

## **COGdesign Community Project Serves as Thesis Project for Landscape Institute Student**

### **RoDogRun in Ronan Park, Dorchester, MA**

COGdesign's dog run project caught my eye because, as a former dog owner, I think there is a place for dog parks in the urban open space network. As the owner of my golden retriever Nica for twelve happy years, I observed first hand how dogs in the city help to create community. The more people are outside, the more likely they are to bump into each other and get to know each other, and, if there is a comfortable and safe place for them to meet, it's even better.

The Ronan Park dog run project was initiated by a group of community-minded dog owners who live near this 11-acre park that overlooks Dorchester Bay in the Fields Corner section of Dorchester. The 6,000 square foot dog run site was left out of a recent park renovation and is sunken and somewhat isolated. The hope is that the dog run will bring vitality to this area of the park and will create a place where dog owners and others can meet and exchange information about what's happening in the community.

My primary challenges are to create an attractive, comfortable, and memorable space that is fun and safe for dogs and that is affordable and easily maintainable by the "RoDogRun" group.

I've been so impressed by the dedication of the RoDogRun group. They meet regularly in each other's homes and have started weekly neighborhood dog walks to get to know the other dog owners in the neighborhood and to raise awareness about the project. They are also very creative – they have a great web site and they developed a catchy name and logo for themselves. One member said he moved to the neighborhood because he saw the web site and thought this was a community he wanted to join.

The project is currently in the concept plan stage. The RoDogRun group and I shared the concept plan with the Meetinghouse Hill Neighborhood Association in December and received their support. The next steps are for me to further develop the plans into construction documents for review by the Boston Parks Department and for RoDogRun to begin fundraising.

*--Charlotte Fleetwood, Cambridge*

*(Charlotte Fleetwood is a planner with Parsons Brinckerhoff in Boston and was a project manager on the Chinatown and North End parks for the Central Artery/Tunnel Project.)*

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