



West Roxbury Main Streets (WRMS) 2022 Sidewalk Audit Report

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Background & Overview

In the summer and fall of 2022, members of **West Roxbury Main Streets** (WRMS) Design Committee conducted a sidewalk audit to identify problem areas and opportunities along a two-mile stretch spanning Centre Street and Spring Street. A map of the WRMS district catchment area can be found online at wrms.org/map.

WRMS's Design Committee assessed a selection of data points and indicators in order to prioritize opportunities to **improve, beautify, and maintain** the WRMS streetscape as a **clean, accessible, and inviting destination for community members and visitors**. The analysis is intended to help WRMS engage with potential partners in driving the work forward - City of Boston officials, public departments, local groups and businesses, and other community stakeholders.

This document provides a list of considerations, recommendations, and specific locations that the design committee identified as "**improvement opportunities**". Chosen indicators for the audit included **bench locations, sidewalk condition, tree canopy, tree health and species, tree pit condition and trash bin locations**.

According to the City of Boston Parks Department protocols, new tree requests are required to come from adjacent property owners; therefore WRMS provided letters and info sheets to all property and business owners located next to the identified empty and damaged tree pits.

Efforts to get more trees and care for existing trees could possibly take advantage of Mayor Michelle Wu's recently announced efforts to bolster the City of Boston's tree canopy to enhance livability and public health throughout Boston's neighborhoods. A new Forestry Division within the Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) was launched in September 2022 to expand Boston's ability to maintain existing and plant new trees.

The Forestry Division will grow the City's tree-related workforce from 5 to 16, with dedicated leadership and resources to plant new trees as well as proactively inspect, maintain, and prune existing trees, focusing on under-canopied and environmental justice neighborhoods. This intentional focus on Boston's trees follows the recommendations of Boston's newly-released **Urban Forest Plan** (boston.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/urban-forest-plan), an assessment of Boston's urban forest with recommendations to improve the way trees are cared for and ensure the urban forest is available to the entire community.

In April 2023, District 6 City Councilor Kendra Lara announced plans to form a City-wide initiative for sidewalk improvements. WRMS will follow these endeavors to identify new opportunities and pathways for making sidewalk and tree canopy improvements.

Key Findings

The Sidewalk Audit surfaced multiple concerns about the overall condition and appearance of tree pits throughout the Main Streets district. **A vast majority of the surveyed pits were overgrown with weeds** when monitored throughout the growing season. Approximately **15 percent** of tree pits were found to be either **void of trees** or contain trees that appeared **unhealthy and stressed**.

The audit further revealed opportunities to reduce litter by **installing trash bins** in highly foot-trafficked locations and bus stops at **eleven new locations**.

Furthermore, the audit identified **six locations** that should be considered for **Age-Friendly bench installations**, primarily near bus stops and where there are significant gaps in distance between existing benches.

Throughout the Centre Street and Spring Street corridor, the assessment noted **uneven and broken sidewalks**, in some cases resulting from tree root damage. These conditions pose fall risks to elderly and physically disabled community members. Furthermore, it was brought to WRMS's attention in April 2023 that individuals with eyesight disabilities experience additional fall risks when sidewalk repairs are replaced with **asphalt rather than concrete; an apparent violation of ADA compliance and City policy**. Further assessment needs to be conducted to properly understand the verifiability of those issues.

Sidewalk Improvement Opportunities (Detailed)

1. Address unhealthy/stressed trees.

High Priority Locations:

W. Roxbury Pkwy./Centre St. Rotary to VFW (north side of street)

Between Greaton Rd. and Manthorne Rd. - 1/2 dead Callery Pear.

Between Willow and Maple - stressed Ginkgo.

Between Maple and Corey - 3 stressed Callery Pears.

Between Mount Vernon and Lagrange - stressed Siberian Elm.

Between Elgin and Loretta - dying Du Zhong.

Between Springvale and Marshall - 3 dead Manchurian Lindens.

Between Gardner and Baker - stressed Japanese Cherry.

Between Spring Valley and Merville - stressed Pine Oak.

VFW to W. Roxbury Pkwy./Centre St. Rotary (south side of street)

Between Gould and Ledge Hill - dead Cherry Plum.

Between Cypress and Baker - stressed Prickly Caster Oil.

Between Constance and Powell - 1 dead tree, 1 stressed tree, and 2 stressed Amur Maple.

Between Alaric and Center - 2 dead Red Maples, 1 dead American Linden, and 1 dead Japanese Cherry.

Between Lagrange and Quinn - stressed Red maple.
Between Hastings and Corey - dead Little Leaf Linden.
Between Corey and Railroad - stressed Ginkgo.
Between Willow and Manthorne - dead American Elm and dead American Pear.
Between Manthorne and 7/11 Store - dead tree.

2. Install New Trash Bins.

High Priority Locations:

W. Roxbury Pkwy./Centre St. Rotary to VFW (north side of street)

Between Manthorne and Redlands - need 2 to service 4 restaurants.
Between Redlands and Willow – need 1 at MBTA Bus stop bench.
Between Corey and Hastings - need 1.
Between Hastings and Park – need 1 at parking lot.
Between Mount Vernon and Lagrange – need 1 at MBTA Bus stop.
Between Temple and Springvale – need 1 at MBTA Bus kiosk.
Between Moville and Webster - need 1 at MBTA Bus stop.

VFW to W. Roxbury Pkwy./Centre St. Rotary (south side of street)

Between Billings and Gould - need 1 at MBTA Bus stop.
Between Morrel and Cyprus - need 1 at MBTA Bus kiosk.
Between Lagrange and Quinn - need 1 at MBTA Bus stop.
Between Park and Hastings - need a few to service restaurants.
WEST ROXBURY WELCOME SIGN – need 1.

3. Install New Age Friendly Benches.

High Priority Locations:

W. Roxbury Pkwy./Centre St. Rotary to VFW (north side of street)

Between Mount Vernon and Lagrange – need 1 at MBTA Bus stop.
Between Moville and Webster - need 1 at MBTA Bus stop.

VFW to W. Roxbury Pkwy./Centre St. Rotary (south side of street)

Between Billings and Gould - need 1 at MBTA Bus stop.
Between Powell and Alaric - need 1 at MBTA Bus stop.
Between Alaric and Center - need 1 at MBTA Bus stop.
1810 Centre St., Macy's Liquor – need 1 at MBTA Bus stop.
WEST ROXBURY WELCOME SIGN - 2 benches needed.

4. Engage with Chase Bank to determine watering and tree/shrub/flower maintenance plan for "Welcome to West Roxbury" planter at the corner of Centre Street and Belgrade Avenue.

In BPDA public meetings, Chase Bank representatives agreed that Chase Bank will oversee maintenance and care of the planter. Further engagement with Chase Bank is needed to clarify roles, contacts, etc.

5. Develop outreach materials to local businesses and property owners adjacent to problem tree pits and provide them with the WRMS informational flyer or engage them to water.

- Outreach Letter - Businesses - DONE
- Outreach Letter - Residents - DONE
- Tree Planting Info Sheet - DONE

6. Encourage new tree plantings in empty tree pits and other open areas with room for new trees.

The listing below are recommended areas where there seems to be room for tree(s) or gaps that could be filled. Ultimately, it would be up to the City to decide the feasibility or suitability of a location for a tree once requested by a property owner.

The properties are identified by street address (if available) and business name – actual ownership information is not included.

High Priority Locations and Adjacent Businesses/Properties:

W. Roxbury Pkwy./Centre St. Rotary to VFW (north side of street)

1729 Centre St., The Continental
1803 Centre St., Lawler & Crosby Funeral Home
1811 Centre St., professional building
1829 Centre St., Maria's Kitchen
1857 Centre St., Bank of America (multiple locations)
1871-1879 Centre St., Saigon Nails-Atlas True Value hardware
1885 Centre St., Boston Ale House
1915 Centre St., James W. Hennigan Insurance Agency
1981 Centre St., Metro Credit Union
2081 Centre St., Baystate Reference Laboratories
2091 Centre St., Phil's Barber Shop
2093 Centre St., Mr. Strength & Conditioning Gym
2097 Centre St., Davis & Sawin Florist
23 Spring St., Spring St. Apartments (City of Boston)
75 Spring St., Star Market plaza (there are old driveway curb cuts – not sure if this precludes trees being planted)
91 Spring St., Hercules Press
115 Spring St., Catholic Memorial school (small stretch along Spring St.)
145-151 Spring St., Shell gas station and McCracken Auto Express
155 Spring St., Dunkin'

175 Spring St., Sunray Cleaners
 180 Spring St., residential
 195 Spring St., residential
 1400 West Roxbury Parkway, VA Hospital (multiple locations along Spring St.)
W. Roxbury Pkwy./Centre St. Rotary to VFW (south side of street)
 1716 – 1734 Centre St., West On Centre restaurant – Roche Community Center
 1810 – 1826 Centre St., Macy's Liquor – Starbucks
 1832 Centre St., Brigham and Women's
 1836 Centre St., Westbury restaurant
 1894 Centre St., Som Tum restaurant
 1898 Centre St., Boston Tax Plus
 1902 Centre St., Family Dollar
 1914 Centre St., Bay State Physical Therapy
 1948 Centre St., Crystal Cleaners
 1990 Centre St., Cloutier Law Firm LLC
 2000 Centre St., P.E. Murray F.J. Higgins, George F Doherty & Sons Funeral Home
 2056 Centre St., Anna's Hand Cut Donuts Inc
 2060 Centre St., Pu Restaurant
 8 Spring St., Kfoury Keefe Funeral Home
 18 Spring St., Parkway Veterinary Hospital
 28 Spring St., residential
 38 Spring St., Escape Hair Salon (there is an old driveway curb cut – not sure if this precludes trees being planted)
 48-50 Spring St., apartments
 100 Spring St., Apple Salon
 136, 144 and 146 Spring St., residential (Parkway Preschool at 146 Spring St.)
 156 Spring St., Energy Credit Union
 162-168 Spring St., various commercial businesses
 180 and 200 Spring St., residential
 222 Spring St., Arabic Evangelical Baptist Church
 1 Morrell St., Elks Lodge (stretch along Spring St.)
 266, 270, 276, 300 and 310 Spring St., residential

7. Develop a plan and schedule for controlling weed growth throughout the district with a focus on tree pits and municipal parking lots, including the Corey Street Lot and Hastings Street Lot.

High Priority Locations:

Hasting Street Lot

The Brick Wall needs to be repaired.

Planting and regular watering of the area around the Clock adjacent to street.

Corey Street Lot

Regular Watering and Weeding