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A Fractured Legacy: The Governance, Goals, and Guides of the Hartford Park System

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**A Fractured Legacy:
The Governance, Goals, and Guides of the Hartford Park System**

Caroline Feeney
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Spring 2017

Abstract

Since its inception in 1853, the Hartford Park System has been a crucial asset to the City of Hartford. The purpose of this thesis is to answer a set of questions about the history and future of Hartford's parks. How has history shaped the current system of 37 parks that can be found in Hartford today? How important is the park system to the City of Hartford? Who are the most important stakeholders within the park system and what goals do they have? How can the goals created by relevant park stakeholders be consolidated into realistic goals for the City of Hartford? In order to answer these questions, I move from a macro level of analysis of the City of Hartford to a micro level of analysis of relevant stakeholders within the Hartford Park System. I provide a unique overview of the history of the Hartford Park System, an analysis of relevant literature on urban parks, a quantitative analysis of fiscal reports, in depth interviews of relevant stakeholders, and finally a qualitative analysis of master plans. Though the system of governance is complex and often mired in opposing goals, I ultimately offer a list of six goals that the City of Hartford has already made and should continue to strive towards in order to improve the maintenance and recreational capabilities of the Hartford Park System.

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Chapter 1: The History of the Hartford Park System

Introduction

The City of Hartford has regressed from having the nation's first voter approved and publicly financed park to a city without a central Parks and Recreation Department. Today, Hartford's parks represent a legacy of the city's historic wealth that has since declined. The City of Hartford is unable to maximize park maintenance and recreational opportunities due to financial restrictions and political will. In order to understand the current state of the Hartford Park System, I believe it is important to understand the history of development, oversight, and maintenance of Hartford's parks.

I use several different sources including articles published by the Hartford Courant in order to provide a thorough timeline of events beginning with the creation of Bushnell Park in 1853. A notable period of time in the history of Hartford's parks was the "Rain of Parks" from 1894 to 1905 due to the addition of 1,000 acres of parkland in just ten years. By the 1930s, Hartford was reputed to have the largest park acreage per capita in America. After the 1930s, very little information can be found about Hartford's parks. The lack of organized information is evident of a decline in Hartford's economy beginning in the 1960s. History shows a trend away from government directed park maintenance and recreation to the privatization of responsibility within the Hartford Park System. Throughout my thesis, I move from a macro level of analysis to a micro level of analysis, focusing first on theory of urban public parks, then the City of Hartford, the opinions of stakeholders in the Hartford Park System and finally an analysis of the plans they have provided regarding Hartford's parks. I use relevant theory regarding urban green spaces to substantiate the claim that both large and small public parks are crucial for a city like Hartford to maintain for their recreational and environmental benefits. I argue that these public

green spaces benefit from public-private relationships to remain well maintained and utilized by the public. Cities today function due to the work of micro actors who help cities accomplish goals regarding their public green spaces. Termed Humane Urbanism, this trend is prominent in the City of Hartford today.

In order to look at the Hartford Park System at a more focused level, I analyze the goals and budgetary allocations of the two publicly funded park actors within the City of Hartford – the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation (DFCYR). With a declining budget, these actors within the Hartford Park System rely on their private counterparts to accomplish their stated goals. In order to further investigate how these private actors fit into the Hartford Park System, I organized meetings with six stakeholders involved with Hartford’s Parks. These meetings were crucial to better understand the priorities of different stakeholders and how they fit into the system of governance.

Finally, due to a recommendation from one of the stakeholders, I analyze four of the most recent and important master plans published regarding the Hartford Park System. These reports are often developed in cooperation with the City of Hartford, relevant stakeholders, and citizens themselves. Each report provides a variety of different goals and recommendations on how to improve Hartford’s parks. In order to make this thesis potentially useful to the actors within the Hartford Park system, I compiled a list of goals found in two or more of the reports. I argue that these six final goals are realistic and the most likely to succeed within the current Hartford Park System.

Inception and the Rain of Parks; 1850-1930

The Hartford park system is full of rich history and innovation as one of the first public park systems in the United States. Created in 1853, Bushnell Park was the nation's first voter approved and publicly financed park. Bushnell Park is located near the State Capitol and is named after Reverend Horace Bushnell who was pastor of the North Congregational Church. During the mid to late 1800s, Hartford was a booming industrial town experiencing the benefits of the newly invented railroad. Bushnell saw the dangers of industrialization on human life and believed that a park would create open space for people relocating into the densely populated city to move around and converse.

Bushnell preached to his congregation that it was crucial for the city to develop parks and open space. Bushnell expressed that, "the wretched filthy quarters shortly to be steaming here if this improvement fails, and already giving notification to the city but by smell and not by beauty in the eye."¹ Bushnell persuaded the authorities and citizens of Hartford that a park in the heart of the city would be a place where people could come together "in peace and happiness. The park would unite people and spread kindness throughout the city."² Bushnell wanted the city of Hartford to feel like a single coherent unit shared by all. Bushnell knew that a park was needed in the heart of the city and not on the outskirts in order to reap its full benefits, but he also knew that this approach would be expensive. So he went to work persuading mills and factories to sell their land and his parishioners on the Common Council that the city needed a park or an "outdoor parlor" as he viewed it. His convincing worked, and in July of 1953 the Council and the legislature approved a charter to take back the land scouted by Bushnell through stated eminent

¹ Bacon, Nicholas A. "Lost in Dialectic: A Critical Introduction to Urban Space in Greater Hartford, 1633-2010." Trinity College, 2010.

² Baldwin, Peter C. *Domesticating the Street: The Reform of Public Space in Hartford, 1850-1930*, (Ohio State University Press, 1999), 12.

domain. Hartford residents then approved the project in January of 1854 by a final vote of 1,005 to 682³. Landscape architect, and leader of the American Parks Movement, Frederick Law Olmsted was heavily influenced by Bushnell. As a parishioner of Bushnell at the North Congregational Church, Olmsted would later design Central Park in New York.

During the creation of Bushnell Park, the City of Hartford saw rapid economic growth with the invention and use of the railroad to transport coal and other raw materials. Steam power technology also turned Hartford into a large manufacturing city. Industries that were prevalent in Hartford during this time included high skilled metal work, guns, printing, machine tools, boiler making and other industrial infrastructure. Due to western migration and expansion of industry to other nearby towns in the 1840s and 1850s, Hartford began to lack enough workers. This problem was then resolved by the immigration of workers from Europe to Hartford.⁴

Jacob Weidenmann, a Swiss landscape architect, designed Bushnell Park. Weidenmann designed a park that included 157 varieties and total of 1,100 individual trees and shrubs from North America, Europe, and eastern Asia.⁵ The design for Bushnell Park as it is seen today has been altered from Weidenmann's original design due to the burial of the Park River in the 1940s. Since its creation in 1853, other features have been added to Bushnell Park including the Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Arch (1886), the Capitol (1876), Corning Fountain (1899), the Carousel (1974) and the Performance Pavilion (1995). Bushnell Park remains in suitable condition today due in large part to the heavy influence and maintenance from the Bushnell Park Foundation.

After the creation of Bushnell Park, many other parks began to come to fruition around the city of Hartford. The era of 1894-1905 is known as the "Rain of Parks" due to the addition of

³ Baldwin, *Domesticating the Street*, 22.

⁴ Walsh, Andrew. *Hartford: A Global History*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013.

⁵ Bushnell Park Foundation, "Park History," Accessed April 3, 2017.

1,000 acres of parkland across Hartford.⁶ These additions included Keney Park, Elizabeth Park, Goodwin Park, Colt Park, Riverside Park and finally Pope Park. As the population of Hartford began to rise steadily from 53,000 in 1890 to 80,000 in 1897, the amount of public space set aside for parks had to grow in order to keep up with Hartford's population.⁷ Reverend Francis Goodwin, Horace Bushnell's successor, and other members of the Park Board, convinced wealthy citizens to donate land and funds in order to establish and expand the public park system in Hartford. Reverend Goodwin is even quoted in the Hartford Courant saying to his relative, "you have no children to carry on your name. But if you give Hartford a beautiful park, your name will be spoken by someone every day of the year."⁸ Goodwin's efforts were very effective which directly benefited the increasing population in Hartford.

In 1895, The Olmsted Brothers firm (Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot) began the plans for Goodwin Park, Riverside Park, and Rocky Ridge Park. During this time, John Olmsted, stepson of Frederick Law Olmsted, led the Olmsted Brothers. John Olmsted wanted to see Hartford's parks link together as an integrated ring of parks creating what he called a Hartford Park System. In a speech given in 1901, Olmsted explained that the newly acquired parks should be "properly called a system of parks because they have been located with due regard to equitable geographic distribution and to take advantage of, and as far as possible to include, specimens of the several types of natural scenery available in the vicinity."⁹ This system includes riverfront meadows, woods, gardens, urban surroundings and fields of trees. Each of the new parks was designed to

⁶ Alexopoulos, John. *The 19th Century Parks of Hartford: A Legacy to the Nation*. Hartford Architecture Conservancy, 1983.

⁷ Baldwin, *Domesticating the Street*, 34.

⁸ Neyer, Constance, "100 Years of Hartford's Parks," *The Hartford Courant*, November 6, 1994, H1.

⁹ Baldwin, *Domesticating the Street*, 122.

be of use and inclusive to the population living in proximity to the park. The idea of connectivity as John Olmsted proposed is something that many people wish to see in Hartford's parks today.

In 1894, Charles Pond, former Governor of Hartford, donated 90 acres and \$180,000 for the maintenance and purchase of additional land for a park. This park would later be named Elizabeth Park in 1897. In 1894, a wealthy businessman named Henry Keney died and donated his estate to purchase land in the Northern part of Hartford when it became available. This land did not become available until 1896 when George A. Parker was hired to oversee the development of Keney Park, which had its own trustees and superintendent. Unlike Bushnell, Parker did not see Hartford's parks as an opportunity to unify an increasingly segregated city. Instead, Parker believed that "the clashing of different groups made unity impossible - and that unity was in any case less important than the fulfillment of individual needs."¹⁰ Parker called for greater segregation of park visitors on the basis of age, gender, and socioeconomic status. Keney Park is one of the largest municipal open spaces in New England and was completed in 1924.¹¹

Later in 1896, The Olmsted firm hired Theodore Wirth to oversee the development of the new parks. Theodore Wirth designed Elizabeth Park in 1904, which contains the nation's first municipal rose garden. Next in line to donate was bicycle and automobile manufacturer Colonel Albert Pope, who donated land in 1898 to create a park accessible to the people who lived and worked in the area. In 1899, a general plan for Riverside Park was created after the citizens of Hartford decided to purchase the land in 1895. Finally, Samuel and Elizabeth Colt gifted Colt Park to the city in 1905.

¹⁰ Baldwin, *Domesticating the Street*, 116.

¹¹ The Cultural Landscape Foundation, "City of Hartford Parks System," October 16, 2009, Accessed April 3, 2017.

Throughout this “Rain of Parks,” the City of Hartford became an industrial powerhouse of external investment.¹² Insurance companies, national and international sales networks and new factories formed in the transition from the 19th to 20th century. Companies such as Pope Manufacturing, Colt’s Patent Fire-Arm Manufacturing, Royal and Underwood, and Pratt & Whitney drove Hartford to be an industrial city. Demographics in Hartford shifted from primarily Irish immigrants to Italians and Russian Jews.

It’s All Uphill From Here; 1930-1960

By the 1930s, Hartford was reputed to have the largest park acreage per capita in America.¹³ The American Parks Movement was in full swing and cities around the nation were looking to Hartford as an example of urban park excellence. According to presiding Mayor of Hartford in 1930 Mr. Walter E. Batterson, “Hartford has the finest parks and the best park and playground system in the country.”¹⁴ The Hartford Courant reported that in 1934, “The total attendance at the 21 playgrounds maintained by the Park Department was 1,459,366.” Also during 1934, a total of “32 baseball diamonds were in service when 3,600 baseball permits were issued and more than 4,000 games were played without permit. 34 tennis courts were in service. The number of participants in lawn bowling at Colt and Elizabeth parks was 3,469. 78 season tickets and 49,872 rounds of golf played at Keney Park. 67,650 bathers used the Riverside Park pool. 327,000 skated on ponds.”¹⁵ These numbers show the sheer increase in the volume of

¹² Walsh, Andrew. *Hartford: A Global History*.

¹³ Alexopoulos, John. *The 19th Century Parks of Hartford*.

¹⁴ “Municipal Park System Inspected By City Officials, Mayor Praises Boards” *The Hartford Courant*, August 29, 1930, 17.

¹⁵ “Opportunities For Play In Parks Listed,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, June 3, 1934, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 7.

people using the services provided by Hartford's parks and the variety of programs offered in the early 1930s.

During the 1930s, Hartford residents knew that Hartford's parks and recreation opportunities were unique to a city the size of Hartford and important to urban life. When the city budget was discussed, Hartford residents were generally supportive of funding for Hartford's parks. According to one resident, funding for Hartford's parks should not be cut and redirected to the school system which was already receiving 26.6 percent of the budget as was proposed by the City of Hartford in 1935. In a letter to the editor of the *Hartford Courant*, a resident explained that, "Parks provide recreation, health, and education - three divisions- so that one third of the money spent on parks can be considered as spent on education in addition to the direct allotment. In reality, then, a staggering sum is allotted to education. Is it fair to cut down the educational features of the schools? Nothing is gained thereby."¹⁶ This Hartford resident believes that the recreational opportunities offered by the parks actively add to the education of Hartford's youth.

By the mid-1930s, only 8 of the 106 workers in the parks department were full time workers. The rest of the workers in the division were part of the Workers Progress Administration (WPA) of the New Deal. These workers and the Civilian Conservation Corps played a formative role in the development of Hartford's parks and recreational capacities.¹⁷ After the WPA projects began to phase out in 1936, some Hartford officials did not believe that cutting the Parks Department so drastically was in the best interest of the city. One concerned Hartford resident wrote in the *Hartford Courant* that "the criticism may arise at once that the

¹⁶ "Hartford's Budget," *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, January 28, 1935, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 6.

¹⁷ Wimer, Arthur, "State Parks Conference Here June 1," *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, May 25, 1936, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 2.

employment of those key men and women is a problem for the WPA that should not be shifted to the shoulders of the Park Department. In that, I heartily agree. Their employment is not our problem, but the recreation of the people of Hartford is our problem and we can best and most economically furnish this recreation through the medium of these people. In view of this, I respectfully ask your consideration of this group as regular Park Department employees for their mutual benefit and ours.”¹⁸ Later in 1938, the WPA workers were acknowledged again for their influence on Hartford’s parks. According to the Hartford Courant, “Those who appreciate the difficulties of arousing the interest of youth and holding its attention will find it hard to deny to the WPA Recreation Division of the Park Department considerable credit for the part it takes in fashioning the lives of the young people of this city.”¹⁹ During the 1930s the people living in Hartford saw the immense benefits of a superb urban park system thanks in large part to the workers of the WPA.

Thanks to Superintendent George H. Hollister and Park Recreation Director James H. Dillon, who both had extensive years working and formal education in parks and recreation, the 1940s were still a time of growth for Hartford’s parks. There are still many advocates for the park system during the 1940s like this Hartford citizen who argues that, “The program of the Recreation Division is educational as well as recreational” and that parks like Hartford’s are important, “Especially in the large cities which find that without such recreational opportunities, unrest and delinquency increase alarmingly. It represents an attempt to make life in a crowded urban section as healthy as it supposedly was in the rural small towns in which our fathers grew. In substance, it is an attempt to check the unconstructive influences of city life by a constructive

¹⁸ “Asks Park Board Keep WPA Staff: J. H. Dillon,” *The Hartford Courant* (1923-1991), May 30, 1936, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 1.

¹⁹ “Recreation in Hartford,” *The Hartford Courant* (1923-1991), April 11, 1938, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 6.

leadership and activities bound to appeal to young and old alike.”²⁰ The health and community benefits of a great park system are unparalleled by other programs and amenities offered by the city during the 1940s.

The World War II efforts of the early 1940s brought many more men than at any other time prior to leave Hartford. One Hartford resident notes that Hartford’s parks were more crucial than ever before. “Think what it means to mothers at work in war industry to know that their children have safe and wholesome places to play after school. Think what it means to war workers with days off during the week to know that they may stretch weary muscles in tennis, softball and the hardier baseball, fill tired lungs with fresh air and acquire invigorating sun tans in the open. Think what this expanded park program will bring all of us who because of gasoline and tire restrictions may no longer roam far outside the city limits for that relaxation always welcome but in wartime a downright necessity.”²¹ The parks offered a place for workers in the wartime manufacturing industry to relax. They also offered a place of distraction for the families of those who were away fighting.

While it was extremely fortunate that Hartford received so many acres of parkland through donations, the upkeep on that land began to take a toll on the City of Hartford in the 1940s. It is during this time that people began to become skeptical about the costs of the park to the city and what benefits the Hartford citizens were getting. Frank E. Perly wrote that in 1944 the park system, “Costs \$100,000 annually, but is used by 2,000,000 people”²² While the costs of upkeep began to creep up, so did the use of the park system that still justified the cost to the city.

²⁰ “Hartford's Recreational Program,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, May 16, 1939, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 8.

²¹ “The Parks Are Open,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, May 3, 1943, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 6.

²² Perley, Frank, “Come On, Hartford, Let's Have Fun,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, May 7, 1944, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, SM3.

In 1947, the structure of the parks system changed with the abolishment of the Park Board, formally known as the Board of Park Commissioners. The Park Board was a group of ten members that had relative independence from the city to make decisions on Hartford's parks. The Park Board was abolished to make way for a new Department of Parks and Recreation in 1947 despite an appeal made by the Park Board to the Charter Commission to remain under the Park Board structure of governance. According to an article published by the Hartford Courant, the reason given for the change was that, "it would be unfair to allow a single department to retain its present organization while other departments were to be managed by a single commissioner answering to the city manager."²³ This department had to now report directly to the city manager and city council instead of the relative autonomy they had before.

According to the Hartford Courant "The city now had absolute control over the parks, with no outside body or buffer to prevent unwise decisions or projects. The parks of Hartford had lost their greatest watchdog." One saving grace for Hartford's parks was that George Hollister, former superintendent under the previous system of governance remained the superintendent of parks. His appointment would only last another few years until retirement, but he carried the vision of the park founders through a time of transition and bureaucratic change.²⁴

One of the first actions of the new Department of Parks and Recreation was to create a new map and directory of the parks in order to "provide the public with a quick survey of public facilities and save many persons the trouble of telephoning the Park Department for such information. In addition the majority of persons do not know that so many varied facilities are

²³ "Park Board Elimination Is Protested," *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, August 1, 1946; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 1.

²⁴ Jones, Todd, "A History of Keney Park," Last modified January 2011, Accessed April 3, 2017.

available in the park system.”²⁵ The Department of Parks and Recreation had created a system of 33 parks for the benefit of Hartford residents. However, many Hartford residents were unaware of the correct places to go for relevant information. A new directory was created in an effort for the Department of Parks and Recreation to better improve their communication with the people of Hartford. This struggle of communication would ensue over the next decade and is still present today.

George H. Hollister, city director of parks and recreation, retired after 45 years with the Hartford Parks Department in 1954.²⁶ Hollister had surpassed his mandatory retirement age of 70 in 1952, but was able to remain working through a ruling by the City Pension Commission until 1954. Mr. Hollister is accredited for much of the care and improvement of the parks as they had developed over the years. After Hollister’s retirement, Everett A. Piester became the succeeding superintendent. Mr. Piester had been assistant to Mr. Hollister for many years and was known for his work in botany and horticulture as director of Elizabeth Park rose gardens. With the abolishment of the Parks Board and transition to the Department of Parks and Recreation in 1947, the role of the superintendent became increasingly important. The former Parks Board operated by assigning each member of the board one or more parks to oversee and take ownership of the maintenance. According to an article published in the Hartford Courant, “That responsibility today rests entirely with the superintendent of parks.”²⁷ The decision to name Mr. Piester as the superintendent was not taken lightly. The decision was favored by the city of

²⁵ “Thirty-Three Activities Available In Public Parks,” *The Hartford Courant* (1923-1991), May 6, 1948, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 10.

²⁶ “Hollister's Retirement To Take Effect April 30,” *The Hartford Courant* (1923-1991), April 13, 1954, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 19.

²⁷ “Mr. Hollister Retires,” *The Hartford Courant* (1923-1991), April 16, 1954, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 14.

Hartford to retain someone who knew Hartford's parks instead of beginning a national search for a new superintendent.

Hartford saw many manufacturing companies and their workers begin to move to the suburbs during the 1950s. According to Andrew Walsh, "populations of nearby Enfield, Bloomfield, East Hartford, Windsor, Simsbury, Glastonbury, Manchester, and Newington all doubled. By contrast, Hartford's population fell for the first time, from its peak of 177,397 to 162,178 in 1960."²⁸ Despite the increase in the number of people moving out of the city, Hartford still surpassed other cities in New England, "and many other cities throughout the country in providing year round programs and facilities for leisure time activities for all ages."²⁹ According to author Peter Harnik, the movement of people to suburbs would have a negative impact on the city's parks. Harnik explained that, "more people— influential people, taxpaying people— suddenly had yards. Even though yards didn't fulfill even one-tenth the many roles of parks, they seemed like little green parks. And it seemed redundant to pay a mortgage for a private yard and then pay taxes for a public park."³⁰ The mid 1950s actually set record highs for the use of Hartford parks where, "attendance increased by 17 percent from the previous year."³¹ Hartford's parks succeeded as a model for other cities around the nation during the first half of the 20th century.

²⁸ Walsh, Andrew. *Hartford: A Global History*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013.

²⁹ "Hartford Area Reflects Nation's Recreation Surge," *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, March 11, 1957, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 6.

³⁰ Harnik, Peter, *Urban Green : Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities*, Washington: Island Press, 2012. ProQuest ebrary. Accessed March 21, 2017.

³¹ Morse, Charles, "City Parks, Among Best, Attract Record Crowds," *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, Jun 30, 1957, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 3B.

It's All Downhill From Here; 1960 - Present

After 1950, the City of Hartford began to undergo dramatic demographic transformation. According to Andrew Walsh, “In that year, its population was more than 90 percent white. In the 1950s, it remained an industrial center that provided more than 30,000 manufacturing jobs within its city limits. But by the early 1970s, the city was about half white and home to only about 20,000 manufacturing jobs. It lost half those manufacturing jobs by 1975, and most of the rest by 1990. By 2010, fewer than 20 percent of the city’s residents were white, about 37 percent were African American, and about 41 percent Latino.”³² During the 1960s, many of the white-collar Residents of Hartford had already left the city for the suburbs. This left many of the blue-collar workers living and working in Hartford.

With the demographic and economic transformation of Hartford during the 1960s came a more critical look at Hartford’s parks. More and more people began to question the percent of the city budget that was being allocated to the parks, while others still justified the need for the parks. According to Hartford resident Mihai Dimancescu, “Hartford is a city which can be proud. Thanks to its Parks and Recreation Department, and to many activities sponsored by the commercial organizations which make this city prosper, juvenile delinquency in Hartford is low.”³³ In Mr. Dimancescu’s letter to the editor of the Hartford Courant, he cites this as a reason that Mr. Piester (acting superintendent of the Department of Parks and Recreation) should not abolish sports in Hartford’s Parks. In 1960, Mr. Piester voiced his opinion that sports should not be played in the parks and he, himself, even interfered with tennis games and intramural bicycle races. With more use, comes more maintenance of the parks. Mr. Piester was a big proponent in maintaining the serenity and botanical purity of Hartford’s parks, as he interpreted that Olmsted

³² Walsh, Andrew. *Hartford: A Global History*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013.

³³ Hartford Courant - The People’s Forum 1960

had intended. Mr. Dimancescu adds that, “We cannot let a man who wishes to destroy health remain unopposed. We must remedy the situation!”³⁴ Sports and recreational opportunities are some of the most important aspects of city parks, and it is evident in this case that citizens of Hartford agree.

In 1974, the city was divided into 11 management units, with each headed by one to two recreation leaders. Each leader was responsible for recreation within their unit. City council members who said that the recreation centers were not providing the recreation needed for Hartford’s citizens criticized this system. Councilman Nicholas R. Carbone suggested that the, “real weakness wasn’t inadequate centers but the recreation program itself and supervision.”³⁵ The Department of Parks and Recreation was operating under a small budget and a fragmented system of governance. The Department would need millions to bring facilities, playgrounds, and centers up to par.

In the late 1970s people began to see the effects of a weak Department of Parks and Recreation. Hartford’s parks saw an increase in vandalism and a decrease in visitors. In 1979, George Yarwood wrote, “There is an obvious need for supervision of planned recreation programs with adequate personnel, increased maintenance with a bigger budget and police surveillance to insure public safety and to prevent vandalism. Employment of semi-skilled and unskilled labor in clearing and cleaning up and construction could be a plus.”³⁶ With a decreased budget, the Department of Parks and Recreation was forced to cut some of the skilled workers such as foresters and gardeners who felt an ownership of the parks that they worked in and

³⁴ Dimancescu, Mihai, “The People's Forum,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, May 21, 1960, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 10.

³⁵ Barrett, David, “Parks Department Changing Role,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, May 1, 1974, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 70.

³⁶ Yarwood, George, “Parks Are for People, Not Trash,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, August 22, 1979, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, 15.

produced better results than a general maintenance crew would.

Many people living near the parks began to take responsibility and ownership of the asset in their neighborhood. The foundation of “Friends of Parks” groups started in the 1970s and became a very common way to maintain Hartford’s parks throughout the 20th century until present day. According to Section 26-14 (a) of Hartford’s Code of Ordinances, a Friends of Parks group shall be defined today as a, “noncommercial entity recognized by the City of Hartford, composed of individuals committed to the betterment of one or more City parks.”³⁷ The first Friends of Parks group, Friends of Elizabeth Park, began its conservation efforts in 1977. The group was formed by “a small group of dedicated neighbors, both urban and suburban, to save the historic rose garden from almost certain demolition.”³⁸ Thirty-five years later in 2012, the Friends of Elizabeth Park changed its name to the Elizabeth Park Conservancy in order to reflect their dedication to the conservation of Elizabeth Park.

Staff levels in the Department of Parks and Recreation dropped from 260 full time workers during the 1977-78 fiscal year budget to about 190 full time workers in the 1983-84 fiscal year budget.³⁹ Some people like Adolf Arnold who justified this budgetary cut by saying that, “Things like maintaining a road in a park is not a high priority when you have people who don’t have shelter.”⁴⁰ John Alexopoulos, assistant professor of landscape design at UConn counters this point by saying that, “It’s the city’s backyard, so to speak. To not keep them up is

³⁷ Municipal Code Corporation, “Hartford, Connecticut: Chapter 26- Parks and Recreation,” Accessed April 3, 2017.

³⁸ Elizabeth Park Conservancy, “About the Elizabeth Park Conservancy,” Accessed April 3, 2017.

³⁹ Sherman, Howard, and Jon Sandberg, “Hartford's Parks,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, June 19, 1983; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, C1.

⁴⁰ Sherman, Howard, and Jon Sandberg, “Hartford's Parks,” C1.

crazy. It's not just a pretty thing... it's a place for respite."⁴¹ Finally, Victor J. Jarm director of the Department of Parks and Recreation explained, "We're trying to hold a C average in our parks system. At any given time as you drive through the park system, 30 to 35 percent of it would be in a condition less than fair."⁴² With this standard of a "C average," Hartford's parks are evidently a low priority for the City of Hartford in 1983.

In 1980, many cities around the nation began to rediscover their waterfronts as a place that could benefit the city both ecologically and economically. In 1981, a small group of people came together in Hartford to form Riverfront Recapture. This non-profit organization had the mission to take back the riverfront of Hartford and East Hartford through a public-private effort.⁴³ Riverfront Recapture was a very controversial topic at the time. As mentioned previously, people in Hartford saw a greater need for other services provided by the city than parks. Rudolph P. Arnold, former Hartford Deputy Mayor said, "Hartford has a lot of other economic and other problems. The city is so distressed that it (the riverfront) is not a high priority, and can't be."⁴⁴ People also feared that a private partnership would not keep in mind the best interests of the residents in Hartford. Bernadine Silvers expressed that, "unless city officials... develop some public participation mechanism and adequate public controls to guide the development, ... riverfront planning will become the bailiwick of large corporations."⁴⁵

Similar to Riverfront Recapture and Elizabeth Park Conservancy, the Bushnell Park Foundation

⁴¹ Sherman, Howard, and Jon Sandberg, "Hartford's Parks," C1.

⁴² Sherman, Howard, and Jon Sandberg, "Hartford's Parks," C1.

⁴³ Riverfront Recapture, "Our History," Accessed April 3, 2017.

⁴⁴ Ryan, Bill, "Riverfront Plan's Support Is Wide, but Shallow," *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, March 26, 1984; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, A1A.

⁴⁵ Ryan, Bill, "Riverfront Plan's Support Is Wide, but Shallow," *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, March 26, 1984; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, A1A.

was formed in 1981 by a group of citizens concerned about how distressed the landscape and sculptures in Bushnell Park had become.

Another main theme that began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s was that the parks were not safe. Due to their lack of maintenance, families' park attendance decreased as crime, vandalism, and trash began to escalate. In 1985, the city began a mounted police patrol program, meaning that police officers would patrol Hartford's parks on horses. "Eight officers were chosen to patrol Hartford's major parks on horseback, an idea which had seen great success in cities such as Boston, Providence, and New Haven."⁴⁶ The stables for the horses were located in Keney Park and the program began in 1986 and ended in 2000 without seeing much success or return on investment.

In 1984, Riverfront Recapture partnered with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) to include riverfront access in its plans to redesign the I-91/I-84 interchanges in downtown Hartford.⁴⁷ This redesign would include a landscaped plaza, to be known as Riverfront Plaza, over the new highway to connect downtown Hartford with the river. While this effort would take many years of construction, Riverfront Recapture worked with other parks like Charter Oak Landing and Riverside Park in Hartford and Great River Park in East Hartford. The construction of Riverfront Plaza was not completed until 1999.⁴⁸

In 1988, the City of Hartford used a private company to develop a plan for Hartford's parks. "Joe Bannon, president of Management Learning Laboratories Ltd., and five assistants presented summaries of their first two months of work on the \$75,000 study, which is scheduled

⁴⁶ Jones, Todd, "A History of Keney Park," Last modified January 2011, Accessed April 3, 2017.

⁴⁷ Riverfront Recapture, "Our History."

⁴⁸ Riverfront Recapture, "Our History."

to be completed in May of 1988.”⁴⁹ Many Hartford citizens were very wary of this kind of plan. They did not trust someone outside of Hartford to assess the parks accurately. Self-proclaimed parks activist Gurujohn Singh Khalsa, “criticized the report, saying the consultant had determined what people in Hartford already knew.”⁵⁰ Though this is the first evidence found of an external plan, many more were to be developed throughout the next few decades and reviewed later in this thesis.

The parks budget continued to shrink during the 1990s. In reaction to proposed budget cuts, parks supervisor Bernard Jaworski said, “It means loss of staff, recreational programs, cutting down on mowing or cutting back on flowers in the flower beds.”⁵¹ During the 1990s, city officials began taking a stance on how to solve the issues facing Hartford’s parks. Most city officials viewed Hartford’s parks as a problem instead of an asset. They were viewed as a budgetary confinement that stole money away from more important things in Hartford.

According to a Hartford Courant article, City Manager Gene Shipman planned a radical overhaul of Hartford's “beleaguered” parks and recreation services. This overhaul would close swimming pools and gymnasiums and leave playgrounds unsupervised. “Shipman’s proposal also would lay off at least nine people. As proposed, the entire package would save the city more than \$530,000 next year. The plan, while cutting services for children could allow the council to restore money to Hartford schools, which council Democrats have said is a primary goal.”⁵² Very few people would argue that Hartford schools are unimportant, but many people in Hartford

⁴⁹ Keveney, Bill, “Panel has questions about report on parks,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, January 29, 1988; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, D3.

⁵⁰ Keveney, Bill, “Panel has questions about report on parks,” D3.

⁵¹ Drury, Dave, “Upkeep No Walk in the Park,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, April 14, 1991, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, H1F.

⁵² Seline, Anita, “Recreation proposal would close down Hartford pools, gyms,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991)*, May 16, 1991, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant, B1F.

would argue that parks serve a crucial role and add value to their communities. During the summer, the parks provide programming and even food to Hartford's residents who would otherwise remain unfed during the summer months out of school meal programs. According to the Hartford Courant, "Shipman said he met with the executive committee of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission which he wants to be responsible for recommending recreation priorities and garnering community comments about programs."⁵³ Shipman's plan would move the responsibility from the city to provide service to community groups that would organize recreational activities and provide gyms and playing fields.

The Trust for Public Land noted that the city of Hartford disbanded the Department of Parks and Recreation in 1996. The city decided to abolish the Department of Parks and Recreation due to "personality issues rather than to structural imperatives, but the result was not positive."⁵⁴ Moving forward, the Department of Public Works was in charge of maintaining city parks while a new Community Services Department took care of recreation. The history of Hartford's parks is one of committed and unified leadership until this point. Without a formal Department of Parks and Recreation, the Hartford Parks system began moving down a detrimental path. This weak, fragmented system of government would cause a lack of leadership and communication for many years to come. The Trust for Public Land also notes that, "cities which have fragmented bureaucratic structures have park systems which do not get the full attention of the mayor, the city council and the public at large."⁵⁵ Under this system of park governance, the city of Hartford has the structure and resources to focus on other problems the city faces that actually have specialized departments instead of Hartford's parks.

⁵³ Seline, Anita, "Recreation proposal would close down Hartford pools, gyms," B1F.

⁵⁴ Jones, Todd, "A History of Keney Park."

⁵⁵ Jones, Todd, "A History of Keney Park."

By the late 1990s, Riverfront Recapture had transformed Hartford's riverside along the Connecticut River. Riverfront Recapture was responsible for all programming of events and activities in Riverfront parks. The Metropolitan District (MDC) provided daily maintenance and funding of the park rangers.⁵⁶ Riverfront Recapture shows the city's transference of the 'problem' of Hartford's parks to private entities through a public-private relationship.

According to the Trust for Public Land's report on Hartford's parks in 2007, the separated park and recreation department, "which once had 350 professionals, laborers, foresters, landscapers, lifeguards, instructors and recreation leaders today musters only 35 park workers and seven recreation professionals — and even that number is on a relentless decline with retirements."⁵⁷ As park professionals began to retire, replacements were not hired and the number of paid employees dwindled down to the very few that are still working for the City of Hartford today.

Impotence and Disconnect; Present

The governance surrounding the Hartford park system today can be characterized as impotent for its lack of leadership and disconnected for its lack of communication between the parties involved and with Hartford citizens. It has been noted, "almost every Hartfordian today is within one mile of a park and 60 percent are within a quarter-mile."⁵⁸ Hartford contains 2,300 park acres within its city limits and additional park acres just outside the city limits (Batterson Park, and portions of Elizabeth, Keney and Goodwin Parks.)⁵⁹ The opportunity that Hartford's

⁵⁶ Riverfront Recapture, "Our History."

⁵⁷ The Trust for Public Land, "The Park System of Hartford, Connecticut: Renewing a Historic Legacy," October, 2007, Accessed April 3, 2017, 1.

⁵⁸ The Trust for Public Land, "The Park System of Hartford, Connecticut: Renewing a Historic Legacy," 4.

⁵⁹ The City of Hartford, "FY 2017 Adopted Budget," Accessed April 3, 2017.

parks offer the city and its citizens are significant, yet is mired by this lack of leadership and communication. The importance of city parks and governance will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. Then, a compilation of unstructured interviews will substantiate the claim that the City of Hartford needs to actively pursue public-private partnerships and cooperation between micro-actors and stakeholders in the Hartford Park System. These actions are necessary as the city moves towards its stated goals of improved sustainability and quality of life for all.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Argument

Park Size

Authors Julia Czerniak, George Hargreaves, and John Beardsley define large parks as parks that are over 500 acres such as London’s Hyde Park, Paris’s Bois de Boulogne, and New York’s Central Park.⁶⁰ According to the authors, “Large parks afford a rich array of social activities and interactions that help to forge community, citizenship, and belonging in dense and busy cities.”⁶¹ Large parks also have very valuable ecological effects on a city, they “are effective at helping to store and process storm-water runoff, to channel and cool air temperature in the urban core, and to provide habitat for a rich ecology of plant, animal, bird, aquatic, and microbial life.”⁶² Many urban theorists including the authors of this book go as far to say that large parks act as the “green lungs” of a city in their function to clean, refresh, and enrich life in a city. Keney Park is the only park in Hartford that can be truly considered a large park, as it is a total of 694 acres with 584 acres in Hartford and 110 acres in Windsor.⁶³

Keney Park has provided Hartford with both recreational and ecological benefits since its inception and development during the “Rain of Parks” era in 1924. As a large park, Keney offers these benefits to the residents of the city of Hartford, the surrounding metropolitan area, and specifically the residents in Blue Hills, Northeast, and Upper Albany neighborhoods of Hartford due to their proximity to the park. According to the authors of *Large Parks*, the sites of land used for the parks inevitably determine the physical characteristics of the parks to a degree. The large

⁶⁰ Czerniak, Julia, George Hargreaves, and John Beardsley, *Large parks*, (Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 11.

⁶¹ Czerniak, Julia, George Hargreaves, and John Beardsley, *Large parks*, 11.

⁶² Czerniak, Julia, George Hargreaves, and John Beardsley, *Large parks*, 11.

⁶³ The City of Hartford, “Keney Park,” Accessed April 3, 2017.

sites of land limit the ability to radically change the land and force the park to be somewhat natural.

Though Keney Park is seemingly natural and vast park, it is the least natural of Hartford's parks and serves as a contradiction to this point. According to an article in the Hartford courant, "Keney Park is the most man-made park in the city, costing nearly double to construct than all the other parks of Hartford... There is hardly a foot of ground that has not been graded... fifty miles of water drains were made; over one million yard's worth of soil was moved; over a million trees and shrubs, all native species, were planted; nine miles of red sandstone roads and walks were laid, none of which had any straight-aways. Fences were constructed around almost the entire perimeter of the park, and a fire line was created along the northern border to help protect the precious woodlands from forest fires."⁶⁴ Though the park was developed by man, it still offers recreational and ecological benefits to the city of Hartford that surpass what any smaller park could offer.

According to the Municipal Conservation Reference: *Hartford's Birds – Park Habitat Revitalization and Conservation*, a new study of Keney Park is required in order to update the images drawn by the Olmsted firm and calculate the exact environmental benefits of Keney Park. This drawing can be seen in Image 1. An updated drawing is needed to "clarify locations of valuable habitat, areas of invasive species, detail opportunities to reduce mowing and revitalize ecosystem integrity of degraded landscapes"⁶⁵ Though an updated drawing is needed to provide specific information on Keney Park, the ecological benefits of the large park are still obvious to the city of Hartford. Today, the 584 acres of Keney Park within the city limits offers more tree

⁶⁴ Jones, Todd, "A History of Keney Park."

⁶⁵ Pelletier, Mary, "Municipal Conservation Reference – for Urban Migratory Birds," February, 2017, 6.

canopy to the city than any other park. Tree canopy is an important aspect of a city because an increased tree canopy “reduces storm water runoff, improves air quality, reduces the city’s carbon footprint, enhances quality of life, contributes to savings on energy bills and serves as habitat for wildlife.”⁶⁶ Keney Park represents 20% of Hartford’s existing tree canopy of 2,870 acres and the area surrounding the park has high potential for increased tree canopy in the near future if pursued by the City of Hartford and stakeholders in the Hartford Park System.⁶⁷

While large parks like Keney Park are important to the city for recreational and environmental reasons, small parks are fundamental in decreasing the fragmentation between green spaces in the city. Small parks can be characterized in this case as anything under 500 acres, including “parkettes” which are defined as parks that are less than one acre in size. According to the fiscal year 2017 Adopted Budget provided by the City of Hartford, the Hartford Park System today includes 37 parks.⁶⁸ Peter Harnik makes the argument in *Urban green: Innovative parks for resurgent cities* that these small parks are crucial to a city like Hartford.

Small parks offer green space to residents of nearby neighborhoods and are often utilized more than large parks are on a daily basis. When thinking about small parks, the importance is less about acreage and more about proximity to people who will use them. Author Peter Harnik argues that “instead of seeking or setting an official standard for, say, picnic spots per 1,000 persons, it’s more efficacious to set a standard for how to devise a process for meeting the need for picnicking, walking, bench-sitting, bird-watching, cycling, kite-flying, and more in each

⁶⁶ O’Neil-Dunne, Jarlath and Keith Pelletier, “A Report on the City of Hartford, Connecticut’s Existing and Possible Tree Canopy,” USDA Forest Service and University of Vermont, April 1, 2014, 7.

⁶⁷ O’Neil-Dunne, Jarlath and Keith Pelletier, “A Report on the City of Hartford, Connecticut’s Existing and Possible Tree Canopy,” 1.

⁶⁸ The City of Hartford, “FY 2017 Adopted Budget,” Accessed April 3, 2017, 38-10.

specific community.”⁶⁹ If a neighborhood needs a small park within walking distance, the city should provide this type of park for its residents.

How close does a park have to be? According to Harnik, “When planners draw concentric circles around parks, those zones are in fact averages and approximations of numerous personal decision-point factors that include physical strength, time, fear, traffic, companionship, and others.”⁷⁰ The measure is not always in miles or feet, but in time it takes to get to a park and the obstacles that might limit access. For example, many residents on the Hartford, West-Hartford line near Elizabeth Park can walk to the park for different activities from their residence. Table 1 shows the many things that parks can be used for as determined by author Peter Harnik. Another important point of accessibility of Elizabeth Park is a parking lot that allows visitors to drive to the park without any trouble or take the CT Transit Hartford City Bus System. A counterexample to this would be Bushnell Park. While some people do live in proximity to Bushnell Park, its downtown location gives those who work in nearby office buildings a place to walk during lunch, but is often deserted after work hours. Bushnell Park’s lack of parking makes it inaccessible to many people who would want to drive their cars to the park, but is located directly on a main CT Transit Hartford City Bus line. Many actors within the Hartford Park System argue that bike lanes and pedestrian walkways should connect these small parks in order to increase accessibility.

Small parks also offer ecological benefits to a city just like large parks. While each small park does not make up as large of a percentage of the tree canopy as a park like Keney Park, they still contribute to the total tree canopy that is crucial for a city’s ecological health. Small parks

⁶⁹ Harnik, Peter. *Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities* (Washington: Island Press, 2012), 27.

⁷⁰ Harnik, Peter. *Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities* (Washington: Island Press, 2012), 28.

also offer a habitat for many species that struggle in urban environments. Many species are “in decline from a variety of causes and pressure, especially due to habitat loss and degradation, the introduction of invasive plants and animals (including outdoor and feral cats), pollutants, such as pesticides, and collisions with buildings, cars, and energy infrastructure (transmission lines, stacks, and windmills).”⁷¹ Hartford’s proximity to the Connecticut River provides species with many different types of environments to survive. City streets and buildings fragment these habitats. Small parks serve to connect different species with their habitats as they navigate through the urban area of Hartford.

Public-Private Partnerships

What are public-private partnerships and how could they help improve the Hartford Park System? According to author Eve Endicott, public-private partnerships were beginning to develop in cities across the nation in the 1970s, but were not commonplace until the 1980s. Now, it is almost the exception if land acquisition and maintenance occur without a partner from the private sector and one from the public sector.⁷² Author Jim C.Y. even goes as far to say that “urban greening has to be a public-private partnership, and the resources and resourcefulness of the private sector should be fully mobilized in a joint endeavor.”⁷³ The resources and resourcefulness of the private sector help to overcome the challenges that face the public sector.

The public sector faces challenges in its maintenance of green spaces due to small budgets and the constraints of public opinion regarding such budget. Endicott argues that

⁷¹ Pelletier, Mary, “Municipal Conservation Reference – for Urban Migratory Birds,” February, 2017, 8.

⁷² Endicott, Eve. *Land conservation through public/private partnerships*, (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993), 3.

⁷³ Jim, C. Y, "Green-space preservation and allocation for sustainable greening of compact cities," *Cities* 21, no. 4 (2004): 311-320.

partnering with a private entity can offer the public sector agility, an atmosphere of possibility, and people. With regards to green space, these private entities can include nonprofits, land trusts, corporations and others structures. The Hartford Park System’s most successful and well-known public-private partnership is Riverfront Recapture. The relationship of giving and receiving of Riverfront Recapture between municipalities, regional partners, the State of Connecticut, and Riverfront Recapture Inc. is illustrated in Table 2.

According to Endicott, “a source of non-government (NGO) money can be extraordinarily helpful in sustaining successful long-term conservation efforts.”⁷⁴ Public-private partnerships offer the City of Hartford a chance to bridge the gap between the city budget and the vast needs of Hartford’s parks. As private citizens originally donated Hartford’s parks, the budget of the city should not be expected to keep up with the maintenance of the privately donated parks. Public-private partnerships operating under good leadership and communication can sustain a high standard of implementation and management of the Hartford Park System.

Humane Urbanism

Author David Prytherch explains the term “Humane Urbanism” in the book *Reclaiming American Cities: The Struggle for People, Place, and Nature since 1900*. Humane Urbanism is an effort to make cities and suburbs greener, healthier and safer, more equitable and multicultural, more efficient, and more people friendly and fun. Humane Urbanism attempts to tackle the question in American cities of, “who decides what is important for whose benefit, how to achieve it, and at whose expense?”⁷⁵ Prytherch goes on to argue that we are currently seeing a

⁷⁴ Endicott, Eve. *Land conservation through public/private partnerships*, (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993), 166.

⁷⁵ Platt, Rutherford. *Reclaiming American Cities: The Struggle for People, Place, and Nature since 1900* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 5.

shift in responsibility away from top-down government run programs to action being carried out by “micro-actors” in order to directly benefit city dwellers.

What is a “micro-actor” and how are they carrying out Humane Urbanism in American cities? Instead of a top-down macro level approach, Prytherch explains that the approach is now coming from, “experienced local or regional non-governmental (NGOs) concerned with particular issues ... more informal, multi-issue neighborhood and block coalitions, “Friends of” groups, and ad-hoc alliances and partnerships, and garden variety volunteer networks.”⁷⁶ The picture that Prytherch paints of Humane Urbanism in American cities is happening in Hartford today. Prytherch offers five premises that are fundamental to this new perspective of Humane Urbanism. These premises are:

- (1) metropolitan regions are essentially inescapable, so we might as well make them as habitable, safe, and pleasant as possible;
- (2) the preceding observation applies across the socioeconomic spectrum to rich and poor alike;
- (3) the laws of nature are not suspended within urban areas;
- (4) respecting and restoring natural systems within urban places is often more cost-effective than using technological methods; and
- (5) sharing “down to earth” activities like urban gardening, native plant restoration, stream cleanups, and tree planting brings people together and builds a sense of community.⁷⁷

An example that Prytherch uses to explain Humane Urbanism on the ground level is the Urban Resources Initiative (URI) in New Haven. Similar to the history of Hartford, New Haven faced a decline in its infrastructure and population while there was an increase in poverty within the city limits from the 1960s until present day. The Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies (F&ES), the City of New Haven, and the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven

⁷⁶ Platt, Rutherford. *Reclaiming American Cities: The Struggle for People, Place, and Nature since 1900* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 7.

⁷⁷ Platt, Rutherford. *Reclaiming American Cities: The Struggle for People, Place, and Nature since 1900* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 225.

formed the URI. Since 1995, URI has facilitated around two hundred urban restoration projects.⁷⁸ These “micro-actors” were able to determine what was needed for the city of New Haven and actually carry out projects in cooperation with the city to address these needs.

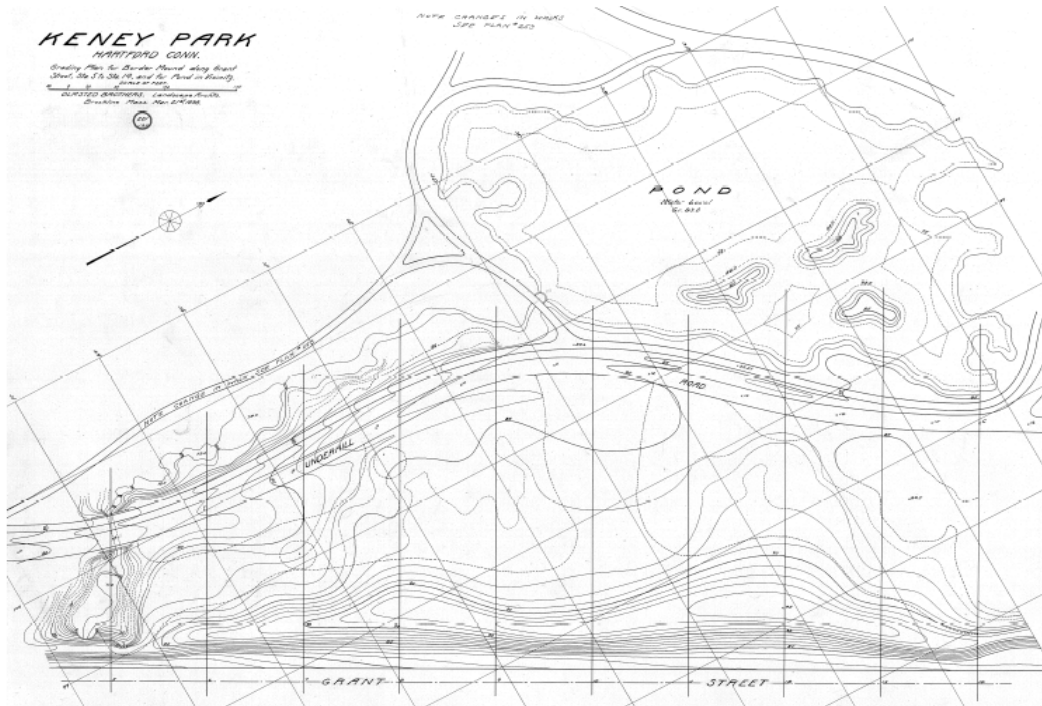
Prytherch explains that URI was so successful due to a “strong ongoing partnership between the city, the university, the community foundation, and community groups ... and a stable leadership of the CEO.”⁷⁹ The micro-actors in Hartford today involve the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC), Friends of Parks groups, and nonprofits that attempt to help bridge the gap between the two organizations - the Department of Public Works and the Department of Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation. Micro-actors like KNOX are very successful in Hartford today when in communication with other community groups in Hartford and utilize mechanisms like PRAC. Collaboration between each other and strong leadership is needed to improve the parks at a level that is beyond planting trees and extends to recreation and educational programs.

Prytherch argues that a grassroots focus by micro actors is more successful than top-down action taken by the government. The people “on-the-ground” know best what is needed for the people living in the city and how to facilitate action to achieve what is needed. These same people also have steady funding levels with the potential to be greater than the funding of the City of Hartford. Hartford needs a central governing organization and strong leader in order to improve communication between the “micro-actors” that have the potential to facilitate Humane Urbanism in the city of Hartford.

⁷⁸ Platt, Rutherford. *Reclaiming American Cities: The Struggle for People, Place, and Nature since 1900* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 231.

⁷⁹ Platt, Rutherford. *Reclaiming American Cities: The Struggle for People, Place, and Nature since 1900* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 232.

Image 1) The Olmsted firm's drawing of Keney Park Pond.⁸⁰



⁸⁰ Pelletier, Mary, "Municipal Conservation Reference – for Urban Migratory Birds," February, 2017, 6.

Table 1) What People Do in City Parks: A Partial List ⁸¹

Traditional Team Sports

Play tennis, golf, basketball, football, hockey, baseball/softball, volleyball, cricket, rugby, soccer, lacrosse

Less Traditional Sports

Bike on trail, bike on road, skateboard, in-line skate, ice-skate, run on park road, run on trail, fish, throw a Frisbee, throw a ball, Frisbee golf, kickball, Hacky Sack, rock climb, ice climb, wall climb, swim, raft, kayak, canoe, row (crew), surf, windsurf, sail, throw horseshoes, lawn bowl/bocce, play shuffleboard, ski cross-country, ski downhill, archery, lift weights, do exercises

More-Active Non-Sports

Fly a model airplane, float model boats, run model cars, play tag, chase, play hide-and-peek, use playground equipment, use a swing set, dig in the dirt, play in the water, walk/hike, walk a pet, perform (e.g., mime, music), climb a tree, bungee jump, geo cache, orienteering, paddleboat, tai chi, have a race, fly a kite, use a hula hoop, ride a horse, scuba dive, snorkel, camp out, falconry

Less-Active Non-Sports

Eat, drink, picnic, orate, gather with friends or family, read, write, think, sing, garden, do yoga, meditate, watch wildlife, photograph wildlife, photograph people, paint, sketch, drive a car, sit in a parked car, drive a motorcycle, visit a nature center, build a sand castle, search for lost coins/jewelry, sunbathe

Other (Generally Considered Positive)

Take a nap, pick up litter, sell or buy arts and crafts, sell or buy food, stage a concert or play, have a party, talk on the phone, surf the Internet, send and receive e-mail, watch people, kiss, improvise games, hold a class, take part in an interpretive talk, watch a historical reenactment, perform community service, restore a landscape, restore a structure, take risks, carry out a search-and-rescue drill

Other (Generally Considered Negative)

Have sex, sell or buy drugs, use illegal drugs, fight, panhandle, draw graffiti, destroy property, hide

⁸¹ Harnik, Peter. *Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities* (Washington: Island Press, 2012), 21.

Table 2) Riverfront Partners: Giving & Receiving⁸²

RIVERFRONT PARTNER	PARTNER CONTRIBUTES:	PARTNER RECEIVES:
Municipalities	Gives up most operating authority over parks; negotiates agreements addressing ownership and use, Continues certain services: utilities, dike and flood operations, police, fire, & fee waivers for events sponsored by partners. Cooperates on land-use planning & enforcement. Agrees to support/implement methods for generating additional public funds for the Riverfront	Economic development, Release from most liability. Release from most maintenance responsibilities. Enhanced municipal image. Increased programming for residents. Jobs for residents. Higher standards of maintenance. Potential for some share of earned income from entrepreneurial activity. Increased value for private properties nearby. Major share of new property tax revenue. Tourist attraction
Regional Partners	Maintenance and security. Venture capital (gap) financing.	Benefits connected with economic growth (direct and indirect), i.e. new customers. Leadership/participation in governance of Riverfront. Potential for earned income from Riverfront can reduce Regional Partner's costs. Enhanced public image
State of Connecticut	Financial assistance to complete construction. Start-up operating capital. Any enabling legislation required.	Increased regional economic activity. Tourist attraction/economic development catalyst. Enhanced image for State & Capitol Region.
Riverfront Recapture, Inc.	Programming expertise. Charitable fund raising capability. Positive public image and name.	Fulfillment of vision.

⁸² Project for Public Spaces, "Riverfront Partners: Giving & Receiving," January 1, 2009, Accessed April 5, 2017.

Chapter 3: The Evolving Budget and Goals of the City of Hartford

With no central Department of Parks and Recreation within the City of Hartford, the main duties of the department are broken up into a complex system of governance. The Department of Public Works (DPW) oversees the maintenance of Hartford's parks under its Parks Maintenance Division. The Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation (DFCYR) oversees recreation in Hartford's parks through its Division for Recreation. The stated goals of each of these programs and their budgetary restrictions prove that an active pursuit of public-private partnerships is important for the Hartford Park System to make any significant improvements to benefit residents of Hartford.

While the DPW and DFCYR shoulder most of the financial burden, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Development Services (DDS) are also relevant actors within the city's Hartford Park System. The DHHS is relevant to Hartford's parks through its Division of Environmental Health, which is responsible for "developing and maintaining Hartford as a health community by developing a sound public health infrastructure, promoting healthy lifestyles, controlling and preventing diseases and by enforcing the public health code."⁸³ On the other hand, the DDS is "responsible for providing and coordinating provision of the following services and activities: licenses and inspections, planning and zoning, housing and property management, grants management and economic development." With relation to Hartford's parks, the Office of Marketing, Events and Cultural Affairs, reviews permit applications for events in parks and the Office of Licenses and Inspections issues licenses with respect to buildings and structures, construction, zoning enforcement, rodent control, etc.⁸⁴ While

⁸³ The City of Hartford, "FY 2017 Adopted Budget," 3-4.

⁸⁴ The City of Hartford, "FY 2017 Adopted Budget," 3-4.

these two departments are important within the Hartford Park System, the DPW and DFCYR are more financially influential towards Hartford's Parks.

Department of Public Works

According to Adopted Budget Reports published by the Hartford Office of Budget and Management, the goal of the DPW is "to create a safe and healthy environment through the implementation of infrastructure maintenance and enhancements of parks, roadways, traffic systems, municipal buildings, vehicles/equipment, flood control systems and the collection of solid waste and recyclables."⁸⁵ The City of Hartford's Guide to Laws Relating to Parks explains that the Parks Maintenance Division within the DPW is "responsible for the management of the city's public grounds, parks, playfields and playgrounds, Elizabeth Park Rose Garden, the greenhouse, the maintenance of street trees and the urban forest and the maintenance of cemetery grounds and operations." Based on these two outlines of the responsibilities of the DPW, it is obvious that their main focus is the maintenance of the Hartford Park System.

The stated goal of the Parks Program within the DPW remained constant from fiscal year 2009-2010 to fiscal year 2016-2017.⁸⁶ The mission statement, as published by the Hartford Office of Budget and Management states that, "The goal of the Parks Program is to provide residents and visitors with attractive and well-maintained parks, cemeteries, athletic fields, urban forest system, playgrounds and other designated areas such as traffic medians, horticultural displays such as the Elizabeth Park Rose Garden and greenhouses."⁸⁷ It is no surprise that the crown jewel of the Hartford Park System, the Elizabeth Park Rose Garden, is mentioned in this

⁸⁵ The City of Hartford, "FY 2017 Adopted Budget," 3-4.

⁸⁶ The City of Hartford, "FY 2017 Adopted Budget," 3-4.

⁸⁷ The City of Hartford, "FY 2009-2010 Adopted Budget," Accessed April 3, 2017.

mission statement. However, the inclusion of the Elizabeth Park Rose Garden by the DPW is problematic. The Rose Garden is maintained at a standard that all other parks should be held to, but it is both privately and publicly maintained. The Elizabeth Park Conservancy takes on the majority share of the maintenance work so that the DPW does not have to. In order to maintain the rest of the parks in Hartford to the standard of Elizabeth Park, the City of Hartford would need to increase funding or pursue funding from an outside source.

Table 1 shows the services provided by the DPW in fiscal year 2009-2010. Table 2 shows that the services provided by the DPW significantly diminish in the fiscal year 2016-2017. The program services that remain the same across the reports include Park Maintenance, Horticulture, Forestry, and Cemetery Operations. The program services that are eliminated include Support Services, Mowing Operations, Park Snow and Ice Operations, and Vegetation Management. The trend that can clearly be seen over the course of the last decade is a diminishing amount of services offered by the DPW for Hartford's Parks despite having the same mission statement.

The burden of these services is further separated under the DPW in non-park specific areas. The fiscal year 2012-2013 report is the first report to show the elimination of these services. It can therefore be inferred that Support Services are still offered by the DPW under their funding Administrative Services and that Park Snow and Ice Operations are still offered under their funding of Snow Removal Operations. It is unclear where Mowing Operations services and Vegetation Management services are offered under the current system of funding. While these services are still offered by the DPW, they are no longer specific to parks and have no oversight to ensure that the best intentions of the parks are kept in mind.

From fiscal year 2008-2009 to fiscal year 2016-2017 the DPW has received between \$12,595,090 and \$14,353,492 and has been between 2.1% and 2.6% of the total adopted

expenditure budget. The highs and lows of funding show the monetary range at which the city of Hartford has funded its parks over the past nine years. The percentages are an important tool to show how much the city funded its parks relative to its overall budget commitments. The percentages serve to illustrate the priority that the city holds the DPW. Of the total budget of the DPW, the money allocated to the Parks Program has ranged from a low of \$1,599,723 to a high of \$2,491,303. The Parks Program has represented between 12.7% and 19% of the total DPW budget from fiscal year 2008-2009 to fiscal year 2016-2017 as illustrated in Graphs 1 and 2. This wide range in percentages shows that Hartford's parks are subject to a very inconsistent budget provided by the City of Hartford.

Graph 3 shows the total expenditure budget adopted by the City of Hartford. Graphs 4 and 5 illustrate the change in budget and percentages within the DPW over the last decade. One of the most important observations that can be made across Graphs 4 and 5 is that the funding to the Parks Program was drastically reduced in fiscal year 2016-2017 despite having a larger overall total adopted expenditure budget. In Mayor Luke Bronin's own public words, "the City of Hartford today faces the greatest fiscal challenge in our city's history. This year, we faced a daunting budget gap of \$50 million, or nearly 20% of Hartford's non-education operating budget. In the years ahead, the gap grows larger."⁸⁸ While the city faces fiscal challenges, a devastating and historic low of 2.1% of the total adopted expenditure budget went to the DPW and only 14.7% of that budget went to the Parks Program.

Department of Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation

According to the Adopted Budget Report for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 published by the Hartford Office of Budget and Management, the Department of Families, Children, Youth, and

⁸⁸ The City of Hartford, "FY 2017 Adopted Budget," 2-1.

Recreation (DFCYR) has the mission to promote “the successful lifelong learning opportunities of Hartford children, youth and families through early education, workforce development and recreation.”⁸⁹ The Office of Recreation Services within DFCYR is responsible for “providing an integrated approach to youth development and recreational activities in the city.”⁹⁰ While the DPW provides the maintenance for Hartford’s parks, DFCYR is responsible for providing Hartford residents with high quality and consistent recreational services.

Today’s DFCYR did not exist and its responsibilities were overseen by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) just seven years ago. The stated mission by DHHS was that, “the goal of the Recreation Program is to provide quality recreation and leisure activities that enhance the quality of city life for Hartford residents and contribute to making Hartford a vibrant and enjoyable Capital City for both residents and visitors.”⁹¹ Under DHHS, Recreation received the largest amount of funding, then Administration, Community Service, Health, Senior Services, Disease Prevention, Maternal and Child Health, Cultural Affairs. This breakdown is further illustrated in Graph 6.

The program services offered by DHHS can be seen in Table 3. These services include Large Recreation Centers, Other Recreation Services, Recreation/Sports, Summer/Winter Recreation Programs, Aquatics, Cultural Affairs, Recreation Special Events, Recreation Contracts, and finally Support for Boards and Commissions. When the DFCYR was created and the Recreation division of DHHS was absorbed in FY 2011-2012, the mission statement and program services remained the same. However, the funding mechanism changed departments.

⁸⁹ The City of Hartford, “FY 2017 Adopted Budget,” 21-1.

⁹⁰ The City of Hartford, “FY 2017 Adopted Budget,” 2-1.

⁹¹ The City of Hartford, “Health and Human Services,” Accessed April 3, 2017, 5.

Over the past few years, the DFCYR has changed its mission and goals to adapt to the change in departments. This change can be observed in Table 4. According to the Adopted Budget Report for fiscal year 2016-2017 published by the Hartford Office of Budget and Management, The Division for Recreation under DFCYR “provides opportunities for the Hartford Community to “Play More.” We strive to help residents discover, explore and enjoy life through creative and challenging recreational choices that contribute to their physical, emotional and social health.”⁹² Some differences can be noted between this mission statement and the previous mission statement of the Recreation Program under the DHHS. The Recreation Program under the DHHS focused on general “quality of life” of both residents and visitors, emphasizing the fact that Hartford is the Capital City of Connecticut. The new Division of Recreation under DFCYR focuses specifically on the “physical, emotional and social health” aspects that lead to quality of life and focuses on the residents of Hartford. Under DFCYR, Youth Services receives the largest percent of funding, then Recreation, Young Children, and finally Administration. This breakdown can be further illustrated in Graph 7.

In order to accomplish these new goals, the Division of Recreation under DFCYR altered its official list of program services from the original program services offered by the Recreation Program under DHHS. The program services listed in the fiscal year 2016-2017 under the DFCYR report are to: “encourage healthy and active lifestyles, foster environmental appreciation and enjoyment through programming, promote creativity through opportunities in arts, culture, and imaginative, improvisational play, develop programs that build and support community, develop recreation management policies and evaluation criteria, and finally to develop and

⁹² The City of Hartford, “FY 2017 Adopted Budget,” 21-5.

implement systems to collect and examine use data for recreation services”.⁹³ Within each of these goal categories is a description of the potential ways to reach each goal. The descriptions in the fiscal year 2016-2017 report provided by DFCYR are much more detailed than the descriptions offered by DHHS in fiscal years 2009-2011 making them much more achievable given the budgetary allocations required.

From fiscal year 2011-2012 to fiscal year 2016-2017 the DFCYR has received between \$3,536,612 and \$5,986,142. The DFCYR budget has remained between .64% and 1.0% of the total adopted expenditure budget. There is likely a structural difference between the scope and type of services that DFCYR can provide with a \$3 million budget and that of a \$6 million budget. Of the total budget for DFCYR, the money allocated to the Division for Recreation has remained between \$1,061,834 and \$2,000,937 and the Division has represented 30% to 36% of the total DFCYR budget from fiscal year 2011-2012 to fiscal year 2016-2017. The DHHS spent between \$1,871,107 and \$2,121,283 on its Recreation Program between fiscal year 2008-2009 and fiscal year 2010-2011. These changes can be seen in Graphs 8 and 9.

After the dissolution of the DHHS, its replacement DFCYR was a new department and therefore needed significant funding to get itself up and running. Graph 8 shows that the DFCYR received significant funding from its inception in fiscal year 2011-2012 until fiscal year 2015-2016 when it began to decrease. The funding for the DFCYR Division of Recreation decreased significantly in fiscal year 2016-2017 to a low of 30% that can be observed in Graph 9. When reviewing the goals of the DFCYR, it becomes obvious that the amount of goals and the quality of the goals are continuously growing and improving. However, with decreased funding the stated mission and goals of the DFCYR become virtually unachievable.

⁹³ The City of Hartford, “FY 2017 Adopted Budget,” 21-5.

What is the Significance?

According to Mayor Luke Bronin, one of the twelve important core goals of the fiscal year 2017 strategic plan is to “provide safe spaces and recreational opportunities.” How is the city of Hartford equipped to provide safe spaces and recreational opportunities for the residents of Hartford with a dwindling budget? The Hartford Park System is only as successful as its two parts - maintenance and recreation. While the employees of the City of Hartford work hard and do the best with the money allocated to them, they can only do so much with so little. As it can be seen in the City of Hartford Budget Reports, the goals of the DPW and DFCYR with relation to Hartford’s parks are constantly changing and striving to improve. However, funding for the DPW and DFCYR drastically declined in fiscal year 2016-2017. If the City of Hartford and Mayor Luke Bronin were serious about providing safe spaces and recreational opportunities for city residents, the funding for such programs would better align with their stated mission and goals.

Ultimately, the City of Hartford can achieve the mission and goals of DPW and DFCYR through the combination of grants and public-private partnerships. Without non-profits, friends of parks groups, and other private investment, the City of Hartford would likely be unsuccessful in achieving its goal of increased maintenance and recreational programs in the city parks. This phenomenon is not just seen in the City of Hartford. According to author Eve Endicott, despite a growing interest nationally in community land conservation such as parks, there has been a decline in the federal matching of funds for state and local projects since the 1980s.⁹⁴ Federal, state, and city budgets fail to prioritize parks in their budgets, an incredible asset to the respective location. The City of Hartford needs to pursue the creation of a centralized organizational entity

⁹⁴ Endicott, Eve. *Land conservation through public/private partnerships*, (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993), 62.

that can both actively raise the required funds to achieve its goals and apply for grant funding.

Under the current system of governance and budget restraints, the active pursuit of public-private partnerships is the only way for the city to continue to provide high quality resources and improve Hartford’s parks for its residents.

Table 1) DPW Program Services Fiscal Year 2009-2010⁹⁵

Name	Goal	Legal Mandate
Support Services	Provide administrative support services for division personnel to accomplish planned objectives to meet resident needs.	
Horticulture	Provide residents of Hartford with high-quality seasonal landscaping and garden displays for recreational activities and scenic areas.	
Forestry	Provide residents of Hartford and the region with a healthy urban forest, streetscapes, and parks to enjoy.	√
Park Maintenance	Provide the residents of Hartford and the region with well-maintained athletic fields, play areas and playgrounds in which to enjoy recreational activities.	
Mowing Operations	Provide residents of Hartford and the region with well-groomed parks and green spaces to ensure safe landscaping for recreational activities.	
Cemetery Operations	Provide residents and families of Hartford burial operations to ensure appropriate landscaping for cemeteries.	
Park Snow and Ice Operations	Provide residents and others with safe conditions for traveling and recreational activities in the parks during winter months.	
Vegetation Management	Provide well-maintained green spaces, public areas, and public lots through vegetation management.	

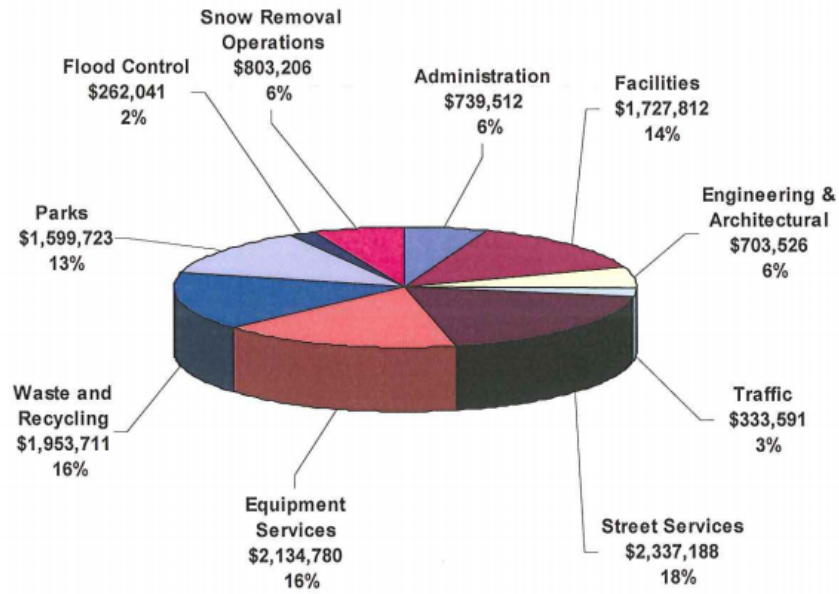
Table 2) DPW Program Services Fiscal Year 2016-2017⁹⁶

Name	Goal	Legal Mandate
Park Maintenance	Provide the residents of Hartford and the region with well-maintained parks, athletic fields, play areas, and playgrounds for recreation, events, and passive activities.	
Horticulture	Provide residents of Hartford with high-quality seasonal landscaping and garden displays for recreational activities and scenic areas.	
Forestry	Provide residents of Hartford and the region with a healthy and safe urban forest, streetscapes, and parks to enjoy.	√
Cemetery Operations	Provide residents and families of Hartford with burial operations for efficient interment of deceased and to ensure appropriate landscaping for cemeteries.	√

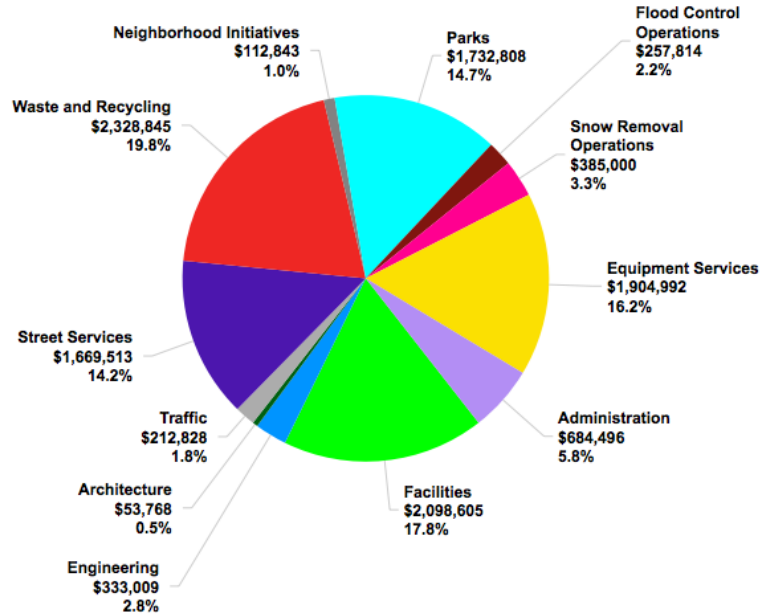
⁹⁵ The City of Hartford, “Department of Public Works,” Accessed April 3, 2017, 25-7.

⁹⁶ The City of Hartford, “FY 2017 Adopted Budget,” 25-6.

Graph 1) DPW Budget by Program Fiscal Year 2009-2010⁹⁷



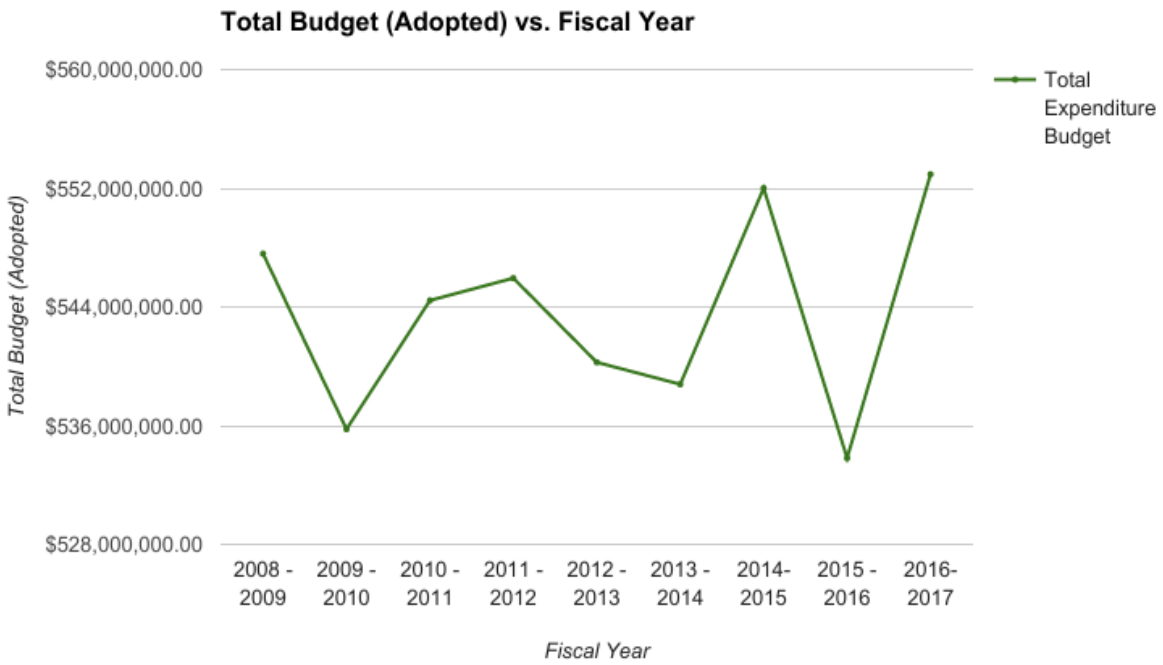
Graph 2) DPW Budget by Program Fiscal Year 2016-2017⁹⁸



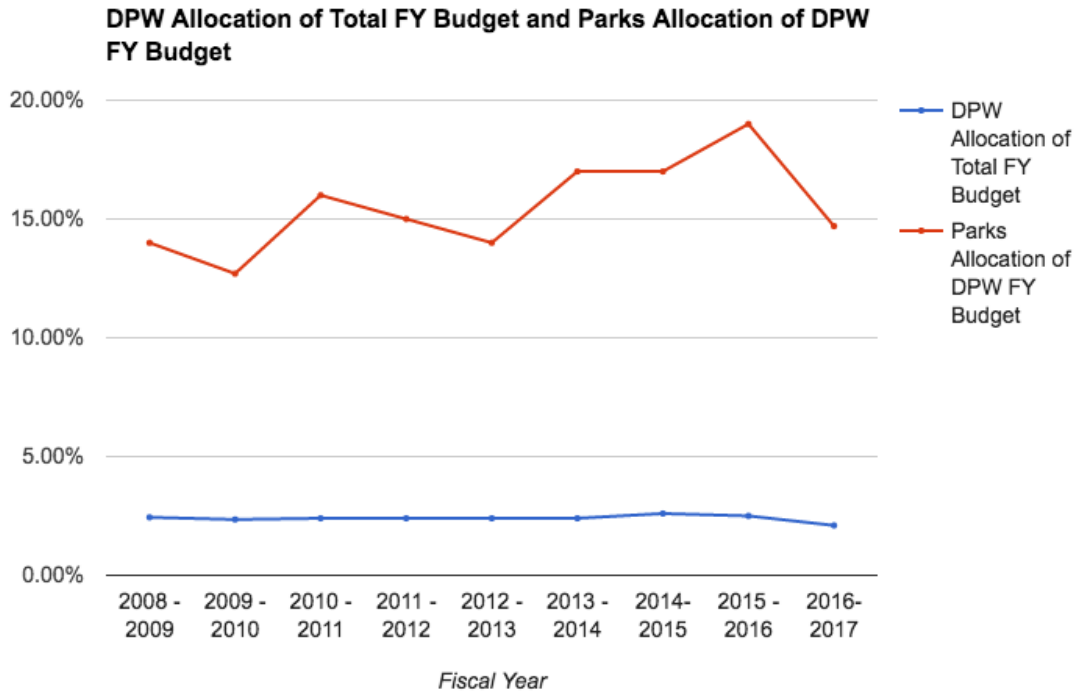
⁹⁷ The City of Hartford, "Department of Public Works," 25-1.

⁹⁸ The City of Hartford, "FY 2017 Adopted Budget," 25-1.

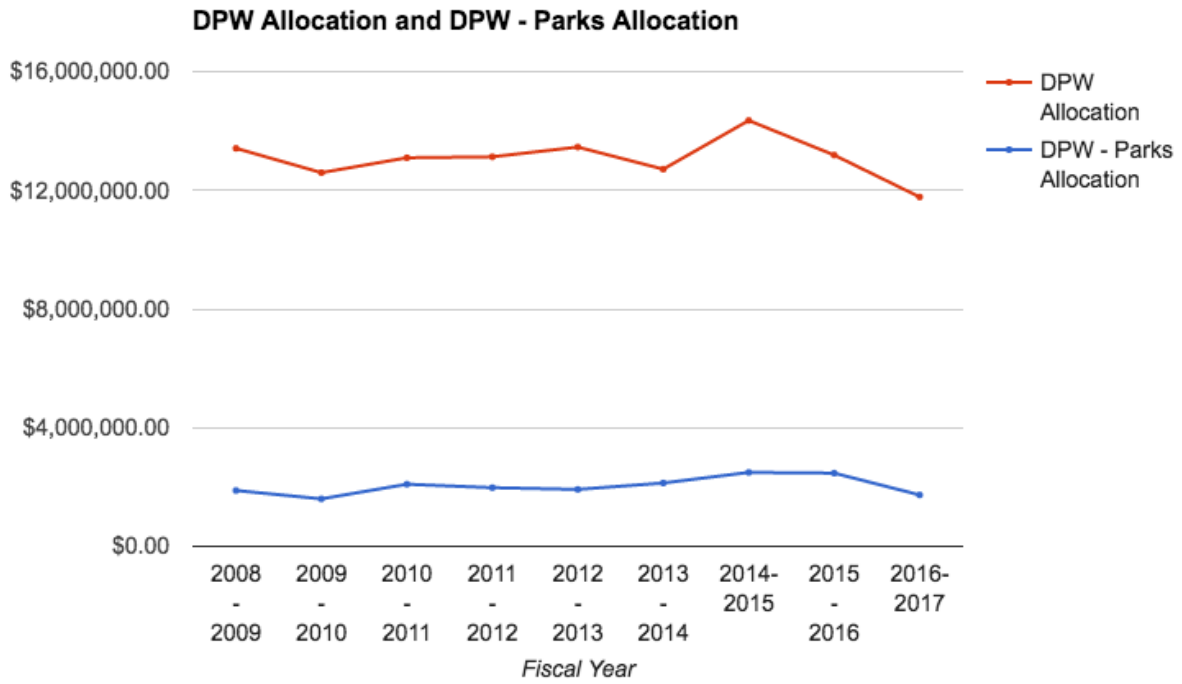
Graph 3) City of Hartford Total Adopted Expenditure Budget



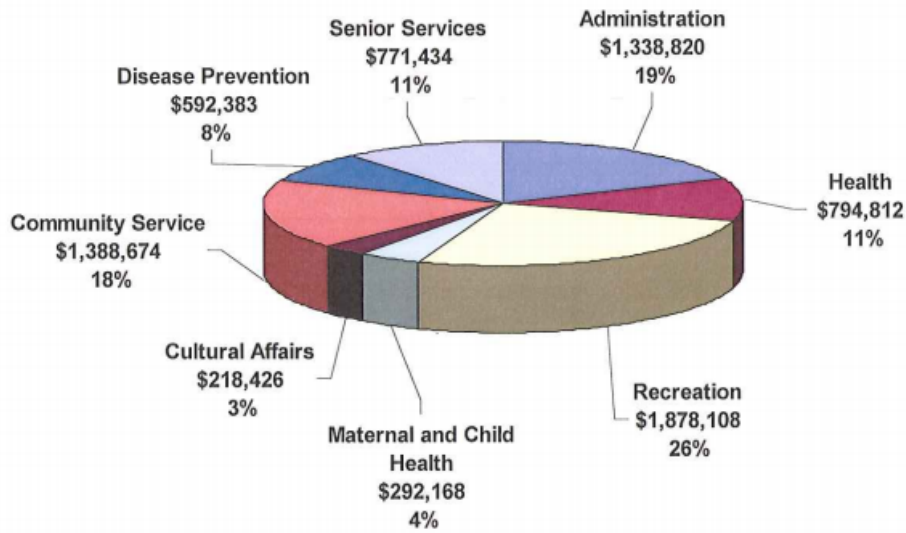
Graph 4) Percentage of Total Fiscal Year City Budget Allocated to the Department of Public Works and Percentage of Department of Public Works Budget Allocated to Parks



Graph 5) Amount Allocated to DPW and Amount Allocated by DPW to Parks.



Graph 6) DHHS Budget by Program⁹⁹



⁹⁹ The City of Hartford, “Health and Human Services,” 27-1.

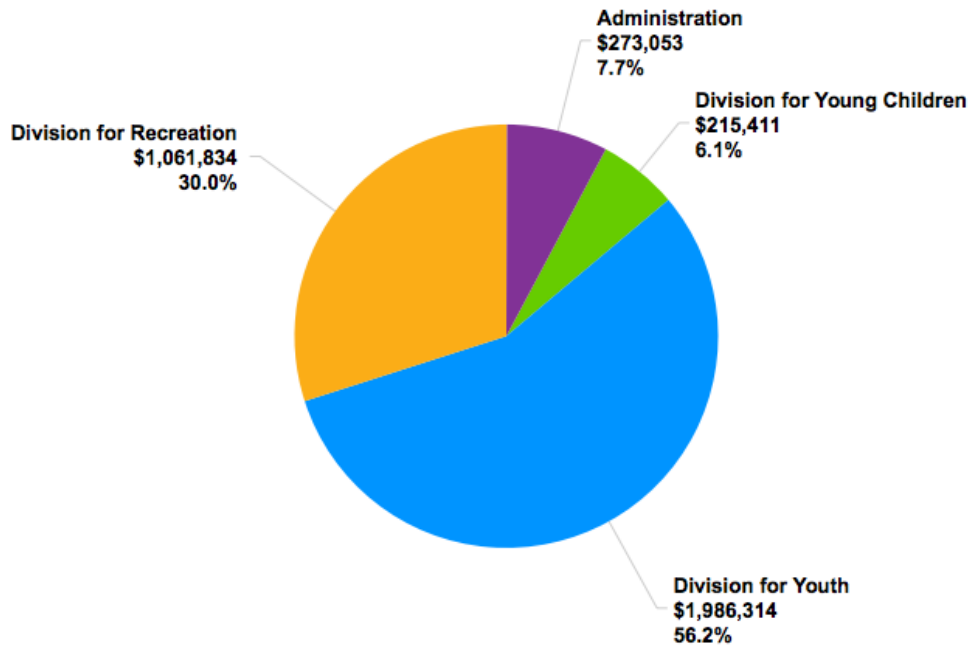
Table 3) DHHS Program Services Fiscal Year 2009-2010 and DFCYR 2011-2012

Name	Goal	Legal Mandate
Large Recreation Centers	Promote positive youth, family and community development by offering a variety of recreational, educational and other supportive opportunities to children, youth and families of the City of Hartford.	
Other Recreation Centers	Promote positive youth development by providing a variety of recreational and supportive opportunities for Hartford's youth.	
Recreation/Sports	Provide quality recreation and leisure activities that enhance the quality of city life for Hartford residents.	
Summer/Winter Recreation Programs	Provide enjoyable summer recreation programs and activities that promote physical and mental health, skills development and enrichment.	
Aquatics	Provide enjoyable indoor and outdoor swimming opportunities for Hartford residents that promote physical health, skills development and enrichment.	
Cultural Affairs	Provide residents and visitors with enjoyable opportunities, improve quality of life and promote the City of Hartford.	
Recreation Special Events	Provide residents and visitors with enjoyable opportunities, improve quality of life and promote the City of Hartford.	
Recreation Contracts	Provide financial resources to neighborhoods and organizations to co-sponsor positive family and community development activities and programs throughout the City of Hartford.	
Support for Boards and Commissions	Ensure that City sanctioned committees receive adequate information and support to be able to perform their charged duties, and provide staffing and technical assistance to projects and initiatives.	

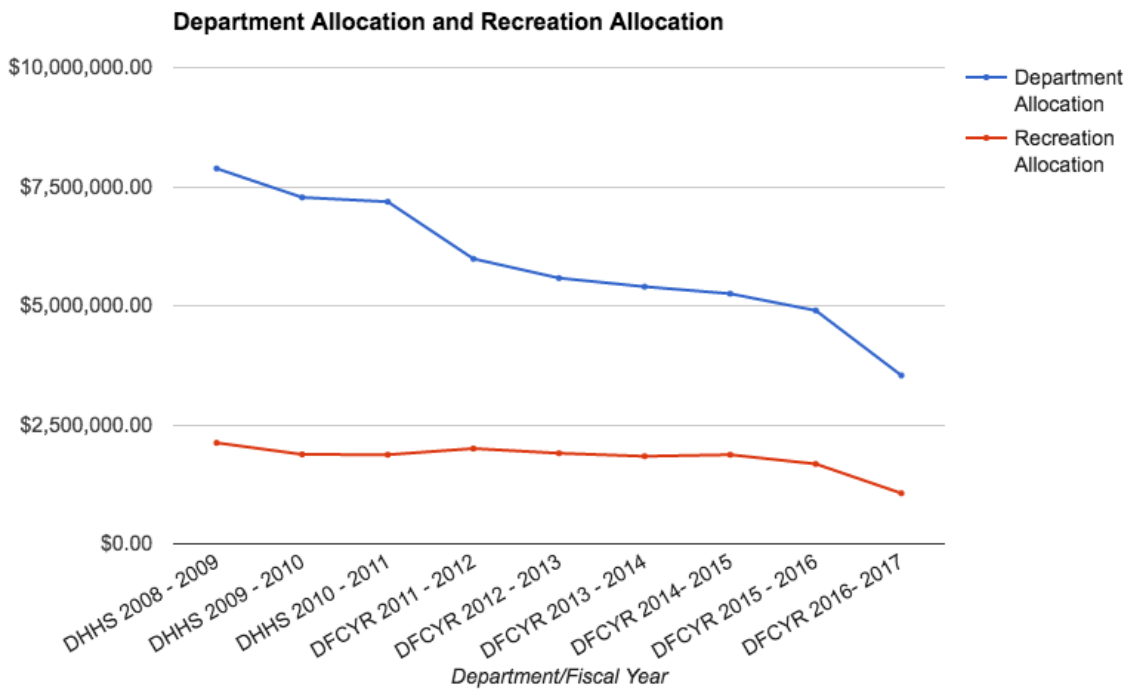
Table 4) DFCYR Program Services 2016-2017

Name	Goal	Legal Mandate
Encourage healthy and active lifestyles	Evaluate opportunities to improve our fitness rooms, considering competition from other available facilities, community demand, geographic distribution, and potential sponsorships. Identify opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle recreation through the periodic closure of park roads and City streets. Communicate the benefits of health and fitness, and approaches to maintaining lifelong health to children, youth, adults and seniors. Negotiate a master agreement with Hartford Public Schools that encompasses current gym/field use agreements between the School District and Recreation. Increase active recreation opportunities for people aged 50+. Market and expand therapeutic recreation opportunities.	
Foster environmental appreciation and enjoyment through programming	Develop a comprehensive environmental education and engagement strategy that covers the full range of Recreation programs and facilities beyond environmental learning centers. Explore opportunities to partner further with environmental organizations in CT. Develop culturally appropriate programs that provide connections to nature and environmental education for people of color, immigrants, refugees, and other underserved populations. Continue and expand environmental education programs for youth and teens.	
Promote creativity through opportunities in arts, culture, and imaginative, improvisational play	Provide arts and culture related programs and services that engage youth early in their development. Provide multicultural opportunities for people of all ages to engage in music, theater, visual and performing arts. Encourage a diverse mix of amateur and professional artists to perform and provide benefits to the community. Continue to collaborate and explore new arts and cultural programming opportunities. Provide opportunities that enable the public to experience Hartford's rich ethnic and cultural diversity.	
Develop programs that build and support community	Work with other City agencies, nonprofits, and community members to create and implement a prevention, maintenance, and intervention program for children and youth. Work with community police teams, facility supervisors and others to develop standard approaches to managing prevention, maintenance, and intervention for youth-related activities. Create programs that build self-esteem and other developmental assets needed for children and youth to make positive choices.	
Develop recreation management policies and evaluation criteria	Develop and implement a formal process for routinely evaluating programs to ensure that there is an identified outcome that is aligned with our vision, mission, and values and that verifies the need for the program within the community	
Develop and implement systems to collect and examine use data for Recreation services	Evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs for children, youth and adults. Establish baseline participation data and work to increase engagement of children and youth in City-wide athletics programs. Continue to foster a strong relationship with the PRAC, community, and other key partners. Align PRAC and Recreation policies for programs and service delivery.	

Graph 7) DFCYR Budget by Program Fiscal Year 2017¹⁰⁰

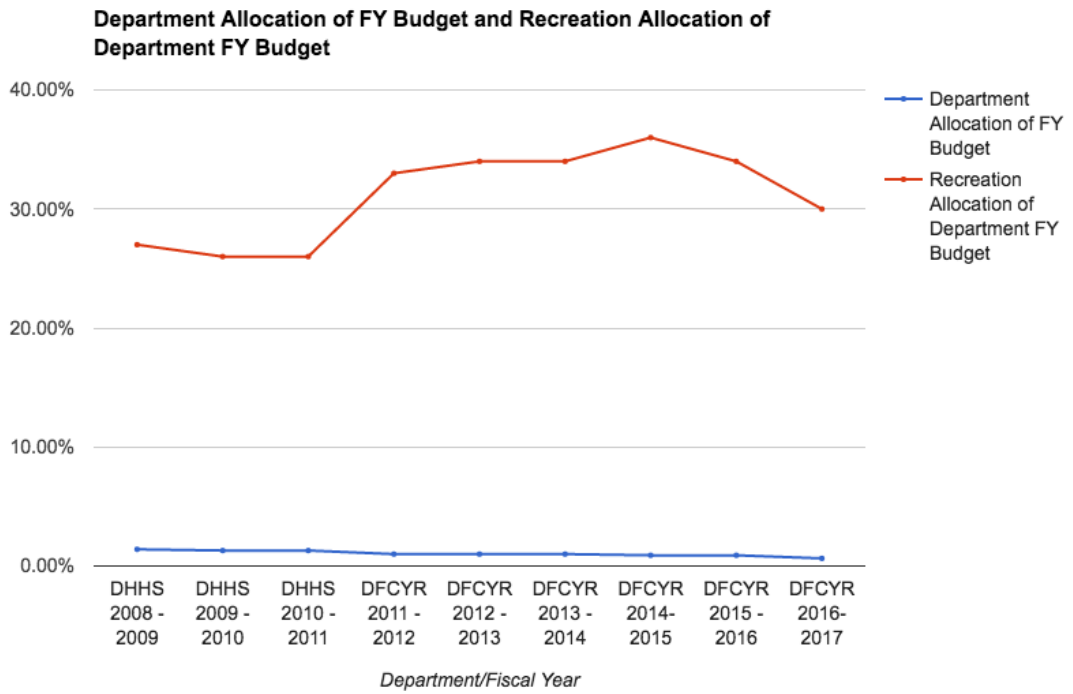


Graph 8) Amount Allocated to Department (DHHS and DFCYR) and Amount Allocated by Department (DHHS and DFCYR) to Recreation.



¹⁰⁰ The City of Hartford, "FY 2017 Adopted Budget," 21-1.

Graph 9) Percentage of Total Fiscal Year City Budget Allocated to the Department (DHHS and DFCYR) and Percentage of Department (DHHS and DFCYR) Allocated to Recreation.



Chapter 4: Pieces of the Puzzle

Community Organization Perspective

City councilwoman Betty Knox started the KNOX Parks Foundation in 1966 that is today known as KNOX Inc. What first began as a monetary trust fund to help improve the city parks and morphed into two organizations in 1976. According to KNOX's website, The Betty Knox Foundation focuses on funding community development and KNOX Inc. focuses on greening programs and horticulture. Today, KNOX's mission statement is to, "Use horticulture as a catalyst for community engagement, KNOX forges partnerships between residents, businesses and government, providing leadership to build greener, stronger, healthier and more beautiful neighborhoods in Hartford."¹⁰¹ In order to fulfill this mission statement, KNOX coordinates greening programs that include "workforce training, Community Gardening Program, Blooms Planters, Trees for Hartford Neighborhoods, Green Team, and Hartford Cleans Up."¹⁰² These programs are organized by KNOX, but are carried out by residents, volunteers, corporate partners, and community organizations. KNOX Inc. currently operates out of a building on Laurel Street in Hartford where I met Ryan O'Halloran, Advancement and Marketing Director of KNOX and a few other members of the KNOX team on January 23rd, 2017.

As this was my first meeting in the research regarding my thesis, I was worried that I did not yet know enough about the Hartford Park System to speak to such experts on the topic. However, the KNOX team was very helpful in clarifying my understanding of the system and it's variety of needs. After meeting with Director O'Halloran and the wonderful people at KNOX, I was assured that I was not alone in my appreciation of Hartford's parks and the asset they provide to the city and citizens of Hartford.

¹⁰¹ Knox Parks Foundation, "Mission & Principles," Accessed April 3, 2017.

¹⁰² Knox Parks Foundation, "History & Vision," Accessed April 3, 2017.

Takeaways:

1. Parks have value, the City of Hartford should capitalize on that value.
2. There are too many plans and not enough action.
3. Rebranding the parks.

Director O'Halloran and the rest of the KNOX team passionately believe that parks can improve the quality of life in a city. KNOX focuses on horticulture and greening through the addition of trees to the city. It is their belief that urban reforestation through community efforts will improve the quality of life in the City of Hartford. Though they do not focus specifically on recreation, the addition and maintenance of green space in the city of Hartford is directly related to the success of the parks and their recreational capabilities.

During our meeting, Director O'Halloran mentioned that there were already multiple "master plans" to improve Hartford's parks. Though he had taken a small role in these plans, he expressed that there were too many plans that all expressed similar recommendations. Ryan suggested that I look into these plans and identify potential commonalities between them. He also suggested that I make a list of actionable items that are not limited by funding from the City of Hartford.

Finally, Director O'Halloran suggested that one way to help improve the image of Hartford's parks was a rebranding of the entire system. The city would not have to spend very much money out of its limited budget to do so. Ryan referenced the attempt to rebrand Keney Park in the Capital City Parks Guide, published in 2014. Instead of the public viewing the parks as unsafe, unkempt, and outdated, a simple rebranding could help potential visitors understand the many amenities Keney has to offer.

Commission & Public-Private Partnership Perspectives

According to Section 26-14 (a) of Hartford's Code of Ordinances, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) is comprised of twenty-one members.¹⁰³ These members include representatives from the active friends of parks groups and members nominated by the Mayor that are subject to approval by the Council on an at large basis. According to Section 26-14 (b), the PRAC shall be an advisory body to the Department of Public Works (DPW), the Director of Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation (DFCYR) and to the Council in matters relating to recreation and park maintenance services. The commission is tasked to study and make recommendations to these governing bodies and to seek working relationships with schools, community and civic organizations pertaining to Hartford's parks. The Commission has the important role in the Hartford Park system to be the contact point for the public to express their opinions and requests regarding Hartford's parks.

A community activist in Hartford who I had worked with on a project for a previous class at Trinity referred me to PRAC Secretary Donna Swarr. Donna suggested that Craig Mergins (Chair of PRAC and Director of Community Events and Engagement at Riverfront Recapture) meet with us at First and Last Cafe. I entered this meeting on February 8th, 2017 with a little more knowledge of the history of Hartford's parks than my last meeting with KNOX. This time, I wanted to know where PRAC fit into the Hartford Park System of governance. I was also very interested in knowing their biggest issues and concerns with the overall Park system and how they would address or fix them if they could.

Takeaways:

1. PRAC's role in the bureaucratic system.
2. Lack of communication and leadership.
3. Public-private partnerships.

¹⁰³ Municipal Code Corporation, "Hartford, Connecticut: Chapter 26- Parks and Recreation," Accessed April 3, 2017.

Based on Hartford Courant articles I knew that Hartford used to, but no longer has a Department of Parks and Recreation. Through my primary research, I was aware that some of the most important aspects of the system included PRAC, DFCYR, Friends of Parks groups, Nonprofits like KNOX, and potentially others. Image 1 shows the list of what I thought the system looked like after the abolishment of the Department of Parks and Recreation. However, Donna and Craig informed me that there was actually another important part of the system, the DPW. They also helped me better understand the functions of each part of the system and who they reported to. Image 2 shows exactly how all of these groups work together within the City of Hartford.

The biggest takeaway from my meeting with Donna and Craig was that they were both exasperated with the lack of communication and leadership between the aforementioned groups. If everyone has the same good intentions for Hartford's parks, why can't they work together to accomplish their goals? Without a central governing organization, very little work or planning is actually done. The maintenance of Hartford's parks has suffered and the use of Hartford's parks for recreational programs is not maximized.

Finally, I noticed an emphasis on the need for private-public partnerships in order to help improve Hartford's parks and provide recreational opportunities. Craig Mergins has a background working for Riverfront Recapture which is an example of a successful private-public partnership that helped improve Hartford's Riverside Park and revitalize Hartford's water front. Similarly, the Friends of Parks groups in Hartford have seen success in the improvement of Hartford's parks through examples like the Elizabeth Park Conservancy and the Bushnell Park Foundation. These groups work to help preserve some of the most historically valuable parks in Hartford. Many of the other parks in Hartford have the potential to engage with and benefit from

these private-public partnerships, but do not lie in wealthy neighborhoods like the Elizabeth Park Conservancy in West Hartford and the Bushnell Park Foundation. Ultimately, Donna and Craig are some of the most passionate stakeholders in the Hartford Park System who would like to see more collaboration with other stakeholders in the system.

Trinity Alumnus Perspective

On February 22nd, 2017 I had met with Trinity alumnus Jack Hale. Jack graduated from Trinity in 1970 and became the Executive Director of the KNOX Parks Foundation in 1985. In an article published by the Hartford Courant, Jack Hale is quoted in saying that the vision of KNOX, “is to help people figure out that they can take care of the city. They don't need to wait around for government to do it.”¹⁰⁴ Jack left KNOX in 2009 to pursue alternative roles in the Hartford Park’s System and most recently has been working to develop Coltsville National Park. Jack Hale is full of knowledge of many of the different stakeholders that serve Hartford’s parks, as he has been actively involved with many of them over the years.

Takeaways:

1. Maintenance and recreation.
2. Unions and professional development.
3. The role of Trinity.

In the beginning of my meeting with Jack Hale I mentioned to him that I had spoken to a few other people regarding Hartford’s parks. They had all expressed interest in the thought of a group like a Hartford Department of Parks and Recreation that could solve a lot of the problems facing Hartford’s parks by providing leadership and communication in a fragmented system. Jack Hale did not directly express the need for there to be a Department of Parks and Recreation, but he did say that there needed to be an improvement in the communication between the

¹⁰⁴ Klimkiewicz, Joann, “Knox Parks Foundation: Garden Giants,” *The Hartford Courant*, January 24, 2008. Accessed April 3, 2017.

maintenance and recreational uses of Hartford's parks. According to Jack, the two tend to be at odds with one another. It is in the best interest of the DPW to limit use of recreational fields in Hartford to appropriate levels so that the quality of playing surfaces can be maintained. On the other hand, for the DFCYR to reach its goals, they need to run recreational programs and actually use the parks at the highest frequency possible. These two organizations need to communicate with one another in order for both to succeed, and the easiest way to do so would be if they report to the same leader or group.

The upkeep and maintenance of Hartford's parks is a difficult task for the DPW due to the sheer acreage of the park system and minimal budget allocated to the department. Another factor that I had not thought about before meeting with Jack Hale was the hiring, contracting, and unionizing of maintenance workers. Without an incentive to do more than what they are expected and take ownership of Hartford's parks, the unionized and contracted workers do no more than what is described in their contracts or job description. Jack also expressed concern with the lack of professional development within the DPW. Without professional development, people remain static with limited levels of skills and productivity.

Finally, Jack and I explored the relationship between Trinity and Hartford's parks. Trinity offers green space to the city of Hartford, but is generally closed off to the citizens of Hartford. As an academic institution, Trinity makes up part of Hartford's "51% of non-taxable land" that Mayor Bronin references in his FY 2016-2017 budget report.¹⁰⁵ Without these taxes, Hartford cannot provide adequate services to its citizens. Trinity should offer more opportunities for Hartford residents to use its facilities and encourage collaboration between Trinity students and

¹⁰⁵ The City of Hartford, "FY 2017 Adopted Budget," 2-1.

Hartford. However, Jack Hale was encouraged by the potential opportunity that Coltsville National Park provides for collaboration between Trinity and the Hartford Park System.

City Initiative Perspective

I met with Sara Bronin in her office at UConn Law School on March 22, 2017 to speak with her about the Hartford Climate Stewardship Initiative of which she is chair. The Hartford Climate Stewardship Initiative has the mission to, “advance the city’s economy, improve public health and quality of life, and promote social equity while becoming a global leader in environmental stewardship.”¹⁰⁶ This Initiative is directly related to the Hartford Park System through the Initiative’s emphasis on Green Space as one of its 6 distinct focus areas. Hartford’s parks also overlap in some of the other focus areas of Energy, Food, Transportation, Waste, and Water.

Takeaways:

1. Climate Action Plan
2. Public-private partnerships

The Hartford Climate Stewardship Initiative’s focus on green space encompasses public parks, cemeteries, trees, and green space on private property. The Initiative is currently drafting a Climate Action Plan that strives to compile the many plans that have been created over the last decade into one document with final recommendations for the city. The Climate Action Plan is much like what I had intended to do for the conclusion of this thesis; however it elaborates on all six of the Initiative’s focus areas. The final chapter of my thesis will elaborate on the work that the draft Climate Action Plan covers with relation to Hartford’s public parks.

When asked if she thought that there should be a central Parks and Recreation Department within the City of Hartford to improve communication between all of the park

¹⁰⁶ Hartford Climate Stewardship Initiative, “Our Mission,” Accessed April 3, 2017.

groups in the system, Sara Bronin suggested that this is not likely feasible at this time, given budgeting and staffing issues. Instead, she suggested that there needs to be an increase in public-private relationships. Ms Bronin mentioned that communication is alive and well thanks to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission where all of the groups get together and voice their opinions.

Sara Bronin noted that one idea that had been discussed recently among some in the city was the idea to create a single private conservancy group that would organize the fundraising for all of the parks instead of the fragmented singular park focused friends of park groups that can be seen today. She mentioned groups like the Central Park Conservancy and Madison Square Park Conservancy as possible models, albeit in a larger and more complex city. She highlighted the robust public art program of the Madison Square Park Conservancy, funded in part by the nation's first Shake Shack, which is located in the park and gives proceeds to the Conservancy. In the future, when the budget and staffing climate is less bleak, Bronin hoped for a more rigorous plan for maintenance and improvements to Hartford's historic parks to be implemented. Sara Bronin's role as a stakeholder within the Hartford Park System is encouraging for the improvement of Hartford's parks. With her passion, relevant expertise, and political positioning, positive improvements are already in action for Hartford's parks and will continue to improve when the Climate Action Plan is published.

Conservation Organization Perspective

On March 24, 2017 I spoke with Mary Pelletier, the Founding Director of Park Watershed Inc. The mission of Park Watershed Inc. states that, "Through community engagement, scientific research and ecological revitalization, Park Watershed Inc., cultivates clean water and healthy urban environments within the municipalities of the Park River regional

watershed.”¹⁰⁷ Park Watershed Inc., began as the Park River Watershed Revitalization Initiative began in April 2012 after Mary Pelletier and others saw how development had damaged the natural connectivity of the watershed. The watershed is important in connecting ecosystems that have been fragmented by urban and suburban development in Hartford and its surrounding areas.

Takeaways:

1. Politics of the Parks.
2. Revitalization of natural resources.
3. Importance of plans.

The biggest takeaway from my conversation with Mary Pelletier was a better understanding of the intricate politics of the Hartford Park System. According to Ms. Pelletier, there are a few different stakeholders in the system that have conflicting motives. Like Jack Hale had mentioned to me previously, the goals of DPW are to maintain the parks while the goals of DFCYR are to use the parks for recreational programs. Similarly, the goals of Friends of the Parks groups are to do what they can to make the parks look good while groups like KNOX and Park Watershed have the goal of revitalizing historic natural resources. Additionally there are recreational leagues who want to improve their fields with synthetic turf and lighting. All of these groups vie for funding from grants and the City of Hartford’s budget, so the politics matter. According to Mary, the groups that get involved in the politics of Hartford are the most successful in fulfilling their goals.

Additionally, Ms. Pelletier stressed the importance of Hartford’s commitment to the revitalization of natural resources. Oftentimes, the city focuses on maintaining parks to a level of status quo and planting new trees around the city. She argued that the focus should be on taking better care of the resources that the city is rich in, like the trees and vegetation found in the historic parks. The city should focus less on altering the infrastructure surrounding parks like the

¹⁰⁷ Park Watershed Inc. “About Park watershed,” Accessed April 3, 2017.

Gold Street controversy in downtown Hartford. The city should look forward and focus more on the resiliency of its ecosystems in order to address the inevitable impacts that climate change will have on the city.

Ms. Pelletier implied the importance of plans for the improvement of the Hartford Park System through her discussion of a few of the more recent and notable plans. She was involved in the Trust for Public Land's report published in 2007 and she emphasized the importance of Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) in the plan. Mary then said that the Green Ribbon Task Force, published in 2011 was created in reaction to the Trust for Public Land's report. Finally, Mary criticized the Sasaki Parks Master Plan for not including enough about natural resources and climate change. While the plans for Hartford's parks are seldom carried out, they act as a model for how different stakeholders in the Hartford Park System should act and what goals they should pursue.

Image 1) Piecing together the puzzle of the Hartford Parks System with Donna Swarr and Craig Mergins.

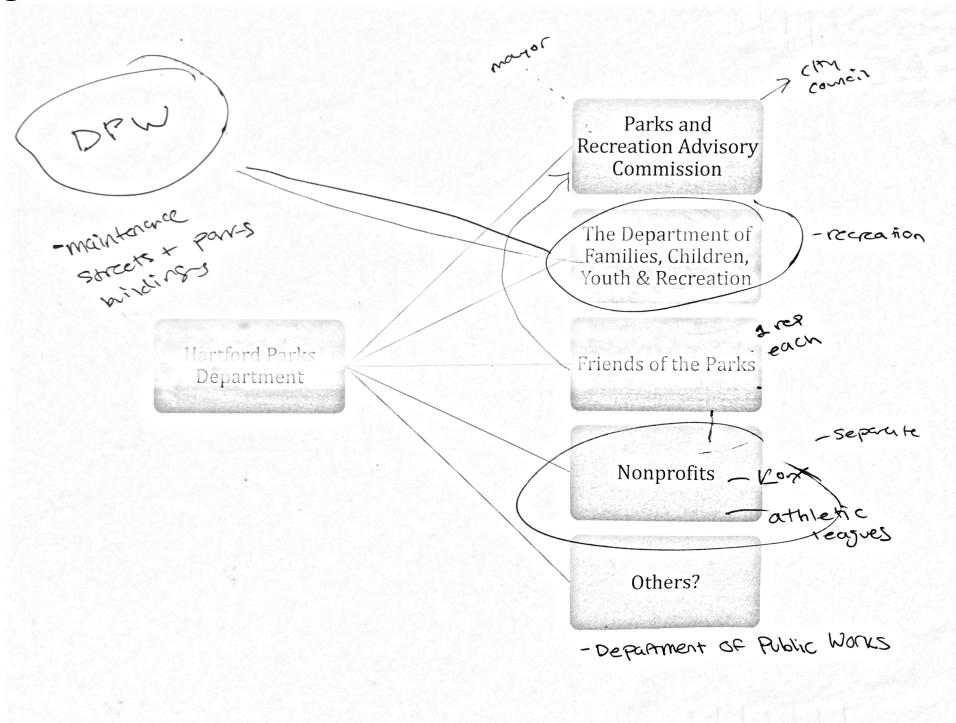


Image 2) City of Hartford Operational Chart

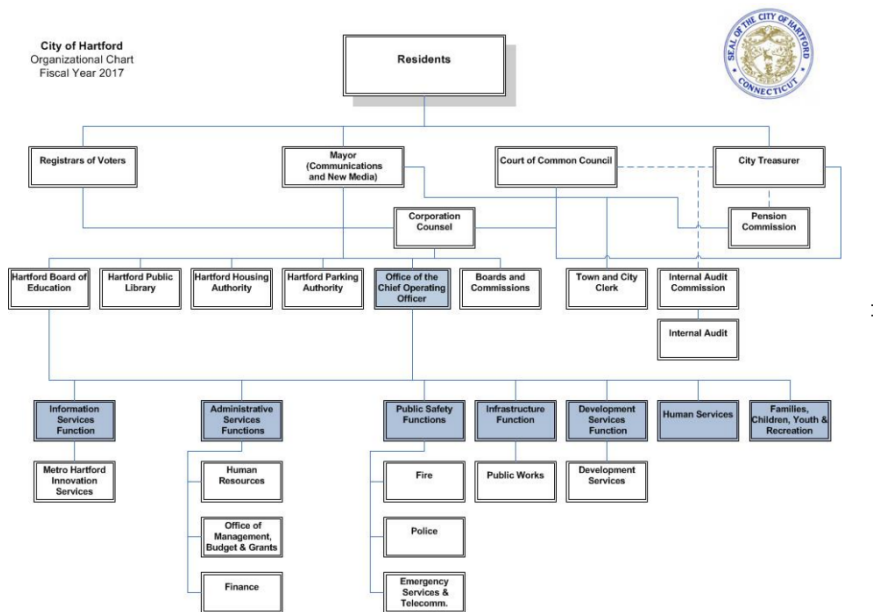
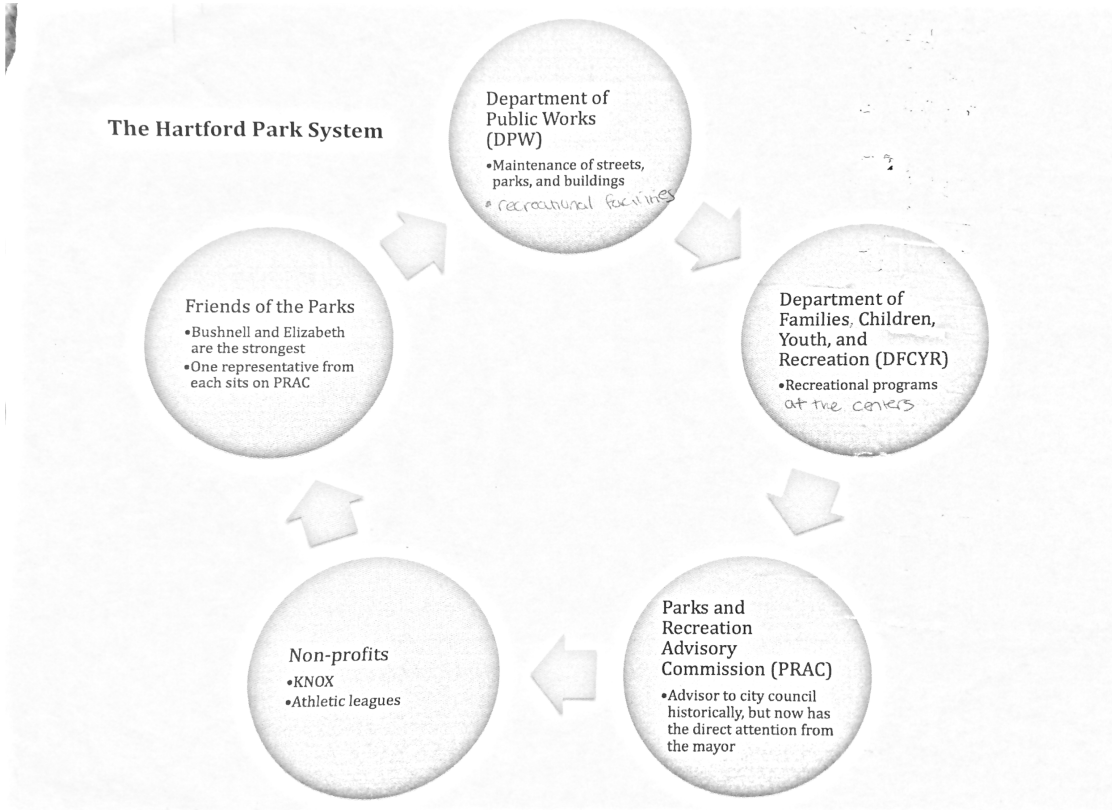


Image 3) Piecing together the puzzle of the Hartford Parks System with Jack Hale



Chapter 5: Plans and Policy Implications

Master plans delineate the goals of a city and the various actions that city stakeholders plan to achieve them. These goals are often developed through consensus by a combination of city officials, city residents, and relevant community organizations. According to Peter Harnik, author of *Urban green: Innovative parks for resurgent cities*, “The exemplary master plan consists of ten components: An analysis of current conditions; A survey that measures the public’s interests and its willingness to pay for improvements; A public outreach component; A cost analysis for any new improvements and programs; An analysis of potential income from facilities and programs; A ranking system for prioritizing the implementation of the elements of the plan; A decision-making process; A budget; A timeline for implementation; and An evaluation component (that ties in with the next current conditions report and starts the process over again).”¹⁰⁸ Hartford has made a number of master plans regarding its parks over the course of the last decade. Not one of these plans aligns well with all of these criteria. Without meeting all of these requirements, Peter Harnik argues that the plan will not be effective and cannot reach its stated goals. Without reaching its stated goals, the city in which the plan was created cannot develop and improve in any meaningful way.

Peter Harnik further emphasized that the inclusion of a budget in a master plan is one of the most important inclusions. It is not easy to create, but without the inclusion of a budget Harnik argues that the goals of the plan will never be fulfilled. Harnik explains that, “A master plan without one is like car without a key. Nothing will happen — nothing can happen — until a

¹⁰⁸ Harnik, Peter. *Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities* (Washington: Island Press, 2012), 48.

city council approves a budget and appropriates some money.”¹⁰⁹ Taxpayer funding makes the politics of money and budgets regarding public parks tricky. Most citizens can be very critical of how expensive park funding is without understanding all of the potential benefits of parks. One specific counterargument that Harnik notes is that, “Chicago’s Millennium Park, the most expensive U.S. city park ever created, accomplished more for the city’s image (and probably for its real estate and tourism market) than any other city park development of the early twenty-first century — not to mention the ripple effect it had in other cities around the country.”¹¹⁰ Though many people do not see the immediate need for a high level of funding of parks, there is evidence that urban parks are important to stimulate the economy of a city. Similar to Harnik’s budget requirement, master plans must also include a detailed timeline with priorities and deadlines. Without a timeline, plans and deadlines have no chance of being implemented and will be ignored based on more pressing demands that do have deadlines within the city governance process.

In this chapter, I will analyze four master plans relating to Hartford’s parks. These four plans do not produce a comprehensive analysis of all of the plans that have been created with relation to Hartford’s parks. These plans are a selection of a several of the more influential master plans that have been published over the last decade. The Trust for Public Land’s report was published in 2007, the Green Ribbon Task Force’s report was published in 2011, Sasaki’s Capital City Parks Master Plan report was published in 2014, and finally the Climate Action Plan is currently being drafted in 2017. Throughout this chapter I will provide background and analysis of each plan. Then, I will compile a list of the goals and recommendations provided by

¹⁰⁹ Harnik, Peter. *Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities* (Washington: Island Press, 2012), 56.

¹¹⁰ Harnik, Peter. *Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities* (Washington: Island Press, 2012), 57.

each plan. I will address the successes that have been accomplished in each one and determine what still needs to be done according to the plans in order to improve Hartford's parks.

Trust for Public Land Renewing a Historic Legacy

The Trust for Public Land (TLP) published the report "Renewing a Historic Legacy" in 2007. The mission statement of the Trust for Public Land is to "conserve land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come."¹¹¹ The TLP acknowledges a list of park stakeholders including: Boys and Girls Clubs, Capitol Region Council of Governments, City of Hartford, Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, Ebony Horsewomen, Friends of Bushnell Park, Friends of Colt Park, Friends of Elizabeth Park, Friends of Keney Park, Friends of Pope Park, Hartford 2000, Hartford Food System, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Hartford Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, Hartford Public Schools, Knox Parks Foundation, Leadership Greater Hartford, Parisky Associates, Park River Watershed Revitalization Initiative, Riverfront Recapture, Town of West Hartford, Town of Wethersfield, and West End Community Center. The TLP identifies these stakeholders in its report because it values their opinions in crafting recommendations based on their experiences with Hartford's parks.

The report provided by the Trust for Public Land provides six categories of goals and recommendations. Each goal has both a short and long term recommended action plan. The six goals within the report are designed to increase appreciation, recognition, and marketing of the rich history of Hartford's parks, connect Hartford's parks through a Green Belt (seen below in Image 1), improve the accessibility, equity and excellence of Hartford's parks, restructure

¹¹¹ The Trust for Public Land, "The Park System of Hartford, Connecticut: Renewing a Historic Legacy," October, 2007, Accessed April 3, 2017.

leadership within the bureaucracy, increase the coordination between the private Friends of Parks groups, sports leagues, and non-profits, and finally improve the funding of Hartford's parks through an increase of public-private relationships. The biggest strength of this report is its use of specific short and long-term recommendations that also include priorities within each goal. The Trust for Public Land's report also includes a detailed fiscal overview including the current fiscal state of the City of Hartford and the Park System. As I have done in this thesis, it is important to look at the current fiscal restrictions made by the City of Hartford in order to produce realistic recommendations and ultimately improve Hartford's parks. Finally, the report includes another one of Peter Harnik's recommendations for a master plan, an analysis of the potential revenue that can be generated by the Hartford Park System. The TLP reports that with their recommendations, the Hartford Park System can increase their revenue through concessions, rental of park property, golf courses, special event services, Batterson Park Pond admissions fees, and even lawn bowling.

Hartford Parks Green Ribbon Task Force

Mayor Pedro Segarra convened a Green Ribbon Task Force on August 19, 2010. The Task Force was guided by its mission stating "It has become clear that improvements need to be made if Hartford's system of parks to live up to the expectations of citizens and businesses of the neighborhoods, the City, and the region at large."¹¹² The co-chairs were Tyler Smith and Bernadine Silvers with the members Carl Bard, Nancy Macy, Jill Barrett, Joe Marfuggi, Charmaine Craig, Jack Hale, Whitney Hatch, Mary Rickel Pelletier, Penny Leto, and Michael Zaleski. These members created subcommittees to tackle the issues of the governance,

¹¹² The City of Hartford, "Green Ribbon Task Force Presentation of Recommendations," Hartford Public Library, March 21, 2011.

maintenance, and finance of Hartford's parks. According to their final report, the Green Ribbon Task Force totaled to seven months of work, 45 meetings, 9 public meetings, over 200 public participants, input from Friends, City Staff, PRAC, and an estimate of over 1,500 volunteer hours.

A strength of the report produced by the Green Ribbon Task force is its implementation strategy and timeline. According to the report, "The Green Ribbon Task Force shares the conviction that the recommendations of this task force be acted on ... We do not want this to be yet another report that sits on a shelf. To that end, we wish to put forth some initial thoughts on bringing these recommendations to reality."¹¹³ For example, most of the strategies include collaboration with specific stakeholders within the Hartford Park System because many insiders who already work in the system and thus have unique domain insight created the report. Unfortunately, despite its public rhetoric on same, The Green Ribbon Task Force's report is missing a detailed budget for the implementation of their recommendations. Without a budget, it is much less realistic for these recommendations to ultimately be implemented or succeed as the Green Ribbon Task force intended.

Sasaki Capital City Parks Master Plan

Sasaki Associates, a Landscape Architecture firm based in Boston, Massachusetts published the Capital City Parks Master Plan in 2014. According to the report's Executive Summary, the plan ultimately is "intended to provide the tools to help the city - and the community - nurture its park system over the coming decades."¹¹⁴ In order for this outside firm to more fully understand Hartford's parks, the group created a steering committee that included

¹¹³ The City of Hartford, "The Green Ribbon Task Force Final Report," Spring, 2011, 24.

¹¹⁴ Sasaki, "Capital City Parks Guide Executive Summary," 2014.

representatives from the Department of Public Works and Development Services. Sasaki facilitated three meetings that were open to the public and a series of focus group discussions that included representatives from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC), Friends of Parks groups, Neighborhood Revitalization Zone groups (NRZs), and “other key stakeholders” e.g. KNOX. Sasaki also facilitated additional meetings with City Departments including the Board of Education, Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation, and the Police Department. A unique feature of the Sasaki process relative to prior efforts was the use of a novel internet based consumer survey called “MyHartford.” “MyHartford” aided their ability to secure as much resident feedback as possible. After these meetings were held and the analysis of the data was completed, Sasaki developed a master plan that reported six main goals as well as a 10-year implementation plan.

The report provided by Sasaki is one of the most extensive plans that have been published regarding Hartford’s parks. The Sasaki team identified six main goals of improvement for the Hartford Parks System that each included multiple recommendations. The six goals are to restore the park system’s legacy, create a connected system, enhance the network of parks to serve all parts of the community, improve financial sustainability, improve maintenance and image, and develop contemporary programs. This plan utilizes many graphics and images in order to illustrate the need for these improvements while developing park specific concept plans for many green spaces around the city. An example of the types of graphics that Sasaki utilizes can be seen in Image 2 below showing an impressive and connected ring of Hartford’s parks. While the Sasaki report includes a comprehensive ten-year action plan, it ultimately lacks a detailed budget plan. As previously discussed, an action plan without a budget plan or timeline is virtually impossible for the City of Hartford to successfully execute and administer.

Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan is currently being drafted by the Hartford Climate Stewardship Initiative, the City of Hartford’s citizens’ sustainability task force (under the leadership of the current Mayor Luke Bronin) and the Climate Stewardship Council. The Climate Action Plan focuses on the six distinct areas of: energy, food, green space, transportation, waste and water. These areas concurrently support the three community-wide values of public health, economic development, and environmental justice. The intention of the Climate Action Plan to include goals regarding Hartford’s green spaces is based on the belief that “In improving the health, quality, and access to our green spaces, the Climate Action Plan may help Hartford more effectively prioritize nature – which will in turn benefit our air, health, and quality of life.”¹¹⁵ The six goals of the Climate Action Plan include consideration of public-private partnerships for Hartford’s parks, improve connectivity between and within parks, set a high number of trees to be planted each year, consider master tree and cemetery plans, and encourage meadows and wildflower fields to enhance biodiversity.

While the new Climate Action Plan shares some commonalities with the previous park plans, it differs from many of the previous efforts given its focus on the sustainability of Hartford’s parks instead of the maintenance and recreational aspects of parks. In the Green Space section of the Climate Action Plan there are the five subsections of History, Diagnosis, Successes, Goals, Recommendations and Metrics, and finally Partners and Community Related Organizations. Again, while the Goals, Recommendations and Metrics section offers helpful planning recommendations; it does not offer a timeline during which they will be completed or any specific budgetary process for the recommendations to be completed. It is also important to note that the Climate Action Plan is still in draft form, and these specifications might be added

¹¹⁵ Hartford Climate Stewardship Initiative, “Climate Action Plan,” Accessed April 3, 2017.

before the plan is published. It is also encouraging that due to its affiliation directly with Hartford's Mayor, this plan might actually be enacted over the coming years.

Table 1) Goals of the four parks master plans of the last decade.

Trust for Public Land Renewing a Historic Legacy (2007)	Hartford Parks Green Ribbon Task Force (2011)	Sasaki Capital City Parks Master Plan (2014)	Climate Action Plan (Currently being drafted, Spring 2017)
<p>Increase appreciation, recognition, and marketing of the history of Hartford’s parks</p> <p>Connect Hartford’s parks through a Green Belt</p> <p>Improve the accessibility, equity and excellence of Hartford’s parks</p> <p>Improve leadership within the bureaucratic structure</p> <p>Improve the coordination between the private Friends of Parks groups, sports leagues, and non-profits</p> <p>Improve the funding of Hartford’s parks through an increase of public-private relationships</p>	<p>Reunite Parks and Recreation Services</p> <p>Hire a Highly Qualified Parks Director</p> <p>For now, keep Parks & Recreation within DPW</p> <p>Strengthen and Restructure the Hartford Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission</p> <p>Establish a Department of Environmental Services</p>	<p>Restore the Park System’s Legacy</p> <p>Create a Connected System</p> <p>Enhance the Network of Parks to Serve All Parts of the Community</p> <p>Financial sustainability</p> <p>Maintenance and image</p> <p>Contemporary programs</p>	<p>Consider public-private partnerships for Hartford’s parks</p> <p>Improve connectivity between and within parks, through trails and other public access ways</p> <p>Set a high number of trees to be planted each year</p> <p>Consider Master Tree and Cemetery Plans</p> <p>Encourage meadows and wildflower fields to enhance biodiversity</p>

Image 1) Trust for Public Land's Conceptual Green Belt.



Image 2) Sasaki graphic showing the potential connectivity of Hartford's parks.



Conclusion

The master plans created by the City of Hartford, relevant stakeholders, and residents of Hartford provide a variety of goals and recommendations on how to improve Hartford's parks. While these plans are each carefully calculated and provide helpful information on how to improve Hartford's parks, not all of the goals and recommendations are realistic. I have compiled a list of goals that can be found in at least two of the four most important master plans regarding Hartford's parks in the last decade. These six goals can be divided into the categories of history, connectivity, accessibility, sustainability, public-private partnerships, and leadership & coordination. While other important goals are identified in each of the four master plans, these goals are arguably the most important and achievable based on their existence in at least two or more of the plans. In order to better determine how realistic each goal is, I will first explain the goal and then analyze the potential for each goal to be successfully completed.

The category of "history" can be interpreted in a few different ways regarding the goals for improvement of the Hartford Park System. The City of Hartford can capitalize on the history of its parks through the marketing of recreational services and uses of the parks. The parks have historically offered a variety of recreational programs that are no longer offered due to budget constraints and disorganization. Another goal is to use the legacy of the Hartford Park System as a purpose for overall restoration and ongoing maintenance. The City of Hartford is lucky to have the resource of historical parks, and should invest in their upkeep.

An illustrative example of the use of history for the promotion of Hartford's parks is Coltsville National Park. The federal government designated Coltsville a National Park in 2014 and has been working with the City of Hartford to get the park up and running for summer visitors. United States Representative John Larson drafted legislation to approve the creation of Coltsville National Park in Congress. According to Representative Larson, "Coltsville has played

an iconic part in our nation's history since Sam Colt founded his company in 1855 and created a community around manufacturing that helped make Hartford one of the birthplaces of the Industrial Revolution. Coltsville will continue to play an important role in Hartford as a national park,"¹¹⁶ In the coming years, visitors will be able to tour the Colt manufacturing facility and take advantage of Colt Park. Samuel Colt's brick carriage house and the groundskeeper's cottage can also be found on the property. Without leveraging Hartford's history and engaging with the National Park System, the City of Hartford would never have had the sufficient level of funding or the initiative to improve Colt Park's visibility at the local, state, and national level.

The category of "connectivity" can be found in many of the master plans, as there are multiple purposes for improving the connectivity of the Hartford Park System. Connecting the park system can better promote the use of the parks for recreational purposes and help connect fragmented ecosystems. One way that stakeholders within Hartford are working to increase the recreational use of a connected park system is through the upcoming Life is a Cycle event. The public-private relationship of The City of Hartford, My City Bikes and Grand Subaru is presenting the Life is a Cycle event on May 25, 2017. My City Bikes is "the public health alliance helping people enjoy better health and quality of life through biking."¹¹⁷ Life is a Cycle is an existing nationwide group bike ride event that benefits the American Heart Association. The cost to participate is only \$1.50 for early registration and \$5.00 for registration on the day of the event, making it accessible to a diverse cross section of as many members of the community as possible.

¹¹⁶ Radelat, Ana, "U.S. House Advances Coltsville Plan" *The Hartford Courant*, February 28, 2017. Accessed April 3, 2017.

¹¹⁷ My City Bikes, "What does My City Bikes do?" Accessed April 3, 2017.

My City Bikes created a proposed bike route that would allow bikers to safely and conveniently ride through the City of Hartford including as much of the City Park's system as possible. Image 1 shows the proposed ten-mile route proposed by My City Bikes that begins and ends at Riverside Park. This route only utilizes Keney Park and Bushnell Park. A committee within The City of Hartford's Department of Development Services developed its own proposed bike route that can be seen in Image 2. The City of Hartford's proposed bike route uses the same ten-mile route as the My City Bikes proposed route. However, the City of Hartford also provides alternate routes for those who want a longer ride. This alternate proposed route is attempts to better connect the Hartford Park System and would additionally utilize Pope Park, Colt Park, Barnard Park, Bond Street Park, Goodwin Park and Columbus Park. The intention to include all of these parks by the City of Hartford is to show bike riders the entire Hartford Park System and increase the visibility and use of the parks for recreational purposes.

The category of "accessibility" includes goals to improve the use of parks by people and neighborhoods within the city. The Trust for Public Land report has the goal to improve the accessibility, equity, and excellence of Hartford's parks while the Sasaki Capital Parks Guide has the goal to enhance the network of parks to serve all parts of the community. With Hartford's high park acreage per capita, accessibility should not be a problem for Hartford residents. Nearly all Hartford residents live near a park. However, not many residents live near a park that is well maintained or offers the recreational purposes they desire. Not all parks in Hartford offer the recreational services that residents require or fulfill the stated goal of the DFCYR to lead a safe, happy and healthy lifestyle.

The Trust for Public Land and Sasaki reports both include goals regarding accessibility to Hartford's parks in relation to pedestrians and bikers. The Trust for Public Land reports that in

the mid 1900s, “parks were drastically affected by the new interstate highways (I-84 and I-91) which were constructed on or near Pope Park, Riverside Park, Keney Park, and Bushnell Park, reducing access and totally changing their sylvan character with noise and concrete.”¹¹⁸

Additionally, the Capital City Parks Guide reports that, “today, the parks are generally well-connected via the road network in Hartford, although interstate and rail lines visually block some parks, especially Riverside and Charter Oak Landing.”¹¹⁹ In the planning of new infrastructure projects, the City of Hartford must take into account the city’s parks, one of its most valuable amenities. In order for the City of Hartford to take into account the voice of multiple stakeholders within the Hartford Park System, the stakeholders must use institutions like PRAC that are already in place to amplify their voices. Stakeholders must also partner with private organizations in the City of Hartford to have their voices heard, as they would all be affected by such changes in infrastructure.

The category of “sustainability” can have multiple meanings depending on one’s frame of reference. Any effort to improve the Hartford Park System should include a focus on both improved fiscal and environmental sustainability. With the increased awareness of climate change and green cities, the Hartford Park System has achieved measured improvement of its environmental sustainability. According to the City’s Climate Action Plan, Hartford has increased its tree canopy significantly, enacted the Hartford Tree Ordinance, prioritized green space on private property through zoning reforms, and protected wildlife habitats while promoting Connecticut River development. In order to increase fiscal stability, the City of Hartford must capitalize upon the idea of public-private relationships.

¹¹⁸ The Trust for Public Land, “The Park System of Hartford, Connecticut: Renewing a Historic Legacy,” October, 2007, Accessed April 3, 2017.

¹¹⁹ Sasaki, “Capital City Parks Guide Part 2,” 2014, 93.

The category of “Public-Private Partnerships” is an all-encompassing goal in an effort to address the lack of sufficient fiscal support for the Hartford Park System within the city’s current budget. Many of the goals within these master plans require an increased budget in order to fully fund their stated goals. Many of the master plans address the fact that Hartford’s budget has not sufficiently prioritized Hartford’s parks over the last few decades. Based on these realities, many of the plans suggest the use of public-private partnerships like Riverfront Recapture to help fund initiatives to improve the Hartford Park System.

According to the Climate Action Plan, Riverfront Recapture “has gained national recognition for its management of Riverside Park in concert with Hartford’s Department of Public Works and the Metropolitan District Commission, as well as private donors.”¹²⁰ Riverfront Recapture relies on financing from The City of Hartford, corporations, educational institutions and private citizens just to name a few sources of funding.¹²¹ The programs offered by Riverfront Recapture fall within the categories of Entertainment & Events, Recreation & Outdoor Adventures, and Urban and Environmental Recapture. The success of these programs would likely not be possible under the sole authority of the City of Hartford. While public-private relationships have the potential to increase the level of existing polarization within city governance, a strengthened Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee has the capability to oversee and manage the relationships and report to the Mayor. Therefore, public-private relationships offer the best opportunity to help improve Hartford’s parks without opposing the values of the City of Hartford.

The goal of “leadership & coordination” is identified across all of the master plans analyzed. Many of the master plans call for improved leadership in the Hartford Park System

¹²⁰ The City of Hartford, “Climate Action Plan,” Concept Draft as of January 2017.

¹²¹ Riverfront Recapture, “Annual Report 2015,” Accessed April 3, 2017.

through a single strong leader or central organization structure of governance. The Trust for Public Land eloquently states, “The drawbacks of a fragmented park and recreation structure, as Hartford currently has, are well known. There are frequently coordination problems between the people who manage sports players and the people who prepare the fields for their use. There are severe challenges with communicating both park information and recreation schedules with the public. Coordinated planning for parks and recreation becomes almost impossible. And budgeting and employee management issues become buried within the larger framework of the other agencies, whether Public Works, Health and Human Services, or any other larger department with multiple missions. In sum, cities which have fragmented bureaucratic structures have park systems which do not get the full attention of the mayor, the city council and the public at large.”¹²² The goal of better coordination between different stakeholders within the Hartford Park System must be improved through strengthened leadership. Some success has been achieved with the improvement of the citizen led Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, but similar improvement needs to be replicated and seen on a larger scale by the City of Hartford.

The Hartford Park System began through a combination of public and private efforts. The general public established Bushnell Park as the nations first publicly funded and voter approved park. Subsequently, private donors established Keney Park, Goodwin Park, Elizabeth Park, Colt Park, Riverside Park, and Pope Park during the “Rain of Parks.” Today, private stakeholders primarily maintain these parks through public-private partnerships in combination with the City of Hartford. The City of Hartford alone does not have the fiscal capacity or

¹²² The Trust for Public Land, “The Park System of Hartford, Connecticut: Renewing a Historic Legacy.”

political will to maintain Hartford's parks to the standard that they require to benefit residents. Though public-private partnerships have the potential to infringe upon the interests of the residents of the city, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks for Hartford's historical parks. With institutions like the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission in place and the potential to develop an improved organizational body, oversight of these public-private relationships is not a problem for the residents of Hartford. The City of Hartford needs to actively seek public-private partnerships and work together with the micro-actors in the Hartford Park system to realize its goals of improved maintenance and recreational capabilities for Hartford's historical parks.

Image 1) My City Bikes proposed route.

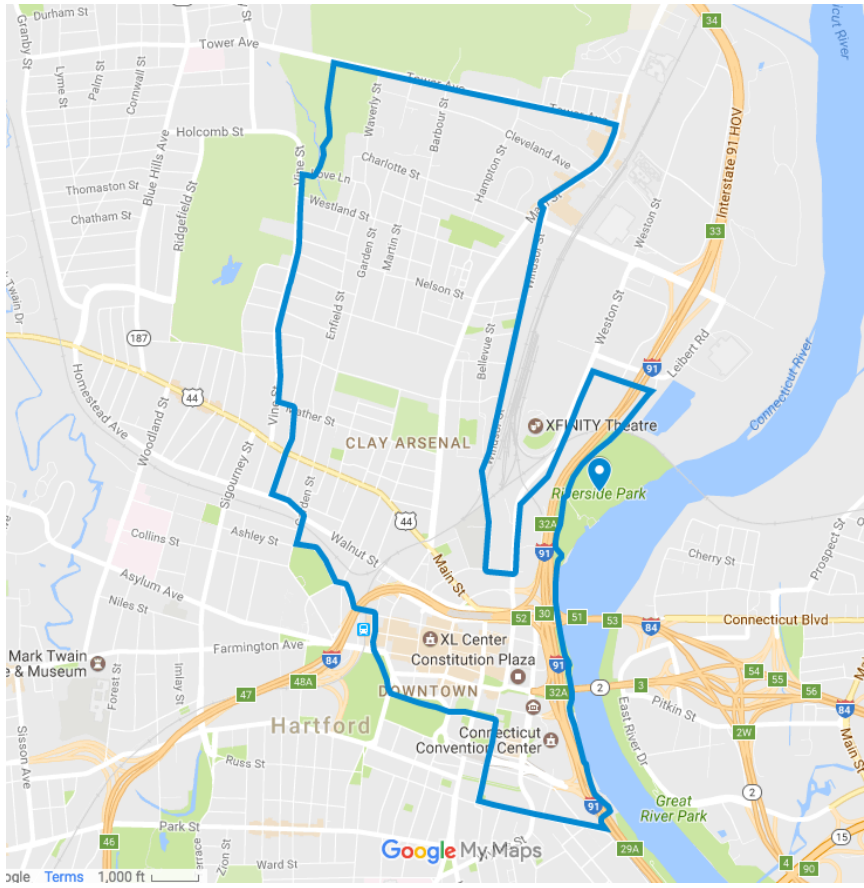
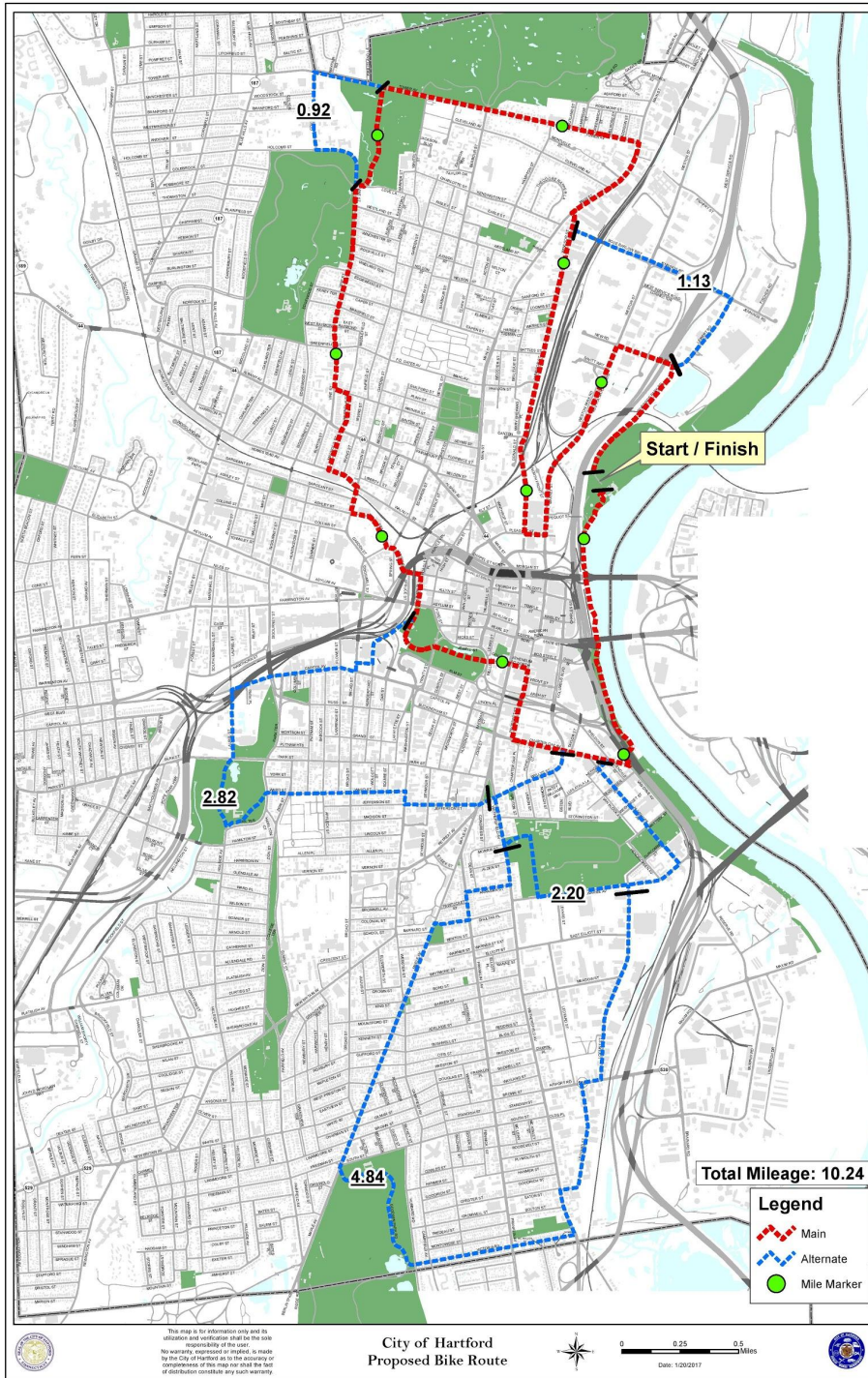


Image 2) The City of Hartford proposed route.



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