

Revised Schedule

TASKS	2021					
	March	April	May	June	July	August
Task 1: Information Gathering and Site Analysis	● →			★		
Task 2: Conceptual Design			→		★	
Task 3: Final Design				→		★

Kickoff Meeting: ●

Community Meetings: ★

Completion Date: End of July 2021

Meeting Summary:

1. Introductions (Holly)

- Meeting should be more open to the public, not only virtual (Helen)
- Saint Street Lot purchase was approved in October 2019. Lot was initially proposed for open lot storage, but residents wanted to keep it as open space and non-commercial.
- Parcel was purchased for preservation using funds from Community Preservation Act, with the intent to create a riverfront park with a riverwalk trail and other amenities
- Since 2019, Town has brought HW on board to help with the design process, and residential trash cleanups have occurred
- HW project team has been on the site and has been gathering data, conducting desktop analysis. Following this meeting, conceptual design will begin (Brian)

2. Existing Conditions (Hannah, Brian)

- Looking at the neighborhood surrounding the parcel, connectivity options to parks, schools, commercial areas, and gardens within a 1-mile radius were identified
- Historically, the site was well-cleared since the 50s-70s, and the southern portion of the site was used for parking (connected by footbridge across Hawes Brook). Northern part of site was cleared of trees, used informally as urban meadow.
- In the last 20 years, northern side of site has regrown. Southern side of site has only regrown in past 10 years, after clearing stopped.
- Do you have any stories to share about this site?
 - I live on Saint John and have lived here since I was 2. Long history of playing on the site. It was never developed; always a nature retreat. There used to be meadow that would fill up with water, which we would ice skate on in the winter. There was also a bike trail connecting to Saint Joseph. When Byrd and Son, the roofing company, owned the property, sand from the shingles were deposited on the site. Always been a dream of mine for this to become a conservation area due to the location between the neighborhood, school, and Hawes Brook (Patty Bailey)
 - The roofing company was across the street (Helen)
- Flood zones are found on the site, which will be considered in HW's concept designs
- MDC and Town sewer easements found on site, as well as flood zone, and Conservation jurisdiction (riverfront area); only 23% of the lot is not under an additional jurisdiction

- g. Soils on the site are urban land/fill. On HW's site visit, standing water or upland wetlands were not observed, so it appears to be well draining. There is potential to improve neighborhood/lot drainage.
- h. There are two informal stormwater basins on the northwestern side of the site. No outfalls are currently on the site. All stormwater runoff from the Saint Street roads currently drains overland onto the site.
- i. There is an MDC lift station along the Neponset River on the site. There is also a sewer manhole that has perforations on its cover, so some stormwater may be entering the sewer system.
- j. There are 3 areas where there is a dominant tree species: catalpa (native) coming up through asphalt in the south, Norway maple (invasive in MA) in the middle, and black locust (invasive) to the north. The north and riverfront consist of dense underground, including invasives such as oriental bittersweet, making it difficult to navigate and access.
- k. The only site access currently is at the end of the Saint streets. There is informal parking at the ends of Saint Joseph and Saint John. No access from Eliot Park. Good views along Neponset River, but hard to access through park due to undergrowth. Potential site entrances at Eliot Park, which is currently separated by a chain link fence. No signage or gateway currently exists at the site to indicate that a park is present.
- l. Site circulation currently consists of a cleared area made for the MWRA easement as well as informal desire lines from hikers and bikes.
- m. What did we miss at the site/neighborhood?
 - i. Perhaps Eliot Park and this park should be tied together? It would also be nice if the entire site were ADA accessible (Helen, Patty Bailey)
 - ii. There is already a lot of parking on the street from residents. Saint John will be narrowed when curb is installed soon. I would not recommend putting additional site parking at the end of the street. I have spoken with my neighbors and we would be ok with emergency parking access to our site through our street, but not site parking. (Patty Bailey)
 - iii. Between Eliot Park and the Neponset is a 20-30 foot span that could be considered for a walking path. There is additional space to the north that could be used as a walking path to other streets. Wouldn't allow for additional parking space, but would open up the area from a neighborhood access standpoint. (Joe Greeley)
 - iv. The Hawes Pool parking area also offers about 30-40 spaces. The Balch School also has parking potential when not in session (Joe Greeley).
 - v. There is a lot of vegetation along the river, which provides shade and keeps the river cool for the fishery. It is important to maintain the canopy, although there is still potential for a path along the canopy. Perhaps there could also be canoe access along Morse Street to minimize disruption to parking and site access. (Francis Hopcroft)
 - vi. Signage will be a key the farther we extend a path along the Neponset. (David Hajjar, Catherine Walsh) Signage should be multilingual (Joe Greeley)
 - vii. Saint James gets a lot of traffic and parking issues during ball games (Nancy Samya)
 - viii. Saint Paul gets traffic from the funeral home (Maria G)
 - ix. The MWRA needs to maintain access to the siphon. It would be nice to have a viewing platform by the river (Paul Halkiotis)

FIGURE 1 Birds Eye Plan Annotated During Meeting



What Did We Miss In the Neighborhood? Existing Conditions

3. Goals and Ideas (Hannah)

- a. HW provides goals based on RFP and possible visions for what the park may look like, including passive recreation, natural play spaces, permaculture, signage.

4. Activity (Hannah, Brian)

- a. Google Jamboard activity (see results in the table on the following page and screen shots at the end)
 - i. Light Department could potentially relocate and use their lot for parking for the site (Helen). The lot is currently used for storing light poles; located at Short Street (David Hajjar)
 - ii. Footbridge connecting to the "bus lot" on Morse Street could be a good opportunity. There is a gap between 2 fences that might serve as an access point and provide access to the Mill Complex. This would connect the park to 100+ people who work in that building. If we could couple this with an acceptable easement to Morse Street, that would be even better. (Joe Greeley)
- b. There is a google link with additional opportunity for feedback, both for attendees and for those who could not attend the meeting (HW)
- c. Conservation/Holly can also be contacted for comments/suggestions, as can Joe Greeley (Holly)

A summary of the Jamboard comments is below, organized with the items most mentioned on the top.

Google Jamboard Activity		
What do you like?	What concerns do you have?	What would you like to see?
Walking trails (3)	No dog park (3)	Educational signage for wildlife, trees, history, the river (7)
River view (2)	Managing invasive plant species (1)	Benches on the riverbank (6)
Riverfront access (1)	Trash dumping (1)	Footbridge across Hawes (5)
Natural play spaces (1)	Not sure if enough room for biking (1)	Trash and recycling containers, as well as a fishing line receptacle (5)
Native Plants (1)	Soil quality for plants (1)	Dog friendly park (4)
Shelter from sun (1)		Bike rack or two at entry points (4)
Proximity to the river (1)		Not displacing wildlife that is present/wildlife preservation (3)
Proximity to the Balch (1)		Walking trails/ability to walk to the water's edge (3)
Learning opportunities (1)		Biking trails (3)
Neighborhood proximity (2)		Canoe and kayak launch (3)
Benches on the riverbank (1)		Access from Eliot Park (2)
Size of the site (1)		A passive use park/quiet space (2)
Tall tree canopy and shrubby layer (1)		Native herbaceous and woody plants (2)
Visual plant interest on the ground (1)		River overlook (2)
		Public art (2)
		Geocaching spots (2)
		Water-based (canoe) trash cleanup (2)
		Parking area: Morse Street Light Department (1)
		Connections to Mill Building (1)
		Tie-ins with local partners (business, Mill complex, NepWRA, etc.) (1)
		Difference/separation from the hustle and bustle of development (1)
		Environmental education opportunities with Balch School (1)
		A dog park so dogs can run off leash (1)
		Tree canopy (1)
		Boardwalk to access river edge from the street and allow handicap access (1)
		Kiosk (1)
		Birding (1)
		Volunteer opportunities to clean up invasives (1)
		Volunteer opportunities for maintenance (1)
		Sign indicating the safety (or not) of consuming fish depending on water quality (1)

5. Wrap Up (Hannah, Brian)

- a. Next steps include receiving additional input. Data gathering is wrapping up, and the design options will be generated based on ideas from the community. The next public meeting (June 29 @ 7:00pm) will be about those design options, including receiving feedback. There may be an additional in-person meeting scheduled, or one of the upcoming meetings may occur in person.
- b. Next steps also include looking at permitting of each concept design.
- c. The final public meeting date (July 29) is tentative.
- d. If there is any chance to use community members for cleanup activities and help connect people with the space, NepWRA is happy to help coordinate that. NepWRA can also be a resource for information on river history. (Andres Ripley)
- e. Ultimately, the goal is to apply to the Town's Community Preservation Fund. It would be good to put a timetable together for what the remainder of this project will look like (Joe Greeley)
- f. One of the last steps to the design process is for HW to put together a cost estimate based on their design, which will be part of an application to the Community Preservation Fund and grant applications (Paul Halkiotis)

What do you like?

riverfront access

natural play spaces

native plants!!!

dog friendly park is yes

access from Eliot park

neighborhood proximity

The size of the site

no dog park

Trash containers to keep the area clean.

passive use

the proximity to the Balch

using plants that are there—would question quality of soil

benches on the river bank

trails for walking

Yes, to trash containers

River view

footbridge across hawes

Benches on the river bank

Some difference/separation from the hustle/bustle of development

Proximity to the river

learning opportunities

Walking trails

benches adjacent to water

walking distance to neighborhoods

parking area: morse street light dept.

Walking trails

Dog park, 100' x 50' so dogs can run off lease otherwise dogs will be among walkers

tie ins with partners- local businesses , the mill complex, NepRWA, etc

access through to Eliot park

Tall tree canopy and a shrubby layer - shelter from the sun, visual plant interest along the ground, vistas of the river

trash definitely

shelter from the sun

I think a more passive use is warranted for such a small park. We should be able to go there for quiet time. Note, too, that the more activities, the more use, the more trash and the more maintenance required.

environmental education opportunities with Balch school

Not displacing wildlife already living there

What concerns do you have?

**managing the
invasive plant
species**

**trash
dumping**

**not sure if
enough
room for
biking?**

What would you like to see?

birding

Benches

Ability to walk to the water's edge, at points along the path

benches, small bridges, tree identification and educational information on local flora and fauna

dog friendly, but not a dog park

biking trails

public art

footbridge: across hawes brook, connections to the mill building

Educational signage regarding the river

potential footbridge across the Hawes

Overlook of the river

dog friendly, but not a dog park

walking trails

Love to see space used to support local art/sculpture

Main entrance should be oriented to Eliot Park because of availability for parking for people not from the neighborhood. Boardwalk to access from a street to river edge to allow for handicap access

walking trails

educational signage

Tree canopy, native plants, benches, wildlife preservation

river overlook

educational signage for the wildlife, trees as well historical information

Add benches and seats for viewing the river and nature

A place to launch canoes and kayaks.

biking trails

canoe and kayak launch

biking trails

native herbaceous and woody plants

educational signage for wildlife, trees, and history

Kiosk

Add benches and seats for viewing the river and nature

dog friendly

What would you like to see?

couple of spots for geocaching

volunteer opportunities to clean up invasives

I'd like to see a bike rack or two placed at entry points to the trail

Yes to the bike rack!

Bike rack

volunteers for maintenance! NepRWA

I'd like to see a bike rack or two placed at entry points to the trail. Also, depending on the water and sediment quality in the Neponset and Hawes, would a sign be needed indicated the safety (or not) of consuming fish

depending on the water and sediment quality in the Neponset and Hawes, would a sign be needed indicated the safety (or not) of consuming fish caught

water -based (canoe) trash clean up

there are many streamers and downed trees across the Neponset and Hawes Brook, so a river cleanup should be contemplated

fishing line receptacle

recycling receptacle, waste bin

signage about history of site could also include more contemporary improvements to environmental health of river, brook, etc.

canoe launch

signage about the history of the land, river, and brook, here

Couple formal spots for geocaching

look at easement for footbridge across hawes