

PART 3

COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE &
RECREATION MISSION

The Neighborhoods

Allston-Brighton

Back Bay/Beacon Hill

Central Boston

Charlestown

Dorchester

East Boston

Fenway/Kenmore

Hyde Park

Jamaica Plain

Mattapan

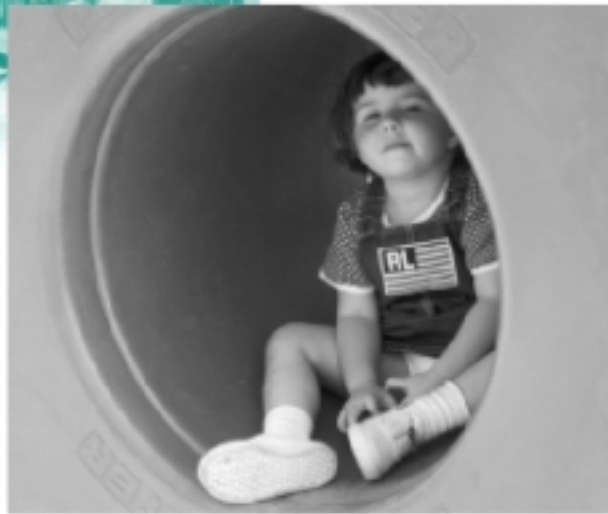
Roslindale

Roxbury

South Boston

South End

West Roxbury



PART 3 • COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE & RECREATION MISSION

THE NEIGHBORHOODS:

Charlestown

THE SETTING

History

Originally settled in 1629, Charlestown did not become a part of Boston until 1874. It was already a thriving harborside community by the time of the American Revolution. A naval shipyard was established there in 1800, generating a mixture of industry and port-related activities as well as large sections of tenement housing for workers. As waves of working class Europeans arrived to work in the shipyard, many of the wealthy old Charlestown families began to move out.

With World War II placing a heavy demand on the shipyard, many of the neighborhood's homes were converted into rooming houses to accommodate both workers and ship crews. The resulting concentration of immigrants, sailors, and laborers gave Charlestown a reputation that did not encourage investments in building single-family homes, businesses, or support services.

During the immediate post-war period, the area began a decline that did not begin to reverse until the urban renewal efforts of the 1970s. This urban renewal process, now nearing completion, was part of a larger revival and rebuilding initiative that has helped restore the community, perpetuating further growth and improvement. A key part of this new growth has been the redevelopment of the Charlestown Navy Yard for office, research, and residential uses. Another promising development has been the depression of the Central Artery in the City Square-Charlestown Navy Yard Area, a project known by its acronym CANA - Central Artery North Area. With adjacent urban renewal parcels poised for mixed-use development, the recent opening of the new Paul Revere Park (MDC), and the



Bunker Hill Monument

With significant developments in the neighborhood's demographics, Charlestown is a community that continues to grow stronger economically, physically, and socially while relying on its long-established traditions and values for stability.

recent reconstruction of City Square by the state, this gateway to the neighborhood will be further transformed.

Other transformations from the Central Artery Project that are in the offing include the New Charles River Basin parks, and most spectacularly the Leonard Zakim-Bunker Hill Memorial Bridge. With significant developments in the neighborhood's demographics, Charlestown is a community that continues to grow stronger economically, physically, and socially while relying on its long-established traditions and values for stability.

Charlestown Demographic and Housing Profile

POPULATION	
2000 Census	15,195
1990 Census	14,718
1980 Census	13,364
Population Growth/Decline, 1990-2000	3.14%
Population Growth/Decline, 1980-1990	10.13%

Demographics/Housing

Once home to a predominantly blue-collar, Irish-American population, Charlestown has grown more economically and socially diverse. Housing and infrastructure improvements have attracted young professionals into the area and the conversion of the Navy Yard has accelerated this process. In fact, between 1980 and 1990, the population of Charlestown increased 10% from 13,364 to 14,718 persons, and then again by 2000 grew by 3% to 15,195 persons (versus 2.5% for Boston).

AGE

2000 Census		
0-17 years	2,824	19%
18 and over	12,371	81%
1990 Census		
0-4 years	850	6%
5-9 years	617	4%
10-14 years	550	4%
15-17 years	351	2%
18-20 years	491	3%
21-24 years	1,274	9%
25-29 years	2,318	16%
30-34 years	1,656	11%
35-44 years	2,100	15%
45-54 years	1,337	9%
55-59 years	639	4%
60-64 years	650	5%
65-74 years	983	7%
75-84 years	490	3%
85 years and over	119	1%
Average Age (1990 Census)	36.2	

RACE	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census
White	13,034 98%	13,927 95%	11,946 79%
Black	24 less than 1%	106 1%	539 4%
Hispanic	124 1%	310 2%	1,764 12%
Asian or Pacific Islander	124 1%	316 2%	761 5%
Other	58 less than 1%	59 less than 1%	185 1%

In terms of the age profiles for 1990 and 2000, Charlestown is generally comparable to the city as a whole. For example, in 2000, 19% of the neighborhood population is under 18 years of age, compared to 20% for the city as a whole.

Racial and ethnic diversity has affected this community as well as the rest of the city. The Hispanic percentage increased from 2% in 1990 to 12% in 2000. Asian/Pacific Islanders went from 2% in 1990 to 5% in 2000; blacks went from 1% in 1990 to 5% in 2000. The percentage of white persons dropped from 95% in 1990 to 79% in 2000.

Public housing developments constitute a large portion of the total number of dwelling units in the neighborhood. Together, the Charles Newtowne, Mishawum Parks, and Bunker Hill developments have a total of more than 1,500 units, nearly 20% of the community's total.

HOUSEHOLDS

Households	
1990 Census	5,152
1980 Census	6,704
Household Growth/Decline, 1980-1990	
	30.10%

Population by Household Type	
(1990 Census)	% Person
Family households	65%
Non-family households	33%
Group quarters	2%

Households w/ One or More Persons Under 18 Years		
(1990 Census)	Households	%
All households	6,841	100%
No one under 18	5,493	80%
One or more under 18	1,348	20%

Households with Children by Type	
(1990 Census)	%
Married couple families	54
Other family, male head	4
Other family, female head	42
Non-family	1

Persons in Households		
(1990 Census)	Households	%
1 person households	2,763	41
2 person households	2,066	31
3 person households	881	13
4 person households	572	9
5 or more person hshlds	422	7

Average Persons per Household (1990 Census) 2.11

Family Type	
(1990 Census)	% Families
Married couple	62
Other family, male head	7
Other family, female head	31
Families as a % of All Households	
	46

It is not clear yet whether Charlestown will continue to retain a stable population of long-term residents. An increasing number of units are being converted into rentals to be occupied by couples without children. According to the 1990 census, the median income for Charlestown was \$35,731, considerably higher than the city median figure of \$29,180. Also reflective of changes in Charlestown, the percent of Charlestown households with no vehicles available, 34%, is lower than for the city as a whole, 38%.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC/HOUSING/DENSITY

Population 16 Years and Older, by Employment Status	
(1990 Census)	%
Employed in armed forces	1
Employed civilians	66
Unemployed civilians	5
Not in labor force	27
Median Household Income (1990 Census)	\$35,731

Occupied Units Ownership	
(1990 Census)	% Units
Owner occupied	33
Renter occupied	67

Number of Year Round Units in Structure	
(1990 Census)	% Units
Single units	17
Double units	12
3-9 units	42
10-19 units	8
20-49 units	3
50 or more units	17
All other	1
Single/Multiple Unit Ratio	0.22

Households by Age and Poverty Status	
(1990 Census)	% Households
Above poverty, under age 65	72
Above poverty, age 65 and over	14
Below poverty, under age 65	10
Below poverty, age 65 and over	4

Household by Number of Vehicles	
(1990 Census)	% Households
No vehicles	34
1 vehicles	47
2 or more vehicles	19

Population Density	
	Persons per Square Mile
1990 Census	12,051.9
1980 Census	10,960.7
Density Change 1980 to 1990	1,091.1

THE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM TODAY

Equity and Investment

Charlestown has a total of 106 acres in its open space inventory of parks, playgrounds, squares, and malls. Protected open space, such as under Parks Department and other public jurisdictions, stands at 69 acres. That translates into a ratio of 4.54 acres of protected open space per 1000 persons, below the city's ratio of 7.43 acres. However, it compares favorably with the ratio of 2.5 acres per thousand population suggested by the Boston Urban Gardeners in the South End Open Space Study (1988) as a more appropriate guideline for inner core urban neighborhoods like Charlestown. It is expected that with the development of open space in the New Charles River Basin through the Central Artery project, the ratio will rise even closer to the citywide level.

The City of Boston's Parks and Recreation Department invested close to \$3 million in improving targeted facilities through the capital plan (see table). These include the rehabilitation of playlots at Caldwell, Cook, Doherty, Harvard Mall, Rutherford/Union, and Ryan, as well as improvements to Sullivan, Thompson, and Winthrop Squares.

In addition, Doherty was the recipient of a historic landscape restoration project funded by city capital funds and a state Urban-Self Help grant for urban park re-development. This was a first phase restoration of the Olmsted-designed northern slope of the park, with its meadows and rustic puddingstone stairway. A passive viewing area was developed, enabling ADA accessibility to this steep slope.

Assessment

Charlestown can be divided into four distinct geographic areas:

Town Hill/Breed's Hill

This southern section of Charlestown is primarily residential with some institutional buildings and churches. Many of its rowhouses have been converted into condominiums and two-family houses in recent years to accommodate an influx of new residents. Historical open spaces such as the John Harvard Mall and City Square Park are in the Town Hill area. The John Harvard Mall, a set of terraces covering nearly an acre, has passive areas, historical features, and a playlot. Serving as a gateway for the entire neighborhood, City Square has been restored and re-designed, with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management as the new steward of this signature open space. The Central Artery North Area (CANA) project has replaced previously existing highway ramps with development parcels.

The Monument Square National Register District surrounds the Bunker Hill Monument. The Training Field (aka Winthrop

CAPITAL PROJECTS 1993-2000/ CHARLESTOWN

Caldwell Street Play Area	\$ 230,000
Cook Street Play Area	\$ 150,000
Courageous Sailing Center	\$ 229,000
Doherty Playground	\$ 896,000
Harvard Mall Playlot	\$ 100,000
Rutherford/Union Playlot	\$ 100,000
Ryan Playground	\$ 274,000
Sullivan Square	\$ 128,62
Thompson Square	\$ 450,000
Winthrop Square	\$ 99,501
Total	\$2,657,123

Square) serves as the centerpiece of a cohesive residential community known as Breed's Hill. Its large shade trees and low fence enable good visibility and five gateway entrances provide easy physical access.

Rich in passive open space, the Town Hill/Breed's Hill area has easy access to active recreation space to accommodate the expanding population: at Bunker Hill Community College (tennis courts and playing fields), the Navy Yard (tennis courts), Paul Revere Park (play lot and playing field), Rutherford Union (play lot and tennis court), and Harvard Mall (playlot). There have been improvements to, and promise to be more, connections to the riverfront from the Town Hill/Breed's Hill area, thanks to the recent opening of Paul Revere Park and the future development of CA/T mitigation parks in the New Charles River Basin. Connections to the harborfront will also improve thanks to Chapter 91/Harborwalk requirements for developments at Tudor Wharf.



John Harvard Mall Playlot

Bunker Hill/Little Mystic

This area contains most of Charlestown's one- and two-family houses occupied by the town's older families. It features a variety of playgrounds and waterfront access areas, including Ryan, Doherty, and Barry Playgrounds. Ryan provides access to the Mystic River, while Barry provides access along the Little Mystic River. The latter water body also has public housing developments and abandoned sites at its edges, including a public access boat ramp. In addition, the Charlestown High School nearby has a full complex of ball fields and tennis and basketball courts, now maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department.

The potential of the Mystic River shoreline remains unrealized except at Ryan Playground where a boardwalk will soon be completed, connecting to a boardwalk at the renovated Schrafft building. There is a pressing need for a thorough environmental protection strategy for the Mystic River, one that will enhance the ecosystems in the marsh, grass mud flats, and shallow waters of the river channel. A demand exists for passive areas to serve the large number of elder residents in the area. The small Olmsted-designed space at the north edge of Doherty has been improved, but the new formal passive area on the Bunker Hill Street side of Doherty needs improvement.

Charlestown Navy Yard

This area has in the last decade and a half developed as a distinct neighborhood with new affordable, elderly, and market-rate housing. Many of the historic buildings have been rehabbed as office space and as research facilities to provide employment and a substantial daytime population. While Shipyard Park has expanded into a family-oriented facility, the wharves now have increased public access. The Parks and Recreation Department has infused capital dollars into the Courageous Sailing Center to rehabilitate the pier and other physical features, as well as lead a fund-raising campaign to help pay for the program's operating costs. A signature recreation feature for Charlestown, this program helps adults, youths, and children access the watersheet of Boston Harbor.

The primary need here is to further improve access to the existing and proposed facilities at the Yard for other Charlestown residents. Opportunities exist to increase access into the Navy Yard from the surrounding community by paved pathways and signage on the north side of Chelsea Street linking the neighborhood to the existing gate 4, 5, and 6 crossing locations.

Rutherford Avenue and the Neck

This area is on the western side of Charlestown bordering Somerville and is dominated by transportation arteries. While there is a small residential enclave north of Cambridge Street, most land uses are commercial or industrial. The Bunker Hill Community College is located in this area across from the Phipps Street Burying Ground.

This section of Charlestown has few open spaces. The Parks and Recreation Department recently rehabilitated both playlots in this area, Rutherford/Union, and Caldwell Street.

The Millers River has been polluted by encroaching industrial uses and has lost its vitality as a natural resource. As part of the New Charles River Basin Project (a CA/T mitigation measure), the Millers River, and the Charles, will be made more attractive, benefiting this part of Charlestown. To make pedestrian connections across wide, busy New Rutherford Avenue to the New Charles River Basin/Charles River Dam and the new Paul Revere Park (MDC), additional planning is required.

The Boston Transportation Department has completed a study of the Rutherford Avenue Corridor, a major artery in this area. The study calls for ways of increasing capacity and making it multi-modal (pedestrians, bicycles, transit, as well as cars) while buffering the neighborhood via increased open space. The implementation of this plan may yield a new face for this part of Charlestown, enhancing this regional transportation facility while it generates open space assets for this neighborhood.

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Broad themes for open space planning in Charlestown include the consolidation and improvement of access to the existing system through opportunities set up by transportation and development projects, and the rehabilitation of existing open spaces to respond to changing community needs.

Opportunities

Neighborhood-wide

- Continue to fund capital rehabilitation of city park facilities as needed in the capital renewal cycle.
- Develop public/private partnerships with area businesses for park improvement projects.

Town Hill/Breed's Hill

- As part of the Charles River Crossing portion of the Central Artery project, mitigate the impact of proposed ramps and establish safe and well-defined access to the new Paul Revere Park from the North Washington Bridge area.

Bunker Hill/Little Mystic

- Realize the Little Mystic's potential as an accessible resource for recreation, relaxation, and education through the revitalization of underutilized sites such as the abandoned public access boat ramp.
- Utilize the model of the boardwalk at Ryan and other sites to improve public access to the water.
- Preserve existing views of Charlestown's waterfront from within the neighborhood. Make project proponents aware of the need to maintain public visual access to the waterfront through the development review process.
- Support the zoning and design guidelines incorporated in the City of Boston's Municipal Harbor Plan, especially the requirement for 50% open space designation for all projects along the waterfront.

Charlestown Navy Yard

- Improve local residential access into the Charlestown Navy Yard by planning for designated paths from the Chelsea Street edge of the Yard at gates 4, 5, and 6.

Rutherford Avenue and the Neck

- Plan for safe and well-defined access to the new Paul Revere Park and other New Charles River Basin Parks from across Rutherford Avenue.

- Work with the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) and with MHD during the implementation of the Rutherford Avenue Corridor study to assure viable open spaces are developed along with the transportation benefits of this proposed multi-modal facility.

Community Priorities

- Further expand the Courageous Sailing Center at Pier 4 with more programs for Boston youth, new memberships, and expanded facilities.
- Install security lighting with an historic look at Phipps Street and Bunker Hill cemeteries.
- Provide further support for the Park Partners program.
- Plant additional trees and shrubs in parks throughout the neighborhood.
- Explore means of providing neighborhood bikeways that connect to regional bikeways in adjacent municipalities, either through Harborwalk or on-street bike lanes.
- Support the Friends of City Square Park in the effort to sustain the Galvin Green trees saved from the CANA parcels.
- Make John Harvard Mall a focus of capital rehabilitation.



Hayes Square, Charlestown

FACILITIES

CHARLESTOWN

Malls, Squares & Plazas

Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
Bunker Hill Monument (Monument Sq.)	3.75	•	NPS														1									1		
City Square	1.03	•	DEM													1										1		
Harvard Mall	0.85	•	Parks									1									1							
Hayes Square	0.17	•	Parks																		1					1		
Sullivan Square	1.62		COB/PWD																									
Thompson Square	0.17	•	Parks														1									1		
Winthrop Square	0.89	•	Parks																		1							

Parks, Playgrounds & Athletic Fields

Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
Barry Playground	3.61	•	Parks							2																		
Bunker Hill CC Athletic Fields	21.03		COM																									
Caldwell Street Play Area	0.11	•	Parks										1								1							
Charlestown High School Fields	9.61		COB/BPS						2		1									3								
Charlestown Naval Shipyard Park	11.06	•	Parks										1													1		
Cook Street Play Area	0.10	•	Parks										1															
Corey Street Court	0.18		COB/BHA											1														
Doherty Playground	3.02	•	Parks							2			1	1						1	1							Open Shelter, Scenic Overlook
Edgeworth Street Play Area	0.49		COB/BRA																									
Edwards Playground	1.33	•	Parks							1		1	1								1							
Hunter Playground	1.16		BHA																									
Little Mystic Access Area	1.88	•	COB/BRA																									Boat Ramp
Mt. Vernon Street Tot Lot	0.15		Massport										1															
Navy Yard Grounds	24.59	•	NPS							2	2										1							Freedom Trail
Paul Revere Landing Park	2.59	•	MDC																							1		
Rutherford Avenue Playground	0.28	•	Parks									1	1	1							1							
Ryan Playground	8.83	•	Parks	1	2	1	1						1	1	1	1						1	1					

Cemeteries & Burying Grounds

Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
Bunker Hill Burying Ground	1.12	•	Parks																									
Phipp's Street Burying Ground	1.75	•	Parks																									
St. Francis De Sales Cemetery	1.80		Private																									

Community Gardens

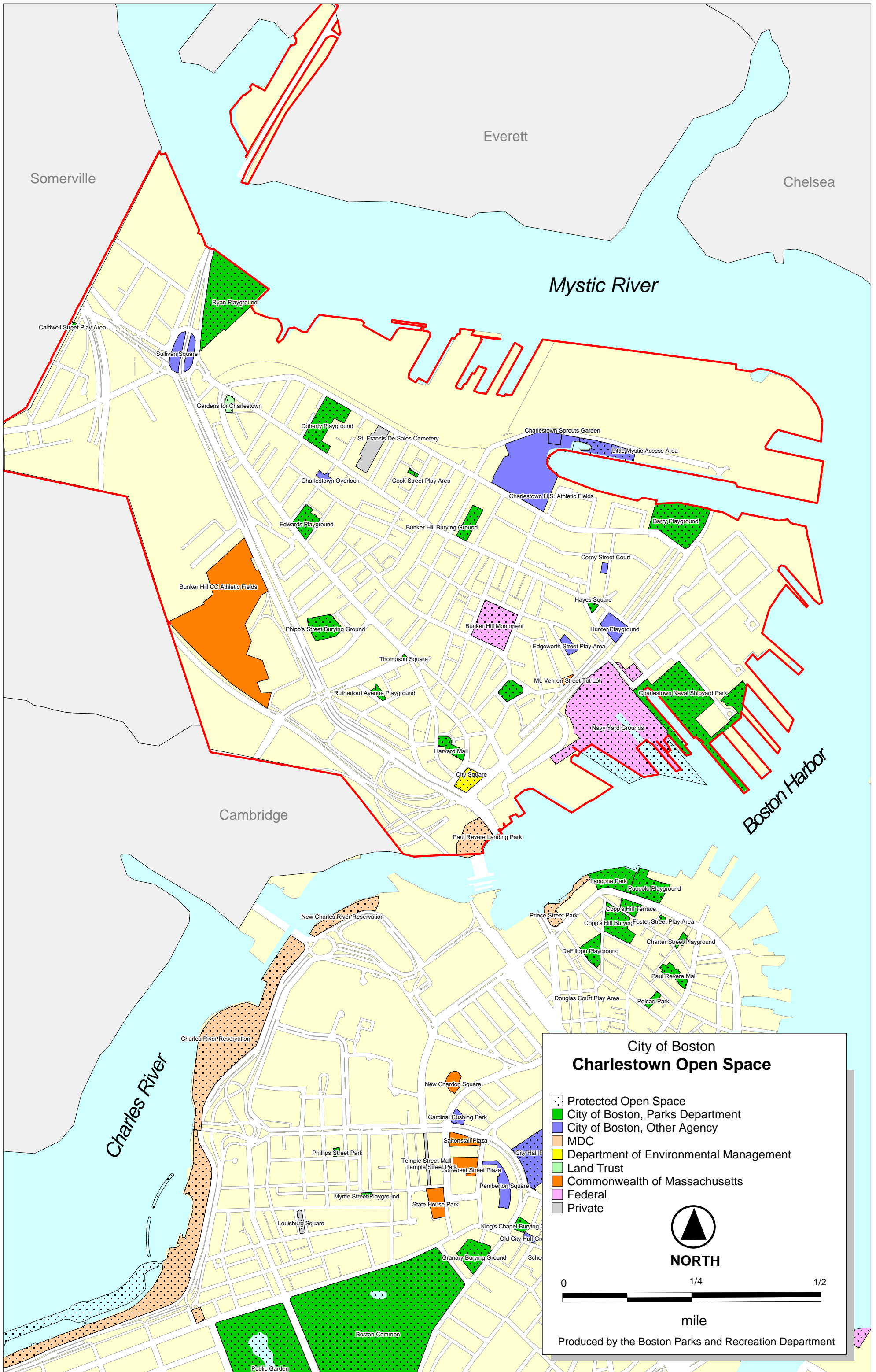
Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
Charlestown Sprouts Garden	0.40		COB/DND																								1	
Gardens for Charlestown	0.36	•	Private																								1	

Urban Wilds & Natural Areas

Site Name	Acreage	P	Ownership	BB	SB	LL	FB	SC	BK	TN	SH	PL	WS	CS	CR	FH	FN	HB	HS	LC	PA	PK	RG	VB	AR	CG	NT	Other
Charlestown Overlook	0.27		COB/BRA																									

Legend

P	Protected	TN	Tennis Court	FN	Fountain	VB	Volleyball Area
BB	Baseball Field	SH	Street Hockey	HB	Handball	AR	Artwork/Monuments
SB	Softball Field	PL	Children's Play Lot	HS	Horseshoes	CG	Community Garden
LL	Little League Field	WS	Water Spray Feature	LC	Lacrosse	NT	Nature Trail
FB	Football Field	CS	Concessions	PA	Passive Area		
SC	Soccer Field	CR	Cricket Field	PK	Parking Area		
BK	Basketball Court	FH	Field House	RG	Rugby Field		



Somerville

Everett

Chelsea

Mystic River

Caldwell Street Play Area

Sullivan Square

Ryan Playground

Gardens for Charlestown

Doherty Playground

St. Francis De Sales Cemetery

Charlestown Sprouts Garden

Little Mystic Access Area

Charlestown Overlook

Cook Street Play Area

Charlestown H.S. Athletic Fields

Edwards Playground

Bunker Hill Burying Ground

Barry Playground

Bunker Hill CC Athletic Fields

Phipps Street Burying Ground

Bunker Hill Monument

Corey Street Court

Hayes Square

Hunter Playground

Thompson Square

Edgeworth Street Play Area

Rutherford Avenue Playground

Mt. Vernon Street Tot Lot

Charlestown Naval Shipyard Park

Navy Yard Grounds

Harvard Mall

City Square

Paul Revere Landing Park

Boston Harbor

Cambridge

Charles River

Charles River Reservation

New Charles River Reservation

Langone Park

Puopolo Playground

Prince Street Park

Copp's Hill Terrace

Copp's Hill Burying Ground

Foster Street Play Area

Charter Street Playground

DeFilippo Playground

Paul Revere Mall

Douglas Court Play Area

Polcari Park

New Chardon Square

Cardinal Cushing Park

Saltonstall Plaza

City Hall Park

Phillips Street Park

Temple Street Mall

Temple Street Park

Somers Street Plaza

Pemberton Square

Myrtle Street Playground

State House Park

King's Chapel Burying Ground

Old City Hall Grounds

Louisburg Square

Granary Burying Ground

Boston Common

Public Garden