

Leo M. Birmingham Park Renovation

CHARLES RIVER RESERVATION
Brighton, Massachusetts

Virtual Public Meeting #2
July 23, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Governor

Maura T. Healey

Lieutenant Governor

Kimberley Driscoll

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary

Rebecca L. Tepper

Department of Conservation and Recreation
Commissioner

Nicole LaChapelle



OUR MISSION:

To protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well-being of all.

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

Provide access to a diversity of outdoor recreational experiences and unique landscapes that is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming.

Conserve lands, water, and forests by integrating science, research, and technical expertise into the management of our natural resources.

Advance climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts by implementing sustainable practices and advancing resiliency across our infrastructure, assets, and resources.

Support healthy communities by providing places for people to connect with nature and each other.

Inspire generations of stewards by recognizing and honoring our legacy through partnerships, public engagement, and education.



MEETING LOGISTICS

The project team will give a presentation, then the public can ask questions and provide feedback live during the meeting by:

- Using the Q& A feature, where comments will be sent to the moderator.
- Raising your hand using the 'raise your hand' feature on Zoom. You will be given permission to unmute and speak.
- Slides are numbered for referencing.

Please note that this meeting is being recorded; the recording will be public record.

Goal of the Meeting

*To present the Preferred Concept Plan,
proposed site features and planting, and
related information for Birmingham Park.*

Agenda

- Team Introductions *(Slide 7)*
- Project Scope *(Slide 8)*
- Site Location & Existing Conditions *(Slides 9-16)*
- Project Status & Summary of Public Meeting #1 *(Slides 17-21)*
- Preferred Concept Plan *(Slides 22-25)*
- Site Features & Planting *(Slides 26-29)*
- Next Steps *(Slide 30)*
- Q&A Discussion *(Slide 31)*
- Additional Information *(Slide 32)*

Project Team

Department of Conservation and Recreation

- Ruth Helfeld, Director, Landscape Architecture Section
- Cass Chroust, Landscape Architect, Design and Project Management

Shadley Associates, P.C. (Landscape Architecture)

- Pam Shadley, Principal
- Skyler Chick, Project Manager

Subconsultants

- Nitsch Engineering – Civil Engineering & Surveying
- Davey Resource Group – Arborist & Invasive Species Specialist
- Public Archaeology Laboratory – Archaeologist
- Pine & Swallow – Soils Specialist

Project Scope

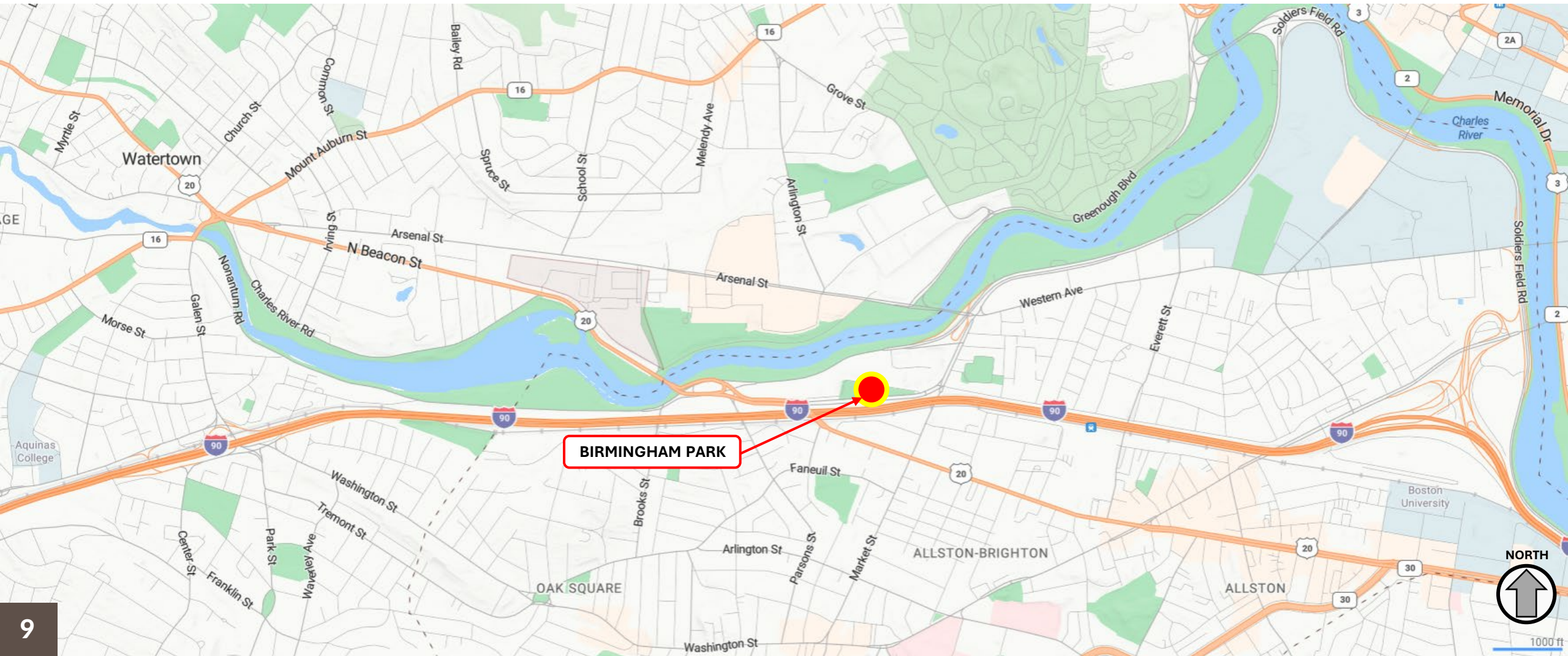
Goals:

- Establish and restore a safe and welcoming park
- Ensure universal accessibility for park features
- Promote recreational activities for different age groups and abilities
- Be environmentally and historically sensitive

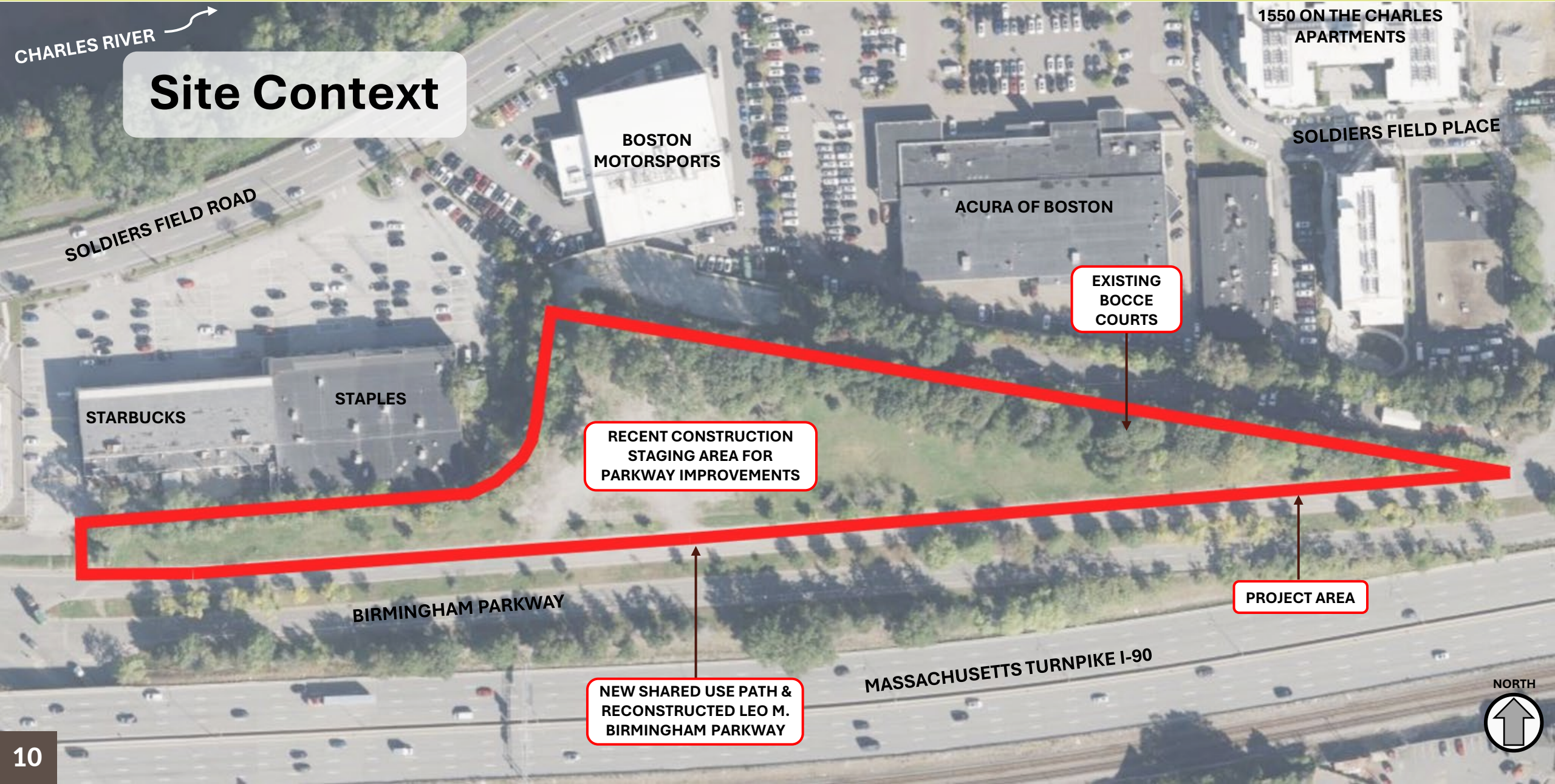
Objectives:

- Fully reconstruct the park with accessible walkways, new site amenities, and restore the degraded landscape
- Replace the existing bocce courts
- Add seating, bicycle parking, shade shelter, horseshoe pits & water bottle filler
- Improve stormwater management onsite
- Tie the park to the new shared-use path and reconstructed Birmingham Parkway

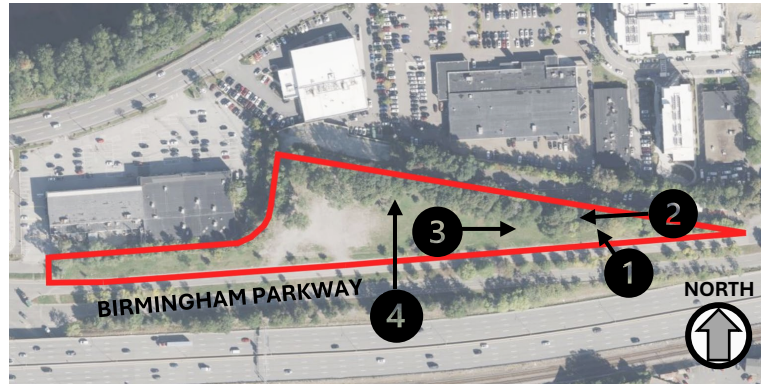
Site Location



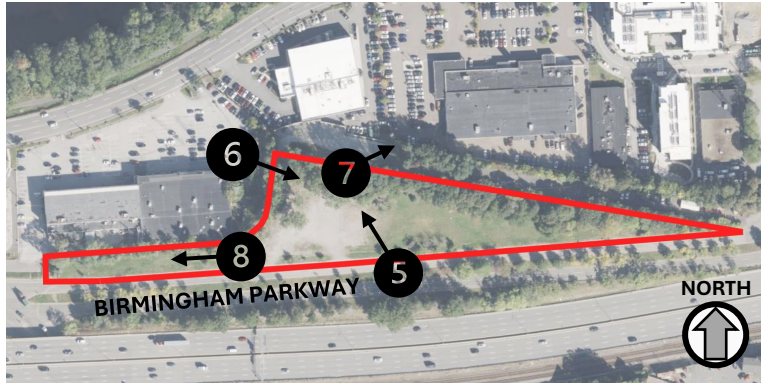
Site Context



Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions



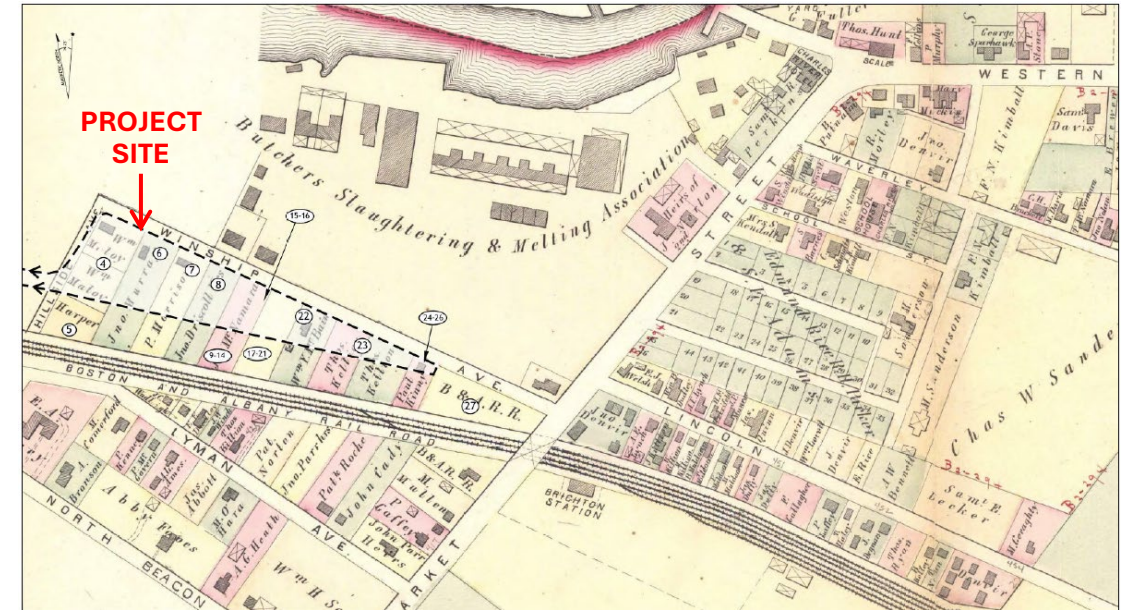
Archaeological Investigation

Work Included:

- Background research
- Walkover survey & technical report
- 34 test pits (hand dug) – 78 artifacts found

Historical Background:

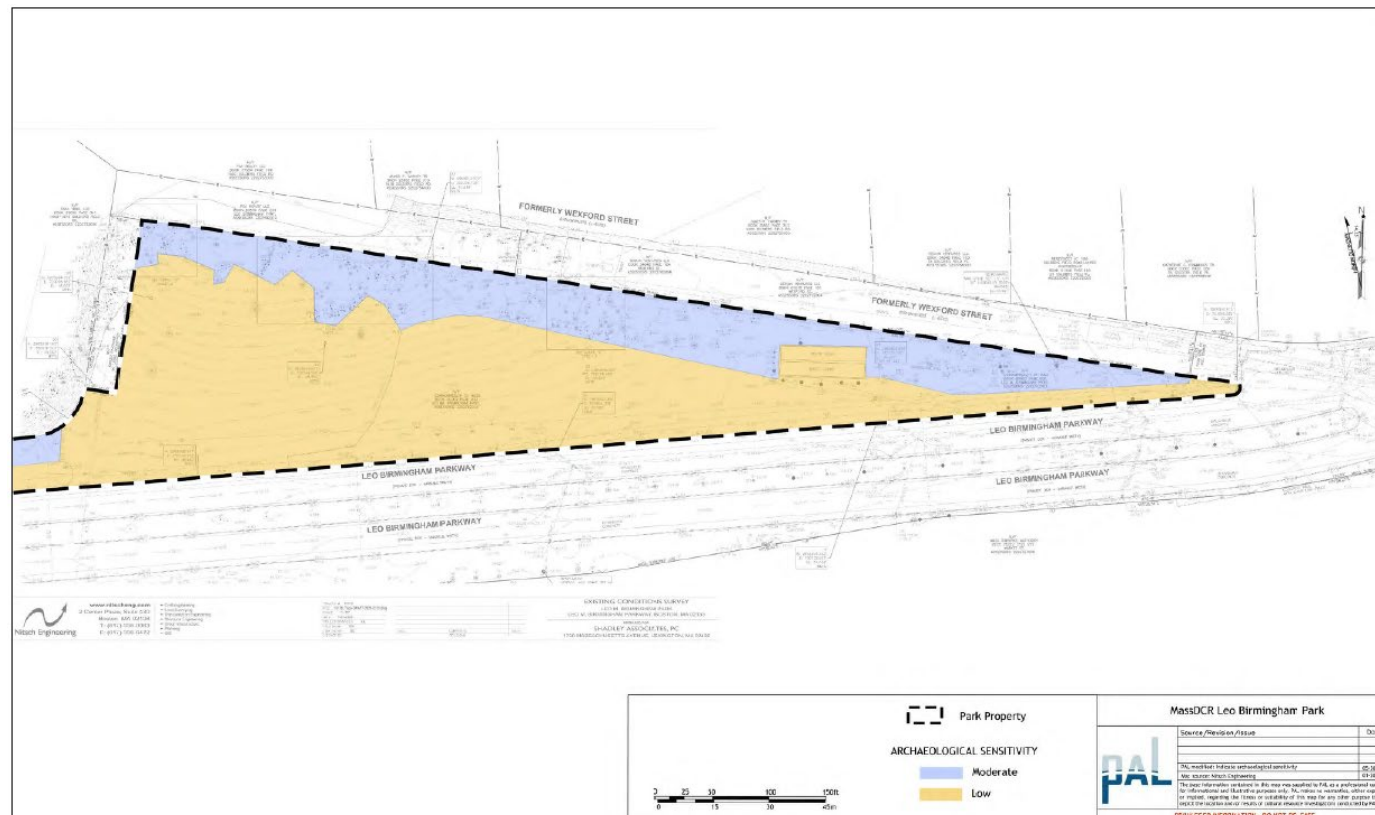
- In the 1800s, the park was a neighborhood with 20 house lots
- Bordered the Brighton Slaughterhouse property to the north
- Bound by Wexford Street (formerly Winship Ave) to the north, Hillside Ave on the west, and the Boston & Albany Railroad on the south
- In 1932, the DCR acquired the entire neighborhood and built Birmingham Parkway and the existing park
- Soldiers Field Road was later constructed when the state acquired the slaughterhouse property.



Map circa 1875

Archaeological Investigation

- Recommendation is for park improvements to avoid deep excavation in the “Moderate Sensitivity” area where the former houses were mainly located



Area of Low Sensitivity

Area of Moderate Sensitivity

Birmingham Parkway Reconstruction

- Construction is substantially complete
- Reclaimed land for Birmingham Park
- Shared use path and parking are now available for public use



Eversource Project

- Continuation of electrical transmission line replacement
- Work to begin in spring 2027
- Construction along Birmingham Park expected first



Complete Route = 1.33 miles



Leo Birmingham Parkway = 2000' or 0.4 miles

Project Status

- Field survey – *complete*
- Existing Tree Inventory & Invasive Species Analysis – *complete*
- Archaeological Exploration & Cultural Resources Report – *complete*
- Concept Design Alternatives – *complete*
- Public Meeting #1 – *December 4, 2025*
- 25% Schematic Design – *submitted June 5, 2026*
- Preferred Concept Design – *presented tonight*

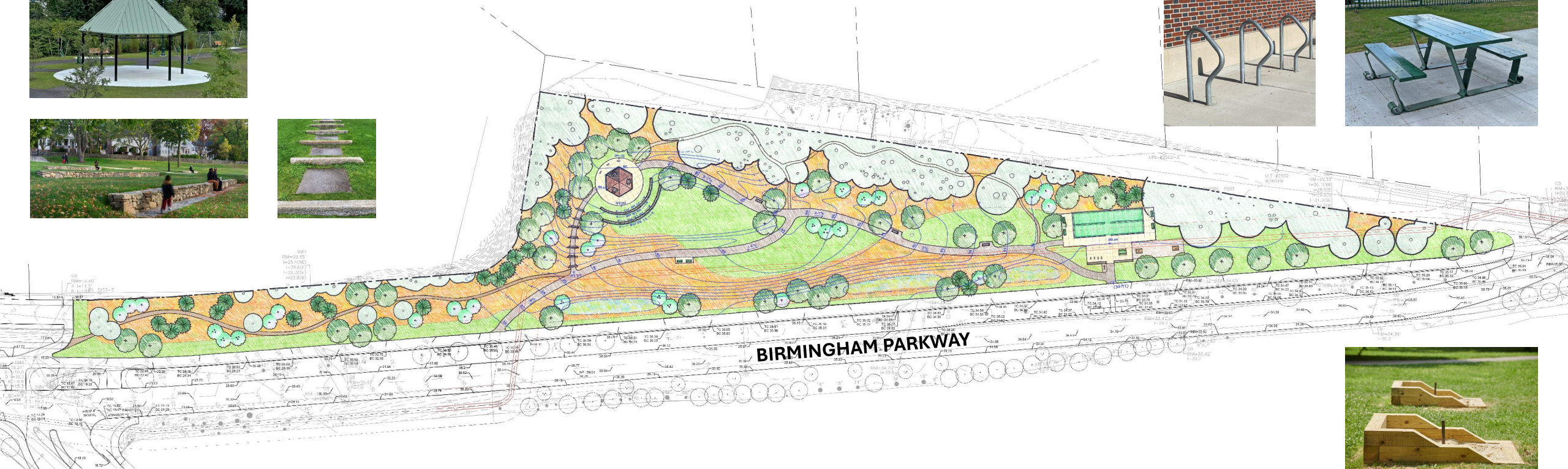
Summary of Public Meeting #1

Concept Design Alternatives Review:

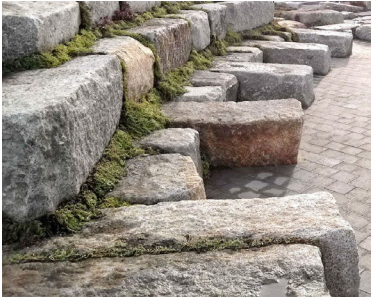
- Two alternatives with different layouts, amenities, and materials were presented
- Public comments indicated preference for elements of each design
- The intent was to find consensus, so a Preferred Concept Design could emerge

Program:

- Two bocce courts & horseshoe pits
- Water bottle filler
- Accessible walkways with seating
- Shade shelter
- New landscaping



Concept Alternative B



Summary of Comments

Concept Plan A

Concept Plan B

Preferences:

- Like the hillside plaza with shade shelter in Concept A
- Prefer natural materials – wood shelter & benches; granite blocks
- Like the layout of the walkways in Concept B that brings the main walk well into the park with a large lawn area
- Like the layout of the bocce courts, horseshoe pits, and seating in Concept B
- Desire for lots of entry points
- Like the walkway through the planting on the west in Concept A
- Add gameboards to tables
- Include a pet station at the water bottle filler
- Promote wildlife habitat

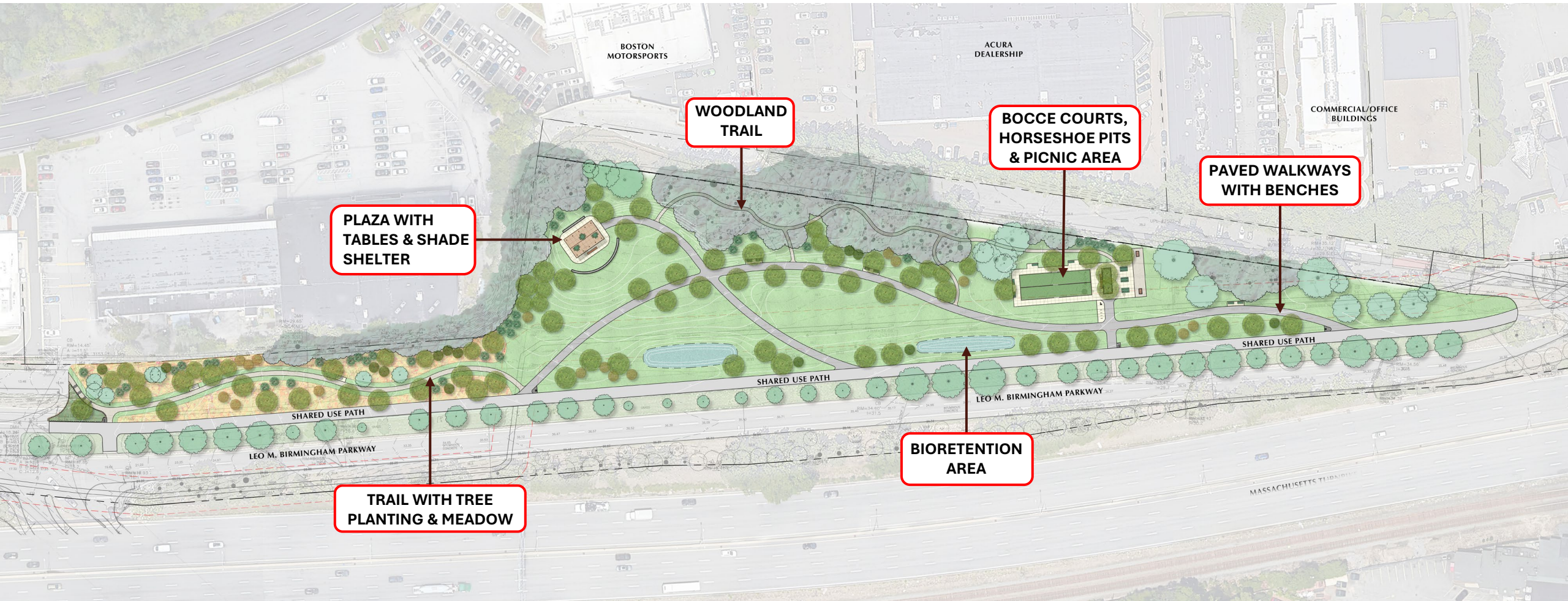
Other Considerations:

- Construction cost and DCR budget
- Maintenance requirements
- Safety and site security

NORTH



Preferred Concept Plan



TWO NEW BOCCE COURTS:
• SYNTHETIC TURF SURFACING
• GRANITE CURB EDGING

HORSESHOE PITS

BENCH, TYP.

PICNIC TABLE

**EXISTING
WOODLAND
VEGETATION**

**EXISTING
TREE, TYP.**

LAWN

LAWN

PARKING

BIRMINGHAM PARKWAY

**BIORETENTION AREA TO
TREAT STORMWATER, TYP.**

12' WIDE SHARED USE PATH

**8' WIDE ASPHALT
WALKWAY**

**BICYCLE PARKING &
WATER BOTTLE FILLER**

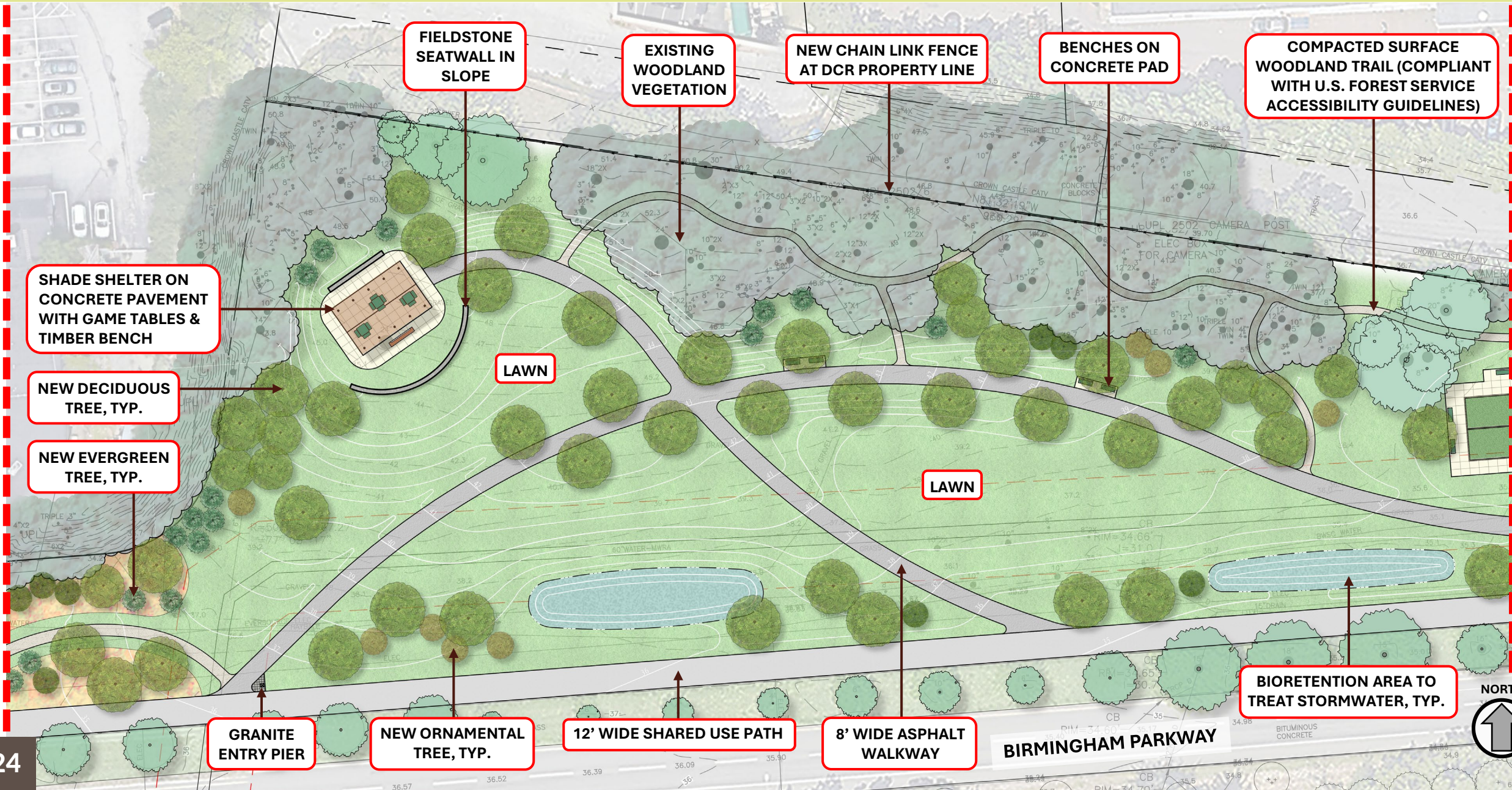
**NEW ORNAMENTAL
TREE, TYP.**

**EXISTING LAWN
MEDIAN WITH TREES**

**NEW DECIDUOUS
TREE, TYP.**

MASSACHUSETTS TURNPIKE (I-90)







Proposed Site Features



Shurcliff Bench



Bicycle Parking



Bocce Courts



Picnic Table



Water Bottle Filler



Bioretention Area



Horseshoe Pits

Proposed Site Features



Shade Shelter



Timber-Style Bench: Option A



Timber-Style Bench: Option B



Fieldstone Retaining Seatwalls



Game Table



Granite Pier



Granite Block Bench

Proposed Planting

- Mix of deciduous & evergreen trees
- Increase species diversity
- Utilize native, adaptable plants
- Promote seasonal interest
- Enhance wildlife habitat



Red Maple



Sugar Maple



Yellowwood



Tulip Tree



Black Gum



Swamp White Oak



Willow Oak



Sassafras



American Linden



Princeton Elm

Proposed Planting (*continued*)



Eastern Red Cedar



White Spruce



Serviceberry (spring)



Serviceberry (fall)



River Birch



White Pine



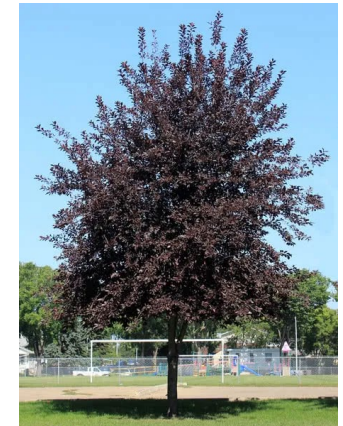
American Arborvitae



Eastern Redbud



Gray Birch



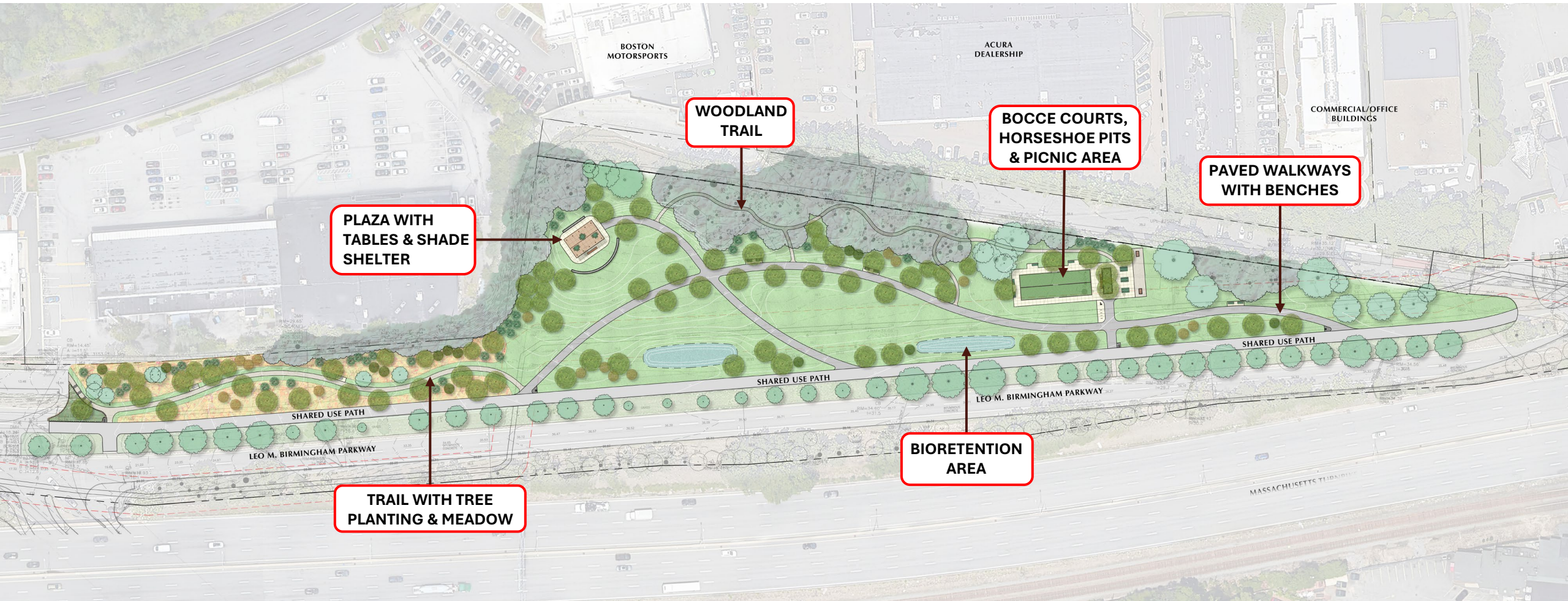
Chokeberry

Next Steps

Design Development (50%)	August – October 2026
75% Construction Documents & Public Meeting #3	October – December 2026
90% Construction Documents	January – February 2027
100% Construction Documents, Public Meeting #4 and Final Bid Set	February – June 2027
Bidding & Construction	<i>Upon approval of construction funding and after completion of Parkway and Eversource projects.</i>

Comments & Questions

Please let us know your thoughts!



Additional Information

- Recording and tonight's slide deck will be available at:
 - www.mass.gov/dcr/past-public-meetings

- If you have comments on this project:
 - Submit online: www.mass.gov/dcr/public-comment
 - Deadline: **Thursday, August 6, 2026**

Please note: the contents of comments submitted to DCR, including your name, town and zip code, will be posted on DCR's website. Additional contact information provided, notably email address, will only be used for outreach on future updates to the subject project or property.

- If you wish to subscribe to a DCR general information or project-related listserv: contact DCR's Office of Community Relations via email at mass.parks@mass.gov

Thank You.

Leo M. Birmingham Park Public Meeting #2



The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) cares for nearly half a million acres of public lands, nurturing the vital connection between people and nature while keeping these shared spaces welcoming and accessible to all.