

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT, NO. 48:
REPORT OF THE BOARD
OF METROPOLITAN PARK
COMMISSIONERS, JANUARY
1900**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649690978

Public Document, No. 48: Report of the Board of Metropolitan Park Commissioners, January 1900 by William B. de Las Casces & Edwin B. Haskell & Edwin U. Curtis

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REPORT

OF THE

Board of Metropolitan Park

Commissioners.

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JANUARY, 1900.
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BOSTON:
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,
18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.
1900.

McDonnell-Baker Commission 4-4-03g

CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Report of the Commissioners, | 5 |
| Report of the Secretary, | 19 |
| Report of the Landscape Architects, | 58 |
| Report of the Engineer, | 76 |
| Financial Statement, | 100 |

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

REPORT.

The Metropolitan Park Commission submits herewith its seventh annual report.

The cost of the Metropolitan Parks and Parkways is to be paid for, under chapter 419 of the Acts of 1899, by the cities and towns of the district in annual payments according to an apportionment to be made every five years, beginning in 1900, by a special commission appointed by the Supreme Judicial Court. This provision of law is in amendment of that contained in the Park Act, chapter 407 of the Acts of 1893, and the Boulevard Act, chapter 288 of the Acts of 1894; and in further amendment of an act of 1896, chapter 550, which set aside the first apportionment and required this Board to complete its acquirements before 1900, in order that the full benefits likely to come to every portion of the district might be apparent at the time of apportionment.

The Commission is able to report at this time that substantially all the lands for the system outlined by the general plan of 1893 have not only been authorized but have also been acquired or are now in process of acquirement. The exceptions are merely certain portions which are to be considered in special reports which the Legislature has ordered, and a comparatively small amount of acquirements which, having been once authorized by the Legislature, have been omitted from the takings because the appropriations have proved insufficient to warrant the Board in including them. These portions will doubtless be provided for; so that with

the special reports before it, the Legislature of 1900 will be enabled to carry out substantially the wishes expressed in the Act of 1896, and make apparent at the time of apportionment the full benefits to be enjoyed by every portion of the district.

When the first apportionment was set aside, provision was also made that until the year 1900 interest and sinking fund charges and the expenses of care and maintenance should be charged to the appropriations provided by loans; but that, beginning in 1900, they should be provided by an annual appropriation for that purpose, and be included in the State tax for the year. The present report, while including a brief summary of the work of the past year, will therefore be chiefly devoted to a financial statement and review of the entire work accomplished since 1893, and to a consideration of the manner in which development and adequate care and maintenance ought to be provided for.

The bath-house at Revere Beach was rebuilt early in the year, and its previous accommodations nearly doubled. A new laundry, police station and boiler house were added, and all the buildings made as fireproof as possible. Land has been acquired for a parkway to Saugus River, and the permission of the United States government for a bridge to Lynn has been secured; both will be built when the Highway Commission is enabled to construct a connecting road in Lynn, for which it has already acquired land. Revere Beach Parkway has been completed south from Charles Eliot Circle to Winthrop Avenue, and land has been taken for its extension through Revere, Chelsea and Everett to Fellsway in Medford, just across Mystic River from Somerville. Work upon this parkway to the extent of appropriations available has been begun.

Winthrop Beach and the road along its crest have been acquired, and a sea wall one mile long has been built. The road itself and a new bridge over the railroad will be built in the spring. The town is paying one-third of the cost of this work, and will care for it when completed.

Fellsway has been completed to Broadway, Somerville. Mystic Valley Parkway has been extended and completed

to the Fells at the former Mt. Vernon Street entrance in Winchester. About one mile of border road has been built along the south boundary of the Fells in Medford. Land has been given by Mr. Peter C. Brooks and Gen. Samuel C. Lawrence along both sides of Whitmore Brook, for an entrance to the south-easterly corner of the Fells. The shores of Mystic River have been acquired by this Board from Mystic Lake to Medford city lands, just below Craddock Bridge. From near this point the remaining shores in Medford have been acquired by the Park Commission of that city, at an estimated cost of \$50,000, to Fellsway at the Revere Beach Parkway. Land in Medford and Somerville, thought necessary for wharves and other commercial uses, was not included in these takings.

Land has been acquired for a parkway from Charles River at Gerry's Landing to Fresh Pond. Of this a considerable portion is to be the gift of John C. Gray, Esq. For the extension of this parkway to Mystic Lake, investigations are being completed along two routes through Arlington. That town has appropriated \$45,000 to enable its Park Commission to assist, and the two Boards are in consultation. Along Charles River, the Speedway, drive and dyke between North Harvard Street and Western Avenue in Boston, Brighton District, and a suitable administration building, have been completed. At Newton Upper and Lower Falls the dams have been repaired, the banks of the river cleared of shanties and rubbish, and a short piece of border road built.

In the Blue Hills a new road has been built from Quincy to Pine Tree Brook entrance. A stable has been built at headquarters, a nursery established and important work of forestry begun. Blue Hills Parkway has been practically finished from Mattapan to Canton Avenue, Milton, and is open to public use. A road has been built in Stony Brook Reservation from Gordon Avenue, Hyde Park, to connect with the road to West Roxbury Parkway of the Boston Park System.

On Neponset River, the portion of Fowl Meadows between Green Lodge Street and Paul's Bridge has been acquired,

largely by gift of Mr. Augustus Hemenway. Mr. Hemenway also gave \$10,000 and the late Charles Van Brunt gave \$5,000 towards the cost of the remaining lands. Other portions of the river bank not occupied by large business concerns are in process of acquirement. On the lower river Milton Marshes and some upland in Boston have been acquired to Granite Street. Land in this section was given by Mr. N. T. Kidder, the heirs of the late Oliver W. Peabody and those of John M. Forbes.

Hart's Hill in Wakefield is being acquired at the joint cost of this Board and the Park Commission of that town.

In pursuance of the intention of the Legislature of 1899 in making appropriations a small portion of Nantasket Beach has been acquired, and other acquirements will soon be made. Land is about to be taken from Hancock Street near Neponset Bridge to Quincy Shore, thence along that shore and Furnace Brook to the easterly end of Blue Hills; also land from Paul's Bridge to Great Blue Hill at the westerly end of that reservation, and land for a walk and drive on Lynn Shore, in extension of King's Beach.

Investigations are about completed for special reports directed by the Legislature as to a parkway from Charles River to Mystic River, and from Dedham to Stony Brook Reservation and from the Fells to Lynn Woods and Lynn Woods to Revere Beach.

Petitions have been received for a parkway from Woburn along Horn Pond to the Mystic Valley Parkway; for the acquirement of Nahant Beach in extension of Oceanside Park, Lynn; and for some minor acquirements. The subject-matter of these petitions is being investigated.

Each appropriation for this work has been made by the Legislature after an exhaustive hearing upon a petition presented by citizens or municipalities of the district, and has been based upon the reports of the Commission. While these appropriations have been general in form, and have left the Commission free from instructions, the purpose for which they were made has been well understood and has been followed as far as possible. The result has been that the district, the Legislature and the Commission have been