

WHITE STADIUM UPDATED Q&A DOCUMENT

Updated: 3/14/24

This document outlines responses to the questions asked at the most recent White Stadium community meeting held on February 12th, 2024 relating to the Alignment with the Franklin Park Action Plan.

White Stadium Q&A Document

I. Community Impact:	1
II. Stadium Access:	2
III. Stadium Design and Construction	3
IV. Transparency and Process	5
V. Funding and Benefits	7
VI. Environmental Impact	8
VII. Transportation and Accessibility	9
VIII. Management of Franklin Park and the Action Plan	9

I. COMMUNITY IMPACT:

- **How will noise spillage be minimized?**
 - **Boston Unity Soccer is committed to minimizing excessive noise impacts on the area surrounding White Stadium during Boston Unity Soccer matches**, which will generally be 2 hours or less in duration. The Stadium sound system will be designed to provide clear communication to attendees while minimizing excessive noise spillover, including through the use of directional and modulated speakers to focus sound within the Stadium. Crowd noise during matches, especially during key moments like goals, can abruptly fluctuate from quiet to enthusiastic cheering, though Boston Unity Soccer expects any such fluctuations to be intermittent and short-lived. In addition, there are several elements within the Stadium that are designed to focus the sound away from residential abutters and into the Stadium.
 - Boston Unity Soccer's commitments to noise mitigation will be memorialized in the lease agreement between Boston Unity Soccer and the City, and in the Cooperation Agreement between Boston Unity Soccer and the Boston Planning & Development Agency
- **How will soccer games coexist with existing programming in the stadium and playstead? Will the events that have called Franklin Park home for decades have priority over the soccer games?**
 - **Cherished community events will continue to call White Stadium home.** Franklin Park and the Playstead are home to many important community events, including BPS Graduations, Caribbean Kiddie Carnival, BAMSfest, Puerto Rican Festival, and more. The lease agreement between the City and Boston Unity will codify that scheduling for White Stadium will be prioritized as follows:
 - i. Major City, Community, and BPS special events in the Stadium and Playstead;
 - These signature community events include but are not limited to, BPS graduations, Caribbean Kiddie Carnival, BAA Half Marathon, BAMS Fest, Puerto Rican Fest, and more.
 - ii. BPS games and Boston Unity Soccer games (approx. 20 per year);
 - iii. BPS practices and other City events; and
 - iv. One Boston Unity Soccer practice during the week prior to a Boston Unity Soccer game.
 - In addition, the City and Boston Unity will work with event hosts to

minimize scheduling conflicts and ensure all uses can coexist harmoniously. For example, Cross Country meets typically take place on the Playstead on Saturday mornings into the early afternoon. Boston Unity scheduling can take this into account and schedule games for later afternoons or evenings.

- ***How will El Parquecito, the playground near Walnut Ave, be impacted by this project?***
 - **There are no changes to El Parquecito proposed as part of this project.** Being a highly utilized and valued playground, the transportation plan coordinated between the City and Boston Unity will carefully consider access and safety to the playground area during game and non-game days throughout the year. This transportation plan will be memorialized in an enforceable Transportation Access Plan Agreement (TAPA) between Boston Unity and the Boston Transportation Department (BTD).
- ***What potential community impacts might arise from large events or activities at White Stadium and the Grove beyond soccer games, and how will these impacts be addressed?***
 - **The City is not contemplating additional large-scale events at the Stadium beyond the important community and BPS events that already take place there and the proposed soccer games and practices.**
 - Existing events will benefit from the White Stadium redevelopment project in several ways. First, they will have access to the new state of the art facilities, including both the East and West Grandstands, and additional programming space available at the Grove. Second, recognizing that transportation and traffic management are challenges during existing large-scale events at White Stadium, the detailed traffic management and circulation plan being developed for Boston Unity Soccer games, which will be memorialized in an enforceable Transportation Access Plan Agreement, will serve as a blueprint the City can use for mitigating negative impacts on neighboring communities during all large events.
 - The programming envisioned for the Grove includes small movie nights and musical performances, among other smaller activities. These programs will be scheduled and developed in partnership with the community to ensure they cater to the needs of local residents who regularly use the park.
- ***How much will tickets cost? Will this be something affordable for most community residents?***
 - There will be a range of ticket types and prices for professional women's soccer games at White Stadium. Boston Unity Soccer

intends to have a supporters section and to offer favorable pricing for neighbors who reside in the area immediately surrounding White Stadium. Boston Unity Soccer will dedicate a neighborhood fan section and create a multi-lingual presentation in the renovated White Stadium to provide an inclusive game experience for community members.

II. STADIUM ACCESS:

- **How much will BPS be able to use the renovated stadium?**
 - Currently, White Stadium is an inadequate facility for BPS athletics. The facility is in poor condition, with one grandstand damaged in a fire decades ago, and both grandstands are not ADA accessible. Given the field's current state of disrepair, BPS is unable to maximize its use. The current field is playable only about 250 hours per year, and the field falls drastically short compared to the use of typical grass fields, which accommodate 750-900 hours annually.
 - **The renovation will allow BPS to take full advantage of the field which can support programming, including BPS games and practices, of 750-900 hours per year.** All sports that currently use White Stadium, including cheerleading, track & field, soccer, cross country, and football, will continue to be able to use White Stadium, and many more students and teams will be able to use the facility than are able to today. The enhanced facilities will continue to support Parks and Rec summer camps for kids, school field days, student athlete summer conditioning, and Special Olympics events.
 - Some football games, which may overlap with the soccer season, will be relocated. In consultation with Boston Unity Soccer scheduling, BPS will maximize the number of football games that could be played at White Stadium and guarantee that White Stadium will be able to host football games at the conclusion of the soccer season, at least for Thanksgiving and end-of-season rivalry games for many more teams than are able to play there now.
- **Will the BPS Special Olympics Field Day continue at White Stadium?**
 - **Yes**, the BPS Special Olympics Field Day will continue to take place at White Stadium.

III. STADIUM DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

- **Where will field sports, including throwing, high jump and long jump, be located?**
 - We are still refining the design for where these areas will be located and will share them publicly when they are developed.
- **Is there going to be handicap access for bathrooms, etc.?**
 - After renovation, the entire facility will meet all ADA requirements.
- **Are Boston Unity Soccer and the City using the same contractors for building?**
 - As part of the public-private partnership, the City will be reconstructing the East Grandstand, track, and athletic field, and Boston Unity will be constructing the West Grandstand.
 - The City is subject to public procurement laws and will be following Ch. 149A for the construction of public buildings. This includes a public bidding process. The City cannot determine the ultimate contractor until it has awarded a contract under the public bidding process.
 - Boston Unity Soccer will engage in its own bidding process for the general contractor and subcontractors working on the West Grandstand side of the project.
- **How will the historical significance of Franklin Park be preserved?**
 - In response to community feedback, the City is working with Reed Hilderbrand, the landscape architectural firm engaged on the Franklin Park Action Plan, for guidance to ensure the Grove and White Stadium renovation design is aligned with the Franklin Park Action Plan, and to consider the value of existing cultural assets.
 - We deeply value the use of Franklin Park as a peaceful respite. The use for professional soccer games will be time-bound, limited to twenty days per year and only two hours before and one hour after a game. The Grove area will be open and free for the public to access from morning to night on non-game days and before and after the game time windows on game days, adding a functional and multi-purpose community space for rest and relaxation. The renovation will also provide public restrooms and water fountains to support park users that are currently not available.
 - We agree with the importance of the Overlook Shelter and Elma Lewis Playhouse and agree that the grove does not replace the importance of the view from the Overlook. Our refined designs will show these shared values. The Parks Department has released an RFQ for a programming and design study for the future of this site. The scope includes site analysis, program development including operational

needs, design studies, and public engagement. The study will incorporate performance space needs, accessibility, materials, historic masonry, grading, utilities and planting approach. It will consider the spatial and programmatic relationship between The Overlook and the adjacent White Stadium and Playstead.

- **How will the City and Boston Unity Soccer ensure equity in construction?**

- The City will be constructing the East Grandstand, track, and athletic field. As a public entity, the City follows public procurement law. The City is committed to equity in our contracting, and our Supplier Diversity team works to ensure that minority- and women-owned small businesses can thrive and grow in Boston through equitable access to City contracts. For capital construction projects, the law allows us to set targets for minority- and women- owned businesses based on their proportion in the market. We will be setting targets for this project when design advances.
- Under the lease, Boston Unity will be responsible for rebuilding the West Grandstand. One of Boston Unity Soccer's main goals since the beginning has been to partner with the local community as much as possible to fill contracting needs. Boston Unity Soccer anticipates that their part of the project will create 500 construction jobs and more than 300 permanent jobs. They intend to contract and employ a 50% threshold for minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses, with a special emphasis on local companies and people from the surrounding Franklin Park neighborhoods. They will work to achieve this commitment in all three phases of the project, including (1) design, planning and permitting, which we are in now; (2) construction, which will begin later in 2024; and (3) stadium operations, which will begin with the opening of the NWSL season in the spring of 2026. They have developed a 4-step plan to achieve this goal, including reporting and transparency to track and report out on their progress. Boston Unity Soccer is committed to providing multiple avenues for engaging, recruiting, sourcing, mentoring, and supporting to develop individuals and businesses to be able to meet the needs of the project. Boston Unity Soccer is committed to fostering meaningful relationships with community groups, business associations, and government agencies to meet their goals. For additional information on these plans, please refer to slides 32-39 of the November 29, 2023 community meeting presentation [here](#).

IV. TRANSPARENCY AND PROCESS

- **What is the timeline for the project? What is the timeline for demolition?**
 - We have been working towards a goal to have the stadium open in time for the March 2026 soccer season. We previously shared that we were planning on demolition in spring 2024. Given public feedback, we have committed not to begin demolition until we have a comprehensive plan for the stadium that we are confident meets BPS's needs and addresses stakeholder concerns.
- **What are the next steps in the BPDA Article 80 process? Will there be a scoping determination? What agencies are involved? What is the date of the BPDA article 80 vote?**
 - Boston Unity Soccer began the BPDA process in December when they filed their project notification form. Following the filing, an impact advisory group was formed, a formal Article 80 public meeting was held, and an IAG meeting was held.
 - Following comments from BPDA review and public comment, Boston Unity Soccer will provide a memo responding to comments and providing updated plans as necessary, which will be posted publicly. The IAG will meet to review these responses and a proposed cooperation agreement including mitigation for the project. A date for a BPDA board vote has not been scheduled.
 - All information on the BPDA process so far can be found [here](#).
- **Is this project subject to Article 97 and MEPA?**
 - Adopted by the voters in November 1972, Article 97 of Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution protects public land acquired for natural resource purposes. The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) requires state agencies to minimize damage to the environment through a review process, and Article 97-protected land is subject to MEPA review.
 - White Stadium is not subject to Article 97. The 14 acres of the stadium parcel was sold by the City (for \$20,000) to the White Fund in 1947 for the purposes of building the stadium. That sale to the White Fund was sanctioned by a Special act of the Massachusetts Legislature - Chapter 542 of the Acts of 1947. The White Fund still holds the deed.
 - In 1949, the Stadium was completed and care, custody, and control was assigned to the Boston School Committee (where it remains today, 75 years later).
 - In 1950, the Legislature passed a special act and determined that the entire White Stadium parcel is a school facility and school yard, and this remains the case.

- As a legal/constitutional matter, the property can be renovated without going through Article 97 because the property is not considered parkland for over the last 77 years and has been a school stadium for that entire time, and will remain a school stadium.
- Because the property is not subject to Article 97, and no other threshold triggers are met, MEPA does not apply.
- **Can the City commit to Boston Unity Soccer being the only for-profit user of the Stadium?**
 - The City is not contemplating additional large-scale or for-profit events at the Stadium beyond the proposed soccer games and the important community and BPS events that already take place there. The lease agreement will allow Boston Unity Soccer to hold approximately 20 games and practices in White Stadium, but doesn't permit other events without City permission.
- **Who has control of the vendor spaces in the Grove?**
 - The Grove will be included within the area leased by Boston Unity Soccer, which is committed to hiring, contracting, and supporting women, minority, veteran, and local individuals and businesses. Boston Unity Soccer will comply with and attempt to exceed the BPDA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Development Policy and will contract using the "Massport Procurement Model" inclusionary standards to a 50% MBE/WBE and local businesses threshold.

V. FUNDING AND BENEFITS

- **What is the cost of the project and how is it being funded?**
 - Currently, the City estimates that the City's portion of the project will cost \$50 million. The original estimate for the Boston Unity Soccer portion of the project was \$30 million, and that estimate has increased to \$ 50 million and continues to be reviewed. Boston Unity Soccer is proposing to cover maintenance of the West Grandstand and field, which is estimated to cost over \$400,000 annually.
- **What would it cost to achieve the renovation of White Stadium without a private partner?**
 - Our kids deserve a world class stadium and athletics facility – the kind of investment that suburban districts can afford.
 - The City and BPS have capital needs that are greater than the resources we have available, and we have to make difficult tradeoffs. BPS is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of 131 school buildings, 30 of which are over 100 years old. The City can't afford a world class facility on par with our suburban counterparts without a private partner.

- Without private investment, \$50 million does not go very far. It is less than the estimated cost to build a new community center, for example. Any project relying solely on City funds would be at a much smaller scale and wouldn't deliver the amenity we want for BPS athletes.
- Boston Unity Soccer Partners is committed to provide various community benefits which the City would not be able to provide alone. For instance these benefits include:
 - Five hundred thousand dollar annual community benefit fund
 - A professionally maintained stadium and playing surface
 - Neighborhood fan zone with discounted tickets
 - Internship and mentorship opportunities for youth within the community
 - Additional commitments to local, minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses that come from a larger project
- **What is the City's long-term budget plan for maintenance/partnership management?**
 - The City will partner with Boston Unity Soccer to manage and maintain the stadium facility. Boston Unity will bear the cost of maintenance of the West Grandstand and field, which is estimated to cost over \$400,000 annually. The City and Boston Unity Soccer will partner closely to ensure smooth and efficient stadium operations.
- **What are the benefits for the community, especially BPS programs?**
 - BPS will benefit from a state of the art athletic facility with a natural grass field. The new facility will include spaces for BPS strength and conditioning training, sports medicine facilities for student athletes, student lounge space, and community space, to create a true hub of athletics and home for BPS student athletes and to provide additional amenities to the community. The renovation will also allow BPS to take full advantage of the field, which will be able to support programming of 750-900 hours per year.
 - On top of the benefits of the new stadium, Boston Unity is proposing scholarships for select BPS students addressing access to high performance club soccer for city youth, a Boston Unity Mentorship Program with the Boston Public Schools to provide access and support with athletes and staff, and summer internships in sporting, sports medicine, physical therapy and sports management for Boston youth.
 - Boston Unity Soccer is also proposing a \$500k annual community fund, increasing by 3% annually, to be distributed to organizations and initiatives that reflect the following pillars:
 - Investments in Franklin Park and the Franklin Park Action Plan

- Youth Sports and Development
 - Health and Wellness of Black and Brown Communities
 - Local Business Development
- There will be an Advisory Committee, including neighborhood representatives from Franklin Park neighborhoods to make recommendations to support organizations and initiatives.
- The project will also offer benefits to local businesses and organizations. The Project will provide opportunities to local designers to help create team merchandise that is distinctly Boston and culturally specific to the neighborhoods of Franklin Park. A portion of the in-game video advertising time will be dedicated to featuring local business partners and vendors providing expanded reach and exposure to potential customers beyond game day attendees. Boston Unity Soccer will also work with community leadership to maximize the use of the renovated West Grandstand and the Grove for community use. These spaces will be made available for community events, cultural festivals, and private events.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- ***What will be the impact on the environment? This includes light, water, and preservation of green space.***
 - In response to community feedback, Boston Unity Soccer has engaged ecologists and arborists to preserve and improve the ecological value of the area surrounding White Stadium, in accordance with principles set out in the Franklin Park Action Plan. The City, its Parks Department, and Boston Unity Soccer will partner to preserve existing trees, remove invasive plant species, and plant new native trees and understory that will enhance the biodiversity within the site. The overarching approach is to be light on the land and ensure that any introduction of impermeable surfaces is minimized.
 - **Lighting:**
 - On an average day during the soccer season, the Stadium will be lit until 10pm for Boston Public Schools and public use. Boston Unity Soccer matches may extend that lighting impact until approximately 11pm on evening match days.
 - **Water:**
 - The area around the Stadium currently lacks adequate drainage and is saturated during storm events, making certain areas unusable. The Boston Unity Soccer and City design teams will employ green technologies to capture stormwater for reuse and to reduce the effects of stormwater on the

landscape directly surrounding the East Grandstand, West Grandstand and the Grove.

- **Preservation of Green Space:**
 - The intended design maximizes green space and reduces paving as much as possible while creating a welcoming atmosphere for public use and crowd movements that will naturally occur around the Stadium. We are also working to reduce the paved areas within the Grove to respond to public comments and will use permeable paving solutions wherever possible.
- **How will the impact of 10,000-spectator soccer games be minimized for wildlife in the park and zoo animals? Will engaging the noise study consultant include Franklin Park Zoo leadership to provide input?**
 - In coordination with the Franklin Park Zoo and other stakeholders, Boston Unity Soccer will develop game day protocols that will address impacts such as noise, and the noise consultant will be taking future readings and will consider impacts to the Zoo when setting sensors for noise receptors. Boston Unity Soccer will use the practices referenced above to minimize noise impacts.

VII. TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

- **How will people with disabilities be accommodated in the transportation plan?**
 - People with disabilities will be accommodated via the use of ADA compliant shuttle buses and through the use of ADA-accessible passenger carts within Franklin Park between the Stadium and the pick-up/drop-off locations. White Stadium itself will be ADA compliant as required by code and Boston Unity is consulting with universal design experts on additional accessibility strategies to make the Stadium experience on game days inclusive and welcoming for all.
- **Will the City of Boston set transportation parameters for the Boston Unity Soccer transportation plan?**
 - We have provided a detailed response to many transportation related questions in our most recent F.A.Q. document found [here](#).
 - The City and Boston Unity are currently developing a detailed analysis of the neighborhood streets surrounding the stadium. We plan to present a detailed traffic management and control plan for game days and other large events during workshops in each neighborhood starting in the first two weeks of April.

- The analysis will include: recommendations of street closures for resident-only access, placement of police details, locations to receive pedestrian safety improvements, location of no-stopping signs to prevent drop offs, temporary traffic pattern changes, among others. The plan will be refined using community feedback and will be formalized and codified in the Transportation Access Plan Agreement (TAPA) between the Boston Transportation Department and Boston Unity Soccer Partners.
- Boston Unity Soccer will not be allowed to utilize the existing parking within Franklin Park for game days. These parking spaces will remain available for regular Park users and Zoo visitors.

VIII. MANAGEMENT OF FRANKLIN PARK AND THE ACTION PLAN

- ***Is there a comprehensive approach to managing the health of vegetation in Franklin Park?***
 - The Franklin Park Action Plan recommends the development of a park-wide natural resource and ecological management plan. That work has not begun yet.
- ***Are other elements of the Franklin Park Action Plan reliant on capital investment from Boston Unity Soccer?***
 - No, the Bear Dens and Overlook projects are funded independently from the White Stadium projects and are not reliant on capital investment from Boston Unity Soccer.
 - See the [Bear Dens webpage](#) for more information and details on upcoming Bear Dens meetings.
- ***Will Boston Parks and Recreation come forward with a comprehensive management plan, as the Action Plan requests?***
 - The operational commitments that the Mayor announced are a significant step forward for plan implementation in the management and maintenance of the park. We're also making progress on capital improvements, but agree that there is more work to do on all 3 fronts.