

Questions and Answers re: Blessing of the Bay Park Redesign

<https://mysticriver.org/blessingofthebay>

How many copies of the fee proposal are required?

Proposals include technical and cost information; 2 hard copies are required.

Which forms need to be included in the proposal?

None beside the ones called out (proof of licensure and certificate of insurance).

If an alternate is included for a survey, would this be included in the Fee Proposal?

Yes.

The RFP requests an "initial environmental assessment" and a "high-level environmental assessment" in the deliverables. Is this referring to standard landscape architectural site analysis documentation, or are you requesting a more formal Environmental Assessment Report (EA)?

This is a standard landscape architectural site analysis. We will not be submitting a formal EA during this phase of the project.

Since MyRWA and Groundwork Somerville have already collected a substantial amount of community feedback, would you consider an approach that shifts the two public meetings - instead of covering site analysis in the first meeting and 2-3 schematic designs in the second, would you consider having the designer present 2-3 schematic designs in the first meeting and presenting the preferred alternative in the second meeting? The site analysis would still be completed and reviewed with the Steering Committee prior to the first public meeting.

Yes, we would consider this.

The RFP is explicit in its exclusion of the boathouse building from the scope of this design project. The scope of work shown in the map/diagram excludes the boathouse and landscape area directly in front of it. However, it is difficult to imagine disregarding this landscape area in designing the rest of the park, specifically as related to pedestrian and bicycling connectivity, vehicular access, and creating programmed spaces that are relevant to the boathouse and the park as a whole, especially at the requested schematic level. Should the design include a simple, yet temporary treatment of the front entrance landscape area associated with the boathouse?

Great question. As mentioned in the RFP, we would appreciate design recommendations that will inform a future process to reimagine/rebuild the boathouse. And we would certainly welcome design ideas about short-term improvements in front of the boathouse given the obvious implications of the path system and parking. It may be beneficial to take a scenario planning approach – if boathouse stays as is vs. conceptual footprint and surrounding landscape for a complete redesign.

Will the selected consultant be expected to field delineate the wetland resource areas?

The goal of the first phase is to understand the implications of various design schemes as it relates to wetland regulations. We expect a desktop delineation rather than formal wetland flagging. However, if a firm believes that this is a critical first step in the schematic design phase, outline the scope and cost of a field approach.

On the site visit, someone commented that the 2-page limit for the project approach may be limiting, particularly the additional scope/cost for a survey.

We would encourage folks to use the fee section to further outline the scope (as this is part of the technical proposal) and if you feel that you need 3-4 pages for the scope, we will not penalize you. Our intent is to keep the proposal as concise as possible – to get a broad outline of scope and a sense of how you would approach the design. This could be a few initial ideas or specific examples from past work that are relevant.

On the site visit, a few folks asked if for a summary of the community outreach done to date. Below is a section from our last grant report and images from some mapping/dot exercises that we did with about 75 people across a few events. See below.

1) Narrative (Discuss work completed, obstacles encountered, changes (if any) to project budget and/or schedule, etc.)

The first phase of this project is open-ended outreach to stakeholders, both asking for input as well as getting the word out about the project. MyRWA and Groundwork Somerville spent late summer to early fall visiting various on-site and off-site events to discuss the park redesign. Groundwork focused on outreach to residents of Mystic Housing and Ten Hills neighborhood. Thus far, all of the outreach to Mystic Housing was through their Mobile Market project – our team discussed the project, collected surveys and hosted an interactive activity at six different Mobile Market events. Groundwork Somerville also went door-to-door in the Ten Hills neighborhood, leaving fliers and chatting with folks about the idea of a revitalized park. This is ensuring that we get a diverse group of neighbors input for the park.

The remaining outreach, led by MyRWA included collecting online and in-person surveys, hosting “dot posters” to learn use preferences, engaging people through community events such as the Herring Run and Paddle, Art Beat and RiverFest. We also hosted a kick-off event for the project “Mystic River Park and Paddle” where we shared information about the project, garnered needs and ideas for the park redesign and participants got to paddle for free afterwards. Later than week we hosted the 7th and 8th grade classes from Albert F. Argenziano, seeing their ideas for the park in chalk on the asphalt and teaching them about native and invasive plant species in the park. Less than half of these students had ever been to the park.

We’ve been learning a great deal about how people perceive the park and what their vision is for the future. The park is unapproachable due to perceptions that boathouse is private, the river is blocked by overgrown vegetation, noise from I-93; the broken benches, lack of trash cans and uneven paths further contribute to the feeling that this park is under-maintained and under-loved. We hope that this community outreach and revitalization changes this.

Measures of Success (Discuss progress to date on the measures of success stated in the project application:

A. To measure community engagement goals, the project team will:

• Count community members that participate in surveys, design workshops, one-on-one conversations and on-site events; Track demographic data inclusive of immigrant/non-native English speaking and low-income residents, people of color and youth that reside in the project area.

- Surveys: 150 (online and in-person)
- On-site events: 112 people participated (Park and Paddle Day and Argenziano School)
- Outreach events: 160 people engaged (Art Beat, Herring Run and Paddle, RiverFest)
- Mystic Housing Outreach: 150 (Mobile Market and Mystic Housing Tenants Assoc.)
- Ten Hills Outreach: 460 households (door-to-door canvassing)
- Project Contact List: 89 people

2) Lessons Learned (Lessons learned during the implementation of this project that might be relevant to other CPA projects and/or suggestions to improve the CPA process.)

We hosted the first Steering Committee Meeting in September. This group will provide overall advice and guidance over the next six months and is comprised of a representative from DCR, City of Somerville, Solomon Foundation, Conservation Commission, MyRWA and Groundwork Somerville. While it's critical that this group develops a strong relationship to implement and provide long-term stewardship of the park, there are some issues to tackle. How will this park balance its role as a state park and local park? How will the ecological components and recreational amenities work together? It's clear that MyRWA's role as a convener of this group is critical – to create a consensus-driven plan that includes considerations of the Steering Committee and input from the broader public comprised of boating/rowing groups, local nonprofits, and residents of Somerville and beyond.

Another element that we will need to continue to tackle is engaging the community. Some people will come to traditional public meetings and some won't. And the design process is not quick, so we need to work to keep the community conversation alive in many circles.

Community and Social Spaces

Place a dot on the things you want to see in the park!



Gathering Area



Play Area



Garden



Skating

BLESSING OF THE BAY
PARK REDESIGN

community visioning for Somerville's waterfront

Recreation and Mobility



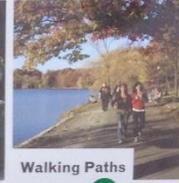
Pick-Up Sports



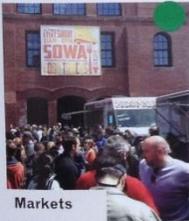
Swimming



Biking Paths



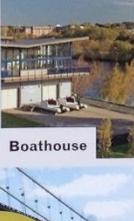
Walking Paths



Markets



Waterfront Docks



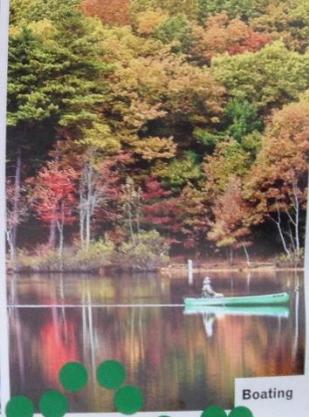
Boathouse



Outdoor Concerts



Fishing



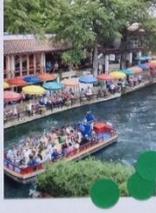
Natural areas



Boat Rental



Public Art



Public Programming



Wildlife Viewing

Boating



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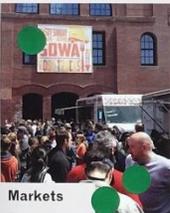
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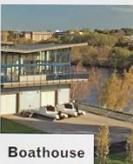
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WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR SOMERVILLE'S WATERFRONT?

Mystic River

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