



City of Boston  
Parks and Recreation

# 2021 Annual Report

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# Letter from the Mayor

Dear Friends,

I have always loved Boston's green spaces. Nestled between buildings, sprawling along the water — our parks and playgrounds are magical places. They give life and color to our city, and provide opportunities to catch our breath and reconnect with nature.

In navigating the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, our outdoor spaces have taken on an even more important role. As we all sought to stay connected, while keeping each other safe, our open spaces grew into essential community hubs and gathering places for friends, families, and neighborhoods across our city.

As the mother of two young boys, I'm so grateful for the dedicated stewardship of our Boston Parks and Recreation Department—stewardship that makes these spaces available to all of us. As mayor, I'm proud of the work that our Parks staff continues to put into sustaining rich cultural and community programming in all our parks, from movie screenings and concerts to workshops and athletic events.

I'm also excited to work with the Parks Department to tap into the power of our parks as engines of climate resilience. Boston is especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as a coastal city. So it's important that we leverage every tool we have to protect our environment and our communities. That's why we're investing in climate resilient features in our parks, like the recently reopened Langone Park and Puopolo Playground. These features are a first for our city and will be the blueprint for how we reimagine facilities that are vulnerable to rising tides and stormwater. And this \$15 million renovation is just the first of many in our plan to make Boston a Green New Deal City.

As we celebrate all that we've accomplished in the past year, I invite you to join us in imagining all that we'll do in the months to come. The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to continuing its proud tradition of creating, maintaining, and preserving some of the finest open space in the nation, and is ready to lead the way in building a brighter, greener future for Boston.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Wu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Michelle Wu  
Mayor of Boston



# Introduction

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department oversees the preservation, care, and improvement of the City of Boston's open spaces. From the pastoral landscapes of Franklin Park to the smallest neighborhood tot lot, residents and visitors of all ages enjoy a wide variety of sports and activities while dedicated workers ensure that our parks and playgrounds are kept clean and safe.

During the first half of 2021, Parks Department staff adapted to ongoing pandemic health restrictions and remote work while continuing to fulfill their primary responsibilities for the management of the City of Boston's recreational facilities, open space resources, street trees, cemeteries, urban wilds, historic burying grounds, and animal care and control. Virtual meetings allowed us to gather community feedback on park improvement projects and hold hearings on tree removal requests.

When health officials allowed the safe return later in the year to in-person events and activities in our parks, we served more than an estimated 50,000 people through our programming culminating in a crowd of thousands at the December 2 holiday tree lighting celebration on Boston Common.

The following annual report reviews the Parks Department's accomplishments over the past year while assuring the future health of our park system with initiatives addressing Boston's urban forest, heat resilience, new action plans for Boston Common and Franklin Park, and an updated seven-year City of Boston Open Space and Recreation Plan.

# Design and Construction

As the division tasked with designing, preserving, and improving our parks, the Design and Construction Unit celebrated more than a dozen projects completed this year. At the close of 2021 the Unit had more projects in the construction phase with an additional 20 pending designs complete or in progress.

Work on the Franklin Park Action Plan continued in 2021. The Parks Department and the Action Plan design team hosted community conversations to discuss activation nodes and catalyst projects. Development of the Boston Common Master Plan also continued in preparation for a 2022 final report.

The Healthy Places website was launched in collaboration with the Environment Department incorporating the City's Heat Resilience Study, Urban Forest Plan, and Open Space and Recreation Plan. Healthy Places received \$340,000 to fund AC unit distribution, five internship positions, additional community engagement, and more.

The Department also received \$1,000,000 from the Community Preservation Act to fund the Open Space Acquisition Fund for the purchase of additional open space in the City allowing the Department to expand and protect vulnerable open space in 2022.

The Urban Forest Plan is a year-long effort made up of several phases. The first part of

the work completed in 2021 was the citywide public street tree inventory that recorded information on a variety of factors such as health, size, site conditions, and more. The data collected during this tree inventory provides an important snapshot in time of the condition of Boston's street trees and the Department aims to keep the inventory updated for use in routine operations. Now that the inventory is complete, analysis is underway to see what it tells about this facet of the urban forest. A report with recommendations will be delivered in late spring of 2022.

The Asset Inventory System was launched and allows the Department to capture changes to the park system after capital improvement projects by updating information on select park features. As a result, there is now a public map of select Department-managed park features and their accessibility status available online to assist the public in planning their visits.

## Court Improvements

The Various Courts program is an annual capital improvements project focused on 88 individual sites containing over 216 courts throughout the City of Boston's park system. The court types include basketball, tennis, street hockey, handball, and wall ball courts. The annual funding is \$750,000 and includes design services and construction costs.



*A partnership with the Boston Bruins Foundation resulted in this state-of-the-art street hockey rink at DeFilippo Playground in the North End.*

Throughout the years the Boston Parks and Recreation Department has partnered with various groups for input, as well as assistance on renovations. The Boston Bruins Foundation, in partnership with commercial playground equipment manufacturer Kompan, assisted in resurfacing Porzio Park in East Boston and DeFilippo Park in the North End. The US Tennis Association along with the Laver Cup assisted in surfacing the tennis courts at Moakley Park in South Boston.

## **Langone Park and Puopolo Playground**

January marked the completion of a \$15 million comprehensive reconstruction and upgrade of Langone Park and Puopolo Playground on the waterfront in Boston's North End. The 4.5 acre signature park is noted for local touches like a bocce court and a marker denoting the site of the Great Molasses Flood of 1919. It also made international headlines in 2019 when a local family solved the clues in the book "The

Secret" and coordinated with the construction contractors to locate a small treasure buried by the book's author, one of 12 in the United States, under the softball field before it was renovated.

With no other athletic fields located within the area, Langone Park and Puopolo Playground provide critical active and passive recreation opportunities to a diverse, multi-generational population. The park is also a critical link in Boston's HarborWalk, a network of publicly accessible corridors that provide the interface between public and private properties and access to Boston Harbor. The project was funded with more than \$14 million from the Mayor's Capital Improvement Plan which included \$1 million from the Community Preservation Act and an additional \$195,000 from the City of Boston's Emelie Pugliano Trust Fund.

The park is the first in the city designed with climate resilient features embedded throughout to protect the shoreline, the neighborhood, and other public assets from projected sea level rise and increased storm

events. In collaboration with Climate Ready Boston and other city agencies and stakeholders, the Parks Department built an integrated seawall internal to the park with overlooks and seating on an elevated boardwalk.

The design incorporates structural elements including ground improvements, micro piles, and lightweight soils to elevate the park up to seven feet without affecting adjacent structures, properties, and the existing seawall. The project also implements stormwater and infrastructure protection strategies to allow for programmed flood pathways and faster recovery of the park and neighborhood after storm events.

## West 2nd Street Park and Community Garden

On June 22, Chief of Environment, Energy and Open Space Reverend Mariama White-Hammond, Boston Parks and Recreation Commissioner Ryan Woods, and other City officials joined the Friends of West 2nd Street Park, the South Boston Neighborhood Development Corporation, local residents, and urban gardeners to celebrate the grand opening of the West 2nd Street Park and Community Garden.

The 16,000 square feet of new park and community garden space, built on a formerly vacant lot at 175 West 2nd Street in South Boston, includes both active and passive areas along with design features such as a patio area, trees, benches, flower containers, and 21 community garden plots providing shared amenities like compost bins and a tool shed. Three of the plots are raised beds

reserved for gardeners with accessibility needs. In addition, a total of 31 new trees were added to Boston's urban canopy.

The new park and community garden were funded by a community benefits contribution from Breakthrough Properties as part of Boston Planning & Development Agency project approval for the 105 West 1st Street development, as well as a joint contract between the Parks Department and Department of Neighborhood Development for the design phase of the project.

## Garvey Playground

A \$5,315,000 project at Garvey Playground, a 5.27-acre park located at 340 Neponset Avenue in Dorchester, was funded by the Mayor's Capital Improvement Plan as part of a series of reopenings in 2021 in Dorchester, Hyde Park, Mattapan, and South Boston.



Improvements to the park include age appropriate play areas for children ages 2 to 5 and 5 to 12 including swings and a cooling station. A new artificial turf field includes Babe Ruth baseball, men's and women's lacrosse, and flag football. The field features integrated concrete bleachers that fit into the landscape. Other amenities include a dog recreation space, a field house terrace, and scoreboards and lighting for the ball field, basketball court, and street hockey.

## Madison Park-O'Bryant Educational Complex

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department joined stakeholders from Boston's youth sports and nonprofit communities on October 15 to celebrate the ribbon cutting for new football, track, baseball, and softball fields shared by Madison Park Technical Vocational High School and the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science.

A partnership forged by the Parks Department's Design and Construction Unit, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the New England Patriots Foundation, and the National Football League (NFL) Foundation, benefitted youth and school football programs that use the Madison Park Technical Vocational High School-O'Bryant Educational Complex football field in Roxbury for practices and games. The comprehensive \$1.75 million renovation project began in August of 2020 and was completed in September.

The overall project included replacement of

the running track and synthetic turf football fields at the upper level, replacement of synthetic turf baseball and softball fields at the lower level, improved fencing and backstops, new and repaired fencing at the perimeter and around the track, and a new electronic scoreboard.

## Medal Of Honor Park

In October, the McGrath Family of South Boston joined the Parks Department and residents of all ages to open a new play area for children ages two to five built in memory of their beloved son, Colin, a South Boston boy who died shortly before his third birthday after being struck by a car. In response to Colin's death, his parents, Kerri and Brendan McGrath, started Colin's Joy Project to enhance local play spaces and sponsor children and family programming in the South Boston community, particularly for families in need.

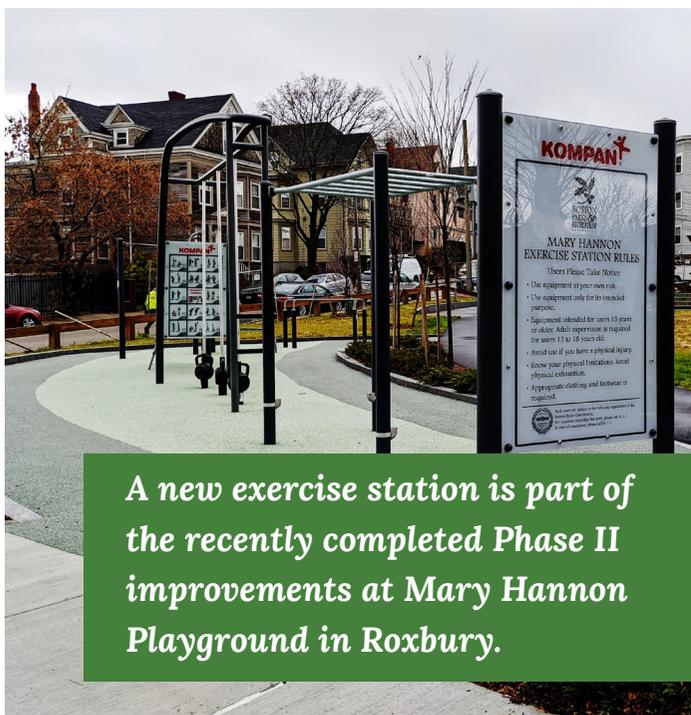


*The "USS Colin" provides a fun space for children at the new play lot opened by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department at Medal of Honor Park in South Boston in memory of local boy Colin McGrath.*

The 2021 park renovation includes age appropriate play equipment, safety surfacing, site furnishings, landscaping, and upgrades to drainage for the splash pad. Construction costs were \$217,500 funded by the Mayor's Capital Improvement Program and a donation by playground equipment manufacturer Kompan.

## Mary Hannon Playground

November 22 marked the completion of Phase II renovations by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department to Mary Hannon Playground at 621 Dudley Street in Roxbury. With an overall budget of \$1,014,000, Phase II renovated an under-utilized field to create a walking loop, exercise station, splash pad, two shelters with picnic tables, benches and game tables, and 32 new shade and flowering trees. The fence that ran the perimeter of the park was removed and replaced with a guard rail to allow the park to be more open and accessible with three new openings added.



*A new exercise station is part of the recently completed Phase II improvements at Mary Hannon Playground in Roxbury.*

## Justice Edward O. Gourdin Veterans Memorial Park

A groundbreaking was held October 7 on a memorial park in Roxbury honoring Justice Edward O. Gourdin and other Black war veterans. Justice Edward O. Gourdin Veterans Memorial Park, located in the heart of Nubian Square (formerly Dudley Square), will be home to a memorial plaza dedicated to the African-American veterans of Massachusetts. The artwork design and construction is being funded by the Browne Fund, the Mayor's Capital Improvement Program, and a grant from the MA Department of Veterans Services. The overall park construction is being funded by the Mayor's Capital Improvement program with a total budget of \$1,272,200.

The late Boston artist Fern Cunningham Terry created the figurative bronze sculpture of Justice Gourdin as one of her final works. The memorial artwork consists of the Gourdin statue and 10 bronze bas relief sculptures sculpted by artist Karen Eutemey representing African-American soldiers across ten different wars. Complementing the memorial will be an interpretive entry marker, all set within a commemorative plaza.

## Harambee Park

A multi-phase renovation of Harambee Park in Dorchester was completed in 2021 culminating in over \$3 million in improvements to the football field. The field was reoriented to optimal solar orientation and LED lighting, new

bleachers, and a practice field with lighting were added. Other amenities include new entrances, interior park pathways, and an exercise station.

## Grants

In October the Department announced the awarding of \$1,537,164 in grants from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for improvements to Boston parks and open spaces. The three grants are the result of a successful ongoing application process by the Design and Construction Unit.

The Department applied for and was granted \$750,000 through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program administered by the state's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) for improvements to Malcolm X Park located at 150 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Roxbury. The project will create new ADA compliant park paths; most entrances will be made ADA compliant; basketball and tennis courts will be made ADA accessible; the play lot will be redesigned to include inclusive elements and a shade structure; and new interpretive signage, bike racks, and benches will be added.



*The City of Boston received a state PARC grant to help acquire land for improved access to Sprague Pond in Hyde Park.*

In September, the EOEEA awarded over \$10 million through the state's Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) program, including an additional two grants to the BPRD. It is rare for a municipality to receive two PARC grants at one time. The first PARC grant for \$400,000 will help fund the capital renovation of Winthrop Playground located at 21 Danube Street in Dorchester next to the Winthrop School. A second PARC grant for \$387,164 will help fund the proposed acquisition of land for the new Sprague Pond Shoreline Reserve in Hyde Park with frontage on Sprague Pond.

## External Affairs

The External Affairs Unit oversees the Parks Department's partnerships, public relations, ParkARTS, special events, and programming. After many events were canceled in 2020, the Parks Department safely returned to in person programs and activities in City parks.

Despite one of the rainiest summers in recent memory, more than an estimated 20,000 people were served through our programming. The Summer Concert Series and Movie Nights entertained thousands, watercolor workshops and arts and crafts workshops helped kids express themselves and appreciate our parks, and children's festivals returned with large yet manageable attendance and high acclaim. The Parks Department's celebrations kicked off the holiday season with spirited public events culminating in the lighting of the City's official Christmas tree welcoming thousands of appreciative revelers to Boston Common.



The return to outdoor events allowed External Affairs to shine with offerings including the Storywalk children's program featuring books in nine languages displayed in parks and playgrounds across the city, the Wild Wednesday hiking series, Watercolor and Arts and Crafts Workshops, the Neighborhood Concert Series, an expanded Golf Course Concert Series, Movie Nights, the Mayor's Neighborhood Coffee Hours, and more.

*External Affairs continued its mission of providing new and entertaining programming with the first annual Fall-o-Ween Children's Festival on October 22 at Boston Common. Adults and children were encouraged to wear Halloween costumes and participate in a wide range of fun and spooky activities. The free family-friendly event included glow-in-the-dark games, children's crafts, and scarily delicious snacks and refreshments.*

# Mayor's Mural Crew

The Mayor's Mural Crew completed its 30th summer of employing Boston high school students to create large-scale public art projects in city neighborhoods and parks. During the month of July, the Mural Crew painted "Tout Moun Se Moun/One Love: Mattapan Tap Tap Mural," a 50-foot by 18-foot mural located at the rear entrance of Chase Bank on Blue Hill Avenue.

In August, the crew painted "Eat What You Grow Reap What You Sow," a 31-foot by 14 foot mural at the corner of Topalian Street and Edgewater Drive, along the Neponset River. The murals were painted by a team of youth and adult artists, including Anthony Amaral, Ava Chow, Brenda Cartagena, Bobby Zabin, Camila Aguilera Steinert, Eli Swanson, Heidi Schork, Isabel Slater, Jabari Gichuru,

Jerome Jones, Leah Prodigalidad, Lucy Edelstein Rosenberg, Liz O'Brien, Mila Fields Zayas, Nate McKay, Niamh Mulligan, Sin Porter, Terrance Wharton, Upasana Patel, and Zariyah Wilkerson.

In September, the Mural Crew and Alberto Fierro, Consul General of Mexico in Boston, announced an online citywide photo collection process of departed loved ones in preparation for Boston's fourth annual Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebration. In keeping with health precautions, this year's Día de Muertos altar was again virtual. Submissions were displayed as part of the virtual citywide altar viewable at [boston.gov/diademuertos](http://boston.gov/diademuertos).



*The Mayor's Mural Crew in front of the completed "Tout Moun Se Moun/One Love: Mattapan Tap Tap Mural."*



## Horticulture

In 2021, the Horticulture team of 12 dedicated greenhouse staff, five Public Garden staff, one Kelleher Rose Garden staff member, and one Martin's Park staff member enhanced the beauty of Boston's neighborhoods and parks by producing and maintaining plantings in our parks when residents and visitors sought the beauty of the outdoors in a time of lockdowns and closings.

During the year, the Horticulture staff grew more than 20,000 finished plants in the Franklin Park Greenhouses which were then planted and maintained in over 60 dedicated sites across the city. In addition, the division planted over 25,000 bulbs in the Public Garden, another 30,000 bulbs in city parks and open green spaces, and organized a vegetable seed giveaway during the Mayor's Neighborhood Coffee Hours that distributed 60,000 seed packets of beans, tomatoes, spinach, and cucumbers.

## Maintenance

With Bostonians using our parks more than ever, our operations staff continued the tasks of the Parks Department's Maintenance Division beautifying, managing, and maintaining the City's park system while navigating changing COVID guidelines. Based out of headquarters in Franklin Park, our Parks Maintenance crews cared for squares, fountains, game courts, street trees, and almost 200 additional acres of urban wilds and non-traditional open space properties. In 2021 a total of 7,916 new park maintenance requests were received with 8,041 completed including existing requests.

## Golf Courses

From January to November, an estimated 83,402 rounds of golf were played at the City of Boston's two municipal golf courses. The 2021 golf season at The William J. Devine Golf Course at Franklin Park was very busy despite an extremely wet July. The golf course was in outstanding condition all season and even offered a few new features. Players at holes 11 and 14, for example, found a new fescue grass divider that caught many an errant ball.

Golfers were also treated to a brand new boardwalk bridge for holes 16 and 17 that helped improve the overall pace of play.

The George Wright Golf Course in Hyde Park had another great year despite a record amount of rain early in the season. Two new tees were completed at holes 6 and 15. Grounds crews were also able to clear out the underbrush down the entire right side of the 15th hole which made the rock croppings much more visible and brought out the beauty of the hole. The George Wright was recognized by Golf.com again in 2021 as the #3 municipal golf course in the country based on value and overall experience.

This year, 99 youth employees beautified and maintained the George Wright and William J. Devine Golf Courses. Golf lessons at the two sites served 285 participants and the Department also continued its participation with the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Foundation to help deserving young men and women who have worked at golf courses in Massachusetts obtain a college education. For over 25 years more than 200 Boston students have benefited from the program.

## Recreation Division

The Recreation Division provides high quality, free sports activities to Boston's youth along with fitness programs for all ages. The team continued their work both online and in person, following social distancing guidelines.

In 2021 the Recreation Department kicked off the first ever Pickleball Exhibition, the Boston City Baseball League's newly formed High School Division, and added two new Sports Center locations at Garvey Park in Dorchester and Almont Park in Mattapan.



A full menu of free recreation programs was presented with offerings including Willie O'Ree Street Hockey Clinics, Boston Baseball League, Women's and Men's Adult Basketball League, Boston Neighborhood Basketball League (BNBL), Men's Softball Leagues, Tenacity, Mayor's Cup Tennis, Boston Neighborhood Soccer League, Football Jamboree, Mayor's Cup Softball, Mayor's Cup Baseball, Mayor's Cup Street Hockey, Mayor's Cup Ice Hockey, and Junior Golf Lessons.

Free winter and summer classes kept more than 5,204 Bostonians moving during 488 hours of free virtual and in-person classes including bootcamps, chair yoga, line dancing, barre, HIIT, Yoga, family fitness, Afrobeats Bootcamp, Tai Chi, and Salsa.



The popular Summer Sports Centers were conducted at East Boston Stadium, Garvey Park, Almont Park, M Street Park in South Boston, and White Stadium at Franklin Park where 6,830 kids were able to safely participate in activities such as archery, obstacle courses, sports clinics, fitness classes, arts and crafts, and more.

## Permitting

The Permitting Unit serves a wide variety of park users by issuing permits for sports teams and leagues, special events, film productions, charity runs and walks, wedding photos, and more. Despite the challenges of COVID, the Unit kept up the pace permitting events including the Boston Marathon, First Night, Shakespeare on the Common, and a full schedule of cross country meets at Franklin Park. In 2021, the Permitting Unit issued 949 permits for adult athletics, 1,156 for youth athletics, 1,384 for special events, and 162 for weddings.

# Animal Care and Control

The mission of Boston Animal Care and Control is to provide high quality of care for animals in their custody, provide humane education and promote responsible pet ownership, and ensure effective enforcement of the laws for the welfare of animals and the safety of the community. The Division operates from an animal care and adoption center in Roslindale and an administrative office located at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue.



*Animal Control Officer Anthony Fabiano and the Boston Fire Department rescued this kitten from a storm drain on Mission Hill. The staff named her Tammy. Ladder 26 later adopted her as their new firehouse cat!*

During 2021 the Division's Animal Control Officers responded to over 7,400 of calls for service, a more than 10% increase over the prior year. The pandemic presented many residents with challenges to find high quality, affordable pet wellness care. The Division immediately responded and expanded its annual neighborhood vaccine clinics to include exam, distemper, rabies, flea/tick prevention, microchipping, and low-cost spay/neuter.



*Each year Boston Animal Care and Control teams up with Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) to hold low-cost pet clinics across the city.*

With help from the MSPCA and Animal Rescue League of Boston, our staff implanted 200 microchips, administered just under 1,000 vaccines, and performed over 500 wellness exams at these clinics alone. The Division operated a low cost spay/neuter clinic on site, hosting several high volume spay/neuter days.



The Division applied for and received a grant for up to \$30,000 from the Mass Animal Coalition and over \$10,000 in grants and in kind donations from the Banfield Foundation. In addition, Animal Control recently acquired dental equipment and looks forward to offering low-cost dental care in 2022.

# Cemetery Division

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

Adapting to restrictions and changes in protocols due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the cemetery division stayed open and on schedule with burials and maintenance of over 260 acres of burial space. Despite this tragic increase, the cemetery staff did not miss a single burial or day of operation since the pandemic struck in March, providing these essential services to families in their time of need. Capital improvements included new windows at Mount Hope and new heating at Mount Hope, Fairview, and Evergreen.

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



## Historic Burying Grounds Initiative

The Historic Burying Grounds Initiative (HBGI) manages 16 different burying grounds located in Boston ranging in date from 1630 to 1841. Gravestones, tomb markers, and monuments honor the many founding members of the community, including Revolutionary War heroes and men and women of national and international fame.

In 2021, the HBGI started conservation work on gravestones at Eliot Burying Ground in Roxbury. The scope of this project encompasses the conservation of approximately 117 gravestones and resetting of approximately 30 gravestones.

This year marked the publication of the Historic Burying Grounds Initiative Master Plan. This document took several years to complete and contains detailed assessments of current conditions in each of the burying grounds as well as recommendations for future work. The plan helps guide the Initiative in choosing restoration projects.

Design phases were completed for three upcoming projects starting with the second phase of gravestone conservation at Copp's Hill Burying Ground covering five sections of the cemetery with an estimated 142 gravestones to be treated. Additionally, crooked gravestones in these sections will be reset. The project received a grant of \$100,000 from the Community Preservation Act with conservation estimated to be completed in 2023.

Masonry restoration began on the many

brick and stone walls at Phipps Street Burying Ground. A restoration specialist was hired to survey the condition of the walls and determine which are most in need of work. Seven out of twelve of the walls were chosen to be included in the primary public bid, with options to include the other five walls. Construction is estimated to be finished in 2022.

The third project will fund the Columbia Road fence and pier restoration at Dorchester North Burying Ground. The cast concrete piers supporting this fence have prematurely failed and the steel ornamental fence requires repainting. This project is estimated to be completed in 2022.

HBGI applied for two grant Community Preservation Act applications for burying ground preservation projects. The first grant application is for restoration of masonry walls, steel ornamental fencing and gates, and gravestone repair and resetting at Westerly Burying Ground in West Roxbury. The second grant application is for restoration of the Harmony Street wall and fence at Bennington Street Cemetery in East Boston.

Landscape restoration continued at the Bennington Street, South End, and Dorchester North Burying Grounds including removal of invasive plants and diseased and dying trees, mulching, improving growing conditions of existing trees, and planting of new trees, plants, and native wildflowers.

# Boston Park Rangers

The Boston Park Ranger service maintained an uninterrupted presence throughout Boston's historic park system and burial grounds in 2021 despite the challenges faced due to the pandemic. Their highly visible mounted, mobile, and foot patrols provided a sense of security and a welcome source of visitor assistance as park visitation and activity spiked dramatically. With lessening public health restrictions, the gradual resurgence of sponsored special events resulted in the Park Rangers coordinating public safety responsibilities vital for successful large-scale public gatherings.

Enforcing Parks Commission rules and regulations, city ordinances and general laws remained an integral part of their mission which helps sustain a clean and safe urban park system. Daily interactions with the public resulted in positive outcomes driven by the Park Rangers' role as goodwill ambassadors representing Boston. Their comprehensive training based on "enforcement through education" and skills as first responders provide an additional level of emergency service when called for.

Another part of their diverse responsibilities is a strong commitment to wildlife management and animal control. Their annual efforts in humanely controlling the Canada goose population by means of egg addling resulted in identifying over 96 nests and 398 eggs throughout the Emerald Necklace and at

Chandler Pond in Brighton.

With lessening restrictions, 2021 saw a revival in programming offered by the Rangers. Monthly walking tours were held in four different parks. Walking presentations were also hosted at Allandale Woods, Franklin Park, Arnold Arboretum, and Olmsted Park based on their unique histories and open space features. The Mounted Unit offered six of its popular "Horse of Course" programs in collaboration with the Boston Police Department, the Boston Fire Department's Summer Teen Academy, and Boston Public Schools. In addition, the Park Rangers' training in providing informal interpretation resulted in interactions with park visitors educating and leaving a positive impression on the public.



# Urban Wilds Program

The City of Boston Urban Wilds Program manages and cares for 30 urban wilds across our neighborhoods. These unique spaces offer a peaceful respite from Boston's urban environment. They serve as outdoor classrooms for children and adults to learn about nature and provide habitat to native plants and animals. Additionally, urban wilds perform many ecological services, such as storing floodwater, filtering stormwater run-off, producing oxygen, and reducing the urban heat island effect.

This year 30 parcels totaling approximately ten acres were permanently protected for conservation through inclusion into the Urban Wilds portfolio. These properties included additional parcels within the Mattahunt Woods and the culturally and geologically significant Babson-Cookson tract in Mattapan, the large Edgeway Terrace parcel and other inholdings at Monterey Hilltop in Hyde Park, the former Rivermoor parcel in West Roxbury, and six parcels at Roslindale Wetlands.

That effort culminated in a well-attended December event to celebrate the successful partnership between City officials and staff, the Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association, the Roslindale Wetlands Task Force, and Habitat for Humanity in advancing a land protection and affordable housing project at 104 and 108 Walter Street. In conjunction with the Walter Street

acquisition, the Urban Wilds Program kicked off a capital renovation project at Roslindale Wetlands this past spring. This wetland habitat and trail restoration project is now 70% complete. When finished in 2022, the site will showcase new wetland boardwalks, refurbished trailheads, and a completed perimeter walking trail.



In November, Urban Wilds staff and members of the Fitzgerald-Tisei family organized a memorial stewardship event in honor of Urban Wilds seasonal staffer Liam Fitzgerald who sadly passed away over the summer. Family and friends came out to lovingly plant hundreds of bulbs and dozens of shrubs at the Carriage Path and Annunciation Church trailheads at Allandale Woods as well as a memorial Tupelo tree beside the footbridge crossing. Next spring, visitors will be greeted by a brilliant bulb display, and family and friends will be able to remember Liam's kind heart and valuable contributions.

# Boston Parks and Recreation Commission

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

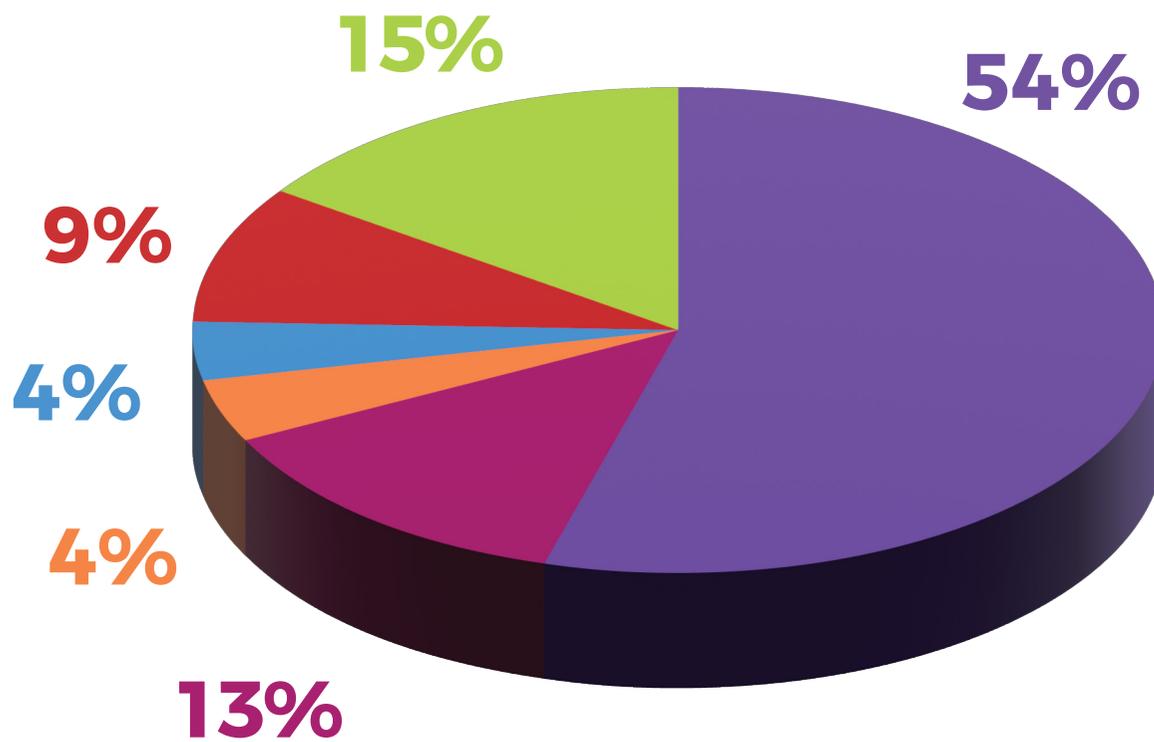
## Commission Members

Reverend Mariama White-Hammond, Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space  
Ryan Woods, Commissioner  
Elisa Birdseye, Associate Commissioner  
Anne Connolly, Associate Commissioner  
William Epperson, Associate Commissioner  
Leonard M. Lee, Sr., Associate Commissioner  
David Queeley, Associate Commissioner

Carrie Marsh Dixon, Executive Secretary  
Liza Meyer, Chief Landscape Architect

# 2021 Operating Expenses

Total expenses:  
**\$ 26,888,246.51**



**Maintenance**  
 \$14,597,301.88

**Design & Construction**  
 \$4,111,765.12

**Recreation**  
 \$1,080,287.85

**Animal Control**  
 \$1,184,427.53

**Cemetery**  
 \$2,484,244.88

**Operations**  
 \$3,430,219.25

# Top Ten Moments from

# 2021



**10.** Boston's first Urban Forest Plan kicked off and will wrap up in the spring



**5.** We expanded our language access and developed multilingual programming in our parks



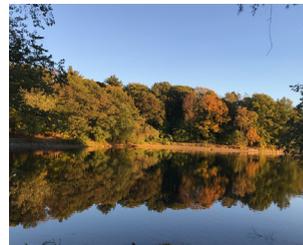
**9.** Our Animal Care & Control division continued to care for our feathered and furry friends



**4.** Design & Construction cut the ribbon and welcomed folks to newly renovated parks in Boston



**8.** George Wright & William J. Devine Golf Courses offered challenging courses in a beautiful setting



**3.** We have built a bigger team with a number of new hires including key senior staff positions



**7.** Mayor's Mural Crew enhanced the beauty of our neighborhoods with art and murals



**2.** Our operations staff worked hard to keep our parks safe, beautiful, and clean



**6.** Wild Wednesdays hikes brought interpretive programming to Boston's Urban Wilds



**1.** We returned safely to in-person events



Boston Parks & Recreation Department  
1010 Massachusetts Avenue, 3rd floor  
Boston, MA 02118

(617) 635-4505

[www.boston.gov/parks](http://www.boston.gov/parks)

   @bostonparksdept

Edited by: Jon Seamans  
Designed by: Shanna Dixon