

Walden Pond Main Beach Accessibility Improvements
November 18, 2024 Public Meeting
Questions & Answers from Zoom Chat

Q1: Is at least one family restroom/changing room going to have an adult changing table?

A1: *An adult changing table was not included in the project plans. DCR will review the feasibility of installing one.*

Q2: Will the bathrooms be open between October and end of May?

A2: *DCR plans to operate the new bathhouse between Memorial Day and Labor Day. DCR will evaluate the feasibility of extending the season in the fall or spring, however the bathhouse is designed to be closed during the winter.*

Q3: Will at least one family restroom have a lift for transfers for wheelchair users who are not self-sufficient?

A3: *A lift for wheelchair users was not included in the project plans. DCR will review the feasibility of installing one.*

Q4: Will there be a way for wheelchair users to get to the water? Such as a beach mat

A4: *There will be a ramp from the bathhouse plaza to the beach, and seasonal beach mat that leads as close to the water's edge as conditions permit given the seasonally variable water level.*

Q5: Will the drive way to the boat launch be rebuilt?

A5: *Yes. The DCR Lakes and Ponds program is conducting a resurfacing of the boat ramp driveway using permeable pavement. This work will begin upon completion of the Main Beach accessibility improvements.*

Q6: family bathrooms have been a huge change to our families life. or atleast to mine and my two young kids. my autistic son is able to deal with the WC experience so much more. not hearing toilets flush and water coming out of the sink is huge.& i really hope there will be alift OR have family restrooms on ground level ?!

A6: *In the new bathhouse is a single level and as such all bathrooms, including the three family bathrooms will be on the main beach plaza level.*

Q7: We need a real PUBLIC meeting, to meet in person, with WIDE notification. Not just people on an email list.

A7: *DCR held two public meetings in 2019, one in January where alternatives for providing accessibility at the Main Beach were presented, the other in November where the preferred alternative was presented. Per DCR's protocols at the time, materials for both meetings were posted on the DCR website for comment, and a public comment period was held. For the November 2024 public meeting, DCR sent meeting invitations out to approximately 7,000 individuals, including to those who attended or commented at prior public meetings. The notice was also posted on the DCR website.*

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Q8: The boardwalk material that was used for the outside of the new Visitor's Center gets tremendously slippery under wet conditions. What plans do you have to ENSURE that this giant boardwalk actually has a surface with grip?

A8: *Thank you for that comment. We will certainly look into ways to resolve that for the Phase 2 of the project*

Q9: Is there an exact count of the trees (beautiful pines) you plan to cut down?

A9: *There are 57 trees expected to be removed, many of which were deemed unhealthy by a certified arborist.*

Q10: Given the 250 celebration in 2025 is it wise to begin building when so many folks are coming to the area?

A10: *Since the pond closes once the parking lot reaches capacity, we do not anticipate a major increase in visitation.*

Q11: what is the website for updates?

A11: *The website address will be published, shortly after the contract is awarded.*

Q12: Will you be labeling all trees to be taken down? Prior to removal, so the public can weigh in/negotiate/collaborate their removal?

A12: *There will not be a process for the public to negotiate tree removal, since the trees must be removed.*

Q13: Can you identify the area where trees and bushes will be cut down?

A13: *The trees to be removed will be limited to the immediate area of improvements. The trees are identified in the powerpoint presentation.*

Q14: What is the expected slope of the proposed accessible walkway? It is very long -will there be an area to rest and allow faster visitors to pass?

A14: *Yes. The slope of the boardwalk will be less than 5% and will be wide enough for people to comfortably pass by each other.*

Q15: What is the start date and what will be the access this winter?

A15: *DCR anticipates work will begin in mid-December or early-January. Access to the Main Beach will be determined in consultation with the contractor. Other areas of Walden Pond State Reservation will remain open*

Q16: Is there a beach chair?

A16: *There are beach wheelchairs at the pond now, and they'll continue to be provided.*

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Q17: Will the quick access down the steep slope still be there?

A17: *There will be stairs that split off from the boardwalk close to the end of the current E-ramp.*

Q18: I just asked this question live: I like the design quite a bit. Thank you! My question is about bike parking. Will there be bike stands near the beach? There were bike racks until a few years ago but they were taken away. Leaving a nice bike in the parking lot out of sight is not a good solution.

A18: *We will work with Park staff to determine what would be the best place for bike racks, if any. If any are added to the pond side, they would not be done until Phase 2 of the project.*

Q19: so the current entry point will be closed? What about cars? Will there be expanded parking on the pond side?

A19: *During Phase II, the E-Ramp will be removed and revegetated with native plantings. There is no expanded parking planned on the pond side of the road, all parking will remain on the opposite side of the road from the pond.*

Q20: Where will emergency vehicles enter?

A20: *Emergency vehicles will be separated from people coming down to the pond. People will be able to access the pond and bathhouse from the crosswalk by the Visitor's center. Emergency vehicles will access the beach front over by the boat ramp and come down to just before the new overlook.*

Q21: How long will this project take to complete?

A21: *The bathhouse portion is expected to take one year, mostly during 2025. The bathhouse will be open during the summer recreation season starting in May 2026. The boardwalk portion is expected to last through 2026.*

Q22: Please provide exact number of trees to be cut down.

A22: *There are 57 trees expected to be removed, many of which were deemed unhealthy by a certified arborist.*

Q23: Bathhouse is currently closed for most of the year. Any plans to keep this open for the full year?

A23: *DCR plans to operate the new bathhouse between Memorial Day and Labor Day. DCR will evaluate the feasibility of extending the operation of the bathhouse in the spring and fall, however the bathhouse is designed to be closed during the winter.*

Q24: Also, bc of the recent issues with the lack of beach, I would like for there to be discussion about public lockers or storage made available for those who want to lock up valuable objects near the bathhouse. (Or if this has already been explored and rejected for safety reasons, at least share reasonings)

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A24: DCR does not plan to include lockers for the public as part of the new bathhouse plan. Lockers have not been provided by DCR at Walden Pond, as it would be difficult to effectively operate, manage, and maintain such lockers.

Q25: Thank you for addressing concerns about erosion during construction! I look forward to hearing more about both the interim and long-term re-planting to mitigate erosion on those very steep slopes leading to the pond. I also want to say that although my question was narrowly focused on the landscape, I'm so, so excited to see the pond more widely accessible as a result of these projects.

A25: The contractor will rigorously adhere to the Order of Conditions approved by the Concord Natural Resources Commission, implementing sediment controls like coir logs. These will be regularly monitored and maintained throughout construction. Temporary soil stockpiles and disturbed slopes will be seeded with appropriate cover crops to minimize erosion and protect water quality. The DCR Lakes & Ponds program will assist with monitoring and preserving the water quality of Walden during this project.

Q26: Thanks. Keeping the pines and the other large trees, and increasing plant diversity can happen at the same time. Can it?

A26: The trees to be removed will be limited to the immediate area of improvements, notably the bathhouse and related infrastructure, and boardwalk.

Q27: Is there ANY possibility that this project will be delayed or stopped entirely by the incoming administration(or other issues)? And if so, what are the contingency plans if work needs to stop? (Will the public always have access, what will be the most destructive steps and how quickly will they be fixed-these projects always take longer than we expect)

A27: The project is funded by federal funds through the American Plan Rescue Act (ARPA). These funds must be committed by the end of the calendar year. We do not anticipate that work will stop once it begins.

Q28: Can the website include visuals of what to expect in terms of construction and protection of the shoreline? More information and communication about expectations will always be appreciated.

A28: DCR will update the website with information on what to expect during construction, as well as protocols to protect the pond water quality.

Q29: What is the purpose of this meeting? The building plan seems Any change suggested here will be considered?

A29: As a preconstruction meeting, the purpose of the meeting was to inform the public about the project and its upcoming construction.