

Linear Park Redesign - Public Meeting #2 - 11/16/2022 - Comments, Questions and Answers

**Comments and Questions**

**Answers**

Park Opening - South Side	
Will you reopen the access from the end of Reed Street that is now blocked by a metal fence?	This is addressed later in the presentation.
<p>Dear Charlie,</p> <p>If there was an access point at Westley Avenue, then any bicyclists would have to enter Westley Avenue from one of three points: down Reed Street, down Harvey Street from the Russell Field direction, or down Harvey Street from the Cedar Street end.</p> <p>Reed Street is one-way going away from Westley, so any bicyclists wanting to enter the Park from Westley would have to drive the wrong way down Reed.</p> <p>Harvey Street is also one-way going towards Russell Field, so anyone approaching from the Russell field direction would have to also go the wrong way down Harvey Street.</p> <p>The only bicyclists who could go the right way would be coming down Harvey Street from Cedar Street, and they could just enter the Park at Cedar Street.</p> <p>Jonathan Slate</p>	<p>Thanks for your thoughts.</p>
I am opposed to a new access point at Westley Ave.	Thank you for your feedback.
Westley Avenue point is a great idea. Would change the way I use Linear Park for the better.	Thank you for your feedback.
Too close to Cedar St. Open an access down by the townhouses or coop housing.	Thank you for your feedback.
If residents near a proposed access point oppose opening it at that location, how do you evaluate that opposition vs. the potential benefit to others who might want to use it?	We are taking all comments and input on this possibility into account and discussing it. We are weighing the pros and cons as we determine our next steps and draft our recommendation.
I'd love to see the Westley Ave. access re-opened ~ I live a few blocks away.	Thank you for your feedback.
I like the addition of another entrance point on Reed Street.	Thank you for your feedback.
Also, bicyclists would not be the only people using the entrance from Reed Street.	Thank you for the comment.
Westley Ave is such a small residential street surrounded in all directions by one way streets. Opening up a small dead end street to pedestrians, bicycles, dogs as well as cars, raises safety concerns for its residents.	Thank you for the comment.

Shouldn't the viewpoints of the residents who live most proximate to the Westley fence carry the most weight as they are most affected by increased traffic and noise that would come from opening the path into a residential-only area? The closest main entry point is only a block away, better lit, less strictly residential, and doesn't add much time-savings for path users in other parts of the neighborhood. Thanks!	Thank you for the comment.
I am against opening the end of Westley Ave. It's a 2 minute walk to another entrance and a opening there will be detrimental to our community and neighborhood, instead of being beneficial to the community. As an abutter, we have had negative experiences with people on the bike path and the fence has separated the our children from police actions on the other side. The path won't just be open during the day, but also at night when we've had issues with inebriated people using the path.	Thank you for the comment.
Strongly oppose opening Westley Ave. Safety concerns—crime, drugs, noise, late night parties—which we had when it was open before. I have had 2 tenants mugged on the path over the years, I don't want Westley to be a “get away” path for crime on the path.	Thank you for the comment.
For safety and security, I am opposed to a new access point at Westley Ave.	Thank you for the comment.
Opening the end of Westley Ave. will also be the only place along this section of the bike path that would dump into residents' front yards instead of into parking lots, which has less impact on the people living there.	Thank you for the comment.
Please DO NOT reopen the fence at Westley Ave! Multiple adverse impacts will result. That's why the City was forced to install the heavy wrought-iron barrier decades ago.	Thank you for your comment.
I live on Westley Ave as well and oppose an added opening. While I understand the desire for more south-facing access points, the addition of one on Westley Ave would be a great disruption -- it would open into our front yards on a quiet street where neighborhood kids play, compared to other openings that connect to parking lots and busy streets. This will make our little street the perfect shortcut for someone going from Dunkin Donuts to Rindge Ave, and I dread the litter and noise.	Thank you for your comment.
Can you at least explain how you compare impact to residents near a proposed change vs. potential benefit to the broader community?	Impact to residents and potential benefit to greater community is something we are continuing to evaluate as we study all options.
Will you meet with the residents of Westley Ave? is this a “done deal” in your minds?	We are still taking input on this. No final decisions have been made.
Shame on you for being so dismissive of the residents of Westley Ave. This is very important to us.	We are not being dismissive to anyone. We are inviting all members of the public to participate in the ongoing design process and stay involved in this project.

To see what an opening to Reed Street might look like, check out the Thorndike Street crossing of the path near Davis Square in Somerville.	Thank you for your comment.
Westley Avenue is the smallest street in Cambridge. When people back out of their driveways, they literally must back into the driveway of their neighbors across the street. There are elderly and disabled homeowners, as well as young children, on Westley. How could they be safe with increased traffic, especially bicyclists, going to Linear Park on this small street?	This is something that we are considering as we look at all options for park access.

<b>Access: Cottage Park</b>	
Any preliminary design thoughts or ideas about Cottage Park access? rather steep grade, but preserving some sort of more natural form of access here would definitely be very desirable.	The Cottage Park access point does have a kind of sloping ramp to get from the Cottage Park sidewalk area to Linear Park. We would like to maintain that access point. And we would also like to make it ADA compliant.

<b>Camp Cameron</b>	
Additional seating with tables and public art would be a good use of "Camp Cameron". I've heard that this area including the corner building was used for train flagging; interpretation of that history through art could be fun and educational.	Thank you for your comment.
Since 'Camp Cameron' was mentioned, some historical marker about Civil War history would be appropriate here	Thank you for your comment.
These photos show an empty Blue Bike dock. If it is full, the path will be considerably narrower	Thank you for the comment.
How about trying to acquire that little triangular building at Mass. and Cameron and removing it (if possible.) At the Somerville/Cambridge line, more trees and seating - if they're tall trees, there should be good visibility below them (vs. shrubs and low trees.) Agreed the MBTA lot — Cambridge should talk with the MBTA about acquiring 10' or so of it.	That is not something that we would generally look to do on a project like this unless there were an enormous need for taking property.
Moving the Blue Bikes would create more space for seating on Camp Cameron section.	Thank you for your comment.

<b>Collaboration &amp; Coordination</b>	
Can Cambridge & Somerville collaborate on the Municipal Line area?	Yes, we have met with Somerville staff to brainstorm ideas but please let us know if you have thoughts!
Has the MBTA been involved in your planning?	Yes, we've met with MBTA staff and discussed access to emergency egress vaults along the Red Line tunnels as well as other items that will require further coordination with them.
How much communication is there with this project and the Grace project?	We have had multiple meetings to coordinate along this edge of Linear Park

<b>Crossing: Harvey St</b>	
Can the Harvey Street crossing be raised and made smooth? Can bike footrests be added on both sides of the Mass Ave crossing?	Yes, a raised crossing is planned.

<b>Dogs</b>	
Human children have exclusive use of the Rindge Field - what about the dog owners, who arguably use this linear path more than human children?! We walk our dog daily on what we call the "sniff path". Was a small dog park with seating around it considered? If so, why wasn't it prioritized?	Public feedback we've received to date has not indicated that a small dog park is a priority.
Please consider public dog parks versus private dog park. There is a small private dog park near the linear path but the public cannot use it.	Thank you for your comment.
A dog run near Russell Field by the Pool fence is very do-able and would not require a big budget to add some fencing.	Thank you for your comment.
Have you considered a dog run in the Russell Field area?	We have not received many requests for a dog run/park in Linear Park, but we will consider the request. Thank you!
Is there a dog park/plan area for dogs unleashed? We need that.	We have not received many requests for a dog run/park in Linear Park, but we will consider the request. Thank you!
The open areas just south of Harvey Street are used a lot by folks letting their dogs run and play.	Thank you for your comment.
Yes, a dog run is VERY much needed!	Thank you for your comment.
A dog park, even a small one / fenced in area should really be considered - many, many dog owners use this path - some with their dogs off-leash when it is not busy. There are several nearby playgrounds and tot lots for children which are fenced off. Adding play structures as proposed would not get as much use as a dog run in my opinion.	Thank you for your comment.
There is a 20' x 200' +/- portion of the park beyond the park fence just east of the Whittemore connector that might be a potential dog run area	We'll take another look, but my understanding is that p[parcel is likely owned by the Linnea apartment building.
Agree with John - if a dog park can't be added right next to the path, there are still spaces around Russell Field where one could be sited	Thank you for your comment.
'+1 on the dog run near Russell Field by the pool fence. Great idea!	Thank you for your comment.
Water fountain include a lower dog fountain?	We will look into that. Thank you for your comment.

<b>Edge Treatment &amp; Side Path</b>	
The additions of side paths, natural play areas, and social spaces all look like great improvements. I really appreciate the design options that you've shared and would be excited to use the path as more than just a transit avenue.	Thank you for your comment.

There were 4 proposals for side lanes, three were paved, one was "grass" or did I get that wrong?	We are proposing a 14-foot path surface and we keep two feet on each side open as a clear zone which is a standard for multi-use paths.
The area shown for a parallel path in this presentation would seem to be the only portion of the path between Harvey and Mass Ave that could accommodate a dual path system.	We will investigate other areas. Stay tuned!
I don't understand what was said about the path edge options. Can people walk/run/bike on those edges? Are they water permeable?	The edge treatment has not been determined yet but we would like to hear how people might use it.

<b>Elmwood Ave Connection</b>	
Are you involved in the approved plans for the connection to Elmwood Ave. Will there be changes?	Yes, those plans were approved before we got underway with the Linear Park Redesign Project. I do want to point out that on Elmwood there is some steep grade between the path surface and the end of the street. The proposed connection that is underway will connect to the sidewalk and there will be a retaining wall to ensure folks are not going down the non-ADA compliant side.

<b>Fences</b>	
Why were property owners not notified?	Abutters were sent a letter in October to coordinated about fences and them aware of the project. Additional outreach to abutters and others in the neighborhood was done through flyering properties in the spring. Additional outreach was done through social media, city newsletters and other means.
Why not take down the fence that was put up a number of years ago?	We are studying fence changes/improvements. Thank you for your comment.
This area has changed a lot over the decades - keeping fences that were necessary a long time ago feels out of touch.	Thank you for your comment.

<b>Finances / Budget</b>	
What is the project's overall budget?	The total project budget has not been determined until we get closer to a full conceptual design. Funds have been set aside in the city capital budget for the two [the Linear Park Redesign, as well as the Danehy-New Street Connector path] path projects in this area in the amount of \$10m. Additional funds may be identified if needed.

<b>History</b>	
Would be good to include Indigenous history in any historical interpretative. There is little to none in this area. History didn't start with the settlers.	Thank you for your comment.
[Edited] The gateway to the park on Cedar St has a plaque honoring my Great grandfather who was killed there in 1905. Will that be saved?	[Edited] Yes, we are aware of the plaque and will be re-setting it on whatever gateway is decided on. It will be saved and re-set.
Paul Toner - I hope the plaque will stay! Or is replaced with a more accessible one.	Thank you for your comment.
Agreed on the indigenous history. I believe the path section just north of Mass. Ave. is where "Weir Field" was which led to a fishing weir on Alewife Brook. Charlie Sullivan has maps showing this (or I can send them.)	Thank you for your comment. Can you please email to us?

<b>MBTA &amp; Structures</b>	
Now that this is no longer a trackless trolley terminal, the city should be able to acquire an easement (not necessarily a land purchase) to widen the path and park next to it.	Thank you for your comment.
For places where you can't put permanent structures on top of MBTA access, you could place moveable seating	Thank you for your comment.

<b>Path Surface / Soil Compaction / Drainage</b>	
Has the soil on the bike path been tested for contaminants, specifically lead? This had been an industrial area. If it is contaminated, is there any plan for remediation?	Since this was an industrial area, we'll have to go out and look as we get into construction. No tests have been conducted yet.
I would love to see the 2' bordering path areas be soft and permeable surfaces — I run on the current dirt paths on the sides out to the Somerville end and far prefer running on soft surfaces vs. pavement.	Thank you for your comment.
Drainage issues need to be dealt with at Harvey/Mass Ave entrance and other places on the path	Yes, all of the drainage will be re-done.
Soft-surface is very appreciated for joggers with bad knees	Thank you for your comment.

<b>Safety for All Path Users</b>	
How will the new designs ensure safety for both bikers and pedestrians? Especially given the many children and strollers. Thank you.	Increasing the path width, and providing 2' clear zones will increase safety for path users travelling at different speeds.
Are there not examples where suggested "optimal" bike lane widths per ASHTO are not always implemented?	There are possible locations where we may have to narrow the path a bit. If we encounter an obstacle. Or if there is another unforeseen issue. So, there is a precedent for doing that. But our goal is to have a 14-foot path width.

<p>The suggestion that signs could be put up allowing bicycles to go the wrong way down a one-way street does not solve the problem of danger for those bicyclists going against the flow of traffic, nor for the automobiles, nor pedestrians in general on those streets, if that was allowed.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>Jonathan’s concern can be addressed by posting “Except Bicycles” signs under existing “Do Not Enter” signs, as is done on Hancock Street in Somerville.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>It’s not clear who has the “right of way” on the path - bikers seem to feel it is theirs, and pedestrians need to move</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>Not confident just asking bikers to be courteous addresses the safety concerns</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>What is the two foot clear zone?</p>	<p>A zone adjacent to the path surface where we not put signage or water fountains or have benches. It's a design standard that has been set by ASHTO and others that the City has taken into our own standards.</p>
<p>The path proposal is 14' plus two 2' side lanes for 18' total, correct?</p>	<p>That is not what we are proposing. We are proposing a 14-foot path surface and we keep 2-feet on each side as a clear zone which is a standard minimum for multi-use paths.</p>
<p>Would love to see meaningfully wider path and focus on increased safety for both pedestrians and bicyclists.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>If the path is widened and then connected to the path that ultimately goes to Lechmere, won’t it become more of a thoroughfare for bikes and be less of a “park”.</p>	<p>The intent is to make the path feel safer, not to increase traffic. Other improvements are intended enhance the park character.</p>
<p>What is the two foot clear zone and how will it increase safety? My biggest concern is around improving safety for both bikers and pedestrians, and increasing path width to help with that safety.</p>	<p>The 2-foot clear zone keeps path users safe in two primary ways. It reduces the "shy distance" from edge of path if there were an obstruction directly at the edge of the path surface. It also provides a recovery area for someone who departs the path unexpectedly. Additionally, it may help extend sight lines creating a more comfortable experience for folks approaching a turn or bend.</p>
<p>The earlier comments about widening the path, may have been based on peoples’ hope that different lanes could be created for different users. I know that was my thought. Since widening much doesn’t seem possible, other options for safely using the path seem important.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>Just got nearly run over again in this section late this afternoon by another speeding road hog.</p>	<p>Thank you for the feedback.</p>

<p>Have you considered speed bumps on the path to control the speed of bicyclists? My son and I bike on the path regularly and on every outing there are speeding cyclists not respecting others' space.</p>	<p>We don't utilize speed bumps to control other multi-use paths, and we don't see that very often in other cities, so that is not something that I think we are going to utilize as part of this approach. We are looking at ways to have path users be courteous, but it is difficult to do speed bumps because of other maintenance, snow plowing, and ADA accessibility requirements.</p>
<p>A speed limit sign that tell someone how fast they're going would be helpful for the e-bike era. Some Bikes don't have speedometers but they're still dangerous!</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>Can bike speeds be moderated with raised areas occasionally? Speed bumps, however maintaining ADA accessibility?</p>	<p>We don't utilize speed bumps to control other multi-use paths, and we don't see that very often in other cities, so that is not something that I think we are going to utilize as part of this approach. We are looking at ways to have path users be courteous, but it is difficult to do speed bumps because of other maintenance, snow plowing, and ADA accessibility requirements.</p>
<p>Can there be a way to check the speed of path users, perhaps with certain areas that measure the time between points and display an "ok," "slow down," or "too fast" message with signage explaining the need for lower speeds when pedestrians are around? Alternatively, there could be a painted area that users should take more than 2 (or 3) seconds to get from end-to-end to indicate the maximum speed. Many cyclists and e-vehicle users have no idea how fast they are going or how fast they should be going.</p>	<p>We'll look at signage and other options to encourage slower speeds, but at this point we're not considering adding any flashing signs.</p>
<p>I totally second Alex Epstein's comment - too many close calls with speeding bikers! Separate lanes/zones very important!!</p>	<p>Thank you for the comment.</p>
<p>Just as with cars, you should consider ways to make various vehicles be considerate to others through design. This is a park, not a speedway, and should be designed to create that atmosphere. That will make this a good place for people to be at all non-internal combustion engine speeds.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>On multiple occasions I have seen people drive gas mopeds down the path and some of the newer e-bikes fly down the section around Russell Field - signage or other traffic calming measures (not sure what those would be) should be considered</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>Continue to be deeply concerned about balancing safety of all users with speeding bikers. Would urge this group to seriously focus on how to keep all users safe. Feels like you are still prioritizing the commuter aspect of this pathway to other users' detriment, especially walkers, children, dogs.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>



For widening the path, have you considered separating pedestrians from cyclists at all in some sections? It's so congested on the weekends!	Creating separate pathways for different users would take a great deal of space that we don't have in many areas, and add a good deal of pavement. We are proposing a 2 foot widening and looking at edge treatments that could work better for some users.
Narrower - but still acceptable - bike lane widths would allow for more safe and separated pedestrian zone, which is essential for pedestrian / walking safely and comfortably.	Thank you for your comment.
I would like to see the path widened and separate lanes/zones provided for different speed users to minimize conflict between people biking, pushing strollers, walking dogs etc. Thanks!	Thank you for your comment.

<b>Safety - Security</b>	
I agree that there would be security implications in adding forest-like cover areas. I would encourage the project team to consult with the police department on how to maintain security, as the path is often used at night and can feel (and be) dangerous.	Thank you for the comment.
Highly forested areas feel less safe for folks walking to and from Alewife Station in the dark	We will keep this in mind. Thanks.
I also note that there has been no mention about increased security on a much more public pathway.	Thank you for your comment.
Is their data on incidents - crimes - along path/Park?	Anecdotally my understanding is that if there is no police report (which is more common for a motor vehicle crash) then there is less data available.

<b>Street Furniture</b>	
Big Belly bins MUST have the foot step pedals - those were really important during the pandemic.	Thank you for the comment.
Are the proposed lights along the bike path designed to reduce light pollution?	Yes, they point down towards the path and are dark sky compliant.
Yes to bottle filling station — if you can make sure it doesn't freeze up and get damaged in the winter	Thank you for the comment. Yes, they will be winterized.

<b>Traffic, Bicycle, Pedestrian Counts</b>	
When were counts taken	[Edited] May, 2022.
Any data for current usage of the path and what activity they are doing?	Counts were done as part of this project, unfortunately the design team is still working on some issues and finalizing details before we're able to publish those counts. We will make those available at some point, but I don't have a definite timeline on when.

<b>Trees</b>	
If the existing trees are less than 12-14' apart, what will you do?	I don't believe this is the case anywhere along the corridor
There are a lot of beautiful mature trees. I hope that keeping them will be a priority in any redesign.	Yes, it is absolutely a priority.
The soil under some trees is heavily compacted. Is there a plan to address that condition? If so, can you give us some details?	We can incorporate attention to soil compaction into our specifications, work with DPW and the City arborist, and make a place to de-compact heavily compacted areas as we undergo pathway surface renovation.
Over-mulching around trees is also an issue that should be addressed with landscaping contractors who maintain the path. They often severely over-mulch, which deprives the upper tree roots of needed air exposure.	Thank you for your comment.
What about the part of the path toward Somerville that doesn't allow trees to grow? The heat at that section in the summer is oppressive. What options are there?	We will be looking at this area in greater detail later in the design process. As you said, this is a challenging area!
Rehabilitation of the park as a growing medium for trees would seem to be a high priority given the City's concern for loss of tree canopy	Thank you for your comment.

<b>Zoom Features / General Comments / Other</b>	
Why is a park being treated as a transportation project?	This is a combined park and transportation project with staff and a design team that work on both disciplines, plus others.
Not in favor of this.	Thank you for the comment.
For what it's worth, this small, older woman feels just fine walking through places like this as long as the path is reasonably visible.	Thank you for the comment.
[Edited] Agreed, there are some nice additions, alterations and improvements that seem well thought out. Thank you.	Thank you for your comment.
Please post Q&A verbatim. Thanks	Thank you for your comment.
Please just do it exactly as is! (why on earth not?)	Thank you for your comment.
Agreed, thank you for your efforts to improve this well-loved path.	Thank you!
Accessible versions of presentations should be provided ahead of time so that people who need them can follow the presentation.	Thank you for your comment.
How many people are on this call?	At this moment, there 55 attendees.
How can I shut off captioning?	At the bottom of the screen, above "live transcript" you can click the cc to turn it off.
Captions blocking images!	There is a CC 'button' at the bottom of your screen that says "Live Transcript". If you click on that you can turn off CC.
How about a few verbal questions - much easier for this member of the public.	Yes, answering these live now. Thanks!
Survey way too fast to reflect meaningfully on options.	Thank you for your comment.

Almost impossible to type, read, and look and listen all at the same time.

Thank you for your comment.