

Avon MVP for D.W. Field Park OCPC Public Engagement Report

June 2024



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Project Summary

MVP Application Project Description

Urban Park for People: Resilient D.W. Field Park

This project will create Nature Based Solutions (NBS) to improve the physical and social climate change resilience of the 700-acre D.W. Field Park in Avon and Brockton and its watershed. NBS will be evaluated in the park, and the 30-acre parcel proposed to be purchased and added to the park, as well as the contributing watershed lands and Avon-owned parcels upstream of the park. Interventions closest to the point of generation are most effective in reducing stormwater impacts. Our integrated four-step mitigation approach is to assess, preserve, design, and engage. Assess the watershed and the Park for resilience opportunities and resources; preserve the most critical parcel of unprotected land in the entire watershed--an extremely time-sensitive action item; design pilot nature-based solutions; and engage the community. It extends the current Wildlands Trust-led D.W. Field Park Initiative, which similarly evaluates NBS and other improvements to the middle portion of D.W. Field Park and continues its robust community engagement and planning process.

Contracted Grant Tasks

Under Grant Agreement Sub-task 2.1

1. Support Wildlands Trust in expanding and facilitating an inclusive Steering Committee to guide the Resilient D.W. Field Park project. The committee will meet monthly, and stipends will be offered to those not already paid to attend meetings.
2. Raise project awareness and communicate progress regularly to the community. A multimedia campaign, underpinned by a website, will be developed that uses both traditional and new media to reach as many people as possible in the community.

Under Grant Agreement Sub-task 2.2

3. Conduct up to four focus groups exploring the needs of specific park users (e.g., bicyclists aged 55+, etc.), working with the Steering Committee to identify users and provide stipends for participation—Avon COA, Brockton High School Envirothon.
4. Conduct informal, in-field interviews with 25 park users to better understand needs, providing stipends for participation.
5. Support two Conway student-led public workshops by helping them organize the events and encourage public attendance.

6. Hold one public stewardship event to increase awareness of the park and the climate-related risks it and the community face and provide further opportunities for residents to remain engaged with the park.
7. Produce and promote two educational exhibits and small events that raise awareness of climate change risks (focusing on urban flooding, riverine flooding, and heat risks) and enable action in the community.

Initiative Partners

City of Brockton – Park is managed by Brockton Dept. of Parks & Recreation

Town of Avon – Host of the northern section of D.W. Field Park and champions of park expansion efforts

OCPC – Environmental, recreation, and transportation planning and outreach

Environmental Partners – engineering & planning for ecological functioning, master plan compilation (phase 1)

D.W. Field Park Association – community engagement & education

Manomet – environmental education

The Conway School – conceptual designs for green infrastructure & recreation

Fuller Craft Museum – Park-adjacent art museum sharing Upper Porter Pond

2.1 Enhanced Stakeholder Outreach and Steering Committee

1. Wildlands Trust and OCPC expand and facilitate an inclusive Steering Committee to guide the project. Monthly meetings with stipends are given to community members (i.e., those not paid by their day jobs to be there).

Steering Committee Members

Eric Beckerman, Town of Avon, Chair of Select Board

Jazmine Bradsher, City of Brockton Office of Mayor Sullivan, Social Services Director

Rachel Bruce, Wildlands Trust, Director of Special Projects – Committee Coordinator

Tim Carpenter, City of Brockton Parks and Recreation, Superintendent of Parks

James Doucette, City of Brockton Board of Health, Code Enforcement Officer

Rhiannon Dugan, Old Colony Planning Council, Senior Planner

Kyle Holden, City of Brockton Planning and Economic Development, Conservation Agent

Rick Jordan, Town of Avon, Town Planner

Brian Martin, Town of Avon, Project Manager

Rob May, City of Brockton Planning and Economic Development, Director of Planning

Erin McGough, Fuller Craft Museum, Executive Director

Eval Silvera, Brockton Beer Company, Owner

Ulisses Varela, City of Brockton, Parks Commissioner

Joanne Zygmunt, Old Colony Planning Council, Senior Planner

Steering Committee Purpose and Goals

The Steering Committee for the Avon MVP project will provide input to the Town of Avon, Wildlands Trust, OCPC, and project partners on planning efforts to revitalize D.W. Field Park in two key areas:

- The northern sections of D.W. Field Park in Avon (northern section of the park)
- A new 30-acre forested parcel being acquired by the Town of Avon, located adjacent to the western shoreline of Waldo Lake (south of South Street).

The Steering Committee will help ensure that plans and designs:

- Enhance ecological functioning at the park.
- Improve amenities and infrastructure to meet current and future recreational needs.
- Address critical issues identified by the community, initiative partners, and this committee.
- Are supported by the community.
- Are feasible and supported by the City of Brockton and the Town of Avon.
- All MVP work to be completed by June 30, 2024.

Steering Committee Meeting Agendas February-June

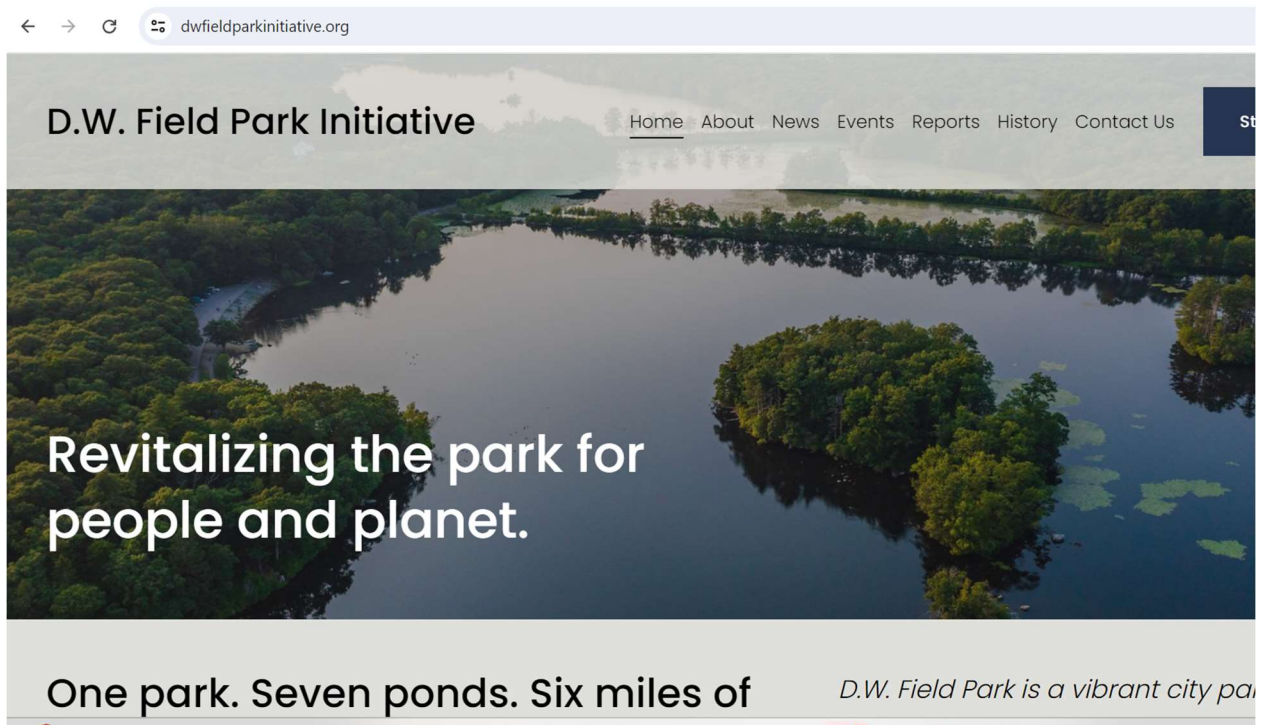
- February Meeting Agenda
 - Phase 2: MVP grant: \$1.5 million awarded in June 2023
 - Status of land acquisition
 - Potential project sites
 - Outreach plan
 - Multimedia campaign, including a new website
 - Focus groups, informal field interviews
 - Conway School outreach in spring (2x visits)
 - Public stewardship event to increase awareness – date TBD in May
 - two educational exhibits about climate change
 - Conway School Overview
- March Meeting Agenda: March 28, 2024
 - Review of Steering Committee Goals
 - Update on land acquisition
 - Press Release
 - Rachel: Conway School overview
 - two new students to work at the newly acquired parcel and the north section of the park
 - Last year's examples: conceptual designs
 - Timeline: choose 5-7 focus sites by April
 - Apr-Jun: 2 outreach events for public input
 - Project draft by June 12, edits by June 15, report by July
 - Outreach
 - Template for DWFPI Business Cards

- Contracting Manomet to do two educational events and host an information table at the Spring Event
 - Focus Groups
 - Brainstorm Potential Groups
 - Spring Event Give a Hoot About the Park May 19th, 2024
 - Next Steps
- April Steering Committee
 - Introductions
 - Conservation Restriction update
 - Updates for Stormwater Management for MVP FY 24
 - Conway School Update
 - Student's intros – Aspen & Aaron
 - Chosen study sites
 - Outreach Update
 - Park interviews 4/29
 - Focus groups
 - Business cards
 - Manomet displays/events
 - May 19 Event Update
 - Flyers & marketing
 - Community groups attending (confirmed/pending)
 - Other vendors confirmed/pending: Lady C&J Soul food, police detail, porta-potties
 - Parking at the medical center next door confirmed
 - Final questions & comment
 - Adjourn
- May Steering Committee Agenda
 - Land Acquisition
 - Storm Drainage Maintenance
 - Property Boundary Signs and Location
 - Naming the Property
 - Conway School Updates
 - Spring Event
 - Biweekly Meeting with the Core Team
 - First public outreach was conducted on 4/26/24 at D.W. Field Park
 - Draft designs for public input at the 5/19 event this Sunday (second outreach)
 - Works in progress presentation Friday, May 24 @ 11:20 am – will share Zoom link with Steering Committee
 - First draft of report sent to Core Team for feedback June 12

- Outreach Plan Update
 - Park Interviews Completed 4/29
 - Focus Group- Scheduling
 - Business Cards – Printed
 - Manomet- Contracted
- Event Update
- Closing
- Adjourn
- June Steering Committee Meeting
 - Welcome & Introductions
 - Overview of the D.W. Field Park Initiative & this Steering Committee’s role
 - Understand the goals and processes of the initiative. Discuss the steering committee’s role and how we’ll work together.
 - Community Outreach and Engagement
 - Updates and discussion around completed and upcoming outreach activities to engage the community in planning and design.
 - Review next steps
 - Adjourn

2. Raise project awareness and communicate progress regularly to the community. A multimedia campaign, underpinned by a website, will be developed that uses both traditional and new media to reach as many people as possible in the community. Your involvement and support are crucial to the success of this project.

Please visit www.DWFPI.org to view updates on the project and join our email list to learn more.



2.2 In-Person Engagement and Workshops

Conduct up to four focus groups exploring the needs of specific park users, working with the Steering Committee to identify users and provide stipends for participation.

Approximately six potential groups were identified and contacted. Due to scheduling conflicts in the Spring and early Summer, only one focus group was conducted. Summary Below:

Focus Group Questions

A focus group is an interactive discussion that allows us to collect information based on your thoughts and experiences. The goal is for you to discuss the questions, meaning you can talk out of order and respond to each other's comments. The questions you will be asked are intended to guide the conversation. Please share your thoughts if we missed something important when thinking about the topic.

Your name will not be assigned to anything you say. The Focus Group will last 30-40 minutes, and you will be compensated for your time.

Today, we are discussing your usage of parks, your experience with parks, and what made you choose a park to help influence our work at D.W. Field Park.

1. How often do you visit parks? What parks do you go to?
2. What comes to mind When you think of visiting a park? What should be there?
3. When you want to spend time with friends or family outside of your home, what is important to you when picking a location?
4. What does the word safety mean when considering safety at a park?
5. Have you heard of D.W. Field Park?
 - a. What do you know about the park?
 - b. What do you think about the reputation of the park?
6. We'd like as many people as possible in our community to enjoy D.W. Field Park.
Can we do anything to enable or encourage you and your family to visit the park?

Question/Answer Summaries

1. How often do you visit parks? What parks do you go to?
Students reported that they went to D.W. Field Park during nice weather, mostly thinking of summer but noting spring and fall as well. One student went twice a week with their mom over the weekend; another student mentioned going regularly to walk their dog.

Students noted that they occasionally visited some parks for track or recreation with friends and family.

2. What comes to mind When you think of visiting a park? What should be there?

Students discussed considering a park space quieter than the rest of the city, with less car noise. They would expect to hear other people, birds, animals, and dogs. Regarding resources at the park, students said benches and relatively clean bathrooms should be provided. They expected walking paths that were relatively clear from brush, sidewalks, signage, and bubblers/ water fountains.

3. When you want to spend time with friends or family outside your home, what is important when picking a location?

Students were looking for areas close to home, one noting that it was preferably within a 10-minute walk. Students also indicated that their families were looking for large spaces for activities such as football or an outdoor area to play cards. Many students noted that when they think of spending time with family, they think of playgrounds.

4. What does the word safety mean when considering safety at a park?

Students noted that safety from vehicles, trash, sharp objects, and natural objects such as fallen trees or poison ivy were significant safety concerns. Walking safely away from cars on paths clear of trash or sharp objects was important. Students did note that people made them feel both safe and unsafe. They wouldn't want to be in a park alone, but they were also worried about strangers and maybe people in the park using drugs.

A student noted that installing a blue light emergency system at the park would make them feel better. There was a discussion about security cameras at the park. Three students said they would feel safer with them. The other students, while unsure, were not opposed to their being cameras in the park. Other ways to increase safety were to have patrols, not police officers, enforce park rules and safety, or maybe an informational pamphlet or QR code about what natural things at the park might be dangerous. The example was how to identify poison ivy.

5. Have you heard of D.W. Field Park?

All the students had heard of D.W. Field Park.

- a. What do you know about the park?
- b. What do you think about the reputation of the park?

Students recalled the story of the children who had drowned in the water.

Another student recalled their mother telling a story about their uncle, who had almost been kidnapped as a teenager. Another student noted that when they think of dangerous things at the park, they think about what happens at the park at night, but in the day, the park's reputation and experience are generally safe.

6. We'd like as many people as possible in our community to enjoy D.W. Field Park.
Can we do anything to enable or encourage you and your family to visit the park?

One student noted that having a bus stop there would increase accessibility for them at the park. Rachel informed them that there was a bus stop, but it was relatively new. Another student noted that the bus going through the park might bring too many people. Students knew of previous events, such as races and triathlons. None of the students present knew about the annual Fall Tower Fest at the park. Students did not know that the tower was sometimes open and safe to climb.

Conduct informal, in-field interviews with 25 park users to better understand needs, providing stipends for participation. (Complete)

Summary: Rhiannon Dugan of OCPC and Rachel Bruce of Wildlands Trust conducted 25 in-person surveys at D.W. Field Park on April 29th. Several surveys had respondents from more than one person. Nine questions were asked verbally to those walking or sitting in the park, and answers were written down. Answers were then manually entered into SurveyMonkey to better sort the data.



Take Aways:

- Many respondents visited the park frequently, and it was the only park they used.
- When regarding safety, the most significant concern was cars, including speeding and crossing into pedestrian lanes.
- Road conditions and park maintenance need improvement.

How often do you visit the park?

Of those interviewed, nearly all came at least once a week, weather-dependent. Two said that they came daily. Seven respondents noted in their response that their frequency depended on the weather (not when it was too cold or too hot). One respondent said it was their first time at the park since the year prior.

Were you aware of the ongoing Master Plan process for D.W. Field Park?

Three out of 25 respondents knew about the park Master Plan. The others did not.

What is the best way for us to provide information about the park?

The most popular option was signage at the park, and social media, in general, was the most popular. The most popular social media platform requested was Instagram (7), followed by Facebook (5), and one person noted TikTok. Other ideas included community boards at grocery stores and local broadcast news.

One thing that came up through informal conversation during interviews was that while many wanted to know about events through social media, they were not following related platforms such as the City of Brockton, the Town of Avon, OCPC, or Wildlands Trust.

By Count:

Email 5

Local news broadcast 1

Signage at the park 8

Facebook 5

Instagram 7

Socia Media general 7

TikTok 1

Community Board at Grocery Store

When you use the park, do you mostly walk, ride a bicycle, or use a vehicle?

19 Respondents said that they used the park for walking, and one person noted specifically walking with their dog. Five people in total indicated that they ran or jogged. Two people drove through, and two people rode bicycles. Two people said they just came to find a spot to relax. Other activities mentioned once were bringing children, feeding the ducks, fishing, and formally competing in road races.

While D.W. Field Park is known for being a driving park, we likely captured few of these responses because surveys were taken on foot with those outside vehicles.

How could your safety be improved as a park user (pedestrian or vehicular)?

Six respondents already felt safe, and a seventh felt secure but not safe enough for their children. Most respondents felt their safety could be improved or was endangered by vehicles. At least five respondents noted that the speed of the cars coming through the park felt unsafe, and one suggested increasing speed limit signs. The other significant concern was drivers crossing over to the pedestrian path or driving in the wrong direction using the pedestrian path. Three respondents identified this as a concern, and another three identified the need to repaint road lines to prevent swerving and enforce the traffic direction. Pavement quality was a concern for four respondents, noting the potholes and crumbling pavement were dangerous for tripping or strollers or because cars swerved around, threatening pedestrians. Two people indicated that adding cameras and police (or other park staff would make them feel safer. One respondent noted that they did not want to see more police presence. Other mentions included preventing cars from coming at dusk or night, gates from being adequately locked, and not feeling safe for children because of public smoking and drinking. During our interviews, we spoke to one person with a handicap that required them to use an electric scooter through the park. They noted they could not get around some gates. The best access to the amphitheater is on the paved Waldo Lake Trail.

What areas of the park do you use the most?

Nine respondents noted that they usually parked at the Oak St entrance. One person parked at South St, and one at the Tower lot. At least two people said they walked from their house to the park. Seven people said that they walked the entire park. Four respondents said they came to spend time at the duck pond, and four only walked the northern loop. Nine respondents walked the center area of the park, most referring to it as the walking loop, middle section, or Waldo Lake Loop.

What would you like to see changed or added?

Two respondents said no change was needed, and three said they wanted better pathway conditions for walking. Overall, answers were scattered but revolved around creating a better sense of space through physical maintenance and cleaning and the addition of sit-down spaces.

Other comments:

- Regular community cleanups for litter
- Police patrolling more often
- Better landscaping trees down dead
- Group activities for biking or exercise
- ADA-accessible benches or picnic tables
- Homeless cleanup
- More personable gathering
- More visible garbage cans
- More car-free road time in the mornings
- Benches at the reservoir and water views
- Need more restrooms at different locations; very dirty
- Playground
- Not enough handicapped parking: non-handicap persons are using the spots
- Separate bike path
- Return of outdoor grills
- Return of trout stocking.

What other parks do you use in the area? How do they compare?

Nineteen of 25 respondents said they only used D.W. Field Park. Six used other parks, two of which were playgrounds for their children.

- Easton Playground – not comparable
- Borderlands- has more wooded trails and more roots to trip on.
- Borderlands- D.W. Field Park users are nicer.
- Cape Cod Canal – more accessible for scooters and more well-maintained, but D.W. Field Park is quieter
- George Mandella Park- Playgrounds
- Ames Nole Abington- not comparable

Website Survey Link: While an online survey was not required, we chose to pose the same questions in an online survey in case those learning about the project or those who did not want to be surveyed in the park chose to take it later. There was only one respondent. The answers were very similar to those we spoke to in person.

How often do you visit the park?

Almost Daily

Were you aware of the ongoing Master Plan Process for D.W. Field Park?

A little bit

What is the best way for us to provide information about the park?

Email

When you use the park, do you mostly walk, ride a bicycle, or use a vehicle?

Walk

How could your safety be improved as a park user (pedestrian or vehicular)?

Somehow, slow down traffic and repaint the center line.

What areas of the park do you use most?

Oak Street to the Reservoir

Where do you feel the park needs the most improvements when considering maintenance?

Fixing some areas of roadway. Entering from South St., the cars go all the way into the walking to avoid rough pavement.

What would you like to see changed or added (use, paths, programming) at the park?

I would like to see more law enforcement; everywhere you go in the park, there is the strong smell of pot coming from cars.

What other parks do you use in the area? How do they compare?

Borderland State park. This is a longer drive for me, but there is no vehicle traffic, and it is much cleaner.

If you would like to get updates on the D.W. Field Park Initiative, please list your email here!
(Optional) (online survey only)

Respondent entered an email.

Support two Conway student-led public workshops by helping them organize the events and encourage public participation. (Complete)

See Conway Students completed project for more information at www.dwfpi.org.

Conway School provides a team of 2 graduate students to prepare concepts & designs for nature-based solutions and, if where appropriate, trail improvements and other outdoor facility improvements/additions for four locations in the northern portion of the park. The Steering Committee chose these sites. Their designs were guided by existing data from Avon, Brockton, and OCPC, the collection of their data, and community outreach (conducted previous and during their contract)

Hold one public stewardship event to increase awareness of the park and the climate-related risks it and the community face, as well as provide further opportunities for residents to remain engaged with the park. (Complete)

Press Release: <https://dwfieldparkinitiative.org/news/give-a-hoot-about-the-park-recap>

On Sunday, May 19th, 2024, OCPC and Wildlands Trust and additional partners from DWFPI held the spring event titled Give a Hoot About the Park. The event was heavily advertised within park flyers and shared through social media; this included creating an event page on Facebook with paid advertising. The event attracted nearly 200 participants despite the rainy weather the day of. The event was entirely free for all. This included live Owl Shows from Eyes on Owls, a catered lunch by Lady C&J Soulfood, and information from community groups tabling.



**GIVE A HOOT
ABOUT THE PARK**

A free community event featuring live owl shows with Eyes on Owls, lunch with Lady C&J Soulfood, family-friendly activities, and opportunities to get involved with D.W. Field Park.

Sunday, May 19 | 11 AM - 3 PM
D.W. Field Park
Gazebo on Lower Porter Pond
Parking @ 370 Oak St., Brockton



dwfpi.org/events



Produce and promote two educational exhibits and small events that raise awareness of climate change risks (focusing on urban flooding, riverine flooding, and heat risks) and enable action in the community. (Complete)

Manomet was subcontracted to conduct two educational exhibitions at local public libraries. The initial event was on June 8th, 2024, at the Avon Public Library, and a display was put up at the main branch of the Brockton Public Library on June 26th, 2024, where it will remain through the month of August. These displays contained information on Manomet's ongoing local work on Heat Islands and Heat Mapping. D.W. Field Park has been a large area of study for this work. The park can be up to 10 degrees cooler than downtown Brockton.

June 8, 2024: One education program at Avon Public Library

June 26 - August 2024: Heat mapping and resilience exhibit at Brockton Public Library

