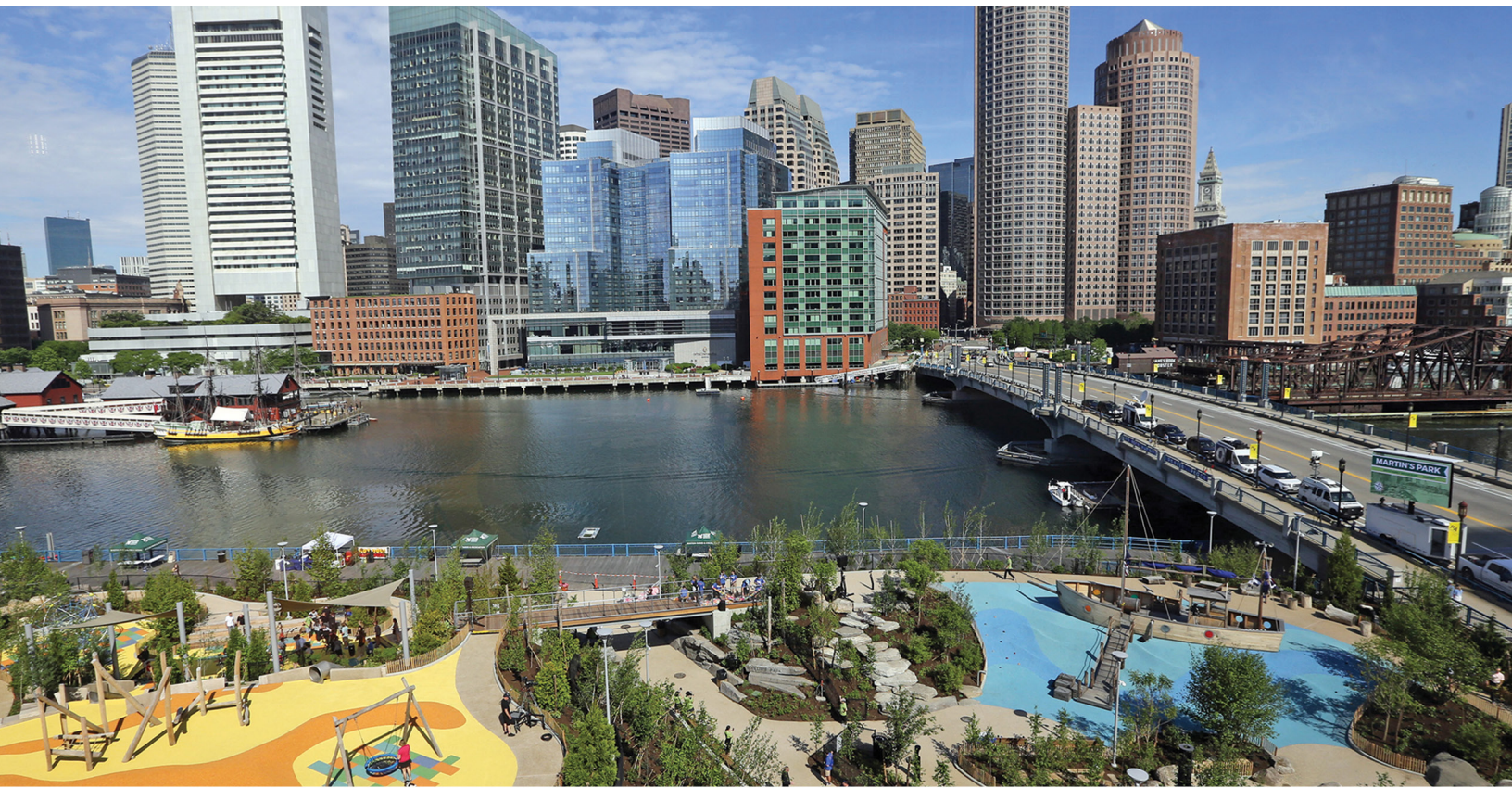


Boston Parks and Recreation Department

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Martin's Park at the Smith Family Waterfront.



**BOSTON
PARKS &
RECREATION**
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR	03
INTRODUCTION	04
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE	05
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION	06
GRANTS	10
MAINTENANCE	10
CEMETERIES	11
URBAN WILDS PROGRAM	13
PERMITTING	14
BOSTON PARK RANGERS	15
ANIMAL CONTROL	16
RECREATION	17
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS	18
MURAL CREW	20
2019 OPERATING EXPENSES	21
BOSTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION	22
2019 HIGHLIGHTS	22



Dear Friends,

2019 was an exciting and historic year for the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. After serving as Parks and Recreation Commissioner since 2014, Christopher Cook was elevated to Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space for the City of Boston. Chris brings years of experience in the environmental and recreation fields, and we are thrilled to have him at the helm during a time when the City of Boston is doing historic work to fight climate change and invest in our world-class parks system.

We were also proud to promote Ryan Woods as the new Commissioner of the Department. Since joining Parks in 2007, Ryan has served as the Public-Private Partnerships Coordinator, Program Manager, and Director of External Affairs.

Most recently, Ryan served as Deputy Commissioner where he oversaw department communications, parks operations, and more than 800 free annual programs for residents. With years of behind-the-scenes experience in the Parks administration both in the office and in the field, I know that Ryan will do a fantastic job in this role.

Last year we also celebrated the opening of brand-new parks, including Martin's Park at the Smith Family Waterfront in the Seaport. This beautiful park is named in honor of Martin W. Richard, the youngest victim of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings. It's a first-of-its-kind, inclusive, climate-resilient park for people of all ages and abilities, and it's a fitting tribute to a wonderful young man who we will always hold in our hearts.

Across town in Jamaica Plain, we unveiled \$4.7 million in improvements to the elaborate pathway system around Jamaica Pond. We also acknowledged our gratitude for two longtime community advocates by dedicating buildings at this historic park in honor of Gerry Wright and the late Christine Cooper.

2019 was also a big year for major planning efforts. We launched new master plans for two of Boston's most well-known and well-loved parks: Boston Common and Franklin Park. We want these planning processes to be guided by resident input, so we've engaged with the community in creative ways: inviting feedback through online surveys, canvassing neighbors door-to-door, holding "pop-up" events at community festivals, doing outreach in partnership with community groups, and reaching neighbors via social media and the press. The public's input is essential to shaping the future of these two jewels of Frederick Law Olmsted's historic Emerald Necklace.

These are just a few of the many 2019 milestones. This report provides more information about new investments, improvement projects, and planning efforts. You'll notice a big focus on climate preparedness, as our parks and green spaces are vital assets in our efforts to protect our neighborhoods from climate impacts. This report also includes more information on the fun and enriching programming that we provide in our Parks citywide.

In 2020, I hope you and your family continue to explore and enjoy Boston's beautiful parks system. The new year is a great time to visit a park you've never been to before, and to get involved with our community-driven planning initiatives. You can always find more information about our parks and events at Boston.gov/parks.

Thanks to everyone who has helped to make Boston's park system the best and most vibrant it's ever been.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martin J. Walsh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Martin J. Walsh
Mayor of Boston

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR
MARTIN J. WALSH

INTRODUCTION

During 2019, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department continued to fulfill its primary responsibility for the management of open space resources and recreation facilities. As the year came to a close and we entered the dawn of a new decade, parks continued to serve as valued resources providing recreation, education, and celebration to Boston's residents and visitors. At the same time, the realities of climate change helped guide the course of planning for the future as new parks came online and master plans were being created for our flagship parks in the Emerald Necklace, Boston Common, and Franklin Park, as well as Moakley Park on the South Boston waterfront.

As the agency overseeing the City of Boston's parks, playgrounds, squares, cemeteries, burying grounds, golf courses, and street trees, the Parks Department is in the unique position of managing some of America's most historic green spaces. Thanks to innovations and partnerships fostered under the leadership of Mayor Martin J. Walsh, the Department has opened new parks on abandoned lots, secured the transfer and purchase of parcels citywide, and joined in the ongoing development of abandoned rail lines and urban wilds into valuable green space while the effective management of public-private partnerships has strengthened ties with businesses and institutions.

As we review the accomplishments of the last year, we look forward to an even greener city with an eye toward steps we can take to mitigate sea level rise and warming temperatures. Climate resilience through design and planning is as important as ever with our landscape architects adapting maintenance techniques and strategies to keep pace with our changing environment.

Factors that directly impact climate are shaping our approach to parks planning. Increasing energy efficiency, mitigating the urban heat island effect, and improving air quality are just a few benefits of the green canopy created by our vast inventory of street trees and urban wilds. The public can see other planning and design adaptations through physical features such as bioswales and rain gardens that manage stormwater flooding.

In the meantime, we continue to build on the legacy of such "firsts" in the nation such as the first public park (Boston Common) and the first botanical garden (the Public Garden) while the staff of the Boston Parks and Recreation Department maintains, preserves, and programs one of the finest urban park systems in America.



With an eye on sustainability, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department is incorporating green features such as this bioswale at Cassidy Playground in Cleveland Circle into new construction on its properties.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: FRANKLIN PARK AND BOSTON COMMON

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department, in collaboration with a cross-functional team led by landscape architects Reed Hilderbrand, has embarked on an 18-month master planning process to study Franklin Park's current strengths and challenges, including its landscape health, relationship to adjacent communities, and uses. The resulting master plan will be informed by extensive community engagement and conversation beginning in January 2020 to set a shared vision for a sustainable future for Franklin Park.

As "America's First Public Park" and an oasis in downtown Boston, Boston Common is one of the most treasured green spaces in the world. The goal of the Boston Common Master Plan is to create a Common that will serve the people of Boston and visitors alike while protecting this special place for decades to come. As 2019 came to a close, the Department had spent more than six months engaging the public in this master plan effort through two public open houses, a series of community based information "pop-ups," an online survey that garnered 4,500 responses, and numerous stakeholder meetings. The rest of 2020 will lead to master plan development, cost estimating, and project prioritization.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The Department's Design and Construction Unit oversees historic preservation, landscape design, capital improvements, planning, and infrastructure throughout City of Boston parks. The Unit also handles dozens of service orders and small repairs that are beyond the scope of services performed by the Maintenance Division.



MARTIN'S PARK OPENS AT THE SMITH FAMILY WATERFRONT

On June 15, Mayor Martin J. Walsh, Governor Charlie Baker, and the family of Martin Richard joined hundreds of residents to celebrate the opening of Martin's Park at the Smith Family Waterfront.

Named after the youngest victim of the Boston Marathon bombings, the park honors Martin's spirit in the joy and laughter of children of all abilities playing alongside people of all ages who visit to pause and relax.

Located adjacent to the Boston Children's Museum at 64 Sleeper Street on the South Boston waterfront, Martin's Park is a first-of-its-kind, climate-resilient park that provides a space for children, families, and visitors of all abilities to learn, grow, and play. During the construction process, climate change – and the potential for flooding along the waterfront – became a very real issue as outlined in the findings of the Climate Ready Boston Report that raised the flood elevation for the site. Mayor Walsh's Resilient Boston Harbor plan laid out strategies along Boston's 47-mile shoreline to increase access and open space along the waterfront while better protecting the city during a major flooding event.

Since the park was designed using previously released flood elevations, the Parks Department had to plan for future resiliency by going back to the drawing board to account for potential changes to the harbor in the face of rising water levels.

Protective measures against future flooding were created by raising parts of the park to prevent flood pathways and by installing mini piles and vegetated beds reinforced with stone to prevent erosion at higher tides. The main pathway through the center of the park was raised with a high point in the middle to help prevent it from being a flood pathway for the Fort Point neighborhood for the next decade. On November 18, Boston Harbor Now presented Martin's Park with an Onboard Award honoring innovative and socially responsible partners in waterfront development in the Boston region.

Boston Harbor Now recognized the City of Boston and commended the Richard family for coming together in the face of unspeakable tragedy to create an extraordinary space that will serve to honor the life of Martin Richard and bring joy to the city for years to come.

The total budget for Martin's Park was \$15 million made possible by private funding through hundreds of donors and \$2 million from the City of Boston including capital funds and Community Preservation funds. The Smith Family Foundation and Barr Foundation each provided \$3 million. The park site includes a parcel that was conveyed by the MBTA to the City of Boston. The facility will be maintained through an endowment of the Friends of Martin's Park and will feature ongoing, free programming.

Perhaps the biggest challenge was to make the existing design work with the new changes in order to provide the park design promised to the community while making the park more resilient. The fact that Martin's Park was recognized with the Onboard Award is a positive sign that the Parks Department succeeded in reaching its goal.

CASSIDY PLAYGROUND

Cassidy Playground in Brighton underwent over \$6.6 million in renovations in 2019 including collaboration with the Public Facilities Department who renovated a 1940s fieldhouse providing updated team rooms and access to public restrooms. In addition, the Parks Department transformed 20 acres of once-soggy sports fields into a sustainable design which redirects storm water into bioswales and upgraded the lighting to LEDs. The revitalized park exemplifies the values of the community, not just by providing a diversity of recreational opportunities – field sports, tennis, skateboarding elements, a loop pathway, bocce, and barbecuing – but also by leading the way on sustainability and accessibility.

JAMAICA POND PATHWAYS

Mayor Martin J. Walsh and Boston Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods joined Jamaica Plain residents along with park advocates and users on November 23 to celebrate the completion of renovations to the pathways encircling Jamaica Pond and the dedication of the boathouse in honor of Christine Cooper, longtime supporter of efforts to restore and revitalize the park. In a surprise announcement, the adjacent nature center building was dedicated to Emerald Necklace advocate Gerry Wright at the same event.

The \$4.7 million project, funded by Mayor Walsh's Capital Improvement Plan, was executed in two phases. The first focused on the area around Pinebank and the ball field and featured repairs to entrances, new rules and bike signage, benches, trees, a bottle filler, and paving of pathways. The second phase involved all pathways surrounding the pond and the DCR multi-use path along the Jamaica way and included the same scope of improvements along with bottle fillers, new exercise equipment, and an accessible fishing platform.

This project was designed to improve water quality through drainage improvements. Swales were added on the uphill side of the pathway to retain and infiltrate storm water before crossing over the path into the pond. Sediment catchment has been added to the top of each cobble swale to allow sediment to settle prior to water flowing over the swale into the pond. The runner's path was designed to funnel water to the cobble swales in order to avoid erosion along the pond edges.

The pathways project has produced major accessibility upgrades. 100% of the entrances now meet ADA guidelines; an increase from one to three drinking fountain/bottle fillers that are ADA compliant; an increase in pathways that are ADA compliant from 60% to 95%; the boathouse plaza is now 100% ADA compliant including the pavement to the door of the boathouse and bandstand; and over 50% of benches now have an adjacent companion seat. The pathways improvement project upgraded signage in the park, added place identification signage, rules signage including new "no swimming/no skating" signs, "no feeding the wildlife" signs, as well as bike rules signs and pavement markings.

NOYES PLAYGROUND

One of the largest playgrounds in East Boston at 8.22 acres, Noyes Playground has traditionally served baseball, softball, Little League, soccer, and, as its name indicates, a playground. Mayor Walsh reopened the park with a Neighborhood Coffee Hour on June 12. A comprehensive renovation approach allowed multiple uses while diversifying and providing additional activities within the park. The project was completed in coordination with a tidal gate installed by the Boston Water and Sewer Commission at Constitution Beach to stop tidal flooding from entering the site along Saratoga Street.

Funded with a \$4.7 million budget from Mayor Walsh's Capital Improvement Plan as well as a \$400,000 Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant by the state's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and a \$100,000 grant from Youth Lead the Change, site improvements include new LED sports lighting, a synthetic soccer/softball field, a fenced and irrigated baseball field with batting/pitching cage and covered player's benches, a fenced and irrigated Little League field with scoreboard and covered player's benches, a playground for ages 5 to 12 and 2 to 5 with rubber safety



Pedestrians and cyclists alike benefit from pathway improvements at Jamaica Pond.



Mayor Walsh cuts the ribbon on the Noyes Park Renovations.

surfacing, a rope climber and dish swing, 2 to 5 play structure and tot swings, splash pad, two basketball courts, a walking loop and exercise station, new trees, and rain gardens.

SMITH PLAYGROUND

On November 2, Mayor Walsh cut the ribbon on the Phase 1 improvements to Smith Playground in Allston. The event was a culmination of years of advocacy by the Lower Allston community to improve the park by creating a space for the whole community: young children, sports users, neighborhood walking groups, skaters and bikers, and lovers of the arts. The celebration marked the completion of Phase 1 renovations with a total budget of \$6.4 million, including \$3.3 million funded by Mayor Walsh's Capital Improvement Plan, \$2.1 million from the Harvard Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund, community benefits from Harvard University, NHL Hockey is for Everyone, the Continuum project on Western Avenue by Samuels & Associates, and the Boston College Neighborhood Improvement Fund for the General Casey Amphitheater named in memory of Major General George W. Casey.



The new park design includes a playground with natural play elements and an adjacent splash pad, multi-purpose field, basketball and street hockey courts, amphitheater, a wheel-friendly area with skateable walls and banks and Boston's first pump track, a walking loop path, and a shaded plaza area with seating and the Donald DeLue sculpture "Quest Eternal," a gift from Boston Properties formerly located in front of the Prudential Center. Work on Phase 2 will continue in 2020 with design and construction of new ballfields between the courts and Soldiers Field Road.

LANGONE PARK/PUOPOLO PLAYGROUND

Construction began in July at Langone Park and Puopolo Playground in the North End. As the neighborhood's only recreational field, providing a safe facility for youth and adult sports leagues for many years to come was a major objective. Given the park's waterfront location, sea level rise and the impacts of storm surges and king tides will continue to affect the park.

In consultation with Climate Ready Boston, the design team studied the projected storm impacts in future years. The plan proposed to raise the critical park functions out of the most vulnerable elevations while converting the multipurpose field to artificial turf, increasing playable time. The existing seawall, over 100 years old in locations, will be repaired and the Harborwalk structure will be elevated, supported by drilled mini piles. A new playground on the west side of the park and doubling the number of bocce courts will ensure that the park is actively used by neighbors of all ages and abilities.

The park made national headlines when a local family solved a 40-year old mystery and correctly guessed that one of the "treasures" from Byron Preiss's 1982 book "The Secret" was, unbeknownst to Parks and Recreation staff, buried under home plate. Since the park was already under construction they consulted with the contractor and the long-forgotten buried item - a decorated ceramic container that could be

exchanged for a jewel worth approximately \$1,000 – was found and redeemed by the family. Thus ended decades of inquiries from treasure hunters convinced they solved the same puzzle with most guessing, incorrectly as it turns out, the treasure was in the Back Bay Fens.

GRANTS

In 2019, the Design and Construction Unit applied for several grants for park reconstruction projects. In January, the Department was awarded \$400,000 by the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs from the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant program for Phase II of the reconstruction of Harambee Park in Dorchester. In October, another \$400,000 was awarded by the same state agency and grant program for Phase III of the Harambee Park reconstruction. In November, the Department was awarded \$1 million by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for the reconstruction of McConnell Park, also in Dorchester.

In June, the Department was awarded a \$1.5 million Action Grant from the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs from the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program to help fund the preliminary design, technical analysis, and pre-permitting for proposed climate resilient capital improvements to Moakley Park located in South Boston.

As the year drew to a close, the Department was awarded a \$750,000 Neighborhood Improvement Fund (NIF) grant from Boston College that will enhance funding for improvements to McKinney Playground located at 74 Faneuil Street in Brighton. The grant will supplement \$1.1 million in capital funding from the City of Boston to fully renovate the park.

MAINTENANCE

The Parks Department's Maintenance Division beautifies, manages, and maintains the City of Boston's park system from its home base in the heart of Franklin Park. Parks Maintenance crews care for squares, fountains, game courts, street trees, and almost 200 additional acres of urban wilds and non-traditional open space properties. In 2019, 6,293 new park maintenance requests were received with 6,318 completed including existing requests. A total of 4,955 new tree maintenance requests were received with 5,289 closed. During the year, 1,962 new street tree requests were received and 1,140 trees were planted.



As always, the Division's work was driven by the focus on creating safe parks for all to enjoy. A team of dedicated workers were deployed for snow removal duties with multiple pieces of equipment in the parks to clear all sidewalks and open major corridors while our tree crews handled massive cleanup jobs in the wake of storms. Spring cleanup and annual plantings started the busiest season and Maintenance was again operating at full throttle.

As the frontline workers in our parks, the Maintenance Division staff plays an active role in planning for the local effects of global issues such as sea level rise, Boston's increasing status as an urban heat island, and climate change. As such, the Division is pleased to offer first-hand input into the Boston Common and Franklin Park master plans and supports forward-thinking planning in potentially vulnerable locations such as Martin's Park, Moakley Park, and the Back Bay Fens.

HORTICULTURE

In 2019, the 17 Horticulture staff members included 11 dedicated greenhouse staff, four Public Garden staff members, one Kelleher Rose Garden staff member, and one Martin's Park staff member, all working with the common belief that urban beautification is greatly beneficial to the well-being of all constituents of the City of Boston. Horticulture staff plays an important role in that job.



The Horticulture crews produced and maintained over 20,000 finished plants grown from seed or plug in the Franklin Park Greenhouse, planted and maintained over 60 dedicated sites, planted and maintained over 30,000 finished plants citywide, planted over 25,000 bulbs in the Public Garden and an additional 30,000 bulbs in city parks and open green spaces for spring 2020, and produced and maintained over 200 large bell pots for median strips, open spaces, and City-owned buildings across the city.

The public also benefited from the skills of the Horticulture Division first-hand through plant giveaways at the Mayor's Neighborhood Coffee Hours, as well as floral installations at park dedications, mayoral events, the "Love Your Block" initiative, the Dia de Muertos celebration at Copley Square, and requests from local garden clubs and various constituents.

CEMETERIES

The Parks Department oversees three active cemeteries maintained by the Cemetery Division on more than 200 acres of land containing over 250,000 gravesites: Mount Hope Cemetery in Mattapan, Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park, and Evergreen Cemetery in Brighton. The Division also manages the Historic Burying Grounds Initiative's 16 historic burying grounds.

The Cemetery Division performed 469 Burials in 2019. Capital improvements included installation of a new heating system at the Mount Hope administration building and new roads and historic signage at Evergreen Cemetery funded with \$350,000 from the Community Preservation Act. The Division also solicited the Boston City Council to access Cemetery Trust Funds and was granted monies to open new Veteran's and Indigent Burial Sections at Mount Hope Cemetery.

The Division once again participated in the annual nationwide "Wreaths Across America" event in December dedicated to remembering the sacrifices veterans have made in wars since the American Revolution.

HISTORIC BURYING GROUNDS INITIATIVE

Boston's most historic final resting places are preserved and maintained thanks to the Historic Burying Grounds Initiative (HBGI), dedicated to the comprehensive restoration, ongoing conservation, and heritage interpretation of Boston's 16 historic burying grounds.

Highlights during 2019 included completion of masonry restoration at Union Cemetery and Hawes Burying Ground in South Boston. The scope of the work included replacement of brick piers on East 5th Street, repainting of the steel picket fence, rebuilding the west perimeter wall and the rear wall of the mound tombs in Hawes Burying Ground, and repair of a tomb entrance in Union Cemetery. Construction costs totaled \$214,000 with support from a \$27,000 grant from the George B. Henderson Foundation.



Gravestones in Copp's Hill Burying Ground, North End, have been conserved and/or reset. The blue tags on the gravestones indicate those that have had conservation work done.

Slate gravestone conservation continued in Copp's Hill Burying Ground in the North End. The overall scope of this project encompasses the conservation of approximately 150 gravestones and resetting of approximately 800 gravestones. Work took place both at an indoor conservation studio and on site. The \$207,400 cost of the project was increased by \$59,600 in order to accommodate additional resetting and conservation work. A grant of \$104,000 from the first round of the Community Preservation Act

helped fund this project. Grant funding was also received from the Freedom Trail Foundation for restoration and repair work on the ornamental cast iron fence in the front of King's Chapel Burying Ground.

Work continued on the revision of Historic Burying Grounds Initiative Master Plan (HBGI). Final drafts of the master plan are currently being reviewed with the total cost of the updated master plan at \$37,750.

Landscape restoration removed invasive plant growth from the rear of the site at Bennington Street Burying Ground and new native plantings were replanted, including a weeping willow tree to help alleviate damp conditions in this section of the site. The 126-year-old privet hedge in the front of the site was structurally pruned. Landscape restoration at Dorchester North Burying Ground included weeding, new plantings, and installation of mulch beds around trees and shrubs.

Design work was completed for restoration and repair of tombs in Dorchester South Burying Ground and the north wall and Columbia Road gate posts in Dorchester North Burying Ground. Other work undertaken included minor tomb repair at Central Burying Ground, publication of fall 2019 HBGI newsletter, and continuation of the Granary Burying Ground photography project, the goal of which is to photograph every grave marker in the Granary Burying Ground and post them to the database of legible grave markers on the HBGI website.

URBAN WILDS PROGRAM

The Urban Wilds Program (UWP) stewards the City's 30 permanently-protected conservation land holdings. In 2019, a management plan was prepared and wetland permits were secured to initiate the Phase II wetland restoration at Allandale Woods; targeted areas included the perennial stream and cattail marsh near the Carriage Path, the wet meadow and intermittent stream along the Genie Beal Trail, and areas around the vernal pool. In addition to the contracted work, the UWP also enlisted the assistance of scores of corporate and non-profit volunteers to accelerate restoration work in these areas. A total of 155 restoration grade trees were planted and countless invasive plants were removed as part of these efforts.

On the land conservation front, the UWP worked with the Conservation Commission to acquire from the Department of Neighborhood Development the last remaining unprotected parcel contiguous with the Deforest Urban Wild near the George Wright Golf Course in Hyde Park. Further west in West Roxbury, the UWP is working with the Boston Planning and Development Agency on the final steps in the process to transfer and permanently protect land contiguous with the Rivermoor Urban Wild. This acquisition will result in a continuous corridor of riverside floodplain from Millennium Park to DCR's Havey Beach.

This year the UWP hired Mass Audubon to draft a management plan for Roslindale Wetlands Urban Wild. This plan provides guidance on ways that wildlife habitat can be protected and enhanced while still allowing for passive recreation. Concurrent with the land management plan, a property boundary survey and wetland delineation study were also completed. Together, these studies will provide key information upon which a comprehensive habitat restoration plan will be developed.

Lastly, in Hyde Park, incremental progress continued this year with slope stabilization at Monterrey Hilltop Urban Wild. There, a strategy of site cleanup, coupled with invasive plant removal, replanting, and neighborhood outreach is being implemented to correct previous site damage and restore woodland habitat. A site survey will be conducted next year to help plan for a more comprehensive future restoration project.



Rivermoor Urban Wild.

PERMITTING

In 2019, the Permitting Unit issued 4,084 permits for all parks and playgrounds. Of those, 971 were for adult athletics, 1,077 were for youth athletics, 1,453 were for special events, and 167 were for weddings. Customer service was a priority with thousands of calls, emails, and walk-ins handled year-round. The Permitting Unit was actively involved in forging and maintaining partnerships with local institutions that have invested in park improvements including Emmanuel College, Suffolk University, Northeastern University, and Emerson College.

The Permitting Unit also worked with partner agencies in coordinating events to manage and forecast events such as the Walk for Hunger, Boston Marathon, Shakespeare on the Common, Boston Auto Show, and Roxbury Homecoming. In addition, film and television production companies increasingly turn to Permitting and related City agencies on a regular basis thanks to a boost from the State's film credit initiative.

Boston's track record of providing locations for commercials and movies was bolstered by recent productions filmed in our park system including the "City on a Hill" limited series starring Kevin Bacon, "Fatherhood" starring Kevin Hart, Dennis Dugan's "Love, Weddings & Other Disasters" starring Diane Keaton and Jeremy Irons, Greta Gerwig's remake of "Little Women" with Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson, Florence Pugh, and Laura Dern, and "Ava" starring Jessica Chastain, Geena Davis, Colin Farrell, Common, and John Malkovich.

The Unit further supported the arts by working with the Boston Art Commission to situate temporary art in the park system including "Uncornered," a collection of portraits of local Bostonians by internationally-recognized artist John Huet on Boston Common, "Cloud Lights" by Pneuhaus at Copley Square, and Ross Miller's Ancient Fishweir Project on Boston Common.

BOSTON PARK RANGERS

The Boston Park Rangers continue to sustain Frederick Law Olmsted's vision of involving "park keepers" in urban green space and parkland. The Boston Park Ranger service remains committed to its mission of preserving and protecting Boston's world-renowned Emerald Necklace parks. While representing the City as highly visible frontline "Goodwill Ambassadors", their services and roles reflect upon the complex issues facing today's urban park managers.

Over the years, comprehensive training has expanded in order to effectively face the challenges presented to the Rangers daily and under all conditions throughout the year. The skills involved in fulfilling their diverse roles range from enforcing laws and ordinances to managing medical emergencies to providing information and assistance about Boston and its unique environs. In addition to authorization as Special Boston Police Officers and Certified First Responders, the Park Rangers remain committed to their responsibilities in natural resource management, urban wildlife and animal control, environmental education, and general park management.



In 2019, the annual egg adding initiative helped to humanely control the Canada goose population by identifying 116 nests and oiling 538 eggs throughout the Emerald Necklace and other select areas.

The Park Ranger service is also directly impacted by the initiatives driven by the Parks Department as a whole. The annual increases in approved special events permits that include activities ranging from road races to festivals to weddings to adult and youth athletics, all play a role in how the Park Rangers are deployed. Beyond the need to collaborate with Boston Police, Emergency Medical Services, and Boston Fire, helping to manage these events with heightened awareness on public safety in open public spaces is essential.

The nationally-recognized Mounted Patrol Unit provides a highly visible presence and proven means of crime prevention in Boston's parks. The resulting heightened sense of security felt by park visitors and patrons includes a form of community policing that has reaped great results and support from the many neighborhoods surrounding the parks. The Unit's involvement in providing programming at various schools and community events results in outreach and building positive relationships. Additionally, the Boston Park Rangers Volunteer/Internship Program provides a unique opportunity to experience working with horses and stable management duties.

ANIMAL CONTROL

In 2019, the Parks family grew as the Boston Animal Care and Control Division moved from the Inspectional Services Department to the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. The Division operates from an administrative office located at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue and an animal care facility located on Mahler Road in Roslindale.

The Division cared for approximately 2,000 domestic and wild animals in 2019, provided approximately 800 low-cost vaccinations for pets belonging to Boston residents, and responded to over 6,000 service calls. Since much of their work takes place within City parks and other open spaces under the Department's purview, the move to Parks aligned with Animal Care and Control's operations.



Boston Animal Care and Control Shelter manager Brittany Monteiro and animal room attendant Robyn Bonds with two of the canines in their care, Darla and Coco. The pet portraits behind them were painted by the Mayor's Mural Crew.

The Division employs animal control officers who are available to respond to calls for assistance around the clock, enforce city ordinances and state laws, patrol City parks, pick up stray dogs and cats, and assist sick and injured wildlife.

The Animal Care and Control staff cares for the dogs and cats - and on occasion other domestic animals such as reptiles and birds - while they are in the Division's custody. Periodically, pets are available for adoption at the animal care facility with a goal to increase the number of adoptable animals in 2020.

Furthering their commitment to help people and their pets, the Animal Care facility offers low-cost pet wellness appointments for Boston residents and collaborates with the State to provide free spay/neuter surgery for pets of low income residents through the Mass Animal Fund. In the spring, the Division partners with Boston Centers for Youth &

Families to offer affordable rabies appointments in several Boston neighborhoods.

RECREATION

The Recreation Division provides high quality, free sports activities to Boston's youth. 2019 kicked off with the opening of the Division's first-ever Indoor Recreation Bubble at Carter Playground through a partnership with Northeastern University. Soccer, rugby, baseball, softball, and lacrosse were some of the sports activities programmed at the Bubble.



Indoor golf lessons were a big hit this past spring. Over 250 youth and adults participated at ten community centers citywide. The lessons provide a great way for local golfers to get their swing in shape before going outside and hitting the links.



The Summer Fitness Series was a huge success with over 17 weeks of exercise for all ages and abilities. The series included Carnival Fit, Cardio Dance, and Afrobeat Bootcamp with new classes featuring POUND Fitness and Qigong. Over 11,000 city residents participated and took steps to improve their health. Due to the success of the program, Recreation will offer a Winter Fitness Series in early 2020.



A major milestone was reached as the longest running free municipal basketball league in the United States, the Boston Neighborhood Basketball League, completed its 50th season. Summer was once again filled with activities with the White Stadium, East Boston, and South Boston Sports Centers offering free summer camp alternatives to Boston youth who might otherwise have no opportunity to attend such programming.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The External Affairs Unit oversees sponsorships, public relations, ParkARTS, special events, and programming. In 2019 the Unit presented programs and events including the Rose Garden Party fundraiser, the Mayor's Garden Contest, the citywide Neighborhood Concert Series, Mayor Walsh's Neighborhood Coffee Hours, the Dorothy Curran Wednesday Night Concerts on City Hall Plaza, and Mayor Walsh's Movie Nights, giving residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy popular films under the night skies in 11 City of Boston parks during August and September. Family-friendly events included the annual Children's Winter Festival, the Boston Bubble Festival, the Pumpkin Float, all on Boston Common, and the Boston Children's Summer Festival in Franklin Park.

Summertime meant the return of the popular Artists in Residence Workshops for children ages three to ten. The annual ParkARTS participatory program gave youngsters the opportunity to express their creativity while working on fun projects with local artists in 16 neighborhood parks from Allston to Mattapan. In addition, participants at select locations were treated to visits from the New England Aquarium traveling tide pool exhibit and the Marionette Puppet Show series with Rosalita's Puppets featuring marionettes made by professional actor-puppeteer Charlotte Anne Dore.



In August, the ParkARTS Boston Children's Summer Festival gave children and families from throughout Boston the opportunity to participate in a variety of free activities from various exhibitors including "Bubble Guy" Jim Dichter, ParkARTS arts and crafts, New England Aquarium, Outdoor RX, Mass Hort, face painting, interactive building blocks with LEGOLAND, demonstrations by the Boston Fire Department and the Boston Police K-9 Unit, and free treats and giveaways.

The Mayor's Rose Garden Party fundraiser was hosted at the Kelleher Rose Garden in the Back Bay Fens for the 23rd year. Over 325 guests attended the June 13 gala hosted by Mayor Walsh and Ms. Lorrie Higgins raising \$173,000 for free programming including concerts, children's arts and crafts, puppet shows, painting and photography workshops, youth festivals, movie nights, and more in Boston parks.



Guests attending Mayor Walsh's Rose Garden Party Fundraiser.



Children participating in Rosalita's Marionette Puppet Show.



Community residents gather for Mayor Walsh's Movie Night.



Country legend Dolly Parton greets the crowd at Boston Common Tree Lighting.

This year's official Christmas tree was a 45-foot white spruce tree donated by Desmond Waithe and Corina Saunders of Chance Harbour, Pictou County, Nova Scotia, who also attended the December 5 celebration on Boston Common. 2019 marked the 48th year that Nova Scotia has given a tree to the people of Boston as thanks for relief efforts following the December 6, 1917, explosion of a munitions ship in Halifax Harbor. Within 24 hours of the disaster, a train loaded with supplies and emergency personnel was making its way from Boston to Nova Scotia.

Entertainment included multi-platinum singer-songwriter and Lexington native Matt Nathanson, award-winning Nova Scotian alt-pop stars Neon Dreams, Nova Scotian R&B singer-songwriter Zamani, performances by cast members from the new musicals "Dolly Parton's Smoky Mountain Christmas Carol" and "Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical," as well as Dorchester's Holy Tabernacle Church Choir, a pyrotechnic finale by Atlas PyroVision, and a surprise appearance by country superstar Dolly Parton herself.

MAYOR'S MURAL CREW

Operating out of Franklin Park Yard, the Mayor's Mural Crew channels and nurtures the talents of young artists while adding vibrancy and color to the urban landscape. During 2019 the crew completed four murals including the City Hall BCYF Childcare play space, a community garden at Clementine Park in Dorchester, the Arboretum Road Tunnel in Roslindale, and pet portraits for the lobby of the Animal Care and Control Division shelter.



Members of the Mayor's Mural Crew check their handiwork at Dorchester's Clementine Park. The design was inspired by gold-inked Victorian book covers that reflect the history of the neighborhood's architecture.

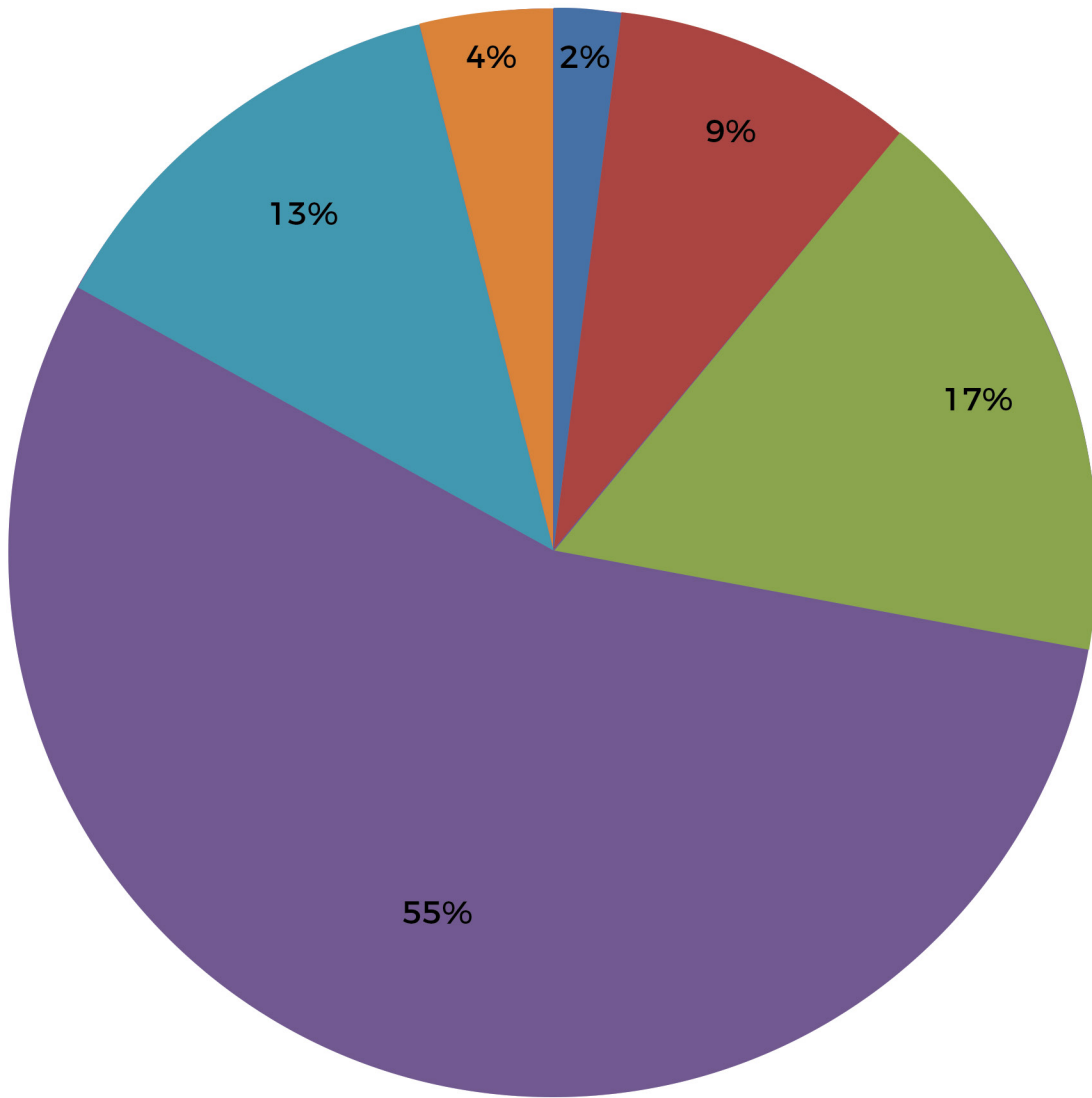
The Mural Crew also participated in an annual fairy house building event at Schoolmaster's Hill in Franklin Park and designed a variety of participatory activities in preparation for the Mayor's Neighborhood Coffee Hours and the Department's tree lightings. Their offerings included life-size coloring book pages, framed-and-pressed-flower demonstrations and giveaways, reclaimed wood holiday ornaments made of logs found in Franklin Park, and ground graphics including coqui hopscotch and salsa step circle.

In November, the Mural Crew teamed up with Boston's Consulate General of Mexico to present the second annual Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebration in Copley Square. Dia de Muertos is celebrated in traditional Mexican homes where departed family members are remembered by altars lovingly decorated with photographs, papel picado paper decorations, offerings of fruit, favorite food and drink, and candles.

Photos of loved ones were displayed on a beautifully decorated altar in Copley Square. The celebration also included masses of fragrant orange cempasúchil marigolds, also called the flor de muertos ("flower of the dead") in Mexico and used annually on the Day of the Dead. The altar in Copley Square contained a stunning display of 500 pots of marigolds, grown from seed and tended by Parks Department horticulturalists.

2019 OPERATING EXPENSES

TOTAL EXPENSES:
\$25,703,209.78



ANIMAL CONTROL
\$571,962

CEMETERY
\$2,416,846

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
\$4,369,139

MAINTENANCE
\$14,121,704

OPERATIONS
\$3,286,909

RECREATION
\$939,650

BOSTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

The Boston Parks and Recreation Commission is a seven-person review body appointed by the Mayor. The Commission oversees the Parks and Recreation Department and has authority over the parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, islands, urban wilds, and cemeteries in its inventory. The Commission was created by the approval of Chapter 185 of the Acts of 1875. The authority of the Commission is set forth in the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 45 and in Municipal Code Section 7.4.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Christopher Cook, Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space

Ryan Woods, Commissioner

Elisa Birdseye, Associate Commissioner

Anne Connolly, Associate Commissioner

William Epperson, Associate Commissioner

Leonard M. Lee, Sr., Associate Commissioner

David Queeley, Associate Commissioner

Carrie Marsh Dixon, Executive Secretary

Liza Meyer, Chief Landscape Architect

2019 HIGHLIGHTS



1

Ryan Woods named Commissioner



2

Community engages in Master Planning Process



3

Martin's Park opens



Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston
Boston Parks & Recreation Department
1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

Telephone: (617) 635-4505
www.boston.gov/parks

Written by: Jon Seamans
Designed by: Shanna Dixon