Open Space Plan 2008-2012

Section 6
Community Vision

Community Vision

Section 6.1: Description of the Process

INTRODUCTION

This Open Space Plan Update comes out of the ideas and information provided by the residents of Boston through surveys and public meetings, along with input from agency officials, field work, and review of past information. The planning and public participation process has been described in Part 2, the Introduction to this plan.

The Planning Process and Public Participation portion of Section 2 (Introduction) described the use of a standardized questionnaire to survey public opinion on open space in Boston as the major means of providing input into the plan. The results of the survey are presented here.

A brief statement of community goals and priorities will be presented in Section 6.2, Statement of Open Space and Recreation Community Goals.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

Questionnaire Development, Distribution, and Coding

The Design and Construction Unit of the Parks Department devised a survey questionnaire with the goal of learning the needs of a cross section of the public. Given limited staff and budgetary resources, the questionnaire was elicit a large amount of information by providing a broad range of standardized response categories that could be easily coded in a short period of time. In fact, most of the completed surveys were submitted via an internet-based survey firm known as Zoomerang. This enabled the coding of the standardized responses to be limited to the surveys submitted by paper versions (in both English and Spanish) distributed to the neighborhood branches of the public library, and the Boston Community Centers located in most neighborhoods.

Notices about the survey, and the opportunity for public input and comment, were provided via press releases to city-wide and local newspapers, and via the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services e-mail "blast list." This blast list is sent to anyone wishing to be

included, and typically includes neighborhood associations, non-profit groups such as community development corporations, activist citizens, and elected officials. It was also noticed via e-mails sent to a list of community groups concerned with open space in Boston, as well as a list of permit holders for athletic facilities and special events in the city's parks. It was noticed on the first page of the city's own home web page for a limited time, and was noticed on the Parks Department's home web page, with a direct portal to the survey hosted by the Zoomerang web site. The survey period was January 1 to March 15, 2007.

A total of 1202 surveys were submitted, though some were incomplete: 218 of these surveys were submitted on paper versions of the questionnaire, either by mail, or collected at the public library branches or the branches of the Boston Community Centers. Almost 100 surveys were eliminated from consideration, as the respondents were either persons residing outside of Boston city limits and used parks outside Boston city limits, or persons who had submitted specious responses to the online survey. As a result, a total of 1105 surveys were analyzed (versus only 298 surveys in the 2002-2006 plan's survey sample).

The new questionnaire had some questions based on the questionnaire used for the survey done for the 2002-2006 plan, such as age, neighborhood, length of residency, size of household, name of the park used most often and the nearest park, changes sought in that park, and changes sought in the general neighborhood's open space.

We then added questions that sought to obtain more information about actual use of the parks by the respondents. We asked about general activities undertaken in the park used most often, what sports, if any, the respondents used the park for now, and what sports they anticipated using the park for 5 years hence. We wanted to know what time of day and the week they use the park.

We also wanted some additional demographic information: age, gender, race/ethnic origin, Latino status, household size, and availability of motor vehicles to their household, and the disability status of any members of their household.

A copy of the questionnaire is shown at the end of Section 6.1, before the collection of Tables and Figures for this section.

The 218 paper questionnaires were coded, then added to the results for the online survey submissions. The Microsoft Access

database software was used for the coding of the paper surveys. The output was then converted to the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software for analysis and presentation along with the online results.

Survey Results

Note: For all tables and figures, wherever N (the number of responses or frequency of choice) is greater than 0, but the percent figure is 0%, "0%" should be taken to mean "less than 1%."

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Neighborhood Residency

While the proportional distribution of survey respondents across city neighborhoods is generally comparable to the actual distribution as found in the 2000 Census, 8 out of the 15 BRA-designated neighborhood planning districts have a variance of 3% or more between the population of the census versus the survey sample (see Table 6-1). Table 6-1 also shows the sample population distribution by neighborhood for the survey done for the 2002-2006 plan.

There appears to be no systematic bias toward one neighborhood or another to account for the variability in the new sample versus the 2000 census. Dorchester and East Boston both have diverse populations, yet Dorchester is underrepresented while East Boston is overrepresented. West Roxbury is an affluent community, while poverty is more prevalent in Roxbury, yet both communities are underrepresented.

While the 2000 census population of Jamaica Plain is 6% of the city's population, the new sample's percent is 17%, a difference of 11 percentage points. As we mentioned in the discussion in the 2002-2006 plan, one likely explanation is that Jamaica Plain, with its considerable acreage of public open space and its good public transit access to downtown, is a popular location for residents in the city with a stronger than average appreciation of the role of open space in daily life. This neighborhood has a history of organizing to protect existing open space resources and create new open spaces, such as the Southwest Corridor Park. Therefore, it has a considerable number of long-term stakeholders with an acute awareness of the need for open space in daily life. Many of these stakeholders have a history of organizing and activism at the local level on land use and environmental issues. Therefore, they would be likely to complete and return the survey questionnaire, and consequently overrepresented in the new survey sample.

The neighborhood distribution comparison between the survey sample population and the census-derived population did not include the respondents who were not residents of Boston. The Residence Location of Respondents table (see Table 6-2 and Figure 6-1) shows the residence distribution for the entire sample, including the non-Boston residents who use Boston parks. (Boston residents who most often used parks outside of Boston were also included in the sample.)

Age

The age distribution of survey respondents compared to the general population (1990 census) is quite different, yet understandable (see Table 6-3 and Figure 6-2). While 17% of city residents are 14 years or younger, only 1% of the survey respondents were in that age group. Given limited staff and budgetary resources, outreach to children of this age was limited. It would be expected that caregivers such as parents or guardians would represent their interests through participation in the survey.

This phenomenon of under-representation reappears for ages 18 to 20, likely due to the general orientation of this age group on education and the establishment of careers. We find instead that respondents aged 25 to 59 are overrepresented as compared to the population as a whole. This would be the age group that are or aim to be long-term stakeholders in the community with the greatest interest in local land use and environmental issues that could affect their families and their homes, usually their most significant investment. The older age groups, 75 and older, are somewhat underrepresented in the sample as compared to the city's general population.

Given the sample distribution, it is expected that while the 17 and under age group is underrepresented, its interests are considered in the responses of the overrepresented 25 to 59 age group. The group that is most vulnerable to under-representation is the 18 to 20 age group. The 25 to 59 age group may not adequately consider their needs, especially given rapid changes in recreation trends. However, given the goal of the Department toward broadly serving all users to the maximum extent feasible, and the recreation trend toward continuing recreation pursuits begun at younger ages for the long-term health benefits, it can be assumed that despite the different shape of the sample's age distribution curve, the sample can be relied upon to generally reflect the concerns and needs of the city's overall population. Another factor to consider is that many

of the 18 to 20 year old residents are students at college: the trend for many colleges is to provide on-campus health/fitness facilities, both indoors and outdoors, as a means to promote health, relieve stress, and provide social opportunities for its students. Yet oftentimes, colleges and their students do resort to off-campus open spaces for a variety of reasons.

Gender

A small percent of the sample, 8%, left this question blank. Those 92% of respondents who answered were comparable to the Census 2000 population in terms of gender distribution: 52% of respondents, like the City of Boston population in 1999, were female, while 48% were male (Table 6-4 and Figure 6-3).

Latino Status

Ninety percent (90%) of the sample provided their Latino status. In comparison to the Census 2000 SF1 count of Latino status, the sample shows a slight under-representation: 10% of the sample identified themselves as Latino, versus 14% of the city-wide population (Table 6-5 and Figure 6-4). The distribution among Latino groups shows some differences between the sample and the city-wide population. While the Puerto Rican and Dominican groups are underrepresented, the Cuban and Mexican groups are overrepresented. The category "Other Latino," was the modal category among the Latino groups in the sample, and matched the city-wide percentage at 7%.

Race or Ethnic Origin

Most (88%) of the respondents provided their racial characterization or ethnic origin. The large majority, 97%, identified themselves with only one race/ethnic origin characterization, while 3% identified themselves with two or more race/ethnic origin characterizations (Table 6-6 and Figure 6-5). The modal category was White, with 82% of respondents; the next most frequent category was "Some Other Race" alone, at 6%, then Black alone with 5%, and Asian alone with 3%. Those who selected two or more race/ethnic origin characterizations also represented 3% of the sample.

Comparison to the Boston figures from the 2000 Census shows a notable difference between the sample figures and the city-wide figures in the black and Asian categories. The most likely explanation for this phenomenon may be that many persons in the

black or Asian race/ethnic origin categories may not have access to computers. (While public library branches and Boston Community Center branches do have computers available, the online survey was set up to not allow more than one submission per computer to avoid/reduce the chance of a single respondent submitting multiple surveys.) Newspaper notices that indicated the availability of paper surveys in local distribution were supplied throughout the city, but the need to visit a local library or community center branch may have been an obstacle to some. Another reason may be that the sample includes non-residents; many areas around Boston have a far lower share of non-White residents than does Boston.

Years as Boston Resident

Because of the presence of non-residents in the sample, we are interpreting the responses to this to mean either living within Boston city limits or in the Boston metropolitan area. Most of the respondents, 87%, offered a response to this question. More than half, 58%, have lived in Boston 16 years or less, and 36% have lived 8 years or less in Boston (Table 6-7 and Figure 6-6). Yet 33% of the sample are long-term residents of Boston, 17-45 years, while 6% were very long term residents, in the 56 years and above range.

Table 6-8 and Figure 6-7 show an interesting comparison between the length of residency in Boston distribution. In the sample for the survey done for the 2002-06 plan, the distribution is weighed more toward the longer-term residents than in the sample for the 2007-11 plan.

Size of Household

The 2007-11 plan survey asked the question about household size (Table 6-9 and Figure 6-8). The modal category was a two-person household, at 35% of respondents. The next largest category was one-person households at 20%, with three- and four person households at 17% each.

Comparing the sample distribution to the city-wide Census 2000 distribution yields interesting results (Table 6-10 and Figure 6-9). Most notable is the 17 percent difference between the Census and the sample results for 1-person households, 37% versus 20% respectively. In the 2- to 4-person household size range, the sample shows a larger share than the census: 69% of the sample stated they were in 2- to 4-person households, versus 53% of the city-wide population described by the Census.

Community Vision

Number of Vehicles Available
As motor vehicles can help individuals gain access to a broader range of recreational opportunities beyond reasonable walking distance, the survey sought information on the number of cars available to the respondent's household: 91% of respondents provided a response to this question (Table 6-11). Of those who provided a response, the modal category was 1 car per household at 46% of respondent households, followed by 2 cars per household at 31% (Table 6-11 and Figure 6-10). The third most frequent category was no cars per household at 17% of respondent households.

When a comparison was made to the city-wide figures from the 2000 Census, a notable difference was seen (Table 6-12 and Figure 6-11): while the percent share of the number of households with 1 car and with 3 or more cars was similar, the percent share for the households with no cars and with 2 cars available were "mirror images." Where 31% of the sample households had 2 cars per household, 35 % of Boston households had no cars per households; on the other hand, where 17% of the sample had no cars per household, 17% of Boston households had 2 cars per households. Put another way, while over one-third of Boston households have no car available, a bit less than one-fifth of the sample households have no car available.

Disability Status
The survey desired to obtain information on disability status of household members of the respondent's household. The question was a copy of that used in the 1999 US Census questionnaire. It sought the type of disabilities experienced by household members: sensory, such as blindness, deafness, or other severe sensory impairment; substantial physical limitations; mental difficulties with learning, memory, or concentration; difficulties with self-care or going outside the home, or employment-related disabilities. Respondents could select one or more such disability categories to describe the disability status of household members. Certain persons may have more than one disability; for example, employment disability would likely overlap with one of the other disability categories.

Out of 1105 respondents in the sample (Table 6-13), 82% either left these items blank, or answered all six questions "No." Eighteen percent (18%) provided a 'Yes" response to at least one of the six disability status questions: 18% of respondents said they were members of a household that had at least one member with a

disability. In 1999, 24% of persons 16 and over in Boston (non-institutionalized civilians) had a disability.

Looking at the distribution of disability types or status, we see by looking at Figures 6-12 and 6-13 that both distributions have a similar shape: difficulties going outside the home and employment disability are the two most frequent categories for both the sample and the city-wide population; the next most frequent categories are physical limitations and mental difficulties; and the two least frequent are sensory- and self-care-related disabilities.

PARKS USED BY RESPONDENTS & THEIR HOUSEHOLDS

Park Used Most Often

We wanted to find out what park the respondents and their household members used most often. We first asked them to report what park they lived nearest, and then asked them if they used that park the most often; if not, we asked them to report which park they did use most often. We then developed the response list for the parks respondents and their household members used most often from the results from these three questions.

Nearest Park We found that 70% of the respondents did use most often the park they reported as nearest their home, while 25% said used another park, and 3% did not use any park (2% left this question blank) (Table 6-14 and Figure 6-14).

Park Used Most Often It comes as no surprise that the top 9 parks cited by respondents most frequently as being used most often by themselves or their household members were generally larger, regional scale parks (Table 6-15 and Figure 6-15). Five of the top 9 are parks in the Emerald Necklace system: the Arnold Arboretum (6%), Boston Common (6%), the Back Bay Fens (4%), Franklin Park (4%), and Jamaica Pond (4%), totaling 24% or nearly one-quarter of responses to this question. After the Arnold Arboretum, the second most frequently cited park was the Charles River Reservation (6%), which straddles Beacon Hill, Back Bay, the Fenway/Kenmore neighborhood, and Allston-Brighton. Other regional parks in the top 9 were Joe Moakley Park (formerly Columbus Park) at 5%, and East Boston Piers Park at 4%.

The next 11 most often used parks are a more varied lot (Table 6-15 and Figure 6-16). Three are South End parks, two of which are

small in acreage, Titus Sparrow Park (1%) and Ringgold Park (3%). Peters Parks is a larger South End park with an athletic field. Two are parks in Jamaica Plain, which are larger sub-regional parks: Olmsted Park (1%) and the English High School Athletic Fields (2%). Another two are larger parks in Allston-Brighton with athletic facilities, Ringer (2%) and Rogers (1%). East Boston has one park in this "next 11" tier, American Legion Playground (2%). The Public Garden, an Emerald Necklace park which serves several neighborhood is also in this second tier (1%). The Southwest Corridor Park, a regional greenway park, serves many neighborhoods in Boston (3%). Millennium Park is a newly built (2000) regional park with athletic fields, grasslands, woodlands, and striking views that attracts many users (2%) despite its isolated location in low-density southwest Boston.

The remainder of the parks cited by respondents as the one they or their household members use most often are scattered throughout the city.

Interestingly, 4% of respondents, who were city residents, cited a park outside of the city limits. This response, the eighth most frequently provided, puts it into the upper tier or top 9 response categories for park used most often. (Questionnaires by respondents who were non-residents and cited a park outside of the city of Boston as the park they used most often were excluded from the 1105 surveys analyzed for the sample.

Frequency of Park Visitation and Time of Visitation

Table 6-16 presents the results of the question regarding park visitation: i.e., the number of days per month, during the season the park used most often is most frequently visited, the respondents or his/her household's other members visited the park used most often. The modal response categories, in the aggregated ranges, were 4 to 6 days, and 9 to 12 days per month (20% each). The next most frequent categories were 20 to 22 days, and 30 to 31 days per month (12% each).

Overall, it can be seen that a further grouping of the range categories is possible: 33% are in the 20- to 31-day "higher frequency" range, 30% in the 9- to 19-day "moderate frequency" range, and 38% are in the 1- to 8-day "lower frequency" range of visitation.

Based on Table 6-17 and Figure 6-18, it appears that the time of week of visiting the park they use most often occurs both on

weekends and weekdays by 85% of respondents, versus weekends only by 10%, and weekdays only by 5%.

The results for the question on what time of day the park is used (Table 6-18 and Figure 6-19) shows that most respondents, 65%, used the park both in the daytime and evenings. The next most frequent choice was daytime only, by 27% of the respondents. Evenings only was chosen by 8% of the respondents.

Means of Travel to and from the Park

The question was asked about what means of travel the respondent or members of his/her family usually used to travel to the park. The modal category by far was walking, at 73%, with the second most frequent category private motor vehicle at 13% (Table 6-19 and Figure 6-20). Bicycling and running/jogging came in tied for third, both at 5%, and public transportation at 4%.

ACTIVITIES PURSUED IN THE PARK

General Activity Type Park Used For

We asked survey participants what general types of activities they or members of their household pursued in the park. We found that the top three activities were ones that were the most basic. "Exercise/Fitness" had the most responses, 454 (as respondents were allowed to pick up to three choices, a percent of the whole reporting of results is not possible) (Table 6-20 and Figure 6-21). "Simple Relaxation/Passive Recreation" was second at 437, while "Enjoy Nature" was third at 421. Activities with more social contexts involved were the next most popular, from "Spending Time with Family/Friends" at 318 responses (almost 100 fewer responses than "Enjoy Nature"), "Take Child for Free Play" (260), "Organized (Team) Sports" (232), "Walk Your Dog" (211), and "Attend Special Events" (206). "Taking Child for Organized Sports" was, surprisingly, the least chosen activity, at 49 responses.

Current Sports/Activities Played in Park

We asked survey participants what sports they or their household members pursued in the park. An extensive list of responses occurred, so we ordered the sports activities by descending frequency of response (Table 6-21 and Figures 6-22 and 6-23). Walking was the most frequent choice, at 401 responses. Figure 6-22 shows the top 10 most frequent choices, and Figure 6-23 shows the next 10 most frequent choices. In the top 10, the most notable

result was the 217 responses for Ultimate Frisbee, a football-style game played with a flying disc, often organized in league play.

Desired Sports/Activities 5 Years Hence

We asked survey participants what sports they saw themselves or members of their household playing over the next five years. We saw some change occurring, with Bicycling getting more responses to become the second most frequently chosen sports activity (230) (Table 6-22 and Figures 6-24 and 6-25). Two sports that were not in the top 20 in the current sports pursued responses are now in the top 20 of anticipated sports to be pursued responses. Canoeing/Kayaking and Bouldering/Climbing are respectively the 13th (56 responses) and 20th (42 responses) most frequently cited sports projected to be undertaken over the next five years.

Change in Sports/Activity Participation

In Table 6-23, we see a comparison between what respondents cited as the current sports or activities pursued in the park and what they projected over the next five years. The column "% Change" represents the relative change anticipated. As can be seen small changes in sports or activities with small absolute participation numbers can yield a large percent change. For example, a 300 percent increase in participation is seen in Fishing, but the absolute increase in numbers of participants as seen in this survey is only 12: that is, currently 4 persons cited Fishing as a current pursuit, while 16 persons projected participation in it over the next five years.

By performing a descending sort by the frequency of current sports/activity participation, the phenomenon for which the respondent has the most knowledge about actual behavior, the most popular sports/ activities in absolute numbers are at the top of the order. This enables a potential understanding of anticipated behavior patterns for the largest number of park users. Among the top 20 sports/activities currently undertaken by respondents (see also Figures 6-26 and 6-27), the largest participation increases are in Softball (75%), Tennis (68%), Inline/Roller Skating (56%), Little League Baseball (50%), Baseball (43%), and Ice Skating (43%). Other notable increases include Flag Football (42%), Skateboard (39%), Football (36%), and Soccer (24%). Walking (1%) and Track & Field (0%) remain stable with little or no change projected in participation, but Bicycling (16%) and Running (11%) show moderate increases. Among the sports/activities with less participation, Bouldering/Climbing (163%), Canoeing/Kayaking

(115%), and Sailing/Boating (115%) are ones with modest current participation but sizable increases projected by the respondents over the next five years.

Nature-Oriented Activities Pursued in Park

The survey asked respondents to choose from an array of activities which they pursued, if any, to enjoy nature in the park. By far the modal activity was "View Scenery without Aid of Guides or Guidebooks while Walking, Running, Bicycling, Riding Wheelchair, Sitting, Boating, Etc." at 596 responses. The next most frequent activity was "Participate in Natural Area Clean-Up or Improvement Projects" at 287 responses, and the third most frequent activity was "Nature Photography" at 212 responses. Of the two nature-oriented activities that involve a substantial science-based knowledge of nature, "Birding" and "Plant or Animal Identification Using Guidebook (Non-Birding)," Birding was more frequently chosen (191 responses), versus Plant or Animal Identification (76 responses). Nature interpretation categories, such as Self-Guided Nature Walks with Brochures or Signs (89 responses), Guided Nature Walks (80 responses), or Boston Park Ranger Guided Tours (51 responses), were on the low end of the frequency of choices for this question.

CHANGES DESIRED IN OPEN SPACE

Changes Desired in the Park Most Used

The questionnaire asked respondents what changes they and their household members would like to see in the park they used most often. They were presented with an array of choices, which were originally developed from the coding of the open-ended versions of this question in the survey done for the 2002-2006 plan. Not surprisingly, the modal response category was "Improve Maintenance" (421 responses), followed by "Improve Vegetation/Landscape" (307 responses), and "Improve Existing Facilities" (266 responses) (Table 6-5 and Figure 6-29).

In a second tier of response frequency are the following changes, in order of descending frequency: "Improve Public Safety" (231 responses), "Improve Dog Control" (218 responses), "More Active Facilities (Sports-Oriented)" (187 responses), "Address Dog Owners' Needs" (178 responses), and "Improve or Add Programs & Special Events" (176 responses).

Community Vision

Perceived Neighborhood Open Space Needs
The questionnaire asked respondents what they and their household members believed are their neighborhood's open space needs. They were presented with an array of choices, which were originally developed from the coding of the open-ended versions of this question in the survey done for the 2002-2006 plan. Not surprisingly, the modal response category was "Improve Maintenance" (337 responses), followed by "Protect Open Space from Conversion to Non-Open Space Uses" (289 responses), and Improve Existing Park Facilities" (262 responses) (Table 6-26 and Figures 6-30 and 6-31).

In a second tier of response frequency are the following needs, in order of descending frequency: "Improve Vegetation (Landscape)" (221 responses), "Improve Public Safety" (219 responses), "Improve Dog Control" (196 responses), "More Sports Facilities (Ball Fields, Courts, Etc.)" (194 responses), "More Open Space in The Neighborhood" (188 responses), "Address Dog Owners' Needs" (176 responses), and 'Improve Natural Areas (Woods, Wetlands, Marshes, Etc.)" (169 responses). Figure 6-31 presents graphically the distribution of choices among the next 10 most frequently perceived neighborhood open space needs.

PARK SUPPORT GROUP PARTICIPATION

Participation in Park Support Group
The questionnaire asked respondents whether they volunteered for or participated in a park-related support group. Table 6-27 and Figure 6-32 illustrates the results: One-third of the sample (33%) said they did volunteer for or participate in a park-related support group. This may seem like a surprisingly high positive response rate. However, as the notification of the survey was made to community improvement groups, park support groups, and sports leagues, this is not very surprising. It also indicates that many respondents are familiar with conditions in the parks and open space they use and know in their neighborhood, and the survey responses better reflect knowledgeable public opinion on this subject.

Type of Support Group Participation
The questionnaire then asked those who said they did participate in park-related support groups what type of such group it was: the results are found in Table 6-28 and Figure 6-33. The most frequent choice was Friends Group (a name typically used for an interest group that advocates and works for the improvement of a specific

park or set of parks) at 167 responses; the next most frequent choice was the Open Space Committee of a Neighborhood Association at 127 responses. Community Garden or Beautification Groups, Other Groups, and Youth Sports Leagues were in the second tier of response frequency. The least frequent response was Adult Sports League.

Section 6.2: Statement of Open Space and Recreation Community Vision and Goals

INTRODUCTION

Based on community input not only through the Open Space Plan Update Survey, but also through correspondence, and through past input from earlier versions of the open space plan, the City of Boston through its Parks and Recreation Department has prepared a set of community goals that will be integrated with a subsequent analysis of needs to develop the plan's Goals and Objectives, to be presented in Section 8.

COMMUNITY VISION: Visioning the Future of Open Space

The vision or endpoint for our efforts to plan for open space in Boston can be as vast as the dreams of the over half a million residents of Boston. But we can certainly outline a set of commonly held images that can inspire, and have been inspired by, the imaginations of residents and professionals alike throughout the discussions that have lead up to this plan.

- Parks which are cleaner than ever with well-maintained play equipment, courts, and fields;
- Parks with programming by Park Rangers, arts groups, and sports, fitness, and recreation providers;
- Play lots that are safe, widely available, stimulate child development, and provide meeting places for parents and other caregivers;
- Recreational facilities that respond to changing demographics and provide youth and adults alike with opportunities for healthy activity, team building, and bolstering self-esteem;
- Youth programming that encourages leadership, accomplishment, and productive activity;
- Greenways, trails, and bikeways between parks and along the seashore and riverbanks linking neighborhoods as well as open spaces;
- Burying grounds maintained as attractive, historical assets for their neighborhoods;
- Community gardens protected and designed with community enhancement in mind;

Community Vision

- Urban wilds and natural areas protected, maintained, and interpreted through community/non-profit/government partnerships;
- Improved access to open space through public transit and non-motorized travel, as well as improved vehicular routes and well-designed streetscapes;
- Acquisition of key open space parcels to protect viewsheds, watersheds, and habitats, buffer existing open spaces, and provide needed recreational facilities;
- Continual improvement and innovation in park and open space design, maintenance, and programming;
- Corporate and business involvement in open space creation, funding, and enhancement;
- Community empowerment through involvement in decision-making about the design and care of parks and open spaces; and
- Stable and enhanced funding for the citywide system of open spaces.

COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS

The Community Setting section of this plan (Section 3) has indicated that Boston's population includes a variety of ages in a community where density varies from the urban to the suburban. The Environmental Inventory and Analysis section (Section 4) has indicated that Boston is blessed with resources that give it a special sense of place, such as Boston Harbor and Dorchester Bay, and the rivers tributary to them – the Charles, the Muddy, the Mystic, Chelsea Creek, and the Neponset. The Open Space Inventory section (Section 5) arrays the various open spaces that are used to fulfill current open space needs, or have the potential to fulfill future needs. Based on a review of previous goals and policies, community setting, assessment of environmental conditions, and review of public input (including Section 6.1's open space opinion survey), three primary goals emerged:

- Protect and improve the existing system of open spaces throughout the city through capital rehabilitation (planning, design, and engineering), maintenance, programming, and other system operations to meet existing and new challenges placed on them as the city changes and grows.

- Create new opportunities for meeting open space needs through the city-building and neighborhood development processes.

Community Vision

- Protect the environmental resources of the open space system to enable the restoration and maintenance of their high quality and to reduce the costs of mitigating adverse consequences.