

**PART 4**

**OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT MISSION**

Cemeteries

Community Gardens

**The Emerald Necklace**

Public Shade Trees



## PART 4 • OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT MISSION

*The Emerald Necklace*

## OVERVIEW

**T**he Emerald Necklace is an internationally renowned 19<sup>th</sup> century linear park system as well as a nationally significant work of landscape architecture, sanitary engineering, and city planning. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., the leading landscape architect of the era, created this system to expand the open spaces of Boston Common, the Public Garden, and Commonwealth Avenue Mall into Boston’s growing neighborhoods. His vision sought to solve a difficult series of public health and civil engineering problems with verdant scenery that brought “peace and refreshment to the city dweller.”

*We want a ground to which people may easily go after their day’s work is done, and where they may stroll for an hour seeing, hearing and feeling nothing of the bustle and jar of the street. We want, especially, the greatest possible contrast with the restraining and confining conditions which compel us to walk circumspectly, watchfully, jealously, which compel us to look closely upon others without sympathy.*

F.L. Olmsted, 1870

Olmsted created a progression of landscapes connecting to the downtown parks that culminated in an extensive “country park.” He designed landscapes evocative of New England’s natural scenery with carefully composed valleys, meadows, and woodlands. Olmsted restored a tidal marsh in the Back Bay Fens, resculpted a river ravine known as the Muddy River, preserved Jamaica Pond, designed the Arnold Arboretum grounds, and transformed farmlands into the poetically inspired Franklin Park. In 1893, Olmsted wrote to his partners John Charles Olmsted and Charles Eliot, “Nothing else compares in importance to us with the Boston work .... I would have you

decline any business that would stand in the way of doing the best for Boston all the time.”

The over one thousand acres of the Emerald Necklace represent a model park system inspired by the civic-mindedness of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, the concept of public parks took hold in American cities to provide healthful relief from urbanization and the associated pollution, noise, and overcrowding. The Necklace gave the pedestrian, equestrian, or carriage rider an hour’s or a day’s recreation without leaving Boston. Age, natural selection, and successive changes in landscape fashions and levels of care have diminished Olmsted’s rich composition of plants. However, these Olmsted-designed parks continue to offer scenic enjoyment, a wildlife habitat in the midst of a highly urbanized region, as well as storm water management in the Muddy River basin.

The Emerald Necklace directly serves 8 of Boston’s neighborhoods with numerous and varied places for quiet contemplation, enjoyment of scenery, and active play – regardless of a park user’s recreational interest, economic status, or cultural identity. These places provide the settings for families and individuals to walk, run, bicycle, play ball, birdwatch, use tot lots, picnic, golf, cross country ski, fish, skate, toss a frisbee, fly a kite, rent a boat, or just sit. For Greater Boston, the Necklace is an important regional recreational

destination for everything from fund-raising walks and the Franklin Park Zoo to the Common holiday tree-lighting ceremony and collegiate cross-country running races.

All parks (including parkways) within the Necklace are designated Boston Landmarks with the exception of Arnold Arboretum. All are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Boston Common, the Public Garden, and Arnold Arboretum are additionally designated as National Historic Landmarks, the highest tier of the National Register.

**EMERALD NECKLACE PARKLANDS**

Site Name	Acres	Ownership
Boston Common*	48.10	Parks
Public Garden	24.25	Parks
Commonwealth Avenue Mall	12.82	Parks
Charlesgate	7.80	MDC
Back Bay Fens**	75.99	Parks
Riverway	21.10	Parks
Olmsted Park	42.89	Parks
Willow Pond Meadow	6.29	MDC
Chestnut & Perkins Streets	1.27	MDC
Jamaicaway	4.71	Parks
Jamaica Pond Park	97.56	Parks
Parkman Memorial	11.80	Parks
Arborway	9.70	Parks
Arnold Arboretum***	249.44	Parks
Franklin Park****	484.47	Parks/MDC
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,098.19</b>	

\* includes Central Burying Ground

\*\* includes Parker Memorial Victory Garden, Joseph Lee Playground, Westland Avenue Gates, Forsyth Way, Forsyth Park, Forsyth Mall, and Evans Way Park.

\*\*\* includes Walter Street Cemetery

\*\*\*\* includes Forest Hills Rotary, Franklin Park Zoo, and White Stadium

### Comprehensive Planning

The Emerald Necklace includes Boston’s oldest park, its largest park, its most heavily-used parks, its most venerable collection of public woodlands, an early model for an urban sanitary system, and one of the world’s most respected arboretum collections. Their protection and ongoing rehabilitation are guided by a collection of master plans. These master plans present an array of recommendations that seek to restore the historic integrity of each park while accommodating contemporary uses. They are also supported by numerous organizations:

Friends of the Public Garden*	Restore Olmsted’s Waterways
Public Garden Rose Brigade	Medical Academic Scientific
Commonwealth Avenue Mall	Community Organization
Committee	(MASCO)
Fenway Garden Society	Jamaica Pond Project
Kelleher Rose Garden	Jamaica Pond Association
Committee	Arboretum Park Conservancy
Fenway Civic Association	Franklin Park Coalition
Fenway Community	Friends of Franklin Park Zoo
Development Corporation	Franklin Park Golfers
Fenway Alliance	Emerald Necklace
Northeastern University	Conservancy
Friends of the Muddy River	Historic Massachusetts

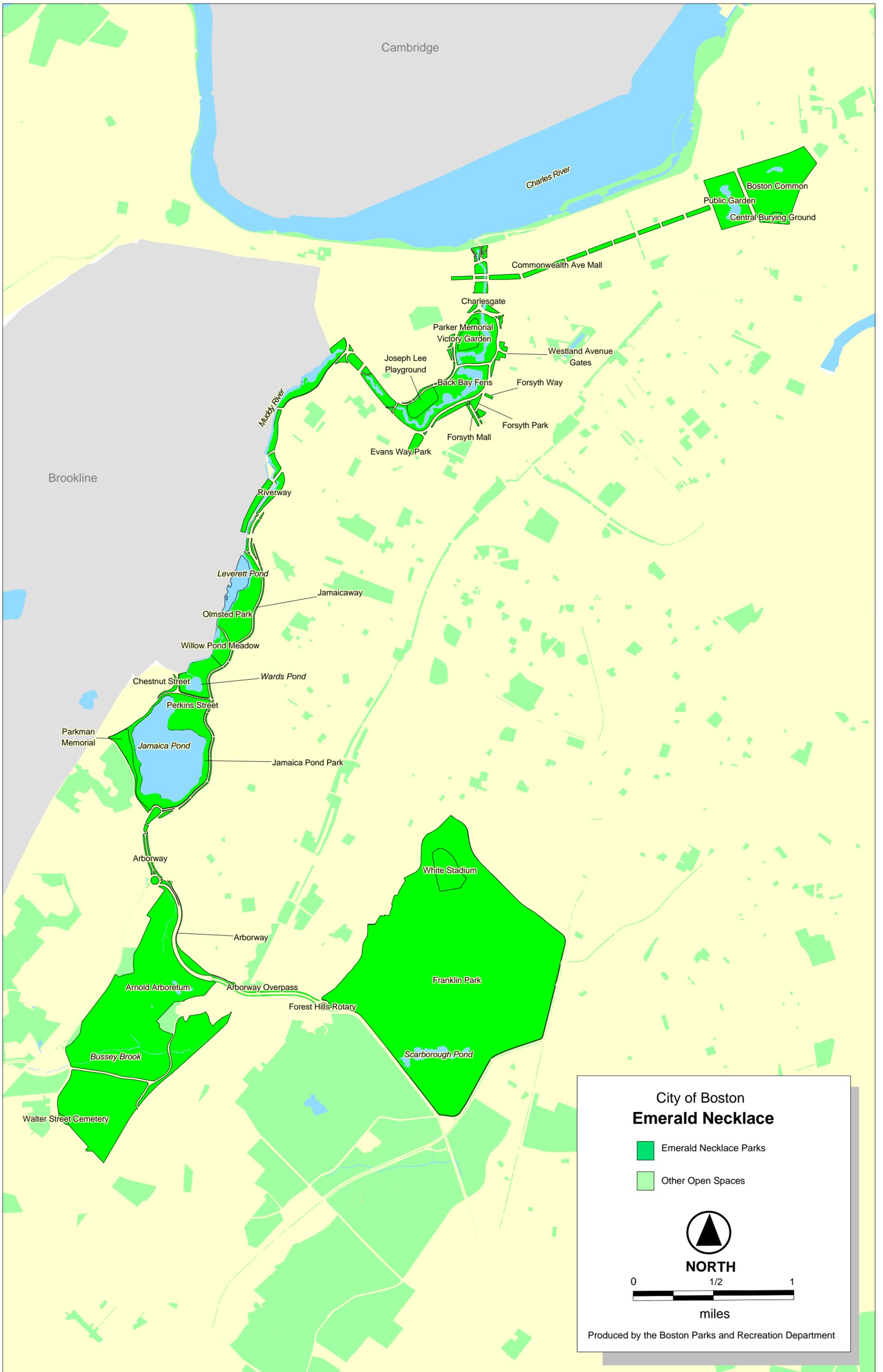
\*This group also advocates for Boston Common, and, through its Commonwealth Avenue Mall Committee, for that park as well.

The genesis of these plans came from organized support for the protection of this park system. The Friends of the Public Garden sought to protect Boston Common from overuse. It could no longer be “all things to all people,” and needed a management plan to structure use. The Massachusetts Association of Olmsted Parks (now incorporated into Historic Massachusetts) championed the Olmsted firm’s role in planning and design for 280 municipal public parks statewide, which resulted in historic park planning and revitalization initiatives.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) launched the statewide Olmsted Historic Landscape Preservation Program in 1984. Through this program, Boston participated in two plans: the *Franklin Park Master Plan 1990* and the *Emerald Necklace Master Plan* for Jamaica Pond, Olmsted Park, the Riverway and the Back Bay Fens (final draft completed in 1990, updated and published in 2001).



Franklin Park, White Stadium



Cambridge

Charles River

Boston Common  
Public Garden  
Central Burying Ground

Commonwealth Ave Mall

Charlesgate

Parker Memorial  
Victory Garden

Westland Avenue  
Gates

Joseph Lee  
Playground

Back Bay Fens

Forsyth Way

Muddy River

Forsyth Park

Evans Way Park

Forsyth Mall

Brookline

Riverway

Leverett Pond

Jamaicaway

Olmsted Park

Willow Pond Meadow

Wards Pond

Chestnut Street

Perkins Street

Parkman  
Memorial

Jamaica Pond

Jamaica Pond Park

Arborway

White Stadium

Arborway

Franklin Park

Arnold Arboretum

Arborway Overpass

Forest Hills Rotary

Bussey Brook

Scarborough Pond

Walter Street Cemetery

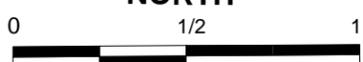
City of Boston  
**Emerald Necklace**

 Emerald Necklace Parks

 Other Open Spaces



**NORTH**



miles

Produced by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department



Other planning documents also contribute to the recommendations recapped in this plan. They are *Conceptual Design of Signage for the Boston Common (1986)*, *Design of Signage for Boston’s Emerald Necklace (1990)*, *The Boston Common and Public Garden Utility Report (1990)*, *Boston Common Management Plan (1990, updated 1996)*, *Boston Common Pathway Plan (1991)*, and *Boston Common Tree Planting Master Plan (1998)*.

The most recent major planning document is *The Emerald Necklace Environmental Improvements Master Plan (1998)*. It provides an overview of a 15-year process for addressing proposed Emerald Necklace improvements that have environmental implications, particularly the Phase I program of improvements to the Muddy River for flood control, water quality, and habitat and landscape enhancement. For further information, please see the Muddy River section of this chapter. The Parks Department expects to complete the Franklin Park Management Plan, the next major planning document, in 2003. For further information, please see the Franklin Park section of this chapter.

Each plan for the Emerald Necklace parks has synthesized historic information, current activities, and input from extensive community processes. The result is a series of master plans that provide a flexible framework for action. At any time new information can be factored in and considered with each master plan’s guiding principles and recommendations. For elements such as planting, fencing, lighting, statuary, paths, furnishings, signs, and structures in the Public Garden and Commonwealth Avenue Mall, there are clear directives based upon historic documents, design precedents, and preservation guidelines. Over the next five years as projects are identified, staff will assess needs, analyze existing conditions, and seek community input during the process that leads to final project design.

### Recent Capital Investments

Over the past five years, the marked improvement of general conditions in the Necklace has been attributable to Boston’s Capital Improvement Program (*Getting the Job Done*) as well as the state’s Historic Landscape Preservation Program. The City of Boston has been able to proceed with capital investments using alternative resources, principally monies administered by the Office of Budget Management and the Trust Office. In 1999, the Parks Department undertook a planning process to develop a scope of work for the rehabilitation of the Muddy River in collaboration with the Town of Brookline, Boston Water and Sewer Commission, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Parks Department maintenance efforts, safety and security enforcement, and increased programming protect the capital investments and help ensure continued support for the parks.

#### CAPITAL PROJECTS 1993-2001/ EMERALD NECKLACE

Boston Common	\$ 8,642,466
Public Garden	\$ 1,566,828
Commonwealth Avenue Mall	\$ 932,566
Back Bay Fens	\$ 837,360
Riverway	\$ 2,043,388
Olmsted Park	\$ 220,320
Jamaica Pond	\$ 1,344,000
Franklin Park	\$ 9,374,523
Total	\$ 24,961,451

## PRINCIPLES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The sections below summarize the recommendations from the various published master plans. For more extensive explanations, please refer to the master plan documents. General principles, goals, and recommendations are listed first, followed by park-specific descriptions and recommendations. These plans guide all Emerald Necklace revitalization efforts. (For further reference to Emerald Necklace recommendations in this document, see the applicable neighborhood chapters.)

### General Goals for the Emerald Necklace

**Historic Landscape Integrity.** Rehabilitate each park's historic character and features to sustain overall historic integrity while serving contemporary uses.

**Unity and Access.** Improve connections to make the system more unified and legible as a whole, facilitate use, improve public safety, and increase appreciation. Examples include better bicycle path routing and signage, pedestrian signals and curb cuts, and continued implementation of the systemwide sign program.

**Awareness and Education.** Foster interpretive and educational programs and continue to strengthen year-round Ranger presence in all Emerald Necklace parks. Foster increased programming to reach children and adults, residents and visitors. Coordinate interpretive efforts by all groups to assure fullest possible coverage without duplication of services.

**Safety and Security.** Continue to work closely with the Boston Police, Municipal Police, and community groups to address and avoid problems. Continue to explore limited enforcement powers, such as ticketing, for Boston Park Rangers.

**Trees.** Provide improved care for all trees. Develop and implement planting plans and tree care standards. Coordinate the efforts of agencies, community groups, and potential donors to ensure that all new trees receive adequate maintenance.

**Shrub Plantings.** Replant Olmsted-inspired shrub beds in specific areas to regain lost scenic artistry conveyed by their variety, textures, and colors. Use plantings to combat problems such as desire paths that cause soil compaction and erosion. Adapt plant materials as needed to address security, environmental, maintenance, and wildlife management factors.

**Woodlands.** Develop a computerized woodlands inventory and protocol. Develop a regeneration plan to improve the woodland ecology. Develop a specific plan for the woolly adelgid infestation of the Hemlock population.

**Wildlife Management.** Protect wildlife habitats when making decisions regarding rehabilitation efforts. Strive to enhance nesting and feeding areas.



Willow Pond, Olmsted Park

**Water Quality.** Advocate for, support, and participate in efforts to improve water quality in Scarborough Pond and the Muddy River from Wards Pond to the Charles River. Follow master plan guidelines regarding bank stabilization, replanting, and perimeter paths. (Please refer to the Muddy River section of this chapter.)

**Infrastructure.** Rehabilitate water, drainage, electrical, road, and path systems as needed, observing applicable city, state, and federal regulations along with current planning guidelines. Maintain fountains, lights, paving, and other elements for public safety and protection of capital investments.

**Structures.** Renovate fences, walls, bridges, shelters, buildings, terraces, and other structural features that contribute to the design of the parks. Replace intrusive structures that have necessary functions with structures of more suitable design.

**Existing Art Work and Memorials.** Maintain existing public art and memorials in accordance with the jurisdiction of other city agencies. Encourage ongoing efforts by the city's Adopt-a-Statue Program. Continue the moratorium on new artwork and memorials in Boston Common and the Public Garden.

**Memorials and Gifts.** Avoid the proliferation of non-contextual memorials and artwork. Encourage contributions to Parks Department planned or approved projects on a case-by-case basis such as tree planting, furnishings and fence rehabilitation or installation, conservation of shelters, bridges, fountains, statuary, and other park elements, and sign system implementation. Encourage proponents to meet with the Parks Department for guidance early on in planning for any proposed memorials or gifts to parks. Coordinate through the Parks Department the review of proposed gifts and memorials in accordance with the jurisdiction of other city agencies, primarily the Art and Landmarks Commissions.

**Intrusive Elements.** Remove or mitigate the effects of structures, buildings, furnishings, or features that conflict with the visual character of Emerald Necklace parks or which compromise the protection and preservation of these parks.

**Fundraising and Collaborative Efforts.** Continue efforts to secure outside funds given the special needs of Emerald Necklace parks and government fiscal limitations. Support the Emerald Necklace Conservancy and other advocacy organizations in their collaborative and fundraising efforts. Investigate the establishment of an Emerald Necklace endowment fund. Use city funds to leverage outside giving. Foster partnerships and collaborations to support maintenance, capital, and programming projects for preservation and revitalization.

**Maintenance.** Continue to ensure a high level of maintenance to meet the high demands and historic significance of Emerald Necklace parks. Expand the Parkman Horticultural Crew.



Public Garden

Continue to upgrade equipment and increase human resources. Further develop partnerships that provide extraordinary care.

***Project Review and Approvals.*** All capital projects shall undergo community review led by the Parks Department. Secure all other applicable city, state, and federal review and approvals. Meet with Parks Department staff at the early planning stage for any project not initiated by the Parks Department, which will directly affect Emerald Necklace parks and for any development, building, or improvement project proposed within 100 feet of Emerald Necklace parkland. Provide direction and oversight for the planning and design of outside projects through Parks Department staff.

### PARK-SPECIFIC DESCRIPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**B**oston Common was formed in 1634 to provide pasturage and other shared needs for the town, based upon the English concept of common land. As the country's oldest public open space, Boston Common reflects events important to the history of the city and nation. Since Revolutionary times, the Common has been the city's favorite outdoor place for public assembly.

*Since Revolutionary times, the Common has been the city's favorite outdoor place for public assembly.*

By 1830 the town had become a city, the sophisticated State House looked down upon a Common bordered by rows of trees, and cows were banned by municipal decree. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Boston Common gained paved walks, statues, memorials, and ornamental fences, becoming an urban park in form as well as function. Today the five-sided, 48-acre Common is admired as much for its landscape features of mature shade trees and rolling lawns as for its historic structures, artwork, and Frog Pond.

While serving as Boston's front lawn to all visitors, the Common is also the favored location for large outdoor gatherings and a neighborhood park for downtown, Chinatown, Bay Village, Beacon Hill, and the Back Bay. Active recreation facilities consist of two tennis courts, a softball field, a Little League field, a children's play area, as well as a summer water spray pool and winter ice-skating rink at the Frog Pond.

The Visitor Information Center (VIC) at the head of the Freedom Trail is the most heavily-used tourist inquiry facility in New England. Completed in 1994 the combined Visitor Information Center and Ranger Station successfully integrates information and safety concerns under one roof. This project involved the relocation of the Ranger Station building and its rehabilitation, construction of a rear addition, demolition of the old VIC, and design of a new MBTA Freedom Trail exit. The restoration of the Parkman Bandstand in 1997 created another venue for music and theatrical performances in the Common.

The renovation of the Frog Pond and construction of the Pavilion in 1997 created a four-season amenity. This \$4 million renovation has allowed for wading in the summer, skating in the winter, and a reflecting pool in the spring and fall.



Boston Common

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) rebuilt the underground garage head houses and revitalized the Parade Ground in 1996. In addition, the MCCA funded the installation of the perimeter fence along Charles Street in 1997. The MCCA also funded the completion of the Charles Street fence that included the restoration of the pedestrian gate at the corner of Boylston Street. The Millennium Group has agreed to fund improvements to the Tremont Street edge, from Boylston Street to Avery Street, as well as its maintenance. The total gift is approximately \$2 million with comple-

tion anticipated for fall 2002. The Department is working with the designer to insure that the work is completed to the master plan recommendations and the department's specifications. In addition, pathway rehabilitation continues in the Common with the Oliver Wendell Holmes path following recommendations made in the *Boston Common Pathway Plan (1991)*. Further enhancing Boston's "front lawn," the Shaw Memorial and World War I Steps were cleaned and restored in 1998. Light Boston installed new lighting for Brewer Fountain in 2001. The restoration and repair of this fountain is in design as of early 2002.

**Recommendations** All policies, projects, and programs for the Common will continue to recognize the need to preserve it as the primary green oasis in downtown Boston, protecting against incursions or degradation to its environment of shade trees and expansive lawns.

- Concentrate on trees and turf as well as general cleanliness, recognizing that the Common receives exceedingly high use and stress.
- Make general water, drainage, and path systems rehabilitation a priority to be implemented both as independent projects and as opportunities are presented by other projects that will disrupt the Common, such as the reconstruction of the underground garage, and the rehabilitation of Tremont Street.
- Continue partnership efforts with the Friends of the Public Garden and other involved agencies such as the MBTA and the Boston Landmarks Commission, as well as with neighbors and developers.

**The Public Garden** is the oldest public botanical garden in the United States and the formal, passive recreation companion to Boston Common. These side-by-side parks together serve as the green oasis in central Boston.

When the Public Garden was established in 1837, the site was marshland at the foot of the Common and the water's edge of the Back Bay. When the land was filled in, the Public Garden's design evolved from a plan by George Meacham published in 1859. The picturesque style of the 25-acre park centers on the central lagoon with its signature bridge and willow trees, as well as surrounding specimen trees, serpentine paths, ornamental fountains, sculpture, Swan Boats, and planting beds.

The city and the Friends of the Public Garden have conducted projects to preserve and enhance the Public Garden since 1993. They include dredging the lagoon, new signs, more ornamental planting beds at entrances and along edges, the revitalization of lawns, and tree pruning. The Japanese Lantern was restored and installed on a new base in 1993 with the helpful donation of private funds. In addition, the Lagoon Bridge was restored and the perimeter fence was repainted. The Browne Fund contributed to the design and implementation of two custom drinking fountains. Future projects will focus on the art works in the Public Garden, such as the Ether Monument (in design as of early 2002) and the very popular George Washington statue (out for construction bidding in spring 2002).



The Public Garden

**Recommendations** The essential style and character of the Public Garden shall be preserved and reinforced through capital projects, maintenance activities, and administrative policies.

- Make a high priority repairs to the tool shed, fountain restorations, and additional sign installation. Continue Boston Landmarks Commission and Art Commission (if applicable) review of proposed improvements to ensure that the historic character of the Public Garden is maintained. Continue Parks Department review of projects proposed by others.
- Continue to address needs and implement recommendations set forth in the Boston Common and Garden Utility Plan (1990) through a capital program, such as upgrading the water supply system, improving drainage, and retrofitting fountains to recirculate water.
- Continue the Parks Department's above-standard level of horticultural and general maintenance for this public botanical garden. Continue supplemental care via partnerships, such as with the Friends of the Public Garden and Heritage on the Common.

**C**ommonwealth Avenue Mall was built by advancing westward from the Arlington Street edge of the Public Garden from 1856 to 1888. As the Back Bay was filled in, Commonwealth Avenue became its spine. The design for Boston's version of a grand Parisian boulevard is credited to Arthur Gilman, with contributions by others including Frederick Law Olmsted.



The central path of the Commonwealth Avenue Mall features memorial statuary.

These 32 acres stretch from Arlington Street to the MBTA subway and bus terminal at Kenmore Square, interrupted by the Massachusetts Avenue underpass, the Muddy River, and the highway overpass at Charlesgate. Many of the Mall's elms have died from Dutch Elm Disease. To avoid future vulnerability to any single species, the elms have been replaced with a variety of trees. The central path features memorial statuary. Recent projects by the city and by the partnership of the city with the Commonwealth Avenue Mall Committee (an active subsidiary of the Friends of the Public Garden) include tree care and replanting, new signs and fences, statue lighting, and the lighting of the Vendome Memorial funded by the Fire Department's memorial fund. Seeding, fertilization, and a new irrigation system for the lawns were installed in 2001. Since 1999, the Department has instituted holiday lighting of the trees on Commonwealth Avenue through private donations.

**Recommendations** The Parks Department will continue its partnership with the Commonwealth Avenue Mall Committee and neighbors to pursue funding and complete ongoing projects.

- Complete the tree replacement plan. Maintain established trees through institutionalized care such as cyclical pruning and inoculation of elms. Continue to provide extraordinary care for trees and bedded plants through the Commonwealth Avenue Mall Committee.
- Complete lighting for the other remaining memorial statuary as lighting designs are approved.
- Install ornamental fences on Fairfield and Gloucester Streets consistent with the fencing on the cross streets from Arlington to Dartmouth.

**T**he Muddy River is the 3.5-mile spine of the Emerald Necklace and is one of the most uniquely designed historic urban waterways in the nation. Its brooks, glades, dells, sweeping vistas, reflecting pools, and ponds are an integrated composition of civil engineering and landscape art.

Flood damage in 1996 and 1998 brought civic leaders, politicians, and community groups together to collectively re-examine the condition of this natural treasure and its importance to the metropolitan area. The result: the City of Boston and the Town of Brookline intend to restore the Muddy River's civil engineering functions, flood-carrying capacity, historic landscape integrity, bucolic scenery, and ecological vitality. The Muddy River

rehabilitation project will significantly reduce flood impacts while improving wildlife habitat and the historic landscape of these water-oriented parks. Boston and Brookline envision that the public funds invested in this project will inspire and attract additional private monies for future historic landscape rehabilitation projects, which will ultimately lead to the completion of the Emerald Necklace rehabilitation. The two municipalities have created a collaborative process with the public and the 29 member Citizens Advisory Committee established by the Massachusetts Secretary of Environmental Affairs in 1999. A 1999 Memorandum of Understanding signed by state agencies and the two municipalities institutionalizes and underscores the commitment to collaborate in the completion of this project as a step towards the Emerald Necklace rehabilitation.

*The Muddy River rehabilitation project will significantly reduce flood impacts while improving wildlife habitat and the historic landscape of these water-oriented parks.*

Challenging problems face this national historic resource. Moderately heavy rains activate emergency measures to combat and clean stormwater back-ups in Fenway/ Longwood-area colleges, universities, and medical institutions, and numerous Brookline businesses and residences. Over five acres of mature *Phragmites* (tall invasive reeds) choke the river and diminish its flood-carrying capacity. The weeds have displaced other plant species, keeping the ecology out of balance, undermining biodiversity, and obstructing historic landscape rehabilitation. Contaminants in the river sediment continue to degrade water quality as the sediments get re-suspended into the water, limiting the number of vertebrate and invertebrate species that could contribute to a balanced ecology.

One hundred years ago, Frederick Law Olmsted believed that nature could restore the human mind and spirit. He conceived the unique urban landscape called the Emerald Necklace to bring a natural regenerative experience to city dwellers. Like their 19<sup>th</sup> century predecessors, today's civic leaders and citizens must commit to stewardship for future generations and sustain a legacy worthy of Olmsted and his peers.

The vision for this project is far-reaching: Boston and Brookline intend to rehabilitate the Muddy River to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens, re-establish the Olmsted scenery to approach its former glory, and reinvigorate the overall park experience. The municipalities are committed to exploring new and innovative ways to maintain the parks in perpetuity, and protect and preserve the public sector's investment. Boston and Brookline will aggressively pursue partnerships with private industry and cultural institutions, and examine organizational models that could inform park maintenance and management practices. The project exemplifies a renewed appreciation of the Emerald Necklace and the reinforced political will to commit to the rehabilitation of this world-class park system.



*Of Olmsted's Emerald Necklace parks, the Fens is the most changed and one of the most active.*

The goals of the Muddy River Restoration Project are:

- Improve flood control;
- Improve water quality;
- Enhance aquatic/riparian habitat;
- Rehabilitate the historic landscape and other resources; and
- Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs)

The Muddy River Project is subject to the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) and the processes specified by that Act. For this project, the major documents that have been produced are the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) released in January 1999 and the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) released in early 2002.

The Special Review Procedure mandated for this project by the MEPA office called for the establishment of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC's role is to advise the Secretary of Environmental Affairs in his evaluation of the proponent's proposed means and measures to minimize damage to the environment, while achieving the project's goals of flood control, water quality improvements, and landscape restoration. The CAC's task is to review proposed activities, comment on the feasibility of different approaches and their likely environmental impacts, and assist the proponent in generating and reviewing alternatives which would avoid or minimize damage to the environment. The proponents and their consultants, along with the state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), provide technical information and analysis for the CAC's review and comment to ensure that the CAC can participate effectively. The CAC comments submitted to the Secretary are required to reflect a consensus of its members (to the degree that they have achieved consensus).

The Special Review Procedure for this project will require the proponent group, following commencement of construction, to file with the MEPA Office and to circulate to all comment providers annual updates describing progress on the project, including detailing the status of physical improvements and management practices, and summarizing monitoring information.

Project consultants are expected to submit a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) in early 2003, with the expectation of state environmental approval by spring 2003.

**T**he Back Bay Fens dates from 1879, and is the first of the five properties Frederick Law Olmsted designed and built to create a linear system of pastoral parks in Boston. Here the Muddy River originally met the Charles River in a salt marsh.

Of Olmsted's Emerald Necklace parks, the Fens is the most changed and one of the most active. Meadows and lawns replaced marsh after the Charles River was dammed in 1910. Without tidal action the shallow pools have become stagnant.

The present Arthur Shurtleff design has been overlaid on Olmsted's, and is more groomed and formal than was the original. It features the popular Kelleher Rose Garden, the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Memorials, and the Roberto Clemente Field athletic stadium. The Henry Hobson Richardson-designed Boylston Street Bridge is the most dramatic of all the stone bridges in the Necklace. It is now obscured from the Charles River side due to the addition of the Bowker Overpass ramp from Storrow Drive.

The Fens provides essential neighborhood parkland for the Fenway, Kenmore, and Longwood areas, and serves as the “front lawn” for several of the city's venerable cultural institutions, including the Museum of Fine Arts and the Gardner Museum. It also includes the Richard Parker Memorial Victory Garden, Boston's oldest community garden. In 1998, the reconstruction of the Mother's Rest Playlot was completed, serving neighborhood children and offering a setting for small concerts. Reconstruction of the basketball courts was also completed in 1998. New Rose Garden signs were installed in 2001.



Kelleher Rose Garden, Back Bay Fens

**Recommendations** The Boston Parks Department will continue to manage competing uses for active and passive recreation while preserving the Fens.

- Improve the watercourse and adjacent landscape through the Muddy River Restoration Project.
- Upgrade existing sports facilities, particularly Clemente Field.
- Designate quiet/passive recreation areas.
- Implement the *Connecting the Corridors* Project in the Back Bay Fens to improve pedestrian paths and transform the former bridle path into a multi-use path for bicycle and non-bicycle users.
- Reconstruct primary structures such as the Duck House and the Evans Way Bridge.
- Work with the MWRA and the BWSC to reduce the CSO discharges to the Fens through the MWRA CSO Facilities Plan. Support the BWSC reconstruction of the Fens Gatehouses including associated landscape restoration.
- Continue the partnership agreement with the Fenway Alliance and Fenway Garden Society.
- Support the work of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, especially its effort to create a visitor center in the Back Bay Fens.

**T**he Riverway, established in 1890, begins at Brookline Avenue, Park Drive, and the Fenway parkway, on land that was formerly the Sears parking lot, just west of the Fens. From the Park Drive/Riverway intersection southward to Route 9, the Muddy River is open and flows through a gentle ravine. Steep wooded banks insulate the park from the city. The Riverway offers one of the most idyllic and best-preserved experiences of



*The Riverway offers one of the most idyllic and best-preserved experiences of Frederick Law Olmsted's designs.*

Frederick Law Olmsted's designs. Three stone bridges span the water and the boundary between Boston and Brookline. The Riverway has no active sports facilities. It is popular with walkers, birders, bicyclists, and people seeking a contemplative refuge. Neighbors from the Audubon Circle, Fenway, Longwood, and Mission Hill areas and Brookline use this park.

Three City of Boston projects have recently enhanced the appearance of the Riverway. The four stone bridges and the attendant landscape were rehabilitated in 1998 with the collaboration of the

Town of Brookline and through funding from the DEM Historic Landscape Preservation Program. The two other projects were the restoration of the Back Bay Maintenance Yard and the reconstruction of the pathways on the Boston side of the park. In addition, the Sears Company returned the Sears parking lot (the infamous "Missing Link") to the city and replaced it with lawn and trees as part of the redevelopment of the Sears Building at Park Drive and Brookline Avenue (now the Landmark Center).

**Recommendations.** The Parks Department will continue structural rehabilitation and replanting to fully reinstate the scenic glory of the Riverway.

- Foster joint projects between Boston and Brookline to implement preservation projects.
- Restore the former Sears parking lot to the vision in the master plan that emulates the original Olmsted plan. Re-create the open waterway as part of the Muddy River Restoration Project.
- Improve the watercourse and adjacent landscape through the Muddy River Restoration Project. Continue to implement the tree and shrub planting plan developed in 1991.

**O**lmsted Park, originally named Leverett Park, was established in 1891 at the upper end of the Muddy River as a succession of ponds set in woodlands. This is especially true from Perkins Street, where the deep-set basin of Wards Pond is nestled in a wooded bowl, to Willow Pond Road, the northern terminus of a section of rolling wooded terrain laced with a series of small ponds and streams. Leverett Pond, the park's largest body of water, shapes the more open north end of the park which abuts Route 9.

The water system demarcates the Boston-Brookline boundary. The idyllic woods, ponds, and streams are interrupted at Willow Pond Road by the former MDC Kelly rink site and two very heavily-used ball diamonds at Daisy Field. Olmsted Park retains several original stone pedestrian bridges and a stone headwall at Leverett Pond. The Route 9/Huntington Avenue overpass, separating Olmsted Park and the Riverway, was built in the 1930s. Olmsted Park is a very popular neighborhood open space resource for Mission Hill and Jamaica Plain, as well as Brookline.

In 1998 a wooden boardwalk was added to one edge of Wards Pond allowing the public greater access to this “hidden jewel.”

**Recommendations.** The Parks Department will focus their rehabilitation efforts on woodland management and the restoration of Wards Pond and other park water bodies.

- Begin water quality improvements at Wards Pond, the upstream end of the Muddy River, as part of the Muddy River Restoration Project (MRRP; please see the Muddy River section above). Continue improvements to the watercourse from Wards Pond to Leverett Pond through the MRRP.
- Further improve the Wards Pond landscape. Build upon the cleaning efforts made by the Longwood Treatment Center and the Appalachian Mountain Club crews. Restore understory plantings. Restore the pedestrian path *all* around the water’s edge.
- Advocate for the water resource improvements of Leverett Pond as part of the Muddy River Restoration Project (please see the Muddy River section above).
- Support the master plan goal of transforming the vacant former MDC Kelly Rink site back to the Olmsted-designed meadow.
- Implement projects as part of the Emerald Necklace Woodlands Restoration Program. Institute a maintenance cycle for care of existing trees. Consider Olmsted Park as a laboratory to explore woodland regeneration.

**Jamaica Pond Park**, situated between Perkins Street and the Arborway, was established in 1892. This 50-foot deep pond is the source of the Muddy River. From a formal entrance at Pond Street with a Boat House and Bandstand (circa 1915), the vista presents green-fringed blue water against tree-covered Hellenic Hill. Olmsted did little to change the landscape except remove ice cutting facilities and all but one of several country homes. The mansion allowed to remain is Pinebank, designed by Sturgis and Brigham for Edwin Newton Perkins. It was built in 1870 on the site of two earlier Perkins houses.

Jamaica Pond is one of the city’s most heavily-used neighborhood parks. Visitors come from Boston, Brookline, and other communities in the metropolitan area.

Jamaica Pond Park



Runners, bicyclists, and walkers circle the 1.4-mile perimeter of the pond. Sailboats and rowboats are available for rent at the Boat House, which also has a snack concession. The ground floor of the Bandstand houses a Boston Park Ranger Station.

Major capital investment at Jamaica Pond in the past ten years has rehabilitated the Boat House and Bandstand, repaired the water leveling mechanism, stabilized and replanted about half of the water's edge, and rehabilitated half of the perimeter path. A bicycle and running path was built on the former bridle path parallel to the Jamaica way, to help mitigate competing uses. The *Connecting Jamaica Pond* project was completed in 2001 with the support of \$1.2 million in federal and state ISTEA funds. The project included the remaining perimeter path rehabilitation and the installation of riprap along the pond edge to deter erosion. The project completed the rehabilitation of the pond edge by the planting of lawn, more than 116 trees, and over 5000 shrub and groundcover plants. *Connecting Jamaica Pond* also installed a bike lane along Perkins Street to advance the master plan recommendation to increase connectivity between Olmsted Park and Jamaica Pond Park. Another project feature was the installation of a grit particle separator, a storm water pollution control device to further improve the water quality of Jamaica Pond. A separate DEM Historic Landscape Preservation Program grant funded the planting of the Pinebank slope in an effort to reduce the amount of sediment entering Jamaica Pond.

**Recommendations** The Parks Department must continue to carefully protect this park and its surroundings to balance heavy user demands with the preservation of historic features and natural systems.

- Provide extraordinary maintenance for the landscape, including the new water's edge plantings, through the Parkman Horticultural Crew and park partners.
- Continue programming with community participation. Emphasize activities singularly suited to Jamaica Pond such as gatherings at the bandstand and the current environmental education and boating programs.
- Secure Pinebank, stabilizing the structure as a landscape element.
- Work with the owners and the community to preserve Hel-lenic Hill, an urban wild and an essential component of the scenery and ecosystem of Jamaica Pond.

**The Arnold Arboretum** was established in 1872. Managed by Harvard University under a 999-year lease with the City of Boston, the Arboretum is located south of Jamaica Pond. Within its 273 acres, the landscape's informal character provides a country park experience, including dramatic views from atop Bussey Hill and Peters Hill. The artful and studious planting of the Arboretum collection results from the collaboration between

Frederick Law Olmsted and Charles Sprague Sargent. The legacy of earlier estate owners is retained by name in such features as the Walter Street Burying Ground, Bussey Brook, and Weld Street.

The Arboretum is bordered by the neighborhoods of Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, and West Roxbury. Known worldwide for its scientific collection of trees and shrubs, it also serves as a favorite regional and neighborhood passive park. In 1996, the Arboretum was increased by 24 acres, thanks to the addition of a parcel known as the South Street Tract, and an ISTEA grant was secured to implement a pathway through this Tract, connecting the Forest Hills MBTA subway station and the original Arboretum's South Street gate. The pathway and gate improvements were completed in the spring of 2002.



Arnold Arboretum

**Recommendations** The Parks Department encourages ongoing collaboration between the staffs of the Arboretum and the Department.

- Continue to rehabilitate pathways, roads, walls, and other infrastructure components with input from the Arnold Arboretum staff.
- Support the opportunity to interpret the South Street Tract as an urban wild.

**F**ranklin Park accounts for more than half of the land area of the Emerald Necklace park system and approximately one-quarter of the City of Boston's total parkland. Landscape historians and designers have hailed it as one of the finest public parks ever built.

Franklin Park's design dates from 1885. Its 484 acres, arranged in a diamond shape, are set among the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, Mattapan, and Dorchester. A century after its creation, Franklin Park is still a much-needed refuge from the city. It suffered a severe decline in the 1960s and 1970s, but is now significantly rehabilitated and well visited.

With its Country Meadow, 65-acre Wilderness woodland area, and peaceful Scarborough Pond, the park still magically suggests a rural retreat. There are picturesque ruins of a shelter and terrace on Schoolmaster Hill above the meadow and the remains of the Playstead Overlook Shelter.

Designed as the active part of the park, the Playstead has versatile, popular playing fields and the newly-refurbished White Stadium. The revitalized Franklin Park Zoo, managed by Zoo New England, and the William Devine Municipal Golf Course (in the meadow) bring 40,000 visitors annually. In 1998, the city completed a new golf course clubhouse that was inspired by the Olmsted-designed Playstead Overlook Shelter.

*Designed as the active part of the park, the Playstead has versatile, popular playing fields and the newly-refurbished White Stadium.*



Because it accounts for approximately one-quarter of the City of Boston's parkland, its maintenance and capital improvement needs continue to be substantial, particularly because a significant amount of the park's vegetation, structures, and infrastructure is a century old. Franklin Park has seen significant improvements: the children's play areas at Walnut Street and Humboldt Avenue entrances have been rehabilitated thanks in part to a federal urban recreation grant; the Schoolmaster Hill ruin has been stabilized; and a Woodlands Program has been initiated to focus on rehabilitating the forest areas of Franklin Park and the other Emerald Necklace parks. Test plots have been planted within Franklin Park at the Hagborne Steps, and a planting plan is in the works for Ellicott Arch.



Franklin Park

**Recommendations** As the largest park in the city's park system and an internationally recognized historic landscape design achievement, Franklin Park poses many challenges today. Neighborhood and active park user needs must be addressed, while respecting the historic and regional significance of this "country park."

- Complete the Franklin Park Management Plan to sustain the Olmsted vision of a rural oasis while detailing recommendations for traffic control and the programming, organization, management, and approval of special events.
- Increase neighborhood partnerships such as with the Franklin Park Coalition. Coordinate activities with the Zoo, White Stadium, and others.
- Respond where needed to neighborhood needs by rehabilitating ball fields, improving basketball facilities, and providing or retaining picnic tables in suitable locations.
- Provide extraordinary maintenance and management of vegetation. Develop, refine, and implement the Woodlands Management Plan to ensure the future health of the forested area of the park.
- Continue to implement the Franklin Park Maintenance Yard master plan for reorganization and revitalization of the existing yard.
- Complete the design and implementation of other priority rehabilitation projects such as the Forest Hills entrance improvements, Playstead Overlook Shelter preservation, Bear Dens stabilization, and further implementation of the sign system.
- Oversee preparation of a water quality assessment and treatment plan for Scarborough Pond, funded with state participation. Phase in its implementation.
- Continue coordination with and among agencies and community groups to avoid user conflicts and to assist with maintenance, programming, and fund-raising.