
Open Space Plan 2015-2021

Section 7

Analysis of Needs

**Section 7.3.3 Open Space Systems
Management
EMERALD NECKLACE**

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Section 7.3.3: Open Space System Management THE EMERALD NECKLACE

OVERVIEW

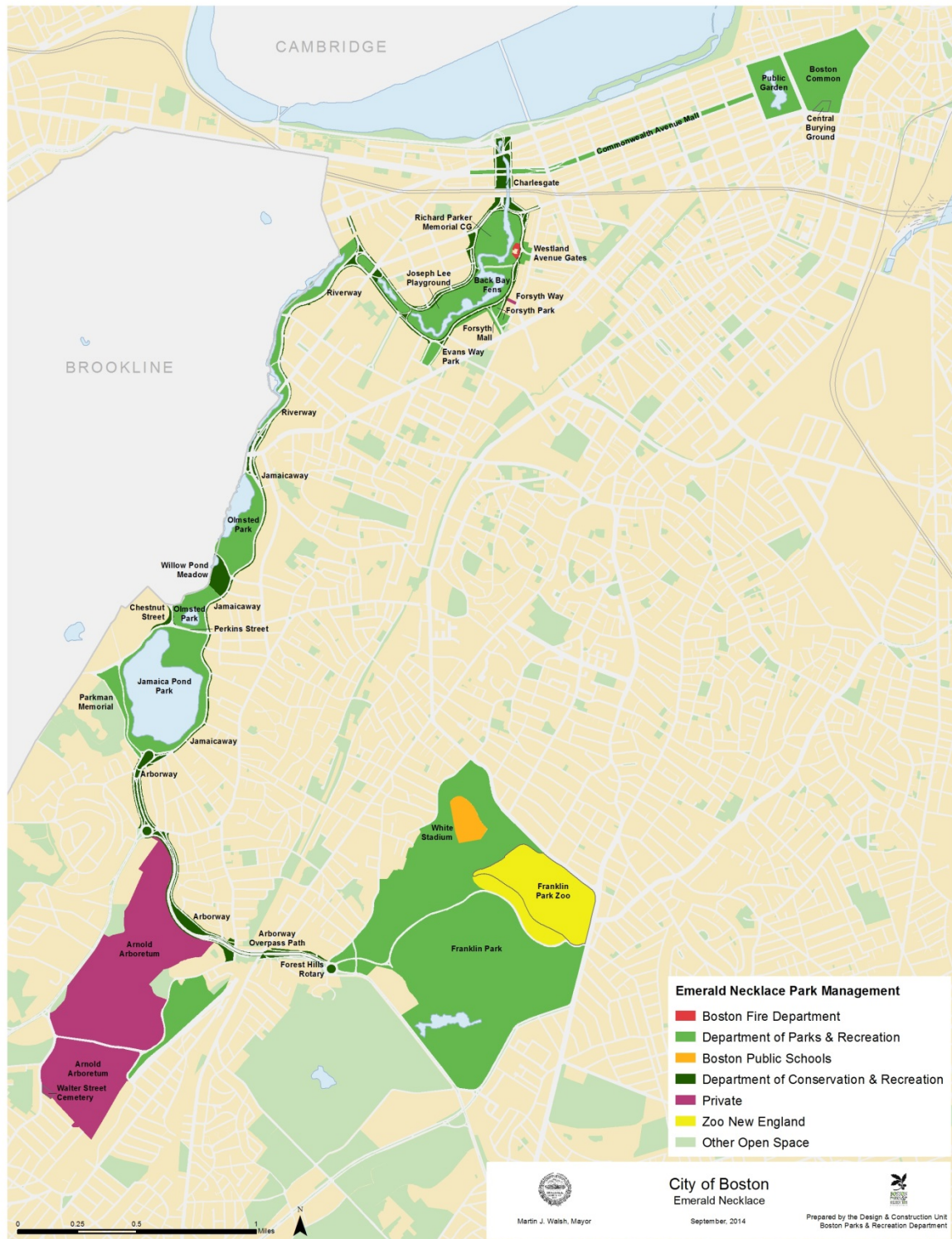
The Emerald Necklace is an internationally renowned 19th century linear park system as well as a nationally significant work of landscape architecture, sanitary engineering, and city planning. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., the leading landscape architect of the era, created this system to expand the open 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 re-envisioned a tidal marsh in the Back Bay Fens, sculpted a river ravine known as the Muddy River, preserved Jamaica Pond, designed the Arnold Arboretum grounds, and transformed farmlands into the 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

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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 1,000 acres of the Emerald Necklace represent a model park system inspired by the civic-mindedness of the late 19th 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 respite from city life, and 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 eight 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, 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 and enjoy these restful green spaces in the city. For Greater Boston, the Necklace is an important regional recreational destination for everything from fund-raising walks and the Franklin Park Zoo to the Boston Common holiday tree-lighting ceremony and collegiate cross-country running races. The system attracts national and international attention as city planners, landscape architects and designers study historic solutions to contemporary challenges like stormwater management and multi-modal access.

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.

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Comprehensive Planning

The Emerald Necklace is made up of nine parks – Boston Common, the Public Garden, Commonwealth Ave Mall, Back Bay Fens, the Riverway, Olmsted Park, Jamaica Pond, the Arnold Arboretum, and Franklin Park. It 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.

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 its use. The Massachusetts Association of Olmsted Parks (now incorporated into Preservation 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).

Each plan for the Emerald Necklace parks has synthesized historic information, contemporary 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 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.

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Recent Capital Investments

The City of Boston has been able to proceed with capital investments using multiple resources, such as monies administered by the Office of Budget Management and the Trust Office. The parks also receive support from by many private sector parties, including neighbors, local institutions, and extraordinarily dedicated parks friends groups.

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 Emerald Necklace revitalization efforts.

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 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 Boston Park 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.

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Safety and Security. Continue to work closely with the Boston Police and community groups to address and avoid problems. Exercise the limited enforcement powers of the Boston Park Rangers to create an atmosphere of security and safety in the Emerald Necklace.

Trees. Provide improved care for all trees. Develop and implement planting plans consistent with historic design intent and tree care standards. Coordinate the efforts of agencies, community groups, and potential donors to ensure that all trees – new and existing – 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 while respecting historic design intent. Coordinate the efforts of agencies, community groups, and potential donors to ensure that all plantings – new and existing – receive adequate maintenance.

Woodlands. Develop a regeneration plan to improve the woodland ecology. Collaborate with partners on response to disease and infestations including Asian Longhorned beetle, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Dutch Elm, etc. (See Trees, above.)

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

Water Quality. Advocate for, support, and participate in efforts to improve water quality in Scarborough Pond and the Muddy River from Ward's 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.

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Structures. Rehabilitate walls, bridges, shelters, buildings, terraces, and other structural features that contribute to the design of the parks to the maximum extent feasible. 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. Work with partners and others to ensure proposed donations are consistent with all applicable plans, regulations and community needs. Encourage proponents to meet with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department for guidance early on in planning for any proposed gifts to parks. Coordinate through the Parks Department the review of proposed projects in accordance with the jurisdiction of other City agencies, primarily the Art, Conservation, 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 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. Work with the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, Friends of the Public Garden and other advocacy organizations in their collaborative and fundraising efforts. Support the Conservancy's Emerald Necklace endowment fund named for the late Boston Parks Commissioner Justine Mee Liff. Foster partnerships and collaborations to support maintenance, capital, and programming projects for preservation and revitalization.

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Maintenance. Continue efforts to ensure a high level of maintenance to meet the high demands and historic significance of Emerald Necklace parks. 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 for city projects. Projects proposed by park partners shall also go through a community review process with the participation of the Parks Department. Secure all other applicable city, state, and federal review and approvals for city projects and participate in securing outside approvals for projects by partners. 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

Boston 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.

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 19th century and into the early 20th 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.

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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.

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.
- Renew focus on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure including paths, drainage systems, and site furnishings, as well as soil and plant health.
- 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 a major 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, Swan Boats, and willow trees, as well as surrounding specimen trees, serpentine paths, ornamental fountains, sculpture, and planting beds.

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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 pathway improvements.
- Renew focus on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure including paths, drainage systems, and site furnishings, as well as soil and plant health.
- 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.
- Look for ways to expand educational opportunities in this passive park to increase enjoyment of horticultural and artistic elements.
- Continue to retrofit 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.

Commonwealth 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.

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 Casey 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 statuary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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- 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.
- Renew focus on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure including paths, drainage systems, and site furnishings, as well as soil and plant health.
- 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.

The Muddy River, the 3.5-mile spine of the Emerald Necklace, is an historic urban waterway that flows through the Riverway and Fens. Its 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 are working with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the US Army Corps of Engineers to provide flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration. The Muddy River rehabilitation project will significantly reduce flood impacts while also provides a unique opportunity to restore areas of the Emerald Necklace. 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 first Phase of the project including daylighting a section of the river at the former Sears parking lot and providing challenge improvements. The second phase of the project is now being designed by the Corps.

Challenging problems face this national historic resource. Moderately heavy rains activate emergency measures to contain stormwater and reduce back-ups in Fenway/ Longwood-area colleges, universities, and medical institutions, and numerous

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Brookline businesses and residences. 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 bio-diversity, 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 19th 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: rehabilitation of the Muddy River will protect the health, safety, and welfare of 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. The park owners (Boston, Brookline, and the DCR), the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, and the Muddy River Maintenance Management and Oversight Committee have signed a landmark agreement to create a five-member cabinet that will ensure the long-term maintenance of the completed project. Boston and Brookline will continue to 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.

The 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 brackish marsh.

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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 had become stagnant. In the nineteen teens and twenties, landscape architect Arthur Shurtleff redesigned the park, creating more groomed and formal design than Olmsted's original. It now features the popular Kelleher Rose Garden, the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Memorials, and the Joseph Lee playground – a cluster of recreational facilities that includes Roberto Clemente ball field. 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.

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 Rehabilitation Project.
- Renew focus on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure including paths, drainage systems, and site furnishings, as well as soil and plant health.
- Designate quiet/passive recreation areas.
- Continue the partnership agreement with the Fenway Alliance and Fenway Garden Society.

The 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. These banks are also a vital component of this tightly engineered landscape. They are flood

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control berms that hold stormwater in the park until it can be safely and slowly discharged downstream through the Charles River to Boston Harbor.

The Riverway offers one of the most idyllic and best-preserved experiences of Frederick Law Olmsted's designs. Three stone bridges span the water and the boundary between Boston and Brookline. The Riverway 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. Many workers from neighboring hospitals and cultural institutions enjoy walks in the shade of the parks towering oaks.

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.
- Renew focus on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure including paths, drainage systems, and site furnishings, as well as soil and plant health.
- Restore the former Sears parking lot to open waterway as part of the Muddy River Project.
- Improve the watercourse and adjacent landscape through the Muddy River Project.

Olmsted Park, originally named Leverett Park, was established in 1891 at the upper end of the Muddy River as a succession of ponds set in mix of woodlands and open fields. In many areas the fields have been lost either to development of athletic facilities or expansion of wooded areas. The deep-set basin of Ward's Pond is nestled in a wooded bowl from which the Babbling Brook leads to a series of small ponds becoming a brook again as it flows into Leverett Pond, the park's largest body of water. The long pond shapes the more open north end of the park.

The water system demarcates the Boston-Brookline boundary, as the Muddy River does in the Riverway. While invisible to most park users Olmsted Park is divided between three jurisdictions: the more formal park and pathways on the Brookline side of the

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waterway; the wooded areas and fields in Boston; and a Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owned parcel near the center of the park. Once the home of a large Quonset hut covering a skating rink, the DCR parcel includes an area that stretches from opposite Castleton Street on the Jamaica way to the town line with Brookline to Willow Pond Road. The woods, clearings, ponds, and streams are interrupted by Willow Pond Road and then curve around 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Parks Department will focus its rehabilitation efforts on woodland management and the restoration of Ward's Pond and other park water bodies.

- Work in partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Town of Brookline and the community on the design and implementation of waterway improvements as part of the Muddy River Project Phase II.
- Renew focus on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure including paths, drainage systems, and site furnishings, as well as soil and plant health.
- Correct drainage at Daisy Field to improve conditions at Leverett Pond.
- Further improve the Ward's Pond landscape. Restore understory plantings. Restore the pedestrian path all around the water's edge.
- Support the efforts by the DCR and the Conservancy to manage the state-owned former Kelly Rink site as a meadow and their protection of Spring Pond.

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, the vista presents a green-fringed blue water sheet against tree-covered Hellenic Hill. Olmsted did little to change the landscape.

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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. Walkers and joggers circle the 1.4-mile perimeter of the pond. Sailboats and rowboats are available for rent at the Boathouse, which also has a snack concession.

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.

- Renew focus on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure including paths, drainage systems, and site furnishings, as well as soil and plant health.
- 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.
- Work with the owners and the community to preserve Hellenic Hill, an urban wild and an essential component of the scenery and ecosystem of Jamaica Pond.

The Arnold Arboretum was established in 1872. Located south of Jamaica Pond, the Arboretum is managed by Harvard University under a 999-year lease with the City of Boston that was signed in 1882, thus establishing a longstanding partnership. 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.

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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.
- Monitor the Institutional Master Plan revision to insure that future developments are consistent with the intent of the lease from the Parks Commission.

Franklin Park accounts for more than half of the land area of the Emerald Necklace park system and approximately one-quarter of the total parkland owned by the City of Boston. 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, touch 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 broad views, 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 White Stadium. The revitalized Franklin Park Zoo, managed by Zoo New England, and the William Devine Golf Course (in Olmsted's Country Meadow) bring thousands of visitors annually. In 1998, the City completed a golf course clubhouse that was inspired by the Olmsted-designed Playstead Overlook Shelter which had been lost to fire in the mid-20th century.

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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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In Boston, the median size of a park is less than 1.5 acres. As the largest park in the Parks Department's system at 484 acres and an internationally recognized historic landscape design achievement, Franklin Park poses many challenges today. While the downtown parks high level of use means higher than standard wear and tear and higher than standard investment, the sheer scale of Franklin Park means it requires a different level of investment than is typical for a City park. Neighborhood and active park user needs must be addressed, while respecting the historic and regional significance of this "country park."

- Increase neighborhood partnerships such as with the Franklin Park Coalition. Coordinate activities with the Zoo, White Stadium, and others.
- Renew focus on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure including paths, drainage systems, site furnishings as well as soils and plant health.
- Respond where needed to neighborhood needs by rehabilitating ball fields, improving basketball facilities, and providing or retaining picnic tables in suitable locations.
- Continue to implement the Franklin Park Maintenance Yard Master Plan for reorganization and revitalization of the existing yard.
- 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.