



Community Preservation Act Funding Request

October 24, 2018

**Landscape design for the John F. Kennedy School
front schoolyard
at the corner of Sartwell Avenue and Cherry Street**

Submitted by the City of Somerville School Department
and The Department of Parks and Open Space

Community Preservation Committee Schoolyard Design Budget Request

CPA Budget Request *

\$70,000 Design

\$5,000 Survey

\$75,000.00

*Does not include any funds for the design of a synthetic turf field.

Other schoolyards the City has renovated, updated or expanded:

Completed:

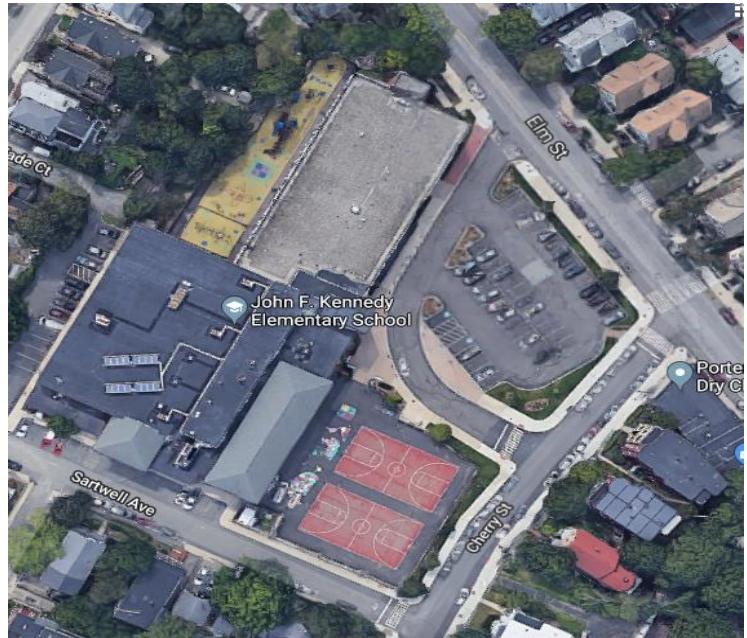
- East Somerville Community School Schoolyard (2013)
- Capuano Schoolyard (2013)
- Kennedy School Rear Tot-lot (2016)
- Argenziano Schoolyard (2017)
- Winter Hill Schoolyard (2018)

Planned:

- **Healey Schoolyard Design:** CPA Funded – Preliminary design work underway
- **Brown School Schoolyard Design:** CPA Funded – Community Process starts fall 2018
- **West Somerville Neighborhood School:** CPA Funded – Community Process starts fall 2018

John F. Kennedy School Front Schoolyard

At the corner of Sartwell Avenue and Cherry Street



What are the existing conditions at the school?

- The Kennedy School front schoolyard is an expanse of cracked and patched asphalt, devoid of any play features except for two full basketball courts and other court games painted on the surface.
- The school yard does not have any trees, shade, or natural vegetation.
- The current design is lacking basic recreation and educational opportunities that would improve the mental and physical health of the students (K-8).

John F. Kennedy School – Front Schoolyard Existing Conditions



Why is it so important to renovate our schoolyards?

Research shows:

- Quality schoolyard design and increased access to recreation can benefit children's physical and mental health and their academic performance. Play improves healthy childhood brain development and can lead to better schoolwork among preschool and primary-level students.
- Contact with nature has been tied to health in many studies. Time spent in and around tree-lined streets, parks, and playgrounds is linked to objective, long-term health outcomes including a reduction in depression and anxiety disorder, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obesity and migraines.
- A growing body of literature has shown that inequities in access to nature are particularly felt in urban areas, where children rely on parks and school grounds to access nature.
- Children with access to parks that include playgrounds have higher levels of physical activity than children with access to parks that lack playgrounds.
- Access to informal play in nature is important for mental restoration, positive and creative social play, physical activity and health and environmental care and competence .
- City children experience environmental inequities when they live in built environments that lack natural areas with diverse species and habitats.
- Children today show higher incidence of obesity, insufficient exposure to vitamin D, high rates of stress, anxiety and attention disorders and high incidence of bullying .
- City children experience environmental inequities when they live in built environments that lack natural areas with diverse species and habitats. This lack of access to nature, informal play and independent mobility has significant impacts on children's physical health and well-being. Informal play, in particular, is significant in that it promotes fields of free action, where children can independently explore.

City of Somerville Planning Objectives:

The City's Open Space and Recreation Plan prioritizes the need for schoolyard renovations.

Are there additional benefits for Somerville children and other residents? Yes!

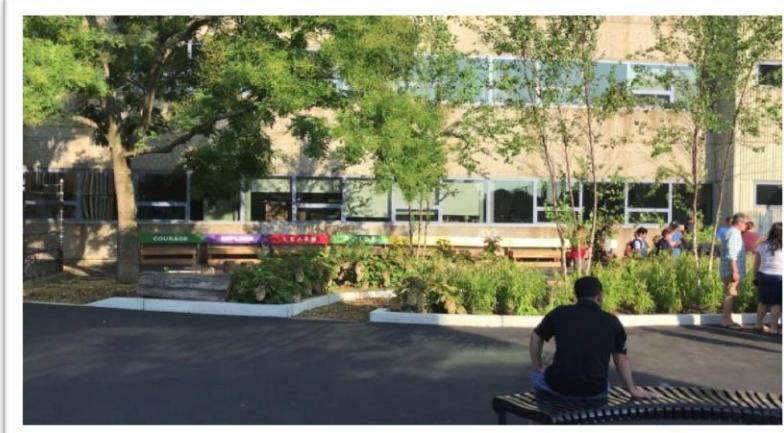
- Once renovated, the front schoolyard at the Kennedy School will serve as a public park and open space during non-school hours and over the summer.
- Schoolyards can provide space for City recreation programming and community events.

What will be the focus of the new design?

- Safety and security for all students.
- 100% ADA access.
- Imaginative, interactive, and age-appropriate play features.
- Opportunities for active and passive recreation and contact with nature.
- Outdoor classroom spaces to support teaching and learning.
- Improved points of access and connectivity between spaces and the school.

**What could the Kennedy
schoolyard
look like?**





How will the new playground design be developed?

- An initial community meeting will be held with school faculty, parents, and the neighborhood to gather input and establish the design criteria.
- The City will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select a Landscape Architecture team.
- In a series of community meetings held in partnership with the community and the Landscape Architect, the City's Parks and Open Space staff will oversee the design of the schoolyard, ensuring that it is tailored to the needs of the City and the Kennedy school students and faculty.

Who Supports this Project?

- Kennedy School parents, students, and neighborhood residents
- The Kennedy School Improvement Council
- Kennedy School Principal Mark Hurrie, teachers and staff
- The Somerville School Committee
- Superintendent of Schools Mary Skipper
- OSPCD Director of Parks and Open Space Arn Franzen
- OSPCD Director of Transportation and Infrastructure Brad Rawson
- Ward 5 Alderman Mark Niedergang
- Mayor Joseph A Curtatone



Thank you for your consideration !

