Sacramento Field Renovation
August 31, 2016

Our goal is to create a more enjoyable neighborhood park, a place for the community to come together, a place for both active and leisurely pursuits. Our aim is to improve and enhance what exists, while also creating new opportunities for children and families. For any park renovation, we work to make accessible, safe, and inviting open spaces.
Park Renovation Process

- Open Space Committee identification of issues
- Rating of parks
- Cost, Budget, & Appropriation/Community Preservation Committee process

City Context

- Green Ribbon Open Space Study
- Agassiz Neighborhood Study
- Healthy Parks and Playgrounds
- Neighborhood Context:
  - Demographic information, e.g. age
  - Population density
  - Public open spaces
  - Community institutions, e.g. schools, day cares, community centers
  - Inventory of recreation activities (tot lots, youth sports, waterplay, off-leash areas, etc.)
Early Issues

- Sacramento Community Garden
- Maria L. Baldwin School leadership & parent group
- Agassiz Baldwin Community, including Neighborhood Council
Community Outreach

- Direct postcard mailing to over 1,300 residents within a ¼ mile radius

- Notice to the Agassiz Baldwin Community and the Agassiz Neighborhood Council and public notice within the Whistler email newsletter

- Placed flyer notices to all abutters properties including Sacramento Street, Sacramento Place, Garfield Street, and portions of Mass Ave. and Oxford Street.

- Posted notices at Sacramento Field, Sacramento Community Garden, Alden Playground, and Maria L. Baldwin School message boards

Community Outreach continued

- Emailed notices to the Baldwin School Community via Family Liaison and parent group to distribute

- Emailed notices to the Sacramento Community Garden via their Garden Coordinators to distribute

- Contacted Sacramento Field users including local day care providers, the Guidance Center, after school program organizers, CitySprouts, and the Baldwin School leadership/P.E. teacher

- Conducted informal site visits to the Field to inform people of upcoming meetings, and had informal conversations with a handful of abutters about the use of the Field
What we heard:
Feedback from our 1st Community Meeting

- New grass planting, irrigation and maintenance to field
- Keeping the field open for multiple activities
- Consideration of both passive and active areas for all ages
- Creating a dedicated "track" around the field
- Create more interesting edges with plantings, pollinators, grasses
- Adding benches and seating
- Need for cooling areas and shade trees
- Better access and signage and the potential for school use
- We heard much support for off leash opportunities for dogs, and some opposition
- Don't overdesign the park, it already supports creative and spontaneous uses

Continued Discussion

- Sacramento Community Gardeners
- Friends of Baldwin Parent Group
- Maria L. Baldwin School leadership
- Local daycare providers
2nd Community Meeting: Design Concept Presentation

Key features of the design concept:

- To create two connections/entrances to the field that are visible, accessible, safe, and well identified with park signage
- A path around the field that is stable, permanent, and accessible for wheelchairs, walkers, baby strollers, and joggers.
- To create a new nature based tot area that achieves a less artificial look
- Resurface and re-line the court, replace the timber retaining walls with masonry wall, and fencing
- To incorporate landscaping improvements with native tree plantings as well as buffer planting of shrubs to visually soften the edges of the field and give more privacy to abutters
Feedback from the Second Community Meeting

- General support for the overall design concept. Attendees liked that the park would remain a multi-use open space with upgraded features.
- Positive feedback about the idea of incorporating more natural design elements and seating.
- No major objections about the loop path feature, but there were some questions and concerns raised about using asphalt, specifically its permeability and health impacts.
- Questions about the lighting concept, specifically about programming the lighting so that it would not be too bright or invite late night activity. Participants were curious to learn what the program might be and what the process working with the City might look like to develop a lighting plan. A few expressed opposition to the addition of lighting.

Feedback from the Second Community Meeting continued

- A request for gates at the entrances for toddlers.
- Interest in incorporating more native species for the plantings and trees.
- A couple participants requested to keep the “full court” with two hoops, the Baldwin School supported a shorter hoop. There was no interest in the Bankshot concept.
- Strong support for off-leash hours in the mornings for dogs. We also heard opposition due to noise issues and clean up as well as wishing to keep the park for people to enjoy.
Questions about Design Concept

Since the second community meeting, the City has been fielding questions about a few of the design elements proposed for the park, including:

- Loop path and material
- Lighting concept
- An enclosed play area for younger children
- Gates at the park entrances
- Youth Soccer

Issue: Loop Path

The loop path is a key feature in the overall design concept and a component in which a broader range of people in the neighborhood could enjoy. In any park redesign, the City strives to uphold Universal Design principles to support recreational opportunities for all users regardless of age, ability, size, etc.

Raised Concerns:
- Accessibility
- Health
- Permeability
Issue: Lighting Concept

The City generally provides park lighting that is balanced to allow enough light that people taking an evening stroll without encouraging inappropriate late night activity. With the new lighting programming capabilities, the adjustability (dimming) of individual lights, and the shielding, there will be far less lighting impacts than what residents might expect.

Raised Concerns:
- Addition/Location of lighting

Lighting Concept Changes
- Reduced the total number of light fixtures along the northeast portion of the park while maintaining a reasonable level of illumination for the park entrances and the path connecting the two entrances. The total number of individual light fixtures went from 15 to 8.
- Commitment to install lighting fixtures with shields to further restrict the light distribution pattern
- Commitment to work with the community and the Cambridge Electrical Department to program the lights to balance safety concerns with unwanted lighting impacts and night sky pollution.
Issue: Enclosed Play Area

CDD staff have worked with a local day care provider and supporters to add gates upon entry to the field at both entrances to provide a degree of control over where and how younger children are able to play throughout the park. The new design play has an enclosed, flat play area to accommodate younger children that includes a toddler climb, slide deck, mirrored panel, steering wheel, and covered sand play area.

Raised Concerns:

- Providing an enclosed space for younger children
- Desire for gates at both entrances
Toddler climb structure and slide deck

Covered Sand Play
Issue: Youth Soccer

CDD staff consulted on multiple occasions with the Cambridge Youth Soccer leadership to understand their space needs for both games and informal soccer practice.

Raised Concerns:
- Size of field for youth soccer
Guidance Center Parking Lot Entrance

Garden Path entrance
Seating and tables, enclosed play area

Multi-use Hard Surface Ball Court
Nature-based Play Area

Loop Path around Field
Changes to the Design Concept

Considerations and changes to the initial design concept presented on May 4th are a result of public input received at the second community meeting, the subsequent open houses, and direct feedback (email, phone calls, letters) to CDD staff.

Path Design & Landscaping Changes:
- Simplified the layout of the loop path around the field and the perimeter elements of interest around the field.
- Reduced size & impact of paved area at the Sacramento PI easement corner
- Commitment to using all native species plantings (trees, shrubs, etc.)
- Commitment of the colors of the park furniture, swings, and fencing to be muted colors
- Installation of a historical marker with content about history of site and images with input from the Cambridge Historical Commission
Changes to the Design Concept continued

**Nature-based Play Area:**
- Increased efforts to have the nature-based play area in the north corner look and feel more natural by reducing the square footage of artificial surfacing
- Made adjustments to the play area to accommodate winter sledding
- Moved the small-scale wooden play hut element away from the outside fencing and closer to the loop path to enhance the access and visibility

**Addition of Gates and Enclosed Area for Younger Children:**
- Added an enclosed 40 foot by 20 foot flat area to accommodate younger children that includes a climb and slide tot deck as well as a covered sandbox play area
- Added gates upon entry to the field at both entrances

Changes to the Design Concept continued

**Improvements to the Sacramento Community Garden:**
- Made adjustments to the garden path entrance to minimize impact on the garden
- Added raised beds along the back edge of the garden
- Added other garden elements including new fencing, a message board, and water spigot
- Changed the orientation of the double service gates to the garden along Sacramento Street
- Removed the back gate at the far corner of the garden (north corner)