

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



BOSTON PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

MARTIN J. WALSH, MAYOR

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Friend,

Parks are about people. Whether it's the toddler cooling off in the Hynes Playground spray feature, the senior couple taking in the tranquility of Olmsted Park, or the future Beanpot champion practicing slap shots at the new street hockey court at Ryan Playground, they are why we have parks.

Pioneers such as Frederick Law Olmsted, Charles Eliot, and our city leaders had the foresight to create a park system as important and impactful as any in the world. The Emerald Necklace was built in response to a period of increasing housing density in our city. Our generation is now facing a period of even greater growth. Beyond maintaining our greenspace, we now must look at improving and expanding our park system. These outdoor spaces give our children the tools and room to grow, clean our air, protect our city, and give people of all ages places for all forms of active and passive recreation.

This annual report is full of meaningful numbers. In 2015, the hardworking folks at the Boston Parks and Recreation Department planted more trees, provided more arts and cultural programs, and completed more construction than in recent years. Behind these numbers are the people who rely on these great spaces and the Parks staff who work to fill their needs.

We invest in our parks because it is an investment in our sustainability as a city. More importantly, however, it is an investment in our people. This report is a celebration of this investment and all that the Boston Parks and Recreation accomplished in 2015.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martin J. Walsh". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

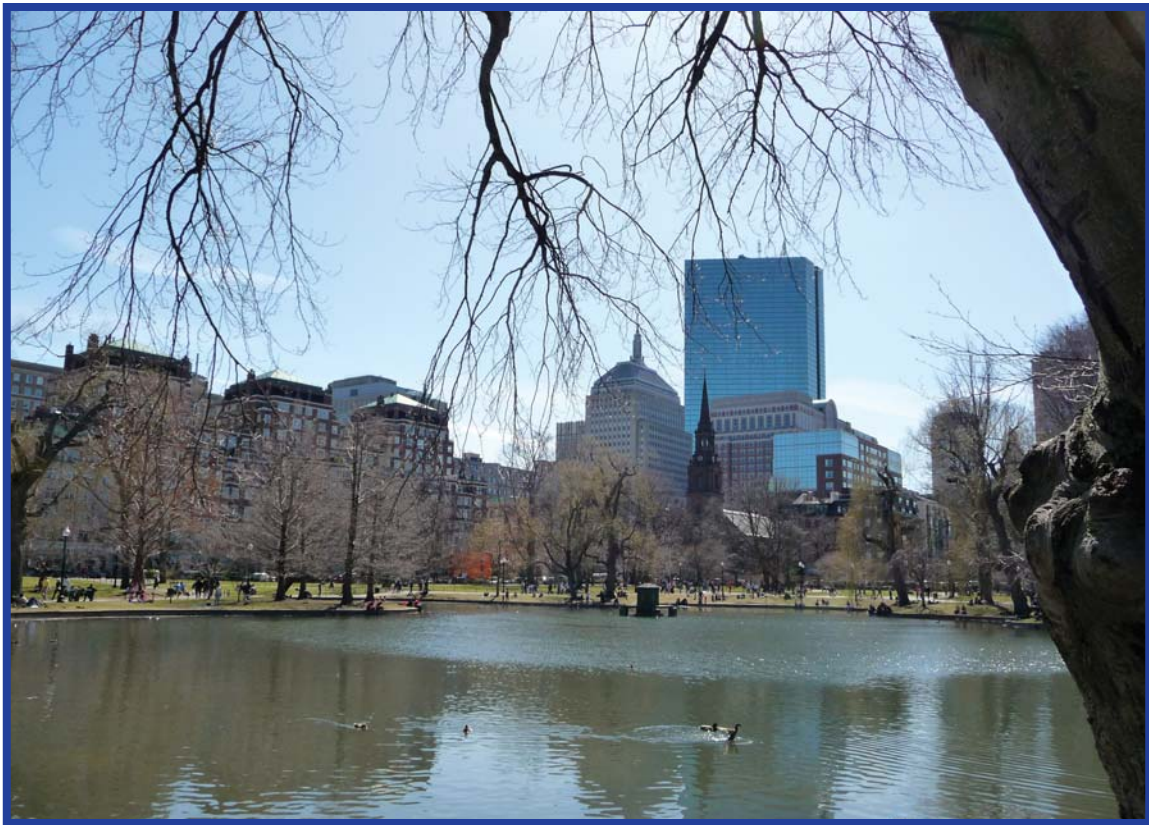
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor of Boston

INTRODUCTION

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department oversees one of the finest park systems in the nation. The City of Boston's open space resources and recreation facilities under its jurisdiction include America's first public park (Boston Common), its first botanical garden (The Public Garden), and renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace park system extending from the Common to Franklin Park.

The Department's open space inventory includes more than 2,000 acres of neighborhood parks, playgrounds, tot lots, athletic facilities, city squares, and urban wilds as well as the City of Boston's inventory of public street trees. The Department also oversees 16 historic burying grounds, two golf courses, and three active cemeteries.

In February of 2015, Mayor Martin J. Walsh fulfilled one of his early goals for the Boston Parks and Recreation Department by returning the Recreation Division to its original home at the departmental headquarters at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue in Roxbury. The move welcomed back the Recreation staff, some with more than 30 years experience, and brought a new sense of cohesion and camaraderie to the units that share the third floor.



RECREATION

On February 2, the Parks Department was pleased to welcome the Recreation Division as it was transferred back from Boston Centers for Youth & Families. Since returning, the Division provided sports and recreation opportunities for over 28,000 children. Boston's parks, ball fields, and courts were a great place to be a kid with an expanded menu of free recreational activities including tennis and golf lessons, lacrosse camps, basketball leagues and baseball leagues.



The signature Mayor's Cup championship series has kids from all over Boston playing sports against their peers from every neighborhood in the city. The ten Mayor's Cup championship tournaments allow for good friendly competition that promotes good sportsmanship and teamwork. One of the major improvements to the Mayor's Cup series was the investment in new uniforms for participating teams, particularly the Mayor's Cup Youth Ice Hockey tournament which

received NHL replica jerseys for all 1,200 participants.

The new Red Sox Experience program was a highlight of a busy summer season. The event in historic Fenway Park gave Boston youngsters the opportunity to field a ground ball, catch a fly ball, and run the bases all within the shadow of the Green Monster. A guided tour of "the Old Ball Park" was also part of the Red Sox Experience along with free hot dogs and soda on Lansdowne Street. The Department will look to expand on this program for 2016.



One of the longest-running programs offered this summer was the citywide Boston Neighborhood Basketball League (BNBL). Celebrating its 46th year in 2015, BNBL is the oldest free municipal basketball league in the United States. Over 2,000 girls and boys participated this year, making it one of the most successful seasons in recent memory. One of the highlights was the new Pee Wee Division which worked with kids six to ten years old to instill a love and passion for the game.

The Department's Sports Centers located at White Stadium in Franklin Park, East Boston Stadium, and Joe Moakley Park in South Boston provided three great options for parents looking to keep their children busy this past summer in a safe, fun, and exciting environment. White Stadium also included a reading, writing, and math curriculum, a very popular attraction at the Sports Center that kept kids on their educational path during the summer. A new Sports Center at Madison Park High School is expected to be a highlight of the 2016 summer season. The Department also hired over 300 youth age 15 to 19 years to help deliver quality sports and recreation activities across the city.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The Department's Design and Construction Unit oversees capital improvements, historic preservation, landscape design, and infrastructure throughout Boston's city park system. A total of 34 park construction projects were completed in 2015 with 23 design plans completed for future projects.

Among the improvements unveiled in 2015 were the completion of \$1.1 million in renovations to Elliot Norton Park in Bay Village near the Theater District and Chinatown. A complete overhaul of the entire park included a new play lot, new pathway configuration, an environmentally-friendly rain garden to recharge groundwater and reduce run-off, an outdoor table tennis table, and an improved natural area.



The Soldier's and Sailor's Monument on Boston Common underwent significant conservation in 2015 along with new lighting, security, pathway, and drainage improvements.

Ribbon cuttings celebrated the reopening of two parks in the Fenway. Symphony Park features a reconfigured passive park with decorative walls and new artwork. The celebration at nearby Edgerly Road Playground marked the completion of a project that completely renovated the old playground from a sunken park in disrepair to a brand-new facility with an accessible entrance, raised sections to increase visibility, and a design that provides access to all portions of the park.



In celebration of the 2016 Bridgestone NHL Winter Classic, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman joined Mayor Walsh, Commissioner Cook, and Boston Bruins owner Jeremy Jacobs in December for the unveiling of the completely renovated Bryan McGonagle street hockey rink at Ryan Playground in Charlestown. The project was funded in part by 2016 Bridgestone NHL Winter Classic Legacy Initiative powered by Constellation and included a new asphalt playing surface and

sealcoating, state-of-the-art fiberglass dasher boards with curved corners (a first for a City of Boston street hockey rink), fencing, benches, bleachers, trees, trash cans, recycling containers, bicycle racks, scoreboard, Musco light poles, and improved accessibility to accommodate players.

Dorchester's Erie-Ellington Playground underwent \$726,000 in improvements funded by the City's Capital Improvement Plan including a \$200,000 Our Common Backyards Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Improvements included a full renovation of the playground, water spray, and park with an expanded play area, game and picnic tables, and \$15,000 in new adult fitness equipment donated by Plymouth Rock Assurance. Park users also enjoyed a new park entrance and plaza with a stage at the corner of Erie and Ellington Streets and an improved and modernized spray play feature.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION (CONTINUED)

Hunt Almont Park in Mattapan underwent \$4.7 million in upgrades including a new artificial turf multi-use field that serves as the home field of the Mattapan Patriots and Mattapan Youth Soccer, a new Little League field, improved cricket pitch, new paved walking path, LED pathway lighting, improvements to natural areas, and increased parking, vending, and equipment storage.

The design for the Boston Greenway Rain Garden was funded in partnership with the EPA and constructed by volunteers as part of Green Jobs training put on jointly by the Parks Department and EPA, which included two days of training for the public and Parks staff on the design and construction of rain gardens.



DOG RECREATION SPACES

In an ongoing effort to address the needs of Boston's dog owners, the Department created a trial dog park at DeFilippo Park in the North End funded through a \$28,660 grant from the Stanton Foundation. The dog park was a success and the Department has now applied for a design grant from the Stanton Foundation to make it a permanent facility with more amenities. It will join our other two official dog parks at Ronan Park in Dorchester and the Joe Wex Dog Recreation Area at Peters Park in the South End. In addition, the Department operates rotating off-leash areas on Boston Common in partnership with the Friends of the Public Garden (FOPG). Two parcels are open at any one time and FOPG pays for the turf restoration.

URBAN WILDS



The Urban Wilds Initiative (UWI) is responsible for the protection, restoration and ongoing maintenance of hundreds of acres of City-owned land for both conservation and passive recreation.

Most notably in 2015, the UWI oversaw the renovation of the Buena Vista and Puddingstone Garden Urban Wilds in Roxbury. These improvements, funded through a \$293,000 grant received by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs as part of the Patrick Administration's Signature Urban Parks Initiative, provided funding for improved access and circulation, landscaping, wall repair, site identification and historical interpretive signage.

HISTORIC BURYING GROUNDS INITIATIVE

The Historic Burying Grounds Initiative (HBGI) is a public/private cooperative program dedicated to the comprehensive restoration, ongoing conservation, and heritage interpretation of Boston's 16 historic burying grounds.

In 2015, HBGI completed renovation work in Eliot Burying Ground including walkway improvements, fencing restoration, repointing of the Roxbury puddingstone wall along Washington and Eustis Streets, and installation of interpretive signage. Funding included a grant of \$157,000 received from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs as part of the Patrick Administration's Signature Urban Parks initiative.

Restoration of the front fence, wall and gate at the Granary Burying Ground began in May and was completed by December. The scope of work included restoration of the historic cast iron fence and repair and cleaning of the granite wall and entry gate on Tremont Street. This project received a grant of \$41,000 from the Freedom Trail Foundation and \$40,000 from the Henderson Foundation.

The HBGI also began design work for restoration of east above-ground tombs in Bennington Street Cemetery. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2016 and be completed in summer 2016. Smaller restoration projects completed in various HBGI sites include gravestone restoration and resetting in Granary Burying Ground, tomb marker resetting in Westerly Burying Ground, design for tomb repair in Central Burying Ground, and wall repairs in Westerly Burying Ground, Copp's Hill Burying Ground, and around the Franklin Monument in Granary Burying Ground.



CEMETERIES



The Cemetery Division maintains and beautifies 16 historic burying grounds and three active cemeteries on more than 200 acres of land containing over 250,000 gravesites at Mount Hope Cemetery in Mattapan, Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park, and Evergreen Cemetery in Brighton. A total of 557 burials were performed in 2015. During the year, planning was completed for a new equipment garage to be built at Fairview Cemetery in 2016.

This year the Cemetery Division once again participated in the "Wreaths Across America" program which was expanded to include the hanging of seven wreaths at the entrance of all 19 of our historic and active cemeteries to commemorate each branch of the military and those missing in action.

MAINTENANCE DIVISION

Headquartered in Franklin Park, the Department's Maintenance Division crews are responsible for the squares, fountains, game courts, street trees, and almost 200 additional acres of urban wilds and non-traditional open space properties that make up the City of Boston's park system. The Division completed 9,525 maintenance requests and an additional 3,963 requests related to trees. During the year 1,849 street trees were maintained/pruned, 1,293 planted, and 528 removed. During the year the Department rolled out a new recycling pilot program in two additional parks (Millenium Park and Ryan Playground) and implemented a second maintenance shift servicing our downtown parks on evenings and weekends. Our Horticulture Division beautifies our parks each year. In 2015, they planted and maintained 682 planting beds and planted over 66,000 bulbs in parks throughout the city. They continue to make Boston bloom!



GOLF COURSES

Boston boasts two popular public golf courses located within city limits, the William J. Devine Golf Course at Franklin Park in Dorchester and the Donald Ross-designed George Wright Golf Course in Hyde Park. A unique program was initiated in 2015 as the Department implemented a honey bee habitat at George Wright Golf Course to promote sustainability of both the bees and the surrounding environment. At the end of the season golfers and staff had a sweet reward when the beekeeper bottled up and distributed the first batch of George Wright honey.

The 2015 season saw 72,968 rounds of golf played at our two courses. Looking ahead, the Department accepted an invitation to host the 2018 Massachusetts Golf Association Amateur Championship at both George Wright and William J. Devine Golf Courses. The golf courses will be the first public facilities to host the prestigious tournament which originated in 1903.

PERMITTING

The Permitting Division welcomed two administrative assistants to aid constituents on the telephone, and online. It was a busy year in 2015 with 2,112 permits issued for parks and playgrounds including 238 for Boston Common, 225 for the Public Garden, 168 for Franklin Park, and 59 for Copley Square.

Among the initiatives overseen by the Division in 2015 were: a \$90,000 Boston College grant co-written with the Boston Police Department for athletic equipment and court resurfacing at McKinney Playground in Brighton; coordination, development, implementation, and management of a ten-year, \$1 million dollar partnership for East Boston Stadium with Suffolk University; implementation of an enterprise solution to promote tennis court use with playlocal.com; coordination of a 24-hour event with Emerson College and Medicine Wheel to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of World AIDS Day; and coordination with multiple sister agencies to present a multi-night 3D light show at Copley Square. The Mayor's Celebration of Lights, Lights of Boston, brought to the city by nonprofit luminARTZ, was the first of its kind in the United States. Looking forward to 2016, the Division acquired the ACTIVE online permitting solution which will be implemented in the coming year.

VENDING

Boston's parks have been home to vendors selling their wares for hundreds of years and serve as the cornerstone for the City of Boston Parks and Recreation Vending Program. Over 30 local merchants participate in the vending program at Boston Common and other smaller landmarks such as Copley Square and Christopher Columbus Park on Boston's waterfront. In addition, a small number of regulated merchants are scattered throughout neighborhood parks within the city.

This was the first year since 1986 that the Parks Department had sole management responsibility for the mobile vending program. Currently vendors are selected as part of a Request for Proposal (RFP) process that is conducted annually. In 2017 the Parks and Recreation Department will look to extend the contracts to three to five-year terms. Revenue generated from the vending program will be used in support of youth recreational services for the residents of the City of Boston.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Department's External Affairs Unit oversees sponsorships, public relations, ParkARTS, and special events and programming year-round in City of Boston parks. In 2015 the Unit presented 764 free activities and programs including such popular annual events as the Dorothy Curran Wednesday Night Concerts on City Hall Plaza, the Rose Garden Party fundraiser, celebrations at the Boston Common Frog Pond, Troops for Fitness, the Mayor's Garden Contest, and Mayor Walsh's Neighborhood Coffee Hour series. The Unit also oversaw a partnership agreement with a local non-profit (Southwest Boston CDC) to implement a goatscaping program featuring youth summer jobs at the George Wright Golf Course.

PROGRAMMING



Mayor Walsh and Ms. Lorrie Higgins hosted the 19th annual Mayor's Rose Garden Party fundraiser in the Kelleher Rose Garden in the Back Bay Fens, an elegant social event which raises money for year-round programming in Boston's park system. Held in mid-June when the garden's 3,000 rose bushes are at peak bloom, proceeds from the event raised over \$130,000 to support free programming in City of Boston parks including concerts, arts and crafts for children, puppet shows, an outdoor fitness series, painting and photography workshops, children's festivals, movie nights, and much more.

Two programs promoting active living continued in 2015. The Boston Parks Summer Fitness Series in partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission and Blue Cross Blue Shield offered free classes in parks citywide throughout June, July, and August including salsa dancing, yoga, tai chi, line dancing, Zumba, and boot camp.

Troops for Fitness also returned for a second year and was expanded to year-round programming utilizing the expertise of local veterans. Hosted by the Department in partnership with Boston Veterans Services, The Coca-Cola Company, and the National Recreation and Park Association, Troops for Fitness offered free workshops and classes instructed by military veterans at parks and community centers citywide. The veterans led exercise programs including boot camps, cardio and strength training classes, running groups, family yoga, therapeutic yoga, and Zumba.

The Dorothy Curran Wednesday Night Concert Series celebrated its 43rd season on City Hall Plaza making it the longest-running outdoor concert series in Boston. The 2015 series featured Michael Dutra's "Strictly Sinatra," Dance Night with Stardust, the Belfast Youth Orchestra, and the return of R&B legends Tavares.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (CONTINUED)

An ongoing partnership with Berklee College of Music and IBA-Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción brought hot Latin sounds to the six-concert Tito Puente Latin Music Series presented in July and August in parks across Boston.



The 2015 ParkARTS Citywide Neighborhood Concert Series hosted free outdoor summer concerts in City of Boston parks with a stellar roster of local talent including blues legend Ricky “King” Russell, Swingin’ in the Fens featuring the Patrice Williamson Group, the Soul City Band, Zili Misik, and Jazz at the Fort featuring the Bill Pierce Collective.

The External Affairs Unit also helped beautify the city’s public ways through the Boston Blooms initiative that distributed 20,000 daffodil bulbs to volunteers for planting citywide. A total of 87 community groups including civic associations, church groups, sports leagues, scout troops, open space advocates, and parks friends planted the bulbs distributed by the Department in approved locations over two weekends in the fall.

The year closed with Boston’s 74th Annual Official Tree Lighting hosted by Mayor Walsh and the Honourable Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia. The show featured An Appearance by Julian Edelman and the New England Patriots Drumline, Broadway singer Mandy Gonzalez, cast members from “Elf: The Musical” and Roald Dahl’s “Matilda The Musical”, “The Voice” contestant Michelle Brooks Thompson, Nova Scotia’s Dave Gunning, Black Nativity, and Berklee College of Music’s a cappella group Pitch Slapped. At the grand finale, Mayor Walsh joined Santa Claus, local children, and the evening’s entertainers to pull the switch lighting up the holiday decorations throughout Boston Common and the Public Garden including the City of Boston’s official Christmas tree, a 49-foot spruce donated by Andrea and William MacEachern of Lorne in Pictou County, Nova Scotia.



BOSTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

The Parks and Recreation Commission is a six person review body that is appointed by the Mayor. The Commission oversees the Parks and Recreation Department, and has authority over the parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, islands, urban wilds, and cemeteries in its inventory. The Commission was created by the approval of Chapter 185 of the Acts of 1875. The authority of the Commission is set forth in the Massachusetts General Laws and in the Municipal Code.

CHRISTOPHER COOK, COMMISSIONER
ANNE CONNOLLY, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER
MARIA FITZPATRICK, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER
RAYMOND FOLEY, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER (*served until 09/2015*)
SANJAY SAINI, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER
CHARLES TITUS, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER
CARRIE MARSH, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
LIZA MEYER, CHIEF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

2015 CABINET CHIEF

AUSTIN BLACKMON, CHIEF OF ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, AND OPEN SPACE

THE BOSTON PARK RANGERS

Frederick Law Olmsted envisioned a team of “park keepers” to be established to protect the Emerald Necklace park system. The Boston Park Rangers fulfill this vision by acting as the City’s goodwill ambassadors to residents and visitors, acting as first responders in emergencies, and presenting a highly visible security presence on foot, on horseback, and in vehicles.

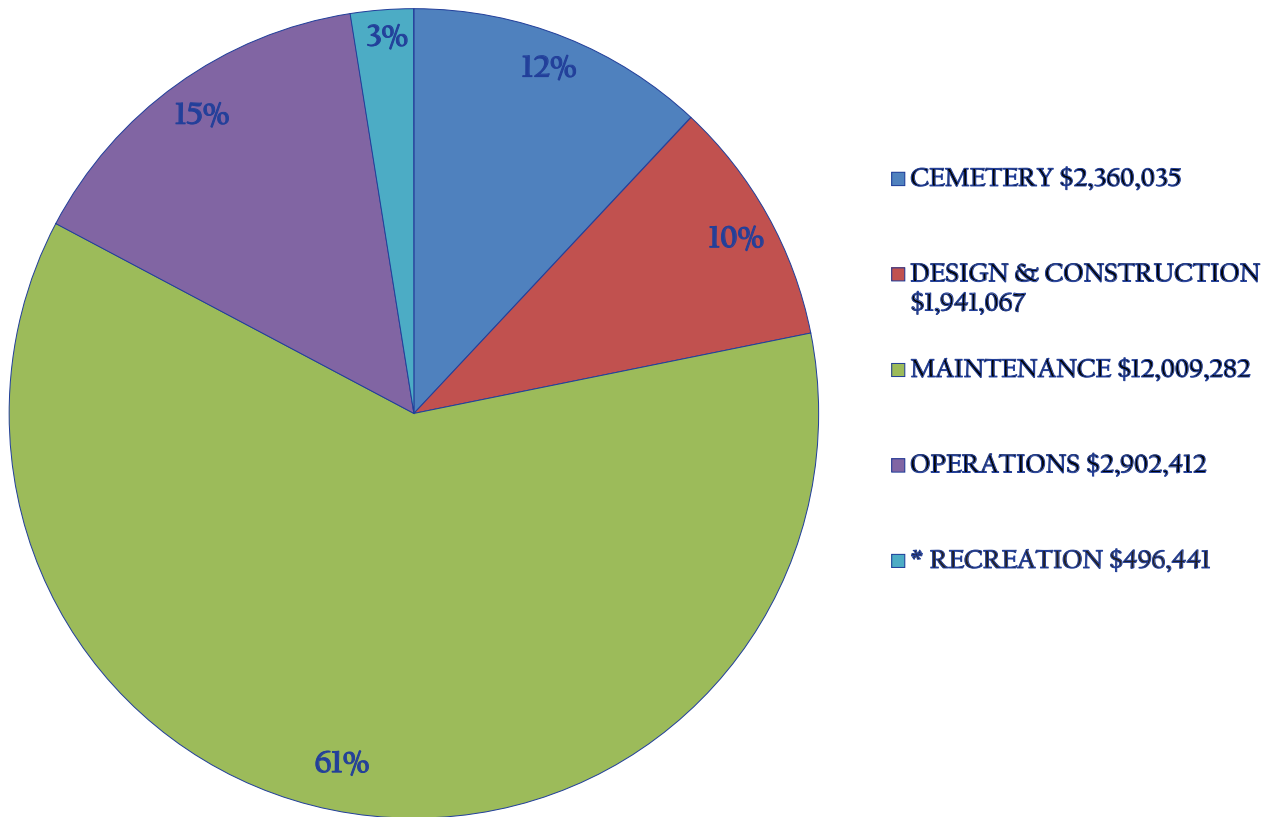


2015 Financial Information

2015 Operating Budget Expenses

\$19,709,238

** Recreation joined 07/01/15*



BY THE NUMBERS 2015

Arts and cultural programs	764
Revenue received from all sources	\$7,665,091
Park permits granted	2,112
Recreational facility permits	829
Special event permits	962
Street closing permits	320
New Park Partnerships Established	12
Park Maintenance requests received	5,093
Park Maintenance requests completed *	9,525
Tree Maintenance requests received	3,817
Tree Maintenance requests completed *	3,963
Street trees maintained/pruned	1849
Street trees planted	1,293
Street trees removed	528
Golf rounds played	72,968
Park construction projects completed	34
Park design plans completed	23
Burials performed	557

* Some cases carried over from previous years

CREDITS

ANNUAL REPORT WRITTEN BY JON SEAMANS
BOOKLET DESIGNED BY MAVRICK AFONSO
EDITED BY RYAN WOODS, *DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS*

CONTRIBUTORS:

CHRISTOPHER COOK, *COMMISSIONER*
DENNIS ROACHE, *DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION*
MICHAEL DEVLIN, *DIRECTOR OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING*
ROBERT ROTTENBUCHER, *CHIEF ENGINEER OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION*
KELLY THOMAS, *DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC BURYING GROUNDS*
TOM SULLIVAN, *DIRECTOR OF CEMETERIES*
PAUL McCAFFREY, *DIRECTOR OF PERMITTING*
DOROTHY BAXTER, *BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGER*
CARRIE MARSH, *EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF BOSTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION*
GENE SURVILLO, *CHIEF PARK RANGER*

Front cover photo courtesy of Matt Conti of *NorthEndWaterfront.com*



2015 ANNUAL REPORT



Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston
Chris Cook, Commissioner
Boston Parks & Recreation Department
1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

Telephone: (617) 635-4505
<http://www.cityofboston.gov/Parks>
<http://www.facebook.com/bostonparksdepartment>



**BOSTON
PARKS &
RECREATION**

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor