

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



THOMAS GALLIGANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LUISA OLIVEIRA, ASLA
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SPACE & URBAN FORESTRY

MEMORANDUM

March 3, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing to provide an update on Council Order #24-0070: "That the Director of Parks and Recreation (Public Space & Urban Forestry is a distinct division from "Parks & Recreation.") discuss how inclusive playground accessibility is being considered in future playground plans and redesign projects."

The Public Space and Urban Forestry (PSUF), responsible for the design and construction of Somerville's open space network, requires that all parks we design comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at the time of construction. We recognize, however, that the ADA framework is inadequate in many ways, and we have begun engaging in conversations with the Committee for Persons with Disabilities (CPD) and others to understand how we can go above and beyond ADA. One of CPD's initiatives that we are currently working on is the purchase of inclusive swings to be installed in City playgrounds, where possible, to assure most playgrounds have inclusive swings.

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance the inclusivity of our parks, we have also begun work on the Kennedy Schoolyard which will feature the City's first fully inclusive schoolyard/playground. We are presently reviewing design proposals through the City's procurement process and hope to select a firm soon. We look forward to a robust community process this Spring where we are all able to learn more and design a park for all. Updates on this project are found on the [SomervilleVoice](#) website.

Thank you,

Luisa Oliveira, ASLA
Director, Public Space & Urban Forestry

