

Section 9

Seven-Year Action Plan

Contents

Section 1 — Executive Summary	1
Section 2 — Introduction	3
Section 3 — Community Setting	7
Section 4 — Environmental Inventory & Analysis	33
Section 5 — Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest	65
Section 6 —Community Vision	111
Section 7.1 — Analysis of Needs: Resource Protection	131
Section 7.2 — Analysis of Needs: Community Open Space & Recreation	153
Section 7.3 — Analysis of Needs: Open Space Systems Management	369
Section 8 — Goals & Objectives	393
Section 9 — Seven-Year Action Plan	395
Section 10 — Public Comments	401
Section 11 — References	405
Appendices	411

Goal 1: Steward the exceptional open space system that the City of Boston has inherited

Objective 1.1: Revitalize and renovate parks according to facility life-cycles.

Action	Responsibility/ Funding Source	Timeline for Completion
a. Develop a new 5 year Capital Improvement Plan for the City of Boston park system. Update annually.	BPRD	2015
b. Design flexible, multi-functional park spaces that maximize park quality and use.	BPRD	Ongoing
c. Renew focus on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure including paths, drainage systems, site furnishings and soil to keep parks in consistently good to excellent condition.	BPRD	Ongoing
d. Improve universal access within the park system to expand recreation opportunities for park users of all abilities.	BPRD	Ongoing

Objective 1.2: Maintain Boston's parks at the highest level feasible.

a. Create a plan and budget for maintenance and operations to better meet the expected level of service in the park system.	BPRD	2015
b. Expand park maintenance and hours of operation as feasible to better correlate with times of peak park use.	BPRD	TBD
c. Invest in the City's infrastructure of staff, equipment, fleet and facilities (such as the greenhouses) in order to expand productivity.	BPRD	Ongoing
d. Invest in soils health to improve quality of natural features including trees, turf and ornamental plantings.	BPRD	Ongoing

Objective 1.3: Manage the unique challenges and opportunities with historic parks and sites.

a. Update management, maintenance, and interpretive plans for historic resources to protect their value to city residents and visitors.	BPRD	2015–2021
b. Rehabilitate each park's historic character and features to sustain overall historic integrity while supporting contemporary uses, programs and facilities.	BPRD	Ongoing
c. Restore and maintain existing public art and memorials in cooperation with Boston Arts Commission.	BPRD/BAC	Ongoing
d. Remove or mitigate the effects of structures, buildings, furnishing or features that conflict with the visual character of historic parks or which compromise the protection and preservation of these parks. Avoid proliferation of non-contextual memorials and artwork.	BPRD	Ongoing

Objective 1.4: Actively manage the City's natural areas to provide safe and welcoming areas for the public to explore nature and recreate.

a. Develop a consistent, year-round operations plan for maintaining natural areas that relies less heavily on volunteers.	BPRD	2015–2016
b. Invest in basic site improvements which include the installation, repair and replacement of signage, fences, walls, and pathways, and vegetation management.	BPRD	Ongoing
c. Develop multi-year landscape restoration plans for priority sites, particularly those already containing, or contiguous with, intact native plant communities and healthy natural systems.	BPRD	2016–2021
d. Develop plans for remediation and habitat restoration of degraded natural areas that have a high potential conservation and recreation value.	BPRD	2017–2021

Objective 1.5: Develop and maintain sustainable funding sources.

a. Increase the budget of the Parks Department through the city budget and external funding.	BPRD	2015–2021
b. Create a reasonable and predictable formula for community contributions for open space, through the Article 80 process, looking to other communities nationwide that have implemented such programs.	BPRD /BRA	2015
c. Develop a funding plan for philanthropic gifts, government and foundation grants, and private/public partnerships in order to sustain recreation programs, the Park Arts programs, tree lightings, concerts and other events.	BPRD/BRA	2015

Objective 1.6: Build partnerships to enhance Boston's parks system.

a. Sustain and expand the the Park Partners program to strengthen partnerships with non-profit "Friends" groups.	BPRD	Ongoing
b. Create a "how-to" book to encourage and guide the development of Friends groups.	BPRD	2016
c. Expand the roster of public / private partnerships to assist in the maintenance and management of parks.	BPRD	Ongoing

Objective 1.7: Provide programming that promotes wellness, environmental stewardship, and builds a sense of community.

a.	Create a plan for recreational and special event programming that includes goals, target audiences, needs served, resources needed, and funding sources.	BPRD	2015–2016
b.	Engage with the Boston Public Health Commission, and other partners with compatible missions, to promote the positive health impacts of access to open spaces, and to determine ways to increase public health programming in the parks and urban wilds.	BPRD/BPHC	Ongoing
c.	Support and promote programming that welcomes people of all abilities.	BPRD	Ongoing

Objective 1.8: Implement policies and best practices to protect and improve the resources of Boston's park system for positive park use.

a.	Increase the capacity of the Park Rangers, and strengthen partnerships between the Park Rangers, the Boston police, community leaders and service providers to provide proactive, visible and dedicated law enforcement throughout the park system.	BPRD	2015–2016
b.	Review and offer suggestions for revision of the City Ordinance on dog recreation spaces to address the demand for dog facilities.	BPRD	2015–2016
c.	Review the policy of bicycle usage in the park system for possible updates.	BPRD	2015
d.	Develop a vending policy for commercial activities in parks.	BPRD	2015

Objective 1.9: Permit use of the parks in an efficient, effective and accessible manner.

a.	Create an online permitting process that is efficient, effective and accessible.	BPRD	2015–2016
b.	Schedule "open field time" that allows casual, unscheduled time at park facilities, as well as scheduled times.	BPRD	2015
c.	Work with the BRA to ensure that universities provide adequate athletic fields on their own campuses within their Institutional Master Plans.	BPRD/BRA	Ongoing
d.	Engage with Boston Public Schools and Charter Schools to ensure an equitable scheduling of playing field time.	BPRD/BPS	2016

Legend (in order of appearance):

BPRD	Boston Parks and Recreation Department
DoIT	Department of Innovation and Technology (City of Boston)
BAC	Boston Arts Commission
BRA	Boston Redevelopment Authority
BPHC	Boston Public Health Commission
BPS	Boston Public Schools (aka Boston School Department)

Goal 2: Envision and create an accessible and equitable open space system for Boston's future.

Objective 2.1: Expand and improve open space access for all existing and projected residents.

Action	Responsibility/ Funding Source	Timeline for Completion
a. Plan to increase the quantity and proximity of parks in high need and underserved areas in the city.	BPRD	2015–2021
b. Evaluate and improve the distribution of recreational facilities across the park system.	BPRD	2015–2012
c. Utilize the Accessibility Self-Assessment of City of Boston parks to identify areas that require improvements to increase park accessibility. Address deficiencies through the City's Capital Improvement Program.	BPRD	2015–2012
d. Consider the feasibility of connecting parks with green streets and parkway links to expand our linear systems.	BPRD	2015–2021

Objective 2.2: Actively engage and build relationships with Boston's diverse population.

a. Develop and implement a comprehensive outreach plan for the open space system to engage and inform all park users.	BPRD	2015–2018
b. Coordinate with the City's Commission on Persons with Disabilities to promote inclusive design and programming.	BPRD/CPD	Ongoing
c. Coordinate with the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Service and the Office of Civic Engagement to increase community input on park projects.	BPRD/ONS	Ongoing

Objective 2.3: Acquire new property to expand the parks system in a financially sustainable manner that balances the need for recreation with the capacity to maintain additional facilities.

a. Evaluate and update the current Park Acquisition Policy, develop a strategy for identifying key open space acquisitions, and a plan for taking action on those proposed acquisitions.	BPRD	2015
b. Seek opportunities for open space to be permanently protected through the city's planning and development review process.	BPRD/BRA	2015/Ongoing
c. Encourage the use of conservation restrictions, where appropriate, for unprotected woodlands and wetlands and other significant open spaces, to protect these lands for future city residents.	BPRD/ Conservation Commission	Ongoing
d. Develop partnerships with private entities to support the maintenance of open space as part of the acquisition process.	BPRD	Ongoing

Objective 2.4: Work within the regulatory framework to balance development and density in the city with the provision of open space.

a. Partner with the BRA to enhance open space design review criteria for all project and plan reviews.	BPRD/BRA	Ongoing
b. Engage with adjacent municipalities and federal and state agencies on the protection of shared natural resources, particularly waterfronts, greenways and large landscapes.	BPRD/BRA	2015–2016
c. Partner with ongoing city initiatives working to improve the public realm such as Complete Streets, Green Links, Safe Routes to Parks, and Boston Bikes.	BPRD/BTD/PWD	Ongoing

Legend (in order of appearance):

BPRD	Boston Parks and Recreation Department
CPD	Commission on Persons with Disabilities (City of Boston)
ONS	Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services (City of Boston)
BRA	Boston Redevelopment Authority
BTD	Boston Transportation Department
PWD	Public Works Department (City of Boston)

Goal 3: Enhance the urban natural environment and improve quality of life and well-being in the city.

Objective 3.1: Implement and evaluate sustainable strategies for park design and maintenance to ensure that parks are prepared for climate change.

Action	Responsibility/ Funding Source	Timeline for Completion
a. Develop green infrastructure performance measures; evaluate park improvements to determine if they are performing as intended.	BPRD/ Environment	2015–2021
b. Apply the City's climate impact assessment tools to parks—evaluate shade/heat; risk/resilience; energy consumption and waste production. Use this assessment to inform design, construction and maintenance decisions.	BPRD/ Environment	Ongoing
c. Implement smart energy use in park improvements and improve access to the City's recycling system in public spaces.	BPRD/PWD	2015
d. Consider opportunities to create open space in coastal areas and flood zones that can also serve as protective infrastructure as the climate changes.	BPRD/DCR	Ongoing

Objective 3.2: Restore the ecological function of our natural resource areas.

a. Maximize ecological functioning, conservation value and recreational flexibility by developing priorities for acquisition and restoration where significant protected open space is already clustered and connected.	BPRD	Ongoing
b. Improve the quality of ecosystems in the city by understanding existing functionality and establishing benchmarks related to climate preparedness, habitat and biodiversity, and human access.	BPRD	2016–2017
c. Engage with adjacent municipalities on climate change, invasive species, pest control and other issues that cross boundaries.	City of Boston & other municipalities	Ongoing
d. Institute programs to address invasive species throughout the open space system.	BPRD	Ongoing

Objective 3.3: Develop best practices for green infrastructure within the parks system.

a. Support the development of green infrastructure throughout the city through public realm improvements, expansion of open space and/or restoration of existing degraded sites.	All City Depts.	Ongoing
b. Develop and adopt a city-wide maintenance program for green infrastructure projects that addresses the shared costs and benefits of these improvements.	All City Depts.	2015–2016
c. Develop a plan for management and expansion of the City's public shade trees in order to increase urban tree canopy coverage.	BPRD	2015–2016

Objective 3.4: Promote creativity, arts and culture in the parks, as key elements of vibrant urban environments.

a. Partner with the Boston Arts Commission to create a vision and plan for the incorporation of public art in city parks, which identifies locations, process, resources and roles.	BPRD/BAC	Ongoing
b. Ensure every neighborhood has a park with the necessary infrastructure to support community events and performances. Identify and correct deficiencies through Capital Improvements.	BPRD	2015–2021
c. Consider the feasibility of establishing a "fairground" type amenity to serve large scale events in the City, and relieve some of the permitting pressures on the downtown parks.	BPRD	2015–2021

Objective 3.5: Advance leadership role in protection, promotion and enhancement of Boston's unique landscape heritage.

a. Work with leaders in preservation and the Boston Landmarks Commission to ensure that the character defining features of significant landscapes are rehabilitated and maintained.	BPRD/BLC	2015–2021
b. Explore opportunities to enhance the diversity, beauty and ecological benefit of parks through restoration and rehabilitation of historic plantings. Improve water quality and wetland diversity by adapting historically appropriate wetland edge plantings.	BPRD	2015–2021
c. Enhance public value and stewardship of the city's historic green infrastructure by expanding informational tools and programs that explain and promote the benefits of these landscapes.	BPRD	2015–2021

Legend (in order of appearance):

BPRD Boston Parks and Recreation Department
Environment Environment, Energy, and Open Space Cabinet (City of Boston)
PWD Public Works Department (City of Boston)
DCR Department of Conservation and Recreation (Commonwealth of Massachusetts)
BAC Boston Arts Commission
BLC Boston Landmarks Commission

Project Map Key

Map ID	Objective			Map Location
A	1.1	d.	Use Menino Park as a model to improve universal access within the park system.	Menino Park
B	1.3	b.	Rehabilitate each park's historic character and features to sustain overall historic integrity while supporting contemporary uses, programs and facilities.	Franklin Park
C	1.3	c.	Restore and maintain existing public art and memorials in cooperation with Boston Arts Commission.	McLaughlin Playground
D	1.4	a.	Develop an operations plan for maintaining natural areas that relies less heavily on volunteers.	West Street Urban Wild
E	1.4	d.	Develop plans for remediation and habitat restoration of degraded natural areas that have a high potential conservation and recreation value.	Millennium Park
F	1.7	b.	Engage with compatible initiatives that promote physical activity and spending time outdoors for health.	Iacono / Hunt Almont
G	1.8	b.	Build on experiences with existing dog parks to create more opportunities for dog recreation spaces throughout the city.	Peters Park
H	2.1	a.	Plan to increase the quantity and proximity of parks in high need and underserved areas.	Selected Key Areas
I	2.1	d.	Consider the feasibility of connecting parks with green streets and parkway links to expand our linear systems.	West Roxbury Parkway or Millennium Park/VFW Parkway
J	2.3	c.	Encourage the use of conservation restrictions for unprotected ecologically significant open spaces.	Brighton
K	2.4	a.	Ensure that open space impacts and opportunities are considered in every planning and development decision.	Selected Key Areas
L	2.4	c.	Engage with adjacent municipalities and federal and state agencies on the protection of shared natural resources.	Condor Overlook/ Mystic River/ Chelsea Creek
M	2.4	c.	Partner with ongoing city initiatives working to improve the public realm.	Little Scobie Playground
N	3.1	c.	Implement smart energy use in designing new park improvements.	Puopolo/ Langone Parks
O	3.2	a.	Maximize ecological functioning by prioritizing restoration where significant open space is clustered and connected.	Allandale Woods
P	3.2	b.	Improve the quality of ecosystems in the city by understanding existing functionality and establishing benchmarks related to climate preparedness, habitat and biodiversity, and human access.	Muddy River Neponset River
Q	3.2	d.	Institute programs to address invasive species throughout the open space system.	Roslindale Wetlands
R	3.3	a.	Support the development of green infrastructure throughout the city.	Sullivan Square/ Elliot Norton Park
S	3.3	d.	Increase tree canopy coverage throughout the city.	Selected Key Areas
T	3.4	b.	Utilize Adams Park as a model for park infrastructure expansion to support neighborhood events and performances.	Adams Park
U	3.4	a.	Partner with the Boston Arts Commission to create a plan for the incorporation of public art in city parks.	Doherty Gibson Playground

Note: The Action Plan Map portrays representative projects and areas of the city that could be affected by Action Plan items. Therefore, not all areas that could be affected by an action are shown on this map.

