
Open Space Plan 2015-2021

Section 7

Analysis of Needs

Section 7.1.2 Resource Protection
HARBOR
OPEN SPACE

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Section 7.1.2: Resource Protection HARBOR OPEN SPACE

INTRODUCTION: A PLANNING FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents a planning framework that has been designed to guide the continuing revitalization of Boston Harbor's open space and Harborwalk systems. In keeping with the intent of this Open Space Plan, it recommends the enhancement of existing open space facilities while identifying opportunities to be realized by future programs and projects along the shoreline and on the islands. The framework builds on and extends the work of public agencies, including the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), the Boston Conservation Commission (BCC), the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP), the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport), as well as non-profit organizations and waterfront property owners, in an effort to promote and provide public access to waterfront open space.

The proposed framework reflects the larger vision of the City to share equitably among all the city's residents the resources of the harbor for recreational as well as economic benefits. Boston Harbor's clean-up project has fostered a resurgence in water-related activities and a desire for broad public access to the water's edge.

Boston's municipal harbor planning efforts, the product of a waterfront district specific community-based planning, articulates this vision through four comprehensive planning policies:

- Universal access to opportunities on the harbor;
- Year-round activation of the waterfront through public, cultural, and water-dependent uses;
- Enhancement of maritime activities; and
- Growth that is appropriately designed and brings vitality.

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Guidelines

District-associated themes underpin the open space recommendations outlined in the pages below. In addition, the following guidelines serve as criteria for waterfront areas to ensure a rich mix of open spaces and uses in each district:

- Projects should maximize active and passive recreational potential with the creation of destination-oriented facilities such as recreational/cultural centers, historic interpretive exhibits, expanded sports facilities and water-dependent uses and activities, public art and performances, and the like.
- Projects should ensure the enhancement of environmental resources through the stabilization and restoration of natural ecosystems, provision of educational programs, and expansion of visitation access and opportunities. The city's youth should be especially targeted to enjoy and maintain these resources.
- Projects should include open space improvements along with a mix of housing, cultural/civic, retail, hotel, and commercial development. Waterfront projects should encourage water-related activity, including public docks and transient berthing, boat ramps, boat rentals, recreational marinas, fishing, and water taxi or water shuttle facilities, with supporting cafes and restaurants as well as swimming opportunities where possible. These diverse uses will activate the open spaces and support year-round, 24-hour activity.

Connectivity

While each district will have its own unique attractions derived from the above mix of activities, critical to waterfront open spaces are improved connections for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users (including water transportation users), and those coming by automobile. Improved access should continue to be addressed through access plans connecting inland facilities to the Harborwalk and the waterfront. Boston's district-based Municipal Harbor Plan advisory committee should include Parks Department personnel to ensure the broadest spectrum of expertise on open space and public access planning and design. A system of desirable connections would include the following:

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- Completion of a Harborwalk public access network along East Boston, Dorchester, Fort Point, South Boston, Charlestown, and North End.
- Improved Harborwalk wayfinding and interpretive signage program.
- Links to Harborwalk from inland facilities like neighborhood parks, the Emerald Necklace system, Rose Kennedy Greenway, Charles River Reservation, East Boston Greenway, South Bay Harbor Trail, and the Neponset River Trail especially through pedestrian paths, bikeways, and public transit.
- An expanded ferry network which links the Harbor Islands and existing downtown piers to docking areas in neighborhood locations.

Management

The implementation of this chapter's recommendations requires long term investment of capital and human resources that may be beyond the limited city, state, and federal means currently available. The state Chapter 91 Tidelands regulations have developed a series of agreements with private and public waterfront landowners that promote public access and mandate maintenance of public amenities. The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership, which includes the Boston Harbor Island Alliance, is another step towards broadening beyond limited city and state resources.

The planning framework in establishing well-defined district boundaries will facilitate the complex exercise of implementing potential projects and programs. Within the confines of a manageable area, ownership, jurisdiction, and operations responsibilities will be fine-tuned or, conversely, consolidated under an appropriate agency or entity in each district. A full matrix of management models can be considered, ranging from the National Park Service management coordination model to a leasehold arrangement with a non-profit corporation, depending on the attributes of a particular district.

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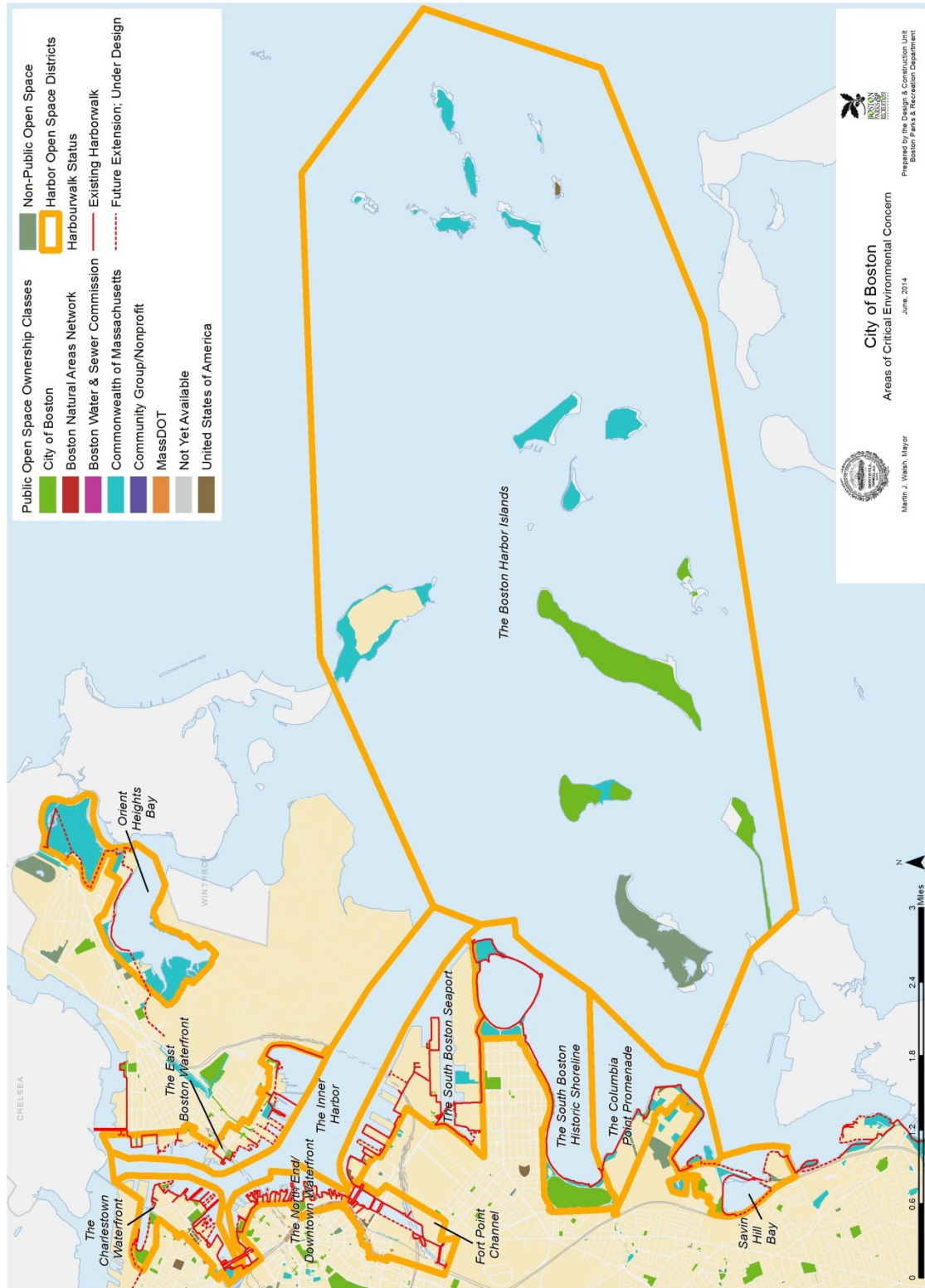
DISTRICTS

As a first step toward understanding the context and the implementation of the above policies, this blueprint establishes districts that encompass neighborhood-level open space systems. The intention is to emphasize the distinct local character that makes each area unique. Existing shoreline features, neighborhood land uses, zoning boundaries, and history of public use provide the context to delineate and establish themes that characterize a particular district. The framework establishes the following districts and themes:

- **Orient Heights Bay:**
Creating New Linkages
- **The East Boston Waterfront:**
Reclaiming an Historic Harbor
- **The Charlestown Waterfront:**
Diversifying the Open Space Experience
- **The North End/Downtown Waterfront:**
Realizing the Public Realm
- **Fort Point Channel:**
Creating an Urban Water Park System
- **The South Boston Seaport:**
Opening and Accessing a Renewed District
- **The South Boston Historic Shoreline:**
Enhancing Olmsted's Vision
- **The Columbia Point Promenade:**
Linking Institutional Development
- **The Savin Hill Bay Area:**
Creating Recreational Opportunities
- **The Boston Harbor Islands:**
Building a User Base through Partnership

The range of these themes and corresponding districts asserts the inherent character of an urban waterfront, reflecting the diversity of the city with a rich and varied choice of physical settings, cultural experiences, and recreational opportunities for residents. Further community-based planning will seek to blend neighborhood and citywide use, private development and public access, and natural resources protection and resource areas visitation.

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CREATING NEW LINKAGES: ORIENT HEIGHTS BAY

With the linking of Belle Isle Marsh and Wood Island Bay Marsh to the Constitution Beach area, a series of complementary open space experiences along Orient Heights Bay can become accessible to all of East Boston. These connections would open up new harbor recreation opportunities.

Recommendations

- Create a link between Constitution Beach and the Bayswater Street Urban Wild/ Airport Buffer Project through a Harborwalk and/or public access path past the Orient Heights Yacht Club. Support the provision of a public docking pier at the Orient Heights Yacht Club.
- Complete the Narrow Gauge Link Pathway to provide access to Wood Island Bay Marsh from Constitution Beach as part of the East Boston Greenway expansion.
- Transfer the restored wetland at the Belle Isle Coastal Preserve to DCR for incorporation into the management of Belle Isle Marsh Reservation. Include a public access link via the East Boston Greenway to both the Bayswater Street Urban Wild and the Belle Isle Marsh Reservation.
- Implement the East Boston Greenway Access Plan recommendations for connecting the inland neighborhood to the Greenway in the sections from Neptune Road to Belle Isle Marsh.
- Develop a system of wayfinding and interpretive signage for this area's growing system of harbor open space that is integrated with the Harborwalk signage system.

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RECLAIMING AN HISTORIC HARBOR: THE EAST BOSTON WATERFRONT

East Boston's waterfront, for many decades neglected, is now beginning to undergo a transformation. The efforts of partners such as the Boston Natural Areas Network and Jeffries Point residents have resulted in new open spaces along the waterfront. During the past three years, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department and the Massachusetts Port Authority have made improvements to the neighborhood's open spaces. As deteriorated or underutilized piers are redeveloped, an active promenade will be created with active and passive recreation, housing, and maritime industrial uses.

Recommendations:

- Extend the Harborwalk from Porzio Park in Jeffries Point to the Condor Street Overlook Urban Wild at the confluence of the Inner Harbor and Chelsea Creek. Use signage and landscaping to draw users to Harborwalk point access in maritime industrial areas. Develop an interpretive signage system to explain the maritime industrial and related uses, and integrate public art into these areas, much as has been done by Harbor Arts in the East Boston Shipyard.
- Restart Massport's planning for the expansion (Phase II) of Piers Park. Support the BRA East Boston Master Plan recommendation to create a waterfront park at Pier 5 in concert with local residents and organizations. Work with the Parks Department on the linkage between Golden Stairs Terrace Park, the Rockies open space, Piers Park (Phases I and II), and Pier 5 open space development .
- Renovate Lewis Mall as a major landscaped pedestrian and water transportation connection from the Maverick Square neighborhood to the waterfront, and coordinate with the newly constructed Portside at Pier 1 project.
- Establish a pedestrian and bicycle connection between Piers Park (Phases I & II) and the first segment of the East Boston Greenway.

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- Continue the East Boston Greenway northward from Bremen Street Park to enable better access to Piers Park and Harborwalk from inland neighborhoods.
- Support the East Boston Municipal Harbor Plan to create public parks and new Harborwalk segments as part of private development along the waterfront. Integrate such parks and rights-of-way into a cohesive waterfront open space system through each site's design to ensure public accessibility visually as well as legally, and to provide activating destinations along the Harborwalk.
- Develop a "low tide trail" to connect Constitution Beach with "other than beach" access points, per the Metropolitan Beaches Commission's 2014 report. Support capital improvements to allow better ADA and stroller access to the beach and to expand water-based activities such as boating and swimming through a floating dock and small boat storage and rental facility, per the Metropolitan Beaches Commission's 2014 report.

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DIVERSIFYING THE OPEN SPACE EXPERIENCE: THE CHARLESTOWN WATERFRONT

Charlestown's waterfront from the Little Mystic Channel through the historic Navy Yard to Paul Revere Park affords unique opportunities for creating a variety of open space and recreational uses on both land and water. Rich in history, skirting a densely populated neighborhood, in close proximity to downtown Boston, and with links to the DCR Charles River Reservation, this area of Boston's waterfront has the potential of providing its open space users a diverse and enriching outdoor experience.

Recommendations:

- Realize the potential of the Little Mystic Channel as a unique open space resource, building upon the new Harborwalk segments and the Weingarten Adaptive Sports and Recreation program for Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital patients and others.
- Use signage and landscaping to draw users to Harborwalk point access, where possible, in maritime industrial areas. Develop an interpretive signage system to explain the maritime industrial and related uses
- Expand the Courageous Sailing Center facilities at Pier 4 and increase programming for Boston's youth and new members.
- Support the BRA Charlestown Navy Yard Master Plan and Charlestown Navy Yard Waterfront Activation Plan which will create a public access and open space network that will reinforce the site's unique historical character and common identity. . Improve the Harborwalk connection from Tudor Wharf along Constitution Marina and coordinate Harborwalk segments and signage with the National Park Service and the Massachusetts Port Authority.
- Support waterside infrastructure allowing public access to the water such as the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital's adaptive marine program at Building 114, additional public

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touch and go docking facilities at marinas within the Navy Yard and water transit facilities at Piers 1 and 3.

- Support the development of the Maritime Interactive Park Network, a system of physical and programmatic maritime and historic interpretation to attract year-round use along Harborwalk and to protect public access.
- Study potential links to the Mystic River Trail System.

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REALIZING THE PUBLIC REALM: THE NORTH END/DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT

The North End/Downtown waterfront has the most diverse recreational and open space opportunities of any waterfront neighborhood, including some of the highest concentrations of active and passive open spaces and recreational facilities. Open space mitigation efforts, as well as improvements by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Parks and Recreation Department, have resulted in attractive, well-used public spaces along the waterfront.

Recommendations

- Support the completion of the remaining pedestrian bridge and open space mitigation commitments as part of the Central Artery Tunnel Charles River Crossing to integrate Boston Harbor with the New Charles River Basin park system and the Esplanade. Complete open space improvements on the south bank of the Charles River and the pedestrian bridge over the tracks at North Station that connects Charles River Basin Park system to the Harborwalk at Lovejoy Wharf.
- Continue the Harborwalk through all upcoming private wharf/waterfront developments. Ensure that public parks that are part of development sites' designs are physically and/or visually linked to the Harborwalk and nearby streets.
- Improve Harborwalk conditions at Lewis and Union Wharves and complete Harborwalk connection along the north and southern sides of Commercial Wharf to Boston Yacht Haven.
- Provide, where appropriate, piers for docking with sewer pumpouts as part of the "No Discharge Area" designation.
- Unify the planned/completed pedestrian pathways and open spaces adjoining the waterfront with the Rose Kennedy Greenway. Support the BRA's Crossroads Initiative work to link downtown to the Greenway and the waterfront and the Connect Historic Boston project to link the downtown's transit to its historic resources.

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- Support the development of the Historic Piers Network, a system of physical and programmatic historic interpretation to attract year-round use along the Harborwalk and to protect public access.

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CREATING AN URBAN WATER PARK SYSTEM: FORT POINT CHANNEL

South Boston's Fort Point District has seen significant change, with new open spaces, Harborwalk segments, and boat docks along the channel. Amenities include interpretive signage, public art, seating areas, and enhanced landscaping. Consistent with the goals of the Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan, a boat dock for non-motorized recreational boats, together with new docks for water taxis and a new "Cultural Connector" boat, make this area a truly urban water park area. The renovation and expansion of the Boston Children's Museum, together with the opening of the InterContinental Hotel and Residences, Atlantic Wharf, and Commonwealth Ventures properties have added open spaces and enhanced Harborwalk segments by the Fort Point Channel, complementing Harborwalk segments and open spaces created by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project as part of its environmental mitigation requirements.

Further anticipated improvements to the open space system include the Harborwalk along the South Station Postal Annex and proposed parks of the 100 Acres Master Planning Area and public amenities in and along the Channel

Recommendations

- Establish a strong link on the cross-channel bridges between the Rose Kennedy Greenway and the enhanced Fort Point Channel through the Crossroads Initiative.
- Seek continued expansions of the water transportation system linking inner-harbor neighborhoods and, especially, waterfront attractions (museums, etc., (through the Cultural Connector boat service) which are accessible from the harbor. Support the BRA's Inner Harbor Water Transportation Study recommendations for this area including service from the regional water transit terminal, to be constructed by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation at the InterContinental Hotel.
- Implement public amenities, including parks, community boating, watersheet sculpture garden, restaurants, etc. along

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the Channel in accordance with the Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan, the blueprint for this urban water park.

- Support the development of the South Bay Harbor Trail linking Fort Point Channel to the South End, Roxbury, and the Fenway, as well as to the Southwest Corridor Park and the Emerald Necklace.
- Work with the BRA to disperse funds from the development of tidelands out of the South Boston Waterfront Account of the Fund for Parks and Recreation to support open space and recreational activation in the Fort Point District.
- Support the Public Works Department's efforts to rehabilitate and restore the Old Northern Avenue Bridge, an historic resource and vital pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Rose Kennedy Greenway, Downtown Waterfront, Fort Point District, and the South Boston Waterfront/Innovation District.
- Support the development of the Historic Piers Network, a system of physical and programmatic historic interpretation to attract year-round use along the Harborwalk and to protect public access.

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OPENING AND ACCESSING A RENEWING DISTRICT: THE SOUTH BOSTON WATERFRONT/INNOVATION DISTRICT

Thanks to critical public projects such as the Moakley Federal Courthouse, the I-90 Connection to Logan Airport, the MBTA Silver Line, and the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, a transformation of the South Boston Waterfront is well underway. This burgeoning area of the City will require the continued integration of industrial, commercial, residential, cultural, civic, and open space/recreational uses to form a lively district.

Significant public planning has taken place for more than a decade to develop a framework for the current development projects in the district including Fan Pier, Seaport Square, and Pier 4. The Seaport Public Realm Plan, South Boston Waterfront District Municipal Harbor Plan, Commonwealth Flats Master Plan, and 100 Acres Master Plan have laid out a vision and a framework to guide developers, designers, and community preservationists. The waterfront will be made accessible to the public via a continuous Harborwalk and linked to an inland park system by tree-lined thoroughfares and other public amenities. The Harborwalk and inland park system will be supported by a variety of cultural and commercial uses, including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston Children's Museum, and District Hall, to enliven and activate this area.

Recommendations

- Work to complete the Harborwalk public access network in the South Boston waterfront, including measures to assure broad public access from inland neighborhoods. Extend and connect the Harborwalk network from the Fan Pier and the Institute of Contemporary Art to Pier 4 and the pier buildings at Commonwealth Pier and the Boston Fish Pier. Consider where feasible further extensions or point access to the Boston Marine Industrial Park, to Dry Dock No. 3, and to the Reserved Channel, as well as connecting across the Summer Street Bridge to L Street Beach and Castle Island in the South Boston Historic Shoreline District. Encourage pedestrian links and view corridors to enable maximum public awareness and use of the Harborwalk. Use signage

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and landscaping to draw users through public access segments to the Harborwalk. Develop an interpretive signage system to explain the maritime industrial and related uses found in the District. Ensure adjacent ground floor uses are compatible with and encouraging of the public's use of the Harborwalk. Develop implementation tools for the Seaport Public Realm Plan and the South Boston Waterfront District Municipal Harbor Plan urban design guidelines so as to assure human-scale development along pedestrian corridors to the Harborwalk.

- Encourage recreational use of the watersheet itself via zoning and planning tools, and the Chapter 91 tidelands regulations. Ensure these activities are available for patronage by the public. Support accessory land side uses such as boathouses, restroom facilities, fishing gear rental and sales, and associated food service to promote public use.
- Support active recreation uses in the parkland envisioned by the open space plans of both the Seaport Public Realm Plan and South Boston Waterfront District Municipal Harbor Plan at the southwest end of the Reserved Channel to ensure balanced recreation opportunities in the South Boston Waterfront District.
- Support the implementation and refinement of the recommendations contained in the BRA's Seaport Public Realm Plan. Work through the implementation process (urban design guidelines, zoning amendments, etc.) to assure varied active and passive open space and recreation needs are met for present and future users.
- Support the development of the Historic Piers Network, a system of physical and programmatic historic interpretation to attract year-round use along Harborwalk and to protect public access.

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ENHANCING OLMSTED'S VISION: THE SOUTH BOSTON HISTORIC SHORELINE

The rich history of this section of Boston's shoreline can be the central theme to guide the next phase of its revitalization. Fort Independence has a military history going back to the 17th century. Castle Island and Marine Park are the waterfront segments of Olmsted's vision for the 19th century. The history of the 20th century recreation movement is reflected in the City-improved facilities at the L Street Bathhouse and Joe Moakley Park, further supporting this district's historical theme.

The 1993 "Back to the Beaches" report by the city/state Joint Commission on the Future of the Boston Harbor Beaches laid the groundwork for the Department of Conservation and Recreation's beach restoration projects. Two Metropolitan Beaches Commission reports, in 2007 and 2014, reviewed improvements which have been made to date, and suggested additional initiatives to further enhance Carson Beach and Pleasure Bay. Concerted regional access improvements must also be made to these enhanced regional waterfront attractions.

Recommendations

- Continue to invest in improvements to the Castle Island area to enhance its use with an eye toward balancing local neighborhood and citywide visitation interests. Establish Castle Island as a museum and historical interpretative center. Increase the number of visitation days at Fort Independence.
- Provide Beach Shuttle bus connections from the UMass/JFK MBTA station to Carson Beach and Castle Island in accordance with the Back to the Beaches plan and the 2014 Metropolitan Beaches Commission report, and extend bus service from Columbia Road to Carson Beach.
- Provide designated pedestrian-activated crossings from Joe Moakley Park to Carson Beach.
- Support ongoing water quality improvement efforts that sustain swimmable conditions in these waters.

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- Provide designated pedestrian paths through a wayfinding system from Telegraph Hill and Independence Square to the shoreline.
- Support the recommendations of the Metropolitan Beaches Commission 2014 Report, including the creation of a “signature” bathhouse at Pleasure Bay, reuse of the “Pickle Jar” building, improved lighting along Day Boulevard, full signalization at the L Street intersections with Columbia Road and Day Boulevard, and pedestrian-activated crossing signals in front of the Curley Community Center.

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LINKING INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE COLUMBIA POINT PROMENADE

Columbia Point continues to evolve with a rich mix of residents, students, workers, and visitors. During the past decade, expansion of the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum, construction of the new Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the U.S. Senate, and implementation of UMass Boston's 25-year Master Plan have brought thousands of additional visitors and students to Columbia Point annually. Hundreds of residents, including many long-time residents, live at Harbor Point Apartments and the more recently-constructed Peninsula Apartments. Additional housing is planned on Mt. Vernon Street by Corcoran Jennison Companies.

Residents, students, workers, and visitors enjoy the local open space system that takes advantage of the water's edge. The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Old Harbor Park at Harbor Point, built in the 1980s, was a key open space amenity for residents. West Link followed in 2006, linking Old Harbor Park to Carson Beach. More recently, new segments of the Harborwalk, including at the Kennedy Library and a UMass segment opening in 2015, will further enhance public access to the water's edge. The Boston Redevelopment Authority's pending re-design of Mt. Vernon Street will help increase inland access to the waterfront.

Recommendations

- Reuse the Calf Pasture Pumping Station in concert with the needs of the public as well as its owner, UMass Boston, so as to provide a destination use and an activity node for the Columbia Point Promenade area.
- Support expansion of the UMass Boston Marine Operations Waterfront Recreation Program, which currently provides introductions to sailing, kayaking, and stand-up paddling from its Fox Point dock. Continue to support this program's operation of Monday Lunchtime Harbor Cruises for the UMass population and the general public.

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- Explore with the Department of Conservation and Recreation the possible use of the John T. Fallon State Pier located at the Kennedy Library and Museum for water transportation to Columbia Point.
- Develop shuttle bus loops between the JFK Library and Carson Beach/Castle Island via the JFK/UMass Red Line station.
- Continue to link programmatically both the State Museum and the University of Massachusetts to the waterfront open space in this area including the Arts on the Point Project.
- Advance the open space goals and objectives of the 2011 Columbia Point Master Plan as they relate to the waterfront, including providing physical and visual links between key open spaces and across Columbia Point to Boston Harbor; developing a public open space system of active and passive parks, squares and streets, connected to the water's edge; creating a sense of place along the waterfront with active uses and amenities; and, preserving and enhancing public access to the waterfront and activating the water's edge.

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CREATING RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES: SAVIN HILL BAY

In the past decade, significant improvements have occurred at some of Dorchester's beaches, which are important and well-used assets for the community. Water quality is very high at Savin Hill Beach, and its walkways are well-maintained. Water quality improvements are still needed at Malibu and Tenean Beaches, where illegal sewer connections can drain into the harbor and limit the number of days that residents can safely swim and play at those beaches. Moreover, while Malibu Beach is easily accessible and well maintained, Tenean Beach is in need of repair, and has been damaged by storms and high tide. (While not part of the Savin Hill Bay district, connections to and improvement of Tenean Beach is mentioned here given the importance of connectivity to the success of the city's harbor open space.)

Recommendations

- Develop Savin Hill Bay's protected waters as an aquatic park for passive and active water-oriented recreation.
- Enhance the developed Malibu Beach and supporting facilities by the provision of a dinghy dock and boat rental.
- Support ongoing efforts to improve water quality at Savin Hill Bay and Malibu Beach.
- Integrate McConnell Park with Malibu Beach and Savin Hill Bay by landscaped lawns and paths.
- Support connecting Tenean Beach to Savin Hill Bay through the construction of a boardwalk along the Southeast Expressway embankment to Victory Road Park.
- Identify new locations for public boat launching ramps.
- Extend public access from McConnell Park via a boardwalk along the periphery of the expressway to connect the public beach at Clam Point.

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- Support the connectivity recommendations of the 2014 Metropolitan Beaches Commission report: “Increase public transit options and new connections between beaches in Dorchester and South Boston; provide connections to the Harborwalk, [beaches,] and the Neponset River Greenway/Trail from neighborhoods that are not directly contiguous, such as Bowdoin/Geneva, Fields Corner, Clam Point, Popes Hill, Codman Square, Ashmont, and Lower Mills. Strengthen connections to the waterfront ... at UMass Boston and Columbia Point; consider a potential transportation partnership with UMass Boston and a seasonal shuttle from Franklin Park down Columbia Road.”
- Support capital and other recommendations of the 2014 Metropolitan Beaches Commission report, such as a redesign and redevelopment of Tenean Beach, a new bathhouse at Savin Hill Beach, sediment dredging for improved water flow and quality, beach connections for cyclists and pedestrians, boat/kayak rentals, and more concessions/food trucks.
- Complete Harborwalk links along Port Norfolk linking Tenean Beach with Port Norfolk Park, Pope John Paul II Park, and the Neponset River Greenway

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BUILDING A USER BASE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP: THE BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS

With the success of the Boston Harbor Cleanup Project, the 2006 opening of the restored Spectacle Island to the public, and the 2011 opening of a visitor pavilion on the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area (BHINRA), with its 34 islands and peninsulas, continues to attract a growing number of visitors (18 of the 34 islands are within Boston city limits). This is one of America's few urban national recreation areas. The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership consists of the owners, including city, state and federal governments, and two non-profit organizations, who manage the park. The City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department and the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation own Spectacle Island, a major hub to the rest of the islands.

Six islands, including Spectacle, Georges, Peddocks, Lovells, Grape, and Bumpkin are serviced by public ferry. Spectacle, Georges, and Peddocks Islands have visitor/welcome centers. Some of the more rustic islands, such as Peddocks, Bumpkin, Grape, and Lovells, offer camping experiences, including yurts on Peddocks Island for less seasoned campers. Free daily programs on the islands make them one of the most popular visitor destinations in the state.

The recently built Camp Harbor View, on the City-owned Long Island, affords inner city kids the opportunity through summer camps to experience this Distinctive Landscape (as designated by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation in its Scenic Landscape Inventory) as do more affluent visitors.

The Boston Harbor Islands, though beloved and enjoyed by many, are isolated and buffeted by their aquatic setting, making them among the most fragile and vulnerable resources in Boston's open space system. Continued investment in this national recreation area is needed, especially in light of predicted sea level rise and extreme storm events.

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Recommendations

- Support the Camp Harbor View program to give inner city kids opportunities to experience the harbor environment at the summer camp grounds on Long Island.
- Build upon the success of the Island Alliance and National Park Service's \$4 million Harbor Islands Pavilion on the Rose Kennedy Greenway, and work to enhance wayfinding from the Greenway to the Long Wharf water transportation gateway to the Harbor Islands.
- Work with the University of Massachusetts and the Kennedy Library on the development of a Dorchester-based gateway to the Harbor Islands, and with Fan Pier developers on the implementation of a Harbor Island gateway in the South Boston Seaport District in accordance with the South Boston Waterfront District Municipal Harbor Plan.
- Support ferry service from Lynn, Squantum Point in Quincy, and Point Allerton in Hull to the BHINRA as recommended by the 2014 Metropolitan Beaches Commission Report to diversify the visitor base.
- Support the recommendations of the 2014 Metropolitan Beaches Commission Report to remediate the asbestos at Gallops Island, invest in the Georges Island marina and terminal, and dredge the marina area of Spectacle Island.
- Document and map all conservation lands on the islands, specify those of critical environmental concern, and develop a natural resource protection plan for their permanent maintenance. Continue to separate these lands from recreational and intensive use areas.
- Continue the City's stewardship plan for Rainsford Island, including an archaeological reconnaissance-level survey, to identify cultural and natural resources and formulate recommendations for protection and use.