
Open Space Plan 2008-2012

Section 8

Goals & Objectives

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SECTION 8: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

As we found in Section 6, the Community Vision, three primary Community Open Space Goals emerged:

- Protect and improve the existing system of open spaces throughout the city through capital rehabilitation, 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.
- 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.

What we found through Section 7, the Analysis of Needs, is that these three goals were supported by the needs that were identified by community, advocates, officials, and professionals.

Therefore, we have adopted them as the goals of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. In this section, we present the results of the development of objectives that aim to help the City of Boston achieve these goals.

Further, two additional goals were developed, based on the Analysis of Needs, Section 7, which are “means-oriented;” i.e., these goals are means to achieve the three “ends-oriented” goals described above. These goals will be described below after the presentation on the first three goals.

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GOAL: SUSTAIN AND IMPROVE THE EXISTING OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

The citizens of Boston should continue to enjoy clean, safe, accessible, attractive, and actively used parks and open spaces in the existing system.

The city will continue to seek, not only from its own work force, but also from other contracted providers, an ever-increasing commitment to high quality, maintainable designs and construction for its historic parks and modern play facilities. In addition, for the next five years the city will enhance properties in its public open space and park system – including such resources as boulevards, medians, streetscapes, greenways, urban wilds, community gardens, cemeteries, and the waterfront. The Parks Department will continue to refine its field-based definition of a consistent standard of maintenance, and will work with others such as property owners to maximize operating and capital funds for this standard.

The objectives for the above goal are to:

- Continue and improve the cyclical rehabilitation of and re-investment in the historic and modern park and open space system. Reinforce cycles for capital funding reinvestment in the park and open space system.
- Use both in-house project managers and consultants in the fields of landscape architecture, engineering, urban, environmental, and preservation planning, arboriculture, and horticulture to assure high quality design appropriate to the role of public open spaces as critical, long-lasting amenities in the public realm.
- Maintain facilities and resources at existing or improved levels through the Quality Control Program, interagency coordination, and constituent-based work plans.
- Update management plans for selected parks where needed due to changing conditions.
- Strengthen the implementation of maintenance and operation plans for the Emerald Necklace park system through the continued use of the Parkman Crew dedicated to this system.
- Improve the training program and other ongoing educational opportunities which commit to the further development of the professional and skilled workforce.
- Sustain city-owned historic burying grounds, active cemeteries, and urban wilds through the regular maintenance commitment of the Boston Parks Department,

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- the use of in-house program coordinators, Boston Youth Fund maintenance crews, and community volunteer groups.
- Coordinate and cooperate with others concerning the maintenance of open spaces not owned by the Parks Department such as Emerald Necklace properties under Brookline and DCR jurisdiction, schoolyards, community gardens, and planted medians.
 - Inventory trees city-wide and design a planting and maintenance program to replenish and add to the tree inventory; coordinate with other agencies affecting tree care and longevity.

GOAL: REALIZE THE POTENTIAL OF A DYNAMIC, INTEGRATED OPEN SPACE SYSTEM WITHIN THE URBAN FRAMEWORK

The City of Boston should create or take advantage of potential opportunities to advance the open space system as a way to promote its citizens' health and well-being within the total framework of geographic economic competitiveness.

In a dynamic city like Boston, there are daily decisions made to invest or disinvest in land assets. Potential opportunities arise to realize open space visions out of both types of decisions as well as the insights of those who appreciate the intrinsic worth of resources.

The Parks Commission has adopted an acquisition policy to allow for the expansion of the open space inventory under its care, custody, and control to:

- respond to the demand for facilities;
- protect scenic areas and establish buffer zones;
- close gaps in the open space system; and
- protect natural and cultural landscape resources.

As detailed in the policy, acquisition of a proposed property will be considered only when there is a demonstrated community need, an environmental and open space analysis indicates its inclusion in the city system, and a financial strategy provides for its long-term stewardship and maintenance.

In addition to acquisition through purchase and transfer, planning will be needed to inform acquisition decisions and urban development decision-making. Leadership and participation in various planning processes to secure more and better-integrated

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open space will ensure the city's livability and economic attractiveness.

The objectives for the above goal are to:

- Continue the process for evaluating potential open space acquisitions as set up by the city's recently adopted acquisition policy. Continue to staff the acquisition program and the deliberations of the Boston Open Space Acquisition Advisory Committee.
- Continue the yearly capital appropriation in the city budget for the Mayor's Open Space Acquisition Fund.
- Create a strategic planning process to determine the public and private vacant lands available and appropriate for inclusion in the open space system in accordance with the acquisition policy. Develop a community participation process for determining support for including proactively selected candidate parcels into the open space system
- Work with the Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) to plan for facilities to support their programming and the league- and community-based recreation programs and events.
- Work with other city agencies to develop neighborhood linear open space networks to protect existing linear facilities and to nurture and develop proposed facilities. Work with other municipalities and the DCR on inter-municipal/regional facilities.
- Engage where needed in multi-jurisdictional projects to create regional open space systems that benefit Boston's residents. Work with other municipalities and the DCR on inter-municipal/regional facilities.
- Advocate for the inclusion of open space concerns in land use decision-making in the city, given the strategic importance of open space in economic growth processes. Coordinate the open space aspects of urban development projects with the city, BRA, state, and federal planning, open space, housing, transportation, and public works agencies; complement and improve the existing open space system through input into public benefit packages and mitigation measures
- Support the creation of land trusts and other innovative models such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and license agreements to protect open space through partnerships, fundraising, and land banking. Support existing groups like the Boston Natural Areas Network and the Trust for Public Land which are currently engaged in such activities.

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GOAL: PROTECT, RESTORE, AND IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENTAL BASE OF THE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Enhancing the livability and quality of life in Boston's neighborhoods and downtown through environmental improvements in the open space system will go hand-in-hand with improving their economic vitality.

The city must nurture both its economy and its environment in an interactive, complementary fashion. Cleaner waters, greener streets and parks, purer air, healthier natural ecosystems: this environmental development will result in a more beautiful, economically vibrant city. Such an environmental development model will make nature an integral part of urban development, complementing Boston's achievements in architecture and urban design. Balanced development, both economic and environmental, will continue to give Boston a competitive advantage regionally and nationally as a place to live and work.

The objectives for the above goal are to:

- Protect city-owned urban wilds and other natural areas from development, encroachment, and uses that degrade their natural character. Advocate for the long-term protection and stewardship of non-city publicly and privately owned urban wilds and other natural areas. Acquire through transfer or purchase urban wilds and natural areas where community support and administrative capabilities warrant protection of highly valued natural resources and ecosystems/habitats.
- Manage and maintain city-owned urban wilds and other natural areas to facilitate public access and promote ecological values. Promote the use of city-owned urban wilds and other natural areas for passive recreation, environmental education, and other uses in keeping with their natural character. Develop administrative, fiscal, and programmatic resources to ensure ongoing, long-term maintenance and management of city-owned urban wilds and other natural areas.
- Develop and implement an urban tree and forest management and development plan (of which the Emerald Necklace Woodlands Program is a sub-set) which treats the city's trees as a part of the capital infrastructure that ensures a quality environment (air, visual, climate, and wildlife).
- Work with city, state, and federal agencies to improve the natural resources of our open space system, especially our vulnerable water bodies. Continue to coordinate decision-making of the Parks Commission and the Conservation

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- Commission through the Parks Commissioner's representation on the Conservation Commission.
- Review and analyze proposed plans and developments for environmental impact, with specific attention to open space; for unavoidable impacts, work toward the most effective and feasible means of mitigation; where feasible, work with project proponents to incorporate enhancements to the open space system as part of the project.
- Work with other municipal and regional jurisdictions to improve ecological systems shared by them and Boston, using watershed protection principles and regional projects such as greenways as a basis for cooperation.

GOAL: COORDINATE OPEN SPACE PROVISION FOR MAXIMUM COMMUNITY BENEFIT

All public open space efforts should be coordinated in such a way as to maximize the benefits for the community at large.

The Parks Commission, the board overseeing the protection of open space in the city regardless of ownership, provides the policy precedent for a coordinated, coherent open space system.

The objectives for the above goal are to:

- Advocate the idea of a single open space system regardless of ownership or physical attributes.
- Continue the integration of cemeteries, urban wilds, streetscapes, community gardens, public housing open spaces, and major public school campuses into mainstream parks operations and programming.
- Continue to maintain all responsibility for city tree planting and maintenance under the Parks Department.
- Encourage public policies and actions that are consistent with the city Open Space Plan such as agency area plans, zoning, conservation legislation, regulatory decision-making, and easements.
- Continue to consult with the Parks Department through its professional staff (horticulture, landscape architecture, engineering, arboriculture, historic preservation, and planning) during the planning, design, and construction process on all projects which will, or have the potential to, come under the care, custody, or control of the Parks

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- Department, or which have major open space impacts (positive or adverse) on the city.
- Participate in multi-agency planning initiatives such as the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Project, Roxbury Strategic Master Plan, etc. to insure the maximum feasible protection and benefit for open spaces in the city.

GOAL: DEVELOP A NETWORK OF RESOURCES TO SUPPORT A FISCALLY STABLE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM
A menu of alternative sources of income, both monetary and in-kind, will continue to be sought without over-commercializing or denying access to parkland and facilities.

Within the larger economic context, parks and recreation budgets have historically fluctuated with the cyclical nature of the public budgeting process. To minimize the effects of these boom and bust cycles, advocacy and active participation by the public must be consistent and coordinated. A variety of partnerships and volunteer programs on neighborhood, citywide, and corporate levels shall continue to be developed in order to supplement and support annual budgetary allocations.

The cultivation of partnerships is an important process for the city's open space system. Through partnerships of various sorts, the community is constantly informing the capital and planning processes. These partnerships often form the basis for community-generated events in the parks that thereby strengthen neighborhoods. The Park Partner Program generates better communications with the Parks Department and should be continued, as should friends groups, corporate sponsorships, and individual legacy gifts.

The objectives for the above goal are to:

- Continue to expand the Parks Department Public/Private Partnerships Program to include all groups that have a relationship of partnership or volunteerism associated with parks and open spaces in Boston.
- Maximize corporate, foundation, and government grant support for programs and capital improvements.
- Continue to capitalize city park maintenance equipment to alleviate pressure on annual operating budgets.

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- Coordinate state and city maintenance to mitigate the adverse effects of any boom and bust cycle
- Support the existing public and private programs dedicated to the care of specific areas of the park system such as the Adopt-a-Statue program, the Ranger program, and the Neighborhood Tree program; encourage the creation of other public and private open space enhancement programs.