

City of Cambridge Committee on Public Planting

Meeting Minutes – April 10, 2024 - 5:30-7:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting via Zoom & at DPW - 147 Hampshire St.

Attendance (* indicates virtual attendance)

CPP Members: Ahron Lerman*, Cindy Carpenter, Chantal Eide, Robb Johnson, Gretchen Friesinger; Sandra Fairbank, Sara Cohen*, Tracey Orr*, Cynthia Smith, Ruth Loetterle*

Members not in attendance: Amira Valliani, Archana Venkataraman, Ray Fahrner, Sophia Emperador, Vinita Bhaskar, Maggie Booz; Angela Zhong

DPW/City of Cambridge: David Lefcourt, Abby Bentley, Ellen Coppinger, Kevin Beuttell*, Andrew Putnam, Kristen Kelleher, Gary Chan (CDD), Lev McCarthy (CDD), Courtney Kirk (CDD)

Guests/Members of the Public: Liana Greenberg-Nielsen (Green Cambridge), Charles Teague, Heather Hoffman, Rebecca Lefcourt

Meeting Minutes submitted by: Chantal Eide

1. March meeting minutes for review
 - The March meeting minutes were approved.
2. Updates from CDD - Gary Chan
 - Introduction of new landscape architect to join the CDD
 - Gary introduced Courtney Kirk, the new CDD Landscape Architect.
 - Project announcement: Renovations of Raymond Park and Rafferty Park
 - Initial plans/ideas for the renovation of Rafferty Park were presented by CDD staff. Rafferty Park is tucked away behind the Sancta Maria hospital. Two schools abut it: the Fayerweather Street school, and a French language school. As the Highlands area develops, there will be increased need for the park. The park has a good tree canopy and woodland spaces. The park equipment may pre-date recent ADA requirements. Much of the canopy is pear and linden. While there is much adjacent tarmac devoted to parking, this does not belong to the city. CDD is working with the firm “Offshoots”. It was noted that often invasives take over in landscapes like this and it would be great if there were a maintenance plan to keep on top of this. Apparently the Fayerweather Street school is active in the area.
 - Raymond needs some renovation, but not redesign. “Agency” will be the design consultant. They are in the Community Engagement phase with a

survey and scavenger hunt in March to establish the current use of the park. Next step is the Conceptual Design. They are working with residents of the Lincoln Apartments. They'll wrap up during the summer and the design phase will be through the winter. The hill is well-liked, there are community gardens dating from the 1970's, and the basketball courts are cracking. There's a seven year plan for parks, driven by condition, and socioeconomic and environmental conditions. The State requires an Open Space Plan which may bring grant money.

3. Updates from City Arborist

- Spring planting updates
 - Lahey is opening and expanding existing tree wells and the in-house crew is doing prep work.
- Arbor day agenda of events & activities - CPP signup sheet (*Cindy*)
 - There will be an artist on Thursday the 25th.

4. Update from each Sub-committee and summary of top priorities for the year (20min):

- Outreach (*Cindy*)
 - Arbor Day - reminders and overview
 - Fresh Pond Day - sign up sheet and overview
 - There will be tabling for the Urban Forest on June 22nd.
- Implementation (*Robb*)
 - Robb had a phone meeting with David Monday 8 April.
 - The committee will next meet on Monday May 6th.
 - Started with four categories: city, state, institutional, and private
 - City: It would be helpful to maximize acceptance of trees for planting in the city's five year street plan, possibly with the Outreach committee. Engineering will be asked when in the 5 year cycle it's best to reach out.
 - State: it can be challenging to work with DCR. Perhaps a Friends group can improve DCR's partnering abilities. Cindy Carpenter and Cynthia Smith have experience working with DCR.
 - Institutional: MIT has less canopy and is more of a heat island. Cynthia Smith suggests reaching out to Laura Tenney
 - Private: Green Cambridge may be able to help plant back of sidewalk trees in commercial areas. Gas stations are mentioned, as is the parking lot behind the Cambridge Common restaurant/bar.
- Policy (*Cynthia*)

- Following Urban Forest Master Plan Technical Report recommendations, this committee will write a letter to City Council. They'll ask for an update on the Tree Protection Ordinance, for an update on zoning tools, ask about protection of large trees, examine the definition of exceptional trees, and increase mitigation requirements. Articles 19 and 22 - tree impacts and protection could be improved. Maggie will draft the letter. The city of Nashville has declared trees to be a public utility and this gives them a lot of power.
 - Governance (Sara)
 - This committee met with Eric Kramer and Stephanie Hsia of Reed Hildebrand. Discussion included how to enhance the role of CPP, and how to have a larger impact on policy. Sara looked into other cities like Chicago and studied their equivalent groups. It would be great if we could have other committee members go to Planning, Bike, and Transportation committee meetings to advocate for trees. Things to monitor: tree planting numbers, performance of bare root vs. balled and burlapped trees. If we want more teeth, we may need to get the ordinance rewritten.
 - Note - trees should go on the city's sustainability dashboard.
- 5. Project update: Linear Park
 - Status update by Kevin Beuttell (5min)
 - There was a meeting with Kathy Watkins, Kevin Beutell, and Andrew Putnam, with some committee members, on 27 March regarding plans for Linear Park. Process issues and concerns were expressed. The latest plans with annotations were released to several members. Staff is committed to sharing major deliverables. Thursday, May 2nd is a page turn meeting, all are welcome. The MBTA review is in process and then that submission will be shared with the committee with annotated comments. The MBTA review was marked at 100% completion but that is an error and it is a draft. *(Please note that the May 2nd mtg was canceled)*
 - Report back - meeting with Kathy Watkins (10min)
- 6. Other Business: (5min)
 - Other topics we could cover this year
 - Sandra Fairbank announced that the project to restore the London Plane allée along Memorial Drive was moving along. Possibility of a July field trip.
 - Robb Johnson mentioned the depaving project from the Participatory Budget - sometimes this results in more trees.

- Gretchen mentioned the five year street plan relative to the bicycle / pedestrian / transportation committees - wonders how they are implementing the urban forest master plan
- Green Cambridge update: on April 25th at Grand Junction Park there will be a tree planting. IQHQ will house Green Cambridge's tree nursery.

7. Public Comments (5min)

The meeting was adjourned at 7pm.

Attachment:

- Rafferty Park Renovation Project & the Raymond Park Renovation, CPP Project Introduction (presentation slides)

NOTE: The foregoing represents our understanding of the discussions and decisions made during this meeting. The CPP requests permission to quote or reference these notes.

RAFFERTY PARK

RENOVATION PROJECT



CPP PROJECT INTRODUCTION
APRIL 10, 2024

PROJECT TEAM

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE



DESIGN TEAM - PRIME CONSULTANT



DESIGN SUB-CONSULTANTS



PLAYGROUND CONSULTANT



CIVIL ENGINEER



ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT

LOCAL CONTEXT - SITE



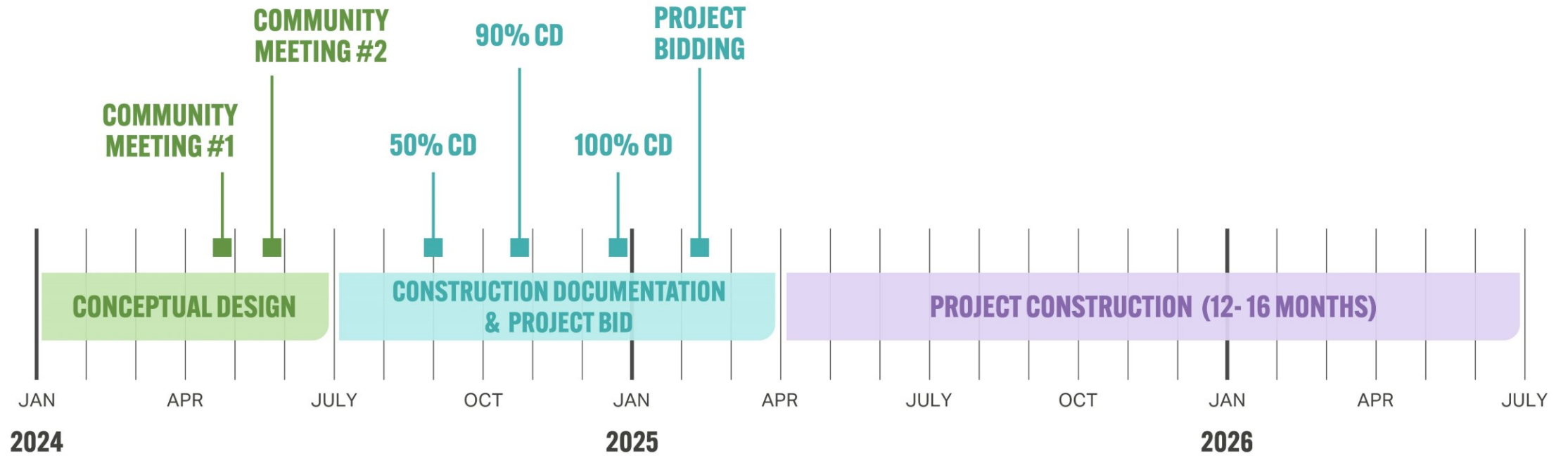
EXISTING CONDITIONS - SITE



EXISTING CONDITIONS - SITE



ANTICIPATED PROJECT TIMELINE



GET INVOLVED

Project Contact:

Gary Chan, Neighborhood Planner
gchan@cambridgema.gov

Project Website:

camb.ma/raffertyparkproject

Project Survey #1:


SurveyMonkey.com/r/RaffertyPark1

Community Meeting #1:

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Community Room at Finch Cambridge
(675 Concord Avenue, Cambridge)



Raymond Park Renovation

Public Planting Committee | April 10, 2024

Project Team

City of Cambridge

+

Agency Landscape + Planning

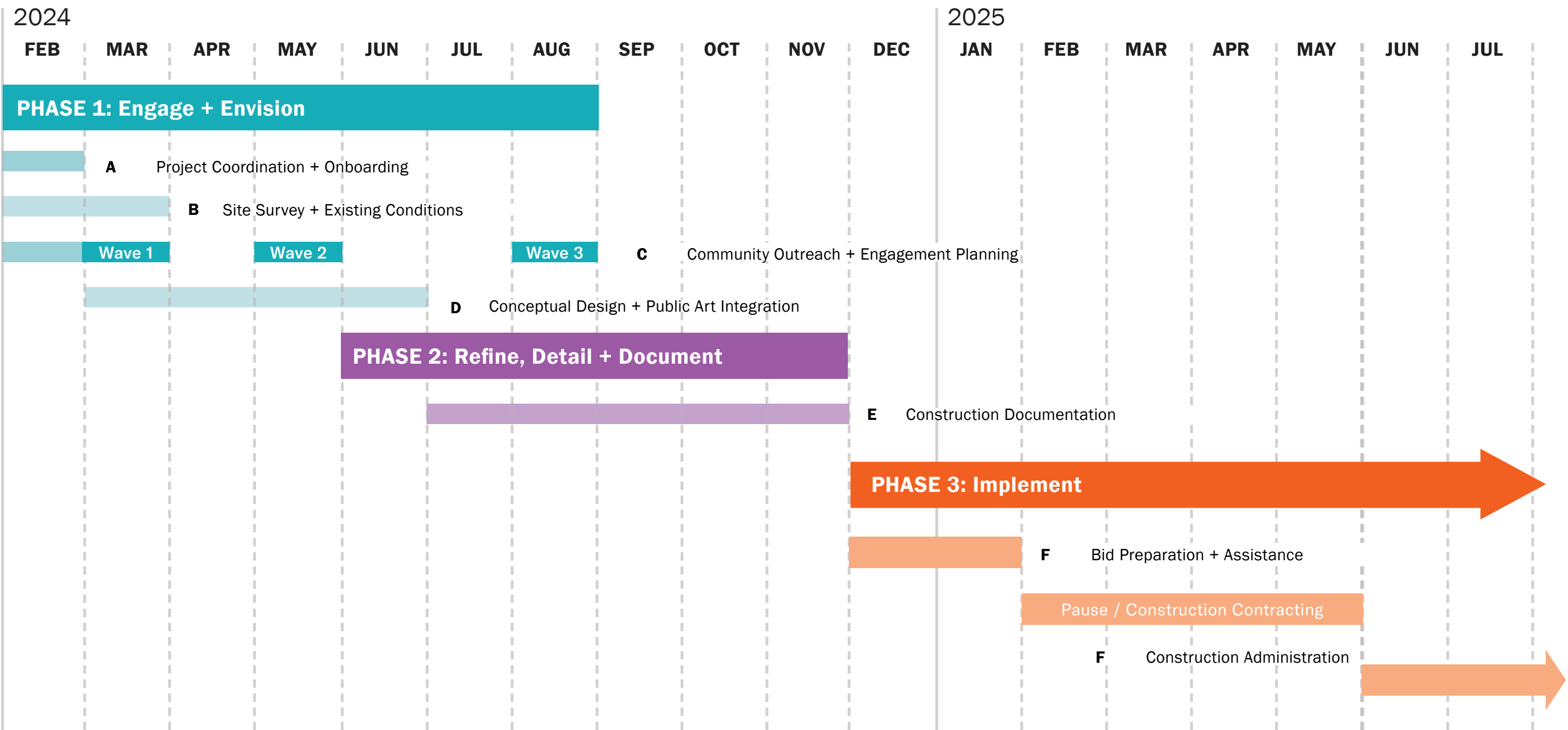
Abundant Playscapes

Arup

Irrigation Consulting

VHB

Expected Schedule



Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions



Get Involved

Project Contact:

Lev McCarthy, Neighborhood Planner
lmccarthy@cambridgema.gov

Project Website:

www.cambridgema.gov/raymondpark

Survey:

SurveyMonkey.com/r/RaymondPark1