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***ROSE FITZGERALD KENNEDY GREENWAY CONSERVANCY***

**GREENWAY PARKS  
MAINTENANCE STANDARDS AND PRACTICES**

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## I. PURPOSE

The Greenway Conservancy is committed to operating and maintaining the Greenway Parks to the highest standards of excellence in order to provide an optimal experience for park users and encourage public respect for the park amenities. Key to this commitment is establishing performance standards that will provide a guide for successful operations and a baseline for ongoing evaluation and improvement.

## II. OVER-ARCHING PRINCIPLES GUIDING PARK MAINTENANCE

Parks will be maintained to a high standard of excellence. Excellence is defined by high standards in appearance and functionality, balanced with active public use and a commitment to environmentally sensitive practices. Maintenance will be supported by current Operation and Maintenance manuals and professional expertise to preserve the public asset. Consistent with available funding and resources, maintenance performance will be evaluated annually.

- To maximize efficiency and responsiveness, park maintenance will be managed and overseen by Conservancy professional staff.
- Preventative practices will drive certain aspects of park maintenance to avoid the costs and public disruption caused by deferred maintenance.
- Organic landscape management practices will be threaded through all aspects of park operations and maintenance activities. Key practices will focus on sound soil management, a preventative approach to pest and disease management, and resource conservation.
- Programming will be carefully managed to balance the goal of offering a diverse array of park experiences with the need to protect park resources for maximum use by the public. Please refer to the *Park Use Guidelines for Public Programming, Special Events and General Use* (at [www.rosekennedygreenway.org/documents](http://www.rosekennedygreenway.org/documents)) for additional information.
- Public education and community involvement through a comprehensive volunteer program will be key practices used to support park operations and maintenance.
- Working in close cooperation with the Boston Police Department, there will be a commitment to ensuring safety and security within the parks on a 24/7 basis.
- Staff will work with City, State and other law enforcement to enforce Park rules as well as all applicable laws in effect on the Greenway.

- Regardless of any situation, best practice decisions will be made to prioritize the health and safety of visitors, and maintain the investment made by the people of Massachusetts.

### **III. PARK MAINTENANCE STANDARDS AND PRACTICES**

Within the resources available, the Conservancy will proactively manage park assets in order that park maintenance can be scheduled and tracked effectively and efficiently.

#### **1. HORTICULTURE**

##### **1.1 Soil Management**

- 1.1.1 Establishing and maintaining healthy soils is the key horticultural maintenance practice in the parks. Planting soils will be tailored to support the specific horticultural requirements of the trees, planting beds and lawn areas. -Soils will be professionally tested on an as-needed basis consistent with current practice requirements for biological content, structural characteristics and pH to enable informed decisions about soil management.
- 1.1.2 Composting will be the primary means to maintain sound soil. Systematic composting procedures will be followed to produce compost recipes that are contaminant free and tailored to the horticultural needs of the plant materials.
- 1.1.3 Compost tea will be used as the primary means to further amend soil biology and optimize growing conditions and/or as part of a pest management strategy.

##### **1.2 Disease and Pest Management**

- 1.2.1 As part of the organic landscape program, no toxic chemical products (i.e. toxic pesticides, fungicides or herbicides) will be used in any of the parks unless specifically approved at a supervisory level. When deemed necessary, the option to perform a “rescue treatment” to NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) standards is allowed.
- 1.2.2 Monitoring, diagnosis and selective treatment will be carried out by a knowledgeable professional staff as the key management approach to disease and pest control in the parks.
- 1.2.3 Treatment will be designed to address each infestation or disease on an individual basis after professional determination of the acceptable level of tolerance.

- 1.2.4 Pests and plant diseases will be controlled through the least invasive techniques and use of non-toxic products, examples of which would include wash downs, release of beneficial insects and when needed, horticultural oils and soaps.
- 1.2.5 Rodent control in the parks will focus on prevention through community education. Efforts will focus on developing effective trash management practices, engaging abutters and park users to minimize food waste, in addition to rigorous trash management efforts within the parks themselves.
- 1.2.6 Parks will be carefully monitored for evidence of rodent activities and control measures implemented immediately. Baiting will be limited, carefully controlled and in cooperation with the City's Inspectional Services Department.

### **1.3 Irrigation Management (also see Irrigation Maintenance Section 2.4)**

- 1.3.1. The irrigation of all trees, planting beds and lawn areas will be managed according to the specific location, horticultural requirements of the plant material, and particular growing conditions to help maximize deep root growth and minimize water consumption.
- 1.3.2. All Greenway irrigation systems will be monitored on a routine basis. Malfunctioning or vandalized components will be addressed and shut down, adjusted, repaired or replaced as needed in a timely manner.

### **1.4. Tree Care**

- 1.4.1. Tree care within the park, including pruning, incorporation of soil amendments, watering and pest/disease control will be directed and closely supervised by professionally trained staff and/or a certified arborist.
- 1.4.2. Trees will receive regular maintenance pruning by trained professionals as needed to promote optimal tree health and to eliminate potential hazards to public safety. For public safety, branch height will be maintained to a minimum of 7 feet above all walking surfaces.
- 1.4.3. All trees will be monitored on a routine basis for broken limbs or damage, and will be addressed within 24 to 48 hours to prevent further injury to the overall tree health. Any situation presenting a public safety hazard will be addressed immediately.
- 1.4.4. Because the tree root zone is critical to the overall health of the tree, particular attention will be paid to protection of this vulnerable area from

vehicles, material storage, equipment, heavy pedestrian traffic and dog damage.

1.4.5. An accurate inventory of all trees, including their location, date planted, and health will be maintained and updated annually.

1.4.6. Trees will be replaced when professionally trained staff or a certified arborist determine they are in an irreversible decline, they pose a potential public safety hazard or they cease to provide ornamental value within the park landscape. Tree removal will occur immediately in cases related to public safety. Other removals and replacement will be scheduled in line with the appropriate season and available resources.

## **1.5. Ornamental Plant Bed Care**

1.5.1. All beds will be pruned, deadheaded and weeded on a regular basis to maintain a neat appearance and to promote optimum plant health. Beds will be cleaned of all trash on a continual basis.

1.5.2. Shrubs will be hand pruned by professional staff or supervised volunteers on an annual basis to promote optimum overall health, growth and floral bloom. Shearing, because of its detrimental impact on plant health, will only be permissible on hedge plantings specifically designed for this practice.

1.5.3. All planting areas will be spread with an approximate 2 inch layer of mulch annually in the Spring and renewed as needed throughout the year.

1.5.4. All beds will undergo continual assessment and maintenance to determine needs related to overall plant health, and to add/divide/remove plant material where needed.

1.5.5. In Fall and/or Winter, perennial plant foliage may be left for seasonal interest or cut back to neaten bed appearance and eliminate potential winter habitat for rodents. Stakes and rope line will be installed when necessary to protect plant material and/or areas susceptible to pedestrian traffic and/or damage by snow removal operations.

1.5.6. Plant material will be replaced with available resources (labor, time, and funding) when it has ceased to provide ornamental value or is determined to be in an irreversible state of decline.

## **1.6. Lawn Care**

- 1.6.1. Lawn areas will be mowed on a schedule adjusted for seasonal growing conditions. Lawns will be kept to a height of approximately 2 to 3 1/2 inches and clippings will be left in place to add organic matter and nutrients back into the soil. All walkways will be blown clean of clippings after each mowing.
- 1.6.2. Lawns will be edged routinely during the growing season to maintain a neat appearance along paving and planting beds.
- 1.6.3. Lawns will be treated as needed using a combination of compost, and compost tea, and supplemented with organic fertilizer when needed to maintain a healthy nutrient recycling system. Optimally, lawns will be kept visually appealing, exhibiting a uniform rich green appearance.
- 1.6.4. All lawn areas will be aerated two times annually at varying depths depending on intensity of use and assessment of soil compaction.
- 1.6.5. Lawns will be monitored for holes or dead patches and either be over-seeded or replaced to maintain a uniform surface.
- 1.6.6. To protect lawns from excessive compaction and maximize their availability for general public use, lawn areas may be roped off for periods of time from Fall through Spring (depending on weather conditions). User-friendly signage will be installed to provide education and on-site messaging.
- 1.6.7. During periods of excessively wet weather, when lawns are saturated and most vulnerable to significant damage, public access to lawns may be temporarily restricted. A combination of fencing and signage may be used to protect the areas for maximum use during the season and reduce the incidence of replacement.
- 1.6.8. Lawn areas may be given a “resting” period following major scheduled events.

## **2. GENERAL MAINTENANCE**

### **2.1. Site Cleaning and Trash Management**

- 2.1.1 Litter and debris will be picked up daily, on a continual basis, keeping all planting and lawn areas, hard surfaces and fountains in a clean, well-kept appearance at all times. Collected trash will be removed from the site and not stockpiled overnight anywhere within the parks.

- 2.1.2 Once identified, graffiti will be removed within 24 to 48 hours.
- 2.1.3 Trash receptacles will be kept clean, monitored on a continual basis, and emptied regularly during the course of each day to prevent any overflowing conditions.
- 2.1.4 All paved surfaces will be kept clean and odor free. Walking surfaces will be washed-down, depending upon intensity of use to maintain a consistently clean condition. Park entry points experiencing intense use by the public and by dogs (particularly during the summer months) will be power washed to maintain a clean, odor free surface.
- 2.1.5 Park benches and seat walls will be washed down periodically and cleaned if surfaces experience incidental spills, etc. Peak summer months may require a more frequent cleaning cycle depending upon use. Cleaning products will be used which have minimal detrimental environmental effects and are consistent with manufacturer's specifications.
- 2.1.6 Park features, such as special gateway structures, pergolas, public art installations, lighting fixtures, signage, etc. will be kept clean of posters, stickers and trash, and washed on an as-needed basis to maintain a consistently clean surface area and appearance.
- 2.1.7 Catch basins will be kept clean and free of debris. Sumps will be cleaned out at least once per year to maintain unrestricted drainage.
- 2.1.8 To protect park paved surfaces and avoid soil compaction in planted areas, small maintenance vehicles will be used to travel or park within the park. Large vehicles will be discouraged within the park footprint unless necessary for the work being performed. Maintenance vehicles will be kept in good repair and subject to regular preventative maintenance servicing.

## **2.2 Snow Removal**

- 2.2.1 Snow removal operations will be supervised by professional staff familiar with park plantings, paving and special features.
- 2.2.2 Outside contractors utilized in snow removal operations will be supervised by an on-site person familiar with the park layout.
- 2.2.3 Snow removal operations within the park will be carried out using smaller, lightweight vehicles that are easily maneuverable and will not damage park

surfaces or plant materials. Larger plows or trucks will not be permitted within the park footprint without prior approval of professional staff.

- 2.2.4 Snow and ice removal operations will focus on public safety. Priority will be given to high pedestrian traffic areas, particularly for peak travel periods. Particular attention will be paid to providing access for individuals with disabilities. Piling snow on lawn areas or planting beds is to be utilized only in the event of major snow accumulation when all surrounding hardscape options have been exhausted. Particular attention will be paid to freeing up catch basins for drainage of snow melt.
- 2.2.5 Snow/ice removal efforts will be based upon pro-active staff monitoring weather conditions to determine the most effective/efficient approach to address public safety and access issues.
- 2.2.6 Products used for snow/ice melt will be used sparingly and targeted towards public safety. Products will be used that are the least destructive to plants and to paved surfaces. Manufacturer's recommendations will be followed on products appropriate for use on the varied materials.
- 2.2.7 Paths and walkways constructed of loose aggregate material and some other tertiary walkways will not be cleared of snow or treated with ice-melt products. These walks will have signage indicating that they are not maintained in Winter.

### **2.3 Pavement, Steps, and Walls**

- 2.3.1 All paved walking surfaces and stone seat walls will be continually monitored and kept in high quality conditions consistent with the original specifications and in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Walking surfaces will be maintained at uniform heights to avoid trip hazards and minimize accessibility issues. Damaged or vandalized areas will be repaired.
- 2.3.2 Masonry features will be re-pointed on a regularly basis to maintain joint integrity and protect the paving/stone in accordance with the original installation specifications.
- 2.3.3 Drainage of walking surfaces will be closely monitored to avoid water pooling – particularly in winter months. Catch basins will be kept clear of debris. Sub-drain systems will be inspected and flushed, as necessary. Walking surfaces having “low points” will be identified, and placed on a priority list for re-grading to correct drainage problems.



## **2.4 Irrigation System Maintenance (also see Irrigation Management Section 1.3)**

- 2.4.1 System mechanical and electrical components will be monitored on a regular basis. Malfunctioning or vandalized elements will be reported immediately and repaired or replaced by professional staff and/or skilled electricians and/or plumbers.
- 2.4.2 A thorough blow out/shut down of all elements of the park irrigation systems will be carried out on a systematic schedule each Fall by trained professionals.
- 2.4.3 When turning back on in the Spring, all irrigation system components will be fully inspected, tested, any malfunctioning elements repaired and the system adjusted for proper coverage.

## **2.5 Fountains**

- 2.5.1 Trained professionals will rigorously monitor fountain operations to keep them safe, clean and continuously operative consistent with the intended function within the park landscape and in accordance with fountain manufacturer's maintenance specifications. Water quality and chemical balance; cleanliness of filters and traps; and proper functioning of mechanical and electrical equipment will be per manufacturer's recommendations and local requirements. Routine maintenance tasks required to maintain safe and proper fountain performance will be performed within 24 hours of determining an unsatisfactory condition exists.
- 2.5.2 Winterization and Spring turn-on will be performed on a regular schedule by trained professionals consistent with manufacturer's fountain maintenance specifications.
- 2.5.3 While respecting their design intent in the landscape, fountains will be operated and maintained as efficiently as possible to minimize excess water and energy consumption.

## **2.6 Lighting**

- 2.6.1 Light fixtures will be monitored and kept in a state of repair such that no more than 10% of all lamps within each park are out at one time. All light fixtures within the parks will be checked periodically for outages. Lamps that serve a security function within the park will be replaced within 48 hours, as parts allow.

- 2.6.2 Ballast boxes, controls, automatic sensors and associated equipment will be monitored to insure proper working order and safe operating conditions consistent with building codes and manufacturer's specifications.
- 2.6.3 Lighting systems will be monitored and maintained to conserve electricity while maintaining the intended design and safety function with the park landscape. Luminaries will be cleaned as needed to support maximum lighting efficiency.
- 2.6.4 Fixtures will be cleaned and surface areas re-finished on a regular preventative maintenance schedule consistent with manufacturer's recommendations.

## **2.7 Site Furnishings**

- 2.7.1 All furnishings and structures within the parks including benches, signage, structures and railings will be visually checked on an ongoing basis for damaged or vandalized components. Any situation which presents a potential public safety issue will be immediately remedied through removal or replacement, or made safe while repair or replacement is completed.
- 2.7.2 All furnishings and structures will be refurbished on a regular preventative maintenance schedule consistent with manufacturer's recommendations to protect the integrity of all surfaces.

## **2.8 Painted Surfaces**

- 2.8.1 All painted surfaces shall be regularly inspected for wear, damage, peeling, scratches and fading.
- 2.8.2 All damaged painted surfaces shall be repainted as soon as practicable. Spot painting shall match existing colors.