

City of Cambridge

MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council 3/20, 2000

MNS

Supervisor to buy forward Order #10

YEA	NAY	ABSENT	PRESENT	
✓				Ms. Kathleen L. Born
✓				Mr. James Braude
✓				Ms. Henrietta Davis
✓				Ms. Marjorie C. Decker
✓				Vice Mayor David P. Maher
✓				Mr. Kenneth E. Reeves
✓				Mr. Michael A. Sullivan
✓				Mr. Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.
✓				Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio

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FY2001

King School Playground	600,000
Franklin Street Park	300,000
Area 4 Open Space Planning & Design	520,000
Squirrel Nut Brands open space	
238 Broadway (including building demolition)	
Maynard School Playground	
Park Preventative Maintenance Program	175,000
Playground Structure Replacement	100,000
Kennedy School Playground	
Golf Course/FP Master Plan Improvements	100,000
Fresh Pond Master Plan Implementation	250,000
Open Space Acquisition Fund	650,000
 TOTAL	 2,695,000

FY2002

Area 4 Open Space Construction	1,500,000
Squirrel Nut Brands	
238 Broadway/Harvard Street Park	
Maynard School Playground	
Glacken, Lusitania Field, Neville	2,500,000 (May be phased in)
Lowell School	300,000
Traffic Island Improvements/beautification	100,000
Park Preventative Maintenance Program	175,000
Playground Structure Replacement	100,000
Lopez Street Playground	
Golf Course/FP Master Plan Improvements	100,000
Fresh Pond Master Plan Implementation	250,000
Open Space Acquisition Fund	2,000,000
 TOTAL	 7,025,000

FY2003

Donnelly Field/Gold Star Pool	2,000,000
Dana Park	200,000
Maple Avenue Tot Lot	200,000
Raymond Street Park	550,000
Traffic Island Improvements	100,000
Park Preventative Maintenance Program	175,000
Playground Structure Replacement	100,000
Bergin Playground	
Golf Course/FP Master Plan Improvements	100,000
Fresh Pond Master Plan Implementation	250,000

Open Space Acquisition Fund	2,000,000 *
TOTAL	\$5,675,000

* Depending on future financial conditions, funding may be used to develop newly acquired open space.

Park Preventative Maintenance. Funds in the Park Preventative Maintenance program are used for a number of maintenance activities in the parks including turf repair and renovation, playground structure and surfacing repair, fence repair and court resurfacing. Over the next three years, preventative maintenance will continue to be aggressive and comprehensive. The primary consideration will be the safety of the user public.

To that end, much work remains with respect to turf replacement and renovation. Many injuries among youth sports participants nationwide can be linked to hard, compacted playing surfaces. Furthermore, soil compaction retards proper root zone development in turf-grass, and contributes to poor drainage of playing fields. Over the next three years, approximately \$100,000 annually will be earmarked for institutionalized practices such as deep-tine aeration, top-dressing, and over-seeding. Where the intensity of use outpaces even an assertive maintenance program, sod will be replaced in the high-stress areas. To illustrate, in the fall of 1999, three and a half acres of sod was placed at a total of eight sites. Approximately 32 acres of open space were aerated, seeded and top-dressed. The cost was \$110,000. In addition to the direct benefit to turf-grass, these cultural practices also promote healthy trees via better percolation of moisture and air into the root zone.

The City currently has twelve wooden playground structures that require significant repairs, primarily due to age. During the past winter, the Parks and Forestry Division conducted a detailed safety audit of each site to identify those needs that are crucial to the safety of children. Bids for that work will be solicited this month, and the project will be completed in the spring. The cost will approach \$60,000. This work will virtually eliminate any hazardous conditions; however, it cannot reverse the fact that many of these wooden structures are past their typical lifespan. Two of the most aged and heavily-used structures, at Kennedy School and King School, have been proposed for replacement in FY 2001. Approximately \$15,000 annually will be dedicated to continual repair of those remaining sites until replacement can be provided by capital appropriation.

At the more contemporary playground sites, there is a constant need to ensure the integrity of the poured-in-place rubber safety surfacing. (Indeed, at future site renovations, the City will review new playground surfacing and install materials that is not prone to vandalism, and does not freeze like loose-fill wood fiber.) The City has contracted for approximately \$15,000 of rubber surfacing repairs this coming spring (damage caused primarily by vandalism), and likely will earmark a similar figure in future years.

Approximately seven sport courts (e.g. tennis, basketball) throughout the City are in need of resurfacing. It is anticipated that these sites will be improved in the fall of 2000, at a cost of approximately \$35,000. In future years, approximately \$5,000 will be set aside with the intent of renovating one court annually.

It anticipated that \$40,000 annually will be dedicated to as-needed or emergency replacement and repair. Typically, much of this expenditure is directed to fencing (e.g. storm or vehicle damage), or infield soil amendments. This spring, \$16,000 will be spent to restore the structural integrity of the bleachers at Russell Field. Approximately \$20,000 annually will be available for City-wide graffiti removal service (inclusive of parks), to augment smaller-scale efforts by Division staff.

Beautification. Four sites have been identified for large-scale landscape renovation, with a total project budget of \$200,000: Arsenal Square; Vellucci Park (Millers River); the intersection at Hampshire/Windsor/Plymouth; and, Cronin Plaza. Design development for the first two sites is complete, with bidding to take place in spring 2000, and commencement of work hoped for in October. Design development for the Hampshire project is expected to conclude this summer, with construction anticipated in 2001. Design development for Cronin Plaza will commence later this year; it is likely that construction will commence in early 2002.

MAINTENANCE OVERVIEW

Contract Services. Last fall, the Parks and Forestry Division announced its intent to terminate all but one of its landscape service contracts, with the intent of overhauling the specifications and soliciting new bids. (There is one year remaining on the existing service contract for Quincy, Tubman, Sullivan, and Central Squares.) This winter, bids were received on a total of nine service contracts (geographic clusters) encompassing 28 park parcels and two roadway medians. Approximately \$440,000 will be spent annually for the next three years on this initiative, the focus of which is the larger passive parcels (e.g. Cambridge Common, Joan Lorenz Park) as well as the major playing fields (e.g. Tobin Field, Hoyt Field).

The new specifications are more comprehensive and contain much tighter enforcement language than previous contracts. (Monitoring will be a chief focus of the Turf and Landscape Manager, a new personnel addition within the last year.) All spring cleanups will be completed by the third week of April. Grass will be mowed once weekly between the third week of April and second week of November. Soils will be tested annually to determine amendment needs (e.g. lime). All mulching of trees and planting beds will be complete by the first week of June. Sweeping of hardscape areas and trash pickup will occur three times weekly between April 15 and November 30.

Regular maintenance practices embrace Integrated Pest Management principles. Passive turf areas will be core aerated twice annually, while playing fields will be done four times. All turf areas will be fertilized three times and slice-seeded twice. Ornamental shrubs will be pruned annually.

Reporting requirements on the part of the contractor include a weekly written work plan and a weekly walk-through with the Park District Supervisor for that site. A system of fines has been established for certain aspects of non-compliance, including unauthorized vehicle access.

Divisional Services. Much progress has been made in the past year with respect to in-service training of existing personnel, as well as the addition of new skilled personnel. As a result, the standard of care provided by the Parks and Forestry staff has increased dramatically. This spring, the Division will execute a number of small-scale, yet high-profile landscape

beautification projects that formerly would have been considered bid work. Examples include the Fire Headquarters and the intersection of Lincoln and Windsor Streets. The Landscape Project Administrator (now a full-time position, as of last summer), in addition to completing design development on the aforementioned capital projects, will begin to compile a resource manual for less complicated endeavors that can be accomplished in-house, on an incremental basis. Examples include seasonal displays at public buildings and the creation of new planting beds in selected parks.

The Neighborhood Park Initiative model has developed quite satisfactorily. Except when emergency conditions dictate otherwise, each of the three Park District Supervisors visits each park in a respective district each weekday. Thus, response time to critical needs has been reduced dramatically. Maintenance sweeps are scheduled based on the size of the parcel and the intensity of use. Effective this year, it is anticipated that every park maintained by Division staff will be policed a minimum of twice per week, with some (e.g. Columbia Park, Alberico Playground) receiving five visits weekly.

A program of preventative maintenance provided by Division staff has been initiated, again with an eye toward safety. Much of the connective hardware (e.g. S-hooks) on all City play structures has been replaced within the last year, a practice that will continue annually. (What has not yet been replaced will be part of the wooden structure repair project.) For the first time, the Division has begun weather-treating the wooden play structures, several of which have existed for 12 years or more without such treatment. To date, structures at Lopez Street, Bergin, Alberico, Paine, Kennedy School, Tobin School and Cambridge Common playgrounds have been sanded and treated, with Fulmore, Agassiz, and Old Morse scheduled for this year. Surfacing at Market Street, Lopez Street, Kennedy School, Columbia, Paine, and Alberico playgrounds has been converted from sand or gravel to woodcarpet. The existing woodcarpet at Harvard Street, Harrington School, Glacken, Sleeper, Wilder, Hurley, Sennott, and Rafferty playgrounds has been replenished.

The departmental commitment to servicing youth sports organizations has greatly increased. Much more attention has been paid to eliminating inherent hazards in the City's baseball and softball infields (e.g. reducing lip buildup that contributes to trip hazards and errant hops). Infield clay at Donnelly, Tobin, Hoyt, Comeau, and Ahern Fields has been amended with soil conditioners to reduce compaction and facilitate drainage. Approximately \$10,000 annually will be set aside for this purpose, with Rindge and Glacken Fields the primary focus of attention in the spring of 2000.

Confidence in the quality of Division services has risen to a level that allows for regular maintenance of the City Hall grounds by Division staff, as opposed to contract service, effective in 2000.

Personnel Reorganization. As mentioned previously, the Division added a Turf and Landscape Manager in 1999, and elevated the Landscape Project Administrator position to full-time status. Thus, much more technical support is available to the labor staff, and better monitoring of contract functions is expected. Design development of capital projects can also proceed at a more rapid clip.

In addition, the Department of Public Works implemented a merger of the Parks and Urban Forestry Divisions, effective September 13 of last year. There are many anticipated benefits. Coupled with a slightly increased outsourcing of street tree pruning and emergency work, the tree inventory of the parks, up to now essentially not cared for, will receive much more attention. The City Arborist will be freed from several administrative functions, thus allowing more time for public outreach and proactive planning. And, the personnel of both former divisions will be more available to support each other in project-based tasks generally out of the scope of the daily routine. As an example, personnel may now be dedicated on a given day to watering of color zone displays, a function not easily accomplished last year. That fact, coupled with last year's extended drought, precluded the Division from planting annuals at many customary sites.

TREE PRUNING AND PLANTING

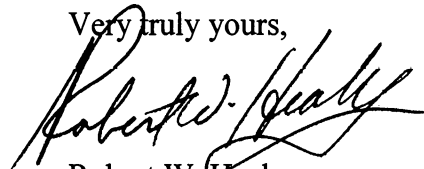
Tree pruning. As our street tree pruning contracts continue to prune along roadways, crews will be assigned to prune parks trees in the contract areas. During snow or rain it is difficult to post and work along streets, so crews are assigned trees in parks and schools. For example, during FY98 tree pruning activity in neighborhood #1, contractors pruned trees in Gore, Hurley Street, and Costa Lopez Parks. This fiscal year, they pruned trees at the Harrington School and the Morse School as well as in Sennott Park, Elm and Hampshire, and Hastings Square Park. Our plan is to prune all thirteen neighborhoods over the next three years, designating park and school trees to be pruned when weather makes street tree pruning impossible.

Tree Planting. The Significant Tree Planting Program will plant thirty-nine, 6"-7" caliper trees in parks citywide over the next three years. To date twenty-six such trees have been planted since FY98. Cost is \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year; which is included in the DPW operating budget.

The Commemorative Tree Planting Program offers citizens opportunity to plant trees in parks each year. Since FY98 four such trees have been planted in parks. Cost is \$100 to \$200 per tree to the City with the participant paying \$100 to \$200.

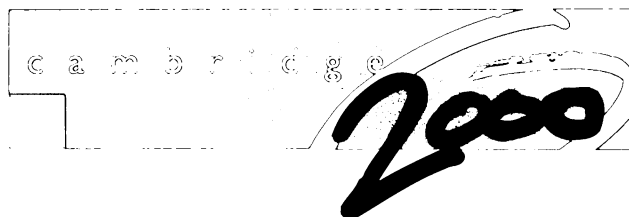
Over the next three years requests from Parks Planning, Parks District Supervisors and citizens will result in the planting of replacement trees for those which die or are removed. Cost is \$300.00 to \$400.00 per tree.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

March 20, 2000

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report #00-04 regarding a three-year plan for capital improvement and maintenance of playing fields, tot lots and tree pruning and planting, pleased be advised of the following:

CAPITAL OPEN SPACE PLAN

FY2000 (current year funds)

Russell Field	\$3,850,000
Track Facility/Danehy Park	3,000,000
Reverend Williams Playground (Sleeper)	300,000
Peabody School Playground	250,000
Paine Park	200,000
Larch Road Playground	200,000
Donnelly Field Master Plan	200,000
Golf Course Improvements	40,000
Rindge Field	Fitzgerald School renovations
Fitzgerald School Tot Lot	Fitzgerald School renovations
Traffic Island Improvements	100,000
Cronin Park	
Windsor/Hampshire	
Park Preventative Maintenance Program	175,000
Playground Structure Replacement	75,000
Raymond Street Playground	
Golf Course/FP Master Plan Improvements	100,000
Fresh Pond Master Plan Implementation	250,000
Open Space Acquisition Fund	3,350,000
Magazine Beach improvements	1,500,000
TOTAL	\$13,530,000



2000 Things 2 Do in 2000

Consent Agenda #10

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Relative to AW Rpt. #00-04,
regarding a report on a three-year,
project-specific; schedule/plan that
covers capital improvements and
enhanced maintenance for playing fields,
tot lots, tree pruning and planting.

In City Council March 20, 2000

*Referred to Public
Facilities Arts +
Celebration Committee
on motion of Councillor
Sullivan*

3/22

sent to C. Born