

Justice Edward O. Gourdin Veterans' Memorial Park
Roxbury, Massachusetts
Park & Memorial Design

PUBLIC FORUM

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center



WHY CREATE THE PARK?

“to pay homage to the men and women of African American descent who resided in Massachusetts and served in the Armed Forces of the United States”



WHY ARE WE HERE?

- Affirm the overall vision for the park
- Understand and incorporate previous efforts
- Establish a purpose for the park landscape
- Identify potential uses and users
- Raise and address concerns about the park



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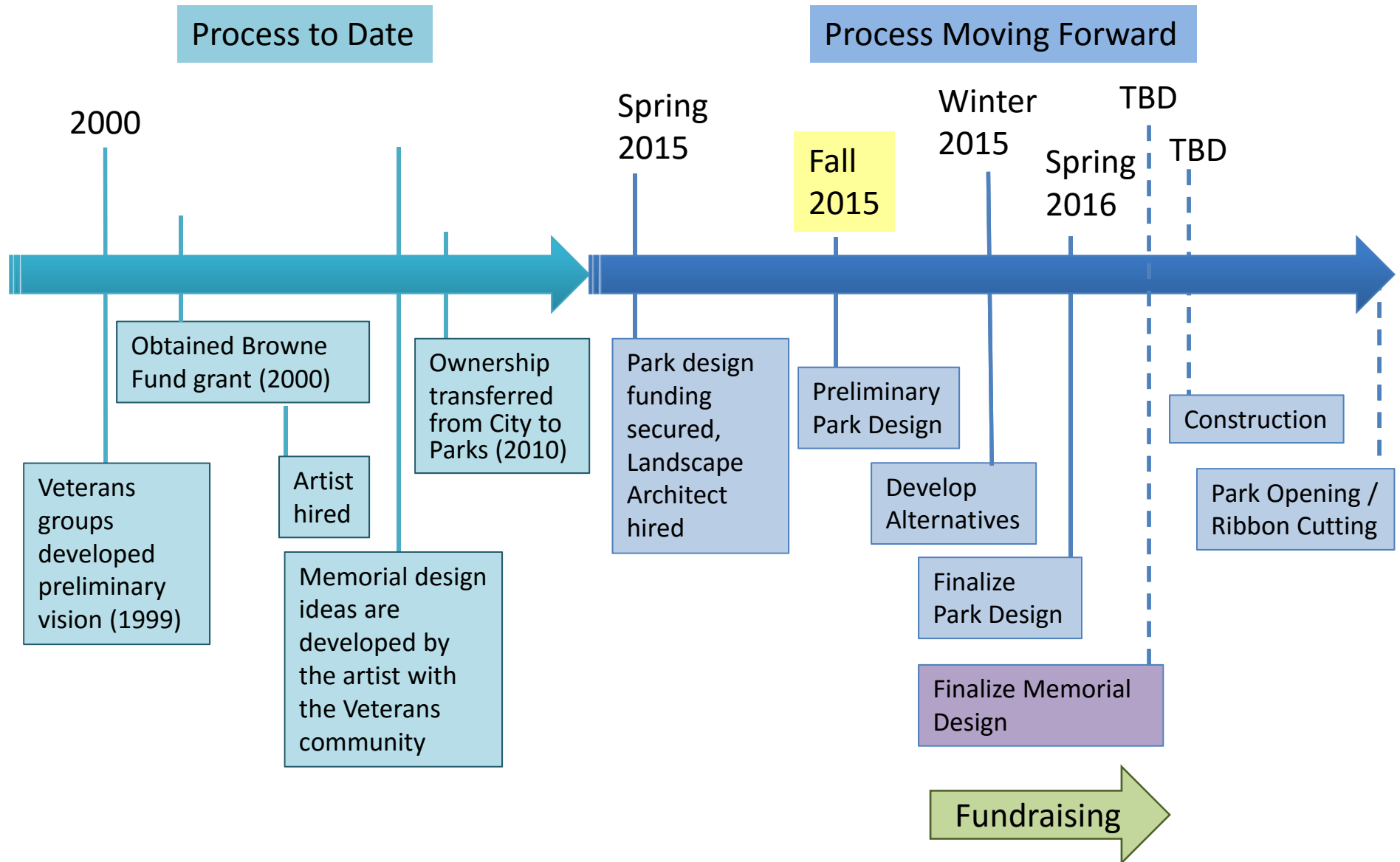
HOW DID THE PROJECT DEVELOP?

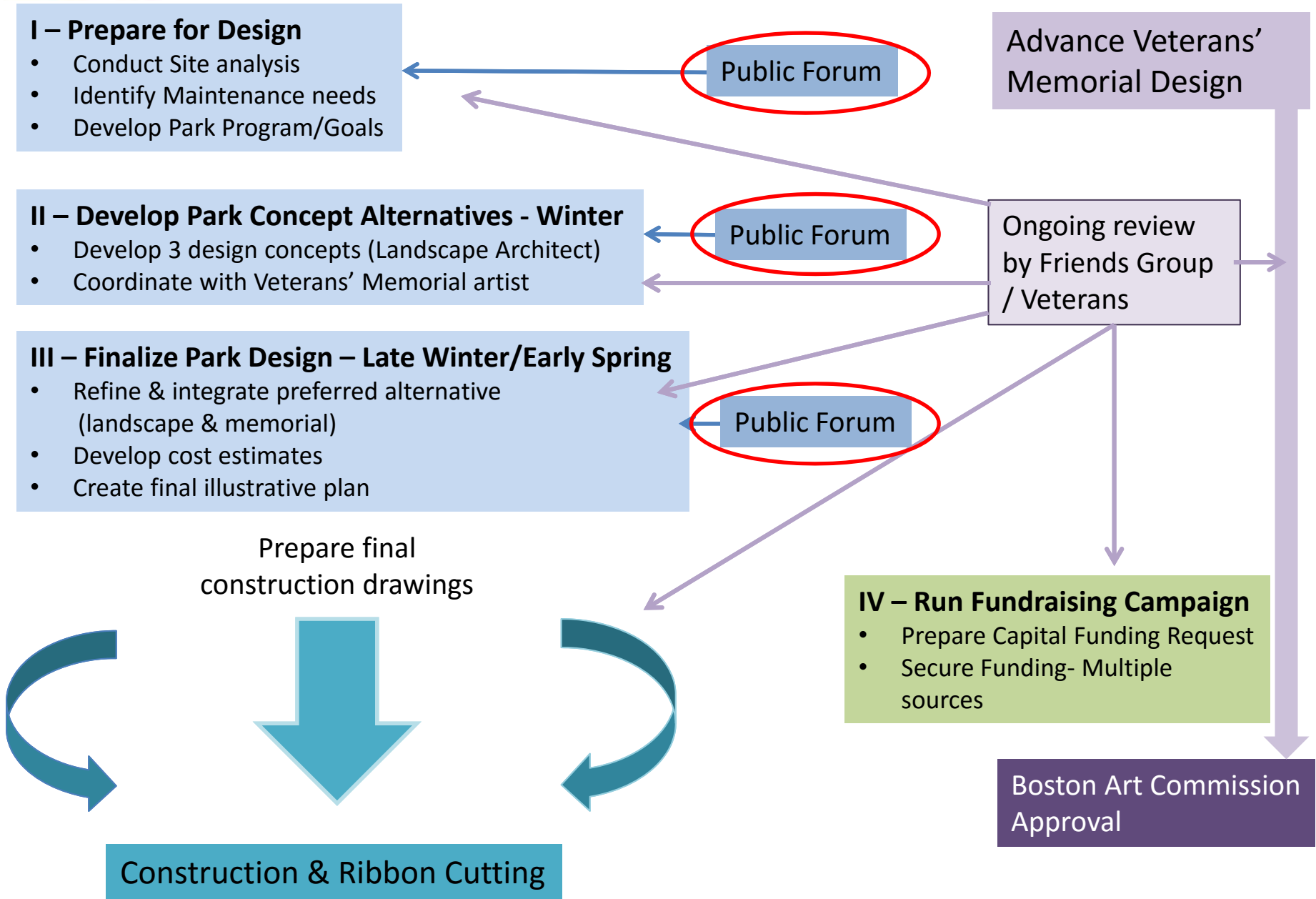
and...

Where do we go from here?

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AN ARTIST'S INSPIRATION

Jeep Jones Park



What are the reasons African Americans enlist?



What are African Americans' experience of war?
What is their experience upon returning from war?



Honoring Justice Gourdin, a man of many accomplishments

- Olympic athlete
- Military officer
- Supreme Court Justice
- Outstanding Citizen



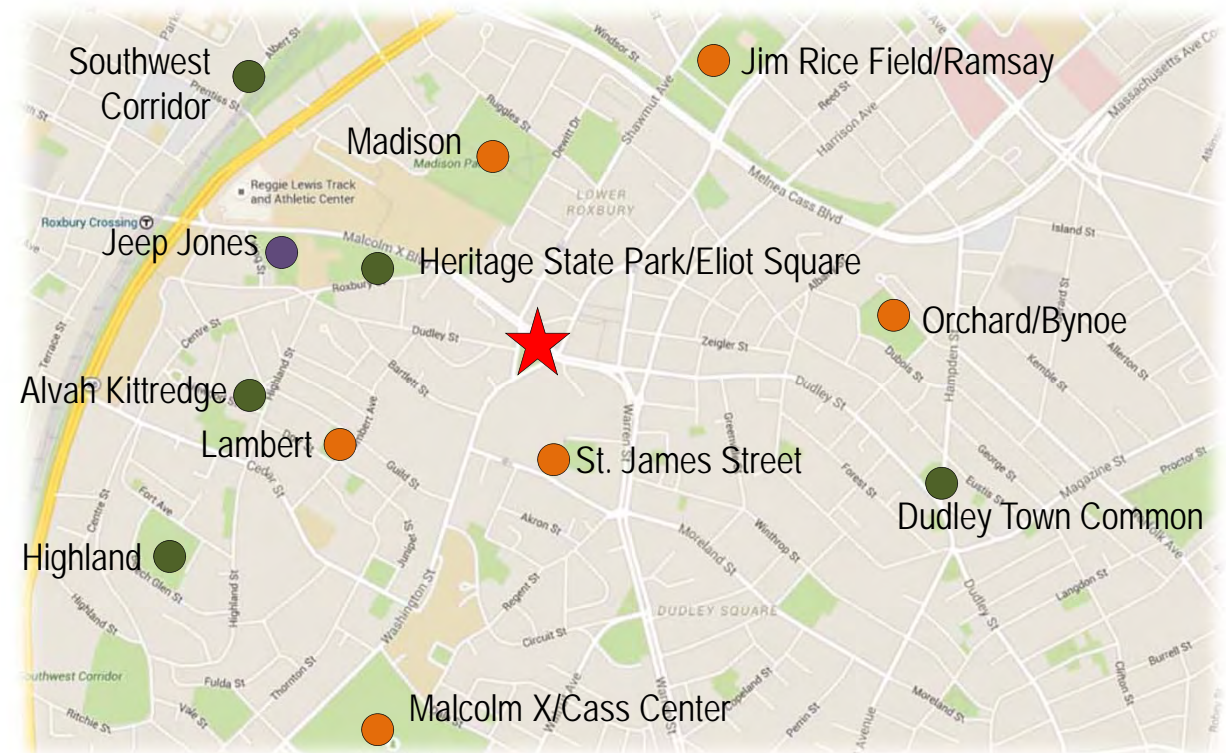


Site Analysis: NEIGHBORHOOD GREEN SPACE CONTEXT

- The park sits amid a constellation of green spaces throughout the Roxbury neighborhood; opportunity exists for Gourdin Park to serve as a hub with spokes (in the form of tree-lined pedestrian ways) leading to the surrounding parks.
- While several surrounding parks serve as neighborhood playgrounds (active recreation spaces), others provide space for both active and passive recreation.
- Other commemorative parks include the Alvah Kittredge Park, Highland Park, Heritage State Park/Eliot Square, and the Dudley Town Common



- ★ Gourdin Park
- Passive/Commemorative
- Active/Playground
- Passive & Active

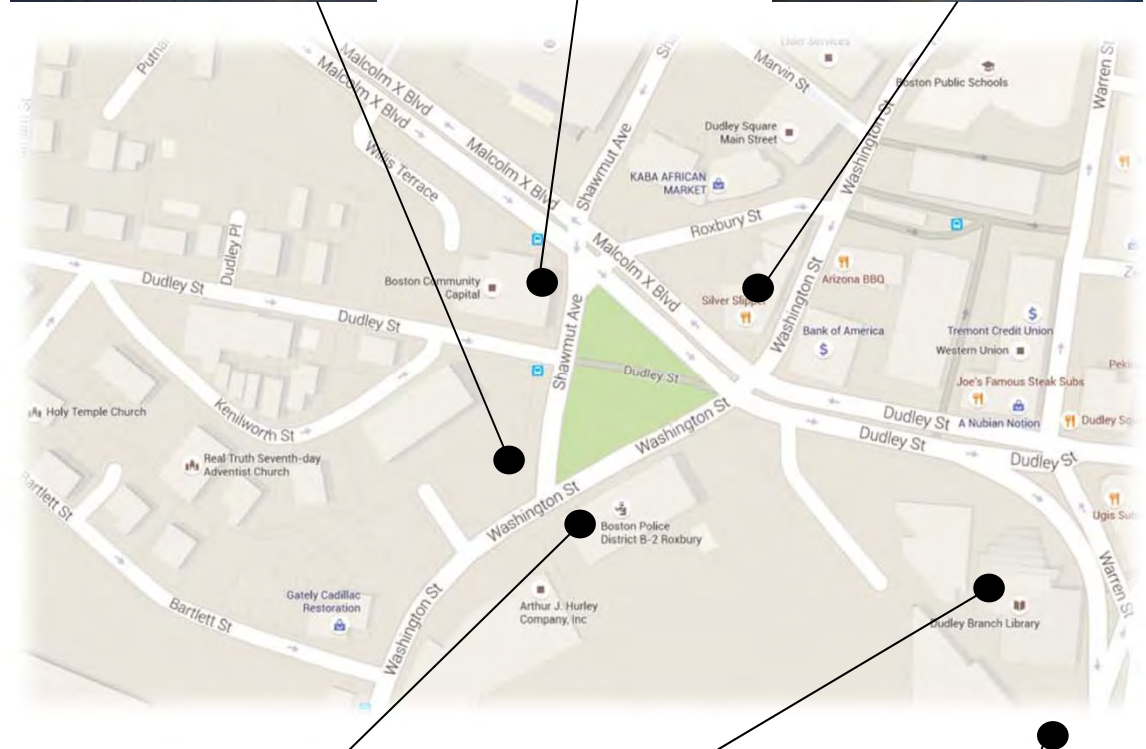




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Site Analysis: IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

- A mix of residential, commercial, and civic/social service buildings surround the park, including the former Boys' Club (west side), Police Station (south side), Post Office (north side), Dudley Branch of the Boston Public Library (to the east), Yawkey Club (also to the east), and District Courthouse (also to the east)
- The transportation corridor connecting Ruggles/Roxbury Crossing and Dudley Square passes by the park; opportunity exists to make the park and sculpture a memorable spot along the route
- Future development is proposed and under construction in Dudley Square and along Washington Street (Bartlett Yard)
- Street life in the area is lively and constant and will increase as new commercial and residential developments open



Clockwise from upper left: community garden and fence mural at Kenilworth Street apartments; former Boys' Club (now social services offices); commercial buildings along Washington Street; Yawkey Club; Dudley Branch of the Boston Public Library; Boston Police Department/Area B-2 Station





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THE PARK TODAY:

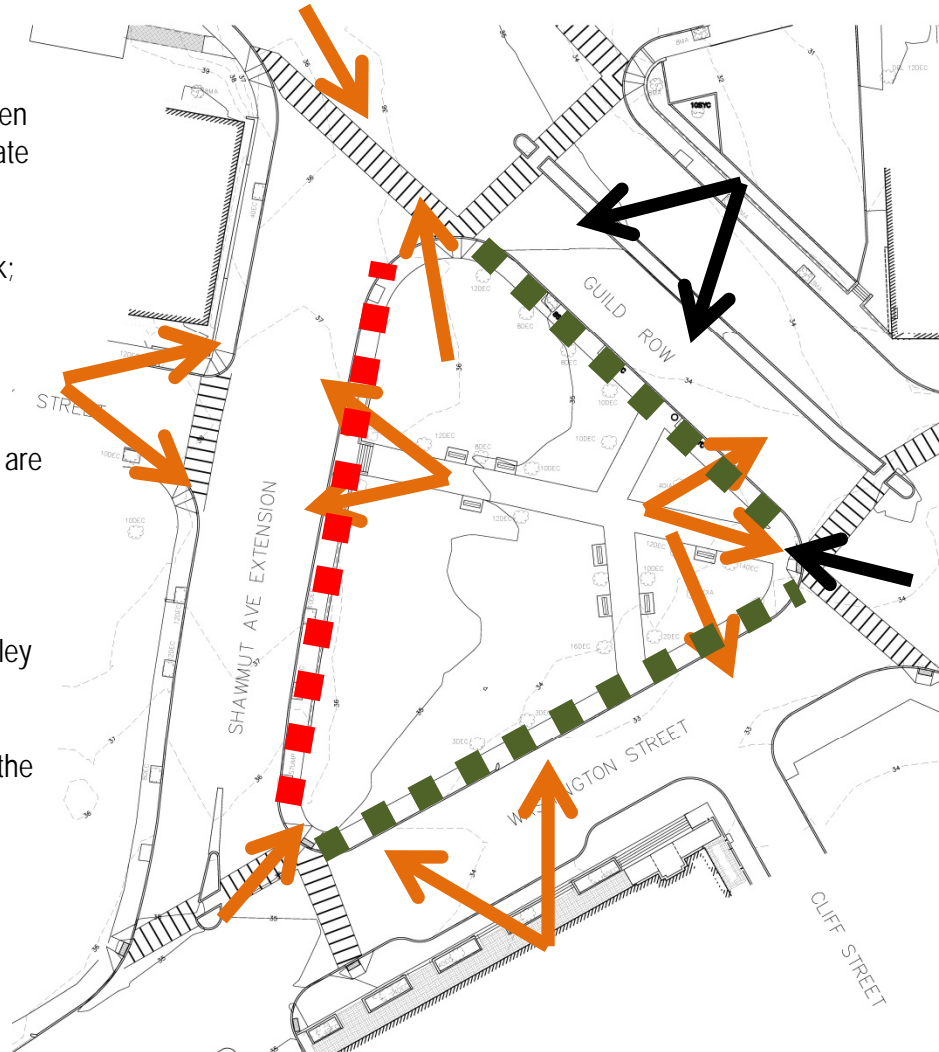
Existing Park Conditions

Site Analysis:

EDGES, TOPOGRAPHY & VIEWS






- The elevated topography and narrow sidewalk along the west (Shawmut Avenue) edge creates a barrier between the street and park; sidewalk is separate from the park
- Level topography along the east and south edges invites users into the park; sidewalk is part of the park
- Visitors arriving at the park from the northwest, southwest, and west enjoy open views into the landscape
- Views into the park from the east side are obstructed by dense tree growth, especially low-growing limbs
- Park users can enjoy views to the surrounding neighborhood from many spots; views of the police station, Dudley Street (east and west) and the Post Office are particularly pleasant
- Views into the park are possible from the upper floors of surrounding buildings, including the Police Station

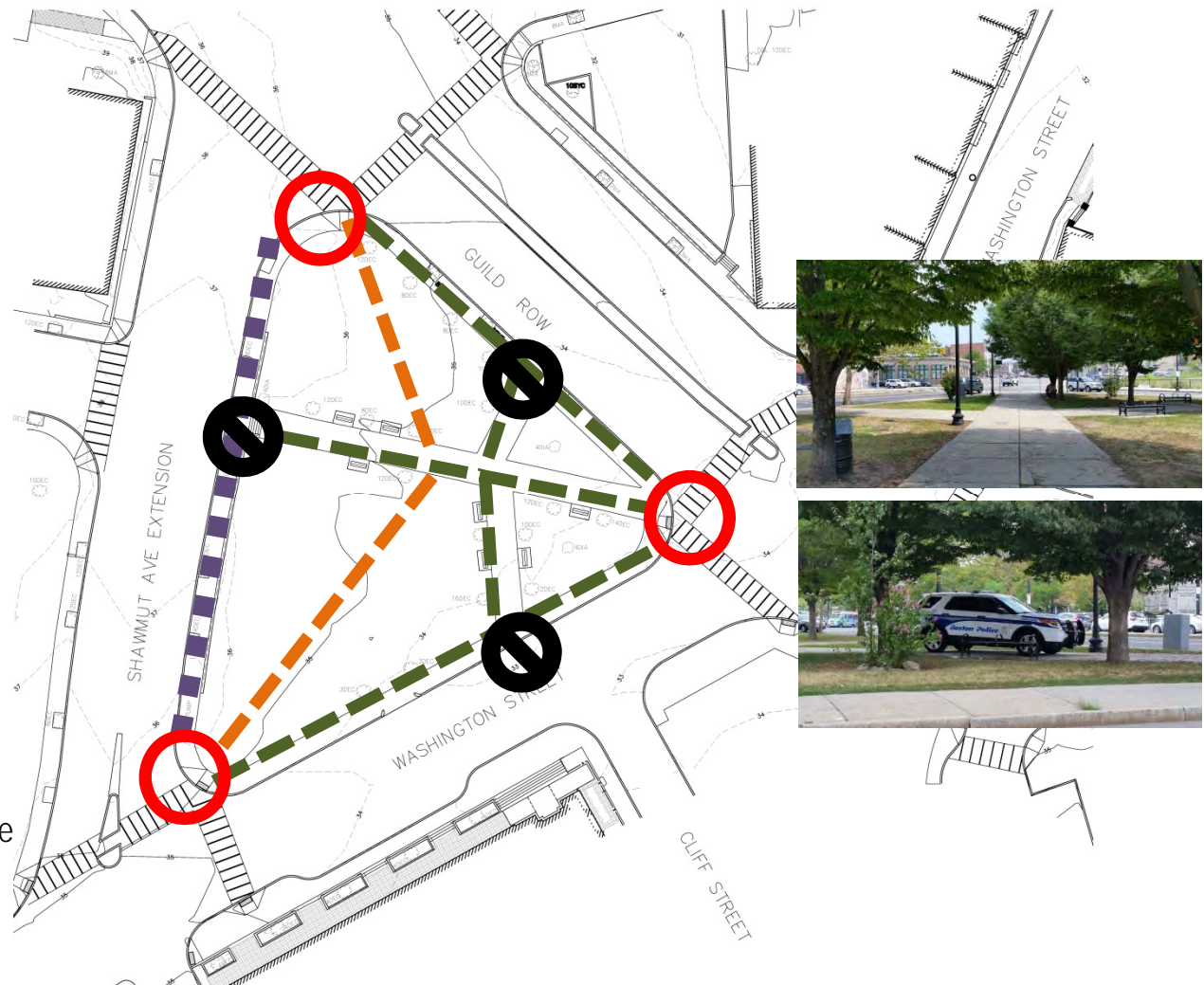
- ■ ■ Open Edge, Sidewalk Part of Park Landscape
- ■ ■ Obstructed Edge, Sidewalk Outside Park Landscape
- ➤ ➤ Open views
- ➤ ➤ Obstructed views



Site Analysis: ACCESS & CIRCULATION

- Safe entrances – those that connect to crosswalks -- appear at the east and southwest corners
- Three unsafe entrances stand along each of the three sides (none connects to a crosswalk)
- The entrance off Shawmut Avenue lacks a ramp (and is not ADA-compliant)
- Most of the concrete walkways seem heavily-used
- Linden trees planted along the Shawmut Avenue edge obstruct pedestrian use in this area
- Users cut from the northeast and northwest corners across the lawns
- The Boston Police Department is currently using the central east-west walkway as a launch for vehicles pursuing traffic violators along Dudley Street

-  Safe, accessible park entrance
-  Inaccessible/unsafe entrance
-  Heavily-used walk
-  Cut-through route
-  Obstructed walkway



Site Analysis: PARK FEATURES

- Deciduous trees, including lindens, zelkovas and plane trees, are concentrated along walkways, providing shade to passersby and bench users
- Majority of trees appear healthy; three are damaged or suffering; one is dead
- Lawns appear compacted
- Shrubs provide color; Roses of Sharon (east side) fill lawns
- Steel benches are heavily used and in good condition
- Lights illuminate the central east-west walkway only; their historic style does not match contemporary style of luminaries on surrounding streets
- Railing along Shawmut Avenue is in need of painting
- The park lacks adequate interpretive signs
- Topography is mostly flat, grades are steep along the west (Shawmut Avenue) edge
- Monotony dominates the overall park landscape

- Dead or Diseased Tree
- Linden
- Zelkova
- Plane Tree
- ✱ Shrub
- ▲ Interior Luminaire
- Seat
- ▬ Flagpole





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THE FUTURE PARK:

Constraints and Opportunities

CONSTRAINTS

- Traffic flows along all sides of the park, creating a noisy and somewhat frenetic setting
- Low-branching deciduous trees obstruct views looking into and out of the park
- The entrances from mid-block connects the park to the police station, but the crossing is unsafe
- Circulation paths dominate and the landscape lacks spaces for gathering, performances, etc.
- Elevated topography along the west edge creates a natural separation between the park and adjacent neighborhood



OPPORTUNITIES

- Views from upper stories of surrounding buildings can be preserved and enhanced in the new park design, incorporating views of the sculpture
- By establishing a formal entrance or entrances, visitors will experience a sense of arrival
- Existing healthy trees can be incorporated into the new design, where possible
- Existing site features, including benches and luminaires, can be reused where possible
- Interpretive signs can be installed to clearly identify the park and outline its commemorative significance
- The sculpture may be sited in a visible location (to be viewed from outside), or deeper inside the park (a more contemplative location)



AGENDA for TONIGHT

Goal: To affirm the overall vision for the park, understand and incorporate past efforts, identify potential users/establish a program of uses, raise and address concerns

- Take part in large group discussions
- Record thoughts/assign priorities
- Reconvene and report back

HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED: 3 WAYS

JOIN THE WORKING COMMITTEE:

To collaborate with the City on the development and completion of the Veterans' Memorial

To function short-term, until park is dedicated

JOIN THE FRIENDS' GROUP:

To support maintenance activities, raise funds, advocate for and events associated with the park

To function over the long-term

STAY INFORMED:

Become part of an email list that receives regular progress updates on the park and memorial design project

For more information please contact Marchelle Jacques-Yarde
at the Boston Parks and Recreation Department - (617) 961-3006 or email Marchelle.Jacques-Yarde@boston.gov