

# **Levingston Cove Improvement Project**

## **Fact Sheet**

### **Executive Summary:**

The following fact sheet serves as a guide to help the reader better understand improvements being made to Levingston Cove at Crystal Lake. The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department is seeking the necessary funding to bring needed improvement to this public park to provide universal access to Newton's premier fishing spot and to address many environmental issues affecting both the park and the Lake. Throughout the project life cycle, we have engaged with resident groups including holding public meetings, site visits, and reviewing (and responding to) proposals for changes to the project. There is consensus among all stakeholders that the Cove improvement should reduce erosion and protect the water quality of the lake. I am confident saying that the project accomplishes these goals.

Levingston Cove is a popular destination for the neighborhood, the Newton community, and visitors from the region. Measures to minimize the impact on the neighborhood have been incorporated in the plan including strategic placement of waste bins, informational and rules signs, placement of crosswalks on the road and plantings to steer visitors to the preferred park access points.

### **Project Goals and Objectives:**

- Project Goals:
  - Ensure through pedestrian movement
  - Preserve and enhance passive recreation and fishing opportunities
  - Ensure accessibility across the site
  - Improve how stormwater moves and is captured on site
  - Create a landscape that is stable and sustainable
  - Enhance and protect views
  - Improve water quality
  - Strike a good balance between human and ecological function
- Project Objectives:
  - Provide pedestrian circulation that is continuous and uninterrupted through the site
  - Provide adequate space for recreational fishing at the existing fishing area
  - Provide ADA and MAAB compliant fishing areas, walkways, ramps, and stairs
  - Provide stormwater management best practices to capture on-site runoff where possible
  - Ease grades to reduce steep slopes and curtail erosion
  - Provide native, hardy plants to stabilize slopes and enhance and rehabilitate wildlife habitats on site
  - Funnel pedestrian flows to reduce desire lines through the new landscape
  - Stabilize and reinforce lawn areas to reduce compaction and future erosion at high-traffic lawn areas
  - Remove invasive plant species
  - Significantly protect and preserve existing trees

## **FAQ**

What are the existing issues the plan seeks to redress?

- Erosion, stormwater runoff entering lake, lack of accessibility, and invasive plant species

Was the community involved in the design process?

- Public input meetings: 2018 through 2019 (Total of 8)
  - 5 Crystal Lake Working Group Meetings
  - 3 Public meetings, including 2 required Parks & Recreation Commission hearings
- Public Information Meeting and multiple meetings with stakeholder groups, along with Community Preservation Committee and Conservation Commission meetings have occurred throughout 2021

Why is the cantilevered platform so important?

- The cantilever fishing platform provides universally accessible fishing, provides ample room for guests using wheelchairs, people fishing, and people sitting or walking through. The design minimizes impact to the lakebed by sitting over the water without pilings touching the water. The platform will be anchored behind the existing fishing wall.

Why is fishing so important?

- This is the premiere fishing location in the city. Crystal Lake is the only place in Newton where trout are stocked by Mass Wildlife. New fish are added annually.

What would the design look like without the platform?

- To retain the surface area of the platform but without having the platform, considerable excavation of the slope between the road and the existing walking path would be necessary. Excavating the land would require a very large retaining wall being erected, further necessitating fall protection (likely a railing) at the top of the retaining wall. People will be bound by a high retaining wall on one side and a guardrail on the other. The design, without the platform, will result in a less accessible fishing area (ADA) and would increase user space conflicts (e.g., angler vs. passerby).

If we minimize construction along the water, can we forego a safety railing along the path edge?

- A railing will be a part of the project for safety to prevent a person falling into the water. A safety railing allows guests with balancing issues to approach the edge of the platform without concern for safety. The railing provides an accommodation for a guest who needs to rest or wants extra stability while standing. A safety railing is a requirement under state building code.

Is the current walkway ADA accessible, will the new design be accessible?

- The current walkway is not accessible under current ADA/MAAB regulations. Implementing the proposed design will result in the park being universally accessible.

Has community input impacted the project design?

- Yes, the overall platform size has decreased, the amount of concrete needed is reduced, the guardrail height on the fishing platform is lowered, and river stone material has been replaced with a more comfortable path design.

How do we know this design protects the environment?

- The project requires review and approval from Conservation Commission and the State to ensure the project protects the environment.
- The design team is composed of: Registered Landscape Architects, Certified Wetlands Specialists, Prof. Structural Engineers, Environmental Scientists, Prof. Civil/Stormwater Engineers, Prof. Geotechnical Engineers, and Technical Review Committee.
- The project is carefully designed to limit disturbance where possible.

How are trees impacted?

- There will be very little impact on trees. Trees will have significant protection by way of corrugated pipe covering the trunk of trees along with greater perimeter tree protection with orange construction fencing.
- Excavation around trees will be conducted by air spade and hand tools. Heavy equipment will not be allowed.
- The plan retains all but one tree that our City Forester has approved for removal. Replacement trees will be planted and result in a net increase, both in terms of # of trees and combined trunk diameter of all trees.

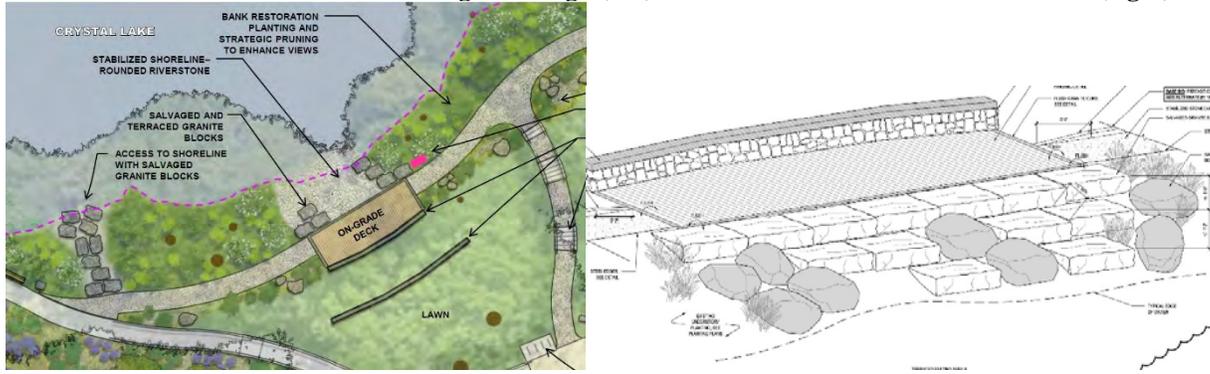
Are invasive plants being removed?

- Yes

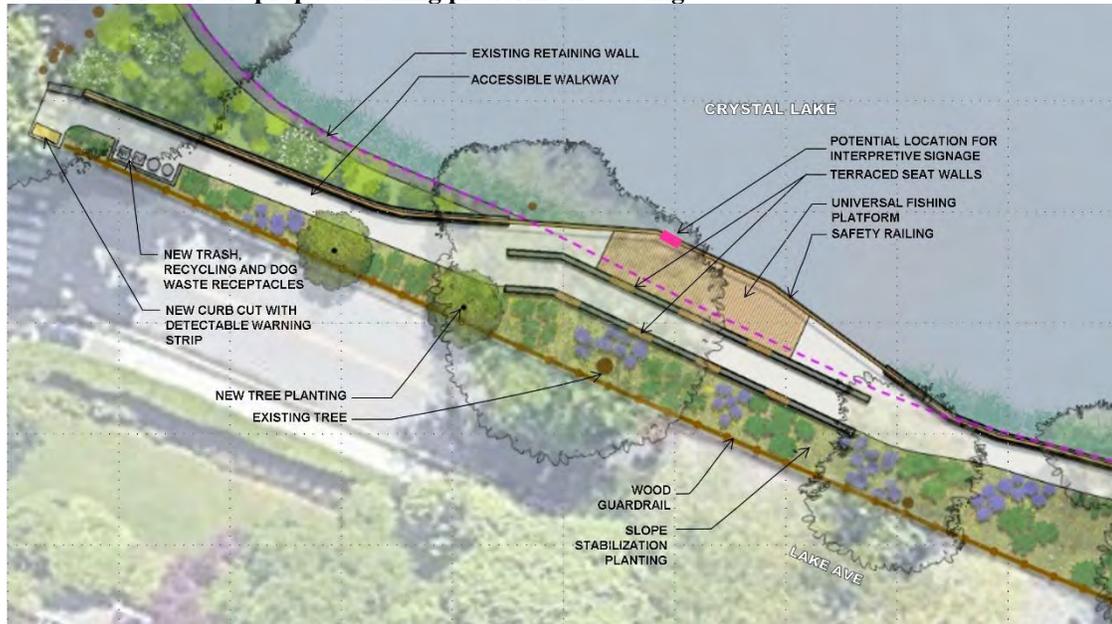
Will there be continued dialogue with stakeholders and advocacy groups?

- Yes, we will keep the groups apprised of developments on permitting and construction.

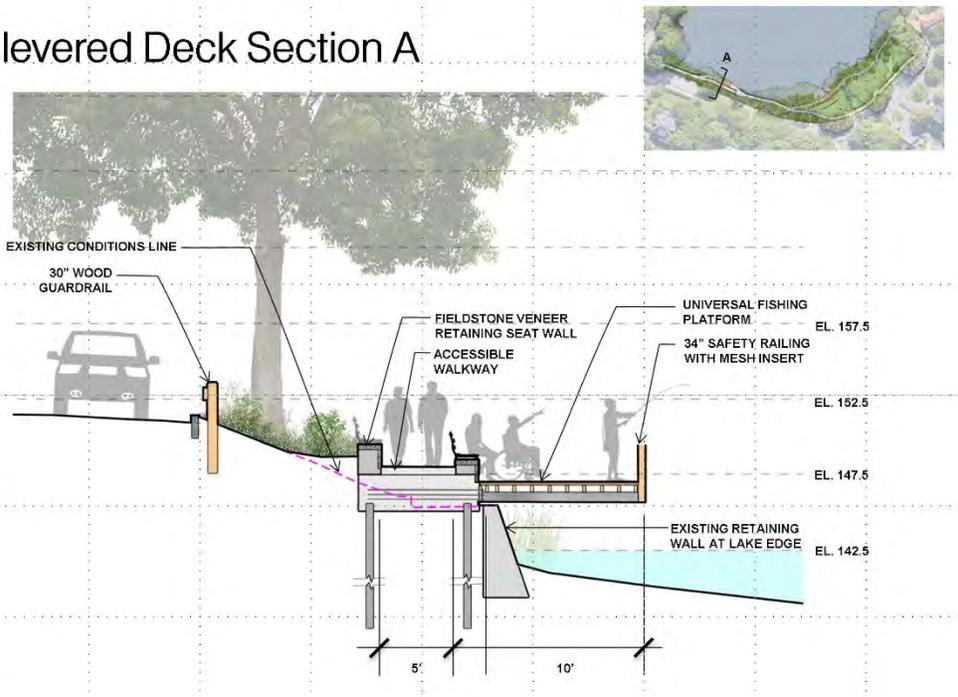
**Shoreline surface materials: stone in original design (left) switched with flat stones and boulders (right)**



**Overhead view of the proposed fishing platform and seating**



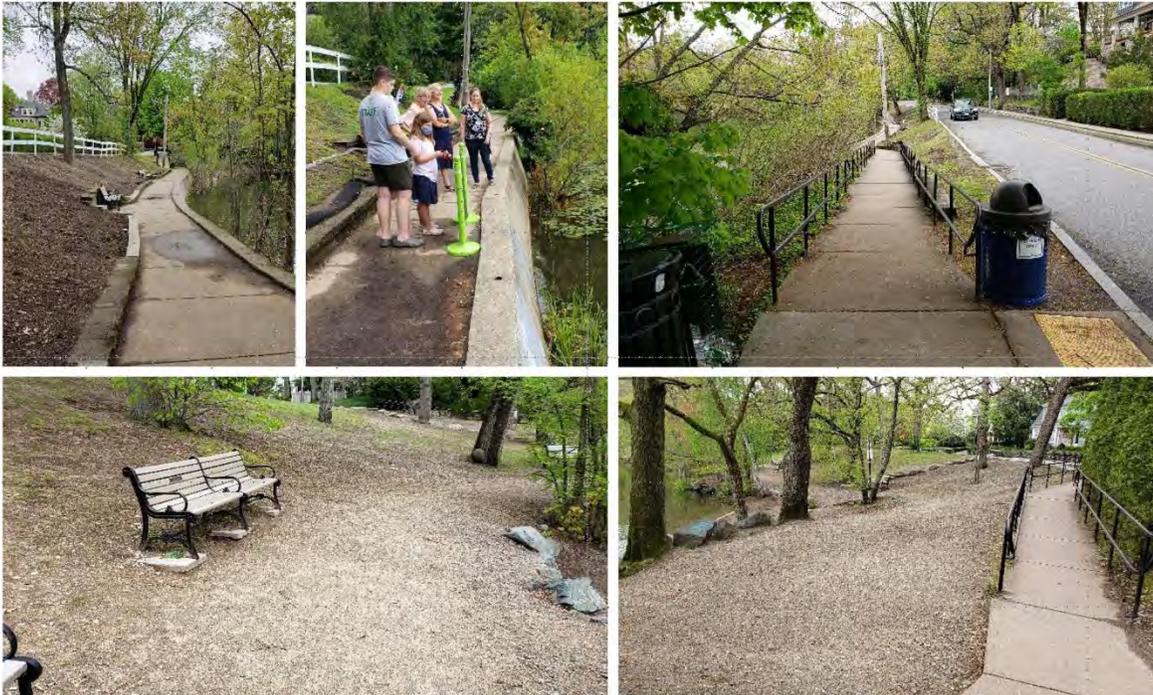
**Cantilevered Deck Section A**



**Stocking Crystal Lake with trout**



**Existing accessibility issues at Levingston Cove:**



Lack of safety railing, demonstrating fishing with a fishing platform railing, existing ramp, lack of stable ground to access benches, non-contiguous safety railing.

## **Project Proposal:**

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/70767/637588395540430000>

## **Definitions:**

- **ADA** – American with Disabilities Act; An Act to establish prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability.
- **Chapter 91 Waterways License** – Required permit when construction work is to occur within a Great Pond.
- **CMR** – Code of Massachusetts Regulations
- **Great Pond** – “Great ponds...shall be public for the purpose of hunting or boating thereon and shall, notwithstanding the provisions of any special law relating to fisheries in any particular place, be open to all inhabitants of the commonwealth for fishing purposes...” - *MGL Part I-Title 19-chapter 131- Section 45: Great ponds; public use; rules and regulations*
- **MAAB** – 521 CMR Massachusetts Architectural Access Board
- **MGL** – Massachusetts General law
- **MHC Project Notification Form** – Massachusetts Historic Commission permit triggered when any state permits are required for the project.
- **Parks + Recreation Commission** – 780 CMR - Massachusetts State Building Code
- **SBC** – 780 CMR - Massachusetts State Building Code
- **Universal Design** – “...Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not...” – *The Principles of Universal Design, V 2.4 - 1997 North Carolina State University, The Center for Universal Design*
- **WPA** – 310 CMR 10.00: Wetlands Protection Act Regulations