



*Planning | Landscape | Athletic Facilities*

MEMORANDUM

Delivery: *via email (dkale@belmont-ma.gov)*

Date: 16 July 2015

To: **Mr. David Kale**  
**Town Administrator**  
Town of Belmont

By: Jonathan Charwick  
Associate

cc: Jay Marcotte, MPA, Director of DPW  
(via email) Patrick Maguire, Activitas

Project: **Town of Belmont – Grove Street Playground Master Plan**  
#14043.00

re: Master Plan Executive Summary

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On Wednesday, March 4, 2015, the first of three public meetings took place for the Grove Street Playground Master Plan. The first meeting was held with individuals that live in and near the Grove Street Playground neighborhood. The second public meeting was held on Monday, March 9, 2015, with members of the youth baseball and soccer groups who permit the playground for soccer and baseball. Each of the meetings had representatives from both groups. The goal of these meetings was for Activitas to listen and be educated on the user group's likes and dislikes of the playground, as well as the items or programs people wish could be added to or removed from the playground. In general, most people that use the playground enjoy it in its current configuration and uses. The following is a list of desired changes that were consistently expressed and could potentially improve the playground:

- Playground edge treatment needs to be enhanced, specifically the perimeter fence.
- Parking and traffic during the fall and spring season, when soccer and baseball are being played, needs to be improved.
- The playground is lacking an internal walking path that could promote passive recreation.
- The permanent baseball outfield fences do not allow for passive recreation and open space during the non-baseball playing seasons.
- The irrigation control boxes for the well pump are not in an ideal location.
- Safety and ADA accessibility issues need to be addressed across the site.
- The sledding hill shall remain in its existing condition.
- Landscape plantings would help improve the playground.
- Preserving open space that exists is important.

- Identify an ideal location for a proposed batting tunnel to support the youth baseball program.
- Trash is an issue in the playground.
- Providing a dog park is not preferred.

Following these two meetings, Activitas compiled the information that was presented by the public and began the master planning design process. The results of the design process were presented at the third public meeting held on Monday, April 13, 2015 at the Beech Street Center. During this meeting, Activitas reviewed discussion from the previous two meetings and presented two (2) proposed master plan layouts for the improvements to the Grove Street Playground.

Option 1 proposes improvements to the existing site that do not require relocation of the existing baseball fields, soccer field, tennis courts, or sledding hill. This option proposes the following:

- Organized on-street parallel parking on Grosvenor Road, Foster Road, and both parallel and head-in parking on Dalton Road. This includes new curbing and sidewalk adjacent and parallel to the existing roads, and a wooden guardrail to replace the existing perimeter fence. The parking spaces are purposely located to preserve the existing mature trees along the perimeter of the site (to the extent feasible).
- A paved internal walking path to promote passive recreation and activity is proposed around the outside edge of the soccer field and the two existing baseball fields in the northwest corner of the site. It is assumed for maintenance purposes that this walking path would be bituminous concrete pavement (asphalt). The walking path must be graded so that the path of travel and access from outside the site to the walking path meets the requirements for ADA accessibility.
- Two (2) Little League batting tunnels are proposed south of the existing baseball field, on the corner of Grove Street and Grosvenor Road. Due to the grading required for the walking paths, the batting tunnels are proposed to be sunken and earth forms created to help screen sightlines from the neighborhood to the batting tunnel. The proposed batting tunnel system is removable and can be taken down and stored during the baseball off-season.
- The existing baseball outfield fence would be replaced with removable outfield fencing. This would allow it to be taken down during the baseball off-season so that the outfields could be used for passive recreation and open space when baseball is not being played. The removable fencing is proposed in the outfield and down the entire length of each foul line.
- Due to the desire to preserve the existing trees between the soccer field and existing playground, the location of the proposed walking path requires the reorganization of

the playground equipment. As part of this reorganization, a new 4' high chain link fence would be provided around the perimeter of the playground. New resilient playground surfacing would also be provided. The intent is for the existing equipment to be reused to the extent practicable.

- The plan proposes the removal of the existing basketball court in the southeast corner of the site. The basketball court located north of the playground along Grove Street would remain.
- Entrance plazas with seat walls to provide passive recreation and a place for seating and shade away from active recreation areas are proposed. These plazas could incorporate specialty pavers and site amenities such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, and bike racks.
- Fit Trail Equipment stations are proposed along the walking path. The intent of these stations is to provide people a place to stretch and incorporate body mass training into an exercise program that also utilizes walking or running along the internal walking paths. These stations would be located in playground surfacing similar to what is proposed at the playground.
- Landscaping plantings that are hardy, native to New England, and drought tolerant have been proposed within the playground to enhance the aesthetic views through the playground. Landscaping would be selected so that there is a variety of color, flowering, and interest during the spring, summer, and fall seasons.

Option 2 was also presented during this public meeting and proposed a much more extensive renovation and reconfiguration of the playground that included the following:

- Similar to Option 1, organized on-street parallel parking on Grosvenor Road and Foster Road with new curbing, sidewalk adjacent and parallel to the existing roads, and a wooden guardrail to replace the existing perimeter fence are proposed.
- A 43-space parking lot is proposed in the location of the existing baseball field on the corner of Grosvenor Road and Dalton Road. Although this requires the removal of a significant amount of open green space from the playground, the intent is to address the parking issues that exist during the spring and fall seasons by relieving the amount of parking required on the street.
- By proposing a parking lot where one of the existing baseball fields is located, the northeast corner of the site was reorganized to provide three (3) baseball fields so that the outfield fences are adjacent to each other and the infields and backstops are on the outside of the playing area. The outfield dimensions of the reconfigured fields are proposed to be the same as the existing fields. With the use of removable outfield fencing, the outfields could be utilized as a large open green space during the baseball off-season. However, because the fields would need to be regraded to maintain positive surface drainage, the sledding hill would potentially need to be

reduced in size and height or eliminated entirely. This is not ideal and represents a major programmatic loss to the park.

- Similar to Option 1, two (2) Little League batting tunnels are proposed to the southeast of the baseball fields. Grading and earth mounding could be utilized to screen sightlines and views from the neighborhood.
- This option reduces the number of tennis courts from four (4) to two (2).
- This option also proposes relocating the playground between the baseball fields and tennis courts. The playground would be located in close proximity to the proposed parking lot. The size of the playground in this option is measurably smaller than the existing playground.
- Similar to Option 1, the existing basketball court in the southeast corner of the site has been removed. The basketball court located north of the playground along Grove Street would remain.
- Also similar to Option 1, internal walking paths with entrance plazas and fitness stations are proposed throughout the site. Option 2 would also include similar landscape improvements to Option 1.
- Similar to Option 1, the soccer field remains in its existing location.

After each option was presented, Activitas invited the public to provide feedback on the options. The feedback received was overwhelmingly in favor of Option 1 over Option 2. Reasons for the public's dislike of Option 2 included the removal of green space in lieu of parking, removing tennis courts, and reducing the size of the playground and sledding hill.

In addition to these comments, there was mixed reaction to the internal walking paths proposed in Option 1. Some people felt the walking paths made the playground feel too urban, while others did not want to include walking paths at all. There was also a concern that the walking paths could become a maintenance issue and would require additional snow removal during the winter. The neighbors expressed concern about adding additional maintenance to the playground because they believe the Town already has a hard time maintaining the site in its current condition.

The proposal to provide removable outfield fencing was received favorably but leads to a management issue: where does the removable outfield fencing get stored when it is not installed? There is an existing amenities building on the site that is currently used for storage, however, it does not have the capacity to store the removable fencing or batting tunnels when they are not erected for the baseball season. If the Town decides to move forward with the removable outfield fencing scope, the Department of Public Works would have to find storage. Stacking the fencing onsite or inside the tennis courts was not looked at favorably by the public.

There were a number of people that voiced their opinion that providing landscape plantings around the site would help improve the look and feel of the site. Activitas noted that the locations and varieties of landscaping shown on the proposed layouts are conceptual and the process of determining what varieties of plants would be planted and where they would be located would be studied during design development if the project was to move forward. One item that was omitted from the both proposed options was a location for the existing porta-johns. Activitas will include a place for the porta-johns with landscape screening in the preferred option.

During the meeting, some asked if the existing site was at its maximum capacity as currently programmed and, if it is determined that the site is at full capacity, what the process is for putting this in writing so that no additional program elements could be added to the site in the future. Activitas believes that the site can support additional programs, but has not at this point been tasked with determining the ultimate program limit.

Following this public meeting, Option 1 was updated to remove the proposed walking path between the baseball fields and soccer field at the top of the sledding hill and to propose a location for the porta-johns, which is in close proximity to the location of the existing porta-john. A proposed phasing plan for Option 1 has been developed to identify how the site improvements could be implemented incrementally over time as budget becomes available. The proposed tasks are as follows and are not in order of priority:

- Task 1 – Removable Outfield Baseball Fence
- Task 2 – Relocate the Existing Irrigation Controls
- Task 3 – Proposed Batting Tunnel
- Task 4 – On-Street Parking
- Task 5 – Internal Playground Improvements – North portion of the playground
- Task 6 – Internal Playground Improvements – South portion of the playground
- Task 7 – Landscape Improvements

An itemized opinion of probable project costs for each task has been attached to this document. These are budgetary costs taken from real quantities using unit costs that Activitas has received from local General Contractors. The costs associated with contingencies and soft costs (design fees) are based upon reasonable percentages of the probable construction costs. As noted, the implementation of tasks is subject to annual funding availability.

On June 15, 2015, a final public meeting was held at the Beech Street Center. This meeting began with a review of the changes made to the consensus plan that was developed and refined as a result of the prior public listening sessions and presentations. The final changes included the removal of the paved path at the foot of the sledding hill and the placement

(with landscape screening) of porta-johns located adjacent to the fence in the southeast corner of the tennis courts. The resulting master plan design includes the primary items that we heard should be incorporated into the plan and that are outlined in this Master Plan Executive Summary.

While there was not 100% agreement on all items, the final plan is one that we believe best addresses the concerns and items that were continually voiced during the public process. The modifications to the site perimeter, beautification of the park entrances, and the formalization of parking, perimeter fencing, and landscaping are important changes consistent with a small neighborhood park and playground accessible to a broad range of citizens.

The items receiving the most discussion are related to the baseball program. The inclusion of a batting cage that is temporary, easily removable, and screened by berms and landscape is not an anathema for a park where Little League baseball is and has been a major program element for many decades. There is room to appropriately locate it within the park while Little League baseball is in season. We view this as a good compromise position.

The second item of discussion was the outfield fences for baseball, which today are permanent, but in the future would be removable. In our professional opinion, fences are appropriate for a competition Little League venue. As discussed, Grove Street has been the home of Belmont Youth Baseball for several decades. The type of fencing that we have recommended and have provided budget pricing for is durable and suitable for a Little League baseball field. As with the batting cage, we find that providing removable fencing that will be taken down when baseball is not in season is an excellent compromise that should greatly increase everyone's enjoyment of the Grove Street Playground.

Lastly, we discussed the steps moving forward and explained that while this is the final "Master Plan," it is not the final design plan, which will be refined for layout, materials, and other details as parts of the project move forward. For example, the entry plaza designs may change considerably in shape and concept, and the walking paths may be realigned, narrowed, or widened in some locations. The final layout and location of the on-street parking may also be modified based on further discussions, site conditions, and additional citizen input.

We feel the master planning process for the Grove Street Playground has been completed. While everyone may not agree with every decision, we feel that the process was a success and a plan that will provide an excellent framework for further improvements has been developed. Should the Town wish to move forward with any or all of the proposed improvements, it would be our pleasure to continue to work with the Grove Street Neighbors, sports groups, and the rest of the citizens of Belmont to refine and realize these recommendations.

PROJECT: Grove Street Playground  
 PROJ #: 14043.00  
 STATUS: Master Plan  
 DATE: 21 JULY 2015

**NOTES:**

Due to the inflationary and unpredictable construction climate, this cost opinion may not represent the actual cost of construction.  
 Tasks are not listed in any particular order or priority.

Task	Item/Remarks	Notes	Total	Unit	Unit Cost	Cost	Subtotal
<b>ITEMIZED OPINION OF PROBABLE PROJECT COSTS</b>							
<b>00001</b>	<b>REMOVABLE OUTFIELD FENCE (can be implemented in stages)</b>						<b>\$206,962.56</b>
1	Northeast Baseball Field						
	Remove and dispose of existing outfield fence		605	LF	8.00	\$4,840.00	
	4' High Removable Outfield Fence (SSI)		605	LF	100.00	\$60,500.00	
2	Middle Baseball Field						
	Remove and dispose of existing outfield fence		580	LF	8.00	\$4,640.00	
	4' High Removable Outfield Fence (SSI)		580	LF	100.00	\$58,000.00	
3	Southeast Baseball Field						
	Remove and dispose of existing outfield fence		526	LF	8.00	\$4,208.00	
	4' High Removable Outfield Fence (SSI)		526	LF	100.00	\$52,600.00	
	4% General Conditions					\$7,391.52	
	8% Contractors Overhead and Profit					\$14,783.04	
	<b>Subtotal:</b>					<b>\$206,962.56</b>	
<b>00002</b>	<b>RELOCATE EXISTING IRRIGATION CONTROLS</b>						<b>\$22,400.00</b>
1	Relocate existing irrigation controls		1	ALLOW	20000.00	\$20,000.00	
	4% General Conditions					\$800.00	
	8% Contractors Overhead and Profit					\$1,600.00	
	<b>Subtotal:</b>					<b>\$22,400.00</b>	
<b>00003</b>	<b>BATTING TUNNEL</b>						<b>\$28,000.00</b>
1	Cantilever Softball Batting Tunnel (SSI)		2	EA	12500.00	\$25,000.00	
	4% General Conditions					\$1,000.00	
	8% Contractors Overhead and Profit					\$2,000.00	
	<b>Subtotal:</b>					<b>\$28,000.00</b>	
<b>00004</b>	<b>ON-STREET PARKING</b>						<b>\$125,865.60</b>
1	Remove and dispose of existing park perimeter fence		1,240	LF	8.00	\$9,920.00	
2	Bituminous Concrete Pavement along road		935	SY	20.00	\$18,700.00	
3	Granite Curb along road		1,500	LF	40.00	\$60,000.00	
4	Wooden Guardrail		1,188	LF	20.00	\$23,760.00	
	4% General Conditions					\$4,495.20	
	8% Contractors Overhead and Profit					\$8,990.40	
	<b>Subtotal:</b>					<b>\$125,865.60</b>	
<b>00005</b>	<b>INTERIOR PLAYGROUND WALKWAYS - NORTH</b>						<b>\$207,344.18</b>
1	Strip and Stockpile Topsoil for asphalt walkways (assume 15")		970	CY	5.00	\$4,850.00	
2	Strip and Stockpile Disturbed Areas for Grading (assume 6")		1,314	CY	5.00	\$6,570.00	
3	Screen Existing Topsoil (Assume 20% Fluff)		2,741	CY	5.25	\$14,389.20	
4	Dispose of Tailings (Assume 10% of Screened Topsoil)		274	CY	18.00	\$4,933.44	
5	Rough Grade Disturbed		91,895	SF	0.10	\$9,189.50	
6	Fine Grade Disturbed		91,895	SF	0.15	\$13,784.25	
1	Interior Park Walk						
	Bituminous Concrete Pavement Stone Base (Dense Graded Crushed Stone)		2,326	SY	20.50	\$47,683.00	
	Bituminous Concrete Pavement		2,326	SY	20.00	\$46,520.00	
7	Respread Topsoil onsite		2,467	CY	6.00	\$14,800.32	
8	Seed disturbed		70,642	SF	0.25	\$17,660.50	
9	Maintenance of Turf during Grow-in Period		70,642	SF	0.06	\$4,238.52	
10	Mulch (fitness stations)		17	CY	30.00	\$510.00	
	4% General Conditions					\$7,405.15	
	8% Contractors Overhead and Profit					\$14,810.30	
	<b>Subtotal:</b>					<b>\$207,344.18</b>	
<b>00006</b>	<b>INTERIOR PLAYGROUND WALKWAYS - SOUTH</b>						<b>\$395,953.60</b>
1	Strip and Stockpile Topsoil for asphalt walkways (assume 15")		642	CY	5.00	\$3,210.00	
2	Strip and Stockpile Disturbed Areas for Grading (assume 6")		1,478	CY	5.00	\$7,390.00	
3	Screen Existing Topsoil (Assume 20% Fluff)		2,544	CY	5.25	\$13,356.00	
4	Dispose of Tailings (Assume 10% of Screened Topsoil)		254	CY	18.00	\$4,579.20	
5	Rough Grade Disturbed		107,019	SF	0.10	\$10,701.90	
6	Fine Grade Disturbed		107,019	SF	0.15	\$16,052.85	
7	Interior Park Walk						
	Bituminous Concrete Pavement Stone Base (Dense Graded Crushed Stone)		1,542	SY	20.50	\$31,611.00	
	Bituminous Concrete Pavement		1,542	SY	20.00	\$30,840.00	
8	Respread Topsoil onsite		2,290	CY	6.00	\$13,737.60	
9	Seed disturbed		79,795	SF	0.25	\$19,948.75	
10	Maintenance of Turf during Grow-in Period		79,795	SF	0.06	\$4,787.70	
11	Landscape Allowance		1	ALLOW	40000.00	\$40,000.00	
12	Plaza Pavers		2,163	SF	10.00	\$21,630.00	

13	Seat Walls (Concrete)	990	SFF	100.00	\$99,000.00	
14	Playground Reorganization	1	ALLOW	10000.00	\$10,000.00	
15	4' High CLF at playground	546	LF	37.50	\$20,475.00	
16	Mulch (playground and fitness stations)	207	CY	30.00	\$6,210.00	
	4% General Conditions				\$14,141.20	
	8% Contractors Overhead and Profit				\$28,282.40	
	<b>Subtotal:</b>					<b>\$395,953.60</b>
<b>00007</b>	<b>LANDSCAPE AND PARK IMPROVEMENTS</b>					<b>\$144,200.00</b>
1	Site Furnishings					
	Site Benches	12	EA	1500.00	\$18,000.00	
	Bike Racks	24	EA	1000.00	\$24,000.00	
	Receptacles (trash & recycling)	12	EA	500.00	\$6,000.00	
	Dog Collectors	3	EA	250.00	\$750.00	
	Fit Trail Equipment	3	ALLOW	5000.00	\$15,000.00	
	3-Row Bleachers	3	EA	5000.00	\$15,000.00	
2	Miscellaneous Signage	1	ALLOW	10000.00	\$10,000.00	
3	Landscape Allowance	1	ALLOW	40000.00	\$40,000.00	
	4% General Conditions				\$5,150.00	
	8% Contractors Overhead and Profit				\$10,300.00	
	<b>Subtotal:</b>					<b>\$144,200.00</b>
	<b>CONSTRUCTION SUBTOTAL:</b>					<b>\$1,130,725.94</b>
	<b>20% Construction Contingency</b>					<b>\$226,145.19</b>
	<b>10% Design Contingency</b>					<b>\$113,072.59</b>
	<b>Owner's Geotechnical Investigation Allowance (±0.5%)</b>					<b>\$5,653.63</b>
	<b>Site Design, Bidding Assistance and Construction Observation Fees (±8%)</b>					<b>\$90,458.08</b>
	<b>Regulatory Permitting Fees (±1%)</b>					<b>\$11,307.26</b>
	<b>Design Services Contingency (±1%)</b>					<b>\$11,307.26</b>
	<b>PRELIMINARY OPINION OF PROBABLE PROJECT COSTS</b>					<b>\$1,588,669.94</b>