



2023-24

ANNUAL REPORT

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CITY of BOSTON



Parks and Recreation

Letter from the Mayor



Dear Friends,

In 1634, Boston's townspeople decided to pay a few more shillings in taxes in exchange for something priceless—turning private farmland into a park for every family to enjoy. Today, more than 14 million people visit the Boston Common – America's first public park – every year. And while it's the most famous, it is just one of more than 250 parks and open spaces nestled into Boston's 40 square miles. Nearly 400 years later, every one of them continues to play the same critical role: Creating space for Boston's residents and families to find joy, rest, and connection in the natural beauty of our city.

Over the past two years, we have expanded our Urban Wilds, renovated treasured community spaces like O'Day Playground and Malcolm X Park, and planted nearly 2,000 trees – growing our urban tree canopy, and building our city's resiliency against extreme heat, coastal flooding, and stronger storms.

But it's not enough that the spaces in and around our neighborhoods protect our homes – they should feel like home, too. Which is why our Parks and Recreation Department works

around the clock to create welcoming, active, restorative spaces that offer free programming and activities for residents of all ages. Since 2023 – with the support of residents, private partners, and our dedicated staff—our parks have hosted concerts, festivals, workshops, and community celebrations, welcoming more than 78,000 people from across our city and around the world.

Last fall, we bid farewell to a leader who helped us usher in this new era of prosperity for our parks: Commissioner Ryan Woods, who served our city for 24 years—five of them as Parks Commissioner. We are grateful for everything he accomplished on behalf of our communities, and even more so for everything his legacy sets us up to achieve in the years ahead. Stepping into the role as Interim Commissioner, our Chief Landscape Architect Liza Meyer has taken up the mantle, leading with clarity as we launch a search for the best possible candidate to fill the role.

Looking ahead, our mission remains clear – continue to deliver on the vision that inspired our residents all those years ago: Cultivate beautiful spaces and enriching experiences that knit our neighborhoods together. As we celebrate all that we've accomplished and continue expanding access, building resiliency, and preserving our natural treasures, I hope you'll join us—in the pages that follow and in the parks nearby.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Michelle Wu". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "M" and "W".

Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston

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Introduction



The Parks and Recreation Department owns 288 properties containing nearly 2,200 acres of permanently protected open space including the Boston Common, the Public Garden, and the Olmsted-designed Emerald Necklace park system. The City's parks contain walking trails, playgrounds, recreational courts, natural areas, historic burying grounds, and much more. We also maintain 29 urban wilds, four high school athletic fields, and operate two public golf courses. In addition to the trees within our parks, we care for more than 40,000 public street trees.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, BPRD continued its mission of managing and enhancing Boston's open spaces and recreational facilities. These years were particularly notable for major parkland acquisitions, including Sprague Pond in Hyde Park, the Egleston Square Peace Garden in

Jamaica Plain, an expansion of Sherrin Woods Urban Wild in Roslindale, and the Roslindale Wetlands Urban Wild. These efforts represent a significant step toward closing park equity gaps and ensuring more residents have access to green spaces within a 10-minute walk. Since the creation of the Open Space Acquisition Program (funded in part through Boston's Community Preservation Act) in 2022, BPRD has been able to rely on a dedicated funding source to not only improve access to open space, but to also protect and restore important cultural sites, natural areas, and environmentally sensitive areas. Prior to that, funding for land acquisition was primarily limited to grant funding sources and constrained by grant matching requirements. Now, as the city continues to grow, open space acquisition for recreation, conservation, and climate resiliency will increasingly become more important.

In addition to these milestones, BPRD completed critical renovations and launched new projects, incorporating sustainable practices to guide future growth. Staff across all divisions worked diligently to maintain Boston's reputation for having one of the finest urban park systems in the nation. As we reflect on the achievements of these two years, we celebrate the dedicated work of our team and the strong partnerships that make it possible.

Planning, Design and Construction

The Planning, Design, and Construction Division oversees historic preservation, landscape design, capital improvements, planning, and infrastructure throughout City of Boston parks. In 2023 and 2024, BPRD broke ground on 25 park renovations and completed construction on 32 sites. We made improvements in all neighborhoods and council districts.

SELECT PROJECTS

Doherty-Gibson Playground

Mayor Michelle Wu gathered with Dorchester residents at a Neighborhood Coffee Hour in May 2023, to unveil the newly renovated Doherty-Gibson Playground. The \$1.2 million project introduced accessible entrances, new play equipment, safety surfacing, a water play feature, and ornamental plantings. A central plaza with seating and tables now serves as a welcoming community gathering space. The design also prioritized the preservation of mature trees.



Alice Hennessey Playground

BPRD was joined by Mayor Wu in June 2023 to unveil improvements to the Alice Hennessey Playground at Millennium Park in West Roxbury. Improvements included age-appropriate play areas, seating, and accessible features like a ramped treehouse-style play structure and an inclusive carousel. A new Little Free Library was added to support literacy and community connection.



Fenelon Street Playground Basketball Court

The Boston Celtics and Red Bull's "Get In The Paint" contest transformed Fenelon Street Playground in Roxbury with a bold new design by Northeastern student Kaiya Santos. The project culminated in an unveiling ceremony with Mayor Wu, Jaylen Brown, and Santos in July of 2023, celebrating the court's vibrant graphics and community impact.

Fenelon Basketball Court unveiling with Mayor Wu, contest winner Kaiya Santos, and Jaylen Brown.



Ryan Playground

July 2023 saw \$1.4 million in improvements unveiled at Ryan Playground in Dorchester. Renovations included a half-basketball court, a central lawn for picnicking, updated play areas, and pruned mature trees to enhance shade and health. The upgrades reflect input from the Columbia Savin Hill Civic Association and local residents.



Walnut Park Play Area

Mayor Michelle Wu and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department celebrated the reopening of Walnut Park Play Area, located at 345 Walnut Avenue in Roxbury, in August of 2023. The \$1.2 million improvement project included a full renovation of the play area with new age-appropriate equipment for 2 to 5-year-olds and 5 to 12-year-olds, resulting in a universally accessible playground. The original wrought iron fencing with cast children's handprints was retained and upgraded, and the handprint theme was carried through the rubber play surfacing.

Based on input from the community, the water play element was renovated and a drinking fountain with a water bottle filler was installed. A new pavilion structure was added to provide shade at the new accessible picnic tables, with companion seating added to complement this request. The park renovation included the planting of eleven trees, a mix of shade and ornamental species. Additionally, the existing concrete wall along the north edge of the site was painted with bright bands of color.



Jeep Jones Park

In July of 2023, Mayor Wu and community members celebrated the reopening of Jeep Jones Park in Roxbury. Clarence “Jeep” Jones, the park’s namesake, was the first Black Deputy Mayor of the City of Boston and recognized as a peacemaker among his many contributions to the community.

He had a 32-year career with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, serving as Chairman of the Board for 24 years with close ties to the Roxbury neighborhood throughout his personal and professional life. Born April 17, 1933, Jones died February 1, 2020, but saw many improvements to the park in his lifetime including its opening in 1974 by Mayor Raymond L. Flynn, renovations unveiled by Mayor Thomas M. Menino in 2010, and the unveiling of Fern Cunningham’s “The Value of a Life” sculpture in 2012.



General Edward O. Gourdin African American Memorial Park

In August 2023, Mayor Michelle Wu, City officials, and representatives of the Veterans and Friends of Gourdin Memorial Park Committee unveiled \$2.1 million in improvements to the General Edward O. Gourdin African American Veterans Memorial Park. The Roxbury park's improvements honor Brigadier General Gourdin and all Boston's Black war veterans, and are a result of community support and local artists.

Located in the heart of Nubian Square, General Edward O. Gourdin African American Veterans Memorial Park is now home to a memorial plaza dedicated to Black veterans of Massachusetts. The 18,000-square-foot triangular parcel is bordered by Washington Street, Malcolm X Boulevard, and Shawmut Avenue. The project is the result of the steadfast, multi-year efforts of the Veterans and Friends of Gourdin Memorial Park Committee.

The total project budget of \$2,095,000 included paving, trees, lawn, a granite seat wall, 10 bas-relief sculptures on granite bases, a granite

entry marker with interpretive signs, the central bronze Gourdin figure, benches, a flagpole, lighting, and general utilities.

The late Boston artist Fern Cunningham-Terry created the figurative bronze sculpture of Brigadier General Gourdin as one of her final works in an illustrious career that produced many noted pieces including "Step on Board" in the South End's Harriet Tubman Park. The memorial artwork consists of the Gourdin statue and 10 bronze bas relief sculptures sculpted by artist Karen Eutemey representing Black soldiers across ten different conflicts. Complementing the memorial is an interpretive entry marker, all set within a commemorative plaza designed by Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture.

The artwork design and construction was funded with grants of \$440,000 from the Edward Ingersoll Browne Fund, \$150,000 in capital funds through the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, and \$50,000 from the MA Department of Veterans Services and approved by the Boston Art Commission.



Malcolm X Park

The \$9.6 million renovation of Malcolm X Park in Roxbury was unveiled in October 2023. Enhancements included new play areas, upgraded courts, a Math Trail, and murals honoring Malcolm X. The project set a benchmark for equitable procurement, exceeding goals for women- and minority-owned subcontractor participation.



Paula Titus Park

June 2024 marked the opening of Paula Titus Park in Roxbury. This 8,000-square-foot park, developed in collaboration with the Highland Park community, offers a shaded pergola, open lawn, and play area for children. The park design reflects cultural connections to the neighborhood and Paula Titus's Cape Verdean heritage.



Mother's Rest Playground

In May 2024, Mayor Michelle Wu and elected officials joined BPRD to unveil \$1.99 million in improvements to Mother's Rest Playground at Four Corners during a Mayor's Coffee Hour. The revitalized park features updated play areas for children, a splash pad with interactive water play, and a shaded pavilion with accessible picnic tables.

Additional amenities include amphitheater seating, table tennis, and fitness equipment, creating a versatile community gathering space. The project, guided by extensive community feedback, incorporated vibrant design elements like colorful play equipment and bright accents on park walls. Funded by capital investments and a \$52,000 donation from the Friends of Post Office Square, this renovation highlights BPRD's commitment to community-driven design.



Bynoe Playground

Mayor Michelle Wu joined city officials and Orchard Gardens community members to celebrate the reopening of Edna V. Bynoe Playground in Roxbury in August 2024. The \$1.12 million renovation included a new splash pad, updated play equipment with safety surfacing, and a shaded seating area.

Named after beloved community activist Edna Bynoe, the playground honors her legacy of advocacy and contributions to the neighborhood. Funded through capital investments and community support, the project reflects extensive feedback from public meetings, ensuring a welcoming and inclusive space for all residents.



Clarendon Street Play Area

In August 2024, Mayor Michelle Wu joined Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods and members of the Back Bay community to celebrate the reopening of the Clarendon Street Play Area. This \$1.95 million renovation preserved the park's original charm while introducing new features like play equipment for children aged 2-5 and 5-12, swings, and a water bottle refill station.

Over a dozen new trees, including magnolias and arborvitae, were planted with guidance from the Back Bay Garden Club. The project, designed by Weston & Sampson and built by Fleming Bros Inc., reflects extensive community input gathered through public meetings and surveys.



O'Day Playground

Mayor Michelle Wu joined Boston Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods, Friends of O'Day Playground, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA), and South End residents to celebrate the reopening of O'Day Playground. This \$2.57 million renovation, unveiled in October of 2024, included colorful new play equipment for children of all ages, a splash pad, court upgrades, and enhanced accessibility for community events.

Utilities and electrical systems were improved to better support neighborhood programs like the annual Tito Puente Latin Music Series. Designed by Klopfer Martin Design Group and constructed by NELM Corp, the project reflects community feedback gathered through public meetings and surveys, incorporating features like colorful court graphics, lower basketball hoops, and game tables for chess and dominoes.



Chittick Schoolyard

In November 2024, Mayor Michelle Wu joined BPRD, the Trust for Public Land (TPL), and community members to celebrate the opening of a new climate-resilient schoolyard at James J. Chittick Elementary School in Hyde Park.

Funded by \$1.5 million from the Community Preservation Act, the project introduced colorful play equipment, an ADA-accessible entrance, and a porous basketball court designed to prevent flooding. Sustainability features include 19 new shade trees, absorbent pavers, and an outdoor classroom to support environmental learning.

The design, created by Warner Larson Landscape Architects and shaped by community feedback, addresses park equity and provides a welcoming space for both students and neighbors.



ACQUISITIONS

Egleston Square Peace Garden

Mayor Michelle Wu joined Boston Parks and Recreation Director of Capital Planning Cathy Baker-Eclipse and Egleston Square community members to celebrate the City of Boston's acquisition of the Egleston Square Peace Garden and take part in a community cleanup in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Civic Organizing. The City's acquisition of the parcel will ensure that the previously privately owned space can remain a community asset and gathering place.

The Egleston Square Peace Garden was founded in 1998 by high school students who transformed the vacant lot into a memorial for young people who had lost their lives to violence. For 20 years, neighbors, business owners, and community members maintained the space and utilized the peace garden for community gatherings including concerts, cookouts, and cleanups. The parcel was previously owned by Clear Channel Outdoor, who had a permitted billboard since 1980 and leased the space below to the Ecumenical Social Action Committee (ESAC Boston) for free until 2018.

When the Clear Channel lease expired in 2018, Friends of Egleston Square Peace Garden, Egleston Square Main Streets, business owners, and community members advocated for a lease renewal until the property was fenced and placed for sale in December 2021. From 2021-2022, advocates continued to organize and worked alongside the City's Environment, Energy, and Open Space Cabinet to pursue public ownership of the parcel.

In 2023, Mayor Michelle Wu announced in her State of the City Address that the City of Boston would acquire the land to steward and care for

the park as an official City park. In 2024, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department officially purchased the lot for \$300,000 supported by Community Preservation Act funds.

In August 2024, the billboard was removed and the chain link fence, which had surrounded the site since 2021, was taken down. Following a site assessment and clean-up, the Boston Parks & Recreation Department looks forward to hosting community design meetings to develop a new vision for the park in collaboration with its founders and stewards.





GRANTS

In 2023, the department was awarded \$1.2 million by the City's Community Preservation Committee for the Boston Open Space Acquisition Fund (BOSAF). This funding supports the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan and Community Preservation Plan goal of providing additional open space for a growing city by funding costs associated with open space and land acquisition.

In Dorchester, the department received \$661,000 in supplemental funding for park renovations at Norwell Street Park, including managing site contamination, constructing a shade structure, installing water utilities, and adding play elements with safety surfacing. In Mattapan, \$406,123 was awarded to create Odom Serenity Garden, a public park adjacent to a new affordable housing development. Ryan Playground in Charlestown was awarded \$1 million in CPA funding for waterfront resiliency measures as part of its larger renovation project which broke ground in 2024.

The department was also awarded \$1 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant for park renovations at Clifford Playground in Roxbury. Improvements include enhancing accessibility, incorporating climate resilience

measures, and increasing athletic and recreational amenities.

In the South End, \$400,000 was awarded for improvements to O'Day Playground by the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs through the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant program. Renovations included a renovated basketball court, inclusive play areas, water spray features, and new community space which was celebrated in 2024.

The Boston Open Space Fund received an additional \$1 million from CPA funding in 2024, continuing efforts to provide new open space for the growing city.

In Allston-Brighton, \$275,000 in CPA funding was awarded for shoreline restoration and improvements at Chandler Pond. In Egleston Square, \$696,740 was awarded for renovations to Lawson Park. The department also received \$26,400 for a new scoreboard at Winthrop Playground in Roxbury to enhance the recently renovated park.

Through the support of the Edward Ingersoll Browne Trust Fund, the Friends of the Public Garden received \$100,000 for renovations to the Arlington Street Entrance and restoration of the Child Fountain in the Public Garden. The Friends of Putnam Square Park in East Boston were also awarded \$48,500 to develop a design for the park's foundation and surrounding area.

The Historic Burying Grounds Initiative received \$16,667 in Freedom Trail Foundation funding for a new fence at Copp's Hill Burying Ground in the North End, ensuring the preservation of this historic site.

Through the Harvard Allston Public Realm Flex Fund Grant, the department was awarded \$862,000 for park renovations at McKinney Playground in Allston-Brighton, including new play equipment, surfacing, splash pad, and entry

pavilion. An additional \$900,000 was awarded for extensive park improvements at Ringer Park as well as \$509,000 for comprehensive renovations, including a new splash pad, at Roberts Play Area. In 2024, the department received \$1 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for flood risk reduction at Mary Ellen Welch Greenway in East Boston. This work will be done through elevation of the multi-use path, accessibility improvements, enhanced entry points, and new tree plantings.

Through the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant, the department was awarded \$500,000 for improvements to Walsh Playground in Mattapan. Upgrades will include basketball and tennis courts, ball field improvements, accessible play structures, water features, lighting, shade structures, and tree planting.

Urban Wilds

The Urban Wilds Program (UWP) was active with land acquisition, ecological restoration projects, and stewardship events in 2023 and 2024. This year our portfolio continued to expand with significant new land acquisitions.



On the capital renovations front, two projects were initiated and substantially completed in 2023. As part of the Roslindale Wetlands Phase II Project, the 108 Walter Street parcel was connected with the remainder of the site through a new trailhead, the completion of a perimeter walking trail, and the restoration of a wetland buffer with native plantings. In Hyde Park, as part of the Sherrin Woods Phase II Project, the degraded Sherrin Street stormwater basin and the wetland buffer adjacent to the trailhead were beautifully restored.



In terms of capacity, the UWP greatly improved its ability to maintain and manage the urban wilds this year by hiring a second foreman to oversee field operations including special restoration projects, seasonal staff activities, and volunteer engagement. Special restoration projects this season included the design and installation of a stone swale and detention basin

to divert water from the walking trails and prevent erosion at Nira Rock in Jamaica Plain, as well as a native restoration planting design and installation at one of the prominent entrances at Roslindale Wetlands.

Additional staffing in 2023 enabled the UWP to host 20 events with volunteer groups from across the city focused on engaging residents in land stewardship and education. In 2024, the Urban Wilds Team had a banner year for volunteer stewardship, outreach and education. Staff hosted 32 events and 439 volunteers in a wide array of stewardship events totalling 1,159 hours of volunteer service.

This year, in partnership with the Roslindale Wetlands Working Group, we also continued to host a series of “Serve & Learn” events at the Roslindale Wetlands Urban Wild. These events featured an educational (“learn”) component, with staff educating volunteers on topics such as ecological restoration, native meadow establishment, and invasive plants. This was then complemented with a stewardship (“serve”) component in which volunteers assisted with invasive plant management and restoration plant installation.



Sprague Pond

On March 3, 2023, Boston Parks and Recreation acquired the land for the new Sprague Pond Shoreline Reserve in Hyde Park located at 0-4 Lakeside Avenue with frontage on Sprague Pond. The land is within the state-designated Ponkapoag Pond/Fowl Meadow Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Such environmentally sensitive areas get special review and consideration when state agencies are required to review development projects.

The site includes frontage along the western shoreline of Sprague Pond, which has been designated by the MA Department of Environmental Protection as a Great Pond, which allows it to receive protections under the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act (Chapter 91). Located in a heavily developed neighborhood dominated by industrial, commercial, and residential uses, the land is currently undeveloped and vegetated with trees and grasses. It provides scenic access to Sprague Pond and to the Great Blue Hill. Thanks to this acquisition the public will be able to fish and boat on the pond.

This land has the potential to be a nationally significant historical, cultural, and archaeological resource area. It is within areas known as important historical assets: the Readville Industrial Area and the former Camp Meigs Civil War-era training camp and hospital where the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the first military unit consisting of Black soldiers to be raised in the North during the Civil War, was trained. Their bravery, despite heavy losses in their first major action in the assault against Fort Wagner along the South Carolina coast, earned respect and admiration for the Black soldiers involved.

This land is also considered archaeologically

sensitive for Native American occupation as well as historical military, residential, or industrial uses of the land. The City's acquisition of this land for open space and recreation provides a means to protect and preserve any significant historical and archaeological resources present there. The City used its funding from Community Preservation Act revenues to contribute to the cost of purchasing this land, along with a state Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant.

Roslindale Wetlands Restoration

In June of 2024, the Urban Wilds division celebrated the festive opening of the 108 Walter Street Trailhead at Roslindale Wetlands with Mayor Wu and the Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association (LANA). This event marked the 2021 acquisition of the 108 Walter Street Parcel, a 35,000-square-foot parcel that has been added to the existing 9.5-acre Roslindale Wetlands Urban Wild, and the recent completion of \$1 million in capital improvements to the site.

In a cross-departmental effort to support Boston's climate goals and the creation of new affordable homeownership units, 104-108 Walter Street was acquired in 2020 by the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) and in June 2021 the 108 Walter Street Parcel, which abuts the existing wetlands, was transferred to the Boston Conservation Commission (BCC) to be stewarded as part of the Boston Parks Department's Roslindale Wetlands Urban Wild. To fund this acquisition on behalf of the BCC, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department received a state Landscape Acquisition for Natural Diversity (LAND) grant and used an FY21 Capital Budget initiative, called the Climate Resilience Reserve.



Phase I and II improvements to Roslindale Wetlands Urban Wild include a new accessible entrance on Walter Street, new and renovated walking trails, benches, interpretive signage, nature observation overlooks, wetland buffer restoration, and new native tree and shrub plantings. Design and construction meetings took place in 2020 and 2022 and construction was completed earlier this year.

The opening of the Walter Street trailhead at Roslindale Wetlands marked the culmination of decades of land protection advocacy from LANA. The newly renovated site provides an uninterrupted perimeter walking path, with boardwalks and bog bridges around the entire 10-acre site. To advance current and future restoration planting efforts at this site, LANA has established a community-supported tree fund.

Sherrin Woods Urban Wild Expansion (0 Dale Street Parcel)

The Urban Wilds team was joined again by Mayor Michelle Wu at the Arborfield Road Block Party in September 2024, to announce the expansion of Sherrin Woods Urban Wild through the acquisition of a wooded 1.01-acre parcel at 0 Dale

Street. This acquisition will protect neighborhoods from inland flooding, prevent continued loss of urban tree canopy, reduce urban heat islands, support community-based planning, and increase natural spaces in the city for all residents.

The parcel at 0 Dale Street in Roslindale was acquired through eminent domain and used \$510,000 of Community Preservation Act funds, consistent with the land's appraised value. The acquisition will preserve the heavily wooded site and complete the conservation of an entire city block by integrating the parcel with adjacent open spaces at Sherrin Woods Urban Wild and DCR's Weider Park.

The 1.01-acre vacant lot was first identified for acquisition for open space purposes by

community advocates more than 20 years ago due to its location adjacent to existing parkland. Members of the Dale Street Neighborhood Association and Southwest Boston Community Development Corporation were crucial advocates for conserving the parcel 0 Dale Street which was acquired by the City in 2024.

Following assessments of the site and cleanup of illegal dumping, the Boston Parks & Recreation Department looks forward to hosting community design meetings to develop a new vision for the park including a Dale Street trailhead, expansion of the Sherrin Woods Trail Network, and wetland buffer restoration to remove invasive species and restore the area with native plantings.

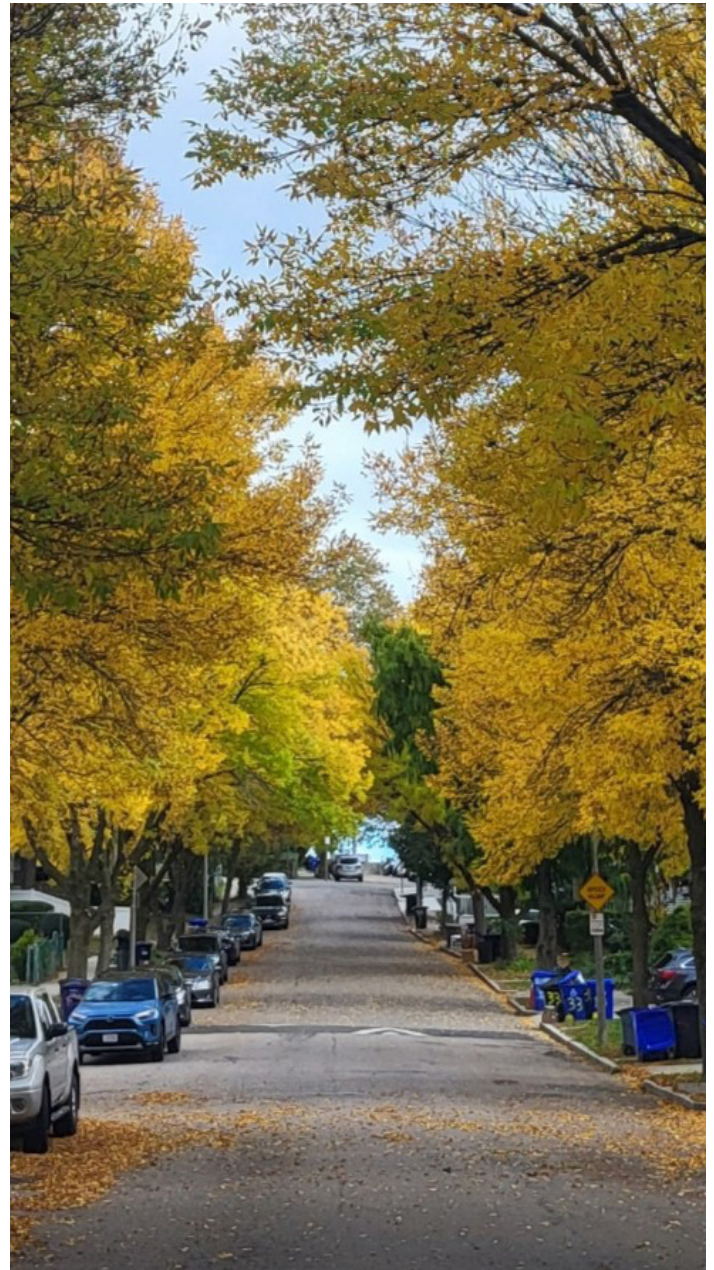
Additional Projects

In Mattapan, the Urban Wilds team broke ground on the Mattahunt Woods capital renovation project. This project will provide newly created trails, boardwalks and interpretive signage for the Mattahunt School and area residents to use for recreation and outdoor science education.

The overall growth of the UWP was also reflected by the program's acceptance in 2023, in partnership with Mass Audubon and Boston University, into the Forest in Cities (FIC) network. FIC is a national network designed to promote and advance healthy forested natural areas in US cities through science, partnerships and communications. Through participation in this network, the UWP will be better able to keep up with the evolving science and best practices surrounding urban forest management.

Urban Forestry

Since the release of the Urban Forest Plan in September 2022, the Urban Forestry Division has made major strides in expanding Boston's urban canopy and deepening community engagement. Over the past two years, strategic investments in staffing, equipment, and programming have strengthened operations and supported key initiatives to plant, protect, and maintain trees throughout the city.



In 2023, the division grew its capacity by adding a director, three arborists, an administrative assistant, and six maintenance crew members. This expansion enabled more efficient tree care and enhanced responsiveness to community concerns. The division resolved over 5,000 tree-related 311 requests that year and prioritized communications with the launch of a dedicated tree hotline, a direct email address, and a revamped webpage featuring a comprehensive inventory of over 40,000 street trees and valuable tree care resources.

A major focus of the Urban Forestry Division's work has been growing Boston's tree canopy, particularly in Urban Forest Plan Priority Areas. In 2023, nearly 1,200 new trees were planted city-wide, with 40 percent prioritized in areas facing low canopy coverage, extreme heat, and historic inequities. Proactive care of existing trees also improved, with systematic pruning efforts and advanced arboricultural treatments, including micro-injecting 1,165 mature ash trees to protect them from the emerald ash borer beetle.

In addition to planting and maintenance efforts, the division secured an \$11.4 million federal Urban and Community Forestry grant to increase tree planting and implement career training in forestry for residents of environmental justice communities. Volunteer tree-planting events for Arbor Day and Veterans Day further engaged residents in stewardship and training opportunities through PowerCorpsBOS, a green industry workforce development program.

Building on this success, 2024 saw even greater accomplishments for the Urban Forestry Division. Operational improvements included the hiring of an additional arborist and the purchase of a watering tank, ensuring young trees receive proper care during their most vulnerable years. This year, the division planted 1,912 new trees,



once again focusing on Urban Forest Plan Priority Areas, which accounted for 40 percent of the new plantings. Pruning efforts reached an all-time high, with 5,100 street trees maintained – double the average from previous years. The division closed 12,148 311 cases in 2024, including 700 emergencies, ensuring a swift and effective response to residents' needs.

The division expanded community engagement efforts through numerous tree-planting events at Noyes Park, Harambee Park, Ronan Park, and Brewer Burroughs Tot Lot. These events brought neighbors together to grow Boston's tree canopy and foster stewardship. In addition, the city's tree inventory was updated to include park trees, with the entire dataset now available on Analyze Boston, increasing transparency and access to information.



A new ordinance protecting trees on public land went into effect in 2024, strengthening tree preservation efforts and influencing the planning of city projects. This ordinance led to the creation of the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee, which includes voices from youth, environmental advocates, and underserved communities to guide Boston's urban forestry goals.

The division's work in 2024 earned notable recognition, including Boston being named a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation. Arbor Day was celebrated at Memorial Park in East Boston, with Mayor Wu and a visiting mayor from the Dominican Republic in attendance to highlight the importance of this work. Informational tags were introduced for newly planted trees to educate the public on their care.

Through these efforts, the Urban Forestry Division continues to prioritize equity by

addressing disparities in access to the benefits of trees while enhancing the health and resilience of Boston's urban canopy.

The division's work has ensured that trees across the city contribute to cleaner air, urban cooling, reduced stormwater flooding, and improved quality of life. Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, the Urban Forestry Division remains dedicated to implementing the strategies of the Urban Forest Plan and fostering a greener, healthier Boston for all residents.

Maintenance

The BPRD Maintenance Division, based in Franklin Park, plays a vital role in maintaining and beautifying Boston's park system. This includes preserving landscaped areas, managing athletic fields and courts, maintaining fountains and plazas, and stewarding nearly 200 acres of urban wilds and other open spaces.



In 2024, the Maintenance Division achieved several significant milestones. As part of the City of Boston's Rodent Action Plan (BRAP), the team installed over 100 rat-resistant trash barrels, with a focus on the Boston Common. During the City's first Deployables Day, hosted by the City's Office of Climate Resilience, the division successfully deployed the AquaGate flood barrier on the East Boston Greenway, demonstrating its ability to protect critical infrastructure and neighborhoods from severe flooding due to climate change. The barrier, stored on-site, is ready to be used in severe weather events.

Throughout the summer, the division operated and maintained 79 spray water features citywide. Additionally, BPRD hired a dedicated maintenance crew for Franklin Park, modernized its operations by digitizing procedures, and enhanced its fleet with the addition of 12 electric vehicles.

In 2023, the Maintenance Division created 8,470 new 311 cases and closed or completed a total of 8,598. In 2024, the Maintenance Division responded to 7,581 311 service requests and completed 7,852 work orders, continuing its commitment to improving Boston's parks and open spaces for residents and visitors alike.

Horticulture

The Horticulture Division – made up of 14 dedicated greenhouse staff, five Public Garden staff, and two Kelleher Rose Garden staff – kept Boston's neighborhoods beautiful by producing, planting, and maintaining flowering beds and pots throughout the city.

During the winter, gardeners tended to flowering annuals and perennials in the Franklin Park Greenhouses, where over 20,000 finished

plants were produced by late spring. In 2024, BPRD completed construction on a brand new 2000 square foot gothic frame that will keep the beloved tropical palms found in the Boston Public Garden and other high visibility sites warm during winter. With the support of a generous grant from the Beacon Hill Garden Club, Horticulture received a new auto fogger machine to safely and efficiently control insects and disease.



The plants produced in the BPRD greenhouse are used in over 60 dedicated sites throughout Boston and the team waters and maintains over 200 individual planting areas throughout the growing season. This year, several new planting areas were added including beds at Brighton Common and another on Warren Avenue in Roxbury. In 2024, BPRD laid the groundwork for expanding formal plantings in the Public Garden in partnership with The Friends of the Public Garden.

The Horticulture team assisted the Friends with a major rededication of the Child Fountain at the iconic Arlington Street Entrance to the Boston Public Garden.

This fall the Horticultural staff planted over 30,000 tulips and other flowering bulbs across the City, including yellow tulips planted in the newest beds in the redesigned Copley Square. Over 15,000 daffodil bulbs as well as wildflower seeds were provided for free as part of our annual Boston Blooms giveaway for garden clubs and community groups that want to beautify city owned parks and greenspaces.



The Franklin Park Greenhouses also supplied plants for celebrations such as shamrocks for Boston's Age Strong Saint Patrick's Day Celebration and flowering annuals for the Mayor's Neighborhood Coffee Hours, park opening ceremonies, and park rededications.

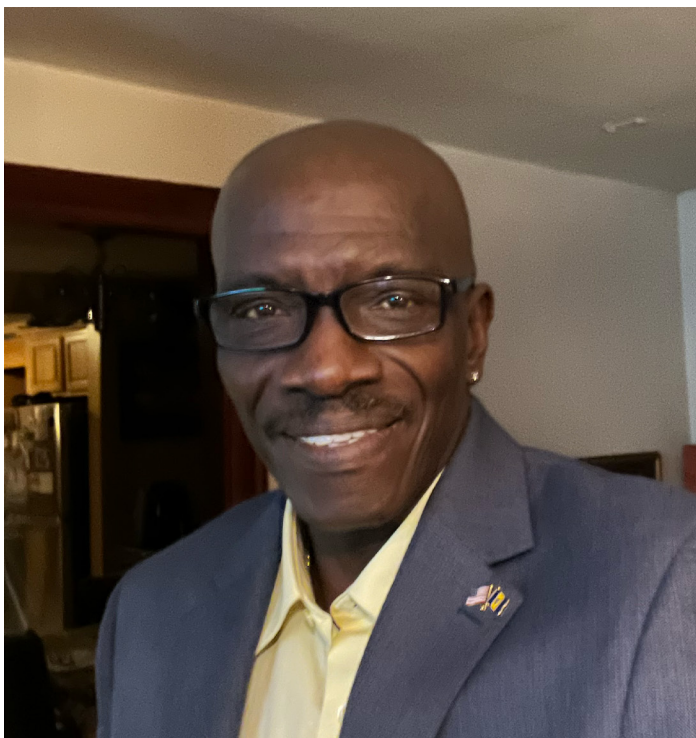


A pallet of flower bulbs is ready to be distributed to community groups citywide as part of BPRD's annual giveaway program.



The Horticulture Division utilized a generous donation from the Earthshot ceremonies to beautify several parks and open greenspaces throughout Boston.

In 2023 one of our most dedicated staff members, Winfield Clarke, was promoted to a Superintendent post in the maintenance yard.



Winfield has worked for the Horticultural Division for over 20 years starting out as a gardener and working his way up to Executive Assistant. One of Winfield's most important roles in the Horticulture Division was designing the formal beds in the Public Garden. Winfield's creations were influenced by his Caribbean homeland, Barbados, as many of his displays had a colorful tropical feel. We wish Winfield all the best in his new role with the Parks Department.

Recreation

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department Recreation Division continued to promote health, wellness, and community engagement throughout 2023 and 2024 by offering a diverse range of free sports events, recreational programs, and fitness activities for all ages. These programs were made possible through dedicated fundraising efforts; no City operating funds were used.



Highlights from 2023 included the Willie O'Ree Street Hockey Clinics, where 20 teens were hired to lead free clinics across neighborhoods such as Dorchester, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, East Boston, Mattapan, and South Boston. These clinics reached over 2,903 youth. This program was extended through the winter, where the same teens served as referees for the Mayor's Cup Ice Hockey Mite games, continuing to make hockey accessible to Boston youth.



Free archery clinics were another major success, serving over 2,823 youth and teens citywide and expanding to include 353 adults and senior citizens. Clinics were offered at various locations, including the BCYF Curley and Roche Centers and pop-ups at Polcari Park and Barry Park. The program culminated with a senior archery competition at the BCYF Curley Center in South Boston in October.

Fitness initiatives flourished in 2023, with more than 7,566 Bostonians participating in over 603 free fitness classes offered during the winter, summer, and fall. Classes included bootcamps, chair yoga, line dancing, barre, HIIT, yoga, family fitness, Afrobeats Bootcamp, Tai Chi, and salsa, ensuring something for every fitness level and interest.

The Summer Sports Centers also saw tremendous engagement, with 16,373 youth participating at locations including East Boston Stadium, Garvey Park in Dorchester, Hunt-Almont Playground in Mattapan, Ronan Park in Dorchester, and White



Stadium at Franklin Park. Activities ranged from street hockey and lacrosse to fitness classes and arts and crafts, supported by 157 youth employees who contributed to the program's success.

Junior Golf programming at the George Wright and William J. Devine golf courses continued to thrive, with lessons serving over 400 participants and 110 youth employees maintaining the courses. Through the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Foundation, over 210 Boston students have benefited from scholarships for college education over the past 25 years.

In 2024, the Recreation Division expanded upon its success, continuing to offer citywide recreational programs that brought communities together. Events such as the Mayor's Cup tournaments showcased athletes of all skill levels in softball, baseball, soccer, and tennis. Youth programming grew to include initiatives such as the Boston Youth Flag Football League and the expansion of lacrosse and soccer crews, which employed SuccessLink youth to teach these sports at the Summer Sports Centers.

The division also launched its first-ever fundraiser, the Putting for Parks Golf Tournament, to support recreational programs for Boston youth. This inaugural event raised over \$30,000 with 25 teams and 16 sponsors participating. The funds directly benefit youth sports and fitness programs, and the event will now be held annually.

The division continued to innovate with new and expanded programs. The archery initiative reached over 3,110 youth and teens, along with 353 adults and seniors, offering activities at beaches, community centers, and parks. Fitness classes remained popular, with 5,434 Bostonians participating in over 560 free in-person and virtual classes.

The Summer Sports Centers, staffed by 157 youth employees, served 4,853 participants across five locations. Instructors taught bike riding, lacrosse, and soccer and emphasized skill-building and safety.

In 2024, golf programs enjoyed continued support from the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Foundation, with Junior Golf lessons serving 380 participants and 93 youth employees maintaining Boston's golf courses.

New sports clinics, including BUDA Ultimate Frisbee, attracted nearly 800 youth and teens to learn a new sport. The program featured 28 summer clinics and several vacation week clinics, underscoring the division's commitment to offering unique recreational opportunities.



External Affairs

The External Affairs Division oversees the Parks Department's communications, marketing, partnerships, fundraising, community outreach for capital projects, and cultural programming functions. Signature annual events included the Rose Garden Party fundraiser, the Mayor's Garden Contest, and the popular Neighborhood Coffee Hour series which gives residents the opportunity to discuss issues and concerns with Mayor Wu and City officials in their local parks.

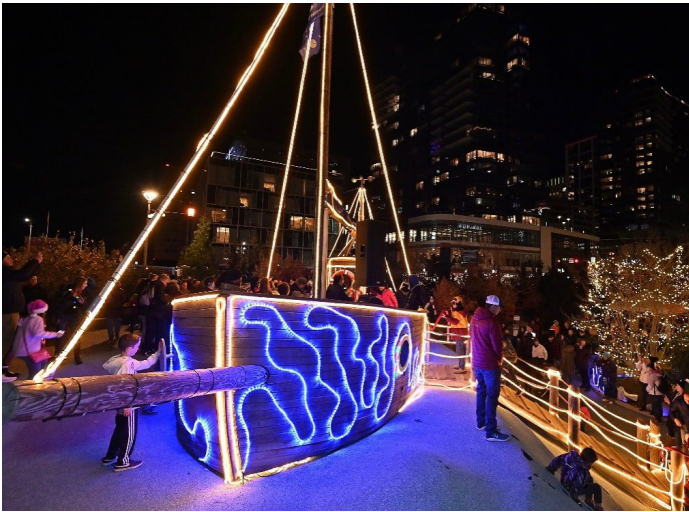
In 2023 and 2024, over 70,000 attendees participated in free events organized by the External Affairs team. Seasonal celebrations brought the parks to life, including the annual Frog Pond Opening in June and the Fall-O-Ween Children's Festival in October, offering a wide range of free, fun and festive activities and partnerships with local businesses and organizations. The year kicked off in February, when Mayor Wu and the Parks team welcomed families for the Children's Winter Festival on Boston Common, a free February school vacation event with music, giveaways, various winter attractions, treats, and crafts.

Spring saw the return of the Mayor Wu's Coffee Hours, with events hosted across Boston's neighborhoods, fostering community connections with city leaders. We welcomed spring with a burst of yellow from thousands of daffodils planted by volunteers through 2023's Boston Blooms program.



The summer calendar was packed with neighborhood concerts, movie nights, arts and crafts workshops, marionette puppet shows, latin music nights, and golf course concerts. External Affairs partnered with groups across Boston to bring live music to parks including the Elma Lewis Playhouse series and concerts in collaboration with Berklee College of Music. At the annual 2024 Rose Garden Party, BPRD raised a total of \$239,500 for future ParkARTs programming.





The year closed with the Department's iconic holiday lighting events at the Christopher Columbus Park Trellis in the North End, Martin's Park Ship in South Boston, and BPRD's biggest event of the year, the lighting of Nova Scotia's Annual Tree for Boston on the Boston Common, the Boston Public Garden, Commonwealth Mall, and the City of Boston's official Christmas tree on December 5.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, the External Affairs (EA) team hosted 16 ribbon cutting events and two groundbreaking events to celebrate major renovations at parks across Boston. A new photo booth offered exciting engagement opportunities at community events and festivals and

expanded capacity for video content and social media brought the Parks social media accounts to new heights. From 2023 to 2024, @bostonparksdept on Instagram, X, and Facebook increased its page and profile reach by 43.5% and improved average engagement rates by 16.8%.

In 2024, BPRD was selected as one of the first City departments to create social accounts on Bluesky, a new social media platform. 61 community meetings for capital projects were held over 2023–2024. In addition, the EA team handled hundreds of press inquiries and published more than 80 press releases in 2023 and 2024. Top stories pitched by the communications team included a Boston Globe photo story about the

City's Animal Shelter and our Boston Animal Care and Control team, in-depth looks at recent acquisitions like when WBZ News Radio interviewed Paul Sutton, UWP Director, on site at Sherrin Woods Urban Wild.

The 2023-2024 season was rounded out with events organized, funded, and staffed by External Affairs including Fairy House Building Workshops, Watercolor Painting Workshops, ParkARTS Arts & Crafts Workshops, Rosalita's Marionette Puppets, Neighborhood Concerts, Tito Puente Latin Music Concert Series, Elma Lewis Concert Series. Golf Summer Concert Series, Virtual Pics in the Parks, Movie Nights, Boston Children's Rec Fest, Boston Blooms daffodil bulb giveaway, and hiking programs exploring our parks. The division also welcomed two new team members in 2024: Grace Burke, Marketing and Communications Specialist, and My'Kel McMillen, Community Outreach Coordinator. Through their efforts, External Affairs continued to activate and celebrate Boston's parks, ensuring residents enjoyed free and accessible programming year-round.

Boston Park Rangers

In 2024, the Boston Park Ranger Service upheld its mission to protect and preserve the city's iconic parks, burial grounds, and open spaces. Through highly visible mounted, mobile, and foot patrols, Rangers provided a sense of safety and assistance to countless visitors.

As certified first responders, Rangers worked closely with other public safety agencies, addressing challenges in all conditions. They

also fostered community engagement through 68 interactive programs, including tours, bird walks, and nature hikes across parks like Boston Common, the Public Garden, and Franklin Park. The Nature Center at Jamaica Pond became a hub for education and daily visitation.



The nationally recognized Mounted Patrol Unit played a key role in community building and public outreach, offering stable tours and the beloved "Horse of Course" program. Supported by skilled volunteers, this unit enhanced public interaction and programming.





Honeybee rescue in the Boston Public Garden with students from Northeastern University Beekeeping Club. Photo courtesy of Northeastern Beekeeping Club.

Rangers also managed wildlife incidents, including leading a multi-agency response to a December 2024 oil spill in the Muddy River, rescuing 44 waterfowl under challenging conditions. This effort highlighted their expertise and collaborative efficiency with partners like New England Wildlife and the Department of Environmental Protection.

In addition to patrol duties, Park Rangers contributed to over 100 special events, managing traffic, security, and crowds to ensure their success. Through safety services, education, and outreach, the Park Rangers once again served as Boston's "Goodwill Ambassadors".

Animal Care & Control

Boston Animal Care and Control continues to uphold its mission of providing high-quality care for animals in their custody, promoting responsible pet ownership, humane education, and enforcing laws for the welfare of animals and the safety of the community.

In 2023, Boston's animal control officers responded to over 7,700 calls for service and rescued more than 1,800 animals, including hawks, rabbits, and stray pets. In 2024, the Division provided care for just under 2,000 animals

annually, assisting those who were displaced, abandoned, or stray.



In 2023, three of 14 rabbits abandoned in Belle Isle Marsh were rescued by animal control officers after being found unable to fend for themselves.



In August 2024, several animal control officers successfully contained a young steer who had gone missing for two months in Roslindale. Animal control officers spent multiple days providing food, water and hay until they were successful in luring “Moodini” into a makeshift pen.

Boston’s animal shelter in Roslindale cared for over 1,100 domestic animals in 2023 and just under 2,000 in 2024, including cats, dogs, reptiles, and rodents. The shelter provided temporary housing for pets belonging to residents who were unhoused or hospitalized.

In 2024, the shelter continued its efforts by offering short-term care for 51 pets belonging to owners facing extreme hardship and reuniting 421 stray dogs with their families.



To address barriers to access, the Division held nine pet vaccine clinics at BCYF centers in 2023, providing free or low-cost care for over 600 pets. In 2024, over 700 pets benefited from low-cost vaccine clinics.

The City also distributed 56 free spay/neuter vouchers to low-income residents in 2023 through the Mass Animal Fund. Additionally, the shelter maintained an on-site pet food pantry in both years, distributing hundreds of pounds of food and supplies to pet owners in need.



In 2023, Animal Control Officer Anthony Fabiano successfully rescued and reunited this mama duck with her ducklings who had fallen down a sewer drain.

Boston Animal Care and Control remains committed to protecting and serving both the animals and residents of Boston, ensuring every creature receives compassionate care and attention.

Permitting

The BPRD Permitting Unit provided permits to park users ranging from major events on Boston Common and at Franklin Park to pick-up ball games on local athletic fields. In 2023, the Unit issued 4,700 permits, including 3,895 athletic permits, 1,699 for special events, and 145 for weddings. In 2024, the Unit issued 4,700 permits, with 3,264 athletic permits, 2,765 special event permits, and 176 wedding permits. The increase in special event permits reflects both a rise in park usage and greater adherence to permitting requirements.

In 2023 the permitting website was updated to make it more customer friendly. The BPRD Permitting Division guided event organizers through the permitting process with customer service being a priority for the thousands of calls and emails handled throughout the year. Longstanding partnerships were maintained with local institutions that have joined us in improving our parks including Emmanuel College, Suffolk University, Northeastern University, and Emerson College.

Cemeteries

The Parks Department maintains three active cemeteries managed 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's assets also include the Historic Burying Grounds Initiative's 16 historic burying grounds.



The Division oversaw 428 burials in 2024 and 486 in 2023. New signage was erected at both Fairview and Mount Hope Cemeteries and in both years, the Division cleaned upwards of 500 headstones of veterans, and participated in the annual Wreaths Across America event to honor those who served. This year, BPRD created additional space at Mount Hope for the burial of

veterans and space at Fairview Cemetery for the indigent.

Major projects took place at our cemeteries, including restoration of the historic wrought iron fencing at Mount Hope Cemetery and major restoration of the historic wall surrounding Westerly Burial Ground in West Roxbury. The team

removed deceased trees from all three active cemeteries, trimmed and pruned the trees at Copps Hill Burying Ground and planted 20 new trees at Mount Hope.

HISTORIC BURYING GROUNDS

The Historic Burying Grounds Initiative (HBGI) preserves and maintains Boston's most historic final resting places in our 16 properties. Conservation, comprehensive restoration, and heritage interpretation of these sites all fall under the HBGI program. Over the past two years, HBGI has made substantial progress on a variety of critical projects aimed at preserving Boston's most historic final resting places.



Bennington Street Cemetery (East Boston)

In 2023, a wall and fence restoration project was completed with funding from a \$67,000 Community Preservation Act (CPA) grant. The total project cost was \$104,632 and included repointing sections of the Harmony Street wall, repairing the concrete capstone, and restoring the steel fence.

A comprehensive map of gravestones was created and made available online, along with photographs of each gravestone, enhancing public accessibility.

Westerly Burying Ground (West Roxbury)

Design and restoration work, funded by a 2022 CPA grant of \$57,000 and a \$200,000 earmark from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, were substantially completed in 2024. The \$359,700 project included gravestone restoration, stone wall and tomb repairs, ornamental gate and fence restoration, chain link fence replacement, and site grading.

Copp's Hill Burying Ground (North End)

Gravestone conservation and resetting work concluded in 2024, with the total project cost amounting to \$472,280, funded by a 2021 CPA grant. Repairs to brick walkways were also completed, alongside pathway restoration and ongoing conservation of damaged headstones.

Granary Burying Ground

In 2023, vandalism to tomb monuments was repaired, and studies were conducted on the deteriorating north wall. Restoration of the northeast wall progressed, focusing on repointing, small-scale rebuilding, and water-intrusion management. This work is 90% complete. In 2024, conservation work on damaged headstones was initiated.

Central Burying Ground

Emergency repairs to underground tombs were completed in 2023, followed by evaluations of adjacent tombs for structural stability. Based on these studies, additional restoration work began in 2024. Structural repairs to underground tombs in 2024 cost \$248,000.

Dorchester North Burying Ground

A \$240,000 fence restoration project was completed, involving the restoration and repainting of the ornamental steel fence and replacement of 19 deteriorating cast concrete piers.

King's Chapel Burying Ground

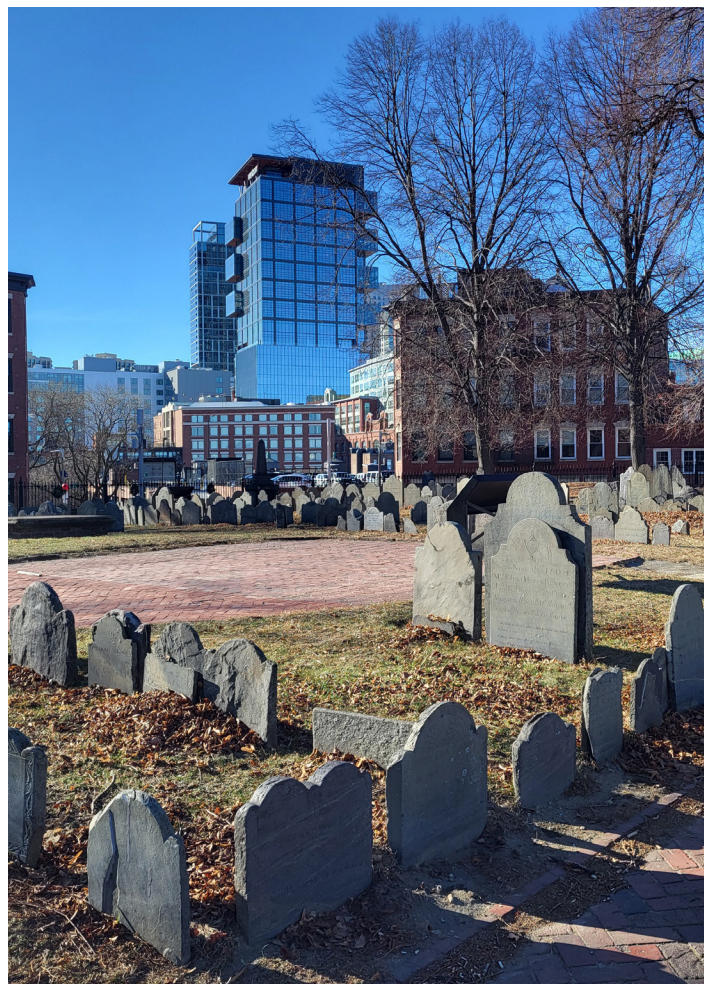
Restoration of the original cast iron fence was completed at a total cost of \$35,808, supported by a \$7,500 grant from the Freedom Trail Foundation's Preservation Fund.



Additional Achievements

Tree planting efforts continued in Dorchester North, Dorchester South, Eliot, Phipps Street, Market Street, South End, and Bennington Street Burying Grounds to enhance the landscape and preserve the historic character of these sites. Restoration of interpretive signs was completed at Granary and Copp's Hill Burying Grounds, improving visitor experiences.

Through these projects, HBGI has demonstrated a commitment to preserving Boston's rich history while enhancing public access and engagement. The combination of community support, CPA funding, and partnerships with local and state organizations has allowed the Initiative to address pressing preservation needs and ensure these historic sites endure for future generations.



Human Resources

The Parks Department Human Resources Unit handles concerns related to employees, including hiring, promotions, recruitment, leave administration, employee evaluations, compliance, payroll, and training and development.

The Parks Department was staffed with a total of 227 full-time employees in 2023. Over the course of the year, the department hired 37 new full-time employees and 111 seasonal employees. The seasonal staff supported various operations, including neighborhood park upkeep, summer camp programs, golf course operations, and maintenance activities. The department experienced an attrition rate of 8.25% and a turnover rate of 4.59%, which included ten voluntary and eight involuntary separations.

During 2023, the department promoted 26 employees. These promotions highlighted the department's dedication to internal career advancement and equitable salary practices. The department also upgraded ten full-time Laborers to Motor Equipment Operators & Laborers and welcomed eight new Park Rangers.

In 2023, the department launched a pilot program in partnership with the Mayor's Office to employ returning citizens and migrant workers. This program provided five months of seasonal employment to eight individuals, with mentorship designed to help them transition into full-time roles. Additionally, three graduates of the PowerCorpsBOS program, which offers career readiness training in the green industry, were employed by the Parks Department. These partnerships reflect the department's commitment to creating career pathways and supporting underrepresented communities.

In 2024, the department welcomed 46 new

full-time employees and 109 seasonal employees. This influx of talent supports the department's mission to expand operations and meet the growing demands of the community. The department continued its commitment to career development by promoting 17 employees across various divisions.

Job Fairs and Community Engagement

The Human Resources team actively participated in multiple job fairs, engaging with hundreds of potential applicants and promoting the diverse career opportunities available within the Parks Department. At the Boston Public Schools Career Day, the team interacted with students from the Boston International Newcomers Academy. Students were introduced to the work of the Boston Park Rangers, horticulture projects, and environmental initiatives. This event included hands-on activities such as visiting the Park Rangers' horse stable and participating in horticulture projects, fostering a deeper connection to nature and environmental stewardship.

These promotions reflect the Parks Department's focus on recognizing internal talent and fostering leadership within the organization.

Throughout 2024, the division participated in many job fairs which helped attract a diverse pool of talent and raise awareness about career opportunities. Boston Public Schools Career Day remained a key event, offering students hands-on experiences and insights into the environmental

and maintenance work conducted by the Parks Department.



These initiatives have strengthened the department's connection with the community while inspiring the next generation of environmental advocates. During a 2024 visit to the Franklin Park Maintenance Yard, BPS students had the opportunity to meet with the Maintenance Division, the Horticulture Division, and the Boston Park Rangers to learn more about the variety of jobs available in BPRD and the exciting and important work our team members do everyday.

Students enjoyed an instructional demonstration from the Park Rangers and had the chance to meet horses from the BPR Mounted Unit. In the greenhouse, students participated in a comprehensive planting project where they could apply their theoretical knowledge in a practical setting. Later, Josh Altidor, General Superintendent, facilitated an engaging discussion with students that focused on a variety of environmental issues affecting our communities and the planet as a whole. This informative session was designed not only to raise awareness but also to foster a sense of responsibility among students regarding the importance of environmental

stewardship and sustainable practices.

Partnerships and Career Pathways

The pilot program for returning citizens and migrant workers continued to provide valuable opportunities for seasonal employees to transition into full-time roles. Additionally, the department strengthened its collaboration with PowerCorps-BOS, hiring more graduates and offering them pathways into green industry careers.



Vending Program



Our Parks mobile vendors had another successful year thanks to a diverse group of entrepreneurs. Of the 13 individual vendors six are immigrants, two are women-owned businesses, and eight are people of color. We are happy to be able to bring a variety of options to the city parks that celebrate the diversity of Boston.

In 2023, the vending program began a major new venture with a collaboration to create a beer garden on Boston Common. Seven groups bid on this opportunity with Emerson College winning the bid. Emerson partnered with Trillium Brewing to transform a previously underutilized corner of the park at Tremont and Boylston Streets into a gathering place for people to eat, drink and listen to live music curated by Emerson's music department. In 2024, the beer garden continued with Harpoon as the new vendor. Funds collected from this venture helped underwrite BPRD recreation programs.

In 2023, the Jamaica Pond Boathouse, operated through our partnership with Courageous Sailing, ran successful children's summer

programs, "Swim, Sail, Science." The program ran for two weeks free of charge supporting 52 4th and 5th grade Boston Public School students identified as being vulnerable to the effects of summer learning loss. Students learned to sail and swim and made progress in math, science, and English language arts with help from BPS teachers.

In 2024, the vending program partnered with Roundhead Brewing Company and Fresh Food Generation to bring Alianza, a first-of-its-kind traveling beer garden series, to seven of Boston's parks throughout the summer with food and beverages for all ages. Throughout the summer, Alianza "popped up" at the following neighborhood parks: A Street Park in South Boston, Forsyth Park in Fenway, Lopresti Park in East Boston, Marcella Playground in Roxbury, Jamaica Pond Pine Bank in Jamaica Plain, Franklin Park, and Brighton Common in Allston-Brighton.

The Parks Department and Mayor Wu were excited to announce in December 2024 that Flour Bakery + Café was selected to manage the Boston Common Concession Pavilion. This decision follows a

Request for Proposals (RFP) process aimed at identifying a vendor that aligns with the City's goals of activating park spaces while providing high-quality food and beverage service in one of Boston's most cherished public areas. With the previous vendor now closed, Flour is set to begin renovations this winter, with a tentative opening planned for spring 2025. This selection supports Mayor Wu's commitment to fostering a vibrant and welcoming Downtown for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

Flour Bakery, a minority- and women-owned business, launched in 2000 in the South End and has become a local favorite for its delicious pastries, sandwiches, and signature hospitality. Led by James Beard Award-winning pastry chef and co-owner Joanne Chang, this celebrated bakery will open its tenth location at the Boston Common Concession Pavilion, bringing its renowned offerings to the heart of Boston's most iconic park.

Boston Parks & Recreation Commission

The Boston Parks and Recreation Commission is a seven-person review body appointed by the Mayor. The Commission was created by the vote of the people of Boston which approved Chapter 185 of the Legislative 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.

The Commission oversees the Boston Parks and Recreation Department and has authority over the properties in its inventory. The Commission reviews projects under Municipal Code Section 7-4.11 which are within 100 feet of a publicly owned park or parkway.

Commission Members as of November 2023

Elisa Birdseye, Associate Commissioner
Gene Bolinger, Associate Commissioner
William Epperson, Associate Commissioner
David Queeley, Associate Commissioner
Mariama White-Hammond, Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space
Ryan Woods, Commissioner, Parks and Recreation Department

Carrie M. Dixon, Executive Secretary
Liza Meyer, Chief Landscape Architect

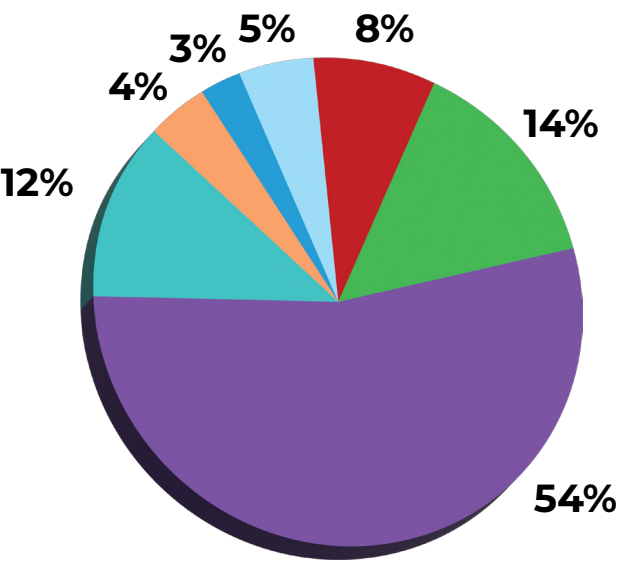
Commission Members as of December 2024

Liza Meyer, Interim Commissioner and Chief Landscape Architect
Elisa Birdseye, Associate Commissioner
Eugene Bolinger, Associate Commissioner
William Epperson, Associate Commissioner
Jessicah Pierre, Associate Commissioner
David Queeley, Associate Commissioner
Icey Washington, Associate Commissioner

Carrie M. Dixon, Executive Secretary

2023 Operating Expenses

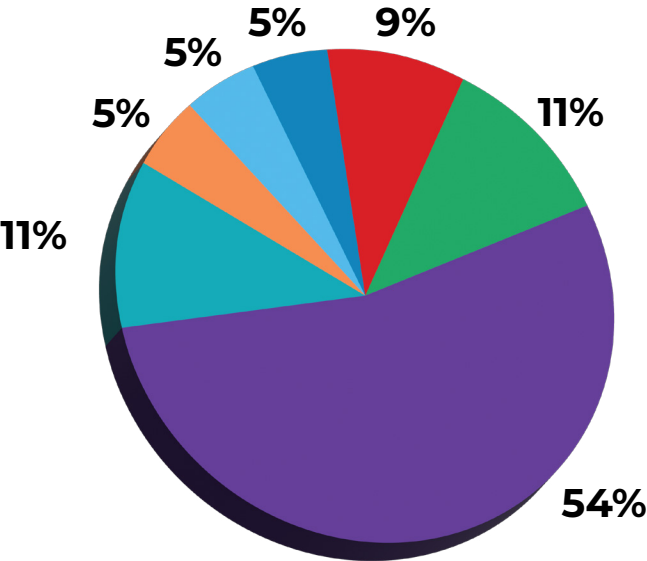
TOTAL EXPENSES:
\$31,627,787.90



- URBAN FORESTRY
\$1,050,213.19
- CEMETERY
\$2,422,246.28
- MAINTENANCE
\$17,170,224.74
- RECREATION
\$1,346,528.33
- OPERATIONS
\$3,695,481.51
- ANIMAL CONTROL
\$1,491,672.26
- DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
\$4,451,421.59

2024 Operating Expenses

TOTAL EXPENSES:
\$32,513,053.78



- URBAN FORESTRY
\$1,708,583.02
- CEMETERY
\$2,808,000.70
- MAINTENANCE
\$17,574,476.38
- RECREATION
\$1,474,833.07
- OPERATIONS
\$3,648,035.92
- ANIMAL CONTROL
\$1,657,410.33
- DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
\$3,641,714.36



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