

Rehabilitation of the Historic Landscape at Lowell Memorial Park

Public Comments
deadline April 2, 2019

Time	Comment	Name		Email Address	Address	City	State	Zip
3/19/19 11:00 AM	<p>I wish to lend my support to the idea of a low fence separating the Lowell Park from Fresh Pond Parkway. Lowell Park would be a great community asset if it included a low fence to separate the park from the Parkway and enable residents with children and pets to safely utilize the space. Without such a fence, it is nothing more than a pretty viewscape for drivers passing through.</p> <p>If Olmsted had known that Fresh Pond Parkway would see 50,000 cars per day, a fence would have been installed on day one Let's fix this historic oversight and give the park back to our residents to enjoy safely. If I had to guess, I would bet that such an idea will be treated as heresy, but I really think it should be considered seriously. Central Park uses a very nice and historically appropriate low fence in such areas to protect and guide park users. An example can be found at this address: https://goo.gl/images/bzmPTs</p> <p>THANKS!!!!</p>	Doug	Brown	douglas_p_brown@yahoo.com	35 Standish Street	Cambridge	MA	02138
3/26/19 1:58 PM	<p>I wasn't able to come to the meeting, but I am in love with the Ancient Maple. Please, can we please try to help take care of it as best we can? This presentation doesn't say anything about care and feeding of the Ancient Maple. Susan</p>	Susan	Labandibar	susan.labandibar@gmail.com	8 Brewer Street	Cambridge	MA	02138

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Time	Comment	Name		Email Address	Address	City	State	Zip
3/31/19 9:09 PM	<p>Sorry I was unable to make the presentation, thanks for the opportunity to submit ideas. I walk through Big Lowell frequently, 5- 10x per week in all but the coldest months.</p> <p>I'd suggest you revisit the location of benches shown on the final page of the plans. The plans call for 9 total, 5 in Small and 4 in Big.</p> <p>1. I rarely if ever see anyone sitting in the Small park, it's relatively close to traffic. Leaving 3 in place there is likely sufficient.</p> <p>2. Allocate more benches to Big Lowell, and be sure to retain the benches in the north end away from FP Parkway and closer to Brattle St.. Those locations are the most peaceful and most frequently used today.</p> <p>Of the benches shown I prefer the Victor Stanley model, I find the Shurcliff style to be relatively uncomfortable, with the seat generally too high.</p> <p>It was unclear from the presentation whether the "inappropriate" trees would be removed, as the new ones are planted. I'm hoping they will be removed to give the new trees and shrubs the best opportunity to thrive.</p> <p>The failing health of the ancient tree at the center of the park means it will have to be taken down at some point, I imagine. Could anything be done to commemorate its history? Could the stump be cut smoothly and finished, and then the rings marked to show all the human or climate history it witnessed thru its life, kind of like what the CA parks have done with crosscuts of ancient redwoods? Perhaps if it's cut at an angle it could be left uncovered and still shed rain and snow. Maybe a project for the Cambridge Historical Society, or Commission? See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPvOqGPb2t0 Alternatively, tree rings map historical weather: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmZO7aRgcW4.</p> <p>Great plan overall, I look forward to seeing it realized!</p>	Thomas	Pounds	tpounds4@comcast.net	102 Lexington Ave	Cambridge	MA	02138

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Time	Comment	Name		Email Address	Address	City	State	Zip
4/1/19 4:25 PM	I hope you will keep the third lane status of Fresh Pond Parkway,, or make it more official, as your report said, as it heads down to join the streets below it and on to Memorial or Storrow Drives. With the larger amount of traffic we have, I think it will keep the cars moving better and not jam up Fresh Pond Parkway or back it up at rush hours. This would also enable cars to scoot by on the right (legally, of course) if they are not planning to turn down Memorial or Storrow Drives, making the traffic flow more efficient. Thank you for listening, Barbara Lloyd	Barbara H	Lloyd	barbarahlloyd@icloud.com	25 HEaley Street	Cambridge	MA	02138

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Time	Comment	Name		Email Address	Address	City	State	Zip
4/1/19 8:21 PM	<p>I have reviewed the documents related to the proposed improvements to (Big) Lowell Park. They are practical and attractive plans for a park badly in need of care and attention. As an abutter to the park I worry:</p> <p>- the proposed lighting : attention must be given to the quality of the actual light, particularly the lamps that are directly in the line of sight from 200/202 Brattle (the lamp in the center of the park). The luminosity of the lamps at either edge of the park will not affect the abutting residents' homes, but the light in the center of the park - if too intense - may bother both residences.</p> <p>- the perimeter plantings proposed for Big Lowell, particularly along the interior of the park and abutters" fence, while having historical precedent, are likely to be problematic. This park is used primarily by owners of dogs who walk, play and toilet. These plants are likely to be trampled and used for defecation (that is unlikely to be picked up by owners once hidden amongst the plantings). This park receives the BARE MINIMUM of DCR maintenance (perfunctory mowing with large equipment, and, it is a certainty that plantings will end up with trash caught amongst them (as once happened with an ill-fated but well-intentioned planting of hostas along the Brattle St, brick wall a few years ago) as well as the aforementioned dog waste. Additionally, this inner edge of the park has been a refuge for the homeless who often camp on the bench behind the tree and use the area to sleep and toilet.</p> <p>- Harvard's "Elmwood" also abutts the Park. Harvard needs to take some interest in the maintenance of the park adjoining the residence of the President. The park along the chain link fence is never cleaned or maintained.</p> <p>I urge DCR to think practically as well as aesthetically and historically about this project. This is not a neighborhood that will take responsibility for the Park's maintenance. Please do not undertake more than can be maintained by the DCR staff.</p>	Caroline	Mortimer	carolinemortimer@comcast.net	200 Brattle Street	Cambridge	MA	02138

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Time	Comment	Name		Email Address	Address	City	State	Zip
4/1/19 10:37 PM	<p>As an abutter to Lowell park I am encouraged by the prospect of a touch of attention given to the park. To be honest, what the park needs more than anything is just regular care. Tree plantings are nice, but regular mowing and leaf removal in the fall would be even better. It seems every year the grass gets much too tall and then the crew cuts it down to about a half an inch so that it is left brown and dead, rendering it so it does not need to be cut again until the next year (clever to reduce work, but ugly). In the fall, the leaves just pile up. The leaves already pile up near the fence due to the wind, and my concern for new plantings along the fence is that they will just trap more leaves and trash than the area already accumulates. Nothing about the maintenance in the park in the past encourages me that the new plantings will be taken care of or that the park will finally be kept to a minimum acceptable standard. After the wall and benches were fixed, I saw no increased regular maintenance. If the park was regularly mowed, the leaves were picked up, and the park benches were painted every other year, it would be plenty nice. I'm not against the plan, I am just skeptical that the park will actually be maintained, which is needed much more than new plantings. As a final consideration, please be mindful with the lights that there are homes that abut the park and bedroom windows that face that direction. The current light is not an issue, and some tasteful lighting in the park seems like a good idea... please just don't make it your goal to light it up like a stadium! Thank you!!!</p>	Donald	Hall	donald.e.hall@gmail.com	202 Brattle Street	Cambridge	MA	02138

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Time	Comment	Name		Email Address	Address	City	State	Zip
4/2/19 1:13 PM	<p>Landscape design recommendations by KZLA address longstanding issues at Lowell Memorial Park which reflect a good understanding of its history, current use and realities of ongoing maintenance. The presentation highlights two big challenges at Little Lowell. First, where to site an improved path that is ADA accessible and best accommodates the significant slope. Alternative 3, the "D" shape, is functional, attractive, brings the path more into the park, and requires only a 12" retaining wall along 80 linear feet. The challenge for DCR snow removal crews is to keep steps clear for pedestrians in the straight part of the D, but this need is infrequent and the steps are few in this plan. Was an option considered of siting path closer to west border, or is the slope here similarly challenging? Second challenge: the memorial wall, desperately needing repair due to yrs of neglect and considerable ongoing damage by plows that apparently 1) push snow down Coolidge Ave into the wall; push snow from Mt Auburn St. into the wall; and 3) do a poor job of clearing the small sidewalk between the wall and Mt Auburn St. Yes, the wall could be moved farther into the park. That may be the only solution, but is costly and against its history. Instead, how about widening the sidewalk along this whole side of the park? The outboard side of the roadway is extra wide here, narrowing to two lanes west of the park. This narrowing of vehicle lane can be on a trial basis with paint and plastic posts, currently being done at west end of Brattle St. where it intersects w Mt. Auburn. Also, I suggest, regarding the "sidewalk to nowhere" along Little Lowell east of intersection of Mt. A. w Coolidge Ave, that pavement be removed, with grass or water garden instead. In this section are four poles that interfere with walking, and at its end, there's no crosswalk across the Parkway anyway. I support idea of the wider, half-circle entrance on Mt. Auburn here, echoing half-circle wall in Big Lowell.</p>	Martha	Stearns	martha.stearns@gmail.com	12 Chilton Street, UNIT 2	Cambridge	MA	02138

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Time	Comment	Name		Email Address	Address	City	State	Zip
4/2/19 1:53 PM	<p>I am writing on behalf of a group of neighbors who prefer Alternate 3 for the pathway through Little Lowell based on the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate 3 maintains the Mt. Auburn Street gateway in its current location and does not require a second break in the wall (as in Alternate 1) or relocation (as in Alternate 4). The current gateway is in a visually pleasing position, and it is in accord with the desire line that leads across Mt. Auburn Street. • The wall that would be required in Alternate 3 is far more more modest in height and length than the wall specified in Alternate 2. • Alternate 3 does not require moving any section of wall as is the case in Alternate 4. (Alternate 1 also seems to require moving a section of wall, or a relocation of the Mt. Auburn Street crosswalk – see our next point.) • Alternate 3 does not require moving the crosswalk across Mt. Auburn Street. Being familiar with the area (as pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers), we see the existing crosswalk location as far safer than the relocated crosswalk specified in Alternate 4. • Alternate 3 offers a benefit that is not addressed in the report, namely, it would allow removal of the Mt. Auburn Street sidewalk from the gateway to the southeastern corner of Little Lowell. This stretch is a sidewalk-to-nowhere with four poles are that navigational hazards. Removing this unnecessary concrete, however small, would help reduce our urban heat island, add green to the landscape, reduce runoff into the street, and obviate the need for snowplowing in winter. <p>Regarding the park's existing trees (especially the three large oaks to the east of the Mt. Auburn gateway), we urge you to consider how they might be integrated into Alternate 3 and given special protection during construction.</p> <p>Thank you for considering our comments, Maggie Booz, 27 Lawn St. Jan Ferrara, 195 Brattle St. Ann Kania, 175 Brattle St. Annette LaMond, 7 Riedesel Ave. Kate Thompson, 14 Elmwood Ave.</p>	Annette	LaMond	annettelamond@gmail.com	7 Riedesel Avenue	Cambridge	MA	02138