

NEWTON Parks & Recreation



Excerpt of the Preferred Newton Upper Falls Master Plan

NEWTON UPPER FALLS PLAYGROUND MASTER PLAN

Spring 2008



Images of Upper Falls Playground - Winter 2007



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Acknowledgements

We gratefully recognize the City of Newton's dedicated Parks & Recreation Staff, including Fran Towle, Commissioner; Carol Stapleton, Project Manager; and Carol Schein, Open Space Coordinator, each of whom participated in every aspect of this master planning effort. Their commitment to the City's park and open space system in general and to the Upper Falls Playground Community in particular, will yield positive benefits to all seeking recreational outlets as key aspects of the Master plan are implemented over the course of the next few years.

Special thanks to the many representatives of the Newton Parks & Recreation Commission for their commitment to the development of this Plan and for their valuable advice during the master planning process. Thanks to many other members of the Newton community, who filled out the park user surveys in order to indicate their likes, dislikes and desires in regard to the past, present and future of the Upper Falls Playground. We also thank Danielle Bailey of the Planning and Community Development Department for her assistance in the creation of the user survey and in compiling all of the survey results. Thanks to the many community members who came out for the open forums to express their concerns in person and to the many representatives of other City departments who provided advice and insight. The recommendations contained in the Upper Falls Playground Master Plan represent our best professional judgment and expertise tempered by the unique perspectives of each of the participants to the process.

Eugene R. Bolinger, RLA
Vice President
Weston & Sampson

July 2007

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Introduction

Weston & Sampson was retained by the Newton Parks & Recreation Department during the fall of 2006 to complete a comprehensive master planning process for the Upper Falls Playground. The work has been financed through, and awarded by, the Newton Community Preservation Committee. The purpose of this master plan is to provide a preferred site plan and supporting documentation that reflects the needs of the community. This plan will serve as a guide for all future development of this park, as well as a tool to secure funding from various private, City, State and Federal sources.

The scope of work undertaken by Weston & Sampson includes:

- Complete topographic surveys of the entire property in order to have relevant plans available for the preparation of future final design documents for bidding and construction
- Conduct user surveys in order to determine community opinions
- Examine and report on all existing park facilities, amenities and conditions
- Identify current safety issues and potential limitations and constraints related to future improvements
- Engage the community in a public dialogue to establish needs, preferences and priorities in relation to the future renovation and restoration of the property
- Develop conceptual and finished master plans, prepared specifically in response to community preferences and ultimately endorsed by both the community participants and the Parks & Recreation Commission
- Identify budget considerations related to all desired improvements
- Identify funding, phasing and implementation strategies

During the past several months, representatives of the Newton Parks & Recreation Department and Weston & Sampson developed conceptual and final “Preferred” master plans for the Upper Falls Playground property. These were generated in response to the needs of the City as expressed by various community representatives at a series of public hearings and through the issuance of a comprehensive Park User Survey. At the outset of the process and in conjunction with the master planning work, Weston & Sampson representatives frequently toured the property in order to assess the existing conditions of all active and passive recreation facilities, current limitations, safety and maintenance issues and identify potential opportunities for providing improved facilities and improved user experience. Existing conditions assessments are included in the form of a series of photographs, plans and narrative summaries contained later in this document.

The major points of the master plan were presented in a preliminary manner to the Newton Parks & Recreation Commission during June of 2007. A final presentation was made during September 2007, at which time the Commission voted to approve the master plan. It is now clear that the Parks & Recreation Commission and others within the community strongly support the enhancement of this property for both active and passive recreational opportunities. There is now great desire to provide new facilities that meet the continuing needs of the surrounding neighborhood and of various recreational programs and community leagues. This written report represents the culmination of the master planning process. This document contains narrative and graphic depictions of the preferred master plan with descriptions of potential improvements,

potential phasing scenarios and implementation strategies. In addition to identifying new and refurbished facilities that meet the needs of various programs and activities, there was an attempt to identify other important initiatives that promote environmental stewardship and that create new pedestrian linkages between Upper Falls Playground and other nearby open space properties, improved parking and site access and improved landscape qualities that establish the characteristics inherent to a first-class park and recreation facility. Implementation of the improvements outlined in this master plan will require significant effort. The Funding Opportunities section of the report identifies potential granting agencies, non-profit entities and other sources of capital dollars or in-kind services that might help with refurbishment efforts.

It is important to note that a “master plan” is typically general and that recommendations are not “cast in stone”. It is fully intended that as particular projects are implemented the actual scope of improvements contained in this report, will again be validated or refined to meet actual field conditions through a continuing public participation process.

Background

The master plan focuses on the Upper Falls Playground, an approximately 8.8 acre neighborhood playground that offers both passive and active recreational opportunities for informal and formal uses. The property contains two primary tiers or levels. The upper tier is located adjacent to Chestnut Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. The lower tier is bounded by the Charles River, which flows in a northeasterly direction past the property. Refer to the aerial photograph contained below for the location of various facilities within the Upper Falls Playground property.



Chestnut Street, Pennsylvania Avenue and the row of trees along the left edge of the baseball field form the upper tier of the park. An old basketball court, grassy slopes and an informal field area form the lower tier of the park along the banks of the Charles River. The baseball field has long dominated the Upper Falls Playground landscape.

Public Participation and the Community Process

The master planning process included a comprehensive community participation process, with primary meetings identified in the chart located below.

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Community Meeting No. 1</i>	Master plan kick-off meeting, review of existing conditions, community feedback regarding current use and future needs of park.	February 6, 2007
<i>Youth League Representatives</i>	Review specific plans related to the refurbishment of baseball and multi-use fields.	March 12, 2007
<i>Community Meeting No. 2</i>	Review of various master plan improvement options. Two basic alternative plans presented and reviewed. Community feedback received in relation to preferences, additional options and related considerations.	April 11, 2007
<i>Community Meeting No. 3</i>	Review of two new and refined master plan improvement options preferred in response to community comment from preceding meeting. End result was the confirmation of the final, preferred master plan option.	June 4, 2007
<i>Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting</i>	Informational meeting, review of master planning efforts.	June 18, 2007
<i>Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting</i>	Master Plan adopted.	September 17, 2007

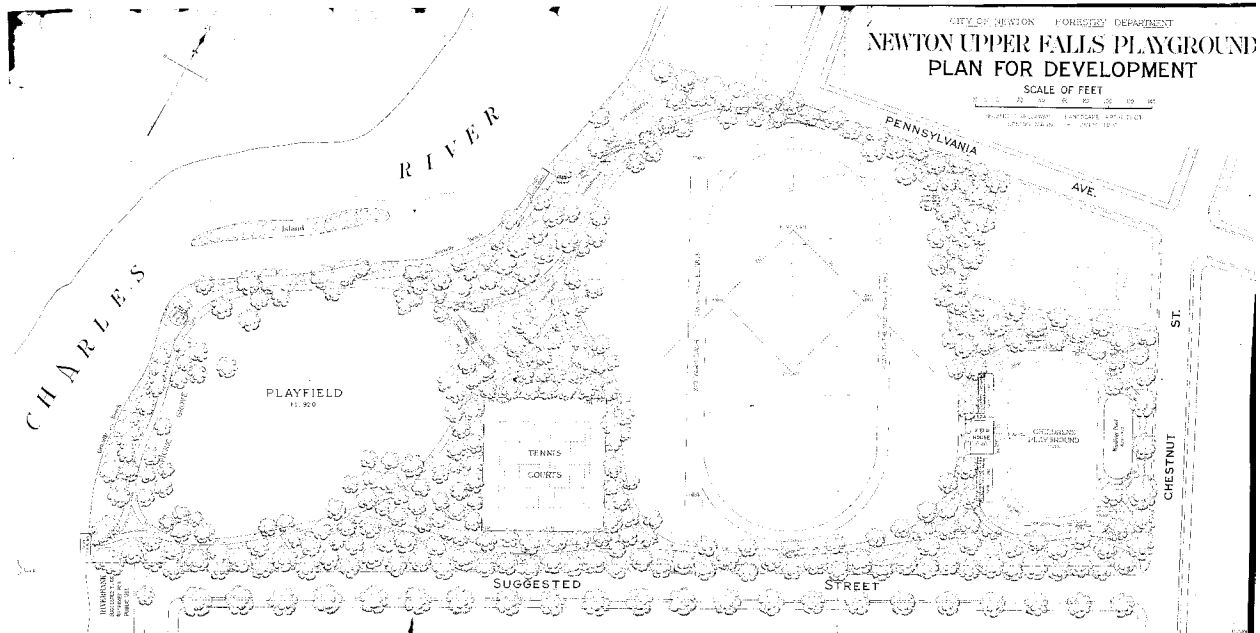
These meetings were held at the Emerson School and were attended by members of the community including park abutters and neighborhood residents, youth recreation league representatives, Aldermen, and Parks & Recreation Commissioners. A series of presentation boards were displayed and discussed based on the specific subject of the particular meeting, as outlined above. Once the presentation concluded, comments were welcomed. At each meeting the feedback was positive and the community concluded the process with clear preferences for a plan that best met both passive and active recreational needs.

Park History

In 1909 the property was deeded to the City of Newton for use as a park, but not until March 18, 1912 was it formally transferred from the care of the City Forester to that of the newly formed Playground Commission. Various sources have reported that baseball has been played at this site since as early as the 1910's. Aerial photos from the 1940's provide evidence that the baseball diamond, tennis courts and parking lot were in the exact same locations as they are today.

The plan contained on the following page dates to 1910 and was prepared by Herbert J. Kellaway, Landscape Architect of Boston, Massachusetts. It is not known how much, if any of the plan was actually implemented, although the baseball diamond is shown in a remarkably

similar location compared to the present day field. It is clear that the precedents for baseball, children’s playground facilities, tennis (basketball had not been invented) meandering paths, access to the riverfront and extensive landscaping within a public park setting have been long established at Upper Falls Playground. Mr. Kellaway was known to have collaborated on the design of numerous other parks and open space properties within the City of Newton.



This historic “Plan for Development” dated July 1910 was prepared by Herbert J. Kellaway, Landscape Architect of Boston. Tennis courts are identified in the area that presently contains the single basketball court and the baseball diamond is shown in remarkably close proximity to the current facility. Note also the “Suggested” Riverbank connection contained at the lower left of the plan.

According to the **Newton Centre Playground Accessibility and Rehabilitation Plan** prepared by Walker-Kluesing Design Group, Mr. Kellaway (1867-1947) worked for the Olmsted firm office from 1892 to 1906 prior to establishing his own firm. He lived in Newton and served as chairman of the planning board from 1930 to 1946.



The images above have been excerpted from a book entitled “The Makers of the Mold” by Kenneth W. Newcomb and include a group of ball players from Upper Falls and a canoe paddler along the banks of the Charles near Upper Falls Playground. Mr. Newcomb indicates that baseball was actively played in Upper Falls beginning in the 1870’s.

Existing Conditions

Newton Upper Falls Playground is an 8.8 acre park situated between Chestnut Street to the east and one of the many bends in the Charles River to the west. To the north of the property is a residential neighborhood bordered by Pennsylvania Avenue. To the south is heavily wooded property owned by American Tower Company. Most notable about the Upper Falls Playground property, in addition to its location on the Charles River, is the significant change in topography between the east and west sections of the park. The land naturally divides into two major terraces or tiers, the upper tier is generally level with Chestnut Street, while the lower tier elevation is 10' to 15' lower as it descends toward the river. The banks of the Charles River are very steep in places and fencing that lines much of the park perimeter precludes access.



The aerial view above looks northwesterly across Upper Falls Playground toward the Charles River and property in Needham (opposite side of river). The Charles River meanders around the western edge of the site, Chestnut Street and Pennsylvania Avenue are shown on the right side of the photograph and Route 128 (Interstate 95 N) is shown at the upper left. The American Tower property is shown to the south (or left side in photo) of the park.

As with many beloved urban parks that offer a broad range of recreational opportunities, years of continuous use have caused wear and tear to the park infrastructure making the built assets difficult to maintain and ultimately causing a decline in use and user experience. The intensive use combined with a lack of capital investment has led to the current state of general disrepair. The following is a summary of existing conditions that prevail at the property.

Access, Circulation and Parking



Photos identifying pedestrian access to the children's playground, pedestrian access to the ballfield and service access to the park (left to right respectively).

Vehicular Access to the Property

At present, a single vehicular entrance provides public access from Chestnut Street into the paved parking area. The entrance is non-descript and the adjacent park edge is cluttered and unappealing with much of the frontage being paved surfaces surrounded by rusting chain link fence.

For maintenance and emergency vehicles, access is provided along an unpaved corridor located between the tennis courts and the northern park boundary. The corridor also provides access to the back of two adjacent residential properties. Record property plans indicate that private abutters must make use of at least a portion of parkland for this purpose. Abutters are also known to make use of this area for the storage of vehicles. Although these informal arrangements have been in place for many years, it is believed that no formal rights of access or easements exist within this area.

A second maintenance gate is located off of Pennsylvania Avenue and provides access into the open area located behind the baseball backstop. The gate has not been in use in recent years.

Parking

A single, paved parking area is provided off of Chestnut Street. The parking lot is chaotic with no formal striping for parking or safe vehicular circulation. Although the parking area can accommodate more than forty cars in an informal, somewhat random manner, capacity would be reduced if individual parking spaces were marked out and minimum dimensions were to be maintained for travel ways. In recent years, residential abutters have used the parking area for the storage of their vehicles and trucks. This is due to the fact that many residential properties in the area have small driveways or no driveways at all. At any given time, between 10 and 20 vehicles may be stored at the property by residential abutters. This creates conflicts during peak periods of park use, especially along Pennsylvania Avenue. Loiterers engage in undesirable activities, like car repair and drinking, while in the lot at night.

Pedestrian Access and Circulation

Based on user surveys, the vast majority of park users arrive at the park on foot. However, pedestrian access into the property is unclear and non-descript. From Chestnut Street, a single gate provides access from the parking area out to the fields and children’s playground (see photo above). The entrance often contains a puddle and is not ADA compliant. There are no formal pathways that link this pedestrian entrance to any of the park facilities.

Pedestrian access into the tennis court complex is provided at one location at the parking area. An asphalt berm that surrounds the court (the courts were historically flooded for winter skating) creates a safety hazard. The gate is excessively wide and intended for service access. A single pedestrian gate is provided along the north side of the courts, but this entrance has been locked for many years and is non-functioning. The existence of a single entrance point within an entirely enclosed park facility creates potential safety issues for park patrons.

Pedestrian access into the children’s playground is provided at a single location. With no formal pathways leading to this entrance and with sand surfacing located within the playground, the facility is not ADA compliant.

There are no formal pathways located within the confines of the Upper Falls Playground. This greatly limits accessibility for seniors and disabled persons and limits opportunities for passive recreational uses (like walking or jogging) of the park property. The addition of formal pathways would provide vastly improved pedestrian access for all park users and would help to create a true multi-generational park experience.

The park is located on riverfront property, but few visitors know this due to the lack of access to the Charles River and the presence of a dense woodland that runs the entire length of the property along the river.

Park Facilities

Newton Upper Falls Playground contains major recreational facilities that include tennis courts, a basketball court, children’s playground, a baseball field, an informal playing field, and a small park support building. Following is a conditions summary for each of these facilities.

Tennis Courts



The tennis courts possess major structural deficiencies.

Two tennis courts sit side by side along Chestnut Street. Significant settlement and cracking throughout the pavement have made this facility virtually unusable for tennis, although nets are new and tennis play is often still observed. Color sealcoating is faded and deteriorated due to the extensive pavement cracking. The chain link fencing that surrounds the court is in poor condition, which provides a visually unappealing edge to the park along Chestnut Street. Along the abutter side of the court complex, the typical 10 foot fence height has been extended by an additional ten feet in order to keep balls within the court area.

Basketball Court



The basketball courts are located out of view from Chestnut Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, which creates safety, security and vandalism concerns.

The basketball court is located midway between the upper tier and lower tier of Upper Falls Playground. Within the exception of the top of the backboards, the facility is out of view from both Chestnut Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Although new nets have been placed on the basketball rims, use of the courts is reportedly limited. Asphalt pavement and color sealcoating are in extremely poor condition. Chain link fence that forms the western edge of the court is in poor condition, and invasive trees have overtaken the backboard at this end of the court.

Children's Playground



Views of the children's playground and an adjacent drinking fountain that has not worked for many years.

The children's play area was constructed in 1987 using Community Development Block Grant funding. Sand surfacing is contained throughout the fenced in play area. The major structure is in significant disrepair and has many broken elements. The structure was originally intended for use by children in the 5 to 12 year age bracket. To improve its appearance, the structure has been painted, but paint is now peeling from many feature surfaces. A swingset and spring animals provide opportunities for smaller children, but these elements are in just fair condition. During the past 20 years much has changed in regard to the design and construction of children's playground and equipment. The current facility no longer complies with important ADA requirements and no longer meets present day safety codes.

Baseball Field

Young children through high school-aged players currently use the baseball field. The field alignment might be considered sub-optimal by certain standards with the outfield being cut short by existing mature shade trees in right field, the park property line in center field, and the tennis courts and parking lot in left field. Baseball fields are preferably situated with an imaginary line through home plate, the pitcher's mound and second base running generally in a northeasterly direction. Orientation and dimensional limitations aside, the baseball field is considered the "defining" feature of the park and of the neighborhood that has been at the heart of community use for nearly 100 years. Anecdotal information furnished during the master planning process indicates that semi-professional baseball was being played at the property as early as the 1910's. The baseball field has provided enjoyment to generations of residents ever since that time.



Newton residents have enjoyed playing baseball at Upper Falls Playground for nearly a century.

The field is in fair condition, and ancillary facilities are marginal. Turf is of fair quality, with extensive weed species prevailing throughout and the grading of the field is irregular in places. The infield is in fair condition, with skinned surfacing (a combination of sand and clay) located throughout the base paths. Coach's boxes are not provided. The backstop and players bench features are in fair to poor condition. Bleachers, while relatively new and in compliance with current building codes, are positioned within a lawn area and weeds are growing through many of the openings between the bench style seating.

Informal Playing Field (Lower Tier)



The lower tier is used for informal play and possesses great opportunity to provide improved passive recreational opportunities and access to the Charles River and to other important linear open space corridors.

A chain link backstop is the only formal element contained within the lower park tier. Uneven terrain and exposed boulders within the lawn area have made this field undesirable for competitive play. At present it used for occasional youth soccer or tee-ball practice. The area is

well suited for other passive recreational pursuits that might include accessing the Charles River, picnicking, walking, bird watching or flying a kite.

Park Support Building



An existing park support structure sits at the northwest corner of the park. Immediately behind the building, steep slopes form the banks of the Charles River. Once used for bathroom facilities and storage, it is now rarely used and inaccessible to the general public. The overhang portion of the structure is used for shelter when baseball games are interrupted by rain. The structure, if retained, is in need of refurbishment to meet the needs of park users and to comply with current code/accessibility standards.

Overall Park Aesthetics/Landscape Qualities

Although there are numerous unique and attractive landscape assets located within and adjacent to the Upper Falls Playground (notably the banks of the Charles River, the sweeping meadow-like areas beyond the baseball field and the mature shade trees that dot the property) the overall aesthetic qualities of the property are impacted as follows:



Park edges are visually uninspiring as viewed from both Pennsylvania Avenue and Chestnut Street.

- Lack of identity from Chestnut Street and Pennsylvania Avenue as many people drive right by without knowing that they are passing an important park and open space property.
- Aesthetic appearance from Chestnut Street is cluttered and unappealing with much of the frontage consisting of paved surfaces that are surrounded by rusting chain link fence.
- The visual quality of the park suffers from aging infrastructure that is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain.
- Chain link fence is rusting and broken in many places.
- Many mature shade trees are a true asset to the park, but need pro-active management in order for them to continue to flourish.
- The wooded edge along the Charles River includes many exotic invasive species that threaten the native vegetation along this side of the park.

- The existing park support structure is largely unattractive, though located in an ideal place adjacent to the baseball diamond.
- There are no site furnishings that offer a place to sit and enjoy the park.
- The park lacks a formal point of entry that locates visitors and provides a meeting/gathering area.

Vegetation

Upper Falls Playground contains numerous mature shade trees that provide important space definition, aesthetic qualities, serve as windbreaks and provide respite from the hot summer sun. However, only a few of the aging trees are in good health, and over the next decade several will be lost. In particular, there are numerous notable Linden trees that form the edges of the children's playground and a portion of the tree line that separates the ball field from the lower tier of the park. There are many mature Red Oaks as well, although several of these are in poor condition and in jeopardy of collapse. Beyond the 10-15 specimen shade trees, other vegetation located within the property is very limited and includes undesirable or invasive species.

Significant vegetation is also located along the banks of the Charles River and along the edge of the park at the American Tower property. Vegetation includes mostly deciduous trees and shrubs and a significant population of invasive species.

The Charles River

The Charles River flows by the western edge of Upper Falls Playground. This important natural resource is presently under-used, under appreciated and difficult to access, due in part to a nearly unbroken length of 4-foot high rusted chain link fence. Invasive plant species also impact one's ability to view the River. Historic plans of the property and anecdotal information provided by area residents indicate that the river provided much higher recreational benefit many decades ago in the form of swimming, fishing, walking and viewing. With other initiatives in place to establish greenway corridors throughout the City, there is an increased desire to improve access to the Charles River and to provide important linkage to an existing river front pathway that connects to William Street to the south.



Views of an early morning mist above the waters of the Charles River.

Upper Falls Playground User Survey

A Park User Survey was sent out in the mail to residents living in close proximity to the park. The survey was also available on the Parks Department's website. Over 100 people responded and provided input on a variety of subjects that relate to overall park experience.

The following is an overview of the people that responded and how they currently use the park:

User Survey Summary

- 65% have lived in the neighborhood for 6 years or longer
- 61% have children under the age of 14 living at home
- 24.5% had people over the age of 65 living in the home
- 66% visit the park at least 1-2 times a month
- 59% go to the park to walk or jog
- 39% use the playground
- 40% play tennis
- 23% are there to play baseball
- 25% use the park in the winter for sledding or cross-country skiing
- 86% of park visitors usually walk to get to the park

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FRAN TOWLE, COMMISSIONER

Park Questionnaire for
UPPER FALLS PLAYGROUND/OFFICER ROBERT BRACELAND PLAYGROUND

SECTION 1: PERSONAL PROFILE

A. On which street do you live?
 B. How long have you lived at this location? 0-5 yrs. 6-10 yrs. 11-20 yrs. over 20 yrs.
 C. Are there people under age 18 in your household? Yes No
 If yes, please indicate the age brackets: (check all that apply)
 0-4 5-9 10-14 15-18
 D. Are there people age 65 or over in your household? Yes No

SECTION 2: PARK USERSHIP INFORMATION

A. Approximately how often do you visit this park? (please check one)
 Often: 3 or more times a week Occasionally: 3 or more times a year
 1-2 times a week Rarely: 1-2 times a year or less
 1-2 times a month

B. What activities do you and your family engage in most often at this park? (check as many as apply)
 Basketball Passive Recreation: relaxing, reading, picnics, etc.
 Playground & Swings Walking/Jogging
 Baseball/Softball Winter Recreation: sledding, cross-country/skijoring
 Tennis Special Events
 Soccer Other: _____
 Pick-up sports: frisbee, bocce, football, etc. Other: _____

C. How do you and your family typically travel to the park? (please check one)
 (check all that apply) If you drive, where do you generally park:

Method	Usually	Occasionally	Never
Walk			
Bike			
Drive			

 Park Parking Lot
 Nearby Business Parking Lot
 On-street Parking

D. How do you rate your satisfaction with this park in fulfilling your recreational needs? (on a scale of 1-10, where 10 is most satisfied and 1 is not satisfied)
 Overall Satisfaction Safety & Security
 Accessibility & Mobility Maintenance & Condition
 Types of Recreational Facilities Offered Park Appearance/Site Aesthetics

SECTION 3: IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

A. What would you like to see added or changed that would make your park experience more enjoyable?

B. Please choose the items you think need the most improvement: (please check up to 3 items)
 Playfields: baseball, little league, soccer, etc. Playground
 Accessibility: pathways, curb cuts, etc. Security: sense of security, security lighting, etc.
 Landscaping & Beautification Courts: tennis, basketball
 Park Amenities: seating, bubblers, shade shelter Site Equipment: building, fencing, signage, etc.
 Parking/Bike Facilities Environmental: drainage, erosion

Thank you for taking the time to help to improve the quality of parks in Newton! Please re-fold the questionnaire so that the return address is showing, tape/staple it closed and affix a postage stamp.

In response to the questions regarding areas of focus for the improvements, most people wanted to see the following items addressed (listed in order of preference):

- Tennis + Basketball
- Landscape/Beautification
- Park Amenities: seating, water fountains, trash receptacles, etc.
- Children's Playground
- Baseball

Preferred Master Plan

The master planning effort provided a unique opportunity to comprehensively assess Newton Upper Falls Playground for the purposes of developing a series of thoughtful and achievable enhancements that will provide benefits to all members of the surrounding neighborhood and larger community.

In developing the preferred master plan, a number of basic themes related to the refurbishment of the park became established as described below:

- The preferred plan provides new and improved opportunities to access Upper Falls Playground (by foot or by car), provides a reconfigured and expanded parking amenity and establishes provisions to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and drivers.
- The plan provides a major point of arrival for pedestrians, key pathway linkages to all passive and active recreational facilities, access to the Charles River, guidelines to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and to provide a park experience that is truly multi-generational.
- The plan provides an approach to dramatically improving the aesthetics of the park through the refurbishment of park edges at both Chestnut Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.
- The master planning process identified the need for providing new and/or refurbished courts and fields in order to better support city sports leagues and other recreation programs that operate within the park. At present, desired field and court conditions cannot be maintained due to chronic infrastructure problems.
- The preferred plan proposes the development of an attractive, maintainable and safe series of passive and active recreational amenities that provide opportunities for enjoyment by residents of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.
- The preferred plan identifies the importance of upgrading the overall park aesthetics and the need to protect, preserve and enhance the site's inherent environmental features.

The plan contained on the following page identifies in graphic form the configuration of all proposed site features. It is important to note that the vast majority of recommendations suggest the refinement, enhancement or refurbishment of *existing facilities* at their basic current locations within Upper Falls Playground. The plan also recommends the development of a modest level of new site amenities, that both complement existing facilities and provide new opportunities for public use and enjoyment in the form of formal pathways, connections to the Charles River and other greenway corridors, site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles) and interpretive signage that conveys the site's unique recreational, historical, cultural and environmental attributes.



The Preferred Master Plan identifies the full potential extent of improvements within the Upper Falls Playground property. The plan is conceptual in nature and it is anticipated that refinements and advancements to the design would be undertaken as actual improvements begin to be implemented.

Access, Circulation and Parking

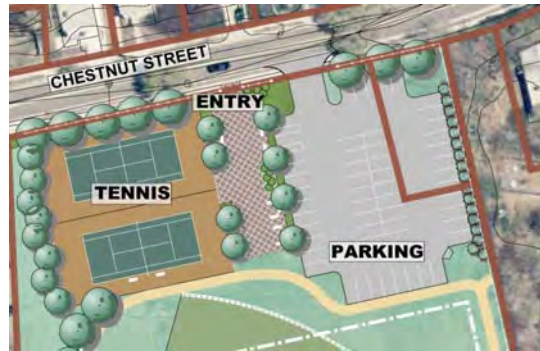
Vehicular Access to the Property and Parking

The proposed plan identifies a fully reconstructed parking area within the same geographic area of the park. The parking area would be reconfigured and expanded in order to meet all current

standards and ADA requirements. The parking area would have the capacity to accommodate up to 53 vehicles, which represents a 30% increase. A single entrance from Chestnut Street would be retained and the parking area would be set back from the street to allow for meaningful park edge improvements that would include decorative fencing, site furnishings, signage and tree plantings.

Circulation would be two-way and circular, which would allow for a vehicle to exit and enter easily, particularly if no parking spaces were available. Pathway linkages would provide safe and convenient pedestrian access to all adjacent park facilities.

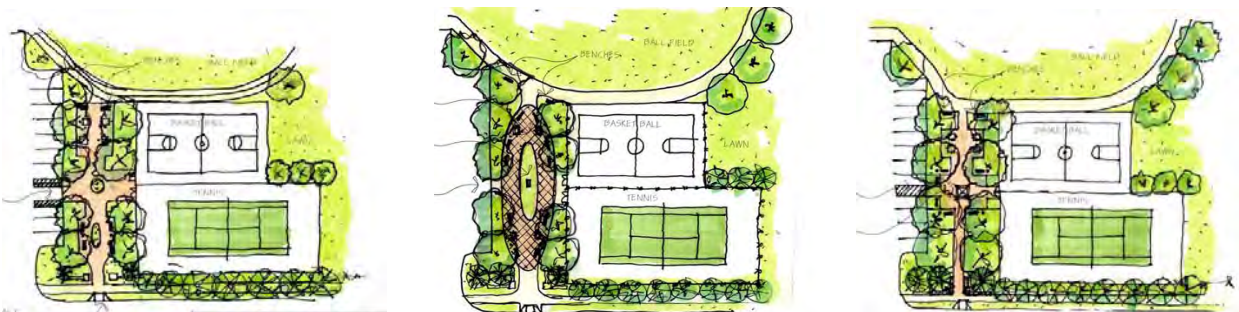
For maintenance and emergency vehicles a curb opening and service drive connection are provided at the southwestern corner of the parking area. The service corridor will provide access to the lower tier of the park by following along the entire park perimeter in this location. A second maintenance entrance could be maintained off of Pennsylvania Avenue at a location to be determined. In essence, an 8' wide maintenance vehicle loop drive (for use primarily by pedestrians) would encircle much of the property.



As part of the master planning process, alternate locations were explored for patron parking, but ultimately rejected by residents participating in the process. Alternate locations included the proposed basketball court vicinity and several locations within the generally open park area located along and adjacent to Pennsylvania Avenue.

Pedestrian Access and Circulation

At present, the park suffers from a lack of safe, clearly articulated and attractive pedestrian entrances. Based on user surveys, the vast majority of visitors arrive on foot. The preferred plan identifies an area for the development of an arrival space that links to Chestnut Street and to the refurbished tennis complex, parking area and field complex. The sketches identified below indicate a variety of options in regard to the future development of this important community space.



Various concepts for the primary pedestrian access point. Chestnut Street is located to the bottom of each image.

Under any of the above concepts, it is envisioned that the improved arrival space would contain decorative fencing, a clearly identifiable and embellished park entrance with markers, signage,

seating, special pavement treatments, lawns and landscaping and fully compliant access to all adjacent amenities. There is also an opportunity to incorporate interpretive signage within this park area in order to describe in both words and images the unique cultural, historical, environmental and recreational assets of this historic park property. A secondary pedestrian entrance would also be provided at Pennsylvania Avenue with direct connections to a renovated children's playground and baseball field.

A formalized park pathway system is proposed. The pathways would provide direct connections from Pennsylvania Avenue and from Chestnut Street to all major park facilities and geographic areas. The pathways would be 6' or 8' wide and paved with asphalt. The 8' width would only be used in locations shared with service vehicle and/or emergency vehicle uses. A loop pathway around the perimeter of the park would allow for walkers, joggers and bikers to traverse a distance of approximately ½ mile, without leaving the park. The pathway would provide much needed multi-generational recreational opportunities and dramatically improve access to the banks of the Charles River and the developing greenway corridor that links to Williams Street.

Park Facilities

The preferred master plan for Newton Upper Falls Playground includes the restoration of all major recreational facilities including the tennis courts, basketball court, children's playground, baseball field and informal playing field. With the exception of the basketball court, it is anticipated that all facilities would be refurbished within their general current park location. In addition and as an option, park user groups could refurbish the small park support building for expanded storage and restroom use. It was generally thought that the facility would not remain open for general public use on a daily basis, rather it would be opened, closed and maintained by groups making use of specific facilities like the adjacent baseball field.

Tennis Courts

Plans call for the two tennis courts to be fully reconstructed within the same approximate location. Work would include new asphalt pavement, color sealcoating, black vinyl chain link fence, seating for users, and enhanced landscaping to partially screen the space from adjacent residential abutters and streets to the north and east.

There was much community discussion related to the potential relocation of the tennis courts to another park location and to the potential elimination of one of the two one courts to create opportunities for other park enhancements. In the end, the vast majority of community members preferred the current location and number of courts.

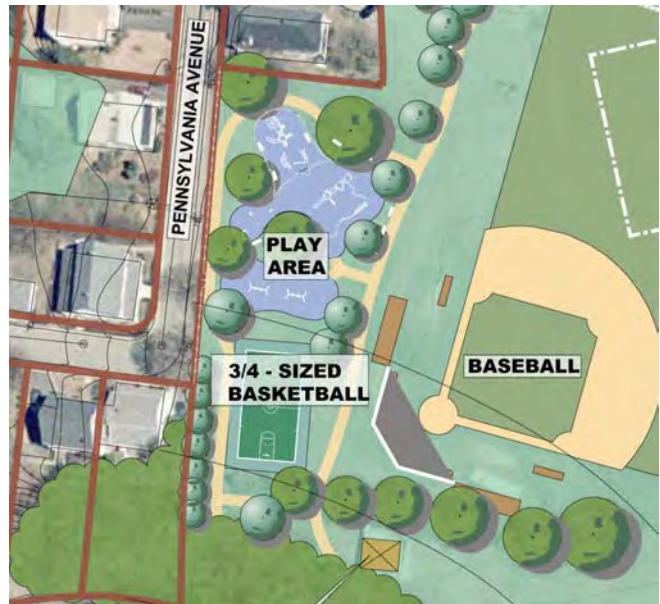
Basketball Court

The preferred plan identifies a new basketball court in the vicinity of Pennsylvania Avenue in an area that is presently open mowed lawn. (Refer to the diagram on the following page.) The baseball backstop is located a short distance to the south and the children's playground to the east. Since this is a new location, within a previously undeveloped park area, community representatives expressed a desire to keep the facility less formal and perhaps slightly undersized in order to attract younger park users who tend to be less rowdy compared to individuals that are

in their late teens or older. There are a number of ways in which to accomplish this type of facility by reducing the length of the court, width of the court or by installing just half court play areas within the paved space. It should be noted that the several members of the Parks & Recreation Commission expressed a strong preference for the development of a full-sized basketball court at this location.

Children’s Playground

After careful consideration, it was agreed that the best location for the children’s playground within the property was within the quiet and pleasantly shaded park area located adjacent to Pennsylvania Avenue, the long established and historical location for this amenity. The current children’s play area will be completely demolished and replaced with new play structures that are separated into age-appropriate clusters. The area for the youngest of children will be enclosed with a decorative fence treatment. New safety surfacing will be a combination of poured-in-place rubberized surfacing, in critical fall and landing zones, and an engineered wood fiber for the rest of the playground area. The new play area will be compliant with all ADA requirements and with all current safety regulations. In addition to new play equipment, all required utility infrastructure (drainage, sub drainage, water service etc.) and new site furnishings that include park benches, a drinking fountain, signage, trash receptacles, tree planting and related landscaping will be completely updated.



Baseball Field

Due to the large footprint of the baseball field, the only feasible location for this facility is the mid section of the Upper Falls Playground. After considering a myriad of potential options for realigning the baseball field in order to provide improved orientation (left fielders currently face directly into the sun during late afternoon games), it was agreed to keep the field in its current general alignment. Slight adjustments are proposed that will increase the minimum distances to right, center and left fields. In order to accomplish this, the distance between home plate and the backstop has been reduced. As part of a refurbished field



project, it is anticipated that new, more formalized players' benches, backstop, coach's boxes and bleachers would be constructed. The existing row of maturing shade trees along the right field line would be retained and pruned, and the diseased or badly damaged trees will be assessed for removal. Multi-purpose fields would continue to be marked out within the outfield areas and continue to provide venues for various youth soccer programs.

Informal Playing Field (Lower Tier)

Under the preferred plan, the lower tier of the park would be renovated to provide improved opportunities for informal play. Sections of the open field would be regraded, and rocks removed to provide for a more useful and safe playing area. A simple, u-shaped fence enclosure would serve as a backstop and represent the only formal element within this area.

Meandering pathways would traverse the perimeter of this area, providing dramatically improved access to the Charles River and to the adjacent greenway corridor.

Overall Park Aesthetics and Landscape/Environmental Enhancements

A series of more modest improvements, separate from the individual facility reconstruction efforts described above have been identified in order to enhance inherent park and open space qualities throughout the Upper Falls Playground property, including the following:

- Refurbishment of all park edges to include pedestrian entrances, pathway connections, landscaping, decorative fence treatments, signage and related amenities that will help easily identify this important park and open space property.
- Structural pruning and disease prevention in regard to the many mature shade trees located within the park. Work efforts might include the removal of badly damaged or diseased trees, removal of exotic invasive species and the installation of new, native shade trees and under story vegetation to improve environmental qualities throughout the property.
- Installation of typical park furnishings, including drinking fountains, park benches, trash receptacles, bike racks and related amenities to improve the experience for all park users.
- Installation of a formalized pathway system to provide true multi-generational recreational opportunities and improved access to the unique Charles River edges of the property.

Vegetation

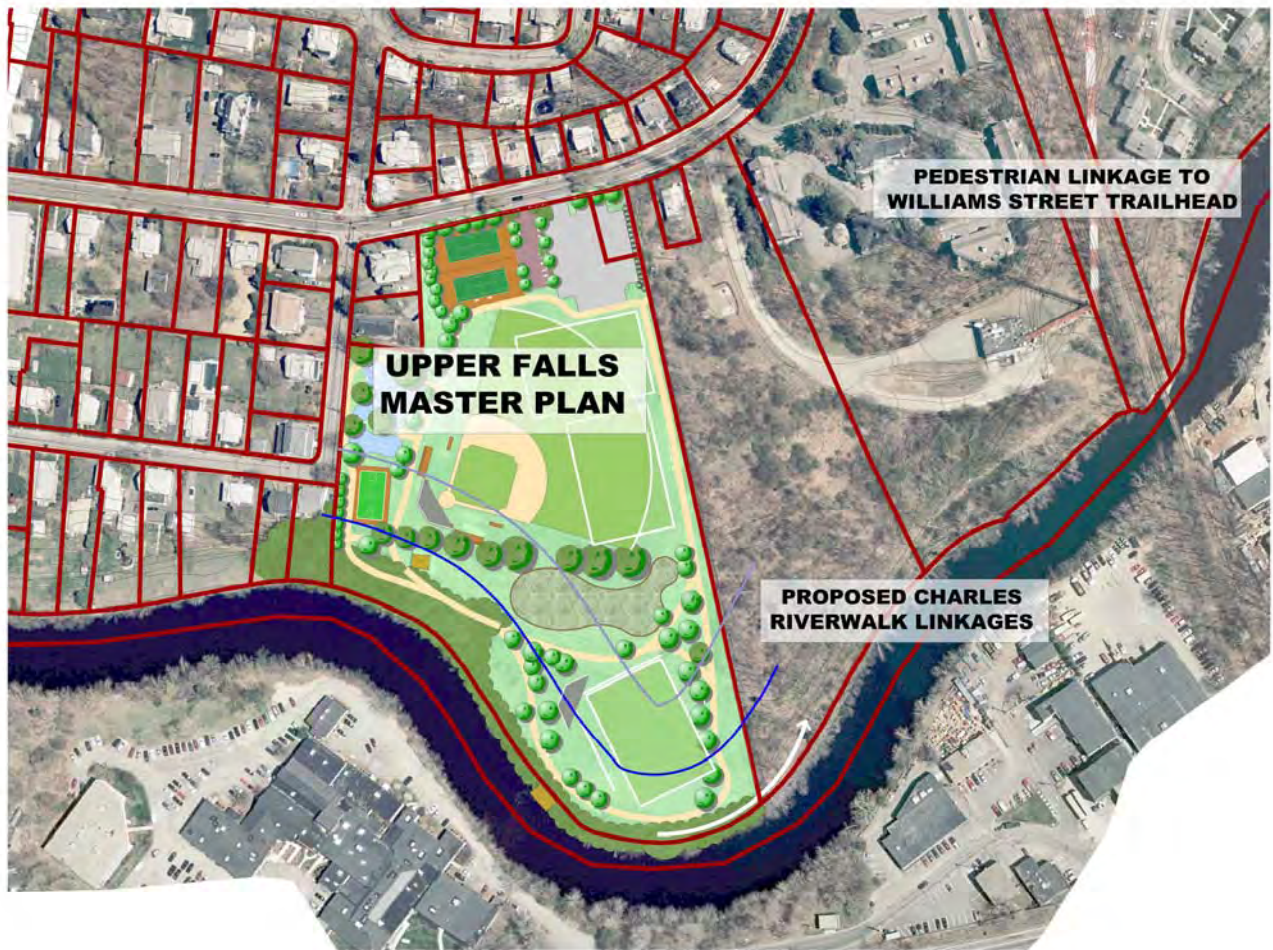
It is anticipated that a more pro-active vegetation management program, that includes some or all of the following undertakings, will yield very positive environmental and recreational results.

- Removal of exotic invasive and other undesirable plant species from the wooded edges of the park along the edges of the Charles River.
- Select pruning of desirable, native vegetation to eliminate damaged or diseased branches and to provide improved opportunity for accessing the Charles River edge of the property.
- Establishment of meadow areas, where grasses are mowed on a seasonal basis in order to reduce maintenance requirements. This approach would allow for the potential establishment of more diverse, native plant species and enhanced wildlife habitat, and overall park aesthetics. There are numerous slopes, particularly within the lower portion of the park, that lend themselves to this type of management approach.

The Charles River

The preferred master plan recognizes the need to provide improved access to the Charles River. Some of the more senior members of the community reflected upon days when residents flocked to the rivers edge during summer months for swimming, boating and fishing activities. While no one felt that the return of formalized swimming to the banks of the Charles at Upper Falls Playground was likely, many did express a preference for the development of improved connections to the waters edge in order to fish and to enjoy the visual benefits of such a diverse natural environment. To this end, a proposed fishing platform is indicated at the edge of the park. This wooden structure would be constructed entirely within woodland areas or upland vegetated banks. The platform would also provide opportunity for viewing (river, wetlands and wildlife) and for relaxation within the less developed lower tier of the park.

In conjunction with environmental improvements and access to environmental features, an interpretive signage program should be considered in order to educate the public, especially children, about the unique environmental qualities of the property.



The context diagram above identifies the relationship of Upper Falls Playground (with master plan configuration shown), to the banks of the Charles River and to future and existing greenway corridors. The park will ultimately connect to a trailhead located at the end of William Street (beyond limits of photo to upper right) to form a continuous pedestrian greenway corridor encompassing approximately ½ mile in length.

Enhanced Buffer Zone

In order to provide environmental enhancement and protection throughout the park, but particularly within the lower tier of the property, the following amenities and or maintenance strategies would be implemented:

- Removal of exotic invasive plant species.
- Planting of native, low maintenance (or no maintenance) understory plant species to provide greater variety and enhanced wildlife habitat.
- Establishment of meadow areas in the area located between the informal field and wooded banks of the Charles River, to improve stormwater management, reduce runoff of solids and nutrients and enhance wildlife habitat.
- Implementation of environmentally friendly park management plan that makes use of lower maintenance native turf grasses and limited applications of low phosphorus and/or organic fertilizers.

Historical Assets

As discussed throughout the master planning process, Newton Upper Falls Playground has been at the center of community life for over a hundred years. As improvements are contemplated, additional historical research should be pursued, and the Newton Historical Commission contacted in order to present and establish an interpretive signage program that sets forth the fascinating past of this great park and open space property for all to experience.



FIELD DAY, GIRLS FROM UPPER FALLS PLAYING DODGE BALL

Master Plan Budget Considerations

The following budget outline identifies basic work efforts related to the potential refurbishment of the Upper Falls Playground. Costs could vary considerably based on the manner in which the improvements are grouped, the time that it takes to implement the full extent of improvements and the methodology selected for implementing the actual improvements. As with the plans themselves, the estimates are conceptual in nature and will require confirmation and refinement as actual improvements are contemplated. Refer to the Appendix for a more comprehensive breakdown.

Total Estimated Park Refurbishment Budget Breakdown

Park Improvement Element	Budget Cost	Notes
Demolition	\$100,000	Existing features
Park Edge Treatment	\$177,600	Fencing, planting, masonry piers at 'gateway'
Parking Area	\$142,575	New paving, striping, curbing
Park Entrance/Seating Area	\$ 90,000	Paving, benches, tree planting
Tennis Courts	\$105,200	New paving, color coating, fencing
Basketball Court	\$48,200	New paving, color coating, not full-sized court
Baseball Field	\$285,000	Includes irrigation and well drilling
Multi-purpose Field	\$100,000	At lower level, to include backstop
Shelter Renovation	\$150,000	Refurbish existing
Children's Playground	\$207,000	New equipment, fencing, and safety surfacing
Pathway System/Loop Path	\$132,000	2,800 linear feet
Park Landscaping	\$ 85,000	Planting and woodland management
Fishing/River Overlook Observation Deck	\$ 50,000	Fishing and passive recreation access to the Charles River
Subtotal	\$1,672,575	
Contractor's General Conditions	\$117,080	Bonds, Insurance, Project Management
20% Contingency	\$ 334,515	
Design/Engineering/Permitting	\$210,000	
TOTAL	\$2,334,170	

Potential Phasing Improvement Program

Phase 1

This Phase I Improvement Program option has been developed for a potential \$1,100,000 budget. The program has been established based on the specific needs and preferences expressed by members of the community through discussions at public hearings and through responses received in the User Surveys. The Phase I Program is also geared toward the types of funding sources that are most likely to be leveraged as part of a renovation effort. The potential Phase I Improvement Program would provide major passive and active recreational benefits to the community in the following ways:

- Renovation of much-loved, but badly deteriorated active recreation facilities
- Enhancement of highly visible park edges to dramatically improve overall aesthetics for residential abutters, park users and passersby
- Improved environmental awareness and stewardship
- New pedestrian access to the Charles River and to other Charles River greenway linkages
- Interpretive signage to set forth the unique environmental, historical and cultural aspects of the Uppers Falls Playground property
- Development of portions of a loop path system to provide pedestrian and service vehicle access to all primary park areas and to enhance the property’s multi-generational offerings

The plan included on the following page identifies the basic Phase I Improvement Program. The estimated cost of all improvements under this program is estimated at \$1,100,000, with funding to come equally from two primary sources (Commonwealth of Massachusetts Urban Self-Help Program and Newton Community Preservation Committee). The extent of potential improvements is summarized below.

Park Facility or Amenity	Description
Tennis Courts	Renovation of popular feature to include new pavements, posts/nets, fencing, seating and perimeter landscaping
Children’s Playground	Reconstruction of existing facility to include new, state-of-the-art, age-appropriate equipment, safety surfacing, perimeter pathways, seating, and landscaping
Parking Area	Refurbishment of current facility to improve access, safety and circulation; increase parking capacity and dramatically improve site aesthetics, with new pavement, curbing, storm drainage and related amenities
Edge and Entrance Improvements	Establishment of attractive park-like edge treatments with ornamental fencing along Chestnut Street, landscaping and formal entrances and arrival spaces, interpretive signage to set forth unique historical, cultural and environmental assets
Fishing / Observation Pier Charles River Greenway Links	Wooden platform to provide opportunity to fish or observe wildlife at the edge of the Charles River and formal pathway linkages to greenway corridors (planned and existing) along the Charles River
Loop Path / Pedestrian Pathways	Selected pedestrian connections and portions of a planned loop path system to include paved surfaces
Landscaping	Selected plantings focused on the areas being improved in this phase



The Phase I Program for a \$1,100,000 project budget would include reconstruction of the tennis courts, parking area and children's playground and also include a new arrival/entry space and significant edge improvements along Chestnut Street. The area is approximately delineated with the bold black dashed line on the diagram above. Work would also include pathway, landscape, and Charles River edge improvements (including the fishing and observation pier) as indicated on the plan.

The Phase 1 Budget identifies the initial breakdown of costs associated with the desired program. All costs have been rounded and are approximate. It is anticipated that the final, precise scope of the improvement program will be further refined upon the receipt of funding and during the development of actual Phase 1 bid plans and specifications. Refer to the Appendix for a more comprehensive breakdown.

Potential Phase 1 Budget Breakdown

Park Improvement Element	Budget Cost	Notes
Demolition	\$40,000	Existing features
Tennis Courts	\$105,200	New paving, color coating, fencing
Children’s Playground	\$207,000	New equipment, fencing, and safety surfacing
Parking Area	\$142,575	New paving, striping, curbing
Park Edge Treatment	\$60,000*	Fencing, planting, masonry piers at ‘gateway’
Park Entrance/Seating Area	\$90,000	Paving, benches, tree planting, interpretive signage
Fishing/River Overlook Observation Deck	\$50,000	Fishing and passive recreation access to the Charles River
Pathway System/Loop Path	\$52,000*	Part of total planned system, links to Charles River
Park Landscaping	\$35,000*	Selected Plantings
Subtotal	\$781,775	
Contractor’s General Conditions	\$40,000	Bonds, Insurance, Project Management
20% Contingency	\$156,355	
Design and Engineering	\$120,000	
TOTAL	\$1,098,130	

* These costs reflect a portion of the total scope commensurate with the first phase of construction. As a result, the prices may vary from those listed in the comprehensive summary in the Budget Considerations section of this master plan. The balance of those costs is reflected in Phase 2.

Phase 2

This Phase 2 Improvement Program reflects the remainder of the improvements proposed within this master plan. As a result, the Phase 2 Program focuses on the larger playing fields and remaining park edges and pathways not covered in the Phase 1 Program. The potential Phase 2 Improvement Program would provide active recreational benefits to the larger community in the following ways:

- Renovation of the ball field and multi-use playing field
- Renovation of the existing park support structure to include bathrooms and storage space for sports leagues

- Enhancement of the Pennsylvania Avenue park edge to dramatically improve overall aesthetics for residential abutters, park users and passersby
- Improved environmental awareness and stewardship through woodland management efforts and river edge stabilization
- Development of the portions of a loop path system not constructed in Phase 1; The completion of this path network will provide pedestrian, service and emergency vehicle access to all park areas while completing the perimeter walking loop

The plan included on the following page identifies the basic Phase 2 Improvement Program. The estimated cost of all improvements under this program is \$1,250,000. The extent of potential improvements is summarized below.

Park Facility or Amenity	Description
Baseball Field	Realignment and renovation of the baseball field including new backstop, players benches and spectator seating, field irrigation and well drilling
Multi-purpose Field	Regrade lower level for smooth grass playing surface, replace the existing backstop for informal softball practices
Shelter Renovation	Refurbishment of current facility to provide ADA accessible restrooms, storage space for sports leagues, and potentially a space for concessions
Basketball Court	New paving, color coating, less than full size court, relocated from the intermediate terrace
Edge and Entrance Improvements	Establishment of attractive park-like edge treatments with ornamental fencing along Pennsylvania Avenue with new plantings
River Edge Improvements / Woodland Management	Enhance and stabilize the banks of the river, remove hazard trees and exotic invasive species in the woodland
Loop Path / Pedestrian Pathways	Complete pedestrian connections of the planned loop path system

Potential Phase 2 Budget Breakdown

Park Improvement Element	Budget Cost	Notes
Demolition	\$60,000	Existing features
Baseball Field	\$285,000	Includes irrigation and well drilling
Multi-purpose Field	\$100,000	At lower level, to include backstop
Shelter Renovation	\$150,000	Refurbish existing shelter
Basketball Court	\$48,200	Relocated from the intermediate terrace

Park Edge Treatment	\$117,600*	Fencing, planting, masonry piers at 'gateway'
Pathway System/Loop Path	\$80,000*	Part of total planned system, links to Charles River
Park Landscaping	\$50,000*	Selected plantings and woodland management
Subtotal	\$890,800	
Contractor's General Conditions	\$77,080	Bonds, Insurance, Project Management
20% Contingency	\$178,160	
Design and Engineering	\$90,000	
TOTAL	\$1,236,040	

* These costs reflect a portion of the total scope commensurate with the second phase of construction. As a result, the prices may vary from those listed in the comprehensive summary in the Budget Considerations section of this master plan.

Funding Opportunities / Implementing Strategies

There are many potential sources of funding from both public and private entities that could help to pay for potential improvements to the Upper Falls Playground. Donations, both large and small, can be lumped together to create the financing needed to undertake meaningful improvements. The Newton Parks and Recreation Department will aggressively pursue a variety of funding and implementation strategies that could include:

- **Traditional Public Bidding-** Develop plans, specifications and estimates for the desired improvements, publicly advertise, receive bids and award a construction contract to the lowest qualified bidder. Projects typically range from small (say \$50,000 or so) to very large (many hundreds of thousands of dollars).
- **In-kind Services-** Implement improvements making use of city labor forces, materials and equipment. This method is typically appropriate for projects that are limited in scope, such as the construction of a parking area or driveway, or refurbishment of adjacent city sidewalks. As funding, material, equipment and human resources permit, other minor improvement efforts can be planned and undertaken. The removal of dead or diseased trees, pruning of healthy trees, and the installation of benches, trash receptacles, fencing, signage, or a small run of masonry wall are examples of the types of minor enhancements that can be provided using city forces and materials.
- **Donations / Corporate Sponsorships / Community Build-** Implement improvements for projects through a variety of means that might include, construction of a children's playground by a corporation or community group or construction of a park feature or facility with funding generated through linkage or mitigation arrangements (often originating from the approval of a large area development). In certain cases, improvements can also be undertaken by contractors looking to donate their services.

For consideration, a number of potential funding sources and mechanisms have been identified. Many of the governmental sources identified allocate millions of dollars per year for parks, open space and athletic facility improvement programs, but competition is intense. The actual improvements are then implemented through a public design, bid and construct process.

Partnerships

Partnerships can also play an important role in the overall plan to improve, manage and maintain various park properties. As an example, there are many privately managed sports leagues in Newton with impressive track records for supporting certain maintenance and capital improvement initiatives for numerous facilities. City's and Town's are increasingly relying on these types of public/private partnerships to create the types of facilities and related playing conditions that are needed to support sports programming.

The City might also consider partnerships with such entities as the Massachusetts Audubon Society, or Charles River Watershed Association in order to preserve, protect and enhance the unique environmental qualities of a particular property and to provide new passive recreational opportunities in the form of environmental education and awareness.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Division of Conservation Services (DCS)

This state agency has funded hundreds of park, open space and recreation projects throughout Massachusetts over the past several decades. Each June, the agency receives applications from municipalities for improvements to parks, playgrounds, athletic facilities or assistance in the acquisition of open space properties. DCS administers several programs including the “*Self-help*” program, which generally funds acquisitions and limited enhancements to open space properties. The funds for acquisitions are designed to protect natural resources by eliminating threatened development. The “*Urban Self-help*” program typically funds the renovation of parks, playgrounds and athletic facilities in larger communities that have fewer outlets for recreation. Demographics play a role in the grant award process. Communities that are more urban in nature with high percentages of low-income residents tend to fair better in the decision-making process as compared to smaller communities or larger communities with higher income levels.

DCS also receives Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds for distribution to communities that are considering park improvements or land acquisitions as described above. The allocation for Massachusetts for the upcoming year has not been determined, although the funds, when available, may be used to supplement both the Self-help and Urban Self-help programs.

Community Preservation Act Funding

Newton has passed the Community Preservation Act, which allows the City to generate funds through an added property assessment for improvements related to affordable housing, historic preservation and certain types of park/open space acquisitions and enhancements. Funding generated locally is matched by an equal amount of state dollars. In Newton this program is competitive and guidelines are stringent, but this should always be pursued as park and recreation improvement programs are considered and pursued.

Stormwater Management Grants

Funding is made available by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs for stormwater management and water quality protection and enhancement efforts. This funding could be a source for environmental improvements to the park in order to enhance the Charles River, which has been adversely impacted by poor stormwater management practices throughout the surrounding watershed.

Other Alternative Methodologies for Implementing Improvements

The City of Newton, through the DPW, receives annual quotations for a variety of public improvements that can be ordered on an as-needed basis. The installation of fencing, bituminous concrete pavements for roadways/parking areas, and curbing are examples. As deemed appropriate, ordering work through this method could be used to complement or support other improvements that are accomplished through other means.

Operations and Maintenance



The Newton Parks & Recreation Department provides maintenance and upkeep services at the Newton Upper Falls Playground. Typical costs for the maintenance and upkeep of park, recreation and open space properties might be expected to range from between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per acre, but can vary somewhat dramatically based on the extent and type of facilities that are located within a given property. The Upper Falls Playground encompasses 8.8 acres of land and contains general lawn and field areas, paved areas, a children's playground and wooded areas. The type of maintenance activity varies depending on the nature of the area being maintained. Following is a summary of the basic maintenance activities that are needed to properly maintain a park property of this nature:

- Mowing of lawn areas during the growing season. Field areas require a higher level of maintenance and more frequent mowing than general landscape areas.
- Soil aeration, particularly within field areas on an annual basis
- Nutrient applications to field areas for enhanced turf growth, weed and pest control
- Removal of trash (daily, multiple times per week or weekly depending on the season and schedule of events)
- Weekly inspection of park facilities and completion of minor repairs (replacement/repairs to a bench slat, fence gate, basketball net, or swing are examples)
- Providing dog dispensers and bags (per City policy)
- Annual replenishment of resilient safety surfacing at children's playgrounds
- Sweeping of paved areas (parking lots that are sanded, areas adjacent to children's playgrounds, other areas subject to collecting debris) on an as-needed basis or in conjunction with regular grass mowing activities
- Snow plowing of parking areas
- Inspection of tree plantings on an annual basis to identify damaged or diseased trees requiring pruning or removal to ensure patron safety
- Line painting at parking areas every 3 - 5 years
- Color sealcoating and line painting of court surfaces every 8 - 10 years

As capital funds are pursued and as actual improvements are implemented at Upper Falls Playground, it is important to consider other design and operational approaches (to be adopted now and in the future) in order to simplify and reduce maintenance requirements, as summarized below:

- Where fence lines are located adjacent to paved areas such as courts or sidewalks, the pavement should be extended below the fence to eliminate the need for trimming of grass or other undesirable vegetation. This is often referred to as a “mower strip”.
- Native, indigenous plantings (trees, shrubs and groundcover) should always be planted in order to ensure sustainability and reduce maintenance requirements
- Where lawn areas are not specifically programmed for use, mowing should be reduced to an occasional or once or twice annual basis. This practice reduces maintenance costs, and allows for meadow establishment and wildlife habitat enhancement.
- Consider the use of solar powered trash compactor units to dramatically reduce the frequency of trash removal. This has been successfully employed in numerous area communities.

Where municipal dollars are hard to come by, and given the fact that parks departments are often under funded, it is important to look to other means and mechanisms to assist in the upkeep of Newton Upper Falls Playground. For instance, a neighborhood clean-up day (this might correspond to Earth Day in April) might help spruce up the park in ways that City forces cannot ordinarily achieve. Contributions in the form of money, equipment or materials from user groups (such as sports league participants) can also help reduce the financial burden on the municipal budget.

Ultimately, maintenance operations are critical to the protection of future capital improvements at the park, and the establishment of an appropriate level of regular maintenance will be essential in order to ensure maximum public use and enjoyment of this great property.



APPENDIX



City of Newton, Massachusetts

NEWTON UPPER FALLS PLAYGROUND

February 6, 2007 Public Hearing

Public Participation Process

- Open Public Forums
- Open, Constructive Dialogue
- Timeline
- CPA Process

Master Planning Process Outline

- Prepare Mapping / Plans
- Existing Conditions Inventory
- Identify All Users
- Complete User Surveys / Questionnaires
- Identify Basic Recreation Needs (Current + Future; Passive + Active)
- Develop Initial Concept Plans (Multiple Alternatives)
- Identify General Cost Considerations
- Develop Preferred Plan(s)
- Develop Final Budget Costs
- Identify Funding Sources
- Identify Priorities / Phasing Options

Future Design / Construction Administration Outline

- Define Phase I Program
- Prepare Construction Documents
- Implement Improvements

Existing Conditions Summary and Assessment

- Opportunities + Constraints
- Access (Vehicular + Pedestrian + Maintenance)
- Parking and Circulation
- Linkages / Connections
- ADA

Facilities

Fields

Courts

Playgrounds

Buildings

Other Ancillary Elements

- Abutter Issues
- Infrastructure
 - To support park uses
 - To support larger City
- Landscape / Overall Site Aesthetics

Open Discussion



City of Newton, Massachusetts



NEWTON UPPER FALLS PLAYGROUND

April 11, 2007 Public Hearing

Meeting Agenda

Review Final Survey Results

Review Concept Plans

- Concept Plan A
- Concept Plan B
- Preferred Plan

Summary of Potential Improvements (Neighborhood Use vs. City-wide Use)

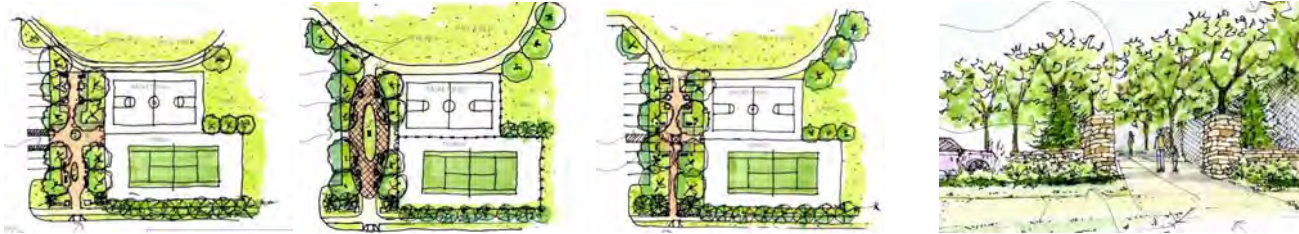
- Fields
- Courts
- Playground
- Parking and Circulation
- ADA Compliance
- Passive Recreation
- Environmental Features
- Landscaping
- Other Park-related Park Amenities

Public Comment

Next Meeting / Work Going Forward



City of Newton, Massachusetts



NEWTON UPPER FALLS PLAYGROUND MASTER PLAN

June 4, 2007 Public Hearing

Meeting Agenda

Review Overall Master Plan and Park Improvement Process

Review Concept Plans

- Concept 1
- Concept 2
- Confirm Community Preferences

Access and Circulation

- Pedestrian Entrance / Arrival
- Pedestrian Connections / Linkages / ADA
- Vehicular Entrances
- Service / Emergency Vehicle Circulation
- Parking

Recreation Facilities

- Fields
- Courts
- Children's Playground
- Park Support Building Refurbishment
- Loop Path
- Fishing / Observation Pier

Park Landscape Enhancements

- Edge Treatments
- Other Landscaping / New Plantings
- Vegetation Management
- Other Park-related Park Amenities

Budget Considerations + Phasing

Funding Strategies

Parks Commission Meeting

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Newton Upper Falls

Budget Analysis

Item	Qty	Unit	Unit Cost	Ext. Cost
Demolition	1	LS	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Park Edge - Chestnut				
Fencing (Decorative)	280	LF	\$ 125	\$ 35,000
Trees	12	EA	\$ 600	\$ 7,200
Signage	1	LS	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
				\$ 47,200
Park Edge - Penn. Avenue				
Fence	200	LF	\$ 125	\$ 25,000
Trees	10	EA	\$ 600	\$ 6,000
Signage	1	LS	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
				\$ 130,400
Parking Area				
Excavation	735	CY	\$ 30	\$ 22,050
Gravel Borrow	735	CY	\$ 35	\$ 25,725
Asphalt Pavement	360	TONS	\$ 120	\$ 43,200
Granite Edging (Sloped)	600	LF	\$ 36	\$ 21,600
Landscaping	1	LS	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Drainage	1	LS	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
				\$ 142,575
Entry Plaza				
Signage	1	LS	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Benches	6	EA	\$ 2,000	\$ 12,000
Drinking Fountain	1	ea	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Landscaping	1	LS	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
Pavements	4,000	SF	\$ 12	\$ 48,000
				\$ 90,000
Tennis Court				
Excavation	500	CY	\$ 30	\$ 15,000
Gravel Borrow	400	CY	\$ 35	\$ 14,000
Asphalt Pavement	250	TONS	\$ 120	\$ 30,000
Posts / Nets	2	EA	\$ 3,000	\$ 6,000
Fencing	420	LF	\$ 60	\$ 25,200
Furnishings	1	LS	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Drainage	1	LS	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
				\$ 105,200
Basketball Court				
Excavation	300	CY	\$ 30	\$ 9,000
Gravel Borrow	240	CY	\$ 35	\$ 8,400
Asphalt Pavement	150	TONS	\$ 120	\$ 18,000
Backboards / Rims	2	EA	\$ 4,000	\$ 8,000
Fencing	120	LF	\$ 40	\$ 4,800
				\$ 48,200
Baseball Field				
Backstop, Players' Benches..	1	LS	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000
Field Renovation	1	LS	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000

Irrigation	1	LS	\$	25,000	\$	25,000
Well for irrigation	1	LS	\$	35,000	\$	35,000
					\$	285,000
Shelter Renovation	1	LS	\$	150,000	\$	150,000
Observation Overlook	1	LS	\$	50,000	\$	50,000
Multi-Purpose Field	1	LS	\$	100,000	\$	100,000
Park Landscaping	1	LS	\$	50,000	\$	50,000
Woodland Management	1	LS	\$	35,000	\$	35,000
Pathway Systems (2,800 LF)						
Excavation	500	CY	\$	30	\$	15,000
Gravel Borrow	400	CY	\$	35	\$	14,000
Asphalt Pavement	420	TONS	\$	150	\$	63,000
Restoration	1	LS	\$	40,000	\$	40,000
					\$	132,000
Children's Playground						
Play Equipment	1	LS	\$	125,000	\$	125,000
Resilient Surfacing	300	CY	\$	40	\$	12,000
Resilient Surfacing (Rubber)	1	LS	\$	10,000	\$	10,000
Edging	1	LS	\$	20,000	\$	20,000
Furnishings	1	LS	\$	20,000	\$	20,000
Landscaping	1	LS	\$	20,000	\$	20,000
					\$	207,000
Subtotal					\$	1,672,575
General Conditions					\$	117,080
Contingency (20%)					\$	334,515
Design / Engineering Fees					\$	210,000
Grand Total					\$	2,334,170



City of Newton, Massachusetts

NEWTON UPPER FALLS PLAYGROUND MASTER PLAN

Executive Summary

(Prepared for the June 18, 2007 Park Commission Meeting)



Introduction

Weston & Sampson was retained by the Newton Parks and Recreation Department during the fall of 2006 to complete a comprehensive master planning process for the Upper Falls Playground. The work has been financed through, and awarded by, the Newton Community Preservation Committee. The purpose of this master plan is to provide a preferred site plan and supporting documentation that reflects the needs of the community. This plan will serve as a guide for all future development of this park, and also as tool to secure funding from various private, City, State and Federal sources.

The scope of work undertaken by Weston & Sampson includes:

- Complete topographic surveys of the entire property in order to have relevant plans available for the preparation of future final design documents for bidding and construction
- Complete user surveys in order to determine community opinions
- Examine and report on all existing park facilities, amenities and conditions
- Identify safety issues and limitations and constraints related to future improvements
- Engage the community in a public dialogue to establish needs, preferences and priorities in relation to the future renovation and restoration of the property

- Develop conceptual and finished master plans, prepared specifically in response to community preferences and ultimately endorsed by community participants
- Identify budget outlines related to all desired improvements
- Identify funding, phasing and implementation strategies

Community Process

The master planning process included a comprehensive community participation process that included the following meetings:

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Community Meeting No. 1</i>	Master Plan kick-off meeting, review of existing conditions, community feedback regarding current use and future needs of park.	February 6, 2007
<i>Youth League Representatives</i>	Review specific plans related to the refurbishment of baseball and multi-use fields.	March 12, 2007
<i>Community Meeting No. 2</i>	Review of various Master Plan improvement options. Two basic alternative plans presented and reviewed. Community feedback received in relation to preferences, additional options and related considerations.	April 11, 2007
<i>Community Meeting No. 3</i>	Review of two new and refined Master Plan improvement options preferred in response to community comment from preceding meeting. End result was the confirmation of the final, preferred Master Plan option.	June 4, 2007
<i>Park Commission Meeting</i>	Informational meeting, review of master planning efforts.	June 18, 2007

These meetings were held at the Countryside School and were attended by members of the community including park abutters, youth recreation league representatives, Aldermen, and Parks Commissioners. A series of presentation boards were displayed and discussed based on the specific subject of the particular meeting, as outlined above. Once the presentation concluded, comments were welcomed. At each meeting the feedback was positive and the community concluded the process with a clear preference for a preferred plan that they felt best met their passive and active recreational needs.

Park History

In 1909 the property was deeded to the City of Newton for use as a park, but not until March 18, 1912 was it formally transferred from the care of the City Forester to that of the newly formed Playground Commission. Various sources have reported that baseball has been played at this site since as early as 1910's. Aerial photos from the 1940's show that the baseball diamond, tennis courts and parking lot were in the exact same location as they are today.

Existing Conditions

Upper Falls Playground is 6-acre park situated between Chestnut Street to the east and one of the many bends in the Charles River to the west. To the north is a residential neighborhood bordered by Pennsylvania Avenue. To the south is the wooded property owned and operated by American Towers. Most notable about this property, in addition to its location on the Charles River, is the significant change in topography between the east and west edges of the park. The land has been graded into two major terraces, the upper terrace is generally level with Chestnut Street, while the lower terrace elevation is 10' to 15' lower as it descends toward the river.

As with many beloved urban parks that offer a broad range of recreational opportunities, years of use cause wear and tear on the infrastructure making these assets difficult to maintain and ultimately use declines. The Upper Falls Playground has been subject to intense use and a lack of capital investment that has led to its current state of disrepair. The following is a list of opportunities for improvement that was presented to the community at the first meeting.

Access, Pedestrian & Vehicular Circulation

- Lack of identity from Chestnut Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, many people drive right by without knowing it is a park.
- Aesthetic appearance from Chestnut Street is cluttered and unappealing with much of the frontage being paved surfaces surrounded by rusting chain link fence.
- Existing parking lot is chaotic with no formal striping for parking or safe vehicular circulation. The lot is used by nearby residents who do not have off-street parking at their homes. Loiterers engage in undesirable activities, like car repair and drinking, while in the lot at night.
- Pedestrian access is not clear and limited to worn paths in the lawn areas. None of the park facilities are in compliance with the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- The park is located on riverfront property, but few visitors know this due to the lack of access to the Charles River and the dense woodland that runs the entire length of the property along the river.
- Maintenance and public safety vehicles access the site through the gravel drive off of Chestnut Street and must drive across the lawn, as there are no paved paths that facilitate vehicular access. This drive is park property but is used by abutters to access their driveways.

Recreational Infrastructure

- Young children through high school-aged players currently use the baseball field. The field alignment is sub-optimal with the outfield being cut short by existing mature shade trees in right field, the park property line in center field, and the tennis courts and parking lot in left field.
- Two tennis courts sit side by side along Chestnut Street. Settlement and cracking in the pavement have made this facility unusable for tennis.
- The children's play area is in significant disrepair. The structure has many broken elements and the play surface is sand, neither of which meet ADA or safety codes.
- An existing park support structure sits at the northwest corner of the park. Once used for bathroom facilities and storage, it is now defunct.
- The existing basketball court is located on the lower terrace of the park that limits visual access from Chestnut Street and isolates this court from the rest of the park.
- A chain link backstop is the only remnant of the former ball field on the lower terrace. Uneven terrain and rocks within the lawn area have made this field undesirable for

competitive play and is currently used only for the occasional youth soccer or tee-ball practice.

Overall Park Aesthetics/Landscape Quality

- The visual quality of the park suffers from aging infrastructure that is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain.
- Chain link fence is rusting and broken in many places.
- Many mature shade trees are a true asset to the park, but need pro-active management in order for them to continue to flourish.
- The wooded edge along the Charles River includes many exotic invasive species that threaten the native vegetation along this side of the park.
- The existing park support structure is largely unattractive, though located in an ideal place adjacent to the baseball diamond.
- There are no site furnishings that offer a place to sit and enjoy the park.
- The park lacks a formal point of entry that locates visitors and provides a meeting/gathering area.

User Survey

A Park User Survey was sent out in the mail to residents living in close proximity to the park. The survey was also available on the Parks Department's website. Over 100 people responded and provided input.

The following is an overview of the people that responded and how they currently use the park:

- 37% have lived in the neighborhood for 6 years or longer
- 65% had children under the age of 14 living at home
- 22% had people over the age of 65 living in the home
- 70% visit the park at least 1-2 times a month
- 63% go to the park to walk or jog
- 41% use the playground
- 37% play tennis
- 23% are there to play baseball
- 24% use the park in the winter for sledding or cross-country skiing
- 88% of park visitors usually walk

In response to the questions regarding areas of focus for the improvements, most people wanted to see the following items addressed:

- Landscape/Beautification
- Park Amenities: seating, water fountains, trash receptacles, etc.
- Children's Playground
- Tennis + Basketball
- Baseball

The Preferred Plan

Based on feedback collected through the Park User Survey, community meetings, and collaboration with the recreation leagues and the Parks and Recreation Department, a "Preferred" Master Plan has been developed that identifies the basic scope of desired improvements throughout the property. A reduced version of the Master Plan is included on the following the description of the plan. In

summary, the plan identifies restoration, reconstruction or redevelopment of the entire property. The highlights of the plan are described below:

Access, Pedestrian & Vehicular Circulation

- A formal edge treatment of shade tree planting and ornamental fencing with a marked entrance will announce the park along Chestnut Street and provide an aesthetically pleasing presence that will improve the overall visual quality of the street and immediate neighborhood.
- The proposed parking lot would provide more available parking through organized spaces and safe lanes for travel and vehicular circulation.
- A comprehensive network of pedestrian paths will provide clear, safe circulation through out the park. The exterior loop of the path network will be 8' wide to accommodate safety and maintenance vehicles. Designated pathways will be designed for full ADA compliance.
- The pedestrian pathways will extend along the river connecting to a larger riverside network of pedestrian access and to an overlook structure that will provide access for fishing and passive recreation.

Recreational Infrastructure

- While the general location of the ball field remains the same, the orientation of the field has been rotated slightly and the footprint shifted in order maximize park use and to allow for consistent outfield distances.
- The two tennis courts will also remain in the same general area, but will be shifted back from the road, repaved with new color coating and enclosed with black, vinyl-coated chain link fence.
- The children's play area will be completely demolished and replaced with new play structures separated into age-appropriate clusters. The area for the youngest of children will be fenced. New safety surfacing will be a combination of poured-in-place rubberized surfacing, in critical fall and landing zones, and an engineered wood fiber for the rest of the playground area.
- The existing park support structure will be refurbished. Bathroom and storage capabilities will be restored. Concessions may also be accommodated within this footprint. The exterior of the structure will be renovated to improve the overall aesthetics of the building with more attractive architectural features for this historic park setting.
- The basketball court will be relocated and placed adjacent to the baseball field and children's play area. The court footprint will be reduced in size to encourage use by younger children and more informal play.
- A rectangular multi-use field will be located at the lower. The existing backstop will be replaced and an informal ball field footprint consisting only of bases set in lawn will be installed. There will not be a skinned infield at this location.

Overall Park Aesthetics/Landscape Quality

- These improvements are intended to create a consistent, updated appearance to the park through an organized circulation system, coordinated site furnishings, and new plantings.
- A formal gateway along Chestnut Street will provide a clear point of entry and orient park users as they enter the park.
- All existing chain link fence will be removed and replaced only as required for safety measures around recreational park elements.
- The existing mature shade trees will be pruned and fertilized to ensure that they continue to flourish.

- The wooded edge along the Charles River will be examined and managed to remove exotic invasive species, prune existing vegetation and strategically open up views to the water.
- New benches, trash receptacles, and drinking fountains will be installed.



Budget Considerations (Not Final)

<i>Park Improvement Element</i>	<i>Budget Cost</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Park Edge Treatment	\$105,000	Fencing, planting, masonry piers at 'gateway'
Parking Lot	\$142,000	New paving, striping, curbing
Park Entrance/Seating Area	\$ 90,000	Paving, benches, tree planting
Tennis Courts	\$100,000	New paving, color coating, fencing
Basketball Court	\$ 42,000	New paving, color coating, not full-sized court
Baseball Field	\$285,000	Includes irrigation and well drilling
Multi-purpose Field	\$100,000	At lower level, to include backstop
Park Support Building	\$150,000	Refurbish existing
Children's Playground	\$210,000	New equipment, fencing, and safety surfacing
Pathway System	\$135,000	2,800 linear feet
Park Landscaping	\$ 85,000	Planting and woodland management
River Overlook/Observation Deck	\$ 50,000	Fishing and passive recreation access to the Charles River
Subtotal	\$1,494,000	
20% Contingency	\$ 298,800	
TOTAL	\$1,792,800	

Funding / Implementation / Phasing

The Newton Parks and Recreation Department will aggressively pursue funding for implementing the Preferred Master Plan through a variety of sources that include:

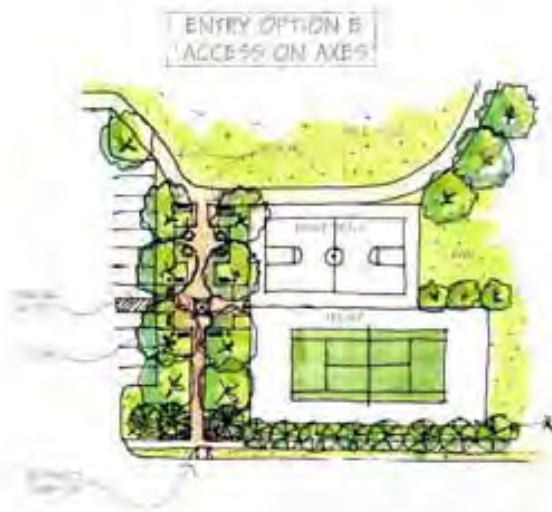
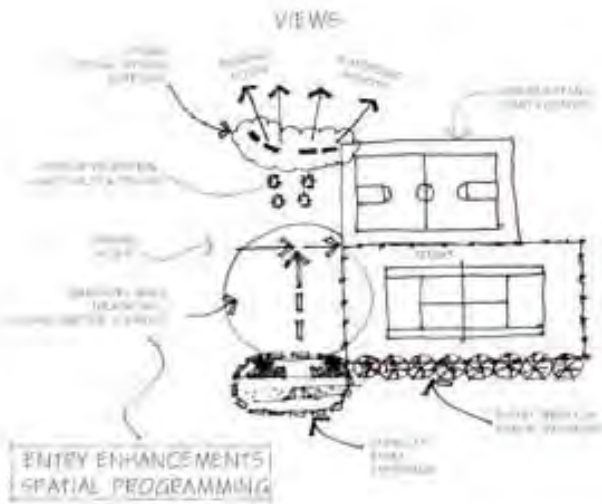
- Federal funding for parks and open space renovation/expansion (Land & Water Conservation)
- State funding for parks and open space renovation and expansion (Urban Self Help)
- Community Preservation Act
- City Capital funding
- Handicapped Accessibility funding, storm water management funding, utility infrastructure funding
- Private Donations
- Proceeds from sports leagues and user groups
- Other Sources

Additional Graphics

The images contained on the following pages include on the ground photographs, sketches identifying potential improvements, and other related graphics prepared as part of the master planning process.



Photographic Images of Newton Upper Falls Playground – Representative Conditions



Images showing alternate entrance plans and a view of a new park-like appearance and treatment along Chestnut Street.

PLAY STRUCTURES



SPORTS FIELDS



Images showing recently renovated playground and recreation facilities.



This aerial photo shows the larger context of the Upper Falls Playground as it relates to the larger recreational network associated with the Charles River.

Park Questionnaire for

UPPER FALLS PLAYGROUND/OFFICER ROBERT BRACELAND PLAYGROUND

During spring and summer of this year, the City of Newton will be developing a master plan for improvements at the Upper Falls Playground, whose official name is the Officer Robert Braceland Playground, located on Chestnut Street. Public input is needed to make this effort successful. Please take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete this survey. **Your responses are anonymous. Please fill out this questionnaire by January 31, 2007.** You may mail this form to City of Newton, Parks & Recreation Department, 70 Crescent Street, Newton, MA 02466 or visit www.ci.newton.ma.us/upperfallspark to complete the survey online. The results of the survey will be presented at the first of several park-planning meetings which is scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2007 from 6:30-8:00pm at the Emerson Community Center. For more information on this questionnaire or the master planning process, please contact Carol Stapleton in the Parks and Recreation Department at (617) 796-1500 or via email at cstapleton@newtonma.gov.

SECTION 1: PERSONAL PROFILE

- A. On which street do you live? _____
- B. How long have you lived at this location? 0-5 yrs. 6-10 yrs. 11-20 yrs. over 20 yrs.
- C. Are there people under age 18 in your household? Yes No
If yes, please indicate the age brackets: *(check all that apply)*
 0-4 5-9 10-14 15-18
- D. How many people over age 65 live in your household? _____

SECTION 2: PARK USERSHIP INFORMATION

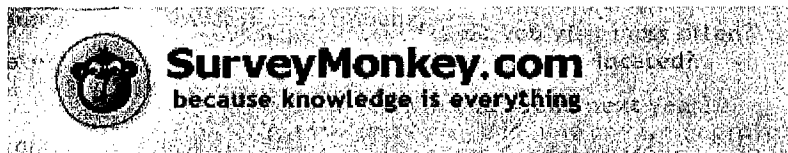
- A. Approximately how often do you visit this park? *(please check one)*
_____ Often: 3 or more times a week
_____ 1-2 times a week
_____ 1-2 times a month
_____ Occasionally: more than 3 times a year
_____ Rarely: 1-2 times a year or less
- B. What activities do you and your family engage in most often at this park? *(check as many as apply)*
_____ Basketball
_____ Playground & Swings
_____ Baseball/Softball
_____ Tennis
_____ Soccer
_____ Pick-up sports: frisbee, bocce, football, etc.
_____ Passive Recreation: relaxing, reading, picnics, etc.
_____ Walking/Jogging
_____ Winter Recreation: sledding, cross-country skiing, etc.
_____ Special Events
_____ Other: _____
_____ Other: _____
- C. How do you and your family typically travel to the park?
(check all that apply)
- | Method | Usually | Occasionally | Never |
|--------|---------|--------------|-------|
| Walk | | | |
| Bike | | | |
| Drive | | | |
- (please check one)*
If you drive, where do you generally park:
_____ Park Parking Lot
_____ Nearby Business Parking Lots
_____ On-street Parking
- D. How do you rate your satisfaction with these parks in fulfilling your recreational needs?
(on a scale of 1-10, where 10 is most satisfied and 1 is not satisfied)
_____ Overall Satisfaction
_____ Accessibility & Mobility
_____ Safety & Security
_____ Maintenance & Condition

SECTION 3: IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

- A. What else would you like to see added or changed that would make your park experience more enjoyable? _____

- B. For each of the parks, please choose the items that need the most improvement: *(please check up to 3 items)*
_____ Playfields: baseball, little league, soccer, etc. _____ Playground
_____ Accessibility: pathways, curb cuts, etc. _____ Security: sense of security, security lighting, etc.
_____ Landscaping & Beautification _____ Courts: tennis, basketball
_____ Park Amenities: seating, bubblers, shade shelter _____ Site Equipment: building, fencing, signage, etc.
_____ Parking/Bike Facilities _____ Environmental: drainage, erosion

*Thank you for taking the time to help to improve the quality of parks in Newton!
Feel free to attach an additional sheet of paper if you have other comments and suggestions.*



UPPER FALLS - FINAL

Monday, February 26, 2007

Results Summary

Show All Pages and Questions

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Total: 101

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Status: Enabled

Reports: Summary and Detail

1. Personal Profile

1. On what street do you live?

(see attachment A)

[View](#) **Total Respondents** 99
(skipped this question) 2

2. How long have you lived at this location?

	Response Percent	Response Total
0-5 yrs.	35%	35
6-10 yrs.	17%	17
11-20 yrs.	17%	17
over 20 yrs.	31%	31
Total Respondents		100
(skipped this question)		1

3. Are there people under age 18 in your household? Please list the age ranges that apply.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Does Not Apply	49%	49
Ages 0-4	18%	18
Ages 5-9	19%	19
Ages 10-14	24%	24
Ages 15-18	9%	9
Total Respondents		100
(skipped this question)		1

4. Are there people over age 65 in your household?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes	24.5%	24
No	75.5%	74
Total Respondents		98
(skipped this question)		3

2. Park Usership Information

5. Approximately how often do you visit this park?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Often: 3 or more times a week	24.5%	24
1-2 times a week	20.4%	20
1-2 times a month	21.4%	21
Occasionally: 3 or more times a year	20.4%	20
Rarely: 1-2 times a year or less	13.3%	13
Total Respondents		98
(skipped this question)		3

6. What activities do you and your family engage in most often at this park? Check as many as apply.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Basketball	20.8%	21
Playground & Swings	38.6%	39
Baseball/Softball	22.8%	23
Tennis	39.6%	40
Soccer	14.9%	15
Pick-up Sports: frisbee, bocce, football, etc.	18.8%	19
Passive Recreation: relaxing, reading, picnics, etc.	25.7%	26
Walking /Jogging	58.4%	59
Winter Recreation: sledding, cross-country skiing, etc.	24.8%	25
Special Events	4%	4
Other (please specify)	11.9%	12
<i>(see attachment B)</i>		
Total Respondents		101
(skipped this question)		0

7. How do you and your family typically travel to the park? Check all that apply.

UPPER FALLS

	Usually	Occasionally	Never	Response Total
Walk	86% (80)	13% (12)	1% (1)	93
Bike	9% (4)	63% (27)	28% (12)	43
Drive	32% (20)	48% (30)	21% (13)	63
Total Respondents				100
(skipped this question)				1

8. If you drive, where do you generally park?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Park Parking Lot	55.7%	39
Nearby Business Parking Lots	2.9%	2
On-street Parking	15.7%	11
Do Not Drive	25.7%	18
Total Respondents		70
(skipped this question)		31

9. How do you rate your satisfaction with this park in fulfilling your recreational needs? (on a scale of 1-10, where 10 is the most satisfied and 1 is not satisfied)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Response Average
Overall Satisfaction	10% (9)	14% (13)	11% (10)	11% (10)	21% (19)	10% (9)	8% (7)	11% (10)	2% (2)	2% (2)	4.63
Accessibility & Mobility	0% (0)	4% (3)	6% (5)	11% (9)	16% (13)	6% (5)	7% (6)	16% (13)	17% (14)	18% (15)	6.92
Types of Recreational Facilities Offered	16% (14)	11% (10)	10% (9)	15% (13)	13% (11)	17% (15)	8% (7)	6% (5)	2% (2)	2% (2)	4.38
Safety & Security	2% (2)	5% (4)	7% (6)	13% (11)	17% (14)	7% (6)	13% (11)	14% (12)	13% (11)	7% (6)	6.14
Park Appearance/Site Aesthetics	24% (22)	13% (12)	14% (13)	12% (11)	7% (6)	13% (12)	9% (8)	6% (5)	1% (1)	0% (0)	3.73
Total Respondents											92
(skipped this question)											9

3. Ideas for Improvements

10. What would you like to see added or changed that would make your park experience more enjoyable?

(see attachment c)

View Total Respondents	82
(skipped this question)	19

11. Please choose the items you think need the most improvement. You may check up to 3 items.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Playfields: baseball, little league, [redacted]	25.8%	25

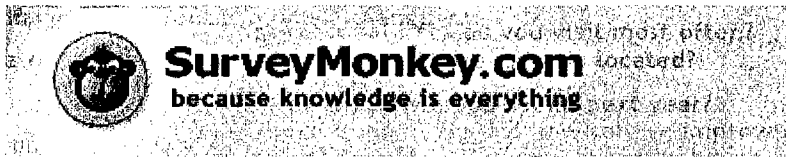
UPPER FALLS

soccer, etc.

Accessibility: pathways, curb cuts, etc.	██████████	18.6%	18
Landscaping & Beautification	████████████████████	52.6%	51
Park Amenities: seating, bubblers, shade shelters, etc.	████████████████████	50.5%	49
Parking and Bike Facilities	██████████	14.4%	14
Playground	████████████████████	47.4%	46
Security: sense of security, security lighting, etc.	██████████████	24.7%	24
Courts: tennis, basketball	████████████████████	55.7%	54
Site Equipment: building, fencing, signage, etc.	██████████████	25.8%	25
Environmental: drainage, erosion, etc.	██████████	13.4%	13
		Total Respondents	97
		(skipped this question)	4

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Monday, February 26, 2007

UPPER FALLS

Open-Ended Results Detail

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Add Filter... Total: 101 Visible: 101

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Configure... Status: Enabled Reports: Summary and Detail

ATTACHMENT A

Page Size: Show 100 per page

Displaying 1 - 99 of 99 << >> Go

On what street do you live?

1. Rockland Place
2. Rockland Place
3. Saco Street
4. Roundwood Road
5. Elliot Street
6. Elliot Street
7. High Street
8. Elliot Street
9. Elliot Street
10. Pennsylvania Avenue
11. High Street
12. Chestnut Street
13. Keefe Avenue
14. Oak Street
15. Cottage Street
16. Pettee Street
17. Chestnut Street
18. Pennsylvania Avenue
19. Elliot Street
20. Saco Street
21. Saco Street
22. Rockland Place
23. Cottage Street
24. Waldorf Road

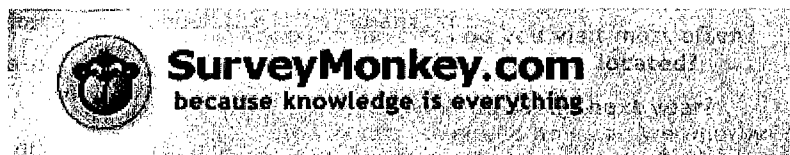
- 25.** Pettee Street
- 26.** Rockland Place
- 27.** High Street
- 28.** Chestnut Street
- 29.** Garland Road
- 30.** Lucille Place
- 31.** Oak Street
- 32.** Southwick Road
- 33.** Chestnut Street
- 34.** Boylston Street
- 35.** Elliot Street
- 36.** Indiana Terrace
- 37.** Oak
- 38.** saco
- 39.** Winter Street
- 40.** High st
- 41.** Chestnut Street
- 42.** Oak
- 43.** Chestnut Street
- 44.** Oak Street
- 45.** Boylston Street
- 46.** Oak Street
- 47.** Cheney Street
- 48.** Chilton Place
- 49.** Hale Street
- 50.** Oak Street
- 51.** Oak Street
- 52.** chestnut st.
- 53.** Chandler PL
- 54.** Indiana Terrace
- 55.** Pennsylvania Avenue
- 56.** Chestnut Street
- 57.** Columbla Avenue
- 58.** Ohio Avenue
- 59.** White Pine Road
- 60.** Thurston Road
- 61.** High Street
- 62.** Saco Street
- 63.** Oak Street

- 64. High Street
- 65. Tamarac Rd
- 66. Saco Street
- 67. Chestnut Street
- 68. Keefe Avenue
- 69. Champa Street
- 70. Cottage Street
- 71. Hickory Cliff Road
- 72. White Pine Rd
- 73. roundwood rd
- 74. 67 columbia ave
- 75. Chestnut Street
- 76. williams st.
- 77. High Street
- 78. Chestnut Street
- 79. Ohio Avenue
- 80. High Street
- 81. Chestnut Street
- 82. Sullivan Avenue
- 83. Ohio Avenue
- 84. Oak Street
- 85. Hale Street
- 86. Hale Street
- 87. Chestnut Street
- 88. Chestnut Street
- 89. Chestnut Street
- 90. Keefe Avenue
- 91. Chestnut st
- 92. Columbia
- 93. Keefe Ave
- 94. Pennsylvania Ave
- 95. Oak Street
- 96. linden
- 97. Thurston Rd
- 98. Oak St.
- 99. Keefe Avenue

Page Size: Displaying 1 - 99 of 99

ATTACHMENT A

Streets	Count
Boylston Street	2
Champa Street	1
Chandler Place	1
Cheney Street	1
Chestnut Street	16
Chilton Place	1
Columbia Avenue	3
Cottage Street	3
Elliot Street	6
Garland Road	1
Hale Street	3
Hickory Cliff Road	1
High Street	8
Indiana Terrace	2
Keefe Avenue	5
Linden Street	1
Lucille Place	1
Oak Street	12
Ohio Avenue	3
Pennsylvania Avenue	4
Pettee Street	2
Rockland Place	4
Roundwood Road	2
Saco Street	6
Southwick Road	1
Sullivan Avenue	1
Tamarac Road	1
Thurston Road	2
Waldorf Road	1
White Pine Road	2
Williams Street	1
Winter Street	1



UPPER FALLS

Monday, February 26, 2007

Open-Ended Results Detail

[<< Back](#) [Export...](#)

ATTACHMENT B

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To analyze a subset of your data, you can create one or more filters.

[Add Filter...](#) **Total:** 101
Visible: 101

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What activities do you and your family engage in most often at this park? Check as many as apply.

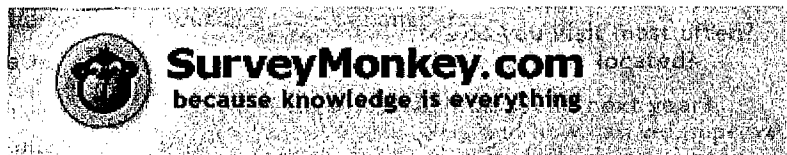
1. Stretching exercises
2. walking dogs
3. walk the dog
4. practices on lower field
5. Playing with dog & new baby
6. free play/soccer practice /tag etc.
7. watch son coach baseball in spring/summer
8. Sitting and watching the river flow
9. walking my dog
10. great grandson visits
11. Taking grandchild for walk
12. Skateboard

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UPPER FALLS

Monday, February 26, 2007

Open-Ended Results Detail

ATTACHMENT C

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What would you like to see added or changed that would make your park experience more enjoyable?

1. Improved tennis courts, playground equipment, lawn maintenance, benches.
2. Blocking sight and sound of Rt. 128. Ugly fencing- muddy at sometimes. Tennis courts uneven. Generally dull look to park.
3. Better tennis courts
4. Better play equipment for small children, landscaping- it is an ugly area.
5. A new basketball court, new swings and a new tennis court.
6. Repair broken equipment. Clean area- remove play equipment not meant for this playground. Trash not picked up. Mud at field entrances.
7. "Update" and refresh it- new activities, new landscaping, etc. Basic- bring in-line with other Newton parks.
8. More toddler friendly play. I have a 15-month old and both frames are too big so she can only play on the swings.
9. I would like to have more equipment, for example, curly slide, trampoline, big slide, monkey bars. Tennis- please fix courts.
10. I would like to see the existing building updated and utilized.
11. Please remove tennis nets in winter and fix the cracks in the surface of the courts. And make sure to spray the poison ivy at the edges. Dead branches need removal.
12. Maybe set up BBQ pits.
13. Lower fields need leveling and drainage. Could add a second baseball/softball diamond to lower field. Enforce leash laws and require owners to pick up after their dogs.
14. New fencing, new playground equipment, landscaping, leveling of ground. Would go to park more often if it were improved.
15. A track, basketball court, planned community events (i.e. as in Newton Centre). Keep the dog poop out of the park- maybe have a dog area designated and poop scoops and bags available. Used to come to park alot but don't since people walk their dogs and don't clean up.
16. I'd love to see a bigger playground area for elementary age kids. Also, love to see picnic tables, repaired tennis courts and basketball courts. A truck for running/walking and possibly paved area for riding bikes (trikes, etc.) Park is not very well lit. There is often broken glass- very dangerous in playground area. We'd love for this to be a more popular, safe and family-friendly place.
17. The tennis courts are dangerously in disrepair. They are unusable and a disgrace. I cannot even use them at this point even though I would like to use them weekly.

- 18.** Tennis court condition should be improved.
- 19.** Make bigger playground for little kids.
- 20.** More benches. Kept cleaner.
- 21.** Improve the basketball, tennis and playground.
- 22.** Don't use this park so can't rate. Very pleased with Emerson Playground. But after looking at park, I thought it could use some amenities.
- 23.** A walking ring around the perimeter of the field.
- 24.** Get to the Charles River. Bathrooms.
- 25.** I would like the tennis courts to remain in their present location and repaced so that we can play a decent game of tennis. Also if you could add a few more courts that would help. Lastly, lights would help us use the court longer, especially after work.
- 26.** Improve curb appeal- soften street edge. Improve access and aesthetics, take advantage of natural topography and proximity to river.
- 27.** New chain link fences. Renovate tennis court.
- 28.** More aesthetics- trees- greens. New playground. Badminton. Need more lights.
- 29.** Level both upper and lower sections. Put basketball and tennis together.
- 30.** Tennis courts repaired/maintained, basketball court repaired and maintained. Put swings back in the lower field.
- 31.** Have a dog play area installed- fenced-in.
- 32.** Please repair the tennis and basketball courts (sprained ankle on a huge crack in tennis court). Also more tennis courts will always be welcome.
- 33.** resurface the tennis court
- 34.** Basketball & Tennis Courts are in terrible shape! Need bathrooms or portapotty that works. Lower field is unsafe without adult supervision + has very lumpy "grass". Playspace could be condemned! Entrance from side street much preferred to Chestnut St. Vehicles practically drive on the sidewalk out in front of tennis courts. Dogs run free unacceptable due to poop & dogs chasing kids. Should be a ban on snow/trash dumping on lower field! Next to the Charles River but visitors would never know it.***From parking lot at gate huge puddle/ice pond to cross over***
- 35.** Tennis courts are in shambles, chain link fence surrounding it is all rusted. Additional tennis courts are really needed for this area.
- 36.** Needs to be cleaned up. Repair tennis court- replace fence.
- 37.** Do you offer soccer for young kids (5-9)? I didn't see this listed on pamphlet. Better indoor facilities would be nice.
- 38.** Playground is pretty bad. Tennis & basketball both seem pretty beat up.
- 39.** More recreation options- new equipment.
- 40.** Volleyball courts
- 41.** Tunnel structure that kids can crawl through. Water play area for hot summer days and evenings.
- 42.** The baseball fields should be available for games or practice during daylight hours. The youth fields on the lower playground need to have the brush removed and fence repaired to make it safer for that age group (6 to 12). The city rents this field to neighboring towns during prime times for the money.
- 43.** Clean up the children's area at least once a week. There are too many dead branches close to the area. The tennis courts need a good clean up around the fence.
- 44.** Playground for kids, environmental appearance, sanitary facilities.
- 45.** Please fix and maintain the the basketball and tennis courts. They are in dire conditions and need serious attention like other public tennis courts in Newton.
- 46.** The lower field should be utilized. We need more basketball courts- tennis are seldom used (we look out onto park across Chestnut) Maybe if they were in better repair they would be used more. Neighborhood tends to use the Emerson Playground but when there are soccer and baseball games, spectators use it. Glad it is not a snow dump anymore. We used to Ice skate on the tennis courts when the fire department flooded them.

- 47.** Child playground. Roller playground.
- 48.** Keep it clean (especially the parking lot)! Inform daycare centers that kids cannot play on tennis courts or use chalk to draw on them!
- 49.** Tennis courts, swings, water fountain, ping pong table, playground, restrooms, benches, shaded area, picnic tables, walking path to river, running track.
- 50.** Better maintenance of field and facilities.
- 51.** Remove electrical box from playground. Place more things for kids activities.
- 52.** River facilities- path, picnic area, dock or beach. Do not dump icy road debris.
- 53.** Basketball court, tennis court, playground.
- 54.** Dogs not relieving themselves all over the playground. Have to watch where you walk!
- 55.** New tennis court. Weird cars always parked there in the lot.
- 56.** Bathrooms. Tot lot. Concessions. Lights. Adult softball league.
- 57.** More benches in the shade.
- 58.** Change the name of the playground back to Upper Falls Playground. The name has historic significance and is known all over as such. Call the tennis courts Braceland Tennis Courts or something but it was wrong to call this historic area other than Upper Falls Playground.
- 59.** a playground, a basketball court
- 60.** the tennis court is full of cracks and the fence is rusted and has holes in it.all the other courts in newton are in great shape, newton center, west newton ect.
- 61.** more beautification a bike path that leads to other places: the falls or maybe needham street starbucks A shelter for picnics etc..maybe even grills
- 62.** Maintain park. Activities for the children of the community.
- 63.** Renovation to tennis courts. A tennis backboard for practice- similar to the one across the River in Needham at the small park there.
- 64.** A water fountain that works. Improve lighting especially for the parking lot.
- 65.** A full basketball court. Baseball or softball. Improve tennis court.
- 66.** New baseball field. Better usage of lower half of the park. Lots of potential.
- 67.** 4 functional basketball hoops with nets
- 68.** My children enjoyed the park but as they got older they became bored because it is only a pre-school-age park and my kids are school-age. I enjoyed the park and it is extremely close to my residence; the other park is about 5 min. away as opposed to 1 min. It's just simply quicker to get to.
- 69.** Upgrade park with a few trees and some bushes by fence for parking.
- 70.** Parking lot is often filthy with debris. Green trash cans are overflowing in park. Trash cans are old and beat up. Fencing is rusted or damaged. Cement blocks in parking lot are shabby. Tennis court & basketball court are run down. Tot lot is outdated and dirty. Bubbler is decaying. Building is an eyesore.
- 71.** 1) bag dispenser for dog messes. 2) better maintenance of grassy areas.
- 72.** walk trail with exercise stations along it
- 73.** Replace broken wood in jungle gym. Weed around swings- inside & outside- not only once a year. No dogs- no golf. Poor lighting on the corner of Keefe & Penn Ave. Light was changed on the corner pole of Keefe & Penn and moved to the next pole making it very dark coming up Keefe to Penn Ave. You have to use your high beams. This light was changed when the City changed from Nstar a few years ago.
- 74.** not allowing any more city dumping of snow or anything else. Please fix the tennis court. Clean up the parking lot, too many cars are parked over nite.
- 75.** renew basketball field renew tennis court
- 76.** The playground area is outdated. It would be nice to have 2 separate areas; one for the smaller children and one for older ones.

UPPER FALLS

- 77.** This park is a disgrace. It is our neighborhood playground, my children beg to go to this park, but the play equipment is outdated, rusty and overall barely useable. I would like to see new playground equipment and also an overall better appearance to the park. It would be nice if people from the neighborhood felt like it was a central place to gather.
- 78.** tennis and basketball courts repaired
- 79.** No public parking in the lot. Tennis courts look terrible. Baseball field in poor shape.
- 80.** I would like to see improvement in the Emerson play ground we have a lot of young kids in the are covering, Thurston Rd, Rockland Pl, Cottage Street and Eliot Hill area. This palyground is many time left unkept, grass not mowed trees falling etc.
- 81.** skateboard park
- 82.** up-to-date swings and slide area

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