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# **Open Space Plan 2015-2021**

## **Section 7**

### **Analysis of Needs**

#### **Section 7.3.1    Open Space Systems Management CEMETERIES**

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## Analysis of Needs

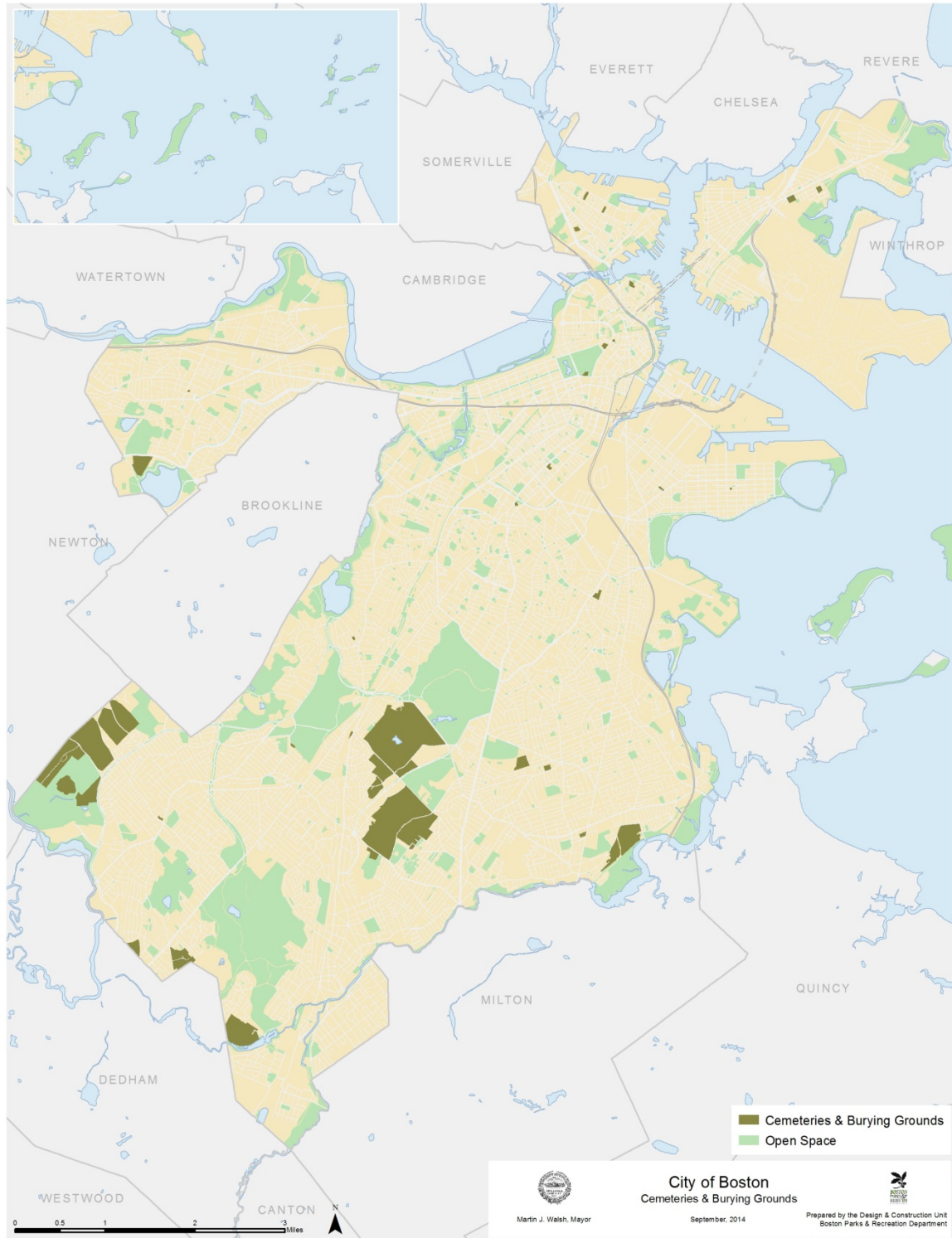
### Section 7.3.1: Open Space Systems Management CEMETERIES

#### OVERVIEW

Boston's historic cemeteries are important examples of the city's early landscape, linking contemporary Boston with a rich historical and developmental legacy. The city's 16 historic burying grounds and three larger garden-style cemeteries date between 1630 and 1892 and are located in 13 Boston neighborhoods. The burying grounds house a rich collection of historic artifacts that tell many stories about Boston's cultural heritage. Gravestones, tomb markers, and monuments honor the many founding members of the community including Revolutionary heroes and men and women of national and international fame. The city's collection of grave markers embodies the distinguished art of many local stone carvers. These stones afford a rare glimpse into Puritan life in the heart of a modern city, where little else remains in context. Collectively they reflect evolving views of life and death. Since their landscapes remain relatively unchanged, they also act as important open spaces in local neighborhoods, often in areas that are densely built with no other available open space.

Boston's burying grounds are important historical sites for a national constituency of academics, descendants, and tourists who visit Boston. Four burying grounds – Granary, King's Chapel, Copp's Hill, and Central – are located along Boston's Freedom Trail and attract an estimated one million visitors annually. Ten historic burying grounds are listed on the National Register of Historic Places; two sites, Central and Walter Street, are National Historic Landmarks. Central is a designated Boston Landmark, as is Dorchester North; the Granary lies within the Beacon Hill Architectural District; the South End Burying Ground is located within the South End Landmark District; and the Eliot (Eustis Street) Burying Ground lies within the Eustis Street Architectural Conservation District.

# Analysis of Needs



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## Analysis of Needs

### *Historic Burying Grounds Initiative*

The Historic Burying Grounds Initiative (HBGI) is an effort of the Boston Parks and Recreation Department to restore the city's historic cemeteries. Combining public and private funding, community support, advocacy, and public education, the Initiative is the largest cemetery restoration program undertaken by a municipality in the United States.

The Initiative grew out of an awareness voiced in the mid-1970s by several local preservation agencies that the effects of age, environment, and deferred maintenance posed an imminent threat of loss to the city's historic burying grounds and thus to the heritage of Boston, New England, and the nation. Acknowledging the historical and artistic importance of these sites in the city's landscape, the Parks Department, the Boston Landmarks Commission, and the Bostonian Society began a collaborative effort to inventory over 15,000 markers and assemble a master plan addressing structural, landscape, and masonry conservation measures in the historic cemeteries. The original HBGI master plan, completed in 1985, guided capital improvements, private fundraising, and partnerships up until the creation of a new historic burying grounds master plan in 1998 by Walker-Kluesing Design Group. During the first phase, activities primarily focused on protection, stabilization, preservation, and restoration of historic artifacts, tomb structures, and retaining walls. These efforts have prevented significant deterioration of these valuable resources and reduced risk to visitors. The Initiative invested over \$7 million in improvements since the establishment of the program. Over \$1.5 million in restoration and repair projects have been completed since the beginning of 2008.

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### *Active Cemeteries Revitalization*

The City of Boston, through the Parks Department, operates three public cemeteries (Mount Hope in Mattapan, Fairview in Hyde Park, and Evergreen in Brighton) for Boston residents, particularly those individuals who cannot afford a more expensive, private cemetery. The Cemetery Division makes approximately 1,000 burials each year. The Cemetery Division has completed Phase II of its expansion plan adding 1,800 double crypt vaults and approximately five to six years of burial space at Fairview Cemetery. Recent improvements include construction of a maintenance facility at Mount Hope, rehabilitation to the administration building and construction of a maintenance building at Fairview Cemetery, and ongoing memorial restoration.

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## Analysis of Needs

### THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

#### *General Accomplishments and Recommendations*

The master plans for both the City's historic and active cemeteries guide the implementation of restoration and rehabilitation projects. The primary focus of the previous master plan was on protecting, stabilizing, preserving, and restoring the gravestones, tombs, and physical structures. The new master plan continues these efforts but also devotes more resources toward making improvements for visitors. The plans, however, may be modified or expanded over time in order to reflect changed site conditions and availability of funding.

There has been a new emphasis on disseminating information electronically, primarily through the City of Boston's website. This effort has included creation of a biannual newsletter, reworking of old site maps and the scanning of over 12,000 pages of grave-marker survey sheets. We are currently working with the City's Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to develop several publicly accessible applications including a database containing pertinent information about individual gravestones and an interactive feature using the burying ground maps. The Department will work with DoIT to develop a bid to build a computerized database for active cemetery records as well.

Grant funding has been an integral part of our ability to undertake major preservation projects stretching beyond our annual budget. Projects utilizing grant funding from 2008 to 2014 include conservation of above-ground tombs in Eliot Burying Ground, landscape restoration in Granary Burying Ground, and historic fencing restoration in Copp's Hill Burying Ground. A continued effort must be sustained to search for more grant funding. While the historic and active cemeteries have their individual needs suited to particular issues and elements of their landscapes, the following categories of recommendations should guide those issues shared commonly by all 19 sites:

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## Analysis of Needs

- Continue to implement recommendations for rehabilitation and conservation projects as recommended in the historic and active cemetery master plans.
- Nurture and accentuate landscape features, where appropriate, to provide a more comprehensive experience for public appreciation beyond the gravestones. Improve tree maintenance.
- Continue improvements in information dissemination by working with the Department of Information Technology to complete new burying ground application. Finish updating all site maps. Continue writing of newsletter. Research further use of technology to increase public knowledge of burying grounds.
- Improve conservation knowledge by analyzing success of previous methods and seeking to develop best practices.
- Target improvements designed to encourage visitation. This should include landscape issues related to lawns and plantings, path systems, site amenities, fences and gates, lighting, and an informational and interpretive sign system.
- Using the model of signs recently installed, create signs in other burying grounds where appropriate.
- Continue to seek private funding to complement City capital funding.
- Continue to facilitate use of sites for educational programs and to spread public awareness. Encourage use of historic and active cemeteries as educational resources for schools, the Freedom Trail, and other tourism efforts.
- Implement an historic preservation plan for the three active cemeteries, including marker inventories and landscape restoration plans.
- Implement planting plans for active cemeteries, particularly for new burial areas and expansion areas.
- Accommodate City policy to provide burial space for Boston residents by seeking land within Boston to provide for long-term availability of burial space.

## Analysis of Needs

### SITE-SPECIFIC DESCRIPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Bennington Street Cemetery*, East Boston, 1838

The three-acre Bennington Street Cemetery was laid out five years after Noddle's Island became East Boston. Originally overlooking Boston Harbor, the cemetery now faces Logan Airport and provides an open space in an area dominated by airport and highway traffic. Nineteenth-century markers record the names of East Boston's early residents, including many Eastern European immigrants.

Major repair work was completed in 2009 on the above-ground tomb structures and wall at the northwest corner of the site. Financial limitations prevented us from repairing the above-ground tomb structures along the eastern border of the site.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make priority structural repairs to the eastern above-ground tomb structures.
- Restore landscape features such as the pathway system, lawn, the pruning and fertilizing of existing trees, and the addition of new trees.
- Improve site map.
- Continue to support educational and fund-raising efforts in this site.

#### *Bunker Hill Cemetery*, Charlestown, 1807

Located on Bunker Hill Street, Charlestown's second cemetery is a reflection of Charlestown's rapid growth during the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Irish immigration. The property lies on the site crossed by British fortifications in the Battle of Bunker Hill.

The following projects have been completed at Bunker Hill: completion of Massachusetts Historical Commission inventory form in 2009 as a precursor to a nomination for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places; site map reworked and digitized in 2012; and repairs to granite piers and front gate in 2013.



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## Analysis of Needs

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prepare nomination for inclusion on National Register of Historic Places.
- Conserve and reset gravestones.
- Repoint stone wall at base of fence.
- Work with the Charlestown Preservation Society, the Charlestown Historical Society, and the Charlestown Neighborhood Council to support educational programs and advocacy for fundraising and capital improvements.

### *Central Burying Ground*, Boston Common, 1756

Located on Boylston Street between Tremont and Charles Streets, Central Burying Ground was established in Boston to alleviate overcrowding in the three older burying grounds. It contains the graves of British common soldiers who died during the Revolution, foreigners who died while in Boston, Roman Catholics, Freemasons, American patriots from the battle of Bunker Hill and the Boston Tea Party, painter Gilbert Stuart, and composer William Billings. The large freestanding tomb structure, "The Dell," along the west edge of the burying ground, houses the remains of 200 graves disturbed by street construction.

Repairs to the entrance tomb and some tombs on east perimeter occurred in 2009. Two unusual grave markers were conserved in 2012. The northern site wall and tomb entrances were repaired in 2012, including the conservation of a tomb plaque. An underground tomb along the west perimeter was repaired in 2013.

### Recommendations

- Improve site map.
- Reset gravestones that are leaning significantly and those that are lying flat on the ground.
- Install interpretive signs like those in other Freedom Trail sites.
- Renovate lawn areas by filling in depressions and eliminating bare spots.

## Analysis of Needs

### *Copp's Hill Burying Ground*, North End, 1659

One of seven 17th century historic burying grounds in Boston, Copp's Hill was a stronghold from which the British shelled Charlestown in 1775. Interred here are Cotton Mather, minister and theologian; Edmund Hart, builder of Old Ironsides; and more than 1,000 African-Americans who constituted the 18th century New Guinea community. One of the few green spaces in the densely built North End, the two-acre burying ground complements Copp's Hill Terrace next door. Together they offer stunning views over Boston Harbor to Charlestown.

Some areas of the brick pathway were repaired in 2009. In 2009 and 2010 the Mather tomb was restored with funding from descendants. In 2013 the Charter Street cast-iron fence was restored, along with three plot fences and the 1840s drinking fountain. The trees in the sites were pruned in 2014.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue preservation efforts of gravestones, repair broken stones, and reset tilted headstones.
- Repoint Snow Hill Street wall.
- Install replica solar lanterns in two gateways.
- Provide further necessary repairs to brick walkways as required due to settlement and frost heaving.
- Continue to work with the Friends of Copp's Hill Burying Ground and the North End/Waterfront Residents' Association to support advocacy for the burying ground, educational programs, and to raise funds for project implementation.

### *Dorchester North Burying Ground*, Upham's Corner, 1633

Located at the corner of Columbia Road and Stoughton Streets, the eight-acre Dorchester North Burying Ground was the town of Dorchester's only cemetery for two centuries. Generations of prominent Dorchester families are represented as well as William Stoughton, Chief Justice during the Salem Witch Trials of 1692; Richard Mather, minister and progenitor of the Mather family; and John Foster, Boston's first printer. Dorchester North contains early slate gravestones of particular artistic merit, including the 17th century John Foster stone, currently exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts. Nineteenth-century maple and oak trees planted by local horticulturist Samuel Downer remain, but large elm trees have succumbed to Dutch elm disease over the past three decades.

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## Analysis of Needs

In 2012 the row of above-ground tombs along the eastern wall were repaired along with several underground tombs throughout the site.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue grave marker conservation and resetting.
- Repair two piers and gatepost at the Stoughton Street perimeter wall.
- Take steps to restore the landscape to the Victorian-period style. This should include building a new perimeter path system with selected crossing paths. Renovate lawn areas. Prune and fertilize trees. Restore the former Victorian-period walkway signs.
- Work with the Dorchester Historical Society and community groups to encourage neighborhood involvement and advocacy, special projects, fundraising, and development of education programs.

### *Dorchester South Cemetery*, Lower Mills, 1814

Opened in 1814 to alleviate overcrowding in the Dorchester North Burying Ground, Dorchester South became a noteworthy early example of the garden cemetery movement that began in 1831 with Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. Samuel Downer, a prominent businessman and horticulturist, designed the landscape as a botanical park with ornamental trees and shrubbery.

Grave markers throughout the site were reset in 2008. The site map was reworked and digitized in 2012. An inventory sheet for the Massachusetts Historical Commission was completed in 2009 and a nomination for National Register status was submitted in 2013.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Address structural problems of the perimeter walls.
- Repair and paint south and west perimeter fence.
- Repair mound tombs at the interior driveway and at the north edge.
- Reset fallen obelisks.
- Work with community groups such as the Dorchester Historical Society and local schools to encourage programmed use of Dorchester South.

## Analysis of Needs

### *Eliot (Eustis Street) Burying Ground, Roxbury, 1630*

Eliot Burying Ground was the town of Roxbury's first graveyard, named after John Eliot, preacher to 17th century Native Americans. Also interred here are generations of local Roxbury families such as Seaver, Ruggles, Williams, Gridley, and Dudley. Today, the burying ground lies within the Eustis Street Architectural Conservation District.

In 2010 the table tombs and above-ground monuments were repaired and conserved.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Renovate lawn areas by eliminating crabgrass, weeds, and moss. Fill in depressions.
- Reconstruct the path system in the current location and width.
- Install interpretive signage.
- Work with community groups such as the Roxbury Latin School, Historic Boston Incorporated, Discover Roxbury!, and Dudley Square Main Streets to encourage programmed use of Eliot Burying Ground.

### *Evergreen Cemetery, Brighton, 1848*

The Town of Brighton purchased land from the Aspinwall family in order to create a second town cemetery in the newly emerging "garden style." Since parks were not yet part of the public realm at the time, residents used Evergreen's 13.88 acres for passive recreation. Today, it is one of three active City-owned cemeteries in Boston. A monument to Brighton's Civil War soldiers designed by George Meacham, architect of Boston's Public Garden, is found there. Like Fairview and Mt. Hope, a new name sign was installed here.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Renovate and repair the administration building.
- Rehabilitate the Civil War Monument and its immediate landscape, correcting erosion problems.
- Reconstruct the roadways.

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## Analysis of Needs

### *Fairview Cemetery, Hyde Park, 1892*

Fairview reflects the development of the Hyde Park neighborhood. It is the final resting place for James Monroe Trotter, the U.S. Army's first black commissioned officer; Hippolitus Fiske and Charles Jenny, founders of Hyde Park; and John Joseph Enneking, an important member of American painting's turn-of-the-20th century Boston School. The hilly contours of Fairview cemetery lend it an attractive natural quality, and magnificent views of the Blue Hills can be seen from the top of Cedar Grove Road.

Fairview Cemetery is currently the primary location for city burials in Boston. Fairview now also has a columbarium for cremated remains. With Phase II of the expansion plan completed, it has approximately five to six years of burial space left.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reset and restore grave markers.
- Repair roadways.
- Make landscaping improvements to City Poor Lot and install permanent grave numbering system.
- Follow through on construction of new maintenance building currently being designed.
- Begin Phase II expansion planning for more burial space.
- Reconstruct backside wall.

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## Analysis of Needs

### *Granary Burying Ground*, Downtown, 1660

Taking its name from the 18th century town grain storage building, the Granary was part of Boston Common when it was established. Today, the two-acre burying ground is enclosed on three sides by tall office and institutional buildings. The Egyptian Revival entry gate and Tremont Street wall were designed by Solomon Willard and built circa 1840. The Granary contains a particularly rich collection of 17th and 18th century gravestone carving, and markers exist here for prominent Bostonians Sam Adams, John Hancock, and Paul Revere, as well as for Benjamin Franklin's family, and, according to legend, Mother Goose.

A collapsed underground tomb was repaired in 2009. Minor fencing repairs were made in 2011. A major landscape restoration was completed in 2012, including widening pathways, providing standing areas for tour groups, installing a new rear path, installing post-and-chain fencing, and tree pruning. Three archaeological test pits were completed in 2013 to determine the construction of the front wall and tombs.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Restore front cast-iron fence, clean and repair granite wall and entryway.
- Continue to implement grave marker conservation projects.
- Continue good relations with abutters and historical organizations to support educational programs, advocacy for fundraising and capital improvements, and to develop maintenance agreements.
- Continue to support programming through historical organizations.

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### *Hawes/Union Cemeteries*, South Boston, 1816/1841

This site actually contains two cemeteries. John Hawes, a wealthy South Boston resident donated the Hawes portion on Emerson Street. The Union Cemetery on Fifth Street is separated from Hawes by a row of tombs. Prominent local citizens buried in Hawes/Union include John Hawes, Cyrus Alger, and Daniel Simpson.

In 2009 the fences along Emerson and East Fifth Streets were repainted. An inventory for the Massachusetts Historical Commission was completed in 2009.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Submit nomination for inclusion on National Register of Historic Places.
- Reset the remaining leaning and fallen gravestones.
- Rebuild the transverse mound tombs and reset iron doors. Remove trees adjacent to tombs to avoid displacement or encapsulation of stone tomb elements.
- Repoint and rebuild brick walls along west boundary. Repoint granite walls along west boundary.

### *King's Chapel Burying Ground*, Downtown, 1630

King's Chapel Burying Ground is the oldest cemetery in Boston and is said to be part of the estate of Isaac Johnson, an esteemed early settler. Royal Governor Andros seized a portion of this property in 1686 to construct the first Anglican Church in Boston. Prominent individuals buried here are John Winthrop, William Dawes, Robert Keayne, founder of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, and Mary Chilton, the first woman to step from the Mayflower in Plymouth.

Minor tomb repairs took place in 2009. The Tremont Street fence was repaired and repainted in 2010 and 11. Tree pruning was undertaken in 2013.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Address landscape issues in the burying ground.
- Provide minor maintenance work at tombs, including repairing sidewalls, and resetting and conserving tabletops.
- Repair front gate.

## Analysis of Needs

- Continue good relations with abutters and historical organizations to support educational programs, advocacy for fundraising, and capital improvements.

### *Market Street Burying Ground*, Brighton, 1764

Market Street Burying Ground was Brighton's primary cemetery until the 1850s when Evergreen Cemetery was established. It had been associated with the Third Church of Cambridge until 1807, when Brighton became a separate town.

The tomb at the rear corner was repaired in 2011. Volunteer growth was removed from the south perimeter in 2012. A site map was created in 2014.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reset leaning gravestones, conserve broken stones and stabilize tomb to the left of the entrance.
- Prune trees, renovate lawn areas as required.
- Repoint north wall Market Street wall. Remove calcium carbonate deposits on Market Street wall.

### *Mount Hope Cemetery*, Mattapan, 1851

Mount Hope is the largest of all City-owned cemeteries. Its 125 acres contain burial plots for veterans of all wars since the Civil War; members of a variety of organizations such as the Elks, Odd Fellows, and Masons; the oldest burial area for Boston's Chinese immigrants; and a monument to the Irish patriot, John E. Kelly. Influenced by Mount Auburn and Forest Hills Cemeteries, Mount Hope's landscape design is based on the garden-style cemetery. Curvilinear tree-lined roads and two man-made ponds grace its rolling landscape.

Recent work here includes an entrance renovation (2010 to 2011) and the restabilization of the chapel (2011 to 12).

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Inventory, repair, and replace decorative path and walk signs.
- Prune, fertilize, and otherwise maintain the older tree stocks at Mount Hope through a \$70,000-per-year program for the removal of dead and diseased trees and the pruning of healthy trees.



## Analysis of Needs

- Resurface and repair roadways.
- Restore chapel to enable its use by the public.

### *Phipps Street Burying Ground*, Charlestown, 1630

One of the few vestiges of 17th century Charlestown after the British leveled the town during the Revolution, Phipps Street Burying Ground also contains some of the finest early gravestone carving to be found in the eastern United States. A granite obelisk memorializes John Harvard, founder of Harvard College and Charlestown resident, and a plaque marks the burial location of Nathaniel Gorham, a signer of the U.S. Constitution.

A new site map was created for the site in 2012. In 2013 repairs were made to tomb entrances and the beginning phase of Japanese Knotweed eradication was started.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue Japanese Knotweed eradication program until removal is complete.
- Conduct grave marker conservation project.
- Clean, prime and paint perimeter and Harvard Monument fence. Repair gate at Harvard Monument.
- Straighten perimeter fence posts and pickets. Repair access gate.
- Repair existing path.
- Work with the Charlestown Preservation Society, the Charlestown Historical Society, and the Charlestown Neighborhood Council to support educational programs and advocacy for fundraising and capital improvements.

### *South End Burying Ground*, South End, 1810

Known as the workingman's burying ground, most burials in this South End cemetery are not marked, and successive filling of the marshy site permitted burials in several tiers. A plan for the site guided the construction of walled tombs around the perimeter of the cemetery that today dominate the site. Once square in shape, the burying ground is now L-shaped, indicating that a quarter of the original site has been acquired by abutters.

The site map was updated in 2012. Some minor masonry repairs were carried out in 2013.

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## Analysis of Needs

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prune existing trees, and plant new trees according to the master plan.

### *Walter Street Burying Ground, Roslindale, 1711*

The Walter Street Burying Ground was originally created as part of the Second Church of Christ of Roxbury in a site adjoining the Peter's Hill area of the Arnold Arboretum. Prominent local families interred there include Baker, Chamberlain, Weld, Child, and Mayo. A marker indicates burial here of American Revolutionary War soldiers who died from war wounds or disease at the Greenough House in Jamaica Plain. An inventory form was done for the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Repair entrance stairways by replacing the missing stones, repointing steps, and painting handrail.
- Submit nomination for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

### *Westerly Burying Ground, West Roxbury, 1683*

Westerly Burying Ground gave inhabitants of Jamaica Plain and West Roxbury a nearby place to bury their dead and served as the West Roxbury graveyard for 268 years. The burying ground provides a visual record of three centuries of early settlers, and examples of local gravestone carving.

The large Wiggins monument and three other grave markers were conserved in 2008. The ornamental cast-iron plot fence was conserved and repaired in 2009.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reset gravestones and repair mound tombs.
- Repair and repoint north and south walls.
- Prune existing trees.
- Clean and paint Centre Street fence and gate.