

## **Introduction**

In 2023, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Inc. (“Dana-Farber”) and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Inc. (“BIDMC”) proposed the construction of a new 300-bed cancer hospital at One Joslin Place in the Longwood Academic and Medical Area (“LMA”) in Boston (the “Project” or “One Joslin Place”). In connection with this important project, the City is able to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety at the intersections adjacent to the Project: Joslin Place, Deaconess Road, Brookline Avenue (one of the LMA’s primary roadways), Pilgrim Road and Jimmy Fund Way.

The proposed vehicular and pedestrian improvements impact Joslin Park, the subject of this Article 97 petition. Given the location of Joslin Park, there are no feasible or substantially equivalent alternatives to an Article 97 action as detailed in the alternatives analysis below. The changes contemplated will result in a net public good by expanding and enhancing Joslin Park. Specifically, these changes will make it easier and safer for all to access the public green space, especially for those with mobility aids and/or disabilities.

## **Article 97 Petition Request**

The Article 97 request in this case is unique in that Joslin Park will ultimately be reconfigured largely within its current location. The land disposition includes Boston Parks and Recreation Department owned area that use of which will be transferred to the City of Boston (approximately 3,639 square feet [“sf”]) by virtue of a highway easement (or some other similar instrument) (the “Disposition Land”). Additional land area includes City-owned areas in which the City’s rights of way over such areas will be discontinued, subject to the process and approval of the Boston Public Improvement Commission, and will be converted to parkland under the care and control of the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, which areas are currently parts of the layout of Deaconess Road and Joslin Place (measuring approximately 3,927 sf, in the aggregate) (the “City Replacement Land”), and the privately owned areas that will be transferred to the Boston Parks and Recreation Department that were formerly part of the layout of Joslin Place (the “Private Replacement Land”)(the City Replacement Land and the Private Replacement Land shall be collectively referred to herein as the “Replacement Land”). As previously noted, any discontinuances or abandonments of any public right-of-way or acceptance of a highway easement for the layout of the reconfigured Joslin Park will require the review and approval of the Boston Public Improvements Commission. In addition to the permanent changes proposed to Joslin Park and adjacent roadways, Dana-Farber and BIDMC will temporarily use Joslin Park

during construction of the Project as a means to minimize impacts on traffic, in particular emergency vehicles to the BIDMC Emergency Room – one of the busiest emergency rooms in Boston.

### **Alternatives Analysis**

Pursuant to G.L. c. 3, § 5A, the City is required to conduct “an alternatives analysis demonstrating that all other options to avoid or minimize said Article XCVII disposition or change in use have been explored and no feasible or substantially equivalent alternative exists.” The City has performed this analysis and believes that no substantially equivalent alternative for Joslin Park exists given the unique needs and location of this project. Coordination amongst the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Boston Planning Department, Boston Public Improvement Commission, and owner of One Joslin Place resulted in the determination of the amount of Disposition Land and Replacement Land, which is subject to the Boston Public Improvement Commission’s review and approval of any discontinuances or abandonments of any public right-of-way or acceptance of a highway easement for the layout of the reconfigured Joslin Park. The amount of Disposition Land has been minimized to the maximum extent possible to meet the policies and needs expressed by City agencies, including, but not limited to, the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. As noted above, the Disposition Land does not contain unique or significant natural resources.

### **Alternatives Analysis**

#### **Park and Roadways Reconfiguration Alternatives Considered**

Dana-Farber and BIDMC proposed the construction of the One Joslin Place project due to the lack of dedicated inpatient cancer care in the LMA.

In order to maximize pedestrian and vehicular safety in the area immediately abutting the project, including for those individuals utilizing Joslin Park, the City examined both no-build and design alternatives. Neither of these types of alternatives are substantially equivalent to the proposed changes to Joslin Park and the surrounding roadway. Additionally, the chosen design will allow for a safer condition for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles, while improving the vehicular conditions on Brookline Avenue by consolidating two intersections into one. The future two components of Joslin Park will be improved and provide an enhanced experience for park users compared to the existing condition. The Article 97 action in this case will result in significant public good, due to the

increase in park accessibility, pedestrian and vehicular improvements, and the improved access to the medical care provided by the cancer hospital itself.

### **No-Build Alternative**

In connection with the Project, BIDMC and the City, coordinating internally with its agencies including Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Boston Transportation Department, and Boston Planning Department, envisioned a realignment of roadways surrounding Joslin Park and proposed consolidating two adjacent intersections (Joslin Place/Brookline Ave and Deaconess Road/Brookline Ave) into one in order to improve vehicular flow and pedestrian safety.

In this case, the City considered a no-build alternative regarding Joslin Place. The No-Build Alternative would keep Joslin Place as a one-way roadway northwestward and Deaconess Road as a one-way roadway southeastward. The intersection of Deaconess Road and Brookline Avenue would continue to have a traffic signal, and the intersection of Joslin Place and Brookline Avenue would continue to be unsignalized. Joslin Park would remain as-is. However, the No-Build Alternative would not be substantially equivalent to the proposed changes to Joslin Park as it would ultimately result in less parkland, less accessible parkland, and maintain the existing congested pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns at these intersections which ultimately impact the park.

### **Design Alternatives**

The design of pedestrian infrastructure and crossings was evaluated to ensure pedestrian safety and a positive experience within the park for all users. Given the limited land area, the significant changes in grade, below-grade utilities and structures, the surrounding ground floor uses and locations of entrances, and roadway design considerations, the City believes that the proposed roadway reconfiguration is the only viable solution that maximizes parkland while satisfying all of the technical constraints and that any design alternative would not be feasible given the desire to maximize parkland, park access, and pedestrian and vehicular safety in a high volume area.

While no alternative configurations of the ROWs were possible, three alternative layouts for the open space itself and pedestrian crossings were considered. While the alternatives had similar impacts in terms of the land area, the three alternatives offered different approaches to pedestrian crossing. As the safety of pedestrian crossing influences

pedestrian traffic and accessibility in the area, it ultimately impacts the park itself. For the purposes of the Alternatives Analysis, the two park areas are noted as Park West (the portion that is bound by Joslin Place to the north and east, Deaconess Road to the south and Pilgrim Road to the west) and Park East (the portion that is bound by One Joslin Place to the north, Joslin Place to the south and west, and Brookline Avenue to the east).

Alternative 1 includes two crossings of Joslin Place, one from Park West directly to and across from the main entrance of the One Joslin Place project and another further to the east between Park West and Park East mid-way through the diagonal portion of Joslin Place. In addition, a crossing would be located across Deaconess Road from Park West. The crossing from Park West to the One Joslin Place main entrance was deemed unsafe as it is just around a slight bend in the road and suggests a relationship between public space and private land that is undesirable. Additionally the crossing mid-way through the diagonal portion of Joslin Place was deemed unsafe as it is also too close to the other bend in the road. As Alternative 1 will result in unsafe pedestrian crossings, the City believes that it is not substantially equivalent to the proposed design, which will increase pedestrian safety and access to the park land.

Alternative 2 includes two crossings of Joslin Place, a slightly angled crossing near the One Joslin Place main entrance and one further to the east where Joslin Place and Deaconess Road would meet (near the tip of Park West). A third crossing is located across Deaconess Road. This alternative was deemed unsafe because the two corner crossings occur at awkward intersections, where drivers are focused on making a turn and may not see pedestrians crossing. In addition, this alternative was deemed undesirable and unsafe because it ignores an existing diagonal desire line, where pedestrians are likely to cross at an unmarked location. This alternative also places the majority of pedestrians on the edges of the park areas and does not improve connectivity to Park West. The City does not believe that Alternative 2 is substantially equivalent to the proposed design, which will increase pedestrian safety and access to the park land.

Alternative 3 includes one crossing of Joslin Place from Park West to the One Joslin Place main entrance. A crossing of Deaconess Road on the eastern end of that park area is also included. This alternative would separate the two park areas and not provide connections through the park. The City does not believe that Alternative 3 is substantially equivalent to the proposed design, which will increase pedestrian safety and access to the park land.

### **Construction Alternatives Considered**

At the City's direction, the One Joslin Place project team evaluated several alternatives related to construction operations with the goal of minimizing the Article 97 impacts of construction operations, including the placement of staging and steel storage. The One Joslin Place project team also took into account pedestrian activities and vehicle flow, particularly emergency vehicles, in this area of the LMA in assessing alternatives related to construction.

Alternative 1 would not require the use of Joslin Park for construction staging or storage; however, standard construction safety principles would suggest that an area of Joslin Park would still need to be closed to the public to ensure safety during construction activities. Construction trucks would be directed northward on Brookline Avenue, turn west on Longwood Avenue, turn south on Pilgrim Road, and turn east onto the construction site at Joslin Place. Portions of Pilgrim Road and Brookline Avenue adjacent to the construction site would be closed during construction activities.

This alternative would not only still have Article 97 impacts due to the pedestrian safety buffer, but the Boston Transportation Department ("BTD") rejected the first alternative as infeasible. BTD indicated that the Construction Management Plan ("CMP") had unacceptable safety issues related to turning radii at the main intersections, the potential for significant traffic flow impacts to ambulances as trucks would block traffic, and the need for backing up maneuvers on Brookline Avenue for steel and certain other deliveries.

Alternative 2 would also not require the use of Joslin Park for construction staging or storage; however, similar to the first option, a portion of Joslin Park would likely still need to be closed to the public to ensure safety during construction. Construction trucks would be directed northward on Brookline Avenue, turn west on Deaconess Road, turn right onto Pilgrim Road and turn right into the construction site at Joslin Place. This option would require changing the current direction as well as adding an island onto Deaconess Road to allow for the BIDMC Emergency Department's continued use of the road. Portions of Pilgrim Road and Brookline Avenue adjacent to the construction site would be closed during construction activities.

Consistent with the first alternative, the second alternative would likely require closing a section of Joslin Park to establish a pedestrian safety buffer during construction. Additionally, negative impacts on the BIDMC Emergency Department also rendered the second alternative unfeasible. The BIDMC Emergency Department, one of the busiest emergency departments in the City, currently meets the Department of Public Health drop-off design requirements for emergency departments. Pursuant to the second alternative, trucks and vehicles would both be turning onto Deaconess Road at the same location, passing in front of the BIDMC Emergency Department drop-off and entrance. This alternative raised concerns regarding pedestrian safety, as patients would need to cross traffic to reach the Emergency Department. The high volume of patient traffic and truck traffic on a single roadway would create traffic and safety concerns. Furthermore, the tight turn radii from Deaconess Road onto Pilgrim Road and from Pilgrim Road onto Joslin Place would require construction trucks to mount curbs and sidewalks and obstruct traffic flow.

Alternative 3, the chosen alternative, would be to utilize the majority of Joslin Park for construction staging and storage while retaining the current traffic flow for the BIDMC Emergency Department. Trucks would be directed northward on Brookline Avenue and turn left at Deaconess Road into the construction site. Portions of Pilgrim Road and Brookline Avenue adjacent to the construction site would be closed during construction activities.

Although this chosen alternative requires the temporary use of Joslin Park for construction staging and storage, it is the only option that creates safer travel routes, allows for sufficient turning radii, limits conflicts with ambulances and vehicles on Brookline Avenue, Longwood Avenue and Pilgrim Road, and allows the BIDMC Emergency Department drop-off area to operate in its current condition. Further, a portion of Joslin Park, approximately 4,000 square feet, would remain open throughout the building construction period. Ultimately, this approach provides an enhanced public park experience without compromising essential safety and emergency access protocols during the construction phase.

### **Public Purpose**

The Article 97 action will result in a net public good for several reasons, which underlie the public purpose for the disposition. First, the park is remaining in the same location, but will

be reconfigured. As the location of the park is ultimately not changing, the individuals who already use the park will not lose their access to green space, which is incredibly important given the urban environment surrounding Joslin Park. Second, the reconfiguration of Joslin Park will ultimately result in more individuals being able to enjoy the park in a safe manner. These changes are imperative for pedestrians with mobility disabilities or aids. The resulting changes will make the new Joslin Park more inviting and easier for members of the public to use and enjoy. Additionally, the park provides an increase to the park area and will protect one existing tree in situ, while including provisions for transplantation of others viable for transplant. Notably, the reconfigured roadways and park proposal and plans for the temporary use of portions of the park have been designed through an extensive public process, including discussion at several public meetings and unanimous approval by the Boston Parks and Recreation Commission.

In addition, the reconfiguration of Joslin Park will allow for a safer pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist environment along Brookline Avenue and Joslin Place. The LMA is one of the busiest areas in the City of Boston with a significant number of jobs and 24-hour activity due to the numerous hospitals, academic institutions, businesses and residents. Improving safety for the pedestrians who access the park and the general area will improve the health and use of the park itself.

Finally, the Article 97 reconfiguration will provide more coherent access to the One Joslin Place project, a new 300-bed cancer hospital, that will serve and benefit thousands. As noted by its proponents, the project will be “the only dedicated inpatient cancer hospital in New England with state-of-the-art design, layout, and equipment.” These individuals will also be able to use and access a new and improved park right outside of the care center.

### **Public Comment and Response**

The reconfigured roadways and park proposal and plans for the temporary use of portions of the park for construction were discussed at several public meetings, including:

1. IAG/IMP Task Force and Public Meetings:
  - January 3, 2024; February 26, 2024; July 29, 2024; October 7, 2024; February 10, 2025; March 17, 2025; March 31, 2025; May 7, 2025

2. Boston Civic Design Commission meetings:

- IMP Full Committee (Initial) August 6, 2024; Sub-Committee August 20, 2024, September 17, 2024; Full Committee (Final Recommendation) October 8, 2024
- IMP Full Committee (Initial) August 6, 2024; Sub-Committee August 20, 2024, September 17, 2024; Full Committee (Final Recommendation) October 8, 2024

3. Boston Planning and Development Agency Board Meetings:

- October 10, 2024; June 12, 2025

4. Boston Parks and Recreation Department – Design and Coordination Meetings:

- July 28, 2025; August 18, 2025; September 4, 2025; January 21, 2026

5. Boston Parks and Recreation Commission:

- Informational meeting July 28, 2025
- Public Commission Hearing October 27, 2025

The reconfigured roadways and park proposal has been unanimously approved by the Boston Parks and Recreation Commission. The park area will increase by approximately 10%, efforts are made to protect and/or transplant existing trees, and the design process is open to and responsive to public input. The park has been designed through a public process, provides an increase to the park area, and will protect one existing tree in situ, while including provisions for transplantation of others viable for transplant.