

## City of Cambridge Committee on Public Planting

Meeting Minutes – February 14, 2024 - 5:30-7pm

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

### **Attendance** (\* indicates virtual attendance)

CPP Members: Ahron Lerman\*, Amira Valliani, Archana Venkataraman, Cindy Carpenter\*, Chantal Eide, Cynthia Smith\*, Gretchen Friesinger, Ray Fahrner, Robb Johnson, Sandra Fairbank, Sara Cohen\*, Sophia Emperador, Tracey Orr\*

[Members not in attendance: Ruth Loetterle, Maggie Booz, Angela Zong, Vinita Bhaskar]

DPW/City of Cambridge: Abby Bentley, Kevin Beuttell, David Lefcourt, , Andrew Putnam

Guests & members of the public: n/a

Meeting notes submitted by: Cynthia Smith

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### **Agenda Items:** Review previous meeting minutes

- January Meeting Minutes Review
- Updates from City Arborists including Arbor Day Events & Activities
- Sub-committee Updates
  - Outreach (Cindy)
  - Implementation (Robb)
  - Policy (Cynthia)
  - Governance (Sara)
- Landscape Design Review of CRLS Planting area at existing Wood Deck (Kevin Beutrell, DPW)
- Linear Park Design Update (Kevin Beutrell)
- Wrap Up and Next Meeting date

### **1) Review prior meeting minutes**

Meeting Minutes for January 2024 meeting were Approved-Gretchen made the first motion and it was Seconded by attendees.

### **2) Agenda Items**

City Arborists Updates: (David and Abby)

Two pruning contracts are going out to bid soon. The “Young Tree” Contract is in place. Thirteen hundred (1300) trees are to be planted over the spring. They are waiting for the weather to improve and warm up before getting started. Also planned is preparation of tree pits and site improvements for the spring planting.

### **CPP Comments re; Tree Contracts**

Re: Tree Planting Methods, B&B and Bare root are the primary tree root methods of planting. Containerized trees and other methods are generally not favored according to David Lefcourt.

2024 Compost Day

April 13 is Compost Day at the Main Library (Joan Lorentz Park —9:00-1:00)

2024 Arbor Week Updates: (David Lefcourt)

This Year Arbor week is celebrated in Cambridge April 22- 26

A Frame signs will be put up to announce Arbor Day events at City Hall and other locations as well as a large Billboard at City Hall.

This year Tree Facts will be put up in the Library Park (Joan Lorentz Park) with 20-25 facts about trees scattered throughout the park.

Apple Tree Grafting Project (as part of collaborative art project) is planned at the Tobin School. This project is an ongoing art project at the school.

A Tree Table is planned Tuesday, April 25, 2024 10-12 at City Hall

Wednesday, April 26, 2024: another Tree give away at Gold Star/Mother's Park on 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Library 10-12 and School 3-5. At the library entrance, there will be a computer monitor with Urban Forest facts and also a give away of various materials including magnets, stickers, and buttons and info sheets on Urban Forest facts.

Dave Lefcourt will also be doing a walking tour of several parks and streets in East Cambridge from Rogers Street to Toomey Park and Triangle Park ( approx. a one mile walk total.)

Friday, April 26 will be an event at the Morse School where they will be handing out 500 Coloring Books w/crayons.

Regarding the tree give aways at various locations mentioned above, they will be giving out 400 Seedlings: Dogwood, Lilac, Winterberry and Hornbeam seedlings.

In the past, CPP members and city staff have been involved in handing out trees and tabling at various locations.

David also mentioned a Canopy Crew Brochure that is in the works and has been reviewed and approved by Green Cambridge.

### **3) Agenda Items: CPP Sub-Committee Updates**

#### **a. Outreach Committee: (Cindy)**

The Committee includes Cindy, Tracy, Ruth, and Gretchen. (Gretchen is a new member of the committee.) Meetings are generally held the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Wednesday of the month.,

They are working with DPW on Arbor Day activities and have a signup sheet for volunteers if anyone wants to participate. Re: Arbor Day, Cindy mentioned that the city and committee are trying to come up with a coherent message.

#### **b. Implementation Committee (Robb)**

The Committee is trying to better understand and facilitate how their CPP sub-committee might help in getting more trees planted every year and in furthering goals laid out in UFMP (Urban Forestry Master Plan)

Location Categories they identified initially include:

City Street Trees: what could CPP do to make a difference in the tree planting in this location? (Trying to understand funding, staff capacity, suitable sites, and role of homeowners in rejecting potential good sites to name a few.

State Land: DCR land which has aging trees and sparse landscapes. Locations include the Charles River parkway areas including the Esplanade and East Cambridge locations under DCR jurisdiction. Not clear that our CPP Committee can have an impact here??

Role of Non-Profits could have like Charles River Conservancy on tree planting and overall park landscapes under state jurisdiction.

Institutional Landscapes: (Harvard/MIT/Lesley): How to encourage more street tree planting in these locations.

Private Property Owners: how to bolster support.

Other Ideas: Dave gave a presentation to the recycling groups. Maybe we could learn from successes of other city Committees. Another example is successful outcomes coming from residents talking to other residents. Peer pressure (going door to door) can be quite effective. Also, talking to neighbors about possible locations on their street: spring tree planting as part of a block party for instance.

Questions/Comments: How often do residents refuse trees? Abby said not that often. Anecdotally, someone (?) said that North Cambridge is a neighborhood where some neighbors have refused street trees in the past.

Do we have spots for potential new trees identified in our data base? Abby answered that the bigger issue is running out of potential locations.

Re: DCR, the Alewife/Jerry's Pond interface may be an opportunity. Also, the Cambridge Garden Club in the past has worked with the DCR on Hell's Half Acre (dense wooded area incl. Birch grove, etc. ) along the River and that project may be coming back to life.

Andrew Putnam commented that the city has mostly worked on city property not DCR land.

Other comments were about the Water Department land and the Forest Friend newsletter as a communication tool at the city's disposal.

**C. Governance Committee: (Sara and Sophia)**

This Committee has to do with the smooth and effective functioning of our Committee on Public Planting and identifying and refining our role as a Committee. This new Committee shared the following preliminary questions:

Are we doing everything the city Charter is asking us to do?

Do we want to add a Secretary to the CPP organization or do we want to continue to rotate this role?

Is it ok to reach out to Eric Singer?

Related to recommendations coming out of the UFMP, what are the best roles for CPP to undertake?

Re: Urban design Guidelines, are there recommendations that we should develop?

Re: Project Review: clarify our role and emphasis. Is the CPP Committee better off working on Urban Forest related guidelines vs. (random) project review?

Re: Meeting length. Should we lengthen meeting time? Charter currently does not limit time/length of meeting.

Cindy made the comment that we could add more time and indepth discussion through additional meetings of the sub-committees.

Suggestion was made to have quarterly meetings and an annual meeting to review Committee progress.

Another comment had to do with the overlap between Committee on public planting and the various transportation sub-committees. (Currently the Pedestrian Committee and the Bicycle Committee have some overlapping meetings.) Would it make sense for us to have overlapping meeting on occasion with these committees or say the Climate/Resilience folks to discuss overlapping issues?



#### **D. Policy Committee (Cynthia)**

The Policy Committee is a new committee that will be focusing on city policies that will help further the protection and strengthening of the Urban Forest Canopy per the recent Master Plan (UFMP).

Members of the Committee also includes Maggie Booz, Archana Venkataraman, and Sandra Fairbank. We are having our first meeting in March on Monday, March 11 5-7 location o be determined.

We will be reviewing the UFMP Policy recommendations and the city ordinance, Article 22: Sustainable Design and Development Zoning Ordinance that pertains to large project review. In particular, we will be reviewing how to best protect our Urban Forest in the context of Open Space & Planting requirements, setbacks, Current Street Trees regulations and Protection; Green Roofs; Green factor standards and exceptions to restrictions by such things as Affordable Housing, etc.

#### **4) Agenda Items: Design Progress Review: CRLS Wood Deck area new Garden at 5 Cambridge frontage**

Kevin Beuttell reviewed the initial planting and layout of a small garden seating area at CRLS as well as reviewed the Conceptual Plant List. An existing boardwalk area will be replaced with a new softscape rain garden with new paved mini-plazas with seating. Existing mature trees and a stump that has been carved into an eagle will remain as part of new design and additional Canopy trees will be added. The design of the space is a collaboration with the Science Teacher at CRLS.

The new planted garden area will improve the function of the rain garden and slow down the surface and sub-surface drainage. The new design calls for 5 new seating areas including a metal bridge between two of the five seating areas. New seating will have backless benches and moveable tables and chairs that will allow flexible seating.

Comments from the Committee on Public Planting included:

A generally positive reaction to the Plant list which includes a variety of seasonal interest and a focus on hardy natives that will withstand the shade and provide a pollinator garden.

A question re: the overall circulation and whether there will be sufficient ADA accessibility. In particular, a concern that the stepping stone pavers between some of the spaces are not ADA accessible. A review of ADA accessibility would be a good idea.

A question re: the adjacent landscapes and whether the planting could extend to adjacent bare planting areas so that the landscape areas have more of a dialogue rather than an island. Kevin explained that funding constraints currently don't allow for an

extension of the limit of work but that the students and school have a number of ideas for improving adjacent areas in the future such as adding community farm areas and additional

Initial tree planting ideas are to add an American Linden, a Tulip tree, etc. to the existing mature oaks. Kevin said that they were thinking of replacing the proposed American Linden tree because the aphid drop is unpleasant and could be a problem in the proposed garden.

#### **4) Agenda Items: Linear Park Update- Kevin Beuttell**

Kevin provided an update on the North Cambridge Linear Park Project. The Consultants are currently reviewing the cost estimate. The city is gearing up to meet with the MBTA who owns the land and needs access to several utilities there. After they receive those comments they will come back to the CPP. This is likely to be in June or sometime in the summer. The Public and CPP will receive the updated design at the same time.

#### **5) Upcoming Agenda Items: UFMP Updates -Andrew Putnam**

Andrew Putnam said the can do a presentation in March which will provide a presentation related to funding for Urban Forest Master Plan updates. He will focus on providing Budget information to fund consultant work as a priority.

#### **6) Wrap Up and Housekeeping—**

Municipal Reforestation Bill passed.

Shared Drive for Committee Notes

Green Cambridge-private property plantings: 100 this year, 1000 estimated for next year.

#### **Public comments:**

**No Public Comments were made.**

**Next meeting:** Next meeting of the CPP will be March 13, 5:30-7:00 Hybrid Meeting via Zoom & at DPW - 147 Hampshire St. and will be advertised to the public in advance.

#### **Attachment:**

- CRLS Wood Deck - slides presented by K. Beuttell

*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.*

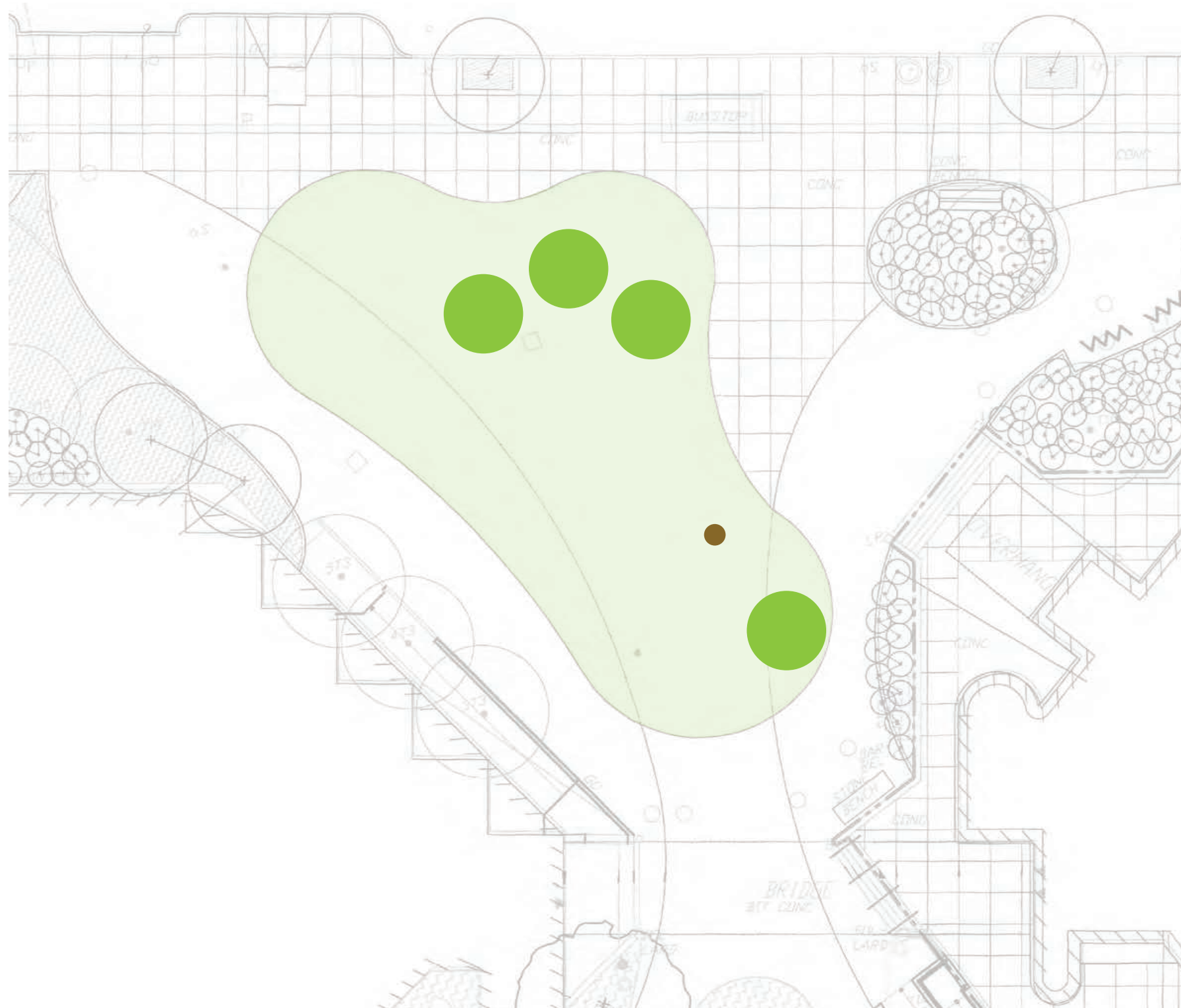




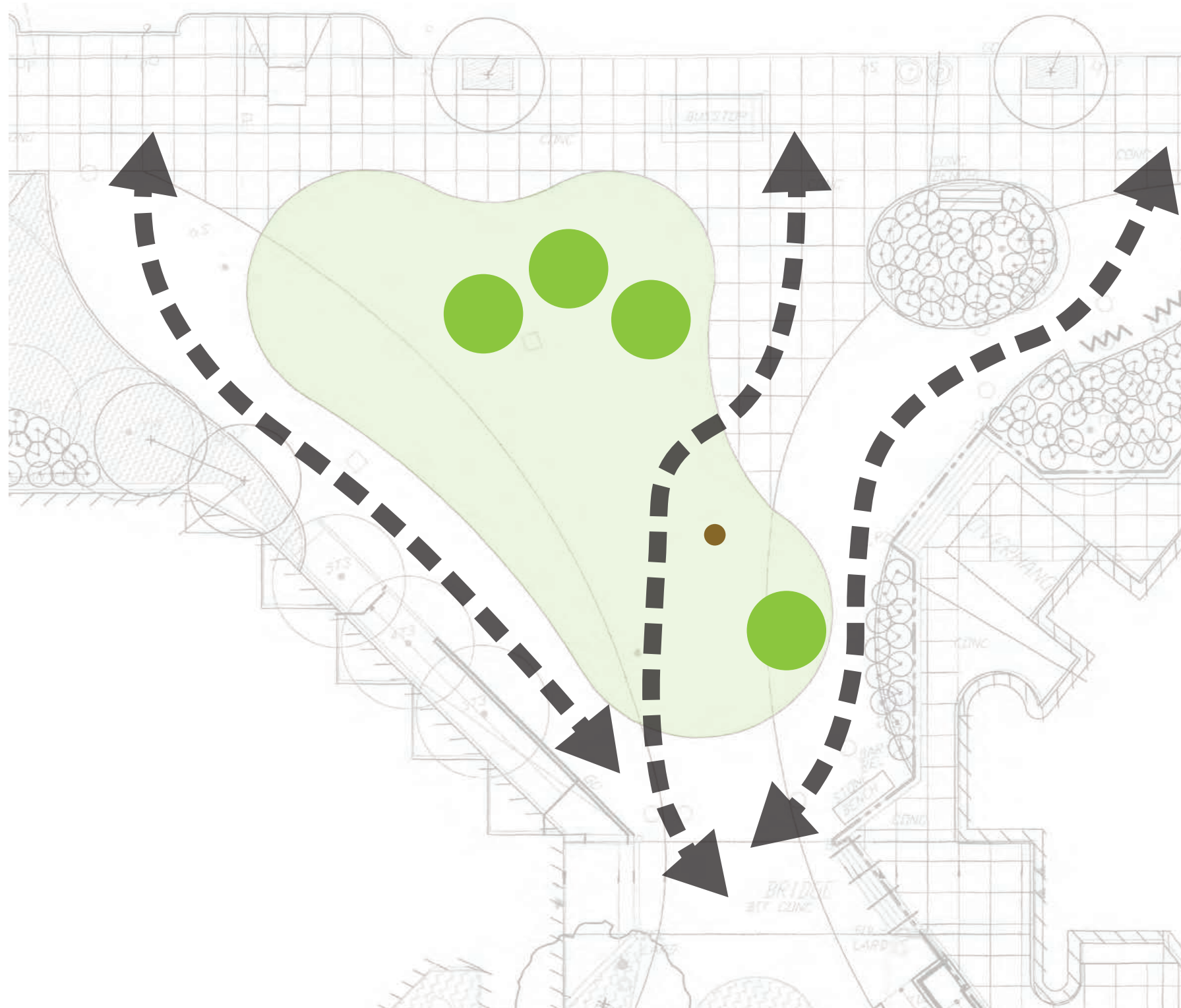
Presentation provided by Kevin Beuttell on the renovation of the CRLS plaza



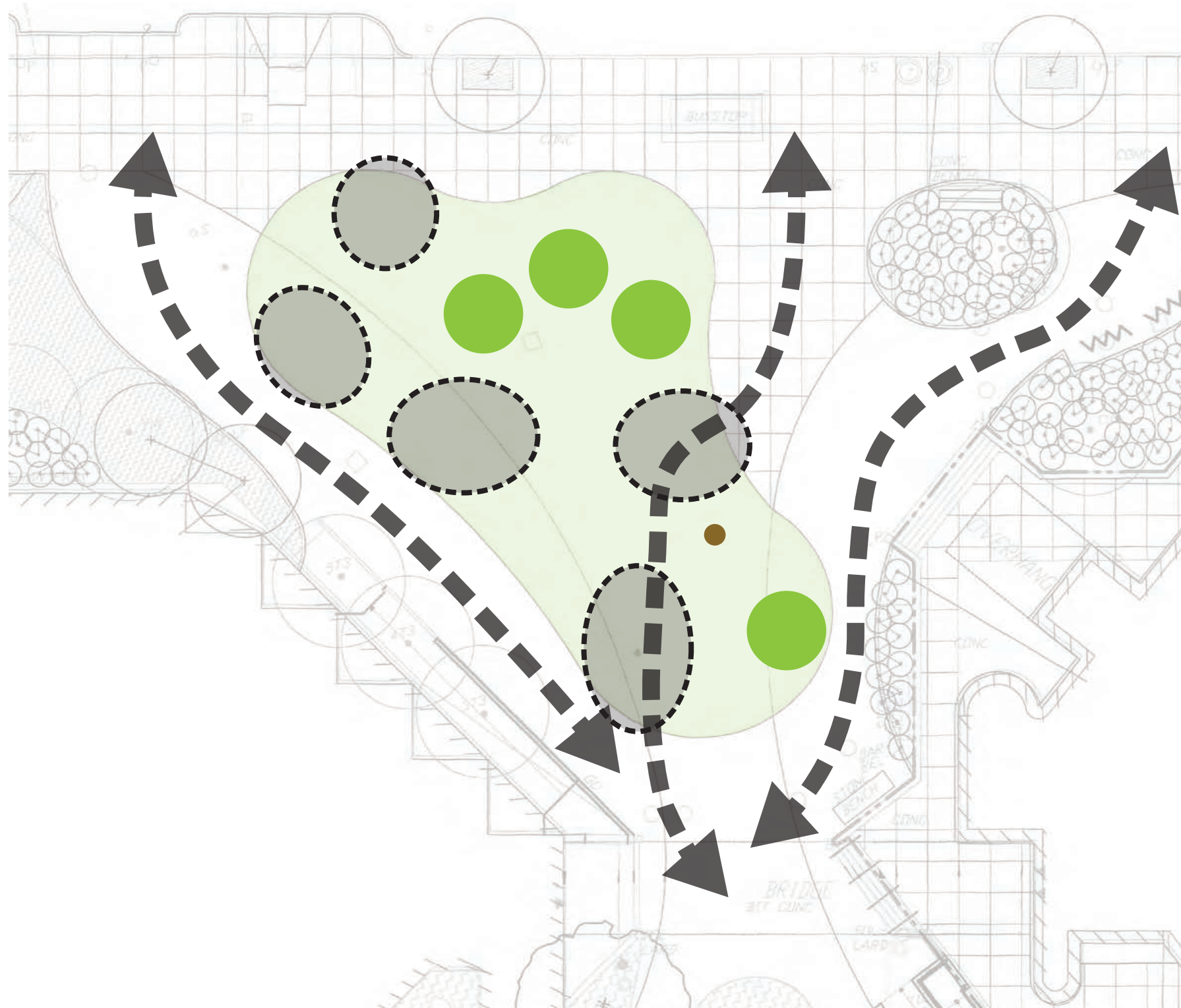
# Cambridge Street



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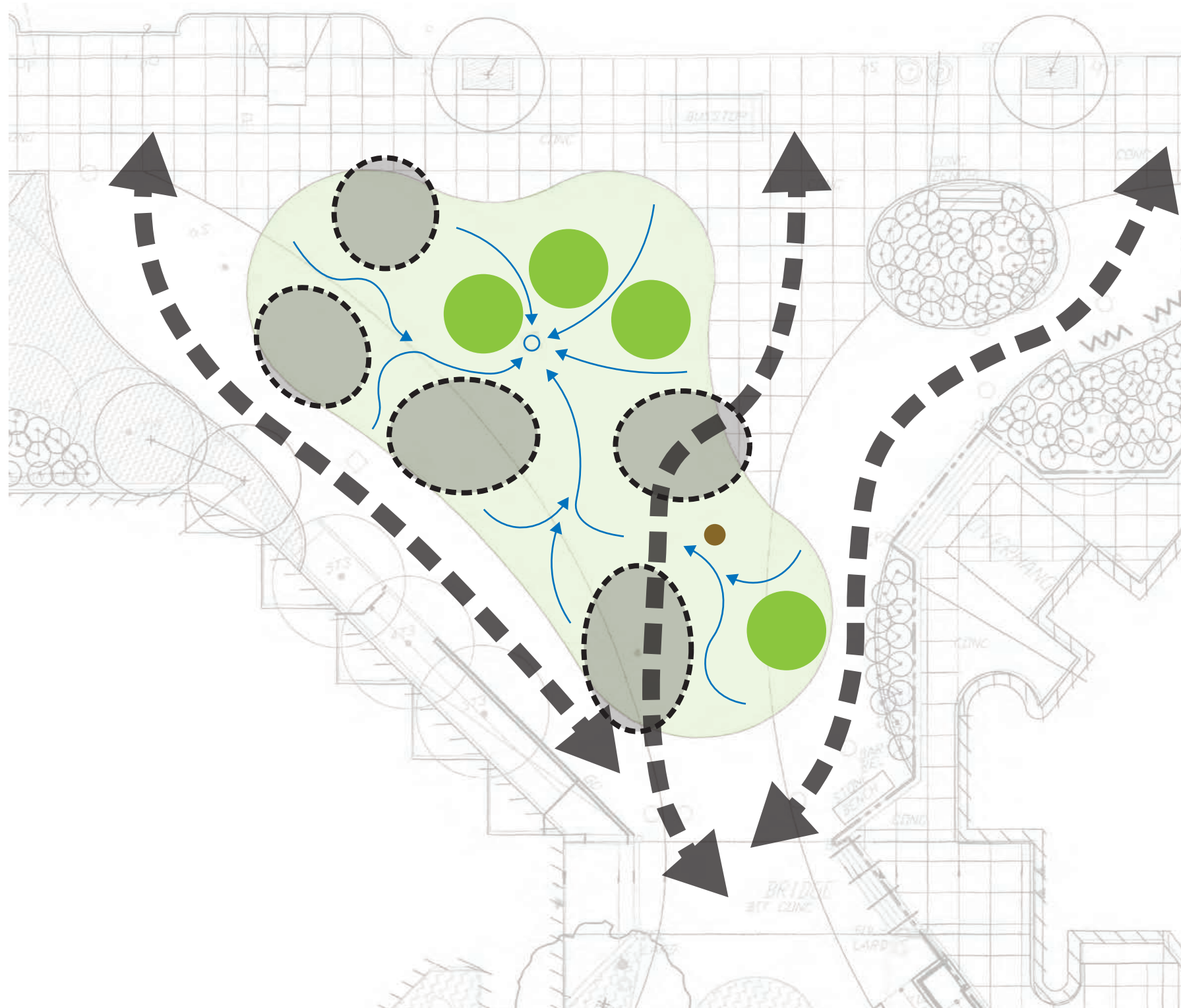


# Cambridge Street





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### **Trees (in addition to the 4 existing Q. bicolor)**

- Tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
- American Linden (*Tilia americana*)

### **Shrubs**

- Bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*)
- Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*)
- Leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*)
- Dwarf fothergilla (*Fothergilla gardenii*)
- Ozark witchhazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*)
- Common witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)
- Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*)

### **Groundcover**

- Penn. Sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*):
- Hayscented Fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*)
- Marginal Wood Fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*)
- White Wood Aster (*Eurybia divaricata*)
- Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)
- Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*)
- Geranium x cantabrigiense ‘Biokovo’
- Wild Stonecrop (*Sedum ternatum*)
- Zigzag Goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*)

### **Seed**

- Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
- Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
- Big Leaf Aster (*Eurybia macrophylla*)
- Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)
- Solomon’s Plume (*Maianthemum racemosum*)
- Golden Groundsel (*Packera aurea*)
- Golden Alexander (*Zizia aurea*)
- Nurse crop (tbd)