barrier. Providing a pedestrian bridge across the stream would overcome this barrier, offer views of the river, and help knit together the park. That in turn would help activate the park and make it safer. This is one of many alternatives that ought to be tested in a master planning process. (see attached diagrams)
- The one parking lot for this park with its 75+/- spaces could be quickly outstripped by demand should some of the planned improvements - the playground or beach overlook - succeed in drawing more people to the park. Where will additional parking be accommodated in the future? Paid public parking at Station Landing is a somewhat remote option but poor access from there to the park undercuts that potential.

Pavement replacement

- With few exceptions the paved paths laid out by Carol Johnson appear to be in the best locations and ought to be restored. Using the available funds to complete this work by June 30th of this year is a good strategy.

Phragmites removal

- We applaud the wholesale removal of phragmites. It is the largest invasive plant management effort within the metropolitan park system that we know of. We are hopeful that this will be successful and sustainable and that it can be replicated at other sites within the metropolitan park system.
- There was no indication in the presentation of how these areas once cleared would be maintained. What will grow in the place of the removed invasive plants - more invasive plants? What is to prevent phragmites or other invasive from repopulating the slopes?
- The relatively flat areas on the upland might be candidates for reseeding with a meadow grass mix. Since the hard work of clearing the area will have been done why not take full advantage of this and locate your meadow treatment in these broader areas instead of the open lawn?

River Overview

Having proposed the concept of a beach area at Macdonald Park we have a special interest in this feature. The idea was to open a window onto the river that was in scale with the sweeping bowl-shaped lawn leading to the crest of the hill. The design by Carol Johnson for Macdonald Park won awards, no doubt, because of its simplicity and sweeping scale. The design proposed by Shadley Associates fails to recognize this quality and, instead, clutters the space with small elements some of which do not seem to belong. We would suggest eliminating unnecessary design gestures and putting the budget where it counts the most - at the beach area

- **The Beach:** The beach is the main gesture of this design and it needs much more emphasis. Given the scale of the park the beach ought to be twice as wide as show and several more trees should be removed to open the view to the river. This is the place for a “gathering space” - not half way up the slope. There should be ample opportunities near the water’s edge to gather and sit.
- **Gathering space with seat wall:** This element interrupts the grand sweep of the lawn and seems out of place. Most visitors would rather sit near the water or in the shade of existing trees along the edges of the great lawn — not in the middle of the open lawn in the hot sun. Most would prefer a comfortable bench to a granite wall or concrete wall.
- **Picnic areas with benches:** Again, these elements clutter the great lawn and are poorly located. The shaded areas under the large trees off to the side of the great lawn and closer to the river appear to be better locations for picnic benches.
- **Rain Gardens:** The purpose of rain gardens is to filter storm water running off from impervious surfaces and to recharge the water table. They are usually located next to large paved areas or roof tops. What use are they in the middle of a large lawn area? Why go to the expense of a rain garden when storm water will be readily absorbed in the surrounding grassy area? These expensive elements appear to be unneeded.
- **Bicycle parking:** Most people will not be locking their bicycles and walking away from them in this part of the park. Park entrances are the better place to locate racks.

Parks Entry

- A gathering place at this key node with wayfinding information would be very helpful
- Given the predominance of parkland in this area, its not clear that a rain garden is worthwhile. If the parking lot drains directly to the river and a rain garden can be used to intercept that run off, it may be worthwhile.

Playground

- We agree with the location of this active use - near the parking lot and the police station on the east side of the park. Here it will help activate a sketchy area and bring families to the park. Utilizing natural landforms to frame the play spaces is very interesting as long as sight lines into and out of the play area can be maintained.
- The playground’s success will hinge on how well the surrounding landscape is cleaned up, thinned out and restored to general use.
- As a regional destination that draws people from a distance, the MacDonald Park Playground ought to have some outstanding features that can not be found at your average city playground. It is worth thinking more about what those features might be and what would make this a big draw for certain targeted age groups.

Pollinator Meadow

- We applaud the idea of shifting from mowed lawn to meadows wherever appropriate. Robert Macdonald Park with its acres of underutilized lawn is a perfect candidate for this.
- The proposed pollinator meadow appears quite small - an object within the park rather than the kind of broad landscape feature that we expect a meadow should be. The rope and wooden post delineation reinforces this object-like appearance and these materials will be susceptible to decay.
- Consider much broader areas for this meadow treatment (see above) with durable granite markers where necessary to delineate key edges.
- Ensure that the maintenance staff has the proper equipment and the mowing guidelines to do the maintenance mowing of meadow grass once or twice a year?

- Consider recruiting volunteers to walk the meadows once a year to manage invasive plants.

Labyrinth

- We are intrigued by this form and how it might look in the landscape. Would it be more effective, however, set into the middle of a large pollinator meadow with tall grass?
- Will this new feature, however handsome, attract new users to the park and meet their needs? If not, is it the best use of our limited resources to activate the park?

Wayfinding

- A simple plan diagram at the entry points might give visitors a better sense of the scale of the park and the network of trails

Invasive Species Control - Japanese Knotweed and Oriental Bittersweet

- This is critically important to the longterm health of the park yet poses a real challenge to the staff starved DCR because it is so labor intensive.
- Can volunteers be employed to do this work with the assistance of a licensed herbicide applicator?

Management

Targeted capital improvements are essential but more is needed to change the function and quality of this large park. The DCR operations staff does a great job of mowing the many acres of rolling lawn but they have no place to store equipment and stage their operations at the park. The maintenance burden is likely to increase and grow more complex as playgrounds, picnic groves, grass mazes, cleared slopes, and more open play areas are added. What would help is a maintenance and operations plan for Macdonald Park and a designated park manager to help implement it. A seasonal onsite manager for the park could be responsible for basic maintenance and might get involved with programming and public outreach. To be most effective, a manager could be stationed onsite in a structure adjacent to the State Police station where drinking fountains and public bathrooms would be provided. Funding for such a position may be hard to come by, but without an onsite presence, gains from all the clearing and capital investments may unravel over time.

Conclusion

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the design concepts of Shadley Associates. We appreciate the time and resources being brought to Torbert Macdonald Park but feel that a more comprehensive and imaginative master planning process is needed to fully realize the potential of this great park. With lots of development coming to the Mystic River Basin and new sources of support, now is the time to look at the entire park and look 20 years into the future.

Attachments:



State Police

Arrival area - wayfinding

Active play area

Maintenance & visitor services

Multiuse path

Picnic Grove

New Bridge

Open embankment

River landing

Bridge from Station Landing and Wellington T stop

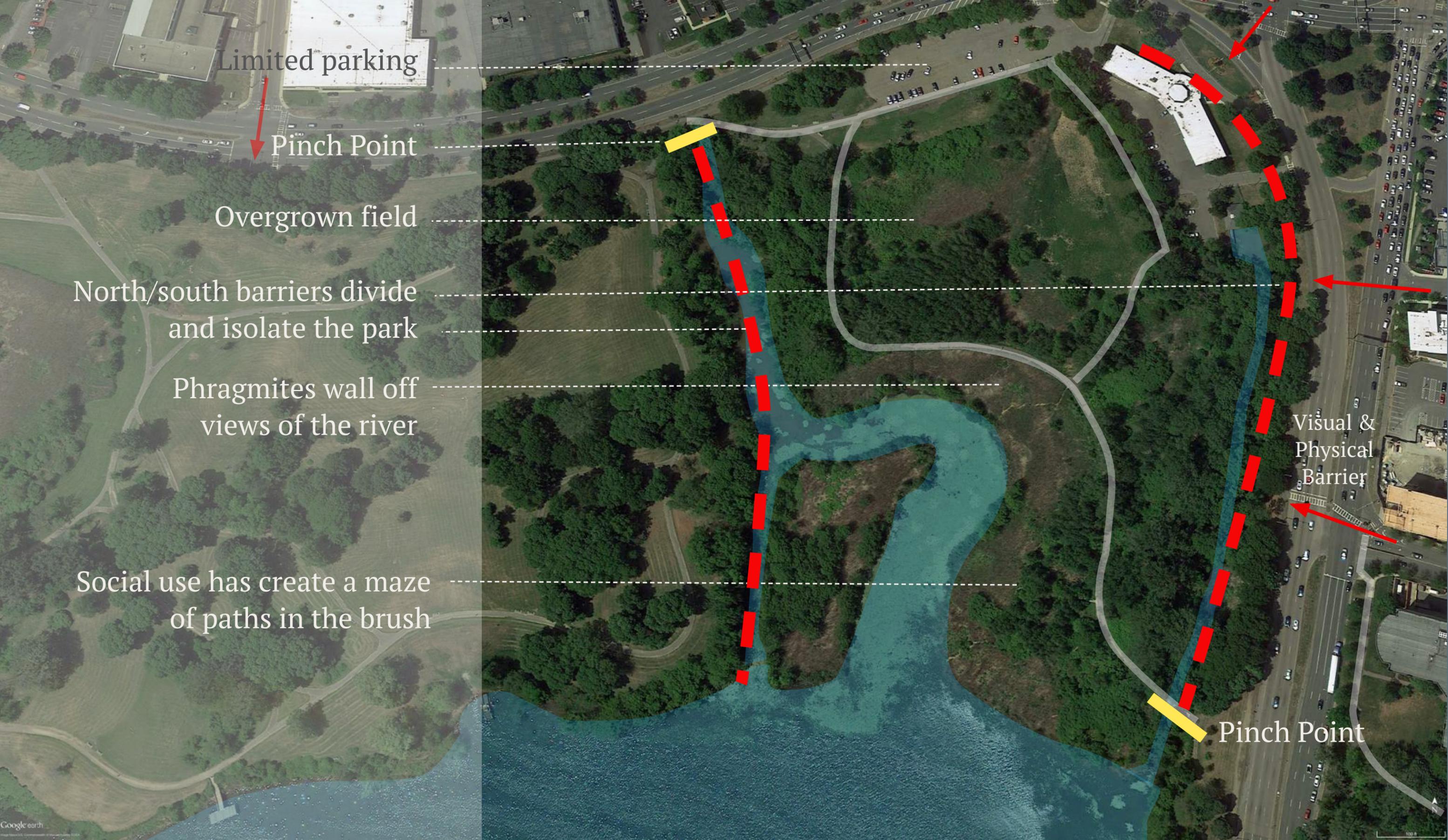
Beach landing

Rte 28 bridge underpass

Wild flower meadow

Wild flower meadow

Macdonald Park - alternative ideas for activating the park



Limited parking

Pinch Point

Overgrown field

North/south barriers divide and isolate the park

Phragmites wall off views of the river

Social use has create a maze of paths in the brush

Visual & Physical Barrier

Pinch Point

Google earth

Macdonald Park - Existing Conditions



Malden • Medford • Everett

Friends of the Malden River

friendsofthemaldenriver@gmail.com

<https://maldenriver.wordpress.com>

May 26, 2016

BY MAIL and by WEB POSTING (partial):

www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/public-outreach/submit-public-comments

Leo Roy, Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
c/o Office of Public Outreach
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Comments on DCR's Concept Designs for Potential Improvements to
Torbert Macdonald State Park in Medford

Dear Commissioner Roy:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR's) proposal to upgrade and revitalize Torbert Macdonald State Park along the Mystic River in the city of Medford. The park is an important amenity in an area that suffers from few such amenities yet is home to significant environmental justice populations. DCR's plan – to bring the park into the 21st century – is to be commended.

By way of background, Friends of the Malden River (FoMR) is a grassroots group of community members – most of them residents of one of the three cities (Everett, Malden and Medford) that ring the visible Malden River – who are deeply concerned about the ecological and recreational health of the river. FoMR's mission is "to promote awareness of and interest in the Malden River, improve its water quality, and increase access for public enjoyment." Formed in 2012 through the joint efforts of local residents, the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), and a graduate-student

DCR Commissioner Leo Roy
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Practicum team affiliated with Tufts University's Water: Systems, Science & Society (WSSS) interdisciplinary program, FoMR is committed to restoring the Malden River to, and preserving it as, a priceless community haven and ecological resource. We are keenly interested in seeing that Macdonald Park remains an accessible resource that responds to the needs of its urban community – particularly so because the park sits *near the mouth of the Malden River* and directly relates to FoMR's continuing effort to ensure that the entire river is publicly accessible for community recreation and conservation.

To repeat, Friends of the Malden River applauds DCR's proposal to upgrade Macdonald Park – in particular its plan to remove non-native invasives like phragmites, Japanese knotweed and Oriental bittersweet. It is time to do this, and we believe that the DCR proposal, as outlined at the public meeting on May 11 at River's Edge, offers a variety of thoughtful improvements. In particular, we have been impressed by other work that your landscape architect, Lexington-based Shadley Associates, has completed (e.g., River's Edge).

We believe, however, that the proposal and the overall plan to make the park as accessible and attractive as possible would benefit from several additions that do not appear to be included in the specifications, at least as presented at the public meeting. Many of these are environmental measures or low-impact development (LID) features that have become virtually mandatory markers of sustainability. They are organized by general topic:

A. Accessibility

1. Consider providing pedestrian access to and from Meadow Glen Mall via a new crosswalk (or even a pedestrian/bicyclist ramp/bridge system of the type found along Storrow Drive in Back Bay).
2. Facilitate extension of the river path so that it aligns with Presidents Landing or Earhart Landing roads at Station Landing across Route 28.
3. Reduce the number of paved pathways. Dirt pathways are better for water cleansing and soils, and they help visitors feel closer to nature. Contrary to what some may think, strollers and wheelchairs do move easily on well-made dirt paths that are free of rocks and roots.
4. Include educational signage, as well as plaques or other signage highlighting the area's rich natural and human history.
5. Make the park's shoreline accessible to kayakers and canoers.

B. Amenities

1. Include an adult parcours installation for outdoor exercise. This has been a wonderful addition to the trails near the Flynn Rink in Middlesex Fells. Preferably, exercise stops should be placed at intervals throughout the park, instead of at a centralized location.
2. Spots should be designed and designated for family gatherings and picnics. In its 2015 Advisory Services Panel Report for Everett and Malden, the Urban Land Institute found a strong public desire for this type of park amenity (see http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/MaldenEverett_PanelReport_web.pdf). This will bring families together in an outdoor setting.
3. Include art installations, both permanent and temporary.
4. Consider constructing a performance stage or small arena to host cultural events.

C. Low-Impact Development (LID)

1. To reduce fertilizer use and required mowing, replace existing turf in selected areas with low-maintenance native meadow plantings (similar to what is proposed for the pollinator meadow).
2. Remove the existing closed subsurface drainage system and rework drainage to include best management practices (BMPs), such as porous pavement, bioretention sites and vegetated swales. Alternatively, redirect the existing drainage system into rain gardens in the park's entrance area.
3. Overall, upgrade stormwater drainage to at least the level required by the just-issued federal MS4 stormwater regulations.

D. Site Remediation/Maintenance

1. Clean up the brook that flows parallel to the Fellsway, running south from the Medford State Police Barracks (station A-4); this area is constantly filled with trash and other debris.
2. Take advantage of regular cleanups available through the correctional and judicial systems.

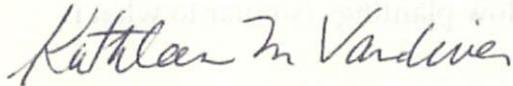
In closing, we appreciate the excellent work that DCR is doing to reimagine Torbert Macdonald State Park in a fashion that more broadly welcomes members of our community. We believe that, with the additional of measures relating to access,

DCR Commissioner Leo Roy
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recreation and environmental stewardship, this project will truly become a jewel in DCR's verdant crown.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this important project. If you have any questions or require additional information please contact us at friendsofthemaldenriver@gmail.com.

Sincerely,



Karen Buck
Brian F. Creamer
Robert H. Russell
Kathleen M. Vandiver

Friends of the Malden River

cc: State Senator Patricia D. Jehlen, Second Middlesex District
State Representative Christine P. Barber, Thirty-Fourth Middlesex District
Mayor Stephanie M. Burke, City of Medford
Mayor Carlo DeMaria, City of Everett
Mayor Gary Christenson, City of Malden
Jon Norton, Chair, Conservation Commission, City of Everett
Roberto DiMarco, Chair, Conservation Commission, City of Malden
Alicia L. Hunt, Director of Energy and Environment/Environmental Agent,
City of Medford
Amber Christoffersen, Greenways Director, Mystic River Watershed Association
Mary Werowinski, Friends of the Mystic River