

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Friend,

From our smallest play lots to our two municipal golf courses, Boston's parks act as common ground for people of all ages and backgrounds. In 2016, we unveiled improvements throughout our neighborhoods including increased accessibility at American Legion Playground in Franklin Park; we added new opportunities for children's play at Fallon Field in Roslindale; completion of Phase 1 of the Muddy River Restoration Project; and a revitalized waterfront showcase at LoPresti Park in East Boston.

In order to support their work improving, preserving, and maintaining our open space, I was pleased to sign off on the largest budget in Boston Parks and Recreation Department history including \$5 million for historic Franklin Park. We also launched the Parks First initiative focusing attention and resources on ensuring equity, access, and excellence throughout the City of Boston's park system.

With 97% of city residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park, Parks First will strengthen our commitment to the environment, public health, quality of life, and the other benefits of having a robust and welcoming park system.

2016 was a great year for the Parks Department, tens of thousands of residents and visitors attended 820 free events, the completion of 20 new construction projects, more than 1,325 hours of recreational programming, and 98% of maintenance requests closed. You can count on 2017 to be even better as we continue to provide safe and fun spaces for people to enjoy. I hope to see you out in our parks!

Sincerely,

Martin J. Walsh

mot of wales

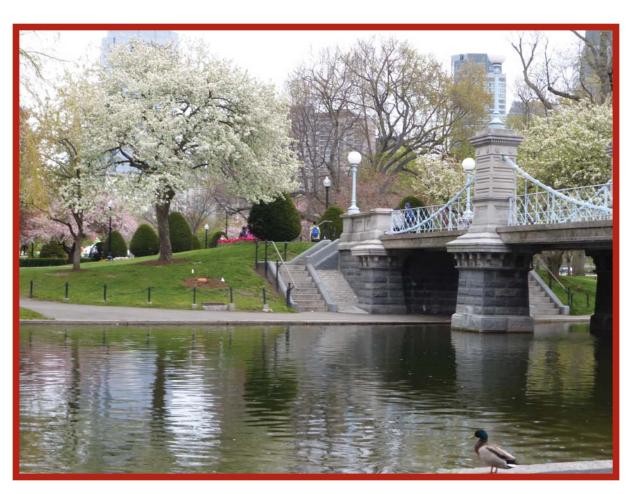
Mayor of Boston

Introduction

Boston's park system was given a boost in 2016 when Mayor Martin J. Walsh announced Parks First, a comprehensive initiative ensuring that the city's open spaces are among America's best through investments in excellence in design and management.

Parks First recognizes that our open spaces can be used in fostering community, adapting to climate change, promoting public health and wellness, and creating livable neighborhoods in an era of increasing housing density. One immediate result of Mayor Walsh's initiative was the FY16 budget, the largest operating budget in the department's history.

This unprecedented investment continued in Fiscal Year 2017 with highlights including a two-year, \$5 million dollar investment in pathway and entrance improvements to Boston's largest open space, Franklin Park; an expansion of Boston's seasonal park ranger workforce, ensuring that Boston's green spaces are welcoming safe spaces for residents and visitors; and park renovation projects including Smith Playground in Brighton, Noyes Park in East Boston, Ross Playground in Hyde Park, and a comprehensive redesign of 45-acre Harambee Park in Mattapan. These projects will focus on ensuring access, equity, and excellence on our park system.



RECREATION

The Department's Recreation Division continued its mission to provide the best in free sports activities to Boston's youth. One highlight of 2016 was the return of the Mayor's Cup Street Hockey Tournament. Teams from South Boston, West Roxbury, Dorchester, and Charlestown competed with the championships held at our brand new state-of-the-art street hockey rink at Ryan Playground in Charlestown. Skateboarders were also welcomed with classes in the basics at our summer Sports



Centers at White Stadium in Franklin Park, Moakley Park in South Boston, and East Boston Stadium.

Successful completion of our Summer Golf Course Management Program resulted in ten high school seniors receiving scholarships from the Francis Ouimet Foundation. Boston youth working at the City of Boston's two municipal golf courses will also benefit from the newly endowed \$200,000 Peter S. Lynch Scholarship.

The Recreation Division hosted the 47th annual season of Boston's favorite summer basketball league, the Boston Neighborhood Basketball League (BNBL), in July. BNBL is the oldest municipal basketball league in the country serving young men and women in three divisions each for boys and girls: 13 and under: 15 and under, and 18 and under. Over 1,800 players on 174 teams participated in this year's league at 23 sites including Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) community centers and selected parks throughout the city.





The Mayor's Cup Cross Country Tournament had the largest field of runners in its existence. More than 700 youngsters ran the world-renowned Franklin Park cross country course to see who deserved the title of "Best in Boston."

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The Department's Design and Construction Unit oversees capital improvements, historic preservation, landscape design, and infrastructure throughout Boston's city park system. The Unit also manages dozens of service orders and/or small repairs as a rapid response to requests originating internally or from the public that are beyond the scope of services performed by the Maintenance Division. A total of 20 park construction projects were completed in 2016 with 30 design plans completed for future projects and a record \$5 million budget approved by Mayor Walsh for improvements to Franklin Park

American Legion Playground

Located in Franklin Park, American Legion Playground underwent \$445,000 in renovations designed to better serve park users with disabilities. Accessible exercise equipment, benches, and picnic tables for park goers of all ages were installed in partnership with the organization Play Brigade which gave \$45,000 to incorporate additional components into the park. The remaining \$400,000 was funded by the City of Boston through a youth advisory committee convened by Mayor Walsh to choose parks for improvement.

Fallon Field



The playground at Fallon Field in Roslindale underwent a comprehensive renovation with a design and construction budget of \$910,000. The newly renovated playground includes the first water spray in Roslindale, a challenging tower climber for children ages 5 to 12 with custom slide extension to the lower level of the play area, a wide embankment slide, swings and a playhouse for 2 to 5-year-olds, and a group spinner and swing. Mayor Walsh will hold an official reopening celebration in the spring.

Elliot Norton Park

Elliot Norton Park, located on the Bay Village/Chinatown line, underwent \$1.2 million in renovations funded by Mayor Walsh's Capital Improvement Plan. Features include a comprehensive redesign of the park including a playground, passive areas, performance spaces, ping pong table, pervious paving, and rain gardens which won a 2016 Greenovate award and will be maintained by the Friends of Elliot Norton Park along with the wooded area. Funding for the irrigation was provided by the Friends of Elliot Norton Park.

Design and Construction (continued)

LoPresti Park

East Boston's LoPresti Park was reopened after completion of a project with a design and construction budget of \$4.4 million funded by Mayor Walsh's Capital Improvement Plan augmented by grants from the US Soccer Foundation (\$400,000), the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) program run by the state's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (\$800,000), and a Trust for Public Land grant for Fit Zone.



Features of the renovated waterfront park include a new artificial turf soccer field with lighting, new basketball courts with lighting, a splash pad, a new play area with adult exercise equipment funded by the Trust for Public Land, renovation of the park's section of the Harborwalk, water access area for personal craft, a picnic grove with a ping-pong table, and salt-tolerant plantings.

The park design capitalized on the spectacular views at the site by aligning the entries and pathways with the existing street grid. The community process emphasized how important basketball was to the neighborhood, and how much people valued being able to be in a park on the water. Shade is critically important on this site and over 100 trees were planted. A variety of spaces were created for people to spend time in the park from a sunning lawn with views to downtown Boston and Charlestown, to picnic tables, park benches, and lounge chairs

Mary Hannon Playground

Mayor Walsh and the Department celebrated the reopening of Mary Hannon Playground in Dorchester, with a ribbon cutting on September 24. The celebration marked the completion



of a project with a design and construction budget of \$871,555 funded by Mayor Walsh's Capital Improvement Plan.

The newly renovated park includes a new basketball court, plaza space, and a performance/stage space designed with input from local church and community groups. New play structures for children ages 2 to 5 feature a balance bridge, interactive panels, and a slide, and ages 5 to 12 include ropes, spinners and a slide. There are swings for younger children,

an accessible swing, and brightly colored safety rubber surfacing and fencing around the playground and basketball court. Landscaping improvements include new trees and perennial plantings.

Design and Construction (continued)

Rachel Revere Square

Rachel Revere Square in the North End received a major face-lift this year with a \$460,855



renovation project. The old brick wall enclosing the park and shielding it from the street was partially removed to open up the space. The flood-prone asphalt surfacing and wooden pergola were also removed. The new park was built using a multi-level design incorporating granite steps and walls and tropical wood seating inserts. The new drainage system will eliminate flooding through the use of pervious pavers and trench drains. The collected water will help to provide much needed moisture to the three new Skyline honeylocust trees.

Marcella Playground

Marcella Playground in Roxbury received a \$2 million renovation including new play equipment, spray feature, court resurfacing, re-graded field and improved lighting, wall improvements, new fence and restoration of public art.



Small Projects

Small projects completed in 2016 include replacement of the existing lawn at Copley Square with brand new sod; transformation of Beecher Street Play Area in Jamaica Plain through aeration, reseeding, and replacement of a collapsed fence; and refurbishment of Ripley Playground in Dorchester including replacement of broken equipment, repair of damaged safety surfacing, and stump removal to facilitate future plantings by community groups.

Winthrop Square Training Field

A total of \$800,000 in landscaping, soil revitalization, pathways, and new perimeter fencing was invested in the historic Winthrop Square Training Field in Charlestown.

Design and Construction (continued)

Muddy River Restoration Project

The Fenway neighborhood saw a former parking lot and roadway transformed into a verdant link in Boston's Emerald Necklace parks thanks to the Muddy River Restoration Project, a joint effort with the Army Corps of Engineers, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Town of Brookline and the City of Boston. The project is a demonstration of truly green infrastructure. Old, undersized pipes were removed, banks shaped and planted, and the river now flows freely again. The work returned Frederick Law Olmsted's vision to the park system by restoring capacity for water in major rain storms while creating habitat and adding beauty.





Before After

Urban Wilds

The Urban Wilds Initiative (UWI) is responsible for the protection, restoration, and ongoing maintenance of hundreds of acres of City-owned natural areas for conservation and recreation.

In 2016, the UWI substantially completed a trail head renovation and way-finding project at Allandale Woods in West Roxbury. Key elements of this project included the renovation of existing entrances, improvements to pathways and trails, and the installation of new information boards and signage. As part of the project, sensitive wetland habitat areas that feed Bussey Brook were also restored near Allandale Field along the VFW Parkway, at the vernal pool behind Snow Place on Centre Street, and at the historic Spring House off Allandale Street. In East Boston, design was completed for the renovation of the Rockies Urban Wild and Orchard.

In addition to to capital renovations, the UWI initiated a pilot project with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) aimed at training local nature enthusiasts to partner with the City and TNC in becoming site monitor and stewards at the Sherrin Woods site in Hyde Park. If successful, the program will be expanded to other sites to simultaneously connect urban residents with nature in their own back yards while helping to address limited program resources for site maintenance.

CEMETERIES



The Cemetery Division maintains and beautifies 16 historic burying grounds and three active cemeteries on more than 200 acres of land containing over 250,000 gravesites at Mount Hope Cemetery in Mattapan, Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park, and Evergreen Cemetery in Brighton. A total of 518 burials were performed in 2016.

The year's highlights included construction of a new equipment garage at Fairview Cemetery, participation in

the "Wreaths Across America" campaign, and delivery of a new power washer truck that will be used for the cleaning of veterans' headstones. To ensure that all Bostonians are cared for, an additional 100 graves were added for the indigent at Fairview Cemetery.

Historic Burying Grounds Initiative

The Historic Burying Grounds Initiative (HBGI) is a public/private cooperative program dedicated to the comprehensive restoration, ongoing conservation, and heritage interpretation of Boston's 16 historic burying grounds.



Accomplishments in 2016 included restoration of east above-ground tombs in Bennington Street Cemetery. Construction began in spring 2016 and was completed in fall 2016. Restoration was also completed on grave markers in Hawes Burying Ground, Union Cemetery, Market Street Burying Ground, Granary Burying Ground, and Dorchester North Burying Grounds. The work in the Granary and Dorchester North Burying Grounds focused on above-ground tomb markers and the work in the

other sites focused on headstones.

Design work was completed for landscape restoration at King's Chapel Burying Ground and design services were started for Victorian landscape restoration in Dorchester North Burying Ground and fence, wall, and tomb restoration in Union Cemetery and Hawes Burying Ground.

Smaller restoration projects in various sites included repair of underground tombs in Central Burying Ground, Japanese knotweed remediation in Bennington Street Burying Ground, and west mound drainage improvements in Bennington Street Burying Ground.

GOLF COURSES

The City of Boston owns and operates two popular public golf courses, the Donald Ross-designed George Wright Golf Course in Hyde Park and the William J. Devine Golf Course at Franklin Park in Dorchester.

In 2016 the George Wright was ranked #9 in Massachusetts Best Places You Can Play by

Golfweek, the 4th best place to play public golf in Massachusetts by Golf Advisor, and one of the top five courses in the Boston area by the Golf Channel. Phase I of the George Wright Clubhouse renovation project was completed including a new roof, external windows and doors, and a brand new clubhouse patio that serves both the restaurant and golf facility. In the summer of 2016, the Department hosted the first summer music series on the patio featuring acoustic music by local musicians.



The William J. Devine Golf Course hosted The MIAA Division 1 State Championship, was ranked the 5th best place to play public golf in Massachusetts by Golf Advisor, and was also chosen one of the top five courses in the Boston area by the Golf Channel.



Construction on the William J. Devine Golf Course in FY16 included a rebuilt tee complex on hole #14, rebuilt bunkers and approach around #6 green, and general beautification near #13 green including a new cart path and new turf. The George Wright Golf Course was also improved with rebuilt bunkers around #17 green, a rebuilt tee complex on Hole #18, and a renovated tee box on Hole #4. A total of 71,073 rounds of golf were played at the two City courses in 2016.

Permitting

The Permitting Unit issued 2,152 permits for all parks and playgrounds in 2016. Looking forward to 2017, the Division will be implementing the Active Net online permitting solution starting in February allowing transparency and accessibility for all permit requests. The system will provide applicants with real-time access, one-stop shopping, online payment options, and staff with accounting, data, and schedules all in one place, automatic reports, and more time to assist constituents.

PARK PARTNERS

The Parks Partners Program is a community-based initiative that strengthens, supports, and helps to create neighborhood park groups while bringing these groups together to facilitate shared learning and form a unified constituency with common goals and deliverable outcomes.

As of December, 2016, there were 12 new Park Partners groups formed for a total of 170 active Park Partners. This represents roughly 1,500 people committed to helping the Department enhance our parks and user experiences. In this year alone, Park Partners had over 50 independent volunteer groups coordinate cleanups and planting initiatives. Several college-aged groups and corporate sponsors also volunteered their time to the Urban Wilds Initiative and preservation efforts. Additional teams of volunteers assisted our Recreation team in successfully executing the events that give our city's youth various sports activities.

In October, more than 90 community groups helped beautify Boston by planting over 22,000 daffodil bulbs bringing color to our neighborhoods in the coming spring. Community groups, garden clubs, and elementary schools from throughout the city have been participating in this program for several years and each year the number of applicants grows. Thanks to the program 140,000 bulbs have been planted citywide in the last five years.



For more information on how you can join a Friends Group or start your own to help care for your neighborhood park, call the Boston Parks and Recreation Department at (617) 961-3006 or e-mail parkpartners@boston.gov.

Boston Park Rangers

As the regulatory arm of the Parks Department, the Boston Park Rangers provide a public safety service that fulfills Frederick Law Olmsted's vision of having "park keepers" patrol the parks in the late 1800s. Their efforts resulted in less vandalism and encouraged, in Olmsted's words, "a wise use of the City's parks."

Today, the roles and responsibilities of the Boston Park Rangers are dramatically different, yet their core mission remains. In light of growing public safety concerns, complex issues surrounding homelessness, and significant changes in park usage, the Rangers strive to remain efficient by constantly improving their training requirements and fine-tuning their collaborative efforts with all of Boston's public safety services.

In addition to being the City's goodwill ambassadors to residents and visitors alike, the Rangers present a highly visible security presence on foot, on horseback, and in vehicles. Educating and informing park patrons about the regulations that are meant to preserve our open space plays a great part in their daily duties

Boston Park Rangers (CONTINUED)

A glimpse at the incident reports handled by the Park Rangers during 2016 demonstrates their efforts while on patrol, better defining how they help keep our parks safe, vibrant and "user

friendly" year round:

Public Assistance: 32,695

Citations: 501

Public Safety/ Park Protection: 15,892

Animal Violations: 4,107 Animal Assistance: 209 Permit Checks: 405 Maintenance reports: 537



Considered an integral part of their daily operations, the nationally recognized Mounted Unit provides an immensely effective and popular means of patrol providing the public with a sense of security wherever they are deployed. The unit's stable operation at Franklin Park also offers a volunteer/internship program that includes summer job opportunities for Boston youth.

Augmenting their role in law enforcement is a concentration in natural resource management, visitor service, animal control and special event coordination. The Park Rangers' annual egg addling initiative (a means by which the Canada goose population is humanely controlled) in 2016 resulted in 435 eggs addled in over 80 nests throughout various parks.

Maintenance Division

Based in Franklin Park, the Maintenance Division works to beautify, manage, and maintain Boston's park system. Maintenance crews are responsible for squares, fountains, game courts, street trees, and almost 200 additional acres of urban wilds and non-traditional open space properties. Ninety-eight percent of the 4,490 park maintenance requests received in 2016 were completed along with 4,136 tree maintenance requests.



During the year, 1,624 street trees were planted and 1,360 trees were maintained and/or pruned.

Last year, Mayor Walsh created the first second shift in Boston Parks and Recreation Department history for maintenance. Parks First will expand the department's seasonal maintenance workforce to ensure that Boston's neighborhood parks receive an increased level of care.

Parks First also expanded recycling into Millennium Park in West Roxbury and Christopher Columbus Park on the waterfront in the North End, providing Bostonians with an opportunity to act as stewards of their environment and complement the city's Greenovate strategy.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Department's External Affairs Unit oversees sponsorships, public relations, ParkARTS, and special events and programming. The Unit presented 820 programs and events during 2016 including the long-running Dorothy Curran Wednesday Night Concerts on City Hall Plaza, the Rose Garden Party fundraiser, the popular Mayor's Garden Contest, and the Neighborhood Coffee Hour series which gives residents the opportunity to meet Mayor Walsh and City officials one-on-one in their local parks.

The first-ever Boston Bubble Festival on Boston Common offered a Saturday in May filled with activities that attracted a crowd of 5,000. Building on the popularity of "Bubble Guy" Jim Dichter's presentations at previous Parks Department children's events, the Boston Bubble Festival offered free outdoor activities in and around the historic Parkman Bandstand.

More than 5,000 people attended the Fall Pumpkin Float at the Boston Common Frog Pond in October. Hundreds of illuminated jack-o'-lanterns were floated on the water accompanied by spooky family activities. Attendees brought small carved pumpkins that were lit and floated on the Frog Pond for a dramatic early evening display.

In June, Mayor Walsh and Ms. Lorrie Higgins hosted the 20th annual Mayor's Rose Garden Party fundraiser in the Kelleher Rose Garden in the Back Bay Fens. More than 300 guests raised over \$140,000 for free quality programming including concerts, arts and crafts for children, puppet shows, painting and photography workshops, children's festivals, movie nights, and much more in Boston parks.

In 2016, the Boston Parks Summer Fitness Series offered in partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission and Blue Cross Blue Shield included group activities for adults and children at 18 public parks in 11 neighborhoods across Greater Boston from June through September. Attendance was 25,000 for the season with classes specifically for seniors, children, and families including salsa dancing, yoga, tai chi, Zumba, boot camp, and line dancing.









EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (CONTINUED)

The last major programming event of 2016 was Boston's 75th Annual Official Tree Lighting on Boston Common. A crowd of 21,000 celebrated as Mayor Walsh lit the City of Boston's official Christmas tree and lights throughout Boston Common and the Public Garden with the Honourable Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia, Boston's own Bell Biv DeVoe, and Santa Claus. The show closed with a pyrotechnic display by Atlas PyroVision.

This was the 45th year that Nova Scotia gave a tree to the people of Boston as thanks for relief efforts following the December 6, 1917, explosion of a munitions ship in Halifax Harbor. A 47-foot white spruce tree in Ainslie Glen, Cape Breton, was selected. The tree was located on a highway right-of-way and therefore owned by the Province of Nova Scotia which was unusual in that with the exception of 1981, the Christmas trees sent to Boston have been donated by private property owners. The spruce was located near the Waycobah First Nations community nestled along the shores of the world-famous Bras d'Or Lakes.



VENDING

Boston's parks have been home to vendors selling their wares for hundreds of years and serve as the cornerstone of the Department's Vending Program. Our program vendors retail all types of items including hot prepared foods, snacks, ice cream, lemonade, sports and city themed t-shirts and sweatshirts, as well as scarves and mittens during the colder months. The carts are typically in service April through September. However, there are some vendors that brave the elements and sell goods for a longer portion of the year.

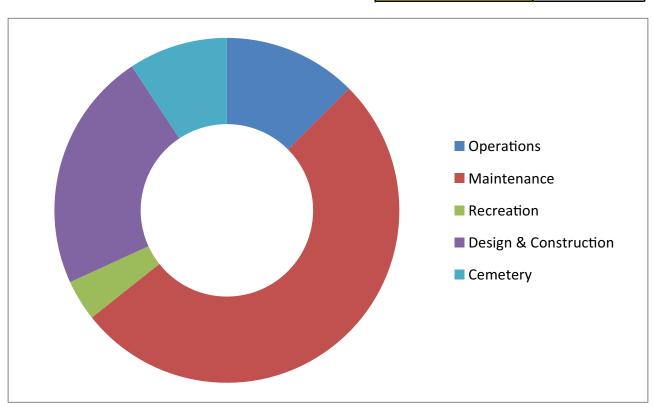
In 2016 there were 24 different vendors operating at 49 sites throughout Copley Square, Boston Common, Christopher Columbus Park, and various other City-owned parks. The revenue generated from the program, in the form of monthly lease payments, is used to support youth recreational programming throughout the City of Boston. As part of our effort to add stability and continuity to the vending system, the Operations and Management of Mobile Concessions 2017 RFP captures three years of business operations. The response has been very positive and we look forward to working with vendors and visitors throughout the three-year contract period.

2016 Financial Information

OPERATING BUDGET

\$23,254,397.48

Operations	2,915,625.15
Maintenance	12,040,833.23
Recreation	895,243.07
Design & Construction	5,242,608.33
Cemetery	2,160,087.70



By the numbers 2016

Arts and Cultural Programs	820
Revenue from all sources	\$7,912, 266
Park permits granted	2,152
Recreational Facility permits	974
Special Event permits	898
Street closing permits	199
New Park Partnerships established	12
Park Maintenance requests received	4,490
Park maintenance requests completed	4,432
% completed	98%
Tree maintenance requests received	4,232
Tree maintenance requests completed	4,136
% completed	97%
Street trees maintained/pruned	1,360
Street trees planted	1,624
Street trees removed	875
Golf rounds played	71,073
Park construction projects completed	20
Park design plans completed	30
Burials performed	468
Recreation sessions	828
Recreation program hours	1,325.5

BOSTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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

Christopher Cook, Commissioner
Elisa Birdseye, Associate Commissioner
Anne Connolly, Associate Commissioner
Maria Fitzpatrick, Associate Commissioner
David Queeley, Associate Commissioner
Sanjay Saini, Associate Commissioner
Charles Titus, Associate Commissioner
Carrie Marsh, Executive Secretary
Liza Meyer, Chief Landscape Architect

CABINET CHIEF

Austin Blackmon, Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space

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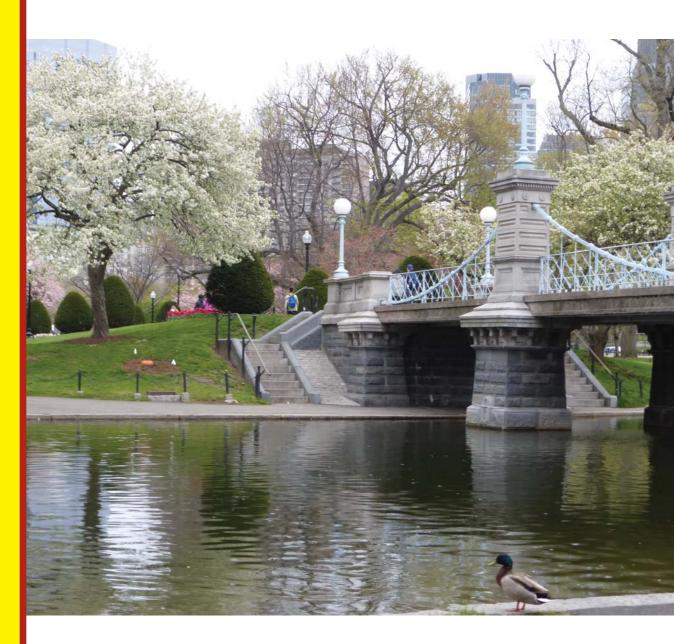
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2016 ANNUAL REPORT





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