



## *A national park area*

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Boston Harbor Islands Partnership Planning Committee  
FROM: Bruce Jacobson, Chair  
DATE: August 2, 2007  
SUBJECT: Gateway Criteria

The National Park Service, Island Alliance, and other partners are currently pursuing development of two “gateways” to the Boston Harbor Islands:

- Harbor Park Pavilion at Long Wharf on the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston; and
- “Adams Landing” at Squantum Point Park in Quincy.

Mainland gateways were a topic of great interest as we prepared the Boston Harbor Islands General Management Plan, and the final plan includes specific guidance for developing these visitor facilities. I thought it would be useful to revisit the criteria that the Partnership endorsed for gateways as we move forward with discussion and planning for new mainland access points to the islands.

The rest of this memo is taken from the Boston Harbor Islands General Management Plan (Boston Support Office of the Northeast Region, National Park Service for the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership, 2002). I have cleaned up language here and there to aid comprehension; page numbers are shown if you want to consult the original text.

### **PARK ACCESS AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS (pp.75-76)**

One of the mandates of the park’s enabling legislation is to improve access to the Boston Harbor Islands using public water transportation. In developing policy to address this mandate, several assumptions were made about water transportation:

- that passenger ferry service will be expanded in phases over time
- that additional mainland departure points and routes are added when there is demonstrated demand
- that island docks, which are controlled by park managers, are open for commercial ferries under regulation by the park dock manager
- that ferry service is intended to be self-sustaining over time.

Consistent with preserving park resources and providing diverse, high-quality visitor experiences, the Partnership seeks to provide reasonable access to the park and to ensure that the means of circulation within the park and on the surrounding lands and waters foster convenient enjoyment of park resources.

The Partnership will cooperate with the many agencies working to provide greater access to the harbor for the public. Special efforts will be made to coordinate with public transit authorities for access improvements to land routes for visitors in inland communities to reach mainland gateways easily.

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## **Gateways**

Access to the islands will be offered from many locations on the mainland. The level of services offered at these locations will vary based on visitor demand and ability of the market to respond. Some departure points will provide a level of service that qualifies them to be designated as official gateways and included in the Mainland Gateway park management areas by the Partnership. Others will feed visitors to the official gateways or, in some cases, directly to the islands.

The Partnership will review requests for new gateways using the criteria established for Mainland Gateway management areas (see below). A public process assures community input.

Mainland gateways are, by definition, ferry departure points with attendant information, orientation, and services for park visitors. The Partnership will ensure that each official gateway is a scheduled stop on the park water transportation system; that it is promoted as a departure point or “entrance” for the national park area; and that there is park orientation and interpretation for visitors. Facilities are to be developed in collaboration with the facility owners. In exchange, the official gateway operators will enter into agreements that provide revenue to the park through the Island Alliance (see Park Financing on page 86). Local municipal endorsement is a prerequisite for being designated a Boston Harbor Islands gateway.

## **Park Water Transportation**

The public water transportation system provides most visitors with access to the park. Our goal is that the water transportation contributes to the overall visitor experience by meeting three objectives. (1) The ferry trip is pleasurable and educational, introducing the visitor to the harbor and to the islands. (2) The service is comfortable, safe, and reliable. (3) The system has sufficient infrastructure to handle a higher volume of visitors as the park grows.

Passenger ferries travel from mainland gateways to hub islands, where water shuttles operate in loops to several other islands. Ferries operate frequently in the summer, less frequently in spring and fall, with special trips in the winter. Eventually, water shuttles may make regular circuits once or several times a day among Georges, Spectacle, Deer, Gallops, Lovells, Grape, Bumpkin, and Peddocks. Less frequent boat service might become available to other islands, such as Long Island.

Dock facilities, ferries, and water shuttles will meet performance standards set by the Partnership. Dock facilities will accommodate various sizes of vessels and provide safe access on and off the vessels. Performance criteria for ferry and water shuttle services address reliability of service and schedules, guidelines to ensure resource protection, vessel wake and wash limitations, public safety, and standards for serving visitors with disabilities. The park water transportation system will continue to be operated by private boat operators under agreement to the Partnership or its member agencies. It will be monitored and evaluated periodically and adjusted as needed.

## **MAINLAND GATEWAYS MANAGEMENT AREAS** (p. 49)

Management areas (sometimes called management zones) help determine the balance between resource preservation and visitor use on the islands. One management area, Mainland Gateways, covers mainland locations. Management areas containing gateways are facilities that welcome harbor islands visitors, providing boat access and information meant to foster a sense of anticipation about the adventure ahead. These developed sites offer orientation, and may provide interpretive and educational programming to intrigue and draw in the visitor to the islands. Mainland Gateways may be professionally staffed and have high levels of visitation and activity.

The Partnership desires access to the islands from many locations on the mainland. Yet, the level of services offered at these locations will vary based on visitor demand and ability of the market to respond. Some departure points will provide a level of service that qualifies them to be designated as official mainland gateways by the Partnership. Other waterfront locations not included with the Mainland Gateway management areas will feed visitors to the official gateways or, in some cases, directly to the islands.

The 1996 park legislation names many locations where federal funds could be used to help support gateways. No locations have yet been included in the Mainland Gateway management area; however, the Partnership has identified potential locations, 15 of which are shown on Management Areas map (page 55). Both Squantum Point and Long Wharf are included.

Although no Mainland Gateway management areas have been designated, the Partnership has developed criteria to be used in designating gateways. Mainland Gateway areas allow for a range of desired conditions and visitor experiences, similar to other park management areas. Some gateway locations are intended to be high-visitation sites that serve national, regional, and local audiences. Others serve primarily local residents, and may be designed for “touch and go” transport (drop off and pick up only). The larger, more active locations will be staffed while the smaller gateways may not be, and services will vary with the level of staffing. The fundamental criteria that must be met by all official gateways are:

- Free access – Mainland gateways are located in areas open to the public without charge.
- Intermodal access – Mainland gateways are sited near public, multi-modal transit systems including highways, bikeways, and commuter boats.
- Piers – Mainland gateways have piers that accommodate regularly scheduled island vessels and meet other program requirements such as access for people with disabilities.
- Long-term docking facilities – Ferry terminals have long-term arrangements so that docking facilities are available for authorized island ferry and water shuttles; thus providing park visitors with assurance that terminals remain in the same locations over long periods of time.
- Identity – A uniform park identity sign package is located at each gateway including a “welcome” sign, orientation panels, and highway directional signs.
- Visitor amenities – At a minimum, seating and a shade shelter are present.
- Good neighbors – Mainland gateways have the ability to accommodate visitor activity without significant negative effects on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Parking – Where feasible, gateways provide parking for island visitors.

The larger, more active locations bring these additional attributes:

- Restrooms and drinking water – either seasonal or year-round facilities are available
- Visitor contact station – an indoor space providing a point of contact for potential visitors is made available
- Sales – island-related souvenirs, educational material, and trip supplies are sold
- Staff – staffed locations may “piggy-back” on existing visitor facilities provided by harbor communities.

#### **Desired Future Resource Conditions at Gateways (p. 52)**

- The mainland environment is a developed area.
- Any historic resources retain integrity and are adaptively reused for park purposes.
- There may be a high degree of impact on natural resources.

#### **Desired Future Visitor Experience at Gateways (p. 52)**

- Interpretation and educational programs help visitors “discover” the islands.
- Visitors anticipate a trip to the islands with a feeling of adventure.
- There is a high level of activity and human interaction.

The desired visitor experience at two types of mainland locations is described more fully in the appendix of the General Management Plan (p. 170). The first stop for many visitors will be a Boston visitor facility where people would gain a perspective of the park as a whole. The Boston Visitor Contact Center describes the desired experience for the Harbor Park Pavilion which would serve the park’s ferry service at Long Wharf. The more general Gateways experience is what would be desired for Squantum: visitors buy tickets, get information about the park, and wait for ferries. Each gateway will feature similar interpretive signs and wayside exhibits (see sign guidelines below). Some gateways will have indoor space.

<b><i>BOSTON VISITOR CONTACT CENTER</i></b>	<b><i>GATEWAYS</i></b>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>High numbers of visitors, both local residents and tourists, are present in downtown Boston</i></li> <li>• <i>Can present comprehensive overview of all the islands and park themes in a significant way</i></li> <li>• <i>Place to reach people who would not visit the islands or who might go another day</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>High numbers of visitors</i></li> <li>• <i>Visitors spend time waiting for ferries: opportunity to use wait time for park orientation</i></li> <li>• <i>Opportunity to reach people who may not visit the islands</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lots of competition for visitors’ attention</i></li> <li>• <i>Visitors can’t see the islands from most potential sites</i></li> <li>• <i>May be difficult to find an appropriate location</i></li> <li>• <i>Major cooperators with significant funding are required</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lots of competition for visitors’ attention in downtown locations</i></li> <li>• <i>Challenge of providing consistent identity and look</i></li> <li>• <i>Visitors can’t see islands from the shore at many locations</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increase awareness of the park and encourage visits</i></li> <li>• <i>Orient visitors to the overall significance of the islands, the park themes, the cultural and natural resources, and the experiences available</i></li> <li>• <i>Present the Partnership concept</i></li> <li>• <i>Help visitors plan trips and make choices about what to do</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Entice visitors to visit the park</i></li> <li>• <i>Help visitors plan, make choices</i></li> <li>• <i>Orient visitors to the overall significance of the islands</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide an “arrival” experience and reinforce the park identity</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal Interpretation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Rangers and volunteers would staff facility and provide visitor reception and orientation services</i></li> <li>• <i>Demonstrations, talks, performances, presentations by rangers and volunteers</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gateways to be staffed by ranger or cooperator staff</i></li> <li>• <i>Ideally, staff will not just sell tickets but do some informal interpretation with discovery carts: things to see and touch</i></li> <li>• <i>Gateways with indoor space have potential for orientation talks, small demonstrations, etc.</i></li> </ul>

### **BOSTON VISITOR CONTACT CENTER**

- Non-Personal Interpretation**
- *Park audio-visual presentation*
  - *Exhibits, artifact displays, hands-on experiences, computer interactives*
  - *Sales and supplies of necessities for island visits such as water, food, sunscreen, cameras*
  - *Webcam to islands*
  - *Kids' corner*

### **GATEWAYS**

- *At all gateways:*
  - *Signs*
  - *wayside exhibits*
  - *interpretive booklet (with map/chart) given out with ticket; could be passport to islands (one page per island with identity of agency, what there is to do)*
  - *kids' activity guide*
  - *seating and shade*
- *In Boston and Hingham (others serving national and regional visitor population):*
- *sales and supplies of necessities for island visits such as water, food, sunscreen, cameras*

#### **Potential Management Activity at Gateways (p. 53)**

- *Focus on visitor convenience and access to services*
- *Rehabilitation as primary treatment for historic resources (See Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties)*
- *Staff presence desirable to provide visitor services*

#### **Potential Infrastructure at Gateways (p. 53)**

- *High level of development*
- *Transit stop and parking*
- *Pier*
- *Marina*
- *Wayfinding and information signs*
- *Shade shelter*
- *Restrooms*
- *Picnic tables and benches*
- *Basic food services (vending machines, snack bar)*
- *Interpretive media (wayside exhibits, brochure racks, audio tours, etc.)*
- *Ticket office*
- *Information kiosk or visitor contact station*
- *Visitor center*
- *Park-related retail (books, necessities, souvenirs, etc.)*
- *Recreational equipment rentals*
- *Paved trails and walkways*
- *Park offices and support (employee housing, maintenance, utilities, etc.)*

## **PARK DEVELOPMENT** (pp. 87-89)

Park infrastructure is the only development envisioned for the Boston Harbor Islands national park area; it should be consistent with at least one of the purposes below and leave park resources unimpaired.

Infrastructure (park facilities) is built for the following purposes:

- to protect and preserve park resources
- to support park programs and education
- to provide visitor safety or amenities
- to accommodate an increasing number of visitors
- to generate revenue for park programs and operations
- to support park management and maintenance

Any park development will support park goals. Development costing more than \$500,000, which the National Park Service funds or for which it is expected to assume operational or maintenance responsibility, is reviewed by the nationwide NPS Development Advisory Board.

### **Development Guidelines**

The following infrastructure development guidelines meld National Park Service policy with more specific guidance for the Boston Harbor Islands national park area. They guide all new construction in the park. “Infrastructure” includes structures, paving, program facilities, administrative facilities, and utilities.

#### *Location*

In general, new construction takes place in the park where infrastructure already exists or previously existed. Major facilities are placed only in appropriate management areas established by the general management plan and after consideration of carrying capacities.

#### *Scale*

Scale of the islands is respected. Facilities are integrated into the park landscape and environs so as to cause minimum impact. Development does not compete with or dominate park features or seem out of scale with individual islands. A cohesive design theme reflects the purpose and character of the park as a whole. Standard designs and components may be used, but they are adapted as appropriate to the specific site and conditions as part of the design process.

#### *Planning & Design*

Planning and design of park infrastructure is accomplished by interdisciplinary, inter-agency teams constituted to meet the environmental, programmatic, and technical requirements of the project, and to help unify the park visually and thematically. In areas of historic preservation emphasis, new visitor or administrative structures harmonize with the area and its cultural resources in proportion, color, and texture. No attempt is made to duplicate or mimic a historic design, nor is any modern construction to be portrayed to the public as historic. Any decisions calling for actions having the potential to significantly alter the environment require formal analysis of alternatives based on reliable data about the natural and cultural resources of the park. Public input is sought at the earliest practical stage of planning and design.

#### *Sustainability*

Any development is programmatically and physically sustainable, with principles of conservation applied. Uniform standards for piers and water transportation contribute to sustainability by encouraging the use of standardized vessels.

### *Life-Cycle Costs*

All costs, including initial construction costs, ongoing maintenance costs, and operating costs, are considered in the planning, design, and construction of facilities.

### *Adaptive Use*

Adaptive use of historic and non-historic buildings for uses such as visitor centers, hostels, and administrative offices is generally considered before new construction, assuming that an existing building can meet park objectives and its use is not an intrusion on significant natural or cultural resources. Use of historic buildings complies with all laws, regulations, and policies regarding the treatment and use of cultural properties.

### *Restoration*

Natural, cultural, and historic features of the park are restored only after research and planning have determined the appropriateness of restoration.

### *Accessibility for People with Disabilities*

Visitor and management facilities and water transportation systems are made as accessible as is practicable, depending on the nature of the area and of the facility, to persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments. In conforming to the policy of accessibility, emphasis is placed on ensuring that disabled persons are afforded experiences and opportunities with other visitors to the greatest extent practicable.

### *Utilities*

Utilities are as unobtrusive as possible and pose the least possible resource impact; municipal or other utility systems outside the park are used whenever economically and environmentally practicable; where possible and authorized, cost-sharing with municipalities and others is done in meeting new, expanded, or replacement park utility needs. An exception to unobtrusive utilities are those that might be highlighted to reveal their function, such as those using renewable energy, an important aspect of education.

## **Sign System**

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership presents a unified sign system to Boston Harbor Islands national park area visitors. This policy integrates the following aesthetic and functional principles:

- provide clear, concise, and consistent communication to visitors in order to improve the quality of the park experience
- help establish the identity of the national park area with the public, while at the same time recognizing the essential role of the island-owning Partnership agencies
- employ quality graphic design that is legible, timely, and inviting
- be sensitive to the park environment by avoiding sign proliferation and using minimal sign size, harmonious colors, and an overall simplicity
- accommodate systematic change and simultaneously retain continuity for visitors
- procure, manage, and maintain signs cost-effectively over their life cycle
- demonstrate sustainable design by selecting materials for long life and utilizing reusable and recyclable materials whenever possible

The Boston Harbor Islands sign system is divided into five groups based on function. Among them, two are appropriate for mainland gateways:

- Orientation panels for park entry portals and major island destinations — help visitors plan their trip to the park and their visit to a particular location in the park through text and graphics.
- Wayside interpretive exhibits for visitor areas — in form and educate visitors about island resources with minimal text and powerful graphics at significant features.

More specific sign standards were adopted by the Partnership to implement this policy.

## **SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP (p. 89)**

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership will demonstrate environmental leadership and a commitment to the principles of sustainability. The Partnership agencies will lead by example in all aspects of park management including policy development; park planning; park operations; natural and cultural resource management; interpretation and education; facilities design, construction, and management; and commercial services. Infrastructure, programs, and functions will be models for the use of sustainable design, planning, construction, development, access, resource use, and maintenance. To ensure appropriate commitment, the Collaborations foster environmentally, socially, and economically compatible solutions.

## **EVALUATING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS (pp. 85)**

The park operates under many laws that require consultation and review by outside parties, notably the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In compliance with environmental laws, the Partnership ensures that the environmental costs and benefits of proposed management actions are fully and openly evaluated before actions are taken that may impact the human environment. Under the National Historic Preservation Act proposed actions are evaluated as to their potential effects. These evaluations include appropriate participation by the public; application of scholarly and technical information in the planning, evaluation, and decision-making processes; use of Partnership knowledge and expertise through interdisciplinary teams and processes; and aggressive incorporation of mitigation measures, pollution prevention techniques, and other principles of sustainable park management. (Specific park policies also address the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act [NAGPRA], and appropriate state and tribal laws regarding Indian burial sites and funerary objects.)