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# **Open Space Plan 2008-2014**

## **Section 7 Analysis of Needs**

### **Section 7.2.5 Community Open Space & Recreation DORCHESTER**

## **Section 7.2.5: Community Open Space & Recreation DORCHESTER**

### **THE SETTING**

Dorchester is the single largest neighborhood in Boston. Its northernmost boundary includes the relatively new and still expanding South Bay Shopping Center. From there the community extends south, its eastern edge running along Dorchester Bay to the mouth of the Neponset River. Dorchester's southernmost extent is to the city limits along the Neponset River, while to the west it borders Mattapan and Roxbury. Across this vast community are many residential neighborhoods and the commercial districts serving them. Some of the most significant include Uphams Corner, Fields Corner, Savin Hill, Jones Hill, Popes Hill, Bowdoin/Geneva, Harbor Point, Codman Square, Cedar Grove, Lower Mills, Adams Village, and Gallivan and Morrissey Boulevards. Dorchester is served by the MBTA's Red Line and many interconnected bus lines, while the Southeast Expressway skirts along its eastern edge.

In the past, some planning processes have divided this community into North and South Dorchester, an artificial designation largely unrecognized and unused by residents. Therefore, it will not be used here.

#### *History*

The Town of Dorchester was settled and incorporated in 1630, encompassing present-day Dorchester, South Boston, Mattapan, and Hyde Park. In 1633, Puritans landed at Columbia Point, an area that was later defended from a fort atop Savin Hill. In that first year a burying ground was dedicated in Uphams Corner. Dorchester is also home to one of the city's oldest extant wood frame houses, the Blake House, constructed in 1648.

Although for nearly 200 years Dorchester developed primarily as a farming community, its harborfront and riverfront hosted commerce, particularly at Lower Mills and around Commercial Point. In the early 1800s, Dorchester estates and summer houses were built as second homes for wealthy Bostonians, especially on the area's numerous hilltops. South Boston was annexed to the city in 1804. In 1868, Hyde Park was incorporated as a separate town.

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Needs Analysis

In 1870, when Dorchester itself was annexed to Boston, it was still a rural community of 12,000 residents. But in that same year came railroad access and ever-increasing residential and commercial development that began to transform what had been essentially an agricultural area. Upper-class Yankees and Irish built one and two-family Victorian homes on Savin Hill and Jones Hill. At the junction of five streetcar lines, Uphams Corner became Dorchester's marketplace.

By 1920, with new streetcar and municipal water lines supporting growth, Dorchester's population climbed to 150,000. Between 1950 and 1980, however, the neighborhood's population dropped by 23,000 people as many families joined the suburban exodus and the process of disinvestment in the neighborhood had begun. This movement was facilitated by the 1959 opening of the Southeast Expressway and the closing of the Old Colony Railroad commuter line.

Replacing those who left Dorchester were at first black families, then followed more recently by Cape Verdean, Latino, Vietnamese, and other immigrant families, as well as those who generally understood the high value yet low prices for many of Dorchester's older residences.

*Demographics/Housing*

During the triple-decker era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Dorchester attracted working-class families, mainly of Irish and other European descent. Predominantly Catholic, the area became delineated by parishes. Since the post-World War II suburban migration of the mid-20th century, the population has stabilized and begun to rise, from 82,912 in 1980 to 85,698 in 1990, a 3.4% increase. The population increase has accelerated further, with a 8.4% increase between 1990 and 2000 to a total of 92,862.

In 1990, 26% of Dorchester's residents were under the age of 18 versus 19% for the city. In 2000, 27% of Dorchester's residents were under the age of 18 versus 20% for the city. Thus, Dorchester will likely remain one of Boston's primary child-raising neighborhoods with the attendant needs for youth-oriented services and infrastructure that go with such an age group. Household median income and poverty figures are comparable between the city overall and Dorchester. The percentage of Dorchester's households that do not own a vehicle is 27%, while for the city it is 35%.

## Demographic and Housing Profile

Population	
2000 Census	92,862
1990 Census	85,698
1980 Census	82,912
Population growth/decline, 1990 - 2000	8.36%
Population growth/decline, 1980 - 1990	3.36%

Age		
0 to 4	6,184	7%
5 to 9	7,421	8%
10 to 14	7,498	8%
15 to 17	4,442	5%
18 to 24	10,288	11%
25 to 44	31,585	34%
45 to 64	17,193	19%
65 to 74	4,553	5%
75 to 84	2,869	3%
85 and over	829	1%

Race	
	% of Total Population
White alone	34%
Black or African American alone	37%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0%
Asian alone	11%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0%
Some other race alone	10%
Two or more races	7%

Latino Status	
	% of Total Population
Not Hispanic or Latino	89%
Hispanic or Latino	11%

N.B.: "0%" means "less than 1%"

## Demographic and Housing Profile

Households	
2000 Census	31,541
1990 Census	29,593
1980 Census	28,341
Household Growth/Decline, 1980-1990	3.36%
Household Growth/Decline, 1990-2000	9.50%

Population by Household Type	
	% Persons
Family households	80%
Non-family households	16%
Group quarters	3%

Average Household Size	
	Persons per Household Type
All Households	2.85
Family Households	3.66
Nonfamily Households	1.37

Persons Per Household		
	Households	%
1-person households	8,158	26%
2-person households	7,939	25%
3-person households	5,578	18%
4-person households	4,497	14%
5-person households	2,826	9%
6-person households	1,392	4%
7-or more person households	1,151	4%

## Demographic and Housing Profile

## Population Density

	Persons per Square Mile
1980 Census	13,749.9
1990 Census	14,211.9
2000 Census	15,400.0
Density Change 1980 to 1990	462.0
Density Change 1990 to 2000	1,188.1

## Housing Tenure in Occupied Housing Units

	% in Occupied Housing Units
Owner occupied	36%
Renter occupied	64%

## Total Occupied &amp; Vacant Housing Units in Structure

Single units	18%
Double units	21%
3-9 units	48%
10-19 units	3%
20-49 units	5%
50 or more units	6%
All other	0%
Single/Multiple Unit Ratio	0.2

## Household by Number of Vehicles Available

No vehicles	27%
1 vehicle	52%
2 vehicles	20%
3 or more vehicles	2%

## Median Household Income

\$38,590

## Civilian Unemployment Rate

8.4%

## Poverty Rate

18.4%

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Needs Analysis

Dorchester has a higher share of owner-occupied units (36%) compared to the city as a whole (32%). Unlike other Boston neighborhoods, such as Allston-Brighton and the Fenway where high college student populations lower the number of family households, families form 80% of Dorchester's households. This compares with 65% across the city.

In 1990, the racially diverse population of Dorchester included 49% whites, 32% blacks, 11% Hispanics, 4% Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 3% other. In 2000, the racial make-up changed further: 34% are white, 37% are black, 11% Hispanic, 11% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 17% in other racial/ethnic categories.

In Dorchester, 1 - 4 unit frame housing predominates: 86% of Dorchester housing units are in the 1 - 9 unit range versus 68% for the city. Besides the triple-decker form, there are ornate Victorians, large apartment buildings, and ranch houses. Density increased by 462 persons per square mile in Dorchester for the ten-year period between 1980 and 1990 versus an increase of 1188 persons per square mile in the 1990-2000 period.

## THE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM TODAY

### *Equity and Investment*

The 351 acres of protected open space in Dorchester, largely under the jurisdiction of the City of Boston and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DCR), give the area's residents a ratio of 3.78 acres of protected open space per 1,000 persons compared to a citywide ratio of 7.47 protected acres per 1,000 persons. This lack of quantity is, however, somewhat balanced by the wide range of open space types, including passive and historic landscaped parks, harbor promenades, playgrounds, beaches, community gardens, and, increasingly, the Neponset River area.

The open space system is coming closer to realizing its full potential in some important areas. These include areas along the Neponset River, the harbor shoreline, and the Old Colony railroad right-of-way adjacent to them, where important restoration and expansion of open space is underway largely through the DCR. When the City, state, and community fully implement the long-range comprehensive plans for these key resources, the amount of open space in Dorchester will substantially increase. Significant increases in Dorchester's usable open space acreage have occurred (see below, "On the Shores of the Neponset") with the

## Needs Analysis

opening of Pope John Paul II Park (2001) and the Neponset River Rail Trail/Greenway (2002).

Under the City of Boston capital improvement program, 11 neighborhood parks and playgrounds, and one historic cemetery, received improvements totaling over \$4 million (see table). These included renovations at Doherty-Gibson Playground (aka Town Field), Dorchester Park, Ryan Play Area, and Roberts Playground. The reconstruction at Mothers' Rest at Four Corners (formerly known as Corbett Park) included the additional of several vacant lots, enabling the expansion of the park to accommodate new features.

Dorchester Capital Projects 2001-2006	
Mothers' Rest at Four Corners	\$610,854
Doherty-Gibson Playground	\$187,478
Dorchester North Burying Ground	\$295,189
Dorchester Park	\$384,395
Downer Avenue Playground	\$187,478
Garvey Playground	\$276,435
Hemenway Playground	\$807,552
Martin / Hilltop Playground	\$44,434
Miranda Memorial Park	\$188,848
Roberts Playground	\$216,011
Ryan Play Area	\$677,633
Walsh Playground	\$216,011
Total	\$4,092,316

*Assessment**"ON THE WATERFRONT"*

The Southeast Expressway cuts through the eastern edge of Dorchester, creating a physical barrier between most of its residential areas to the west and the waterfront to its east, with the exception of the Savin Hill, Columbia Point, and Port Norfolk neighborhoods. Columbia Point, Port Norfolk, and Savin Hill, while blessed with a diverse open space inventory, have limited access to the rest of Dorchester due to the Expressway, much like the North End was physically isolated from downtown Boston due to the then elevated Central Artery. Columbia Point, separating the South Boston shoreline from Dorchester, and originally a "calf pasture" used for grazing, has developed institutional uses such as the University of Massachusetts Boston campus and the John F. Kennedy Library. While splendid facilities in themselves, Columbia Point's many institutions have poorly integrated open space systems that need better linkages. Additional tree planting on existing avenues and roads would help improve the scenic qualities of this area.







Site Name	Baseball Diamond	Softball Diamond	Little League Diamond	Football	Soccer	Cricket Field	Rugby	Lacrosse	Multi-Use Athletic Field	Basketball Court	Basketball Half Court	Tennis Court	Street Hockey Court	Volleyball	Handball	Horseshoes	Children's Playlot	Waterspray Feature	Passive Area	Community Garden	Artwork/Monument	Path	Nature Trail	Landscaped Area	Fountain	Concession(s)	Parking Area	Other Features/Facilities	
10 Josephine Street Garden																			1										
29 Josephine Street Garden																			1										
Adams Rock													1				1												
Adams/King Playground																													
Allen Park																													
Audrey Jacobs Memorial CG																			1										
Barry Street Garden																			1										
Boston College HS Athletic Fields	2							2				5															Track		
Boston Gas Company Easement																			1										
Bullard Street Garden																			1										
Byrne Playground									1			2					1												
Calf Pasture																								X					
Cedar Grove Cemetery																													
Centerville Park																													
Clayborne Street Garden																				1									
Claymont Terrace					1				1																				
Clementine Park																													
Codman Burying Ground																													
Codman Square																				1									
Columbia Point Community Garden																				1									
Columbia Road Trolley																	1												
Conley & Tenean Streets Park																													
Coppens Square																									1				
Cronin/Wainwright Park		1							1			1					1								1				
Deer Street Park																	1												
Doherty/Gibson Playground	1	1			1				2								1												
Dorchester North Burying Ground																													
Dorchester Park	1	1	1	1					1			1					1	1						1					
Dorchester South Burying Ground																													
Doucette Square																													
Downer Avenue Playground																													
Fannie Lou Hamer Community Garden																				1									
Fernald Rock																													
Florida Street Reservation																													
Gallivan/Hallet Circle																													
Garvey Playground	1			1					1			1					1												
Geneva Cliffs																													
Granite Avenue Ledge																													
Harbor Point Boulevard																													
Hemenway Playground	1								1	1							1	1											
Huntoon Rock																													
Kennedy Library Harborwalk																				1									
Keystone Shoreline																													
Lucy Stone Schoolyard																													
Lydon Way Garden																				1									
Malibu Beach																										1	Beach, Sun Shelters		
Martin/Hilltop Playground										1							1	1											
McConnell Park	1	2			1													1	1										
McCormack School Ball Field	1																												
McMorrow Playground		1	1						1								1										1		
Meany Park																	1												
Meetinghouse Hill Churchyard																													
Meetinghouse Hill Overlook																													
Melvin'side Play Area									1								1												
Monadnock Street Garden																				1									
Mother's Rest at Four Corners																	1	2		1								Performance Space	
Mt. Bowdoin Green																			1										
Mullen Square																			1										
Nellie Miranda Memorial Park																	1												
Nightingale Garden																				1									
Nonquit Green																			1					X		1			
Nonquit Street Garden																				1									
Norton Street Playground																													
Norton/Stonehurst Garden																													
O'Donnell Square																				1									
O'Donnell Square																													
Old Harbor Easement																					X						Beach		
Old Harbor Park																					X							Picnic Tables, Shelters	
Paul Sullivan House Comm Garden																			1										

[illegible]

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Needs Analysis

The renovated Harbor Point housing development has attracted a stable residential population despite the area's relative isolation. With certain recreation facilities on-site, a new DCR waterfront park along its eastern edge, and a new pedestrian/bicycle connection to the South Boston beaches, the Harbor Point housing development now feels less isolated.

Sandwiched between the ramps of Morrissey Boulevard and the Southeast Expressway, Savin Hill is a small but stable residential community with grand Victorians and triple-deckers that have spectacular views of the Harbor and access to Savin Hill Bay. However, Savin Hill is physically disconnected from the rest of the city but for a single road bridging the Southeast Expressway.

The Savin Hill area, while blessed with a diversity of open spaces, could benefit from further enhancement of local facilities. Two such enhancement strategies are the development of the existing beaches in the area and the introduction of a stabilization program for other natural resource areas in the neighborhood, such as the urban wild at Patten's Cove. In response, the DCR restored Savin Hill Beach while protecting coastal wetland. In accordance with its recently completed master plan, the Parks Department has undertaken a phased capital improvement program for Savin Hill Park, an historic landscaped park in the heart of the neighborhood.

Port Norfolk will continue to undergo transformations as its former industries are converted to housing and commercial development. This area can anticipate future development of DCR parkland as the Lower Neponset River Master Plan is implemented.

Open space opportunities exist on the Dorchester waterfront. The proximity of McConnell Playground and Malibu Beach to Dorchester Bay provides elements for developing the Bay as a regional aquatic recreation center. Recent park developments on Dorchester Bay at Tenean Beach by the DCR and at Rainbow Park have created two much-needed facilities popular for strolling, sitting, picnics, children's play, swimming, and fishing. The DCR efforts now underway will allow continuous waterfront access to Tenean Beach, potentially increasing the points of entry to the water's edge from the neighborhood.

#### THE INLAND NEIGHBORHOODS

To the west of the Expressway are the residential areas around Uphams Corner (where Dudley Street and Columbia Road meet) and Edward Everett Square (where Massachusetts Avenue and

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Needs Analysis

Columbia Road meet), which consist of triple-decker, two-family, and large Victorian-era homes. Many of these homes show signs of recent rehabilitation efforts. Recreational and cultural opportunities are becoming available with improvements to existing open space facilities and with many concerts and other performances presented at the historic Strand Theatre. The houses along Dorchester Avenue, a major local thoroughfare, are interspersed with light industrial and commercial uses. The Midlands rail corridor (aka the Fairmount commuter rail line) defines the western edge of this neighborhood.

The Uphams Corner residential area is currently underserved in terms of open space facilities. The increasing population, especially that of children, will put even more pressure on existing parks and playgrounds in the coming decade. Part of the problem is a lack of direct access to the shoreline facilities at Columbia Point and at Savin Hill. Columbia Road, a major arterial in this sub-neighborhood, provides access to the DCR's recently rehabilitated South Boston harbor beaches. However, improved MBTA bus service to these beaches from inland residential areas is still needed to expand access to these highly valued recreational resources.

Lower Mills has experienced a general housing revitalization effort for some years now, in part spurred by the conversion to apartments and condominiums of the Baker Chocolate Factory complex. Condominium conversion has also taken place around Ashmont, as well as renewed commercial activity. Changes in the Neponset area have taken place as a result of the DCR's opening of the Neponset River Trail, a pedestrian and bicycle facility, and the Pope John Paul II Park at the former Neponset Drive-In and Hallet Street Landfill sites.

In areas to the west, community revitalization efforts are ongoing. Fields Corner has already experienced substantial revitalization projects stimulated by City investment. Fields Corner is also a new Main Streets District. In Codman Square, the Codman Square Community Development Corporation and the City continue to support development and investment at this important commercial node. Today Dorchester's commercial nodes have undergone changes attributable to the disappearance of the streetcar lines, shifts in population, and the advent of Main Streets Districts in several of Dorchester's retail areas. Generally, the sections of the community nearer the waterfront have experienced more revitalization activity than the western portions of the neighborhood. Dorchester Avenue, which is a primary commercial artery of the

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Needs Analysis

neighborhood, is in need of extensive tree planting and general “greening” measures. Overall, many streets in Dorchester are distinguished by their mature shade trees, but there are gaps in the presence of street trees. This makes the street trees’ overall positive impact on Dorchester’s streetscapes “patchy” in its effect.

Dorchester’s neighborhood parks are multi-purpose facilities, and tend to be well distributed throughout the community, providing ball fields, ball courts, and playground areas. There are also some notable areas for passive recreation in the neighborhood parks such as the wooded portion of Dorchester Park with its Olmsted design.

Dorchester’s neighborhood parks are generally in good condition, and in some cases residents are concerned that park popularity will attract overuse. Still, certain sub-neighborhoods such as those around Codman Square, Meetinghouse Hill, and the Bowdoin Street area lack sufficient neighborhood park space. Coordination with schools and improvements to schoolyards as noted in Community Priorities below can help mitigate this situation throughout Dorchester. Improvements to parks on a regular cycle of capital rehabilitation continues to be needed; parks in need of improvement include Byrne, McConnell, Quincy-Stanley, Ripley, and Roberts.

Cedar Grove Cemetery and South Dorchester Burying Ground are important for contributing green vistas to their surrounds. Cedar Grove also helps buffer the Neponset River and ecologically sensitive areas along its banks from human development.

An initiative is being discussed that would promote linkages to Dorchester’s abundance of public and cultural assets. A neighborhood-wide trail, as suggested in the BRA’s Boston 400 draft report, or a series of sub-neighborhood trails, could link the wealth of open space, historical, cultural, and environmental features, while benefiting residential and commercial areas in Dorchester. This type of initiative would be ripe for a public-private partnership approach to development and management, perhaps on a similar basis to the Freedom Trail. Such an approach could provide a series of destinations for tourists to visit, and help to further the neighborhood’s economic development agenda. The Dorchester Historical Society has expressed interest in this concept, as have several neighborhood activists. In the meantime, the Browne Fund has made a \$15,000 design grant to the Dorchester Historical Society for Allen Park, the original Dorchester

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Needs Analysis

Town Commons. This site would certainly be a destination along such a trail.

#### GROWING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

The community gardens in Dorchester, as in other neighborhoods, have been built primarily on former vacant lots. Entities such as the Boston Natural Areas Network have built and supported the 23 diverse community gardens throughout Dorchester. These gardens serve a role in ameliorating the dense cityscape that resulted from the rapid development of Dorchester in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many are on former house lots and serve as the only openings in the dense urban fabric in certain sections of this neighborhood. Community gardens have also been bright spots bringing neighbors together and supporting their future hopes for community revitalization.

#### ON THE SHORES OF THE NEPONSET

The ecosystem of the Neponset River shoreline has notable and vulnerable natural resource qualities. Sustained efforts of the DCR and the community - especially the Neponset River Greenway Coordinating Council - have been important in keeping out damaging uses. Future efforts must balance protection with public access and recreational opportunities, in turn reinforcing the constituency for resource protection.

In the mid-1990s, the state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs helped this cause by designating the Neponset River Estuary as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This official designation gives this area a higher level of state environmental review for development within its boundaries. It also recognizes the high quality of the natural resources in the Neponset River Estuary, despite its proximity to a major metropolitan center. With the opening of Pope John Paul II Park, the DCR has taken a great leap forward toward realization of the Lower Neponset River Reservation Master Plan. Another milestone in the implementation of the Master Plan is the opening of the Neponset River Greenway on an abandoned rail corridor. This pedestrian/bicycle path helps link the regional Pope John Paul II Park to other Dorchester communities beyond the immediate Neponset sub-neighborhood.

The DCR should continue to implement the Master Plan that it completed in the mid-1990s for the Lower Neponset River Reservation, and connect this Reservation to the Dorchester Shores Reservation. To increase the benefits of this linear recreation system, further planning efforts are needed to extend it



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**Needs Analysis**

beyond Dorchester. The Neponset River open space system should continue westward to Mattapan, Milton, Hyde Park, and beyond. To be able to go from Lower Mills or Port Norfolk to the Fowl Meadow, Stony Brook, Mother Brook, Charles River, and Blue Hills Reservations should be the energizing vision for implementing the Master Plan for the Lower Neponset River Reservation and for planning its eastward extension.

## THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Since the City of Boston has rehabilitated most parks in the recent past, many neighborhood park issues relate to management and maintenance. Continuing the capital rehabilitation cycle on a consistent basis will be important for fulfilling the open space needs of this community. Playground equipment safety and turf care are ongoing concerns, along with general park care and security. There is interest in extending Park Partners programs, especially to provide more family activities.

Beyond the care of existing facilities, there is great interest in expanding public open space resources and addressing environmental concerns. Besides the focus on the waterfront, there are opportunities to strengthen the green space system in the southern area of Dorchester with improved connections. Street tree planting and care is important. Quality open space is needed in housing complexes. Demonstrated desire for additional community gardens will warrant attention. Given the vacant land opportunities and the several areas underserved by open space in Dorchester, balanced long-term community redevelopment will need new open spaces to accompany new housing and commercial developments.

The quality of life in Dorchester can be further improved by opening further access to the shoreline. Designating paths and transportation routes to facilities like Joe Moakley Park, Carson Beach, Savin Hill Bay, and Pope John Paul II Park can provide additional recreational opportunities for a greater number of neighborhood residents. Linkage between the Neponset River Reservation and the DCR's other reservations should be an important goal for the neighborhood as well as a legacy for Charles Eliot, who planned much of this system in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

### ***Opportunities***

#### **"ON THE WATERFRONT"**

- Continue to address water quality improvements along the waterfront. Support the BWSC sewer separation projects, the MWRA CSO Control Project, and the DEP Chapter 91 and Boston Conservation Commission reviews of waterfront projects.
- Increase and improve community access to Dorchester Bay. Support the DCR's construction of a boardwalk along the Southeast Expressway embankment linking Tenen Beach to Savin Hill via Victory Road Park. Encourage the DCR to

## Needs Analysis

- provide continuous waterfront access and expanded parkland in their negotiations with National Grid. Develop commercial activities such as restaurants, boat rental, and shops to complement recreational activities at Tenean Beach. Support plans for a new MBTA station providing access to the waterfront in conjunction with the Old Colony project.
- Prepare a plan for recreation, open space, greening, and other environmental improvements in Port Norfolk that recognizes the historic character of the area. Support the timely implementation of the capital developments proposed for the Port Norfolk area in the DCR master plan for the Lower Neponset River Reservation. Explore with the DCR the development of recreational piers, such as at Shaffer Paper.
  - Plan for new aquatic recreation opportunities at Savin Hill Bay by programming the improved Malibu and Savin Hill beaches. Screen the traffic impacts of Morrissey Boulevard with landscaping.
  - Continue the Harborwalk between the Kennedy Library and Carson Beach through Calf Pasture.
  - Develop a linkage plan for the open spaces in the Columbia Point sub-neighborhood. Increase community use of institutional ball fields and open spaces at slack times. Increase scenic quality through a plan-driven tree and landscape planting program for this sub-neighborhood's roadways.
  - Support the DCR work to increase continuous access to Tenean Beach as a means to increase neighborhood access to this waterfront recreation area. Support the work of the Boston Water and Sewer Commission to decrease stormwater-driven pollution of Pine Neck Creek.
  - Explore revenue production for open space from concessions at suitable locations near shoreline recreational areas.

## THE INLAND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Continue to support extending the greening of Columbia Road. Examine the possibility of designated bicycle lanes and a designated bike route with signs to improve access to Joe Moakley Park and the harbor beaches from Dorchester's residential areas and from Franklin Park.
- Expand access to Carson Beach through direct MBTA bus service to the McCormack Bathhouse from the inland residential communities.

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- Increase the inventory of public green space in the Meetinghouse Hill/Mt. Bowdoin area. Investigate the vacant parcels surrounded by Richfield, Bellevue, and Hamilton Streets for their potential development as open space.
- Develop pedestrian scale open spaces to complement the neighborhood level commercialization of Uphams Corner and Everett Square. Support the efforts of the Department of Neighborhood Development Main Streets program in Uphams Corner.
- Examine the Midlands rail tracks right-of-way for open space opportunities.
- Explore establishing additional play lots and other active recreation areas for youth in certain underserved sub-neighborhoods such as Uphams Corner, Jones Hill, Everett Square/Columbia Road, Fields Corner, Ashmont, Neponset, and Codman Square. Coordinate with the School Department and the Department of Neighborhood Development in targeting schoolyards in such areas for Schoolyard Initiative improvements.
- Continue to fund capital rehabilitation of City park facilities as needed in the capital renewal cycle, such as at Byrne, McConnell, Quincy-Stanley, Ripley, and Roberts.
- Support the BRA Dorchester Avenue Plan to improve the streetscape along Dorchester Avenue with a public/private partnership for tree planting and maintenance.
- Develop a street tree planting plan for Dorchester's residential areas using a strategic approach that builds on other capital improvement or economic development efforts. Support the Growing Boston Greener effort especially in this neighborhood.
- Continue and expand the Park Partners and ParkARTS programs to help stabilize maintenance and security as well as to enhance park programming for special events and sports, youth, and community activities.
- Install blue safety call boxes where, in the judgment of park and police officials, the boxes are warranted based on site conditions and/or the safety history of particular sites.

## ON THE SHORES OF THE NEPONSET

- Increase public access and open space facilities all along the Neponset River while protecting and stabilizing the ecosystem. Support the DCR's completion of a recreational trail system with boardwalks, observation areas, and docks along the Neponset and on the abandoned rail corridor. Encourage planning for a path system to link Dorchester Park and Cedar Grove Cemetery to the river. Encourage the

## Needs Analysis

- MHD to restore a zone of suitable plant materials between the Southeast Expressway and the shoreline. Work with the DCR to enable Dorchester residents to fully utilize the new Pope John Paul II Park to help meet the open space needs of the community.
- Focus on public access and the development of passive and water-oriented recreational facilities in the Lower Mills area. Support efforts of the state Department of Environmental Management to develop the Lower Mills Heritage State Park.
  - Coordinate with the DCR, MEPA, BRA, Park Commission, Conservation Commission, and other agencies to review development projects in the Neponset River Estuary ACEC.
  - Link Pope John Paul II Park to future and existing DCR parklands in Port Norfolk and the Dorchester Shores Reservation. Plan for the extension of the Neponset River Reservation westward to Mattapan, Milton, Hyde Park, and southward to the Fowl Meadow and other DCR reservations.

## GROWING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

- Continue to provide ancillary support to the large number of community gardens through the Parks Department's small grant program to support small-scale improvement projects at each site.

**Community Priorities****"ON THE WATERFRONT"**

- Coordinate City/DCR jurisdiction on shoreline issues, such as Yacht Club expansion and potential beach pollution.
- Work to continue the Neponset River Trail from the Pope John Paul II Park all the way north to Castle Island.

## THE INLAND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Explore the feasibility of establishing new parkland in the neighborhood through the Parks Department's Open Space Acquisition Program.
- Develop Columbia Road as a tree-lined thoroughfare to link the inland neighborhood areas to Joe Moakley Park.
- Initiate an open space/streetscape planning process for the Newmarket Square area through discussions between concerned business groups and the City. Build upon the work that has been done by the Parks Department to rehabilitate Clifford Playground.
- Provide more community policing at parks to discourage illegitimate activities like public drinking and drug use. Coordinate the Boston Youth Fund program with existing

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Needs Analysis

Park Partner groups to optimize maintenance of open space resources in the neighborhood.

- Support development of quality open space in publicly-assisted housing sites.
- Provide more street hockey courts in parks.
- Continue and expand Park Partner opportunities at parks where community members need support.
- Expand enforcement and signage to regulate the use of dogs in parks and playgrounds in the face of increased dog ownership. Increase public awareness of water quality impacts on the Harbor and the Neponset from stormwater contaminated by dog waste. Identify responsible dog owners groups as potential stewards for such public awareness campaigns and for potential dog park areas.
- Explore need for capital improvements to Martin Hilltop Playground.

#### ON THE SHORES OF THE NEPONSET

- Support the DCR's planning efforts for recreational access all along the Neponset from the Fowl Meadow Reservation to the mouth of the river.