



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
MAYOR JAKE WILSON

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LUISA M. OLIVEIRA, ASLA
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC SPACE & URBAN FORESTRY

Date: February 19, 2026
To: The Honorable City Council
From: Luisa Oliveira, ASLA, Director of Public Space and Urban Forestry
Re: Item 26-0267 – Director of Public Space and Urban Forestry conveying information regarding the Kennedy Inclusive Schoolyard renovation.

Dear Honorable City Council,

The Public Space and Urban Forestry (PSUF) Division of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development submits this communication summarizing community engagement efforts to date for the Kennedy School Playground Renovation, outlining upcoming participation opportunities, and reviewing the anticipated project timeline.

Since project launch, Project Manager Jon Bronenkant, ASLA and the design team have conducted extensive outreach with the Kennedy School community, the broader neighborhood, advocacy groups and committees, as well as individual parents. Project Manager Bronenkant has met directly with school leadership and staff multiple times, conducted recess playground observations, distributed flyers, and performed outreach at school and community events. In addition, structured feedback was gathered through a series of surveys, including a teacher survey, a community-wide survey, and a second survey on schematic designs, each of which received robust responses.

A public meeting in December 2025 presented early findings and three design options, followed by additional input through online surveys, school-based discussions, and a roundtable on inclusive design and accessibility with the Special Education Parent Advisory Council and Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) members. Project Manager Bronenkant has also attended school professional development days as well as a SCPD meeting, and even created a lesson/game for teachers to use with children. These efforts, as well as all project updates, can be found on this project's SomerVoice page at <https://voice.somervillema.gov/kennedy-school-playground-renovation>.

Public engagement continues with a virtual community meeting on February 26th at 6:30 p.m. to present preferred designs and construction updates. Design development and construction



documents will advance through late winter and early spring; the project will be put out to bid with Phase 1 construction anticipated to begin in the summer of 2026.

To minimize disruption to the school, construction must be performed in two phases: Phase 1 is planned to begin immediately after school ends this summer and conclude before the start of school; Phase 2 is expected the following year and may extend beyond the summer window. Phase 1 includes subsurface stormwater management (beneath the parking lot), a reconfigured parking layout and entrance loop, accessible sidewalks, bike racks, seating, perimeter plantings, shade structures, expanded asphalt play space, perimeter fencing, and multi-sport goals. Phase 2 will replace the existing asphalt play area with poured-in-place rubber surfacing and install play equipment, graphics, plantings, and other playground amenities.

Ongoing engagement will ensure the final design reflects community priorities while maintaining opportunities for continued public input. We are excited to deliver Somerville's first inclusive schoolyard grounded in a thorough engagement process and much awaited by many.

Thank you,

Luisa Oliveira, ASLA
Director, PSUF