Town of Andover

THE PUBLIC REALM

PARK, PLAYSTEAD, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX PLAN

February 10, 2015

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PART I
INFORMATION GATHERING

August 2013 to December 2014

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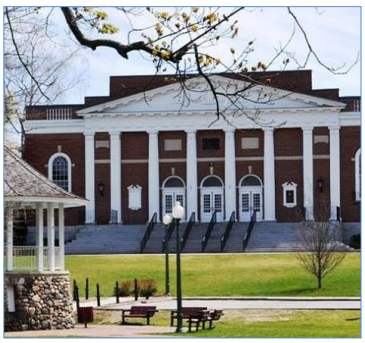
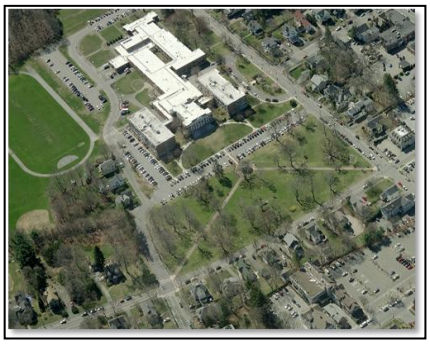
Andover's Public Realm
A Framework for Decision Making





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Introduction

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Frederick Law Olmstead set forth an ambitious agenda to provide every American with access to public open space. That agenda included public acquisition of huge amounts of land for public parks, parkways, playgrounds, nature preserves and regional park systems. In Olmstead's career, he had been involved in over 5,500 projects included 650 parks and recreation areas, 900 private estates and 270 subdivisions and is credited for Boston's Emerald Necklace (a system of parks linked by pathways and waterways in the greater Boston area). Parks are extremely important because they provide relief from streets and noise, parks open up places for "play", and create a common space where diverse populations can intermingle.

The Town of Andover followed suit with purchases of contiguous pieces of land between the years of 1850 and 1910 for educational buildings and for parkland open space in and around the downtown area. Today, the "open space" area surrounded by Chestnut Street, Whittier Court, Bartlet Street and Morton Street is approximately 20.4 acres. It is comprised of the "Park", the "Playstead", the future Cormier Youth Center, Doherty Middle School, the Town Offices, the Center at Punchard, and the School Administration Offices.

The term "open space" is not sufficiently explicit. The two words together can mean *private* open space, *common* open space or *public* open space. For the purposes of this document, we are focusing on *public open space*. Public open space is territory that is owned and managed by a public agency for everybody's benefit. It is up to government to decide the form and character of the public open space provided. As a result of the pioneering work of Olmsted, government agencies tend to be specific about the design, landscaping and use of public parks. This document is designed to help our government officials over the next couple of decades, make educated decisions about the 20.4 acre area comprising the Park, Playstead and Municipal Complex.

Aerial of the Park, Playstead and Municipal Complex

(Improvements to Doherty Middle School and new Cormier Youth Center are superimposed)

History of the Public Realm Planning Process

The section below is <u>ONLY a recap of the planning process</u> to show that a comprehensive planning process did take place. The planning process included numerous public meetings (over eight) and input from many people of various opinions and from numerous sources. The section captures all that was said and submitted. The information in this section is NOT the recommendation section. It is for informational purposes ONLY.

February 2012

The Andover Master Plan was completed. Goals included: **Goal OS-6** Community Gardens and Small Parks. The town should support the creation of community gardens in several neighborhoods across town, especially for people with disabilities, children, apartment dwellers, seniors and families; **Goal OS 6.3** Create pocket parks in denser neighborhoods around town; Goal OS 9.3 Design and build accessible playgrounds throughout town; and **Goal OS 9.4** Redesign existing parks and playgrounds to be accessible.

August 2013

The Andover Planning Board (the "Board") first discussed the idea of creating a Park Master Plan at a public meeting. At the meeting, the Board discussed creating a scope of work for the Board to follow over the next year while drafting a plan. The Board opened up the meeting to the public and created a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (S.W.O.T.) or ("SWOT") analysis.

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<u>Strengths</u>

- Location
- Beautiful
- Walk-ability
- Tranquil
- Weekend/Evening parking
- Actively used
- Multi-use
- A park in downtown
- People love it
- Gathering place

<u>Weaknesses</u>

- Daytime parking
- Lack of trash collection at events
- Teens at night/security
- Capacity issues at events
- Monitoring
- Signage from downtown
- Lack of play area for kids

<u>Opportunities</u>

- Create better way-finding/signage
- Improve existing fields
- Add more amenities (garden, trees, bike racks, playground, trash containers etc)
- Improve lighting (low level lighting)
- Access to utilities and bathrooms
- Diversity of trees
- More park volunteers
- Organization of events
- Improve benches
- Improve track
- Create story signage or dedication signage

<u>Threats</u>

- Funding for improvements
- Funding for maintenance
- In time improvements decline
- Too much light for neighbors
- Brook under the Park
- Water is still an issue
- Added impervious area
- Night concerts

A SWOT Analysis is a simple but useful framework for analyzing strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats that are faced. It helps to focus on strengths, minimize threats, and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available in a time constrained environment. The SWOT analysis was conducted at a public meeting and captured the thoughts and opinions of those that attended the meeting that particular evening. It is input only not a list of recommendaitons.

October 2013

The Board collected ideas and proposals from various Town departments, boards, commissions and local citizen groups. Below is a summary of all of the input received by the Board:

Preservation Commission

- Maintain large gathering space
- Maintain green and open space with a minimum of intrusions
- Develop a plan (and design process) for the location of future monuments
- Sidewalk on the Chestnut street side of the park
- Improve water and electrical service to the bandstand
- Improve bathroom accessibility
- Insure tree and landscape variety

Andover Department of Community Services

- Winter community ice skating in a small area
- Possibly additional day events

Patriotic Holiday Committee

- Respect the Memorials in the Park
- No permanent construction in the park
- Memorials and monuments shall not be moved
- No Playstead signage that would detract from Playstead memorial status
- Town work with PHC to determine an appropriate footprint for a playground in the Playstead

Andover Cultural Council

- Performance Space (expand current stage, improve sound, create new structure in the form of a shell or small amphitheater)
- Sculpture (integrated with natural landscape, garden)
- Visual Art (permanent or temporary)

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Residents:

- Playground/area in the park
- Remove cannon
- Improve seating
- Picnic table(s)
- Add color (flowers)
- Plow pathway between parking lots in winter
- Create better way-finding/signage
- Improve existing fields
- Add more amenities (garden, trees, bike racks, playground, trash containers etc)
- Improve lighting (low level lighting)
- Diversity of trees
- More park volunteers
- Organization of events
- Improve benches
- Improve track
- Create story signage or dedication signage
- Smoke-free in park
- Fountain or other water feature
- Entrance way
- Create a plan for future improvements
- Improve waste and electrical service to the bandstand
- Access to utilities and bathrooms
- Winter community ice skating in a small area
- Possibly additional day events
- Performance space (includes sound, staging, small amphitheater….)
- Sculpture integrated with natural landscape (provide reason for people to visit the park)
- Sculpture garden
- Visual Art (permanent or temporary)
- Seating areas near building in underutilized space
- Traffic circulation and parking improvements
- Develop a plan (and design process) for the location of future monuments
- Sidewalk on the Chestnut street side of the park (additional sidewalks or paths)
- Maintain green and open space with a minimum of intrusions
- Maintain large gathering space
- Insure tree and landscape variety
- Capture history of Andover in a better way (historic markers or story snippets)

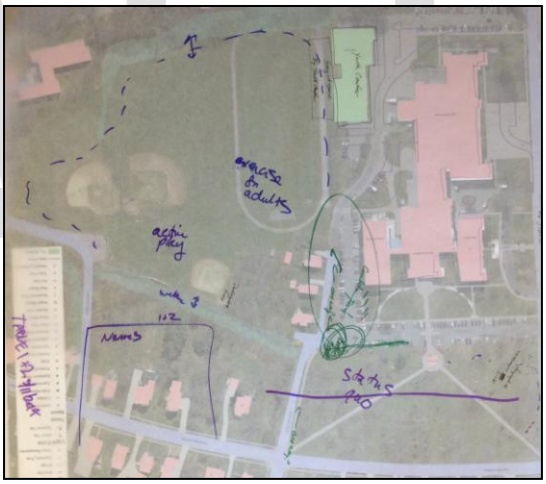
The information gathered during the SWOT analysis, public comment and the written submissions are not recommendations. Again, it is to show the wide variety of ideas that citizens of Andover have when it comes to the public realm. The information in this section is for informational purposes ONLY.

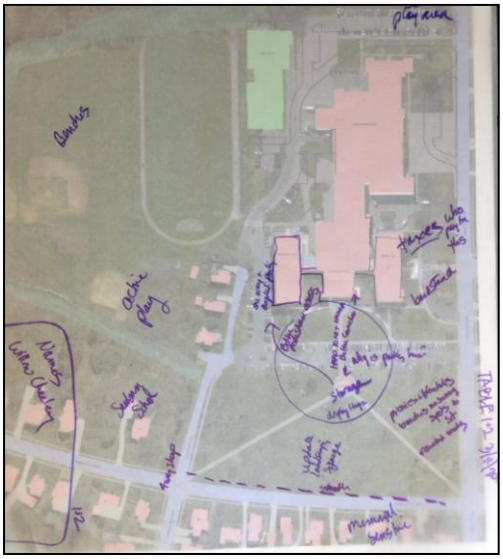
November 2013
The tree inventory (57 existing trees of 20 different varieties) and the chronology of the area (1850 to present) were reviewed. The Patriotic Holiday Committee presented to the Planning Board an overview including a history and photographs of the memorials as well as a list of recommendations.

December 2013
Design Charrette was cancelled due to a snow storm.
The regulations that govern the Park, "Town of Andover Regulations for the Use of the Park" were updated and approved by Board of Selectmen on December 2, 2013.

March 2014
A public participation Design Charrette was organized by the Board. Approximately 50 people participated along with the Planning Board. They divided up and sat at six tables. People were expected to interact in a collaborative manner. Each table was provided a map of the area with trace paper and they were instructed to have a discussion about the area and what improvements could be made and then use the provided markers to draw their ideas on the trace paper. At the end a representative from each table presented their findings, ideas and thoughts.

April 2014
A summary of the Design Charrette was finalized.





SUMMARY

"Group A" concluded that parking in the area can be tight during business hours and events on the weekends, and the consensus of their group included a recommendation that the police could be more lax during events. More Elm trees should be planted. The bandstand should be improved and/or enlarged to be made more functional. A play area should be added in the park for younger children and a playground in the larger field that could accommodate an older population. The group encourages that there be more landscaping and more seating options. Also, the group felt that adding interactive sculptures or some sort of visual element would aesthetically improve the Park. The group would like to improve or add sidewalks around the perimeter of the campus for better pedestrian safety that could also serve as a meandering walking path or track. They suggested that the field design be studied to better accommodate all of the different youth sports. If the fields are improved, they may be able to fit a basketball court in to that area. The

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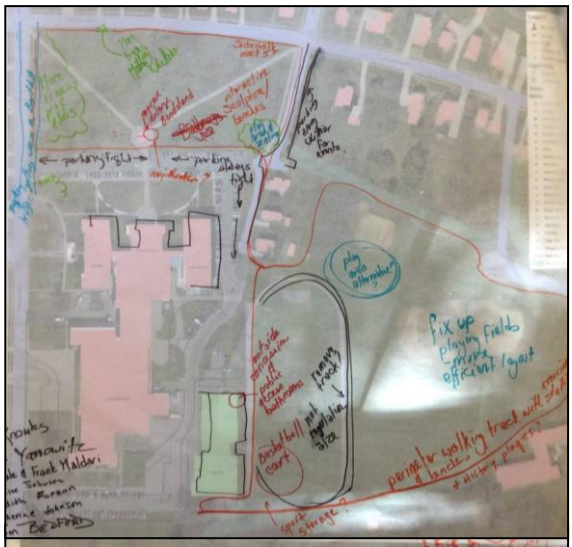
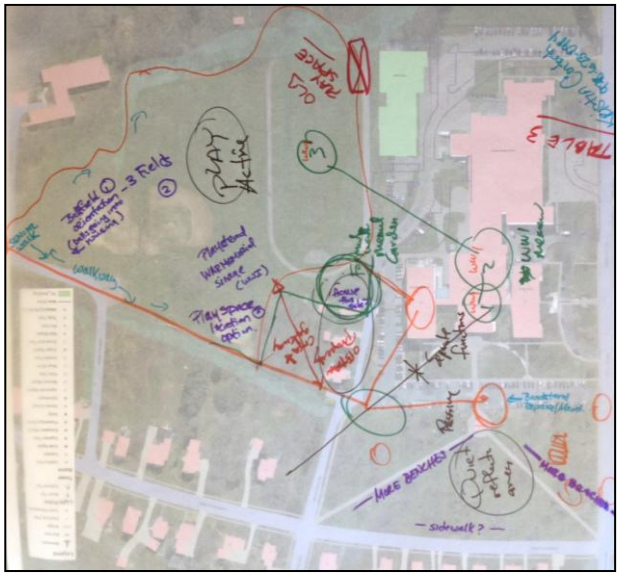
addition of public restrooms and a concession stand would complement all of the sports and activities held in the area.



"Group B" stated that their group had a lot of the same ideas as the previous table, especially with regards to connectivity and parking (see "Group A"). They felt that it is often inconvenient and sometimes dangerous driving to the Town Offices. They want to make sure that sensitivity to the memorials in the Park is maintained, and that if any changes are to be made to the Park, that the significance of the memorials is kept in mind. One suggestion is to incorporate a handicap accessible trail to connect the memorials, because right now, if you are handicapped you cannot physically get to the memorials.

"Group C" pointed out that the table included veterans, a member of Youth Services, a member of the Housing Authority, a member of the Planning Board and a mother of young children. They explained that they wanted to acknowledge that the campus includes two World War I Memorials. They felt that there should be better signage indicating that. They would like to see a play space in the Playstead area as well as a walkway for the seniors to better access the Center at Punchard that could be connected to a larger walkway space. They would prefer to keep a separation between the quiet Park and the play area of the Playstead, and that in their opinion, the functions are separate, one is active the other passive. Some of the ball fields can be reoriented to promote positive play for all of the different activities to take place at one time, and to keep balls out of the neighboring properties. They would like to see the Bandstand repaired and for more benches to be added to the Bartlet Street side of the Park. They suggested that a sidewalk be added to the Chestnut Street side of the Park and felt that this may keep dog walkers from passing through the Park. They feel the Town should obtain the three houses on Whittier Court.



"Group D" stated that the group talked about the different interests in the Park and the concern for the veterans'

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memorials. They also talked about how the Park is used for many different purposes including Clown Town and Art in the Park. They were in disagreement on play areas, some felt that the Park should have a small play area for preschool aged children, and others felt that a larger play area behind the Doherty School would be more appropriate where there is more room and flexibility. One idea is to take down the bandstand and put an amphitheater in its place. Some felt it would be nice to move the memorials around this amphitheater while others felt the memorials should stay in place. They suggested pathways to the memorials so that people can access them as well as more benches in the Park that can be gift opportunities. There were suggestions for tables for people to be able to sit down to play chess or checkers as well as more native trees and more lighting in the area. Some in the group also felt that the Park should be a more inclusive Town Park and not a neighborhood Park.

"Group E" felt that the memorials should be respected. They suggested a gathering area for small groups to meet in the Park with benches that could maybe be enclosed by a wall in one corner of the Park. They would like sidewalks on Chestnut Street and around the perimeter to more closely connect the two spaces of the Park and the Playstead. The field layout in the Playstead should be redesigned to make a more efficient use of that space (maybe change direction of the track and fields). Some drainage could be provided so that some of the areas that are wet could be used. If ever possible, they would include artificial turf and lights for the large field. They showed improvements to the Stowe field to the south side of the Doherty School with the potential of a tot lot at the Bartlet Street side of that area where the foundation for the former Stowe School is. They said some signage would be helpful to offer direction to the different areas. The Center at Punchard could use an improvement to the façade. They would also welcome some sort of walking connection or path that allowed connection through the whole campus. The group would also like the bandstand, canon and bridge to stay, but were divided on if a sandbox should be added. Something could maybe be done with the bandstand so that it is better utilized because during the concert series, the bands don't even use the bandstand because it is too high.

Overall, the attendees were open to new ideas and making improvements to the Public Realm. Not every idea was agreed upon, however a few major themes emerged including

- better pedestrian and vehicular circulation,
- better connectivity,
- increased seating opportunities,
- refurbishing/replacing worn or weathered elements,
- creating a place for play, and
- respecting the existing memorials and adhering to a public process for any new elements in the area.

The large amount of ideas and information gathered during the Design Charrette are not formal recommendations. Again, it is to show the wide variety of ideas that citizens of Andover have when it comes to the public realm. The information in this section is for informational purposes ONLY.

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May and June 2014
The Goals and Objectives were drafted based on the common themes arising through the process. A formal draft plan was created.

October 2014
The Planning Board reviewed the draft plan and began the task of formalizing the recommendations and creating a path for implementation.

December 2014
The Planning Board reviewed a second draft of the plan. Additional input from the audience identified that there is confusion with the input section and the recommendation section. Also, additional editing is needed to clearly outline the intensions of the plan, the basis for the plan, the recommendations in the plan and the next steps needed.

February 2015
The Planning Board reviewed a third draft of the plan.

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The Park, Playstead and surrounding areas in Andover*
A Chronology

The section below is an abridged history of the area. The knowledge we gain from knowing the history of the progress and development gives the process a total sum of the events and decisions. That sum product helps our actions in the present and for future decisions.

1850 Andover resident Benjamin Punchard donated $50,000 to the town, which was used to create a free high school open to all residents (currently the location of the Andover town offices).

1853 The Trustees of the Punchard Free School purchased 8.5 acres of cow pasture from the well-respected Joseph Richardson for $2100.

1856 The "Punchard Free School" opened. In 1868 a fire destroyed the original building and a new building was rebuilt and opened in 1871 (arson was suspected).

1870 Town of Andover purchased the land from the Punchard Trustees where the school was located for $6000.

1897 Andover set up a Park Commission. The Park Commission was concerned with the large tract of land in the center of town known as Richardson Field.

1899 Additional land was purchased Richardson Field from the Richardson Family to increase the size of land already owned by the town. The Common or Central Park eventually became simply known as "The Park".

1900 The west end of the Park was developed first with paths and gardens.

1902 Punchard Free School name is officially changed to Punchard High School (because it is a public school). In 1915 the school expanded and built an addition.

1904 A group of private citizens was working to purchase a larger plot nearby for a playground.

1904-05 Funding approved to build a central heating plant east of the schools.

1904-06 Stately trees and ornamental shrubs were planted and elegant gravel walks were constructed. The stone bridge was built over the exposed water feature, Rogers Brook.

1906 Town of Andover raised funds to purchase the area now known as "the Playstead", as an athletic facility for Punchard High School. At times in was not being used by Punchard, other townspeople were welcome to use it.

1907 There was a small forest of Hemlocks and Pine trees that were planted to enhance the school grounds but had grown too large and blocked the view of the school from Punchard Street. It was recommended that 17 trees be cut down.

1910 Town of Andover purchased additional land to increase the size of the land holdings.

1913 The Bandstand was built (Town Meeting voted to spend $1000 - $500 for a bandstand and $500 for entertainment). The base was built with the same fieldstone used for the bridge over Rogers Brook. Within the structure is a tool shed. Until **1941**, the Andover Brass Band played Sunday afternoons in the Park until it disbanded due to World War II.

On the east side of the bandstand was a small pond that Rogers Brook ran through. There was periodic flooding in the Park and surrounding area due to Rogers Brook.

1914 – 1918 World War I.

1924 Bleachers were built and moved seasonally from baseball diamond to football field.

1929 – 1939 Great Depression and little or no funds were spent on improving the Park.

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1937-38 Playstead is improved with a football field, track and baseball diamonds (potentially using Works Progress Administration "WPA" funds).

1932 A World War I Howitzer cannon is placed in the park by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The German cannon was a trophy captured by American forces.

1933 A Special Town Meeting appropriated money for the erection of a junior high school, a "common assembly hall" and a gymnasium. The assembly hall and gymnasium, with school related uses below, connected the existing Punchard High School (now the town offices) with the new junior high school (now the Center at Punchard and the School Administration Offices). The new school was named the Clara A. Putnam Junior High School, although it was commonly called "Andover junior high." Clara Putnam was an Andover teacher, naturalist and bird expert. The new auditorium and gymnasium building were named the "Andover Memorial Building".

1933 The Playstead is included as part of the Memorial in an amendment at the Special Town Meeting.

1936 Memorial Auditorium was completed.

1936 Historic Rogers Brook Flood occurred.

1939 In the Memorial Auditorium, a bronze tablet was installed called the War Memorial Tablet and was displayed in the foyer.

1939- 1945 World War II.

1948 The School Committee voted that the only plaques or memorials which have historical or education significance for children shall be considered for the placement in school buildings.

1950 The Memorial Circle family housing complex was built. It was originally affordable housing for returning veterans, which eventually included Korean War veterans. There is a memorial containing the information on the Morton Street side of the complex.

1950 – 1953 Korean War.

1957 Chestnut Court is built.

1950's-1960's The Park area slowly aged into disrepair (overgrown gravel walkways, missing stairs on bandstand, stones were missing from the bridge that covered Roger's Brook). Whittier Street was connected to Bartlet Street and people would park their cars near the Bandstand.

1951+/- First Andover Little League field built in the southwest corner of the Playstead.

The Playstead was where most people went to play (not in the Park). Baseball and football were played in the Playstead. All outdoor high school athletic events were held in the Playstead.

1952 Central Elementary School was built next to, not attached to, Punchard High School. The building was renovated and renamed the Doherty School in 1972. In 1982, it was renamed Doherty Junior High School. In 1988, It was renamed its current name of Doherty Middle School.

Also, located on Bartlet Street were the John Dove School (named for industrialist and philanthropist, originally known as the Center District School, in existence 1876-1952), the Stowe School (named for Harriet Beecher Stowe, originally known as the Central Grammar School and burned in 1981 (suspected arson), in existence 1888-1971 and demolished in 1982), and the Jackson School (named for the first minister of West Parish Church Reverend Samuel Jackson, was in existence 1910-1981 and demolished in 1982). **NOTE:** There is a much more comprehensive history on the evolution of the schools located on Bartlet Street. If more detail is sought, see list compiled by James Batchelder that can be found in the book *A Century of Change* by Eleanor Richardson. Also, Julie Pike created an excellent presentation called the Lost Schools on Bartlett Street that outlines the history of the schools in the area.

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As part of the educational cluster, there was a playground located just to the east of the Stowe School. The playground bordered the Playstead. It had swings, see-saws and large pipe structures for climbing. A playground existed in the area until 1980.

1950+ Clowntown started in the area behind the Junior High School and moved to West Elementary for more room (see 1980+ for more information).

1954 Hurricane Carol tumbled several large mature trees in the Park.

1954 – 1975 Vietnam War.

1957 Punchard High School is closed and replaced by "Andover High School" on Shawsheen Road (now West Middle School). The building once called Punchard High School is now the Andover Town Offices building.

1960+ Recreation Department (now the Department of Community Services "DCS") events were held in the park (such as Easter Egg Hunt, Peanut Carnival, etc.).

1960 +/- The Park was used every May and June by the Junior High School for an open house, concert, choral society and a student art show.

1967 Grandview Terrace is built.

1968 The Town of Andover engineered a culvert to bury the brook and end significant flooding of the area. Grass was planted on top of the concrete.

1968 Clara A. Putnum Junior High ("Andover Junior High") was officially renamed East Junior High. It is now the School Administration offices.

1968 A new Andover High School is built next to the old site. The old site was converted to West Middle School. The Collins Center was built in 1982.

1970 Organized Memorial Day events take place on the steps and in front the Memorial Auditorium. Fourth of July events take place in the Playstead.

1971 Art in the Park began (currently held annually in September and organized by Andover Artist Guild).

1972 Family music festival concerts began (currently held on Wednesday evenings annually July through August)

1974 Crafts in the Park began (currently held annually in May, originally ran by American Field Service now organized by Christ Church, Andover).

1980 Organized town sports were regularly scheduled in the Playstead.

1980+ Clowntown relocated from West Elementary to the Playstead and finally relocated to the Park.

1980+ Improvements were made to the Park. Park began to rekindle its original purpose of being a gathering place for townspeople.

1980+ Preschool events – two mornings per month during July and August (Fire Engine Day, Monster Truck Day, Teddy Bear Picnic and Luau Day).

1980 Playground associated with elementary schools is taken down.

1982 Stowe Court is built by the Andover Housing Authority.

1984 The Bandstand was refurbished (the stairs were gone, fieldstone foundation was damaged and it reeked of mold and other smells).

1984 Town of Andover converted the Junior High and Punchard High School into Town Offices.

1984 As part of the building renovation, the street that separated the school complex/town offices and the Park was discontinued and two parking lots were created (that exist today).

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1990+ Community Yard Sales are established (there are two per year, one on Earth Day and one in the fall).

2000 Andover, England representatives visit. An area of shrubs is planted along the Rogers Brook path as a dedication to Andover, England (and a "twinning" ceremony was held).

2004 World War II Monument** (northeast corner of The Park) is dedicated.

2006 Vietnam Monument (east side of The Park) is dedicated.

2008 Korean Monument (southeast corner of The Park)

2009 The Cannon (originally placed in the park in 1932) was restored and replaced back in the park.

2010 Memorial Auditorium renovation was completed. The Gymnasium and Playstead were re-dedicated on Memorial Day.

2010 Board of Selectmen approved flying larger flags donated by Veteran's families on the Bandstand during Patriotic events such as Memorial Day and the 4th of July.

2011 Memorial Auditorium front entrance and step renovation was completed and Auditorium re-dedicated.

2012 Cormier Youth Center location and funding approved at a Special Town Meeting. The building will be located behind Doherty Middle School adjacent to the Playstead.

2012 Senior Center is officially renamed "The Center at Punchard, Celebrating Life's Experiences".

2013 New Circulation and parking areas created adjacent to the Doherty Middle School. The Youth Center began construction.

Acknowledgements: Bill Dalton, Jim Batchelder, Julie Pike, Cal Deyermond, Mike Burke, Christine Metzemaekers, Mary Montbleau, staff at the Andover Historical Society, members of The Center at Punchard , the book "A Century of Change" by Eleanor Richardson, numerous Articles in the Andover Townsman, Lawrence Registry of Deeds and past planning documents. If I have missed anyone, I sincerely apologize!

The name "Playstead" is a local word and the first English language use occurred in an 1887 Boston Evening Traveler article that stated the children of Boston were lucky to be able to go to Franklin Park and play at the playstead.

****Monuments are dedicated to the people who served their country in time of war, including those who were killed and wounded.***

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PART II
COMPILATION OF DATA AND RECOMMENDATIONS

February 2015

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Goals

1.) ***Create and maintain a welcoming space that encourages people of all ages and abilities, and supports a sense of community (a multi-generational community campus)***

The Park and Playstead attract a wide range of visitors of all ages, residents and non-resident visitors, those seeking moments of peace and reflection and those seeking a place to romp. Future park design should continue to foster opportunities for people to gather, to meet up with friends, to strike up a conversation with a stranger, to enjoy each other as neighbors.

The school, Cormier Youth Center, Center at Punchard and Town Offices are a destination for many and should provide an environment with which all residents experience is comfortable, safe and welcoming.

2.) ***Create a space that promotes a healthy and active way of life***

A well designed park with symbolic functional and aesthetic improvements can help Andover maintain a healthy, active and diverse sense of community. Activities and events such as DCS's Teddy Bear Picnic and Firefighter Day attract the preschool crowd. Both families and seniors bring their picnic blankets on Wednesday evenings in the summer to enjoy the concerts. Clown Town is a beloved annual event as well as Art in the Park and Crafts in the Park. It is important to continue to promote, plan for, and enjoy community activities and events.

3.) ***Preserve dignity of existing veteran memorials***

Given the small size of the park and the many legitimate uses, care must be taken to situate each physical element. To date, four significant veteran's memorials are dispersed within the Park. Memorial Auditorium and the Playstead are also veteran memorials in the area. The memorials and monuments should be cared for and maintained and accessible to all.

The Town should follow a public process with regards to any new memorial or monument and shall involve the Patriotic Holiday Committee. This process should allow for an opportunity to consider innovative and inspired approaches to design and location as well as public input.

4.) ***Provide continuous stewardship of the public realm and plan for the future***

It is important to update public facilities in response to continually changing public demand. The Town should manage the public realm efficiently and economically, renovate and reposition the area to promote its use, and maintain and value the area for future generations

The area has a one hundred and fifty year history (see abridged chronology attached) and as time has progressed, many changes have occurred. Improvements and elements have come and gone, and the use of the Park, Playstead and municipal area has changed to some extent over the years. However, the area is, and has always been, for the use of and for all the people of Andover.

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An Action Plan for the Public Realm

The next section is a list of issues and recommendations that evolved from the discussions. There are additional steps needed to implement any recommendations and additional public participation is needed. Public participation ensures that all voices are heard.

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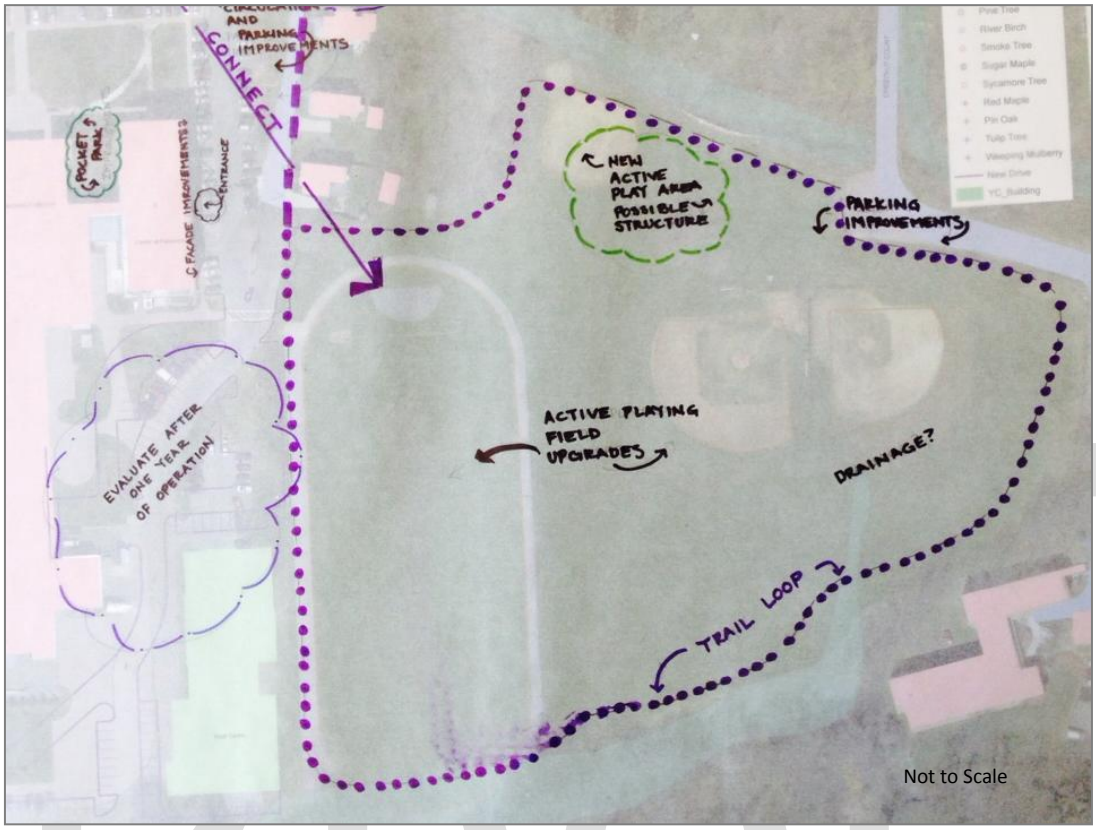
1.)Playstead



Issue

- Lack of playground or an active play structure in the area.

Recommendation

- It is the general consensus that the greater area of the public realm should have a larger play structure of some sort that appeals to children of all ages. The town should work closely with the Patriotic Holiday Committee and the athletic organizations on the scale, footprint and location of any structure in the Playstead. This play structure should be located in the Playstead so that it complements the existing playing fields.

  Note: there may be an area by the upper Stowe field for a small play area for younger children.

Playstead Continued…

Issue

- Circulation.

Recommendation

- It is the general consensus that a trail loop should be considered to connect the Park and the municipal buildings into a completely connected area for the public.

Issue

- Condition and orientation of the playing fields.

Recommendation

- The field layout should be studied and as a result may be redesigned to make more efficient use of the space and of the sports currently played in Andover.

  If possible, incorporate other field sports such as lacrosse, basketball and softball into a multi-functional sports complex.

Other recommendations and improvements to consider include:

- Drainage;
- Parking;
- Artificial turf;
- Lighting;
- Seating;
- Restrooms; and a
- Concession stand.

This will require additional study and public participation.

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2.)The Park

Issue

- Lack of designated area for small children

Recommendation

- Create a focal intergenerational passive gathering space

Combining public open space with other functions keeps the space lively. A designed gathering space can be an environment of varied materials that encourages unstructured, free play. It could be designed to prompt creativity and sensory exploration for children and at the same time provide seating and landscaping that encourages the gathering of care-givers and citizens.

This type of area can be:

- inter-generational with a primary focus on low impact activities;
- seating to gather and converse;
- an open aesthetic with low barriers for safety as needed (no fencing);
- elements for young children that are educational, interpretive and playful but non-traditional;
- small scale so that young children are engaged for less than an hour but not an entire afternoon;
- be unique but fit within the character and function of the park.

Elements that may be included: plants, rocks, seating, lawn, pathways (for exploration), small scale bridge, sense of place small scale structure(s), diverse textures, sand, elements that encourage balancing or stepping, elements that are accessible, a climbing hill or mound, garden, sculpture, visual art, and/or multipurpose seating. Also, there may be an opportunity to incorporate a universal game (such as chess or checkers) into the area for intergenerational integration.

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Examples of items that may be included into an intergenerational gathering space

A possible location for such an area could be where the shrubbery representing “Rogers Brook” is currently located.

There are 10 mature crabapple trees that border some shrubs (which have grown tremendously since originally planted when the folks of Andover England visited in 2000). The original purpose and dedication of outlining Rogers Brook has been lost with the current condition. The trees and shrubs act as a divider within the park and could be redesigned to connect the park. Improvements may help to re-establish the original purpose of the “twinning” agreement.

For example: relocate the shrubs to provide a natural fence along a new Chestnut Street sidewalk (or simply just removed), and redesign the area closest to the existing stone bridge to be an imagination space that incorporates an acknowledgment of the brook, the Mary French bench and tree, as well as the Andover England bench. Today, the area seems to “divide” the Park rather than “connect” the park. This is a section of the Park that is already disturbed and this area may be able to integrate the recommendations and ideas from the design charrette and public meetings.

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Recommendation

- Hold a public meeting to discuss opportunities in this location for future consideration.

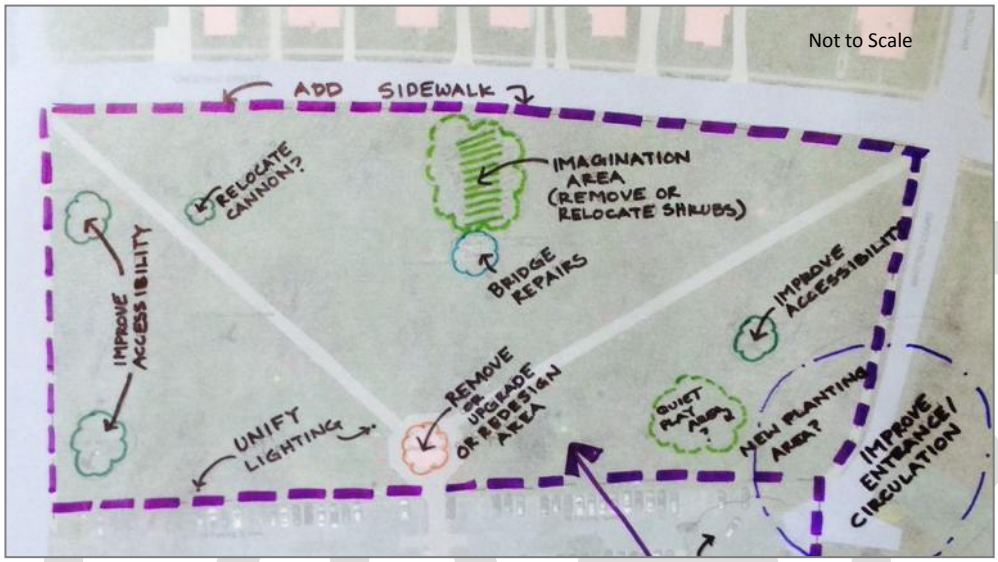
Park continued…

Issue

- Lack of continuous sidewalk around the Park

Recommendation

- Continue sidewalk along Chestnut Street and along municipal parking lot for a continuous loop for pedestrians.



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Issue

- Lighting and Seating

Recommendation

- Standardize lighting system and upgrade areas that are dark. Reset benches and replace deteriorating benches. Possibly create an area or seating that incorporates a picnic table(s).

Issue

- Accessibility to memorials and monuments and other dedicated spaces in the Park (Playstead and Town Offices)

Recommendation

- Connect the memorials and monuments/dedicated spaces in the Park by providing an accessible path. NOTE: there is no recommendation to move a memorial or monument.
- There should be a formal process or set of procedures for future placement of memorials and/or monuments in the Park including a public meeting and public

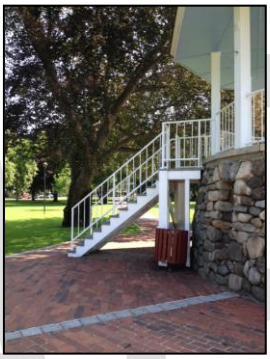
comment opportunity with a focus on future connectivity, accessibility, design, context and sensitivity. The Patriotic Holiday Committee should be involved in the process.

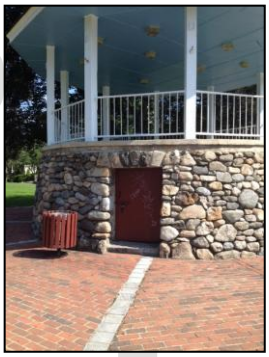
- Create a way to link the existing memorials and monuments in their current location into a walk of honor and reflection.

Over time, instrumental persons to the success of the town (public servants, volunteers, elected officials) pass away during their service to the community. Several remembrance sites are scattered throughout the area (a sitting area, some Magnolia trees, etc). Consider locating a small "memorial grove" for future dedications or creating a plaque acknowledging all persons in an area that may be added to in such circumstances.

Issue

- The Bandstand





Recommendation

- The bandstand is not generally used as it once was in the 1930's for its true purpose as a bandstand. The orientation, size and height are constraints.

There are a few options to consider:

1.) Move the stairs so that the entrance is from the south side (easier access) and improve utilities.
2.) Lower and/or enlarge the bandstand and move the stairs. By lowering the bandstand it would make it more accessible.
3.) Remove the bandstand and rebuild a space that is functional for the events of today and for the next few decades (possibly and amphitheater).

Other Recommendations for the Park

- Adopt and follow a management plan to plant diverse native trees to replace dead, dying or diseased trees;
- Maintain open spaces within the Park;
- Improve utilities within the Park;
- Increase recycling options and improve trash removal practices;
- Continue winter activities such as ice skating in the Park; and
- Add visual art and bicycle racks to the park.

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3.)Center at Punchard/School Administration Building

The Center at Punchard would like to extend the center beyond the walls of the municipal building into the surrounding open space.

Issue

- Unappealing and uninviting entrance way.

Recommendation

- Create a more appealing "user-friendly" entrance.

Issue

- Isolated center.

Recommendation

- This building is in the center of the complex and should have better connections to the Park, Playstead and parking areas. Create better connections for the center to connect to the rest of the public realm.

Issue

- Uninviting landscaped areas.

Recommendation

- Reinvigorate the "Senior Garden" and surrounding landscape. Create an inviting area between the Center and the Auditorium – possibly include sculpture, seating, a garden, etc. This could be a nice outside inviting space.

Issue

- Bricks and veneer are deteriorating.

Recommendation

- Make capital improvements to the exterior of the building.

Issue

- Parking constraints and lack of connectivity to area.

Recommendations

- Revise street and parking pattern and include a sidewalk or pathway to connect the Park, Center and the Playstead.
- Purchase homes along Whittier Street to provide additional land for connections, green space and vehicular and pedestrian movement.

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4.)Town Offices/Doherty Middle School

Issue

- Signage

Recommendation

- Create a comprehensive and consistent signage program for the entire area.

5.) Cormier Youth Center

Issue

- Unknown

Recommendation

- Evaluate after one year of full operation.

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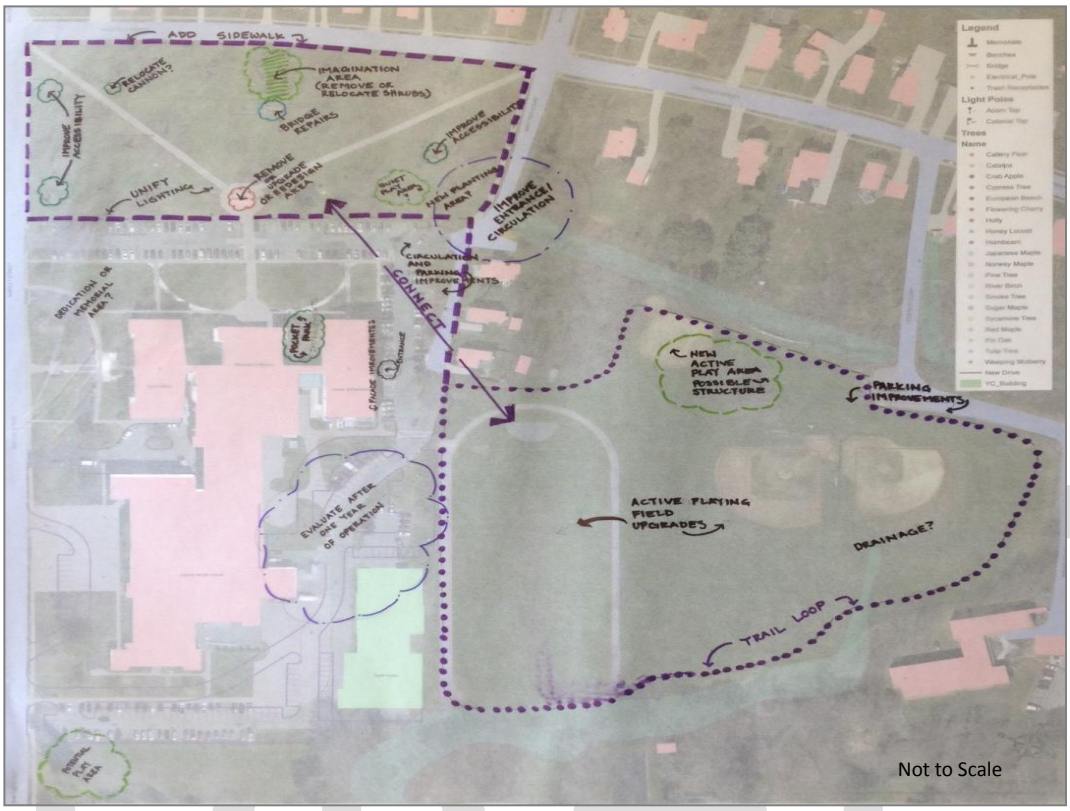
6.) Overall Complex – The Public Realm



Issue

- Connectivity between the Park, Playstead and Municipal Complex.

Recommendations

- There needs to be better connectivity within the public realm. Creating a loop sidewalk or path system (or a combination of both) that encircles the Park and leads to the municipal buildings and into the Playstead would help to create a continuous trail for pedestrians.

- Long term goal may be to purchase the homes along Whittier Street to provide additional land for connections, green space and vehicular and pedestrian movement.

Issue

- Funding and timing.

Recommendation

- The Town should apply to Grants that will help implement the recommendations (e.g. Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs Grant Opportunities), encourage citizen fundraising (private efforts to implement recommendations), and work with Plant and Facilities to incorporate certain improvements in the Capital Improvement Plan (connectivity, vehicular circulation improvements, etc) and consider phasing the implementation over time with priorities foremost in the process.

Inventory of Trees in the Park

Currently there are fifty seven (57) trees that represent twenty (20) varieties.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Native/ Not Native	Count	Additional information
Callery Pear	*Pyrus calleryana*	Not native	2	Callery pears are remarkably resistant to sicknesses or blight; they are more often killed by storms or high winds than by sickness.
Norway Maple	*Acer platanoides*	Not native	7	Do not plant. Norway maple has been reported to be invasive throughout the northeastern U.S.
Red or Swamp Maple*	*Acer rubrum*	Native	3	Over most of its range, red maple is adaptable to a very wide range of site conditions, perhaps more so than any other tree in eastern North America.
Pin Oak*	*Quercus palustris*	Native	2	
Catalpa		Native	1	There are two North American species, *Catalpa bignonioides (southern catalpa)* and *Catalpa speciosa (northern catalpa).*
Flowering Cherry			1	Ornamental
Sugar Maple	*Acer saccharum*	Native	17	The sugar maple is an extremely important species to the ecology of many forests in North America.
Tulip	*Liriodendron*	Not Native	1	From the Appalacian area.
Weeping Mulberry			1	Ornamental
Crab Apple*	*Malus*	Native	14	
Kousa Dogwood*	Cornus kousa	Not-Native	2	
Smoke Tree or "Smoke Bush"	*Cotinus*		2	They are large shrubs or small trees, native to the warm temperate northern hemisphere.
River Birch	*Betula nigra*	Native	1	
European Beech	*Fagus sylvatica*	Not Native	1	
Japanese Maple	*Acer palmatum*	Not Native	1	
Cypress	*Cupressaceae*	Not Native	1	
Austrian Pine	*Pinus nigra*	Not Native	1	
Sycamore*	*Platanus occidentalis*	Native	1	
Hornbeam	*Carpinus betulus*	Native	1	
Honey Locust	*Gleditsia triacanthos*	Not Native	2	

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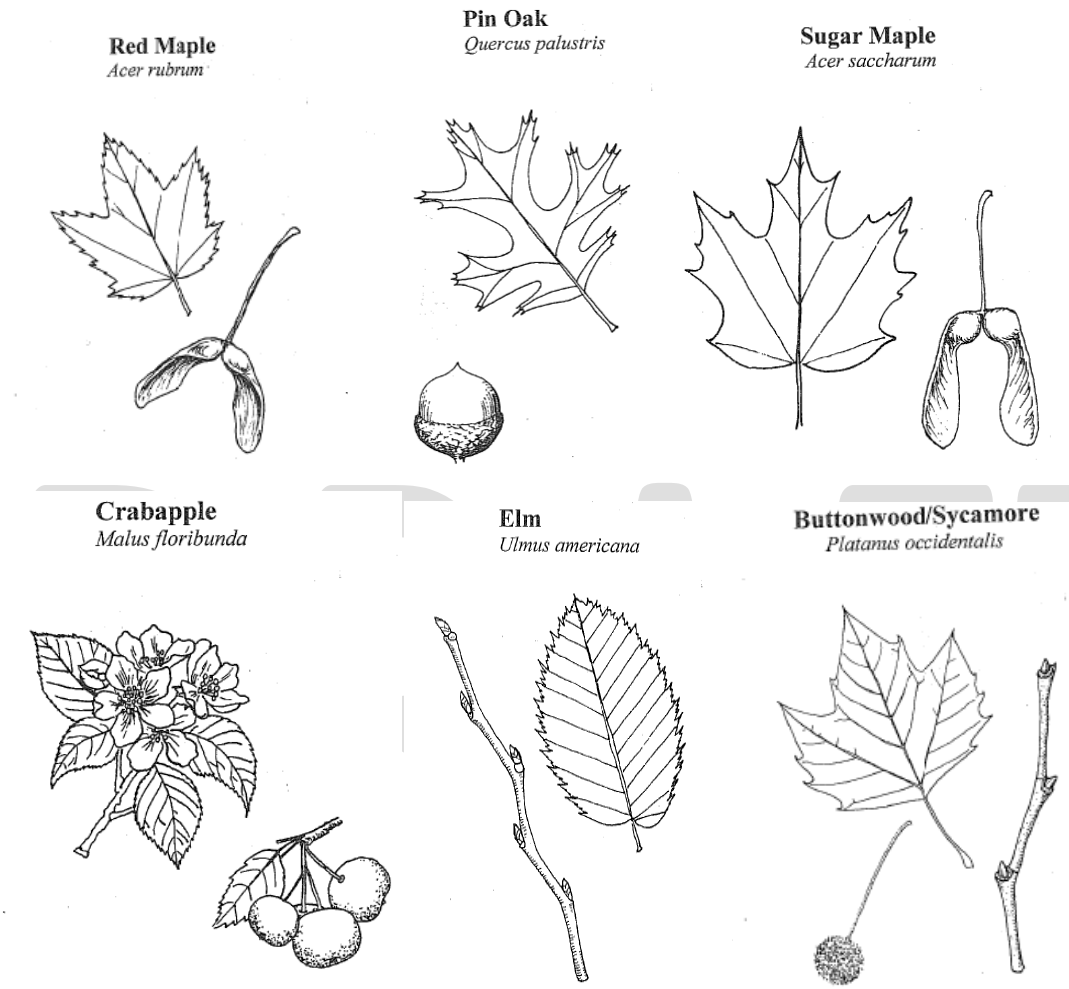
*Examples:



Recommended Species for Andover, Massachusetts:

Large evergreen trees	Large deciduous shade trees	Ornamentals	Shurbs
White fir (Abies concolor)	Swamp White Oak (Quercus bicolor)	Flowering Dogwood (Cornus florida)	Winterberry (Ilex verticillata)
Japanese umbrella pine (Sciadopytos verticillata)	Yellowwood (Cladastris lutea)	Chinese Dogwood (Cornus kousa)	Red-twig Dogwood (Cornus sericea)
White pine (Pinus strobes)	Siver Linden (Tilia tomentosa)	Japanese Tree Lilac (Syringa reticulate)	
	Littleleaf Linden (Tilia cordata)	Sourwood (Oxydendrum arboretum)	

Implementation

The following is a plan for "next step" to the Park, Playstead and Municipal Complex.

The Playstead

Issue	Recommendation	Short-term	Long-term	Level of complexity*
• Lack of play structure in the area	Locate a play structure or play ground within the Playstead	Hold a public meeting to discuss design concepts Involve Department of Municipal Services and the Patriotic Holiday Committee	Design, Fundraise, Capital Improvement Plan and Install	4
• Circulation	Create a trail loop to create connectivity	Identify location and route	Fundraise and Install	3/4
• Condition and orientation of the playing fields	Study field layout and use programming	Department of Municipal Services to discuss with town sport organizations and schools	Create a plan for the Playstead area after Youth Center is complete	4
• Drainage	Along with field layout study, review current drainage issues		Include on plan	4
• Parking	Combine with play structure and playing field discussions		Include on plan	4
• Lighting, artificial turf, seating, restrooms and concessions	Combine with play structure and playing field discussions		Include on plan	4/5

**Complexity:*
1 = Recommendation can be completed now.
2=Recommendation can be completed without difficulty but may need additional time.
3=Recommendation requires planning and implementation time.
4=Recommendation requires planning, coordination and funding.
5=Recommendation requires long-term planning, coordination, community support, and funding.

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The Park

Issue	Recommendation	Short-term	Long-term	Level of complexity*
• Lack of designated play area for small children	Create a focal intergenerational passive gathering space	Hold a public meeting to discuss design concepts	Design, Fundraise, and Create	3/4
• Lack of continuous sidewalk around the Park	Continue sidewalk for a continuous loop around Park	Department of Municipal Services review	Design, Capital Improvement Plan, Build	3/4
• Lighting and Seating	Unify lighting system	Department of Municipal Services review	Replace	1/2
• Accessibility to memorials and monuments/dedicated spaces in the Park (Playstead and Town Offices)	Make memorials accessible with path ways Note: Do not move or remove existing memorials	Hold a public meeting to discuss options Create a set of procedures for placement of new memorials or monuments.	Design and Create	3
• The Bandstand	Consider reorientation, reconstruction or removing bandstand.	Discuss options	Plan for improvements when needed	4/5
• Trees in Park	Adopt and follow a management plan to plant diverse native trees to replace dead, dying or diseased trees;	Implement management plan for trees		2
• Prevent too many obstacles in the Park	Maintain open spaces within the Park;	Commitment to keeping open spaces in the Park		2
• Poor utility connections in Park	Improve utilities within the Park;	Department of Municipal Services review		3/4
• Year-long activities	Continue winter activities such as ice skating in the Park;	Discuss options		2
• Lack of cultural amenities	Add visual or interpretive art	Discuss options		3/4

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The Center at Punchard

Issue	Recommendation	Short-term	Long-term	Level of complexity*
• Unappealing and uninviting entrance way.	Create a more appealing "user-friendly" entrance.	Hold a public meeting to discuss design concepts Involve Department of Municipal Services	Design, Fundraise, Capital Improvement Plan and Renovate	3/4
• Isolated center.	Create better connections for the center to connect to the rest of the public realm.	Should be part of the larger schematic plan to connect the area		2
• Uninviting landscaped areas.	Reinvigorate the "Senior Garden" and surrounding landscape. Create an inviting area between the Center and the Auditorium – possibly include sculpture, seating, a garden, etc. This could be a nice outside inviting space	Hold a public meeting to discuss design concepts Involve Department of Municipal Services	Create an implementation plan	3/4
• Bricks and veneer are deteriorating.	Make capital improvements to the exterior of the building.	Involve Department of Municipal Services and study solutions	Capital Improvement Plan	4
• Parking constraints and lack of connectivity to area.	Revise street and parking pattern and include a sidewalk or pathway to connect the Park, Center and the Playstead. Purchase homes along Whittier Street to provide additional land for connections, green space and vehicular and pedestrian movement.	Hold a public meeting to discuss design concepts Involve Department of Municipal Services Should be part of the larger schematic plan	Design, Fundraise, Capital Improvement Plan and Construct	4/5

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Overall Complex- The Public Realm

Issue	Recommendation	Short-term	Long-term	Level of complexity*
• Connectivity between the Park, Playstead and Municipal Complex	There are several options outlined in this plan. The next step would be to involve the Department of Municipal Services and to work with a designer to create better connections between the Park, Playstead, Center at Punchard, and the other municipal buildings.	Hold a public meeting to discuss design concepts Involve Department of Municipal Services Should be part of the larger schematic plan	Design, Fundraise, Capital Improvement Plan and Construct	4/5
• Funding and Timing	Research all grants associated with parks, playgrounds, sport fields, historic preservation, and community centers The process may take several years to implement but by creating a vision, the citizens can implement the plan in phases			NA
• Completion of the Youth Center	Once the center is finished, then a full analysis of parking, circulation, use and activities can be conducted.			NA
• Signage	Create a comprehensive signage plan for the area.	Involve the Department of Municipal Services and the Design Review Board to consider an unified and simple signage program for the area		3

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Summary

As with any plan, there are steps to be taken by the citizens, the public officials and the town staff to implement the recommendations. Some recommendations are easier to implement than others. Some may be implemented as soon as the summer of 2015. Others may require additional meetings, design and fundraising.

This plan is to be used as a guideline. This plan was created and based upon a significant amount of public input and discussion. There may not be one hundred percent consensus on every recommendation, but overall the issues and recommendations in this plan are founded on the majority of participant's agreement and consensus.

It is important to consistently reference the Goals set forth on page 18.

This plan is endorsed by the Town of Andover Planning Board and is presented to the Board of Selectmen as an official PARK, PLAYSTEAD, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX PLAN FOR 2015.

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