

Southwest Corridor Park Management Advisory Committee (PMAC) **Annual Report 2021: Celebrating Civic Engagement**

In our 2021 annual meeting and annual report for the Southwest Corridor Park Management Advisory Committee, we focus on a theme of civic engagement, reflecting the work and milestones of this year. We are grateful for the connections we have made this year with people who are working on many inter-related city issues, and for our partnerships with DCR staff who support the park and encourage us in our work.

The Southwest Corridor Park is a 4.7 mile linear park, with 52 acres of greenspace, bicycle and walking paths, playgrounds, spray pools, sports facilities, and community gardens, and with a long history of community engagement and volunteer park stewardship. The Southwest Corridor Park Management Advisory Committee (PMAC) has been the community forum for park neighbors, park users and park volunteers for



five decades, dating back to the planning phase of the park in the 1980s. Our network of volunteers brings many perspectives to the continued success of this park, focusing on community gardening, park stewardship, youth programming, mini-grants, bicycling, skateboarding and dog walking, and on constructive engagement with community development projects along the length of the park. Our network contributes over 2,000 hours of hands-on stewardship in the park each year, plus an equal number of hours of behind-the-scenes work in coordinating, communicating and supporting the mission of this park.

PMAC meets monthly, currently as a virtual meeting, and welcomes all to attend meetings and join our email list. See the meeting schedule and sign up for emails at <http://swcpc.org/pmac> and look for our social media links and follow us online.

Why celebrate civic engagement?

“Civic engagement” is a natural theme for us this year because of the **civic engagement work** our network does, leading and participating in projects, committees and community meetings in every neighborhood along the park; and because of the **significant milestones** reached during the year.

Our annual report presentation this year shares “10 reasons that we celebrate our civic engagement.”

Our annual report presentation video began with a brief reflection on civic engagement, shared by PMAC Co-Chair Tracy O’Brien, thoughts she shared when she was thanking the panelists at the end of our PARK HISTORY PANEL this summer, and which are relevant for all of our work:

We all benefit from the work of others, and so I want to thank each you [panelists] for all you have contributed. I find it very inspiring, as we continue to work through PMAC and other organizations, as all of us are involved in civic engagement in one way or another.... It's important that we touch base occasionally, and that we affirm one another, and see that sometimes things take a long time, but it is worth continuing and persisting in this work.

10 Reasons We Celebrate Civic Engagement:

[1.] Celebrating the grand opening of the Burnett Street Park and Garden

The Burnett Street Park and Garden’s Grand Opening on June 30th was a celebration of years of work, with the grand opening ceremony made perhaps even more memorable by the pouring rain. As the city looks at how to build greenspace into rapidly developing neighborhoods, this project is a model for others to look at.





[2.] Celebrating the construction of the new skatepark

The August 30th skatepark ribbon cutting officially opened the new Jamaica Plain Skatepark, which has immediately become a popular destination for a wide age range of skateboarders and people on BMXs, scooters, rollerblades and more. A true example of civic engagement over a long period of time, this project was the work of a DCR partnership matching project, initiated by local skateboarders, with matching funding provided by Converse. Read more about the project at <https://www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-celebrates-the-opening-of-the-jamaica-plain-skate-park>



Department of Conservation and Recreation

<p>Charlie Baker <i>Governor</i></p> <p>Karyn Polito <i>U.S. Governor</i></p>	<p>Kathleen Theoharides <i>Secretary</i></p> <p>Jim Montgomery <i>Commissioner</i></p>
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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
COMMISSIONER JIM MONTGOMERY

INVITES YOU TO ATTEND

Jamaica Plain Skate Park Ribbon Cutting
Monday, August 30, 2021
9:00AM

Southwest Corridor Park at New Minton Street and Amory Street
Jamaica Plain, MA

For more information email Mass.Parks@mass.gov

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[3.] Having a voice and visibility in the city council and mayoral campaigns

The Southwest Corridor Park was highlighted as a model of urban greenspace in many mayoral and city council candidate forums, in Boston Park Advocate social media, and – shared in the annual report presentation video – in the mayor-elect’s victory speech.

[4.] Providing a community voice for projects in every neighborhood along the park.

Our volunteer network is involved with community planning for housing, transportation, public arts projects and more, in every neighborhood along the park. Our participation focuses on the ways that community development, housing, transportation and greenspace interact to create a healthy urban environment.

Participation in public hearings and meetings for community development projects, including:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 220 Huntington Avenue (Midtown Hotel) • 267 Amory (Youth Enrichment Services - YES) • 45 Burnett St. • 840 Columbus Ave. (Northeastern) • MBTA Back Bay Ventilation CAC • Mildred Hailey Phase 1 Re-Development Project • Parcel P-3 • SNA Mural Project • Terrace St. Planning/Visioning • And others



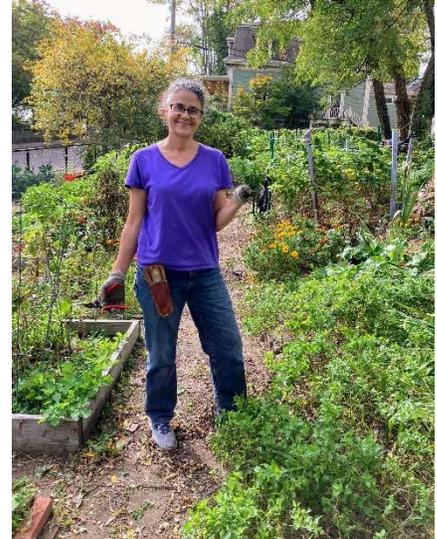
[5.] Supporting and leading activities for children and families

While the pandemic is not over, many youth and family programs re-started this summer. With support from Northeastern University and the Southwest Corridor Park Conservancy, PMAC once again supported seven mini-grant projects to provide youth and family programming. We also continued our work in the Jackson Square children’s garden and in science & art programming for children at Mildred Hailey Apartments.

Mini-Grants for Youth and Family Programming	PMAC 2021 Youth Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boston Explorers • Dancing in the Park / SOCA / With BPD E-13 • JP/Tree of Life Father’s Group • JP/Tree of Life Mom’s Café • Roxbury Community College Community Garden • United South End Settlements Paint-Out • Walking Group at Alice Taylor Apts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackson Square Children’s Garden • Art/Science Programs at Mildred Hailey Youth Drop-In Center and at MHATO hot dog nights, Unity Day and Youth Fair. • Park volunteer opportunities for youth/teen programs, including Girl Scouts, local schools and others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additionally, the park is noted for the myriad opportunities for youth and families, though formal and informal activities, sports leagues and sports facilities, playgrounds, mother’s groups and more who enjoy the park. 	

[6.] Stewarding our network of now twelve community gardens

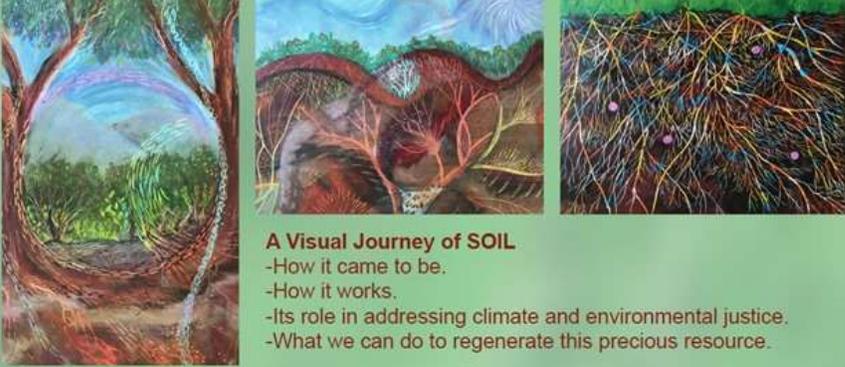
Our network of community gardens celebrates two milestones this year. (1.) This year PMAC was approved for a partnership matching project to start the process of renovating the community gardens in the Southwest Corridor. (2.) And this year we integrated the Oakdale Community Garden, which is now officially a DCR property, into our network of community gardens.



[7.] Hosting guest speakers

This year we hosted two sets of guest speakers in PMAC meetings, with an eye toward creating wider conversations about the role of this and other parks in issues of importance to the city. Our March meeting featured Janet Powers from Mothers Out Front on Healthy Soils, and July featured three neighborhood activists, Betsy Johnson, Ernest Coston and Weezy Waldstein, on our “Park History Panel.”

The Story Beneath Our Feet



A Visual Journey of SOIL

- How it came to be.
- How it works.
- Its role in addressing climate and environmental justice.
- What we can do to regenerate this precious resource.

Presented by Janet Powers, ecological landscape designer and Member of Mothers Out Front Healthy Soils Team

Park History Panel
 Presented by the Southwest Corridor Park Management Advisory Committee (PMAC)
 Tuesday, July 6, 2021
 Via Zoom
 Visit swpc.org for the Zoom link

Between the well-known People Before Highways march in 1970 and the park grand opening in 1990, there was a period of two decades of an evolving vision for the land along the Southwest Corridor. How did neighbors help to shape this vision? And what comes next?



MASS. NEWS 1
Southwest Corridor park
 Gov. Michael S. Dukakis announced yesterday the MBTA's \$100 million park along the Southwest Corridor from Uxbridge St. to Forest Hills. The cost in the 1960s for the Route 1-95 but the straggled after citizens is a five-mile bike, basketball and tennis grounds.

US gives \$1400m for SW Corridor plan

Harmony and herbs harvested in city garden

The Boston Globe (Boston, Massachusetts) - 30 Jan 1970, Mon
 Tuesday, January 31
 Orange Line - Help decide what happens after the Orange Line is relocated. Project Working Committee meets at Prince Hall Grand Lodge, 18 Washington St., 8:30-10 p.m.
 Wednesday, February 1
 Transit Meeting - Boston Street Union, Lee Tompkins will meet to discuss architectural designs at Baystate Congregational Church, 207 Amory St., Jamaica Plain, 7:30 p.m.

Community Gardens Bus Tour - Sponsored by Boston Gardeners and Southwest Corridor Community Urban Gardeners office, 250 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02116. Telephone: 267-4825 or 522-1299. July 18, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

[8.] Creating and sharing a new curriculum project about civic engagement

The new curriculum materials, titled, “**A Circle of Parks: Boston Parks and Greenspace as a Case Study in Civic Engagement**,” uses the history of the Emerald Necklace and the Southwest Corridor Park as the foundation for exploring concepts of greenspace, public goods, participatory democracy, civic engagement and more. Visit <http://swcpc.org/curriculum> to explore and share these materials.

A Circle of Parks: Boston Parks and Greenspace as a Case Study in Civic Engagement
 Web Link: <http://swcpc.org/curriculum.asp>

Five lesson plan modules, with flexibility to mix-and-match. May be taught online or in a classroom, asynchronously or as group/classroom activities. Developed by the Southwest Corridor Park Management Advisory Committee (PMAC) for classroom and youth programs.

Lesson #1 | The Geography of Parks & Greenspace in Boston

- Video: “A Circle of Parks,” with the stories of the Southwest Corridor Park and the Emerald Necklace, focusing on the role of civic engagement in the history of both parks.
- Activity: Using maps to explore the geography of parks in the city overall, and in students’ own neighborhoods and communities.
- Activity: Defining park, playground, greenspace.

Lesson #2 | Concepts for Civic Engagement

- Video: “The Economics of Public Goods” introducing the concept of public goods; defining the public, private and non-profit sector; and introducing the role of public, private, non-profit and informal organizations in providing and supporting public goods, including parks and greenspace.
- Reflections / Discussion Activities

Lesson #3 | History of the Southwest Corridor Park - Inquiry Lesson

- Inquiry Lesson: A collection of primary and secondary source material about the history of the Southwest Corridor Park, with activities to guide students in exploring these materials.

Lesson #4 | Who Takes Care of the Parks?

- Video: “Understanding Local, State and Federal Government” with applications to the history of the Southwest Corridor; and the current blend of non-profit organizations, informal organizations, and state and local government agencies that support the park.
- Reading: “Understanding Civic Engagement (with “Five Myths about Civic Engagement)” (with audio option)
- Exercise: Myths and Realities / Do’s and Don’ts
- Exercise: Website Study / Who Manages the Parks?

Lesson #5 | Decision Making

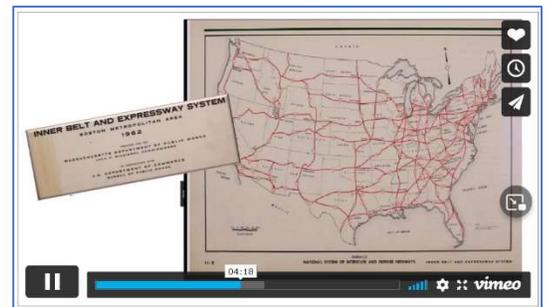
- Activity: Case Study Exercises
- Concepts: Majority Rule; Consensus; Compromise; Public Democracy

Extension Activities

- Exploring Park-Related Careers
- Concluding Projects / Civics Projects



Inquiry Lesson
Southwest Corridor Park History



FIVE MYTHS ABOUT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- 1. The “One Hero” Myth**
Big changes are usually not the work of one person alone; but the work of many people working together. Even when one person becomes the symbol of a larger movement, there is often a bigger, and perhaps more powerful, story of many people working together in different roles, over a long period of time.
- 2. The “One Moment” Myth**
Big changes usually don’t happen all in one moment; but are part of a longer series of events that move the story forward. While there may be one pivotal moment that stands as a symbol of a major change, there is usually a longer story of many other events that contributed to that work.
- 3. The Myth of “Deficit Based” Thinking**
In order to tell a dramatic story about a community project, the storyteller sometimes portrays a “before and after” picture that over-emphasizes or even falsely portrays problems or “deficits” in the “before” picture. It is more powerful, though maybe less dramatic, to focus on the “assets” (or strengths) of the community.
- 4. The Myth of Easy Answers**
Some community issues present a sharp choice between two very different, very clear choices, with a clear right and wrong. But in the long run, the work of community groups is often focused on more complex decision making, with the need to balance different interests and community needs and to work through compromises and consensus-building.
- 5. The Mythical Unnamed “They”**
The pronoun “they” is often used to portray unnamed and unknown persons or groups that control decisions in the community. It is more powerful to be able to identify specific agencies and organizations, understanding city, state and federal government, and to understand the work of different agencies and organizations, including public, private and nonprofit organizations, as well as informal community groups, that help to shape a community.

[9.] Launching an online dashboard and system of “neighborhood representatives”

The new online dashboard and the system of “neighborhood representatives” was designed to create a systematic approach for tracking park issues and milestones. Preview this dashboard and fill in a “park assessment” at <http://swcpc.org/dashboard>

[10.] Working with DCR staff and others to explore projects and next steps for the park

We are proud of our good relationships with DCR staff, city officials, public safety officers and others who support the park. With DCR, we have been engaged in many good conversations about park needs and next steps.

On a personal note, this year we marked the retirement of Pat Driscoll, DCR Park Supervisor, who worked with the Southwest Corridor Park since the beginning of the park. We are proud to have played a part in his career with the park, and appreciate his skill, knowledge and care for the park. We follow in the example of seeking to support, with equal care, both the physical environment of the park and the community involvement that makes the park such an asset to everyone who uses it.

► AND... bringing people together to steward and enjoy the park.

Visit swcpc.org and look for us on social media to learn more and get involved.

