

# Mid-Cambridge Parks Vision

## Project Introduction Meeting

June 16, 2026



**CITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

CDD  
Community  
Development



# For Those Joining Us Live on 6/16

1. Need Zoom help? Email:  
[LMcCarthy@cambridgema.gov](mailto:LMcCarthy@cambridgema.gov).
2. We will record the presentation to follow.
3. We will hold time for clarifying questions after the presentation. That time will not be recorded, *though we'll take and share notes.*
4. We're excited to hear any comments/reactions, though we'd like to address questions first.



# Mid-Cambridge Parks Vision

## Project Introduction Meeting

June 16, 2026



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CAMBRIDGE**

CDD  
Community  
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# Project Team

## **Gary Chan**

Neighborhood Planner, CDD

## **Cortney Kirk**

Senior Landscape Architect, CDD

## **Claudia Zarazua**

Director of Arts and Cultural Planning, CDD

## **Lev McCarthy**

Neighborhood Planner, CDD

## **Suzannah Bigolin**

Senior Urban Designer, CDD

## **Kevin Beuttell**

Supervising Landscape Architect, DPW

## **Marlees West Owayda**

Community Engagement Manager, CDD



# Today's Agenda

1. Project Introduction
2. Planning Context and Considerations
3. Design Vision
4. Public Art
5. Next Steps



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# Upcoming Projects

Joan Lorentz Park (no major work planned)

Maple Ave Playground  
Medium-Term

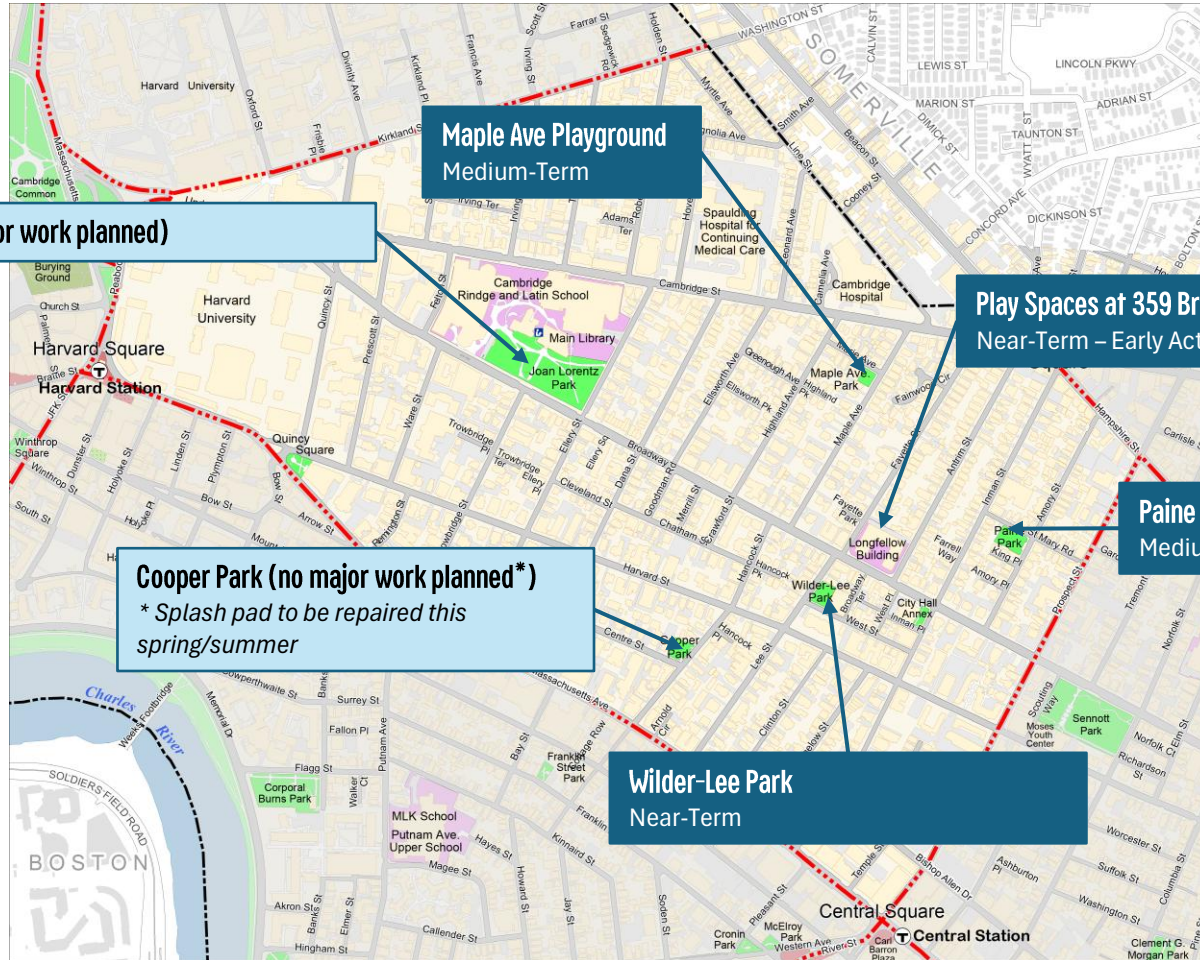
Play Spaces at 359 Broadway  
Near-Term – Early Action Project

Paine Park  
Medium-Term

Cooper Park (no major work planned\*)  
\* Splash pad to be repaired this  
spring/summer

Wilder-Lee Park  
Near-Term

- City Boundary
- Ⓜ MBTA Subway Station
- Neighborhood Boundaries
- City Park or Playground
- DCR-Owned Park
- Public Plaza
- Public School Grounds
- Cemetery
- Privately-Owned Park
- Publicly-Accessible Park
- Privately-Owned Plaza
- Publicly-Accessible Plaza





# The What and the Why

## What This Is

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- Preparing for park improvements at parks reaching end of material life
- Process to develop a deliberate vision for what should be included in future parks
- Result of from open space and neighborhood planning process recommendations





# The What and the Why



## Why This Process

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- Leverage opportunities that come from thinking about these spaces together
- Identify and navigate changes in uses, if desired by neighborhood (or, affirm existing uses)
- Work toward a common vision as projects are implemented at different times

# What We Hope to Result from this Process

## Deliverable



Plan for future uses in renovated parks, including:

- Park uses and activities
- Priorities for design character
- Guidance to shape a future call for public art

## Other Objectives



Connection between neighbors and the City

- Learn from you!
- Consensus amongst neighbors (*not 100% agreement*)
- Clear expectations on what's to come as projects advance

# What This Process Will Not Directly Address

## We do not plan to focus on:

- Expansion of open space areas or acquisition of new sites
- Spaces not identified for near-term renovation

While we can document feedback on other topics **the focus of this work** will be on sites planned to be renovated in the near term.





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# Context Map

- City Boundary
- ⬇ MBTA Subway Station
- Neighborhood Boundaries
- City Park or Playground
- DCR-Owned Park
- Public Plaza
- Public School Grounds
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Mid-Cambridge Parks Vision

# Planning Context: Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Planning

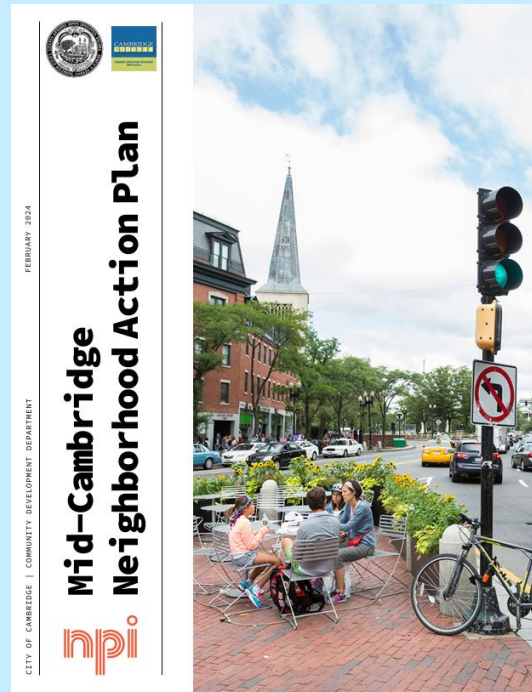
## Action Plan Recommendations

- **Goal 1: Improve access to different types of outdoor activities.**

*Develop a parks framework plan to diversify neighborhood park amenities over time.*

- **Goal 2: Add and improve green spaces and plantings**

*Continue program of park improvements through renovations or targeted improvements in parks.*





# Existing Park Uses

## Joan Lorentz Park

- Playground
- Tennis/pickleball courts
- Open/flexible lawn area (with diverse tree plantings)
- Morning shared use off leash hours
- Seating – fixed and movable (PB Cool Spots)

## Maple Ave Playground

- Playground
- Water play

## Play Spaces at 359 Broadway

- Open courtyard area
- Play areas (side areas)
- Basketball

## Cooper Park

- Playground
- Water play

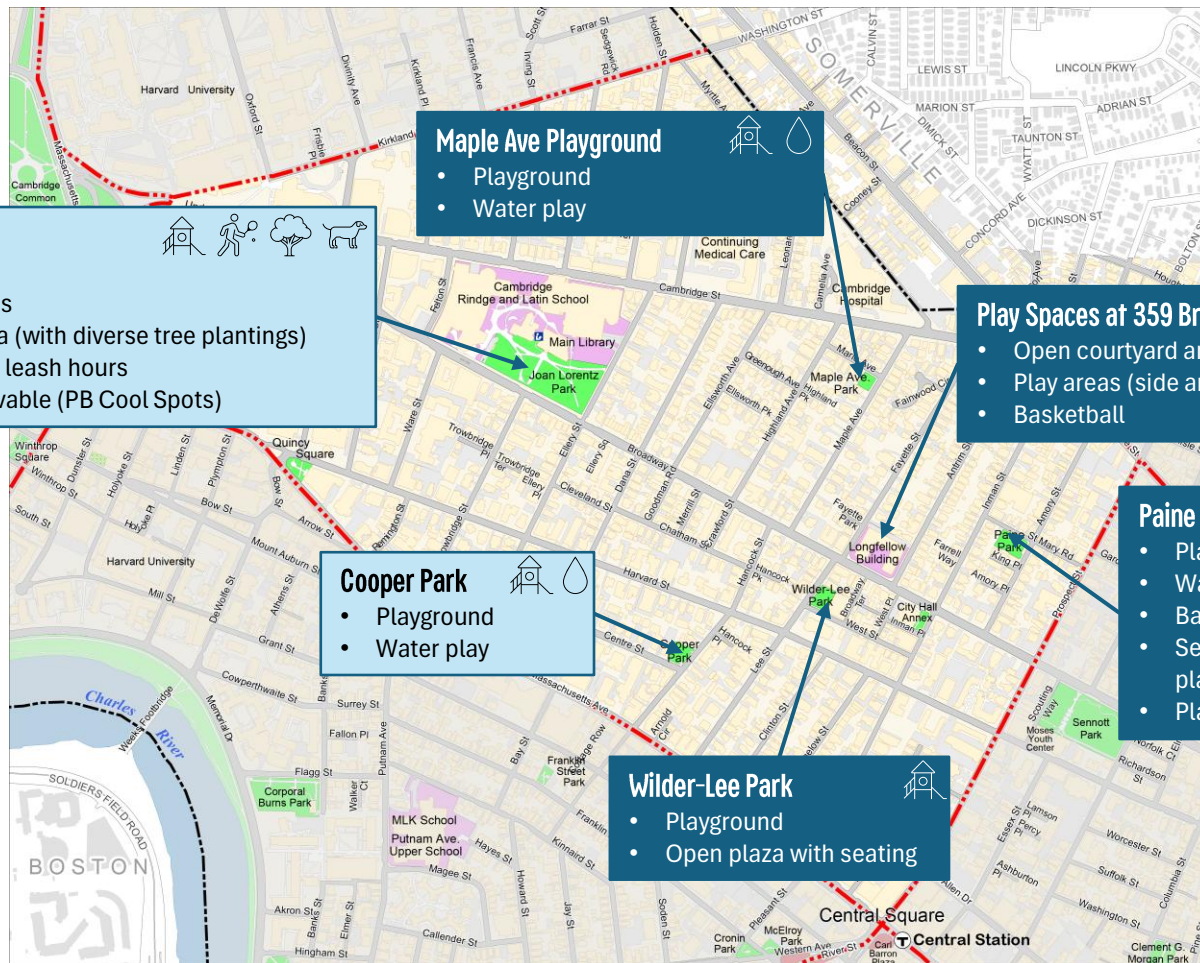
## Wilder-Lee Park

- Playground
- Open plaza with seating

## Paine Park

- Playground
- Water play
- Basketball (single hoop)
- Seating, including planted sidewalk edge
- Planted areas

- City Boundary
- Ⓜ MBTA Subway Station
- Neighborhood Boundaries
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## Maple Ave Playground

- Playground
- Seating

## Play Spaces at 359 Broadway

- Open courtyard area
- Play areas (side areas)

***As each park undergoes improvements,  
are these the park uses that should go back?***

- Public Plaza
- Public School Grounds
- Cemetery
- Privately-Owned Park
- Publicly-Accessible Park
- Privately-Owned Plaza
- Publicly-Accessible Plaza



- Playground
- Splash pad (\*to be repaired this spring/summer)

- Basketball (single hoop)
- Seating, including planted edge
- Planted areas
- Public art mural

## Wilder-Lee Park

- Playground
- Open plaza with (some) seating
- Sloped lawn area

# Early Action Project: 359 Broadway Play Spaces



## Project Parameters

- These outdoor spaces (courtyard and side areas) will continue to support the High School Extension Program as well as other youth-serving programs.
- This building has also historically served as a swing space for school and youth-serving programs. We understand it will continue to play this role while also potentially housing other youth-serving programs (e.g., Pre-K programs).

*Because we have a general direction of what uses will need to be supported here and are advancing this as an **Early Action Project**.*



## Next Up: Wilder-Lee Park



### Project Parameters

- Construction at Wilder-Lee will not begin until construction at 359 Broadway is complete (so that both are not offline at the same time).
- What we learn from this process will guide the design of Wilder-Lee Park.

***This will have its own engagement process (we hope you stay involved!)***

## Mid-Cambridge Statistics and Demographics (Basic Summary)

Total Population  
**14,046**

Total Land Area  
**292 Acres**

48.1 Persons Per Acre  
(2<sup>nd</sup> highest in Cambridge)

6,144  
Households

**86% of Population** live in Households  
**14%** live in Group Quarters (e.g. dormitories)

# Mid-Cambridge Context (Other Things to Consider)



## Major Institutions

- Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School (and High School Extension Program)
- Cambridge Public Library Main Branch
- War Memorial Recreation Center
- City Hall and City Municipal Offices
- Harvard University
- Medical Institutions



**303**

Active Dog Licenses  
in Mid-Cambridge  
(as of 6/10)



~5 Acres Public  
Open Space

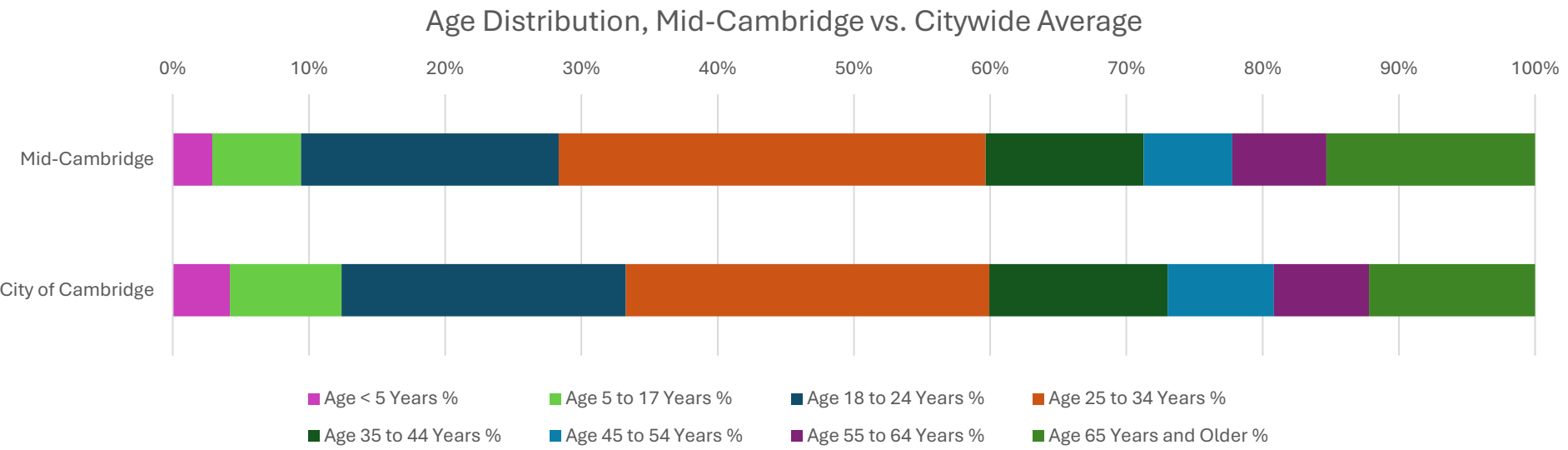


## Other Nearby Spaces

- Harvard Yard and Science Center Plaza
- Sennott Park
- Lincoln Park (Somerville)



# Mid-Cambridge Statistics and Demographics (Age Distribution)

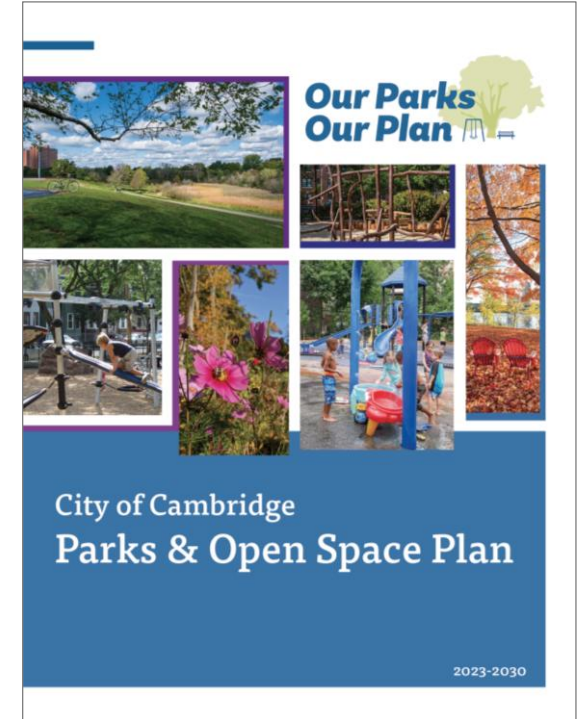


# Cambridge Open Space Goals

## Open Space Planning Goals

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- Build high-quality parks that embody our community's priorities and wide range of interests.
- Bring creativity, arts, and culture to parks and public spaces.
- Improve how we share information about parks and open spaces. Highlight opportunities for learning and community building.



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# Design vision for our parks



## Starting point



Several small parks  
across the  
neighborhood



Each has strengths,  
challenges, and  
different users



This is our chance to  
imagine what these  
parks could be



# Design vision for our parks



## What we want to understand

- How do you use these parks?
- What's missing?
- What's most important for their future?
- **Do they need to relate to each other, or should each one stand alone?**

# Design vision for our parks

## An opportunity to create a vision

What kind of neighborhood experience do we want these parks to support?

Community Idea



Idea In Real Life



# Design vision for our parks

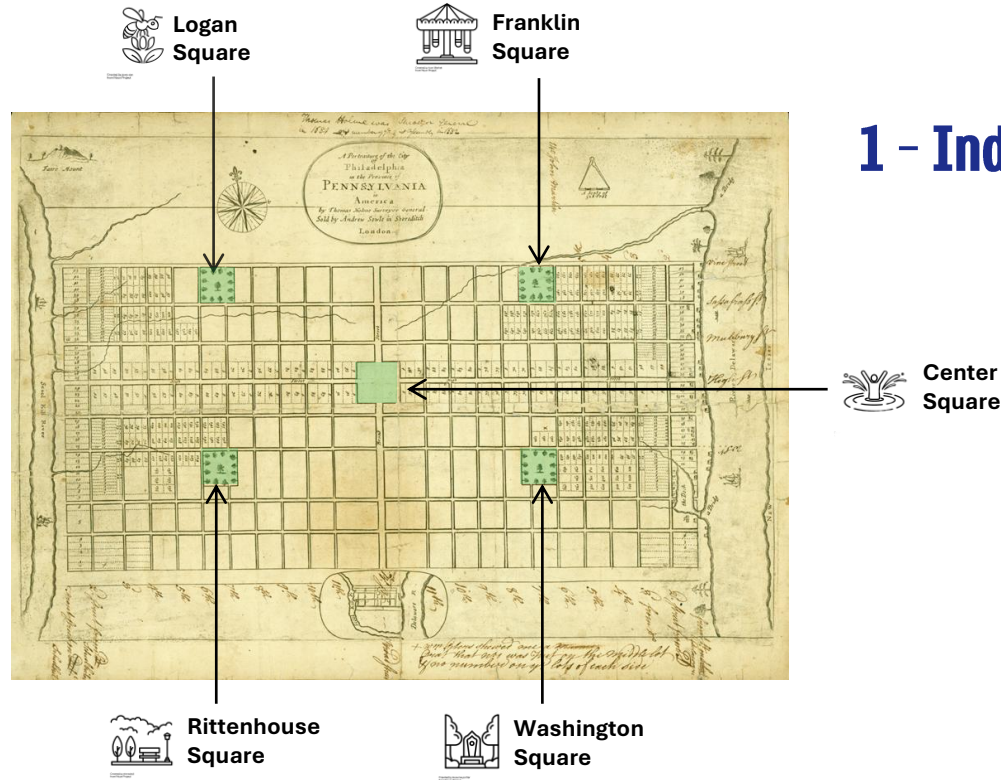


## There are different ways to create a vision

- We can explore different big picture approaches
- Each represents a different design outcome



# Design vision for our parks



## 1 - Individual parks with no connection

- Each park is designed independently
- Each reflects the needs and identity of its immediate surroundings.
- No requirement for consistency or shared elements.



# Design vision for our parks



## 2 – Coordinated parks (current city approach)

- Parks remain unique, but share similar design cues.
- Common plant palette, standard City materials, seating, lighting, and signage.
- Flexible with a common identity and sense of belonging.

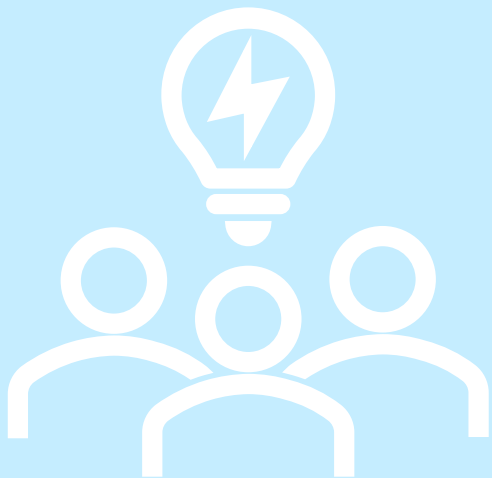
# Design vision for our parks



## 3 – Connected network

- Parks as part of a unified experience.
- Connections can be thematic, aesthetic, ecological, or programmatic.
- Each park has its own identity, but contributes to a shared story.

# Design vision for our parks



## What matters most to you?

- What kind of relationship, if any, should these parks have with each other?

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# Public Art in Parks

1% for Art Ordinance: Requires that 1% of capital project funds be allocated to public art—supporting art in parks and public spaces





# Public Art Opportunities in Mid-Cambridge Parks



# Public Art Process

- Community input:
  - What kind of art?
  - What themes?
  - ...?
- Call for artists
- Selection process
- Design Development





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# Next Steps

**[camb.ma/midcambridgeparksvision](https://camb.ma/midcambridgeparksvision)**



Online Survey(s)



In-Park Engagement  
(July/August/September)



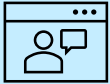
Summer Open House  
for 359 Broadway Play  
Spaces Renovation Project



In-Person Workshop in Fall

# Stay Connected

**[camb.ma/midcambridgeparksvision](https://camb.ma/midcambridgeparksvision)**



Virtual office hours



Please share with your neighbors!



Sign Up for Email Updates