

## Southwest Corridor Park Alliance Annual Report – November 2023

We are pleased to share this brief annual report, from the Southwest Corridor Park Alliance annual meeting presentation. We are a network of volunteers, from all the neighborhoods along the park, representing the varied interests of park neighbors and park advocates. We became connected to the park because of gardening, or bicycling, or dog walking, or local history, or just enjoying the greenspace, paths and playgrounds. By participating in this alliance, each volunteer has dedicated some of their skills and time for advocacy and leadership for this vibrant urban park. You may know us by the name PMAC – Park Management Advisory Committee, which is the name and acronym given to the park-wide planning committee in the 1980s. We are proud of this history and feel confident that our new name will serve well moving forward. This group, PMAC, now the Southwest Corridor Park Alliance, has met continuously since the 1980s, providing a forum for community leadership and stewardship of the park.



**At our annual meeting, we presented a slide presentation: *Vitality of Urban Parks*. View this slide presentation on our website, <https://southwestcorridorpark.org>**

### A Year of Action Planning

At the end of 2022, we were excited that the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) identified the Southwest Corridor Park as one of the first state parks to participate in DCR’s Master Planning Process, later renamed “Action Planning.” As of Fall 2023, the Action Planning team, which includes DCR staff and consultants, has completed the first phase of the work, focused on gathering information about current park conditions. We are looking forward to the next phase, which will include visioning and brainstorming about the park.

Some of our work last winter focused on organizing information to share with the Action Planning team. We feel that the team appreciated using our resources to learn more about park history; to see surveys that we have done with park users (including our bicycling/walking path survey); to learn about our work with public safety officers; and to read about input from park neighbors via meeting minutes, the park dashboard pages and other materials.

At the same time, knowing that this would be a year with lots of visibility for our network, we



changed our name from the long-time PMAC name to the **Southwest Corridor Park Alliance**. We like the name “Alliance,” as it reflects the spirit of connecting and partnering that is so important for this park.

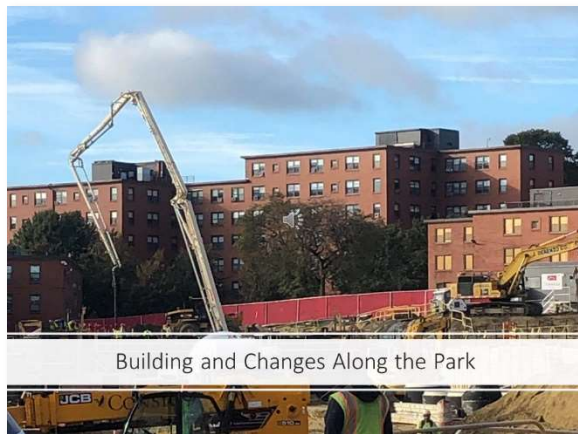
With increased attention to all aspects of park history, we applied for a spot in Northeastern University’s “Reckonings” summer institute, and one of our leadership team members started work on digging into new aspects of Southwest Corridor Park history, focusing on indigenous people’s history and present influence.

The DCR Action Plan team engaged with LivableStreets Alliance to spend time in the park gathering community input, and our Southwest Corridor Park Alliance members collaborated in this information gathering, staffing tables and providing support during events at Mildred Hailey and Alice Taylor Apartments.



Meanwhile, throughout the year, DCR moved forward with playground projects and initial path repairs, not needing to wait for the Action Plan to start on some of these key projects.

### **A Year of Building Projects**



This was also a year with lots of construction projects along the park, with cranes, backhoes and construction fencing being a common feature along the length of the park. Park volunteers stay connected to these projects, providing a voice, sharing information and advocating for the park and neighborhood.

A new Carter School is under construction on one side of the park; and new residential units are under construction on the other side. Half a mile down the park, the new NEU EXP science building was just completed.

Near Stony Brook, the new YES project and other work is moving forward.

New construction in Jackson Square, and the proposed Jackson Square Greenway path, continues forward.

Re-development at the Mildred Hailey Apartments, including a new Anna Mae Cole Community Center and new greenspaces, will be a major project over the next few years. We continue as partners with the tenant organization, staying involved with gardening and children’s programming, and maintaining a voice for the park and greenspace during the planning of each phase of this project.

## Highlights: New in the Park



A highlight along the park this year – the new commemorative marker of the location of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King’s first home.

At the unveiling, local leaders, the new DCR Commissioner, and DCR staff, expressed lots of love for the park and for the wider local history of which we are a part.

Nearby, new murals were created during the the MLK Day of Service in January 2023.

New playgrounds moved forward this year, including an earth-themed playground at Mission Deck.

## Continuing Stewardship

Every year, volunteers contribute over two thousand hours of park stewardship, doing hands-on work in the park, plus an approximately equal number of hours behind the scenes.

Volunteer roles are diverse: coordinating the network of twelve community gardens in the park; being keepers and sharers of park history; convening meetings and communicating online; and much more.





One behind-the-scenes role that was especially important this year; we attend community meetings and make sure that the park is considered as an important community asset within neighborhood development, building and transportation projects.

We continue to participate in and support children's and family activities, through the mini-grant program and by providing craft table activities at events at Mildred Hailey Apartments and Alice Taylor Apartments. We connect with community organizations, schools and colleges along the length of the park including Spontaneous Celebrations, USES, Boston Explorers, Roxbury Community College, Northeastern University and many other community groups.



We are easy to find online and in the park. Please look for us to connect during the year. Please visit the park website at <https://southwestcorridorpark.org/>. Also please check out our partner organization, the Southwest Corridor Park Conservancy, at their new website, <https://corridorpark.org>

Join the Southwest Corridor Park email list at <https://southwestcorridorpark.org/alliance.asp>, and follow us on social media, and most importantly, connect with neighbors in the park, year round, to enjoy this valuable greenspace together.

