
PROGRESS REPORT

Accessibility Improvements

Robbins Farm Learning Garden

Prepared by
Robbins Farm Garden Cooperative
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Accessibility Improvements Update

Robbins Farm Learning Garden

Several accessibility issues were identified at Robbins Farm Park in the Town of Arlington ADA Self-Evaluation Report prepared by the Institute for Human Centered Design in December 2014. The Town implemented nearly all of the report's recommendations as part of the Robbins Farm Park Improvement Project approved for Community Preservation Act funding in FY 2017. This is an update on accessibility improvements at Robbins Farm Garden. Each of the three references to the garden in the Self-Evaluation Report is addressed below.

1. On page C-198: "There is an inaccessible gate entrance at the Cooperative Learning Garden program. The gate is not along an accessible route, the gate opening is too narrow, and the gate lacks a smooth surface on the push side. The ground surface at the gate is not firm, not level, and not slip-free."

A stone dust pathway between the garden gate and the Eastern Avenue sidewalk was installed in 2017, providing an accessible route to the garden gate and a ground surface at the gate that is firm, level and slip-free. A compliant-width (nominal 5') garden gate with a smooth surface on the push side was installed as part of the new entry arbor structure in 2018. (See Figure 1)

2. On page C-200: "Within the enclosed garden area, there are no areas within accessible reach ranges, along an accessible route, or that can be approached via a firm, smooth, level and slip-free path."

Raised garden beds were constructed on each side of the entry arbor within accessible reach ranges in 2019. (See Figure 2) Raising additional garden beds could be considered in the future.

Building a new garden fence in 2020 outside the perimeter of the old fence allowed a redesigned garden plan to be implemented this year. The new plan provides accessible garden paths, and garden beds with accessible widths. (See Figures 3 and 4 for new and previous plans)

Though the paths are not yet all firm, smooth, level and slip-free, we have begun the process of smoothing and leveling them.

3. On page C-204: "Ensure that public information about Cooperative Learning Garden, including application and rules information (online and printed), provides accurate information specifying the plan and timeline for ensuring that Garden program will be accessible."

A new aluminum sign was installed at the garden's entrance this spring. The sign includes application and rules information, along with other information about the garden. (See Figures 1 and 5)

The Membership & Rules page of our website (robbinsfarmgarden.org) contains detailed application and rules information, an accessibility statement and an application form, all of which meet online accessibility standards. (See Figure 6 for accessibility statement)

In closing, we continue to be grateful for the privilege of gardening at Robbins Farm Park and appreciate your patience with the pace of these accessibility improvements. Moving forward, we hope to make the garden even more accessible and more of an asset to the community. We welcome your suggestions.

Sincerely,

Robbins Farm Garden Cooperative 2021

[David Barlow, Lisa Bielefeld, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Shakti Davis, Nicole Green, Alan Jones, Steven Lee, Maura McDinger, Tim O'Leary, Martha Parravano, Michael Prager, Deepa Sayyaparaju, Mike Smith]



Figure 1.
The new garden gate showing the accessible stone dust path to the Eastern Avenue sidewalk, the entry arbor with a nominal 5' wide gate opening (with a yardstick on the path for scale), and the garden sign (detailed in Figure 5).



Figure 2.
The new raised garden beds are within accessible reach ranges: 2' high x 2' deep x 4' wide. (The gate is shown open here, with a yardstick for scale.)

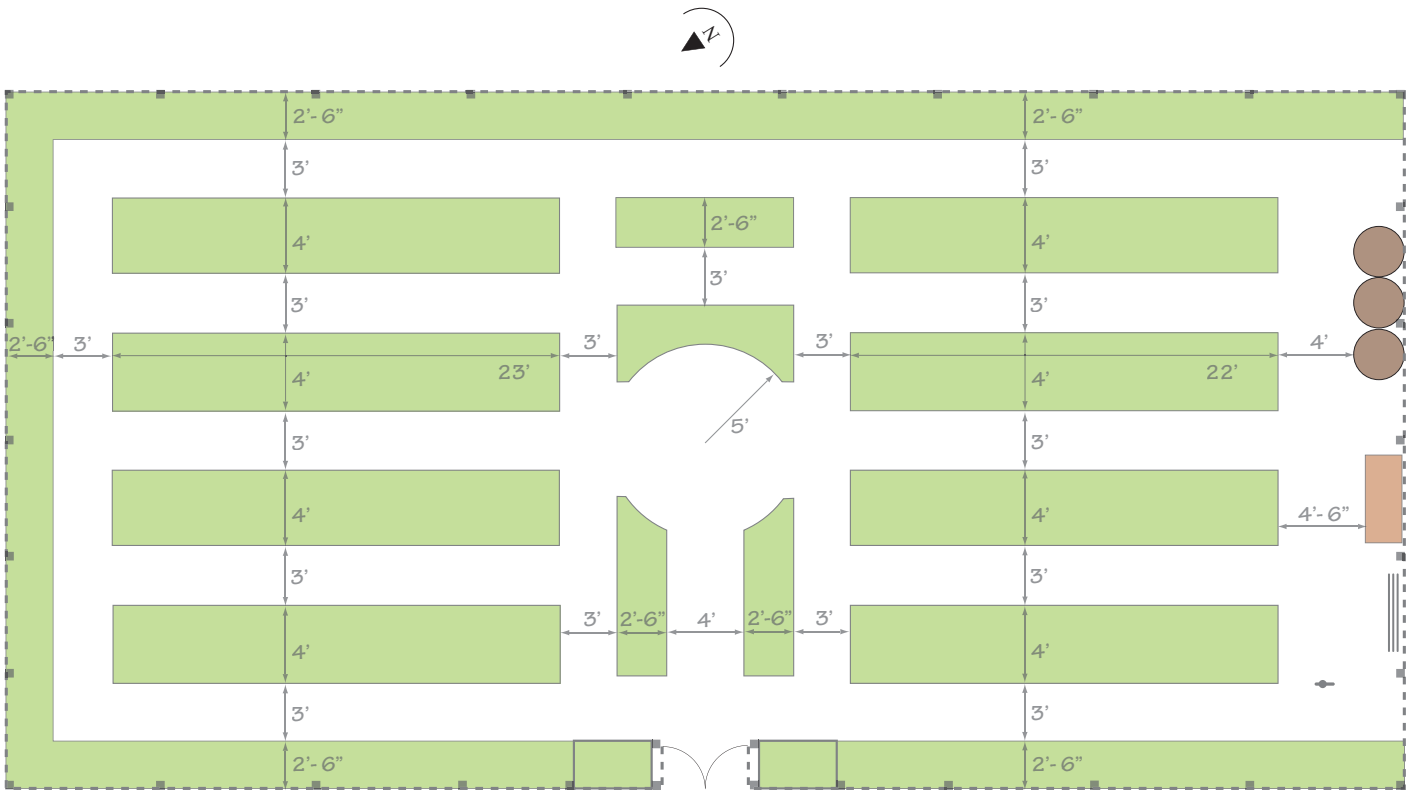


Figure 3. 2021 Garden Plan showing min. 3' wide paths and max. 4' wide beds (overall garden size: 36' x 72')

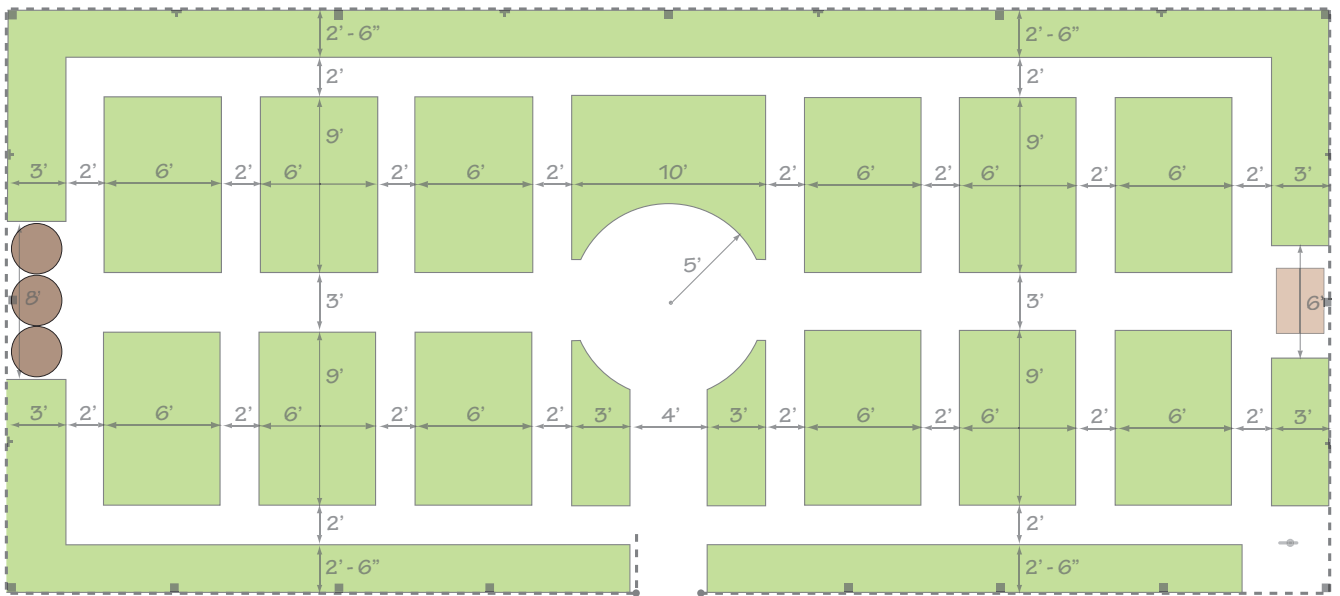


Figure 4. 2011-2020 Garden Plan showing min. 2' wide paths and max. 6' wide beds (overall garden size: 30' x 68')



Figure 5. Artwork for new aluminum sign installed at garden entrance (actual size: 12" x 18")

Accessibility Statement

The Robbins Farm Garden Cooperative strives to provide a community space and recreational outlet that is accessible and inclusive. In partnership with the Town of Arlington, the Garden Cooperative has identified ways to improve accessibility and has worked steadily towards that goal. Below is a summary of recent and current initiatives that address accessibility improvements since 2017.

Achieved:

- Addition of a stone dust path connecting garden entrance to Eastern Avenue (2017)
- Remodeling of entryway to meet ADA compliance (2018)
- Addition of raised garden beds within accessible reach ranges (2019)
- Redesign of garden to create accessible-width paths and beds (2021)

In progress:

- Leveling and smoothing of pathways within the garden (ongoing, 2021)

If you have additional questions about accessibility or recommendations for improvement, please reach out to us via the form on the "Contact Us" section of our website.

Figure 6. Screenshot of accessibility statement on the Robbins Farm Garden website (<https://robbinsfarmgarden.org/membership/>)