

☀️ OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

WE ENVISION...

...A Boston in which older adults are able to safely and easily access the natural and built environment, including public buildings, parks and green space.

WE HEARD....

- Boston's older adults value greenspace.
- 97% of Bostonians live within a 10 minute walk of a park and people said parks were a real asset to life.
- Many older Boston residents want better accessibility features in public areas.
- 31% of survey respondents are dissatisfied with the availability of benches in public areas and along walkways.
- Some seniors, especially those with disabilities, feel unsafe going to parks.
- 20% of survey respondents do not feel safe going to public parks.
- Many older adults want better access to public restrooms.
- 50% of survey respondents do not think that public restrooms are available in convenient locations.



WE HEARD:

“I’d like to be able to easily find out if there are neighborhood councils or meetings in my neighborhood.”

- BOSTON RESIDENT

“The greatest problem for active Boston seniors is the lack of public bathrooms. The few that exist whether in private or public buildings are not publicized. Why isn’t there a list of public bathrooms in Boston?”

- BOSTON RESIDENT

WE ARE...

Improving City Parks

Since 2014, the number of programs in City parks has increased from 171 to 834, and the City has increased its investment in parks by over \$7 million. Maintenance workers and seasonal ranger positions have been added to increase park cleanliness and safety, and recycling programs are being piloted in six different locations. In 2016, a collaboration formed between the Elderly Commission, the Parks Department, and the Design for Aging Committee (DFA) from the Boston Society for Architects. This collaboration led to a more structured senior engagement strategy, involving older adults and DFA in two City park redesigns.

Pedestrian Ramps and Sidewalk Accessibility

Mayor Walsh is committed to accessibility for people in Boston. In addition to parks, the City of Boston is committed to building pedestrian ramps in the city. In the last year alone, 900 were completed. Calls to 311 are helping to prioritize the Sidewalk Maintenance Plan. Since 2014, the City has installed 1,776,866 square feet of new sidewalk and ramps, or about 12 miles of brand new sidewalk and 29 miles of partial repairs on various sidewalks around the city. The City also brought 2,481 pedestrian ramps into ADA/MAAB compliance between January 2014 and September 2016.

In 2016, Mayor Walsh called for commercial buildings to be held accountable for shoveling their sidewalk, and he supports increasing fines for businesses that do not shovel

WE WILL...

Recommendation #1:

Ensure the consideration of older adults' needs and opinions in park and public space design.

- **ⓓ Action Item A:** We will develop a set of recommendations for age-friendly and dementia-friendly park features to use as a guideline when designing City-owned parks and green spaces.
- **Action Item B:** We will create a system that promotes older adult participation in all park planning processes.

Recommendation #2:

Educate older adults about how they can help improve the safety of Boston's outdoor spaces.

- **Action Item A:** We will promote the use of **Boston 311** to encourage residents to report problems or concerns related to outdoor spaces.
- **Action Item B:** We will encourage older adults to get involved with neighborhood associations or friends groups to address safety concerns, promoting the idea of "community policing," and utilizing Boston Police Department communication tools such as "**Text a Tip.**"

Recommendation #3:

Improve awareness of currently available public restrooms.

- **Action Item A:** We will identify the location of current public restrooms in **Boston Main Streets** and other business areas and determine the best ways to communicate this information to the public.

Recommendation #4:

Mitigate effects of extreme heat on vulnerable populations, especially older adults living alone.

- **Action Item A:** We will develop an action plan to expand Boston's tree canopy and other types of green infrastructure to provide shade and means of other cooling. It will focus on neighborhoods with the greatest need, including those with high numbers of older adults.¹³

KEYWORDS:

BOSTON 311: is the telephone number that connects residents with Constituent Service Center Representatives who are ready to help resolve non-emergency questions and concerns.

TEXT A TIP: ANYTIME, anywhere, individuals can simply text the word "TIP" to CRIME (27463) and report a crime anonymously to Boston Police Department's Crime Stoppers unit.

BOSTON MAIN STREETS: Each neighborhood Main Streets organization is a small, independent non-profit responsible for beautifying and strengthening their local business districts.