

# ANNUAL REPORT



**CITY of BOSTON**



*Parks and Recreation*

**20  
25**

# LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Friends,

As the home of America's first public park, Boston has long understood the importance of keeping nature accessible amid the bustle of the city. From the establishment of Boston Common more than 400 years ago, to the stringing of each and every jewel of the Emerald necklace to follow—we know that in order for Boston to thrive, our residents need open spaces to exercise, gather, and reconnect with nature.

Today, Boston is woven together by more than 2,000 acres of parks, green spaces, and urban wilds. Here at the City, our mission is to ensure that world-class park system is more beautiful, sustainable, and equitable than ever—and I am incredibly proud of what we achieved toward that goal over the past year.

Throughout 2025, we completed capital improvements at 14 parks and acquired new parkland for permanent conservation. We planted a record 2,288 trees, with a focus on neighborhoods that have faced historic discrimination and disinvestment. And we made huge strides in the care and stewardship of Boston's largest green space, Franklin Park—progress made possible by the leadership and expertise of the park's inaugural Executive Director, Luis Perez Demorizi. I was delighted to welcome Luis to the City this fall, and I am confident that this treasured and historic landmark is in the best possible hands.

It's also our goal to make Boston's parks into vibrant centers of community life. This year, more than 34,000 people gathered in our green and open spaces to enjoy concerts, festivals, workshops, and community celebrations. Looking ahead, we remain committed to ensuring our parks are beautiful, welcoming, and restorative places—offering free activities and programming that bring residents of all ages together and making our communities stronger.

We invite you to explore the following pages to learn more about this work, and we hope you'll join us outdoors to experience the ways it has helped make Boston truly a home for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Wu". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michelle Wu  
Mayor of Boston

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# INTRODUCTION



The Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) creates and maintains clean, green, safe, and accessible public parks and open spaces throughout Boston. The Department is responsible for 293 properties containing around 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 feature walking trails, playgrounds, recreational courts, natural areas, historic burying grounds, and so much more. We maintain 31 urban wilds, 4 high school athletic fields, operate 2 public golf courses, and care for more than 45,000 public street trees.

In 2025, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department continued to strengthen these spaces through strategic investment, thoughtful stewardship, and deep collaboration with residents, partners, and

City agencies. From expanding the urban tree canopy to investing in climate-resilient parks, the department progressed in ways that balance innovation with preservation. Guided by long-term plans such as the Urban Forest Plan and Franklin Park Action Plan and sustained by dedicated staff, the BPRD delivered measurable improvements while laying the groundwork for future generations.

Across divisions, Parks and Recreation emphasized proactive, data-driven approaches—whether through block pruning thousands of street trees, leveraging new asset management systems, or securing major grants for park improvements and historic preservation. At the same time, the department strengthened community engagement, celebrating shared stewardship through volunteer plantings, public programming, and partnerships with local organizations and friends groups.

As Boston continues to grow and adapt to changing climate and community needs, BPRD remains committed to ensuring that every resident has access to safe, welcoming, and resilient open spaces. This report highlights the progress made in 2025 and reaffirms the department's role as a steward of both Boston's natural environment and its shared civic history.

# PLANNING, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

*The Planning, Design, and Construction Division oversees historic preservation, landscape design, capital improvements, planning, and infrastructure throughout all City of Boston parks. In 2025, BPRD completed construction on 14 sites. We made improvements in all neighborhoods and council districts. 2025 was also marked by land acquisitions and transfers.*

## PROJECTS

### Titus Sparrow Playground

In May, Mayor Michelle Wu and the Parks Department joined the Friends of Titus Sparrow Park during the South End Neighborhood Coffee Hour to cut the ribbon on the newly renovated Titus Sparrow Park. The celebration marks a \$2.4 million investment in the park, including colorful new play equipment, updated sports courts, improved lighting, and enhanced site drainage.

The renovation preserves the park's familiar charm while introducing a range of new features, including updated play equipment for children ages 0-5 and 5-12, along with a new swing set and

spinner. Sports amenities were enhanced with a resurfaced tennis court and a more accessible basketball court. Below the surface of the park, sustainable stormwater infrastructure was added using Stormtech infiltration chambers to improve drainage across the site. Additional upgrades include on-demand court lighting from dusk to 9:00 p.m. between April 1 and November 30, as well as new game tables for chess and dominoes.



## Crawford Street Playground

Mayor Michelle Wu, Chief Climate Officer Brian Swett, elected officials, and Roxbury residents cut the ribbon on the newly renovated Crawford Street Playground during a Roxbury Neighborhood Coffee Hour in June. The celebration marked a \$2 million investment in the park, funded through the City's five-year Capital Plan.

Improvements include a fully upgraded playground and an oceanic theme shaped by student input, a splash pad and water play area, a renovated little league field, exercise equipment, shade shelters, drinking fountains, permanent game tables, and a walking loop on the lower terrace. Site upgrades

also involved improved lighting, accessible entrances, and a continuous accessible route connecting the playground and fields.

Design and construction were driven by community feedback gathered through public meetings and surveys beginning in 2021, with CBA Landscape Architects leading design and Fleming Brothers, Inc. completing construction. Nearby David Ellis Elementary School students and staff played a direct role in shaping equipment choices and the playground's color palette.





## Harambee Park Cricket Fields

Mayor Michelle Wu, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, elected officials, and members of the Dorchester community gathered in August to celebrate the completion of major improvements to Harambee Park's cricket facilities. The event marked a \$2.4 million investment and the completion of Phase 4 of a multi-year effort to expand and enhance recreational amenities at the park.

The project delivered two upgraded cricket fields, including a fully lit competition field and a dedicated practice field, supporting both organized play and community use. Additional improvements include new bleacher seating, pedestrian pathways, and site lighting to improve comfort, circulation, and safety for players and spectators.

These upgrades reflect years of collaboration with local cricket organizations, including the Caricom and Conway Cricket Clubs, and ongoing community input. Design services were provided by Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc., with construction completed by Fleming Brothers, Inc., and funding supported through the City's five-year Capital Plan.

## Chandler Pond Restoration

In September, Mayor Michelle Wu, Interim Boston Parks Commissioner Cathy Baker-Eclipse, elected officials, and Brighton residents celebrated the completion of Phase 1 improvements at Chandler Pond. The \$990,600 investment went towards restoring and stabilizing the pond's shoreline as part of the City's multi-year master plan. The event recognized a major milestone in protecting one of Allston-Brighton's most cherished natural spaces.

The work focused on shoreline stabilization, invasive species removal, and native plantings along one-third of the shoreline near Lake Shore Road, strengthening ecological health and laying

the groundwork for long-term water quality monitoring. Efforts also improved surrounding parkland pathways and wetlands, enhancing access for walking and bird-watching in the 18.91-acre park.

This phase was shaped by community feedback and led by Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture, with construction by SumCo Eco-contracting. Funding came from the Community Preservation Act, DCR, and ARPA funds via the Friends of Chandler Pond, and Boston College's Neighborhood Improvement Fund, reflecting the partnerships across municipal, state, and community stakeholders dedicated to sustaining the pond's ecological vitality.



## Codman Square Park

In October, Mayor Michelle Wu, Boston Parks and Recreation Department leadership, local elected officials, and neighborhood residents gathered in Dorchester to celebrate the completion of significant renovations at Codman Square Park. The ribbon-cutting highlighted the City's investment in reimagining this green space as a vibrant and accessible gathering community area.

The project included a complete renovation of the park's entrance plaza and pathways, installation of new seating and a gathering area, upgraded landscape plantings, green stormwater infrastructure, improved lighting, enhanced accessibility features designed to make the park welcoming for all ages and abilities, and an artistic

sculpture by local artist Destiny Palmer. These improvements create more usable open space while honoring the park's role as a neighborhood hub.

The Codman Square Neighborhood Council and community members played a central role in shaping the design, informing both the layout and amenity choices. The project design was led by Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture, and the construction was constructed by ANJ Construction and the Artistic Element was designed by Destiny Palmer. Project funding was provided by the Community Preservation Act and the City's Capital Plan with collaboration from the Office of Green Infrastructure, Climate Ready Streets, the Parks Department and the Browne Fund.





## Walsh Playground

In October 2025, Mayor Michelle Wu, Interim Boston Parks Commissioner Cathy Baker-Eclipse, local elected officials, and members of the Lower Mills community gathered in Dorchester to celebrate the completion of a comprehensive renovation at Walsh Playground. The ribbon cutting marked a \$4 million investment funded through the City's five-year Capital Plan and a PARC Grant, reflecting a major upgrade to one of the neighborhood's key recreational spaces.

The project delivered a wide range of improvements designed for all ages and activities. New features include a competition softball field, multipurpose athletic field, tennis and pickleball courts, basketball court and half court, updated play equipment for children ages 2–5 and 5–12,

and a splash pad. Site enhancements also added a quarter-mile walking path, woodland trail, updated entrances, improved pedestrian lighting, a stormwater management system, shaded structures, and café seating areas.

The renovation process was informed by extensive community input gathered through public meetings and surveys. Design was led by CBA Landscape Architects with construction by R.A.D. Sports, and community priorities such as preserving the sledding hill and adding pickleball striping on the courts helped shape the final project.

## Copley Square Park

In 2025, we celebrated the return of Copley Square Park to civic life with the Copley Tree Lighting. The project restores and modernizes this iconic civic space while improving accessibility, sustainability, and flexibility for daily use and major public events. The \$18.9 million renovation was funded through the City's five-year Capital Plan.

The renovation delivers fully ADA-accessible pathways, reconstructed sidewalks, shaded seating, and a significantly expanded tree canopy, supported by permeable paving to improve stormwater management. The redesigned plaza, Raised Grove, and lawn areas enhance views of the Boston Public Library and Trinity Church and better support events such as the Boston Marathon, First Night, and the Copley Square Farmers Market. Designed by Sasaki and constructed by WES Construction Corp., the project reflects years of community input and advances the City's climate resilience goals through increased green space and restored historic features, including the park's iconic fountain, which will be completed in Spring 2026.

In addition to the milestones celebrated with ribbon cuttings, we made significant progress on a number of projects across the city. In Dorchester, we repaired walls at Ronan Park and enhanced pathway accessibility at Dorchester Park. In West Roxbury, we completed paving improvements at Millennium Park, while in Jamaica Plain, we upgraded Murphy Playground and opened a new dog recreation area and playground at Flaherty Park. Citywide, we also improved athletic fields at Christopher Lee Little League Field in South Boston and Ramsay Park in the South End.

## ACQUISITIONS

### Odom Serenity Garden (0.14 acres)

The Steven P. Odom Serenity Garden is a new park adjacent to the new Morton Station Village housing development located on Hopkins St in Mattapan. The site was formerly the location of a Boston Police Department station, and was unused until the Mayor's Office of Housing put out a request for proposals (RFP) for the construction of an affordable housing development. The RFP requirements included an open space portion of the property that would be transferred to the BRPD.

The park was named to honor the late Steven P. Odom, a 13-year-old Dorchester resident who was a victim of gun violence. The BRPD worked with the community to develop a design for this park that simultaneously improves the neighborhood's public safety and public health, creates a community teaching and healing space for youth and families in the neighborhood, allows people to enjoy nature and realize the healing power of green spaces, and honors Steven's memory.

### Sister Mary Veronica Park (0.11 acres)

In August 2025, Mayor Michelle Wu and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department announced that the City acquired Sister Mary Veronica Park in South Boston as a permanently protected open space. At a public hearing on July 28, 2025, the Boston Parks and Recreation Commission approved the purchase of the park, located at the intersection of West 8th, F, and Grimes Streets in South Boston. The property will be protected under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution and placed under a Conservation Restriction held by the South Boston Neighborhood Development Corporation.

The City negotiated a price of \$200,166.67 with the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston (RCAB), funded through the Community Preservation Act for the Boston Open Space Acquisition Fund. The acquisition fulfills a community commitment to protect the property from potential development.

Originally owned by the City of Boston and transferred to the Archdiocese in 1955, the site became an informal pocket park in 1968 when the South Boston Resident Association transformed the space. When the property, including five mature trees, several benches, and a small planter, was listed for sale in 2023, neighbors formed the “Save Sister Mary Veronica Park Committee” to advocate for the preservation of the property, gathering over 2,000 signatures from South Boston residents on a petition.

This acquisition fills a gap in BPRD’s park service areas, as the closest parks are all more than a quarter-mile away. The area is also within an Urban Forest Plan priority zone, and this acquisition will protect several mature trees in an area of South Boston that has been seeing recent canopy loss. In October 2025, Boston Parks and Recreation planted a new elm tree in Sister Mary Veronica Park, the first step in our investment in the beloved South Boston neighborhood park.



### **West of Washington Family Park (0.22 acres)**

Since 2016, the West of Washington (WOW) Coalition, a neighborhood association based in Dorchester between Codman Square and Four Corners, has been working to turn a vacant piece of land in Dorchester into a public park. The WOW Coalition worked with a local developer and the Trust for Public Land to acquire CPA funding in order to purchase part of the property, which was then gifted to the BPRD in December 2025. The remaining section of the property had been owned by the Mayor’s Office of Housing and was transferred to the BPRD as part of the project. BPRD has acquired additional CPA funding for a renovation project to create a park based on community designs.

### **Codman Square Park (0.35 acres)**

Codman Square Park is an essential green space and community gathering area in Dorchester. Previously, BPRD had been maintaining and permitting the property despite the Boston Public Works Department owning it. In alignment with recent improvements, PWD gave formal ownership and management of the park to BPRD. This permanently protected the park under Article 97 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’s Constitution.

### **43 & 45 Danube St (Winthrop Playground Addition) (0.14 acres)**

43 & 45 Danube St are two parcels adjacent to John Winthrop Playground, a BPRD property that was recently renovated. In August, they were transferred from the Mayor’s Office of Housing to BPRD to expand Winthrop Playground. Together, the parcels total 6,882 square feet. The park before

the addition was 68,274 square feet, so the addition of these parcels expanded the area of the park by about 10 percent.

Winthrop Playground was renovated in 2024 using funds from both a Parkland Acquisition and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant and a Community Preservation Act (CPA) Grant. Transferring these parcels is a continuation of the investment in this property and the surrounding community.

### Union Street Park (0.49 acres)

Union Street Park is located in Downtown Boston between Boston City Hall and the Blackstone Block Historic District. It had been owned by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) since 1961.

The property consists of a lawn with a stone paver walking path. The southern portion of the park includes several seating areas, benches, and two statues of former Boston Mayor and Massachusetts Governor James Curley, as well as 26 mature trees. A portion of the northerly end of the park has been established as the site of the New England Holocaust Memorial, which was built to pay tribute to the six million people killed during the Holocaust and to honor the survivors. The project was initiated by a group of Holocaust survivors living in Boston, and by the time the site was dedicated in October of 1995, more than 3,000 individuals and organizations nationwide had joined to sponsor the project. The Memorial is an important location for Boston's Jewish community, and is included in the Boston Art Commission's Public Art Map.

A 2014 agreement between the BRA, the BPRD, and the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston establishes that the BRA will transfer the property to the BPRD when appropriate.

Now that the Connect Historic Boston project has been completed, BPRD and the Planning Department determined that the park should be transferred to the BPRD. This transfer was completed in August of 2025, and the park is now permanently protected in accordance with Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



### GRANTS

In 2025, the Department was awarded \$743,340 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 Jamaica Plain, the department received \$703,019 in supplemental funding for park renovations at Egleston Square Peace Garden. At Harambee Park in Dorchester, CPA funding supported pathway

improvements inside the park and along the Talbot Ave entrance. In Brighton, \$187,000 in CPA funding went toward incorporating climate-resilient features, including cooling and shade structures, into the McKinney Playground improvements.

The department was also awarded \$1,000,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant for park renovations at Ceylon Park in Dorchester. The grant will enable the park renovation project to include a new play area, splash pad, furnishings, improved sports facilities, and green infrastructure.

In Allston-Brighton, \$500,000 was awarded for improvements to Ringer Park by the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs through the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant program. These improvements include a dog park, new playground, ADA walking paths, and upgraded sports courts. Another PARC Grant for \$425,000 was awarded to Ronan Park in Dorchester. Construction will break ground in 2026 on improvements to Ronan Park and will include new site equipment and general improvements leading to enhanced accessibility.

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 also received two major grants to support future gravestone conservation: a \$104,000 Cultural Facilities Fund Capital Grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and a \$157,650 Semiquincentennial Grant for Historic

Preservation from the National Park Service.

Through the MassDEP Section 604(b) Water Quality Management Planning Program Grant, the Department received \$44,780 in funding for Chandler Pond in Brighton. The grant will enable BPRD, in partnership with the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA), to conduct a monthly water quality monitoring program for 12 months, develop a Watershed-Based Plan (WBP), and engage the community. The WBP will identify sources of pollution and required load reductions, and analyze site and size potential Best Management Practices (BMPs) to meet required reductions in bacterial and nutrient loading.

Through the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, the department was awarded \$1,170,000 for Phase I Improvements to Moakley Park in South Boston. This grant will go towards design, engineering, and permitting services for the improvement project at Moakley Park.

An additional FEMA grant will support the Climate Ready Boston initiative with a Planning, Feasibility, and Design study that incorporates flood resilience at Christopher Columbus Park in the North End. This work will develop a schematic design for the park that ties into the resilience planning at Long Wharf.

## **PLANNING DATA & TOOLS**

In 2025, BPRD created a new map on [boston.gov/splash](https://boston.gov/splash) that showed the status of 82 spray plays across the city. This user-friendly feature allows residents to easily search and find their nearest splash pad, as well as to see critical information such as accessibility and whether each splash pad is up and running or down for maintenance.

In addition, the planning team worked to revamp the “Accessible Features at the Parks” page to be more user-friendly. The site now includes a screen-readable table that is pulled directly from the BPRD inventory and is consistently updated. Users can go to the map, search for specific features of interest, and toggle on accessible entrances with addresses for GPS navigation.

## FRANKLIN PARK

Franklin Park continues to be a hub for activities and community events for Bostonians, and 2025 proved to be an especially great year. From hosting various cultural and BPS athletic events to breaking ground on a number of capital projects, there was no shortage of excitement. In September, BPRD welcomed Luis Perez Demorizi as Franklin Park’s Executive Director, following the initial steps of the Franklin Park Action Plan. Luis brings over a decade of experience in park planning in the Greater Boston area. He also brings extensive knowledge of operations and management of public open spaces.

This park administrator role, envisioned in the Franklin Park Action Plan and announced by Mayor Wu at her State of the City address, will lead and coordinate the City of Boston’s investment in and care for this iconic park. Director Perez Demorizi will work alongside community stakeholders to restore and maintain the park’s ecological health and enhance the experience of those who enjoy the park.

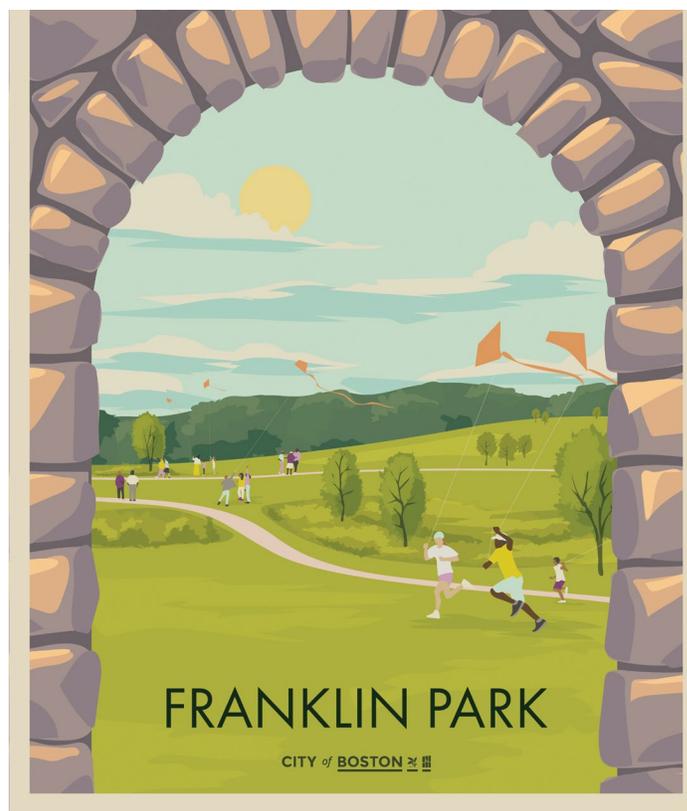
Throughout the year, the Franklin Park Action Plan Committee and the Franklin Park Tenants and Operators Group met and made efforts to improve communication and coordination among the various agencies operating within Franklin Park on projects and initiatives that help promote and improve the city’s largest public open space.

## Icons of Franklin Park Poster Competition

In partnership with the Boston Society of Landscape Architects, the Franklin Park Coalition, and the City of Boston Planning Department, BPRD invited the public to celebrate the physical and cultural Icons of Franklin Park in a competition inspired by the posters of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s. It had three categories with corresponding cash prizes:

- Jury Selections: 2 Awards, \$3,000 each
- People’s Choice: 1 Award, \$2,000
- Emerging Artists (Ages 14-24): 2 Awards, \$500 each

The submissions were reviewed by a jury panel and yielded a total of 54 submissions that were truly inspiring. We held a ceremony at the William J. Devine Clubhouse on October 26th.



**Anne Lai, “History and Horizon at Franklin Park”  
- Emerging Artist Award**

## Capital Projects

2025 was an impactful year for capital improvement projects within the park. We broke ground on improvements at the Bear Dens and at the Ellicottdale tennis courts and picnic grove. We also began discussions on dogs, Circuit Drive, and the Elma Lewis Playhouse at the Overlook Ruins.

### Bear Dens

The make-safe project kicked off this year to improve conditions for public use. Construction is anticipated to be complete in the Spring of 2026.

### Ellicottdale Tennis Courts and Picnic Grove

The two-phase construction project began in November. We are excited about the tennis court expansion for community and Boston Public Schools use. The project also improves the picnic grove with dedicated grills, accessible tables, and trellis structures. We aim to get the courts open for the Boston Public School's spring tennis season, and will start the construction on the picnic area after Juneteenth 2026.

### Circuit Drive Traffic Calming and Drainage

Improvements to traffic and drainage along Circuit Drive were discussed with the community this year through a series of meetings. As a result, a multiphased approach was introduced to make improvements along the corridor.

In the fall, the team presented the plan for the first phase of implementation. Speed tables and crosswalks were strategically placed to increase

connectivity between the east and west sides of the park, enhance pedestrian safety, and reduce vehicle speeds along the drive.

### Dog Facility Study

We hosted successful pop-up and community meetings to discuss opportunities for a dog-friendly Franklin Park. Each session saw a healthy turnout of park users who stopped by to share feedback, ask questions, and learn more about the study. The conversations were productive and provided a good range of perspectives on how people currently use the park and what they'd like to see in the future. We expect to have a full report in early 2026 illustrating our findings.

### Elma Lewis Playhouse

The Elma Lewis Playhouse in the Park is an essential program to Franklin Park. The Playhouse is currently set up on Pierpont Rd, West of the Playstead. Historically, the performances took place at the Overlook Ruins; however, the conditions of the ruins have declined, making the site unsuitable for large-scale events. In collaboration with the Franklin Park Coalition, BPRD has prioritized improvements to the original home of the Playhouse at the Overlook to return the beloved concert series there.

As a result, the City contracted a designer to assist in conducting community engagement and developing conceptual designs for the space. The project has transitioned into the final design phase.

## Franklin Park Trust Projects

Through the Franklin Park Trust, we made significant headway on special maintenance projects at the Park. These ranged from invasive plant removals at the Overlook, Long Crouch Woods, Hagbourne Hill, Walnut and School entrance, and at the Raccoon Cages. We also began critical work to plan masonry improvements at Ellicott Arch.



# URBAN WILDS

*This past year, the Urban Wilds & Natural Areas Program (UW Program) flourished, expanding their team to include two Tree Equipment Operators and two Franklin Park Natural Areas Forepeople. The team headed restorative projects in the urban wilds this year, completing a wildflower installation at Dell Rock, a drainage swale and slope stabilization project at Nira Rock, and a woodland restoration planting at Roslindale Wetlands.*

## Franklin Park Natural Areas

This year began a new era of care and investment in Franklin Park's natural areas, as per the 2022 Franklin Park Action Plan. The UW Program recruited, trained, and oversaw two natural area forepersons to restore and manage the park. With assistance provided by the UW Director and Crew, these new hires began ecological restoration work in high-priority areas like Long Crouch Woods. Their work has involved mapping management areas, coordinating with the Franklin Park Coalition and other partners, removing invasive plants, implementing plant healthcare management, planting native vegetation, and promoting natural forest succession.

These restorations benefit park visitors by increasing safety and accessibility, restoring beautiful views in the park, and promoting the ecological health of the park. This season, over 776 cubic yards of invasive brush were chipped and repurposed into "habitat brush walls," and over 150 native understory plantings were installed. The forepersons and the UW Crew enlisted the support of 225 volunteers to begin restoring 9.5 acres of the park.

## Mattahunt Woods Urban Wild

Mayor Michelle Wu joined the Mattapan community to celebrate the reopening of the Mattahunt Woods Urban Wild. During the three-year restoration effort funded by the City's five-year Capital Plan, \$850,000 was allocated to the Environment Department to manage the project in collaboration with the BPRD and local residents. This restoration involved implementing accessible entrances and signage, bike racks, benches, removing trash and invasive plants, and planting native vegetation. A new trail connecting Mattahunt Woods to the Mattahunt Elementary School and Mattahunt Community Center is being built.

In 2026, the UW Crew will assume responsibility for continued restoration, maintenance, and community engagement.

## Additional Projects

As this capital project wrapped up, planning and site analysis work started on the next capital renovation project at Condor Urban Wild in East Boston. This project will address salt marsh restoration as well as repairs and enhancements to infrastructure and upland meadow areas.

# URBAN FORESTRY

*Since the release of the Urban Forest Plan in September 2022, the Urban Forestry Division has expanded the city's tree canopy, strengthening day-to-day operations, and deepening partnerships with residents and community organizations. Strategic investments in staffing, equipment, data systems, and public programming have enhanced the City's ability to cultivate plant life throughout Boston.*

In 2025, Urban Forestry continued to advance canopy growth by planting 1,937 street trees. In addition, 351 trees were planted in parks and open spaces citywide, not including trees planted in park renovation projects.

**Park and open space plantings were completed at the following locations:**

- Beethoven School Play Area
- Bennington Street Cemetery
- Central Square Park
- Copp's Hill Terrace
- Copp's Hill Burying Ground
- East Boston Memorial Park
- Eliot Burying Ground
- Evergreen Cemetery
- Fairview Cemetery
- Harambee Park
- Healy Field
- John Harvard Mall
- Rev. Loesch Family Park
- Millennium Park
- Mt. Hope Cemetery
- Noyes Park
- Portsmouth Street Park
- Ronan Park
- Ross Playground
- Smith Field
- Whitey McGrail Memorial Park

In Chinatown, a neighborhood with limited locations for new trees, Urban Forestry worked with the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics to install four moveable tree planters above the ground. A total of four planters were installed on Harrison Avenue between Kneeland Street and Beach Street. Each of the planters have one Serviceberry tree growing in them, which the Urban Forestry Division will continue to water and maintain as they monitor the progress of this pilot program.

## **Tree Maintenance and Protection**

The Urban Forestry Division takes the responsibility of managing Boston's 40,000 city trees very seriously. Managing trees in a city environment differs greatly from tending to trees on forested land. City trees must be pruned regularly for their own health and the safety of vehicles, pedestrians, and houses.

Historically, street tree pruning occurred in response to resident service requests submitted through the City's 311 system. While these requests remain a priority, the Division now employs a more proactive maintenance strategy: the block pruning approach. Through this, arborists create work orders for entire blocks rather than addressing trees individually. This expansion allows crews to work more efficiently, reduces repeat visits, and

ensures consistent care across neighborhoods.

As a result of this proactive strategy, Urban Forestry pruned 7,288 street trees in 2025. Prior to the adoption of the Urban Forest Plan, the Division pruned an average of about 2,500 trees per year. The transition to block pruning represents an increase of nearly 192 percent in annual pruning activity and marks a major step forward in preserving the City's tree canopy.

Protecting mature trees is critical to canopy preservation, particularly with the spread of invasive species. Ash trees, which make up a meaningful portion of the street tree population, are especially vulnerable to the Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive beetle who can kill infested trees. Protecting ash trees helps maintain canopy cover while avoiding the high costs and environmental impacts caused by large-scale tree loss. Guided by the Urban Forest Plan, preventative treatments were administered by injecting trees with a protective solution that defends against the beetles. The treatment is effective for approximately two years and regular evaluation and retreatment are essential.

In spring 2025, arborists assessed all ash trees in the City's inventory to determine suitability for treatment. As a result, 1,505 ash trees were treated in 2025 to help keep them healthy and resilient. Together, proactive pruning and targeted pest management reflect Urban Forestry's commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy tree canopy for Boston's residents.

### **Community Engagement and Stewardship**

Urban Forestry strengthened public engagement and stewardship efforts throughout the year. The division celebrated Arbor Day citywide and

partnered with the nonprofit organization: Speak for the Trees as well as community volunteers to plant trees at Mt. Hope Cemetery, reinforcing the shared responsibility of caring for Boston's urban forest.

Boston was also recognized for its longstanding commitment to urban forestry, receiving the Tree City USA designation from the National Arbor Day Foundation for the 27th consecutive year.

### **Data, Planning, and Technology**

In 2025, Urban Forestry advanced data-driven management of the city's tree canopy. The division received updated data for the five-year Tree Canopy Change Analysis, providing critical insight into canopy trends and informing future planning. In addition, the City's tree inventory was successfully integrated into a new citywide asset management system, enabling more seamless data sharing and coordination across departments.

### **Workforce and Capacity Building**

Urban Forestry furthered their professional development by hiring new personnel. These new additions to the team included three new Tree Equipment Operators to strengthen field crews, and 10 staff members successfully passed the Massachusetts hoisting license exam, expanding in-house capacity and improving operational flexibility and safety.

Together, these efforts reflect Urban Forestry's continued commitment to building a healthier, more resilient, and more equitable urban forest for all Boston residents.

# MAINTENANCE

*The BPRD Maintenance Division, based in Franklin Park, plays a vital role in maintaining and beautifying Boston's park system. This includes caring for squares, fountains, courts, fields, and other non-traditional open spaces.*

Seasonal operations shift throughout the year, with teams focusing on mowing and turf care, planting seasonal flowers, caring for ballfields, and supporting major events during the summer; leaf removal and planting in the fall; snow removal and deicing during the winter; and renewed lawn care and seasonal maintenance in the spring to prepare parks for increased public use. The Division is made up of regional crews, supported by a skilled trades unit that provides specialized services across the park system. 2025 also marked a milestone year as the maintenance unit successfully turned on all 85 splash pads across the city.

In 2025, the Maintenance Division received a total of 7,108 new 311 cases and closed or completed a total of 6,980, continuing its commitment to improving Boston's parks and open spaces for residents and visitors alike.

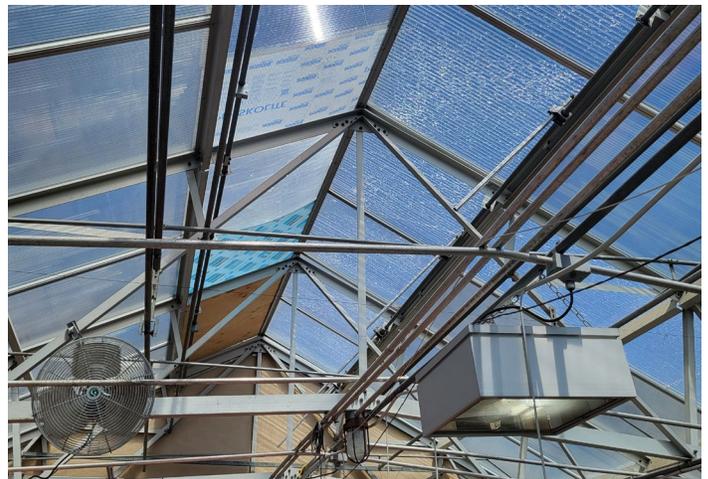
## HORTICULTURE

The Horticulture Division, which is made up of 15 dedicated greenhouse staff, 6 Public Garden staff, and 2 Kelleher Rose Garden staff, kept Boston's neighborhoods beautiful by producing, planting, and maintaining flowering beds and pots throughout the city.

Throughout 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.

During a storm in the early spring, our main greenhouse sustained major damage to the rooftop vent. With help from a contractor and funding from the Parks Capital fund, we were able to make repairs and utilize the greenhouse for production during the growing season.



With the support of a generous grant from the Beacon Hill Garden Club, we were able to replace our broken Generac generator, which is meant to power heat for our greenhouses in case the power goes out. This prevents us from catastrophic crop failures should we lose power during the winter months.

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 a new bed at Adams Park in Roslindale Village as well as Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park.



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, which is set to open in spring. 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 green spaces.

In addition, The Franklin Park Greenhouses contributed plants for celebrations such as Saint Patrick's Day, when shamrocks are grown for the Boston Elderly Services Department holiday celebrations. Flowering annuals are also supplied for the Mayor's Neighborhood Coffee Hours, park opening ceremonies, and park rededications.



This fall, the Horticultural staff planted over 30,000 tulips and other flowering bulbs across the City. We supplied 15,000 daffodil bulbs for the annual giveaway for garden clubs and community groups that want to beautify city-owned parks and green spaces.



# RECREATION

*In 2025, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department's Recreation Division continued its mission to promote health, wellness, and community engagement by delivering a wide range of free recreational programs, sports leagues, clinics, and fitness opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities. Through citywide tournaments, seasonal leagues, specialized clinics, and collaborative community events, the division provided thousands of Boston youth, adults, and seniors with opportunities to stay active and connect with neighbors.*

Throughout the year, the division organized hundreds of recreational events ranging from neighborhood-based clinics to large-scale Mayor's Cup tournaments. In addition to its core offerings, the Recreation Division partnered with City departments and community organizations to support special events that brought residents together to enjoy outdoor spaces, celebrate holidays, and participate in family-friendly activities that strengthen community bonds.

Recreational programming in 2025 spanned a wide range of sports and activities, including Adaptive Soccer, Archery, Cross Country, Rugby, Tennis, Ultimate Frisbee, Volleyball, and Junior Golf, as well as established leagues such as the Boston Neighborhood Basketball League (BNBL), Boston Neighborhood Soccer League (BNSL), Boston City Baseball League (BCBL), Men's Adult Basketball League, Men's Softball Leagues, and the Mayor's Cup series. Longstanding partnerships with organizations such as Tenacity, BUDA, and the Willie O'Ree Hockey program continued to expand access to both traditional and emerging sports.

*A major highlight of 2025 was the continuation of the Forever Young Program, a new initiative designed to promote active, healthy aging through recreation and social engagement. Offered in partnership with Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF), this free, weekly seasonal program*

*provided older adults with opportunities to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities such as archery and bocce while fostering wellness, connection, and meaningful social interaction. Sessions were drop-in and open to all, reflecting the department's commitment to inclusive, lifelong recreation.*



The division also expanded opportunities for girls' sports with the inaugural Boston Neighborhood Volleyball League (BNVL). Launched in partnership with Boston Public Schools Athletics and Let's Play Boston, this free six-week summer league served girls ages 15 and under at Madison Park High School in Roxbury. The league offered a supportive environment focused on skill development, teamwork, and friendly competition. Additionally, the Greater Boston Girls Hockey League (GBGHL) continued to grow. Following a successful launch of an under-8 division in winter 2024, the league expanded in 2025 to include both under-8 and under-10 divisions, serving 22 teams citywide. Championship games were once again hosted at Walter Brown Arena at Boston University, providing young athletes with a memorable competitive experience.

Seasonal programming remained a cornerstone of the division's work. Winter offerings included flag football, adaptive soccer, baseball and softball clinics, rugby and soccer clinics at the Carter Playground Bubble, and the Boston Parks Winter Fitness Series, which engaged more than 2,600 participants. Spring programs featured the All Girls Sports and Wellness Festival in partnership with BCYF, Mayor's Cup Street Hockey, and Junior Golf lessons at Franklin Park.



Summer programming remained our busiest time of year, with leagues, tournaments, clinics, and Summer Sports Centers activating parks across the city. Highlights included the Boston Neighborhood Basketball League, which served over 1,200 youth, and the following Mayor's Cup tournaments: Baseball, Softball, Flag Football and Tennis. The Willie O'Ree Street Hockey Program reached nearly 1,600 youth across multiple neighborhoods while employing teens as instructors and leaders. Free Summer Sports Centers at five locations engaged thousands of participants and provided meaningful employment opportunities for youth leaders and staff.



Fitness programming continued to thrive in 2025, with free winter, summer, and fall fitness classes keeping more than 7,200 Bostonians active through over 800 hours of virtual and in-person offerings. Classes ranged from youth-focused activities to adult and senior fitness, reinforcing the department's commitment to health and wellness at every stage of life.

The Mayor's Cup program remained a flagship initiative, serving 4,873 youth across baseball, softball, soccer, flag football, ice hockey, street hockey, tennis, and cross country—an increase from 2024. Citywide, 355 Mayor's Cup games, matches, and races were hosted, giving young athletes the opportunity to compete against peers from across Boston and build skills, confidence, and sportsmanship. Winter Mayor's Cup Ice Hockey alone served more than 1,500 youth across nine neighborhood rinks, emphasizing the scale and impact of our free sports offerings.



Overall, in 2025, the Recreation Division hosted 638 events and served over 11,799 people through leagues, clinics, tournaments, fitness classes, and sports centers. By combining long-standing programs with new initiatives and strategic partnerships, the division continued to expand access to high-quality recreational opportunities that promote physical health, personal growth, and community connection across the City of Boston.

# 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, the popular Neighborhood Coffee Hour series, and the annual holiday lighting events across Boston.*

In 2025, more than 33,000 attendees enjoyed 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 spooktacular 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 the Parks team welcomed families to the Boston Common for the Children's Winter Festival, a free February school vacation event with music, giveaways, various winter attractions, treats, and crafts.



Spring saw the return of Mayor Wu's Coffee Hours, with events hosted across Boston's neighborhoods in partnership with the Office of Neighborhood Services, which fostered community connections with city leaders. We also welcomed spring with a burst of yellow color from thousands of daffodils planted by volunteers through 2024's Boston Blooms program.





The summer calendar was packed with ParkARTS 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. In September, we

even hosted a magical Wicked Movie Night on the Boston Common featuring musical performances, movie trivia, and an epic costume contest. The momentum kept us moving into October, where we closed out the fall season with the Fall-O-Ween festival, which featured more live music, ventriloquism, and a crowd favorite comedic magic show!



*The year closed with the Department's iconic holiday lighting events, kicking off with the arrival of Nova Scotia's Tree for Boston. This year was made extra special as Mayor Michelle Wu and Interim Commissioner Cathy Baker-Eclipse travelled to Halifax, and joined officials to cut the 2025 Tree for Boston, a 45-foot-tall white spruce tree, donated by Claire and Ronald Feener of Lunenburg County. In November, we lit up Christopher Columbus Park Trellis in the North End and Martin's Park Ship in South Boston, and in December, we celebrated a dual re-opening and tree lighting at Copley Square in Back Bay. The highlight was the lighting of Boston Common, the Boston Public Garden, Commonwealth Mall, and the City of Boston's official Christmas tree on December 4.*

Throughout 2025, the External Affairs team hosted 9 ribbon-cutting events to celebrate major renovations at parks across Boston. Additionally, 30 community meetings for capital projects were held in 2025 and the External Affairs team handled hundreds of press inquiries, publishing more than 70 press releases in total.

The division also welcomed a new team member in 2025, Program Manager Allison Singer. Through the team's efforts, External Affairs continued to activate and celebrate Boston's parks, ensuring residents enjoyed free and accessible programming year-round.



# BOSTON PARK RANGERS

*In 2025, 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 51 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.

Rangers also managed wildlife incidents, including leading a multi-agency response to avian flu. 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

*In 2025, Boston Animal Control marked a year of exceptional service and dedication to both animals and residents. Animal Control Officer Michael Stern was named Massachusetts Animal Control Officer of the Year, recognizing his leadership and commitment in a year that saw Boston's Animal Control Officers respond to a record 9,100 calls for assistance. From rescuing wildlife and investigating animal neglect to reuniting lost pets with their families, the team continued to provide expert, compassionate service citywide.*



The City's animal shelter in Roslindale played a central role in this work, caring for more than 1,000 domestic animals in 2025. These included stray dogs and cats, small animals, pets seized during cruelty investigations, and animals temporarily housed while their owners were hospitalized, displaced, or incarcerated. Approximately 60 percent of dogs brought to the shelter were successfully returned to their owners. Every animal received comprehensive care from the City's veterinary team, including exams, vaccinations, preventatives, and needed medical treatment. Over the course of the year, the team performed 143 surgeries, including spay and neuter procedures and minor medical

interventions such as dental cleanings and wound care.

Community outreach remained a cornerstone of the program. In 2025, Boston Animal Control distributed over 600 pounds of pet food, provided 935 free and low-cost rabies vaccinations across 10 neighborhoods, and hosted a community day offering free pet supplies to residents. Through neighborhood clinics, shelter care, and emergency response, including wildlife rescues and critical disease interventions like parvovirus treatment, the Animal Control and veterinary teams continued to strengthen public health, animal welfare, and community trust throughout the City.



***Young Cooper's Hawk trapped in JFK station, he was captured and released.***



*Approximately 60 percent of dogs brought to our animal care facility are returned to their owner and this cute pup was one of them.*



*Male Golden Retriever puppies tested positive for parvo after arriving at our shelter, recovered, and were adopted – highlighting the importance of vaccinations.*



*Meet Roll, one of the cats at our animal care facility,*



*Vet tech, Andrea Forry, meets a happy clinic attendee at our vaccine clinic at BCYF Pino Community Center.*



*In 2025, the vet team performed 143 surgeries, pictured are foster kittens recovering post neuter.*



*Four pups wait their turn to get vaccines and licenses at our low cost clinic at BCYF Curtis Hall Community Center in Jamaica Plain.*

# 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 2025, the unit issued 5,535 event permits, including 1,885 special events, 135 weddings, and over 3,480 sports events at BPRD properties. The largest events included the Boston Marathon, BAA Half Marathon, and the October 2025 “No Kings” protest which drew over 100,000 people to the Boston Common.

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. In 2025, we strengthened our partnership with Bunker Hill Community College, Charlestown Youth Sports, North End Sports, and East Boston Sports to share and coordinate facilities to replace three fields under construction at Ryan Playground in Charlestown.

# 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.*



In 2025, the Division oversaw 485 burials, 132 at Mount Hope, 327 at Fairview, and 26 at Evergreen. The team participated in the annual Wreaths Across America Campaign and cleaned over 250 headstones of veterans.

Major projects took place at our cemeteries, including the restoration of the historic wrought iron fencing along Walk Hill Street at Mount Hope Cemetery. In addition, BPRD ran a rigorous campaign of pruning trees and removing deceased trees in all three active cemeteries. Over 100 trees were planted at active cemeteries and 20 at historic burying grounds.

## HISTORIC BURYING GROUNDS

*The Historic Burying Grounds Initiative (HBGI) preserves and maintains Boston's most historic final resting places in our 16 historic burying grounds. Conservation, comprehensive restoration, and heritage interpretation of these sites all fall under the HBGI program. In 2025, HBGI made substantial progress on a variety of critical projects aimed at preserving Boston's most historic final resting places.*



## Granary Burying Ground

Work began on a major gravestone and monument conservation project, including the cleaning and repair of three prominent monuments: the John Hancock monument, the monument to Benjamin Franklin's parents, and the Mosely family monument. In addition, 100 gravestones (the front left quadrant of the site) were conserved. These gravestones are being treated in a conservation studio over the winter and will be reset in spring 2026, at which time all gravestones in the section will be fully cleaned. The site also saw significant turf restoration through spring and fall seeding programs, along with the installation of a new sign which will highlight the step-free accessible entrance.

## Westerly Burying Ground (West Roxbury)

Gravestone conservation was completed at Westerly Burying Ground, stabilizing and preserving historic markers. Three new interpretive signs were installed to enhance visitor understanding of the site's history and significance. Comprehensive pruning and tree care were also completed to improve landscape health and visitor safety.

## Copp's Hill Burying Ground (North End)

Restoration began on the historic cast-iron fence, addressing sections damaged by fallen tree limbs as well as other missing or deteriorated elements. This work builds on several years of ongoing conservation at the site, which was recognized in 2025 with a Preservation Achievement Award from the Boston Preservation Alliance for gravestone conservation efforts.

### **Dorchester North Burying Ground**

Design work was completed to repair the site's front monumental entry and the Stoughton Street gate. The design phase of this project is 90% complete, with construction expected to be bid in 2026 and continue through 2027. Comprehensive tree care and new tree planting were also completed.

### **South End Burying Ground**

Design work was completed to restore a collapsed tomb, laying the groundwork for future stabilization and preservation of this historic burial feature.

### **Tree Care and Landscape Stewardship**

Extensive pruning and tree care were carried out to support the long-term health of the landscape and protect historic features within the historic burying ground sites. Tree planting continued with the addition of 20 new trees at Bennington Street, Dorchester North, Elliot, and Westerly Burying Grounds, carried out in collaboration with Tree Eastie and the Garden Club of the Back Bay. Comprehensive pruning and tree care also took place at Bunker Hill Burying Ground, Dorchester North Burying Ground, and Westerly Burying Ground. This work strengthens the City's canopy while honoring the historic character of our burying grounds.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

*Throughout 2025, the Human Resources division remained focused on supporting our workforce through strategic hiring, employee development, and active engagement initiatives that strengthen our organizational culture.*

Key highlights include employee promotions, the successful onboarding of new staff who bring valuable skills and perspectives, and HR's continued involvement in events and initiatives that promote professional growth and collaboration.

### **Employee Promotions**

During the past year, 13 employees were promoted across various divisions, reflecting our strong commitment to internal career advancement and employee retention. These promotions recognize the dedication, performance, and leadership potential of our staff while reinforcing our belief in developing talent from within the organization.

Promoting internal candidates strengthens institutional knowledge, enhances continuity, and builds leadership capacity across teams. As these employees transition into their new roles, they bring renewed energy, insight, and innovation that contribute to the ongoing success of the organization. The Human Resources team remains committed to supporting their growth and ensuring they have the resources needed to thrive.

### **New Hires**

This year, the organization welcomed a total of 160 new employees, including full-time, seasonal, and intern positions: 43 full-time employees, 114 seasonal employees, 3 interns. This expansion reflects our continued efforts to meet operational

needs while investing in a diverse and skilled workforce. The addition of new team members strengthens our capacity to deliver high-quality services and advance departmental initiatives.

### **Compensation Review and Benchmarking**

In addition to workforce development initiatives, the department participated in an extensive benchmarking and classification review focused on Laborer Services roles. This comprehensive analysis evaluated job duties, responsibilities, and market alignment to ensure positions accurately reflect the work being performed and remain competitive within the labor market.

As a result of this process, 104 full-time regular Laborer Services positions were upgraded, better aligning classifications and compensation with the scope, complexity, and expectations of the roles. These upgrades support employee retention, recruitment, and equity, while reinforcing the department's commitment to fair and competitive compensation practices.

### **Employee Development and Training**

Employee development and continuous learning remained a core priority for the Human Resources Department throughout the year. Targeted training initiatives focused on strengthening leadership skills, enhancing workplace safety, and ensuring employees are equipped with the knowledge and certifications necessary to perform their roles effectively.

A total of 16 Parks and Recreation employees participated in management and workforce readiness training, spearheaded through the Central Office of Human Resources Training and Development team. These offerings included the City Supervisor Orientation, New Manager Training, and De-Escalation Training,

supporting both new and experienced managers by reinforcing best practices in supervision, communication, conflict resolution, and employee engagement.

In addition, the department conducted an internal management training for Superintendents within Park Maintenance, emphasizing consistent supervisory practices and accountability. Training topics included effective documentation, recognizing and addressing insubordination, maintaining professional boundaries, and leading disciplinary and termination conversations. Scenario-based exercises reinforced fair, policy-driven decision-making and clear communication when managing employee performance and conflict.

The department also invested in technical skill development to support operational needs. Eighteen employees from the Urban Forestry Division and Park Maintenance Division successfully completed a Training Program, earning their 1C and 2A Hoisting Licenses. This training enhanced job-site safety, expanded operational capacity, and ensured compliance with regulatory requirements.

Together, these initiatives reflect the department's continued commitment to developing a skilled, confident, and well-prepared workforce while strengthening leadership consistency and operational excellence across divisions.

## HONORING SERVICE & CELEBRATING MILESTONES

### Retiree Recognition

As part of our continued commitment to honoring the dedicated employees who have shaped the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, we are proud to recognize those who retired this past year. Their years of service, institutional knowledge, and unwavering dedication have left a lasting legacy—both within our department and throughout the communities we serve.

*This year, we extend our sincere gratitude and best wishes to the following retirees:*

- Jacqueline Chase, Senior Personnel Officer II – 41 Years of Service
- Warren Watson, Park Maintenance Foreperson – 35 Years of Service
- Fran Dean, Superintendent of Trades – 20 years of service
- Maureen McQuillen, Senior Administrative Assistant – 14 Years of Service
- Patrick Toomey, Welder Foreperson – 13 Years of Service
- Charles Pace, Heavy Motor Equipment Repairperson – 11 Years of Service

We thank each of them for their years of commitment, professionalism, and the invaluable expertise they brought to our organization.

### 2025 Service Milestones

We are also proud to celebrate the extraordinary dedication of employees reaching significant service milestones in 2025. These anniversaries reflect decades of commitment, leadership, and pride in public service.

#### 40 Years of Service

Michael Dever, Gardener

#### 30 Years of Service

Jennifer McNeil, Park Ranger III

Hodari Keels, Park Ranger III

Richard Sameski, General Park Maintenance Foreperson

John Schievink, Park Maintenance Foreperson

Jose Padilla, General Maintenance Mechanic Foreperson

#### 20 Years of Service

Riley Cooper, Park Maintenance Foreperson

Elisabeth Scott, Greenhouse Gardener

John Harrington, Gardener Foreperson

Ernesto Reyes, Park Maintenance Foreperson

Alexis Trzcinski, Director of Animal Control

#### 10 Years of Service

Eileen Pembroke, Administrative Secretary

James Hayes, Grave Digger

Bryant Perry, Heavy Motor Equipment Operator & Laborer

Rayshawn Clarke, Park Keeper

# VENDING PROGRAM

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

In 2025, the vending program partnered with Roundhead Brewing Company once again to launch a traveling beer garden through Boston's parks.

In May, Mayor Michelle Wu and community members celebrated pastry chef Joanne Chang by cutting the ribbon on Flour Bakery + Café's newest location in the Boston Common. Through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP), Flour was chosen for its alignment with the City's goals for enhancing public spaces with high quality food service, community centered design, and local ownership.

The selection of Flour Bakery builds on Mayor Wu's efforts to revitalize Downtown Boston, which includes improving public spaces and enhancing amenities for residents, workers, and

tourists. The reactivation of the Boston Common Concession Pavilion is a key piece of the Boston Common Master Plan, which emphasizes seamless park-to-city connections.

Flour Bakery joined a growing lineup of seasonal activations on the Common, including the return of the UnCommon Stage and Beer Garden in partnership with Emerson College, which brought food, beverages, and live music. In addition, a new initiative: "Footprints of Boston" offered free programming uplifting local artists and businesses, activating the Brewer Fountain area of the park. These initiatives reflect the goals of the Boston Common Master Plan: to expand amenities that support park visitors; create a multi-functional space welcoming to people of all backgrounds and neighborhoods; and strengthen the park's natural, historic, and cultural character.



# BOSTON PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

*The Boston Parks and Recreation Commission is a seven-member body appointed by the Mayor, tasked with overseeing the City's parks and open spaces. The Commission was established through the vote of Boston residents approving Chapter 185 of the Legislative Acts of 1875. Its authority is codified in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 45 and Municipal Code Section 7.4. The Commission reviews projects under Municipal Code Section 7-4.11 that are within 100 feet of a publicly owned park or parkway.*

In 2025, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Boston Parks Commission. In 1875, Boston residents voted to create a unified park system, laying the foundation for the Boston Parks and Recreation Department as we know it today. At the time, Boston had many scattered public green spaces but lacked a coordinated system to serve the city's growing population. Concerns about public health, overcrowding, and equitable access to nature prompted the Massachusetts Legislature to pass an act establishing the Parks Commission and granting it the authority to develop the Emerald Necklace and the broader park system for the City of Boston—a measure ratified by citywide vote on June 9, 1875.

Now, 150 years later, Boston's parks continue to promote public health, climate resilience, recreation, and community connection. As we honor this milestone, we look forward to the next 150 years of vibrant, accessible, and resilient parks for all Bostonians.

## **Commission Members as of December 2025**

Cathy Baker Eclipse, Interim Commissioner  
(July 2025-present)

Brian Swett, (April - July 2025)

Liza Meyer, Interim Commissioner  
(October 2024- April 2025)

Sandy Kautz, Associate Commissioner

Eugene Bolinger, Associate Commissioner

William Epperson, Associate Commissioner

Jessicah Pierre, Associate Commissioner

David Queeley, Associate Commissioner

Icey Washington, Associate Commissioner

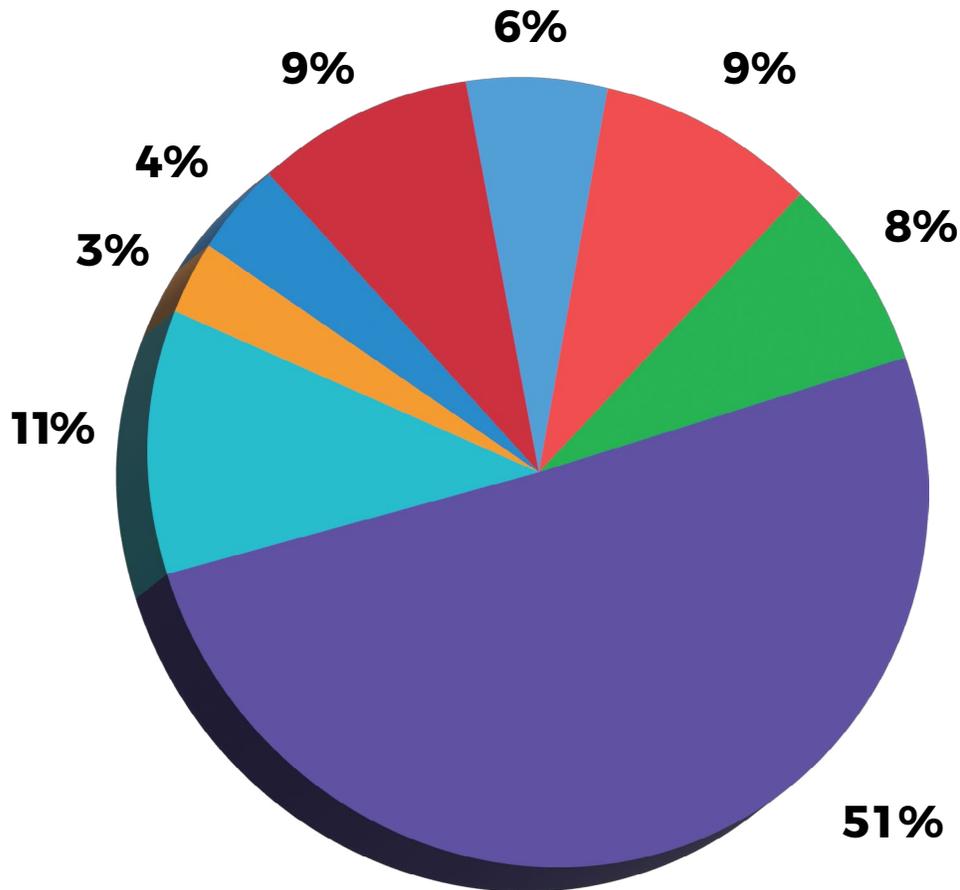
Carrie M. Dixon, Executive Secretary

Jill Zick, Interim Chief Landscape Architect

# 2025 OPERATING EXPENSES

## TOTAL EXPENSES:

\$31,627,787.90



### OPERATIONS

\$3,603,737.80

### RANGERS

\$1,032,043.39

### RECREATION

\$1,288,097.71

### URBAN FORESTRY

\$2,826,480.31

### ANIMAL CONTROL

\$1,853,065.81

### CEMETERY

\$2,778,775.01

### DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

\$2,611,144.80

### MAINTENANCE

\$16,517,973.18



**Boston Parks & Recreation Department**

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Edited by: Grace Burke    Designed by: Shanna Dixon

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