

Roberts Field Advisory Committee
Friendship Park Playground Expectations Summary
1/28/18

The Roberts Field Master Plan ([found here](#)) was created in 2017, and includes community expectations and recommendations for Park improvements. Included is a new nature themed, inclusive Friendship Park playground designed to provide a safe and fun place where children of all abilities can play together barrier free, is developmentally appropriate for children with and without disabilities, has an open “sensory rich” environment, and encourages physical and social play for all.

Master Plan playground design expectations include a natural area(s) using landforms such as open green lawns, rolling hill(s), berms, tunnel(s), sandy digging area, and landscaping designed with the intent of bringing children and people closer to nature, and encouraging fun activities like digging in the sand, rolling down hills, or playing chase or hide and seek. The natural areas must be segregable for maintenance (mowing). A nature themed “scavenger hunt” playground activity has been discussed to connect the playground to the natural areas of the Park.

With the inclusive playground design, expectations are that the playground designer will consider using a mix of fully accessible surfaces (such as Poured-in-place rubber, mats/tiles, bonded rubber mulch and synthetic turf with rubber in fill, or turf) wood fiber, sand, grass, brick, concrete or other.

There is a strong desire for community input during the final playground design. A playground survey was recently completed which helps to define community expectations for equipment and design ([found here](#)). Additional public input opportunities have been discussed, including an elementary school “design day” and playground design public input session. “My Dream Playground” drawings have been collected by mail, email, and at the library. The 40+ drawings will be displayed at the library and online during the final design process.

There is strong community support to protect the trees within the playground construction area and in the Park and to add additional shade to the playground. The Master plan included an inventory of protected trees and Tree Protection Guidelines ([found here](#)).

Master Plan expectations include that taller and “noisier” equipment will be located away from abutting properties where possible. The Master Plan includes a sound mitigating landscaped berm buffer near abutting property, and the playground design should take advantage of existing sound and visual mitigation, and provided shade of existing trees. Landscaping is expected in the final design.

The brick pathway connecting the lower parking lot and playground will be maintained. Additionally, the Friends of Roberts Field is planning a “Buy a Brick” campaign to create a new brick path from the upper parking lot to the playground, possibly connecting to the existing brick pathway. Adding more brick pathways or a meditation labyrinth to the interior of the playground has been discussed, and could possibly be funded by the “Buy a Brick” campaign.

Funding for the new inclusive playground was provided at the Chelmsford 2017 Fall Town Meeting. The playground funding presentation ([found here](#)) outlined the community and committee expectations for the inclusive playground.

For the Community Build, the committee expects support and direction including volunteer recruitment, planning, scheduling, and oversight for construction activities. Fundraising help is also a plus. Volunteer recruitment plans are underway.