

Murphy and Robinson Playground Construction

\$630,000

Two important, and overdue, playground renovation projects require additional funding to move into construction for FY22. The projects, Murphy Playground and Robinson Playground, have both undergone a full public design review process with the neighborhoods, complete engineering construction documents, and have been put out to bid. The bids exceeded available funding. The projects have been reviewed and additional value engineering completed, but there is still a shortfall if the Town is to construct and complete these projects in accordance with the project design goals to support multi-generational, accessible and inclusive play and public park space for the community. The combined shortfall in construction funding for both projects is \$630,000. The playgrounds were last renovated nearly 30 years ago. It is critical that these projects move forward now as they are shovel ready and there is concern about further cost increases.

Several factors have caused Robinson and Murphy Playground projects to require additional funding beyond that which was originally allocated to build the project. The first was additional time and funding that was necessary for the Town to conduct its due diligence in environmental site assessments for both properties. Due to the former use of the Robinson Playground site by the Boston Elevation Railroad and potential for contaminated soil to be encountered during construction, the Town hired Weston and Sampson, an environmental engineering consultant to conduct a Phase 1 and 2 Environment Assessment. They evaluated the soils that would be encountered during construction and also provided technical assistance for the development of the final construction documents. This work added an additional \$6,250 for Phase 1 and \$18,200 for Phase 2, as well as an additional \$94,500 for landscape architecture and engineering services to ensure that the design and construction was performed in accordance with all requirements. Murphy Playground also involves a significant amount of grading and earth work. A similar assessment was conducted for this project adding \$38,500 for both Phase 1 and 2 assessments. All of this work has been completed and the projects are ready to move forward.

The second impact that has caused increases in pricing and delays is the Covid-19 pandemic and associated impacts to the global economy. The Robinson design review process commenced in the fall of 2019, before the pandemic and continued through the pandemic, ending in 2021. The Murphy design review process started in the winter of 2020 right at the beginning of the pandemic and continued with the design review process ending in 2021. During that time the construction industry has seen unrepresented rises in fuel and materials cost as well as a labor shortage, that are all amplified by the continued ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The Department is seeing steep increases in all construction costs.

All of these factors have led to two important shovel ready projects that are now over budget. The purposed budget for Robinson Playground was \$1,150,000 million which was funded in FY21 and the design estimate which is based upon current bidding prices is at \$1,425,625. That leaves the project approximately \$275,625 over the current budget. The purposed budget for Murphy Playground was \$915,000 which was funded in FY 22. The project was put out to bid in the summer of 2022 and we received one bid from UEL Contractors for a total of \$1,269,251. That leaves this project approximately \$354,251 over the current budget.

Both projects are vital to the neighborhoods as they serve as many residents access to open space since few houses in the neighborhood have any sizable yards. These parks are also the gathering space for the dense neighborhood, where a variety of picnics, games, sledding and social gatherings take place.

The Design Review Committee (DRC) process for Robinson Playground started with the Parks and Open Space Division staff attending the neighborhood block party in the summer of 2019 and then continued with an additional 6 community meetings, 2 on-site meetings and then a final meeting before the Park and Recreation Commission on February 9th, 2021 where the Commission voted unanimously to approve the new plan. The Design Review Committee (DRC) process for Murphy Playground started in March of 2020 and then continued with an additional 3 community meetings, 2 on-site meetings and then a final meeting before the Park and Recreation Commission on February 9, 2021 where the Commission voted unanimously to approve the plan.

The Murphy and Robinson Playground Projects include the following improvements:

- Treatment of the park's perimeter and entries to address issues of universal accessibility
- Redesign for new playground to include play equipment for all ages and resilient safety surfacing
- Upgrade the water play
- Upgrade the storm water system to include infiltration on site
- Assess the grading and drainage to direct runoff appropriately
- Shared multi-use hardcourt play space ;
- Site furniture and destinations for seating and picnicking throughout the park;
- New tree and shrub plantings
- Murphy Playground includes renovation of the open lawn
- Robinson playground includes an accessible perimeter walking path