

October 20, 2021

Via Form on website [DCR Public Comments | Mass.gov](#)

Department of Conservation and Recreation
Office of Public Outreach
251 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Herter Park Master Plan

CRWA Comment #1

On June 23, 2021, Charles River Watershed Association (“CRWA”) provided comments to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (“DCR”) on the Herter Park Master Plan, currently being prepared by DCR and Halvorson Design and associated subcontractors (collectively, the “Project Team”). We were pleased to see the Project Team reflect input from stakeholders and the public in the Fall 2021 presentations. We also appreciate that the planning work recognizes the importance of preserving the park’s history (e.g., the amphitheater and the Herter Center as centerpieces) while planning for its future, including mitigation and managing impacts due to climate change (e.g., flooding, urban heat island). Our comments are in response to the content presented at the September 23, 2021, Stakeholder Meeting #2 and September 29, 2021, Public Meeting #2.

CRWA support the following that were proposed in the September 2021 Meetings:

- Increased and improved safe access to the park by pedestrians, bikers, and vehicles
- The “Diet Road Concept” and expanded parkland near the Eliot Bridge, both of which result in reduced impervious cover and increased vegetation
- Inclusion of a new pollinator meadow
- Removal of invasive species and plantings of native species (ecological restoration, restored woodlands)
- View terraces to see the Charles River
- Preservation of existing wooded areas
- Additional access to Amphitheater from the opposite side as the current bridge
- Addition of public restrooms

CRWA Comment #2

However, given the public presentations focused on particular content and did not address all public input, CRWA requests the project team revisit CRWA’s June 23, 2021, comments (in particular, no concrete recommendations for stormwater and drainage as it relates to the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for phosphorus and bacteria, and climate change were provided in the September 2021 updates), as well as consider the following additional comments based on the information provided during September 2021 by the Project Team.

CRWA Comment #3

Vehicular Circulation: Soldier’s Field Road Diet

We urge the Project Team to consider how this option will support various event needs. Can this reduced lane scenario be closed down temporarily for large events that need additional parking?

CRWA Comment #4

Herter Center Adaptive Reuse: High School Rowing

We request that the Project Team produce a summary of the total existing and potential impervious and pervious cover for the two Adaptive Reuse concept alternatives. The park should maintain as many healthy trees as possible throughout the entire area, but specifically in relation to the Herter Center Adaptive Reuse. We request the Project Team compare the total trees and green space that will be removed by the Herter Center Adaptive Reuse. As part of considering alternatives, we request selection of the alternative that minimizes creation of impervious cover and reduces removal of healthy trees be prioritized.

Has the team considered using a green roof on the new facility? If not, are there alternatives to reduce urban heat island that can be employed?

Note that, as part of the permitting process, CRWA will have additional comments on any proposed addition of a dock.

CRWA Comment #5

Community Garden Consolidation: Concept Plans

We are aware the community has concerns about the plan to consolidate and relocate the gardens. What are the pros and cons of moving the garden? What will be in place of the garden planned to be moved - will it offer an area for stormwater management or is it merely planned to be grassed/lawn area? Is moving the garden necessary for the parking lot or wayfinding configurations? Will the same amount of space be offered in the new location? How, if it all, will plots be relocated? How many mature trees will be removed to make space for the garden move?

CRWA Comment #6

Moat Landscape: Reconstruction

Regarding the moat, we strongly encourage DCR to consider converting the moat into a constructed stormwater wetland, rather than the planned dredging and replanting. Since there is no natural water flow in the moat, these 'restoration' efforts will need to be repeated every 5 years or so to maintain an open channel. We echo the concerns of the community around mosquitos and concerns about vector-borne illness. Converting the moat to a constructed wetland would relieve some of the anticipated maintenance, and improve drainage and water quality to the Charles River.

CRWA Comment #7

Park Concepts: Enlarged Plans

Regarding the new lifeguard station, we request more information on the new lifeguard station, especially as it relates to total impervious cover and reduction of green space/trees.

Regarding event/picnic laws, will any of these areas require the use of fertilizers? We would like to see the operation & maintenance program for these areas and hope that will be included in the Landscape Management Plan.

As part of the permitting process, CRWA will have additional comments on any proposed docks and river access points.

CRWA Comment #8

Other Comments

We request the Project Team include the following in the final Master Plan:

1. A count of total anticipated trees that will be removed and total trees that will be added, including types, dimensions, etc.
2. Total existing impervious cover and total proposed impervious cover, with the park and the roadway, tallied separately.
3. A discussion on anticipated climate change in this area of Allston that is consistent with the Commonwealth's projections and the mitigation measures that are being included in the elements of the Master Plan.

Thank you for considering these comments. We look forward to seeing a full copy of the Herter Park Master Plan.

Sincerely,



Dira Johanif,
Program Associate for Community Resilience



Jennie Moonan, PE
Stormwater Program Director