

# Development of an Elm Park Conservancy

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Worcester Community  
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**PARKSPIRIT**  
of Worcester, Inc.

# Development of an Elm Park Conservancy

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*This report represents work of WPI undergraduate students submitted to the faculty as evidence of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on its website without editorial or peer review. For more information about the projects program at WPI, see <http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/Projects>*

## Abstract

The project assisted Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. in the planning and implementation of what will be the first conservancy in Worcester, MA: The Elm Park Conservancy (EPC.) The project team addressed this by creating a framework for the EPC that includes a funding strategy, management structure, and volunteer engagement plan. The team conducted content analysis on and interviews with successful conservancies across the United States, local nonprofit organizations, and the Worcester Parks Department in order to make informed recommendations to Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. The team then presented their findings to city officials and community representatives in order to assess the feasibility and garner support for the conservancy.

## Acknowledgements

We would first like to thank our sponsors, Brittany Legasey and Rick Miller of Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. Without their vision, support, and dedication to the City of Worcester, this report would not have been possible.

We would also like to thank the many individuals who took the time to interview with us, including representatives from local Worcester nonprofits, conservancies across the United States, and WPI faculty members. We appreciate the information you shared with us about your organizations, and without it this project would not have been possible.

We would also like to thank Jeff Tomiano for his consistent involvement in this project, as well as Bob Lock for his participation in our video project. Also, thank you Jim Monaco for helping us with technical support regarding our project video.

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Finally, we would like to thank our project advisor, Professor Corey Dehner, for her guidance, passion, and constant reassurance during the course of our project.

## Executive Summary

Worcester, Massachusetts is home to 60 green spaces that encompass a total of 1250 acres (The City of Worcester, n.d.). With that comes the responsibility to maintain these green spaces so that they are safe and attractive for the general public. However, due to the minimal budget the parks department have, parks in Worcester suffer from maintenance and management issues. As a result, numerous volunteer groups have taken initiative in the upkeep and management of Worcester's parks. However, none of these organizations are professionally staffed or widely recognized.

For these reasons, Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc, a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to protecting, promoting, enhancing, and advocating for Worcester City Parks, took the initiative and collaborated with Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Worcester Community Project Center to create an Elm Park Conservancy. The conservancy would be a professional organization with a strong board and staff members, that will ensure the maintenance and management of Newton Hill section of Elm Park, Salisbury Park and potentially other Worcester parks. We worked with Park Spirit to assist them in the planning and design of the Elm Park Conservancy (EPC).

### Methodology:

Our goal was to ensure the sustainability of Elm Park by developing a framework for creation of an EPC that includes a funding mechanism, management team, and volunteer engagement plan. In order to achieve our goal, we developed the following objectives:

1. Develop an understanding of the current funding, management and volunteer structure of Elm and Salisbury parks and Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc.
2. Identify and evaluate existing frameworks of successful conservancies in the U.S.
3. Assess the local climate for conservation organizations in Worcester, Massachusetts
4. Analyze interview data and develop a framework for the Elm Park Conservancy

5. Gain support and feedback from the City of Worcester government.

In order to achieve our first objective, we requested and reviewed certain documents and information regarding current funding sources, organizational structure, and volunteer practices provided to us by our sponsors.

In order to develop a framework for the EPC, we next needed to identify common structures, volunteer practices and funding practices that contribute to the success of conservancies in the U.S. We began our research with conducting content analysis on the official websites and available documents of **42 conservancies from 16 different states, and Washington D.C.** We collected and sorted data by inputting the information gathered into a 16 parameter matrix.

We then **conducted structured interviews with representatives from 22 of the 42 conservancies we researched** (20 of which we analyzed further) to fill gaps of information. We analyzed the interview responses and compiled them into a more detailed matrix. We later broke down the two matrices into 18 more focused matrices. From these matrices, we were able to identify commonalities between the 20 conservancies. We also conducted structured interviews with local nonprofit conservation organizations in order to accomplish objective 3.

The data analysis technique we utilized for this project was **grounded theory**. Using the commonalities between conservancies we identified from the matrices, we first drafted a preliminary framework for the EPC based solely on the common conservancy practices found in from our research on conservancies nationwide. We then considered Park Spirit's current structure, funding capacity, and volunteer strategy, as well as the information gathered from the Worcester nonprofit interviews. After incorporating those factors into our structure, we asked our sponsors for their feedback, and made further adjustments to the structure.

We then conducted interviews with representatives from the Worcester Parks Department and Worcester City Council and had a brief discussion with City Manager Edward M. Augustus on the possibility of establishing a conservancy for Elm Park. Following this meeting, the Office of the City Manager scheduled a meeting between Park Spirit, the Parks Department, and the Law Department in order to begin the process of creating a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Worcester and Park Spirit of Worcester. The meeting took place at the end of the project and wheels were put in motion.

### The Phases of Development of an Elm Park Conservancy:

The features, responsibilities, and characteristics of conservancies and the land they preserve vary greatly across the U.S. We developed a three phase, seven step process for the formation of the Elm Park Conservancy, pictured in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1: The Phases and Steps of the Development of the EPC

### Step 1: Develop a vision

From our content analysis and interviews we found that developing a clear vision with an explicit explanation of the purpose of forming a conservancy is essential to its success.

Also we recommend that Park Spirit develop a strategic plan that encompasses at least the next five years. Consequently, we recommend that Park Spirit begin the EPC by developing a clear vision and a strategic plan that is aligned with the Parks Department plan for Elm Park.

### Step 2: Establish an Agreement with the City of Worcester

We found that 100% of the conservancies we interviewed had some level of collaboration with their respective city. Having a formal agreement with the city government is crucial to ensuring a strong Public-Private Partnership. In order for the EPC to be successful, we recommend Park Spirit establish an agreement with the city of Worcester.

### Step 3: Create Organizational Structure

We recommend that Park Spirit transition into the EPC by taking on the responsibility of the maintenance of the Newton Hill section of Elm Park and changing its name to the EPC. We also recommend that the EPC structure include a Board of Directors as the governance body, with the five committees working under the Board of Directors as pictured in Figure 2.

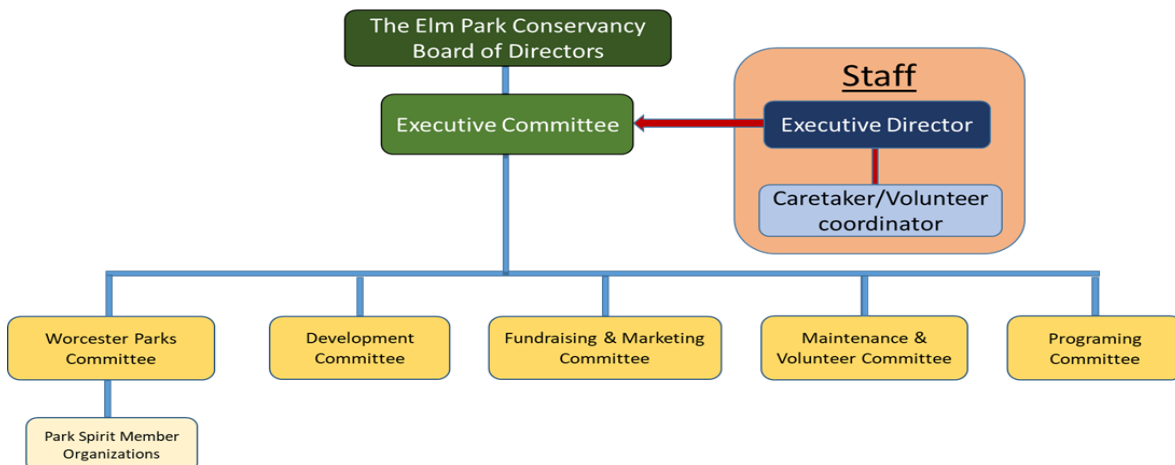


Figure 2: Proposed Structure of the EPC



#### Step 4: Recruit Board Members

**We found that in order to be successful, a conservancy should have a board of directors made up of individuals from diverse skillsets, the most important of which being fundraising.** We recommend Park Spirit recruit one or more individuals of each of following skillsets: lawyers, financial experts, marketing experts, fundraising experts, politicians, business leaders, community leaders, and forest management experts.

#### Step 5: Hire a Staff Member

**We found that almost all conservancies began their formation with the hiring of an Executive Director.** This person is mainly responsible for fundraising and the day-to-day management of the conservancy. Therefore, we recommend Park Spirit hire an Executive Director with fundraising expertise.

#### Step 6: Develop a Funding Strategy

We found that common funding practices among the conservancies not heavily supported by their city government include: holding annual galas, multi-level membership programs, soliciting for corporate and individual donations, and regularly applying for grants. **We recommend the EPC implement these practices.**

#### Step 7: Develop a Volunteer Strategy

The most common volunteer sources of the twenty conservancies we interviewed are corporate, high school or college students, gardeners, nearby residents, retirees, and friends groups. Since corporations and schools are the most common significant sources of volunteers and can be well applied to the location of Worcester, **we recommend that the EPC offer volunteering opportunities for corporate groups as well as high school and college student groups.**

**Finally, we developed the Elm Park Conservancy framework that includes potential funding practices, volunteer practices, and an organizational structure.**

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

With an estimated land mass of 9,826,675 km, the United States is two times larger than the European Union, and is considered the third largest and one of the most biodiverse countries in the world (CIA factbook, 2017). The U.S. has 59 national parks and more than 10,200 state parks spread through its vast land; however, the majority of these parks are located in rural areas where only 37% of the population lives (United States Census Bureau, 2015). More than 62% of U.S. population lives in urban areas, which makes it hard for residents to be connected to nature and have easy access to open green areas (United States Census Bureau, 2015). Global urbanization, which is the gradual increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas (Villa, 2014), is endangering the available and protected green spaces in cities. As a result, urbanization adversely affects the societies that live in urban areas (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2008). According to a 2008 United Nations report, global urbanization is predicted to rise from 46.6% to 69.6% between 2000 and 2050. The upcoming generations are the ones who will suffer this dramatic change and its consequences (Gracey, 2007).

In 2004, Rhonda Clements, a Hofstra University Professor in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, conducted a study of how often children in the United States participate in active, outdoor play, compared to previous generations. She surveyed more than 800 mothers nationwide regarding their active, outdoor play experiences as children, as well as their children's play experiences. Clements found that 70% of the mothers reported playing outdoors every day when they were young, compared to only 31% of their children. Furthermore, when the mothers played outdoors, 56% remained outdoors for three hours at a time or longer, compared with only 22% of their children. This reduction is due to several

reasons, such as dependence on television and digital media, and concerns about crime and safety. Also, 93% of mothers indicated that outdoor play positively impacts children's physical and motor skills development. Out of the 800 participants, 75% agreed that lack of outdoor activity affects their child's social skills, and 51% thought that it affects artistic and creative skills when their children go to green spaces more often (Clements, 2004).

Urban green spaces refer to: "land that is partly or completely covered with grass, trees, shrubs, or other vegetation in urban areas" (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). The city of Worcester, Massachusetts has more than 60 parks, a land mass of 24,710 acres with 17% of its land preserved as green space (The City of Worcester, n.d.). Despite the high percentage of green space, Worcester Parks receive less than 1% of municipal funding, which poses a challenge for park maintenance and management.

Due to the reduction of funding, deficit of maintenance, and the importance of the preservation of Worcester parks, nonprofit volunteer organizations such as Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. and the Friends of Newton Hill at Elm Park formed to take on this great responsibility of maintaining, restoring and promoting the use of some Worcester parks. (Park Spirit of Worcester, 2017). Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. is a local nonprofit organization that was formed in the 1980s in order to assist with the maintenance, volunteer management and funding for Worcester's parks. Park Spirit's main vision is "*to protect, to promote, to enhance, and to advocate for Worcester City Parks for all individuals to enjoy these public resources*" (Park Spirit of Worcester, 2017). Due to a dearth of funding and a need for increased maintenance and management of Worcester parks, Park Spirit is pursuing the creation of an Elm Park Conservancy (EPC). According to Park Spirit, the EPC would constitute a conservation plan for the Newton Hill section of Elm Park, Salisbury Park, and potentially other Worcester



parks. Park Spirit's vision is for the EPC to include a funding mechanism that supports and promotes the EPC goals, a structured plan to secure and sustain volunteers, and a management team that will promote and enhance the implementation of the EPC.

Park Spirit reached out to the Worcester Community Project Center of Worcester Polytechnic Institute for assistance in the establishment and implementation of the EPC. This is the task that our team has been given, and we have developed and organized this report in order to assist in the creation of the EPC. This report has five chapters, including this introduction as chapter 1. In chapter 2, we explore the importance of urban green spaces and their benefits through a literature review. In chapter 3 the methods we used to achieve our goal and objectives. In chapter 4, we propose a framework and process for the formation of the EPC. Finally, in chapter 5 we offer final thoughts and the conclusion.

## Chapter 2: Background

In this chapter we explore the importance, benefits, challenges and potential solutions to the challenges of urban green spaces (UGS). In section 2.1, we discuss the importance and benefits of UGSs. We focus on how access and proximity to green spaces affect public health, the economy, and the environment. Then, in section 2.2, we illustrate the challenges facing urban green spaces, specifically focusing on funding, management, maintenance and crime challenges in urban parks. In section 2.3, we demonstrate solutions to UGS's challenges including government regulations and incentives, land trusts and conservancies. Lastly, in section 2.4, we introduce the park structure in the City of Worcester, Massachusetts and highlight the need for a conservancy.

### 2.1 Importance of Urban Green Spaces

In this section, we discuss the importance of urban green spaces and how they benefit both the environment and nearby residents. The term “urban green spaces” refers to: “land that is partly or completely covered with grass, trees, shrubs, or other vegetation in urban areas” (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). Scientific research has shown that UGSs, including urban parks, have potential social, environmental, and economic benefits (Konijnendijk, Annerstedt, Nielsen, & Maruthaveeran, 2013).

In urban areas, green spaces have proven to be a great alleviator of climate hazards by decreasing the effect of heat stress (Laforteza, Carrus, Sanesi, & Davis, 2009). In addition, a study completed by Dr. Ambra Burls, Vice Chair of the United Kingdom UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) Program, shows that UGSs can be a stress reliever for surrounding communities by connecting residents with the environment (Burls, 2007). Moreover, a 2010 study conducted in the Netherlands by a research team including: Agnes E. van den Berg of Wageningen University and Research Center, Jolanda Maas and Peter Groenewegen of the

Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research, Robert Verheij of EMGO Institute, VU University Medical Centre, and Utrecht University Departments of Human Geography and Sociology, found that UGSs make people's lives less stressful and get them out of the city's atmosphere to a more relaxing open green area (Van den Berg, Maas, Verheij, & Groenewegen, 2010). In the following sections we explore the health, economic and environmental benefits of urban green spaces.

### 2.1.1 Public Health

Due to an increase in desk-bound jobs and the increased reliance on vehicular transport, leisure physical activity is important in fulfilling recommended physical activity levels (Bedimo-Rung, Mowen, Cohen, 2005). Urban parks have an important role in providing both easy access to green spaces for the general public, and for recreational activities. Patricia Zaradic and Oliver Pergams, two well-known conservation ecologists, conducted a study and found that Americans undervalue the importance of being in nature. Between the years 1988 and 2006, per capita visits to national parks in the United States steadily declined (Pergams, Zaradic, 2006). According to Zaradic and Pergams, the decline in use of parks and green spaces is because of the growing fascination for electronic recreation.

Rhonda Clements, former Professor of Education at Manhattanville College, conducted a study in 2004 on the play activities of 834 mothers and their children (Clements, 2004). The nationwide survey kept track of the frequency and time of play activities of children in the United States. Clements found that 85% of mothers believed that their child's television viewing and computer game playing was the reason for the lack of outdoor play (Clements, 2004). This shift in recreational activity away from outdoor play has implications on the physical health of our youth.

### *Physical Health*

A multitude of studies have shown that urban residents who live close to urban green spaces tend to have better physical health than those who do not. According to a 2006 study of more than 250,000 residents' opinions of parks by Maas, Verheij, Gronewegen, Vries, and Spreeuwenberg, a large percentage of green spaces in an urban environment could improve the health of nearby residents (Maas, Verheij, Gronewegen, Vries, & Spreeuwenberg, 2006). Additionally, the study found that people living in a 1-3 km radius of green spaces were healthier and had longer lifespans than people living beyond 3km (Maas, Verheij, Groenewegen, Vries, & Spreeuwenberg, 2006). **Fig. 2-1** depicts how the percentage of green spaces increases health and physical activity of residents living within a 1-3 km radius of those green spaces (Maas et al., 2006). The y-axis on this graph shows the 'percentage of health better than good,' which refers to the percentage of individuals who believe they are in good health. Furthermore, Yoshiro Takano, a Professor from the Tokyo Medical and Dental University, found that walking in green spaces for senior citizens can increase their lifespan and general health despite gender, marital status, or socioeconomic status. Takano also found that green spaces give residents pleasant and comfortable experiences, which can contribute positively to individual's mental health (Takano, 2002).

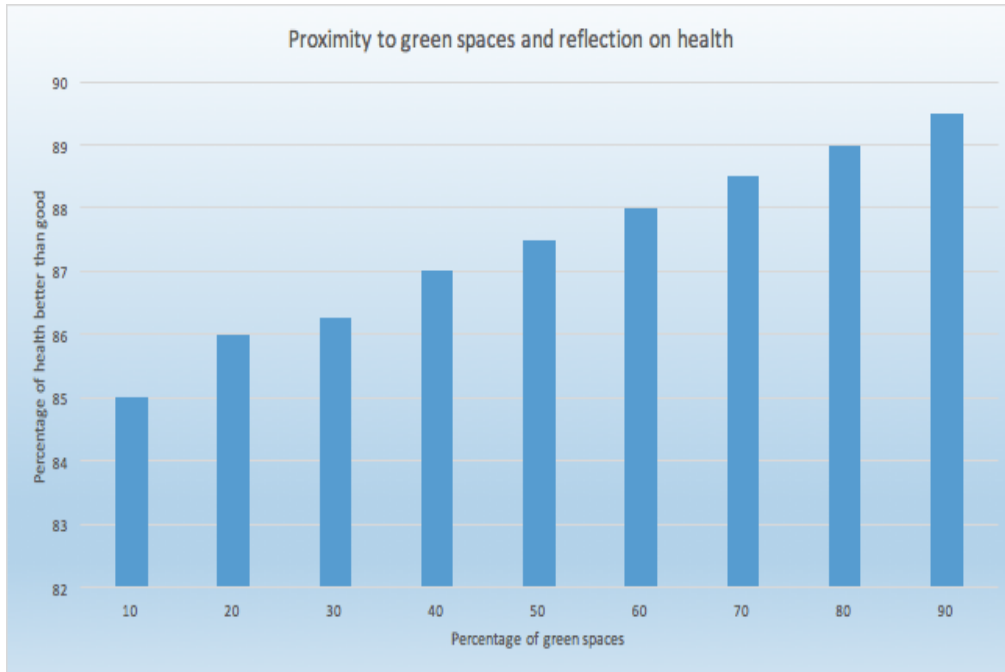


Figure 2-1 This graph shows the relationship between proximity to green spaces and health. Data from Evidence Based Public Health Policy and Practice, 2005

### *Mental Health*

Urban green spaces also have a positive influence on mental health. According to a 2014 study by Roland Sturm, a Senior Economist and Graduate Professor at Pardee RAND Graduate School, and Deborah Cohen, a Senior Physician Policy Researcher at Pardee RAND Graduate School, individuals who spend more time in green spaces are more likely to have moderate stress levels (Sturm & Cohen, 2014). In this study, Sturm and Cohen examined the correlation between proximity to urban parks and mental health of individuals in select neighborhood parks in Los Angeles, California. They surveyed individuals in these areas about the proximity of their home to parks and asked respondents to complete a Mental Health Inventory (MHI-5). The MHI-5 is an assessment used to identify anxiety, depression, behavioral control, and general distress. This study found that individuals who frequently visit parks or live near green spaces tend to have higher scores on the MHI-5 (Sturm et al., 2014). Ultimately, Sturm and Cohen found that there is a significant correlation between mental stability and availability of green spaces.

Another reason that people visit parks is to relax and be close to nature. Yoshifumi Miyazaki, Director of the Center for Environmental Health and Field Sciences at Chiba University in Japan, proposes that individuals are able to recover from stress when they are in a natural environment. Miyazaki's Nature Therapy Theory argues that human psychological and physiological functions have evolved to adapt to the forest environment and, therefore, forest stimulation easily facilitates psychological and physiological relaxation (Takayama, Korpela, Lee, Miyazaki, 2014). It is therefore beneficial to one's mental health to live near green space.

According to a survey conducted in 2004 by Anna Chiesura, Professor of Leisure, Tourism and Environment at Wageningen University, out of 467 park visitors in a Netherlands park, 73% came to the park to relax and 54.4% came to the park to be in nature. Chiesura finds that the majority of park-goers use parks as a relaxation method and to be in nature, not necessarily as a space for physical activity (Chiesura, 2004). Parks serve as places for residents to appreciate the beauty of nature, exercise, and relieve stress, which is why their upkeep is so important to urban communities. In addition to the vast health benefits of UGSs, green spaces may be beneficial to the economy.

### 2.1.2 Economic Benefits

The prominent economic benefit of parks is the positive effect they have on property value in nearby areas. Property in close proximity to urban parks have a strong demand in the real estate market (Czembrowski, Kronenberg, 2016). Potential homeowners are influenced by both external and internal factors that ultimately affect their decision. Furthermore, the quality and size of the green space are also significant factors that affect the value of a property. John L Crompton, a Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences professor at Texas A&M University, suggests a way to take advantage of this situation. Crompton posits that since people are willing to pay more for a home near a park, the value of property near that lot will also increase. This

means that when the house is sold, the new owner will likely have to pay higher property taxes to the government. Crompton argues that the resulting increase in revenue could then be used to fund the parks (Crompton, 2001). Therefore, it would be financially beneficial to the surrounding area if urban parks are well-maintained.

### 2.1.3 Environmental Importance

Urban green spaces also have environmental importance because they offer places in a city to retain local biodiversity, also known as the diversity of vegetation and life in the area. Different UGSs across one city can have very diverse flora and fauna. In Sydney, Australia, biologists conducted a study that examined the biological and ecological differences between urban green spaces (see **Figure 2-2**). The study found that there was a significant difference in both the vegetation and animal species present at different parks. Some parks had bird species that were completely unique to that park, showing that biodiversity varies widely among green spaces in Sydney (Zivanovic, Luck, 2016). UGSs play an important role in the sustainability of the local ecology, and this study shows how the biological factors of nearby parks differ greatly.

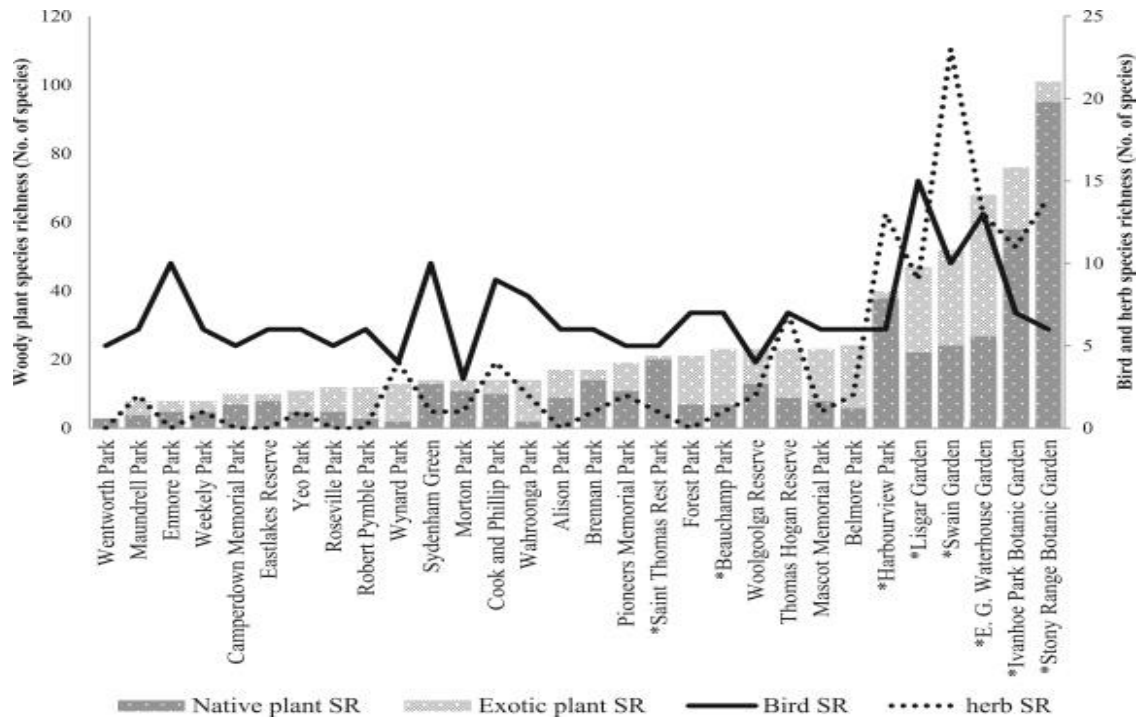


Figure 2-2 This graph shows the biodiversity of different UGSs, showing that a certain area’s vegetation and life can be different in comparison to other areas. Retrieved from (Zizanovic, Luck, 2016).

## 2.2. Challenges Facing Urban Green Spaces

While there are countless benefits of public green spaces, there are also cost and time constraints involved in the process of maintaining them (Harnik, 2010). In this section we discuss the lack of funding for public parks, and examine additional challenges caused by lack of funding. The additional challenges that we will discuss include: management, maintenance, and crime.

### 2.2.1 Funding Challenges

Lack of funding is one of the biggest challenges urban parks encounter (Walls, 2014). From 1990 to 2011, the state budget for parks was cut by over 25%, which is represented by the general fund in **Fig. 2-3** (Walls, 2013). While there is a slight increase in park-generated revenue and dedicated funds, this insignificant increase did not make up for the deficit that the reduction of general funds left behind, of which a large proportion is federal funding (Walls, 2013).



Furthermore, park operation expenditures between 1990 and 2011 increased from around \$1.8 billion in 1990 to approximately \$2.3 billion in 2011 (Walls, 2013).

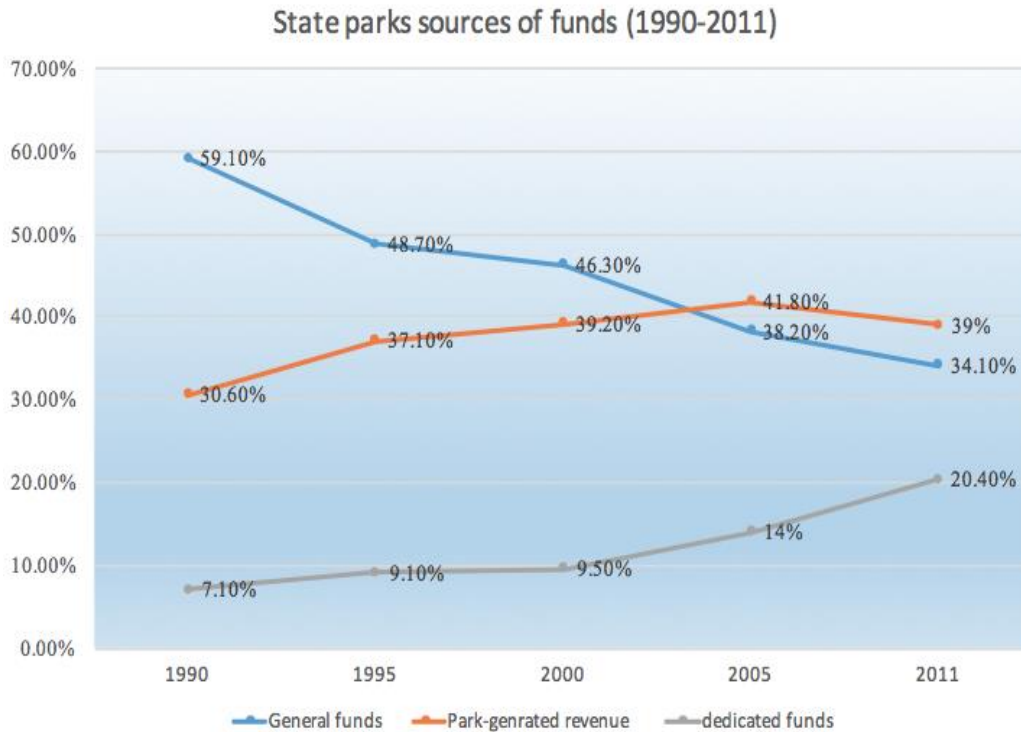


Figure 2-3 This graph shows how the sources of park revenues have changed between 1990 and 2011. Data from National Association of State Parks Directors (NASPD).

When the financial crisis hit the U.S and the entire world in 2008, parks were victims of the crisis and have yet to recover (Walls, 2014). In 2014, federal and state government funds combined were less than 13% of the total source of park funding as shown in **Fig. 2-4** (Walls, 2014). Also, in 2014, 11 states did not receive federal funding at all (Walls, 2014). An example of the deficiency of funding to urban parks are the parks of Los Angeles, California, which suffer from a lack of funding, especially in predominantly minority areas (Wolch, 2005). The Department of Geography at San Diego University conducted a study on parks in southern California and found an uneven distribution of funding between different districts and that there is no federal funding for California parks at all (Department of Geography, San Diego

University, 2009). Due to the reduction in park funding, urban park systems in the United States are increasingly transferring the maintenance and upkeep responsibilities to volunteer organizations (Holifield, 2014).

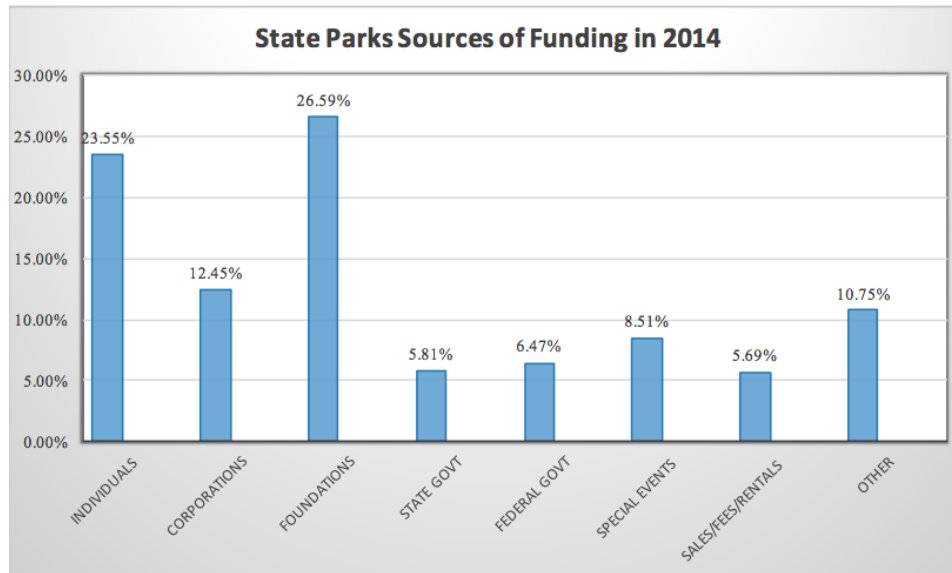


Figure 2-4 This graph depicts the sources of funding in state parks in the year 2014. Data from Resources for the Future 2009 park conservancies and advocacy organizations survey.

### 2.2.2 Park Management

The overall decrease in federal, state, and municipal funding in the U.S. that started in the 1950s gave rise to the formation of “friends” groups and park activist groups all across the nation (Platt, 2016). “Friends groups” refer to nonprofit volunteer organizations that are dedicated to improving public parks (Platt, 2016). A famous example of a nonprofit dedicated to park maintenance is The Central Park Conservancy in New York City (Platt, 2016). The Central Park Conservancy was founded in 1980 as a way of dealing with the neglect facing Central Park at the time, and signaled the beginning of a park activism movement in the 1990s (Platt, 2016). More recently, according to a 2009 study, local parks departments across the United States are on a decentralization trend and are faced with decreasing budgets (Taylor, 2009). Since the municipal budget of parks has decreased, it follows that there is a lack of funding for park management. This in turn led to the formation of nonprofit and volunteer organizations

dedicated to maintaining and protecting public green spaces. However, this creates a potential coordination issue as so many different organizations along with local, state, and federal government share park related responsibilities.

### 2.2.3 Maintenance and Crime

In order to consistently attract visitors, urban parks must undergo regular maintenance (Iqbal, 2015). Regular maintenance is the daily supervision and sanitation of park infrastructure (McCormack, Rock, Toohey, & Hignell, 2010). Poor maintenance of parks can negatively affect individuals' perceptions of park safety and park quality (McCormack, Rock, Toohey, Hignell, 2010). Due to this, individuals are less likely to visit parks if they are poorly maintained (Bedimo-Rung, Mowen, Cohen, 2005). Additionally, with the decrease in park funding comes a decrease in the ability of cities to maintain urban parks (Walls, 2014).

Lack of maintenance in public parks has also been shown to negatively affect individuals' perceptions on the safety of the park and surrounding areas (Iqbal, 2015). Urban green spaces that lack maintenance also lack a park steward, who ensures the safety of the park's infrastructure and its visitors (Groff, Mccord, 2012). As a result, some urban parks that lack maintenance have the stigma of being associated with criminal activities (Gold, 2007). A 2012 study done in Philadelphia found that the density of crime in parks and surrounding streets were more than twice that of Philadelphia as a whole (Groff, Mccord, 2012). In light of these issues, volunteer organizations have taken responsibility to improve the maintenance of urban parks (Murray, 2010). Since the challenges of urban green spaces are so common in the U. S., many communities have joined the effort to tackle these challenges by establishing volunteer organizations.

## 2.3. Solutions to Urban Green Spaces Challenges

Communities across the country have employed different methods to address the budget, maintenance and management challenges of urban green spaces (Kabish, 2014). In this section, we explain the different ways that cities and communities deal with these challenges.

### 2.3.1 Government Regulations & Incentives

In the United States, local governments often deal with the challenges of green spaces through regulations and incentives (Bengston, 2004). Some cities restrict urban growth rate by limiting the number of building permits issued, or by putting regulations on proposed development. One way governmental organizations deal with the cost of parks is through development impact taxes. These taxes not only discourage urban development, but also provide a new source of revenue for the park system (Bengston, 2004). Some of these problems are not recognized by the government, which is when nonprofit organizations step in.

### 2.3.2 Land Trusts

An example of a nonprofit organization that may step in to address UGS problems is a land trust. Land trusts are nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations that assist in the protection of natural land by owning it (Merenlender, 2004). Land trusts acquire land for the sole purpose of preserving and maintaining it, which is one of the main reasons it is such a widely used form of land preservation. Other organizations that acquire land, such as universities, religious groups, and governmental organizations, have different motives that make them less likely to preserve the land (Merenlender, 2004). The main function of land trusts is to acquire natural land so that it is not taken over by urban development, and most land acquired by land trusts comes with large donations for the expected maintenance of the land. It is through these generous donations that land trusts fund the maintenance of the land (Brewer, 2013). Another type of organization that focuses on the conservation of land is a conservancy.

### 2.3.3 Conservancies

Conservancies are nonprofit organizations that collaborate with local governments to maintain, manage, and assist parks by implementing funding and volunteer strategies (Martin, 2015). A conservancy serves as a way to organize work, establish formal agreements for plans with the city and public organizations, and have a steady source of funding through donations, volunteers, and federal funding (Martin, 2015). Conservancies do not have a specific size requirement or a specific framework, but most of these organizations mirror the frameworks of other successful conservancies. The first conservancy was formed in New York City in 1980. The Central Park Conservancy was created to help clean up Central Park. Rather than helping existing organizations, the city decided to take this approach in order to have a better way to track funding, maintenance, and volunteers (Blaha, 2015).

Conservancies have multiple ways to deal with UGS challenges. For one, conservancies foster and maintain a good relationship with city councilors. By forming these kinds of relationships, organizations and city councilors can reach formal agreements on issues, as well as establish plans to prepare the conservancy for any problem or situation that may arise (Blaha, 2015). In order to ensure the success of a conservancy, there are multiple requirements that must be met. Some of these requirements include: transparent day-to-day operations; a board of directors that is a representation of the public; mutual respect for all other park organizations they are working with; prominent public outreach; and entrepreneurial approaches to help with park challenges. **Fig. 4-5** shows the average annual revenue of select conservancies in the years 2009-2012. By hosting events and programs, conservancies can raise money in order to further enhance the park. The most common events that generate revenue among conservancies are fundraisers, concerts, and through attractions (Martin, 2015).

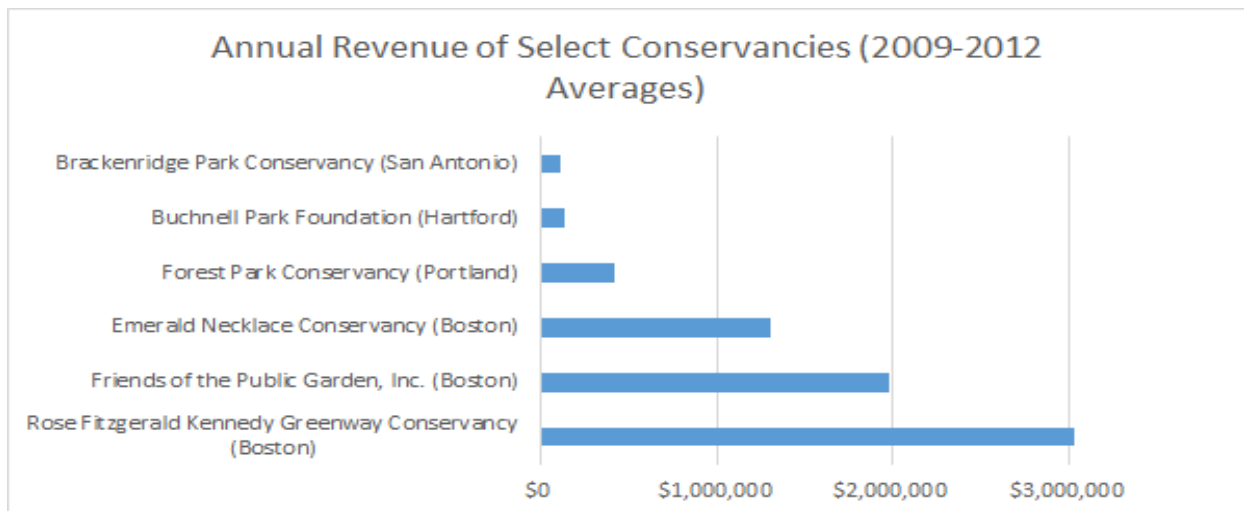


Figure 2-5 This graph shows the annual revenue of select conservancies (2009-2017 Averages) in the United States. Data from Harnik (2015).

In many cases, the establishment of a conservancy can serve as a solution to the problems faced by neglected urban green spaces. However, the establishment of a conservancy can give rise to a new set of challenges (Martin, 2015). One problem that conservancies typically encounter is the disorganization of resources due to the lack of communication or a master plan. Another potential problem is the miscommunication of responsibilities when it comes to the role of the conservancy. This could lead to many other problems such as poor maintenance practices and poor use of funds. Another challenge facing conservancies is the fact that they are not for profit organizations, so there is a chance that they will not get a steady amount of volunteers and supporters. In addition, because conservancies are often private organizations, local governments are less inclined to provide funding (Blaha, 2015).

While there are some problems with conservancies, they have become the most sustainable way to maintain and manage parks (Harnik & Martin, 2015). As of 2017, there are no conservancies in the city of Worcester, Massachusetts. The implementation of a conservancy in Worcester would help improve upon the public-private relationship between local nonprofits and the city, and also outline the responsibilities of the city and the conservancy.

## 2.4 The Need for a Conservancy in Worcester, MA

The parks in Worcester, MA would benefit immensely from the implementation of a conservancy. Since the annual city budget for parks is below 2%, maintenance and management under a conservancy would improve and enhance these parks. One example of this is Elm Park, which had three caretakers fifteen years ago but now only has one. An Elm Park Conservancy would look for and hire full and part time employees to manage the local parks. (B. Legasey, R. Miller, personal communication, September 13, 2017). Because of the decrease in funding for parks, the city needed to find alternative ways to consistently maintain the parks. Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. is a nonprofit volunteer organization, formed by the former Parks Commissioner Tom Taylor in the 1980s with the purpose to help assist the city government with the management and financial responsibility of parks. Additionally, volunteer organizations such as The Friends of Newton Hill at Elm Park and the Green Hill Neighborhood Association have also taken initiative in the upkeep and management of select Worcester parks.

Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. and the volunteer organizations working under Park Spirit have made significant improvements to Worcester parks. For example, Park Spirit was responsible for the installation of an 18-hole disk golf course and fitness circuit in the Newton Hill Section of Elm Park, and coordinates many clean up events throughout Worcester parks (B. Legasey and R. Miller, personal communication, September 13, 2017). Park Spirit's main goal is to enhance Worcester's parks for the benefit of Worcester residents and visitors, however, the responsibilities that these parks demand is beyond Park Spirit's financial and management capabilities. This is why Park Spirit is collaborating with Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Worcester Community Project Center to establish a conservancy to ensure the maintenance and management of Worcester Parks. The conservancy will increase the sustainability of Elm Park by developing a framework that establishes a funding mechanism, management team, and

volunteer engagement plan. In the following chapter, we highlight the objectives that led us to our goal.



## Chapter 3: Methodology

The goal of our project was to increase the sustainability of Elm Park, Salisbury Park, and potentially other Worcester parks by developing a framework that establishes a funding mechanism, management structure, and volunteer engagement plan through the development of an Elm Park Conservancy.

In our introductory meeting with Brittany Legasey, the president of Park Spirit, and Rick Miller, the treasurer of Park Spirit, they described the need for the creation of an Elm Park Conservancy in the City of Worcester. In their vision, the Elm Park Conservancy (EPC) would be responsible for maintaining Salisbury Park, the Newton Hill Section of Elm Park, and potentially other parks in Worcester (B. Legasey, R. Miller, personal communication, September 13, 2017). Our team assisted Park Spirit in the research, planning and design of the EPC by developing a long-term, sustainable framework for a Worcester based conservancy.

We achieved this goal by accomplishing the following five objectives:

1. Develop an understanding of the current funding, management and volunteer structure of Elm and Salisbury parks and Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc.
2. Identify and evaluate existing frameworks of successful conservancies in the U.S.
3. Assess the local climate for conservation organizations in Worcester, Massachusetts
4. Analyze data and develop a framework for the Elm Park Conservancy
5. Gain support and feedback from the City of Worcester government

### 3.1 Objective 1: Develop an understanding of the current funding, management and volunteer structure of Elm and Salisbury parks and Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc.

According to Brittany Legasey and Rick Miller, Elm Park and Salisbury Park lack a consistent and reliable funding source, maintenance schedule and source of volunteers (B. Legasey, R. Miller, personal communication, September 13, 2017). Before we began identifying

methods to address funding, maintenance and organizational shortfalls, we first assessed the current framework of both Park Spirit of Worcester and more specifically Elm and Salisbury Parks. It was necessary to do this in order to gain an understanding of Park Spirit's current responsibilities and see how a conservancy could be implemented within their structure.

In order to learn more about the issues facing Elm Park and the Newton Hill section of Elm Park, Rick Miller and Brittany Legasey of Park Spirit invited us on a tour. From the tour, we gained a better understanding of their vision for the conservancy. We then requested certain information from Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. via emailing our sponsors. The specific information we requested can be viewed in **Appendix A**. In response, our sponsors provided us with Park Spirit's current bylaws, descriptions of each executive position (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Parliamentarian), the "2017 Permit Application for Event in a Park" of the City of Worcester, a list of fall events, a brief summary of Park Spirit's income and expenses over a 21 month period (Jan 2016 - Sept 2017), Membership Organization Guidelines, a Fall 2017 Parks Report (detailing Park Spirit's activity from August-November 2017), and an example of meeting minutes (May 22, 2017). Park Spirit also provided us with a written explanation of other important characteristics such as their current funding and volunteer practices.

In order to analyze this information, each team member individually reviewed the documents and descriptions provided. We then discussed the documents as a group, summarized the information, and created a visual representation of Park Spirit's current structure. The visual representation and summary of Park Spirit of Worcester's current structure is discussed in-detail in section 4.1. Developing our understanding of Park Spirit helped us focus our search in objective 2.

### 3.2 Objective 2: Identify and evaluate existing frameworks of successful conservancies in the U.S.

In order to develop a framework for the Elm Park Conservancy, we needed to identify common practices that contribute to the success of conservancies in the United States. We began our research with a primary analysis of the official websites and available documents of 42 conservancies nationwide (see **Appendix B** for a complete list of the conservancies we examined). Early on in the project, our sponsor, Ms. Legasey, directed us to a study conducted by Peter Harnik and Abby Martin of the Trust for Public Land called “Public Spaces/ Private Money: The Triumphs and Pitfalls of Urban Park Conservancies”. This study compared the park acreage, years founded, annual revenues, annual spending, and more of 41 U.S. conservancies (Harnik & Martin, 2012). From the list of conservancies covered in this study, we selected 40 conservancies to research, excluding only one conservancy that we could not find an official website for. The two additional conservancies that we added to the list were St. Paul Parks Conservancy and The Friends of Christopher Columbus Park which were referred to us by our sponsors and project advisor respectively.

These 42 conservancies are located in the following cities: Birmingham (Alabama), Denver (Colorado), Hartford (Connecticut), Washington D.C., Atlanta (Georgia), Louisville (Kentucky), Boston (Massachusetts), Baltimore (Maryland), Detroit (Michigan), St. Paul (Minnesota), St. Louis (Missouri), New York City (New York), Buffalo (New York), Oklahoma City (Oklahoma), Portland (Oregon), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), Memphis (Tennessee), San Antonio (Texas), Houston (Texas), Dallas (Texas), and San Jose (Texas). **Figure 3-1** shows the number of conservancies we researched in each state.



asked also made it easier to compare each conservancy and make general observations about the conservancies. A list of the conservancies we interviewed and the interview preamble can be found in **Appendix E** and **Appendix D** respectively. We then developed a conservancy interview question template, which can be found in **Appendix F**, and took detailed notes during each interview. The purpose of these interviews was to fill the gaps of information missing from our analysis of their online content and to get more specific information about their board structure, decision making processes, funding sources and strategies, marketing strategy, and volunteer plan, as well as valuable opinions and recommendations.

In order to organize and analyze the information we gained from the interviews, we then created a matrix, from now on referred to as the “interview matrix.” The parameters of the matrix are listed in **Appendix G**. In order to analyze the information we gathered in the website and interview matrices, we broke down the matrices into 18 more specific matrices. The titles and parameters of each of the data collection matrices are located in **Appendix H**. From these matrices, we were able to tally the number of conservancies that had which characteristics. From these totals we were then able to identify which characteristics and practices were common, and feasible for a Worcester based conservancy. However, since none of these conservancies are located in Worcester Massachusetts, we needed to gather data from local organizations to see if they highlighted any Worcester specific considerations we should include.

### 3.3 Objective 3: Assess the local climate for conservation organizations in Worcester, Massachusetts

Because Worcester is a unique location, it was important to relate the common practices of conservancies we found on objective 2 to similar local organizations. In order to complete object 3, we conducted structured interviews with representatives from the Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLTL), Mass Audubon, and the Regional Environmental Council (REC), each of

which is a local conservation organization. We were referred to these organizations by our sponsors and project advisor. The interview questions of for each of these organizations are located in **Appendices I through K**.

We conducted these interviews with GWLT, Mass Audubon and REC because we wanted to gain insight into the different types of funding avenues and practices common to local Worcester conservation organizations. From these interviews we gained information regarding how these local organizations fund themselves and how they recruit and maintain a consistent volunteer base, specifically in the Worcester area. We then compared these practices to the practices of the conservancies we interviewed in objective 2.

We also contacted the Greater Worcester Community Foundation (interview questions in **Appendix L**), which supports nonprofit organizations in the Worcester area. From this interview we were hoping to gather information about available funding sources for local conservation organizations.

#### 3.4 Objective 4: Analyze data and develop a framework for the Elm Park Conservancy

The data analysis technique that we used to develop the framework and make recommendations is called grounded theory. Grounded theory is a systematic approach to the analysis of data that involves running data collection and data analysis alongside one another (Elliot, Fairweather, Olsen & Pampaka, 2016). This technique helped us guide our research, and allowed our research to become more focused over the course of the project. It also allowed us to effectively incorporate all of the relevant factors into the framework.

The first set of data that we analyzed was the data collected in objective 2. As discussed in detail in objective 2, section 3.2, we used matrices to organize and sort our data as well as identify commonalities between the conservancies. We then drafted a preliminary framework and structure based solely on the practices that were proven successful by the twenty

conservancies across the U.S. We then considered the data we gathered in objectives 1 and 3, and made modifications to the framework and recommendations. This means that we considered Park Spirit's current structure, funding capacity, and volunteer strategy, as well as the information gathered from the Worcester nonprofit interviews to make these modifications. After incorporating those changes into our structure, we asked our sponsors for their feedback, and made further adjustments to the framework based on their experiences. Once we had an understanding of what the conservancy might look like, we took the idea to the Worcester City government.

### 3.5 Objective 5: Gain support and feedback from the City of Worcester government.

After reaching out to the local nonprofit organizations, we conducted interviews with representatives from the Worcester Parks Department and the Worcester City Council. Through our weekly sponsor meetings, we got in contact with Jeff Tomaino, a recreation coordinator from the Worcester Parks Department. We conducted a structured interview with Mr. Tomaino in order to gain basic information regarding the operations of the city and how we should proceed in order to gain support from the city government (interview questions located in **Appendix M**). We also interviewed representatives from the New York City Parks Department in order to gain a better understanding of Public-Private Partnerships.

Next, we conducted a structured interview with Gary Rosen, a counselor-at-large for the Worcester City Council. Our sponsor, Rick Miller, had already reached out to Gary Rosen about the concept of forming a conservancy in Worcester and confirmed that he was interested in the idea. We interviewed Councilor Rosen because he is the Standing Chairperson on the Committee of Youth, Parks & Recreation, and to determine if the city government would be receptive to the idea of endorsing, partnering with, or supporting a conservancy. The interview helped us understand the city's main concerns about forming a conservancy (interview questions in

**Appendix N**). After conducting the interview, Gary Rosen helped us schedule a short meeting with the City Manager.

In our brief discussion with City Manager Edward M. Augustus, Jr., we had Rick Miller accompany us to explain to the City Manager the work of Park Spirit and the Friends of Newton Hill (interview questions in **Appendix O**). The City Manager's Office then scheduled a meeting between Park Spirit, the Parks Department, and the Law Department in order to begin the process of creating a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Worcester and the Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. The meeting occurred after the completion of the project. In chapter 4 we describe the results of the execution of each of these objectives.



## Chapter 4: The Process of Forming an Elm Park Conservancy

In this chapter, we provide our summary and analysis of Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc., as well as our proposed framework of the Elm Park Conservancy and related recommendations. In section 4.1, we narrate the current structure of Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc.

### 4.1 The Current Structure of Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc.

Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. is a 501(c) (3), nonprofit organization that aims to protect, promote, enhance, and advocate for Worcester City Parks (Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc., 2017). The organization was established in the 1980s by then Parks Commissioner Tom Taylor, who envisioned a group of park enthusiasts who would work with the Parks Department to enhance Worcester's parks system (Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc., 2017).

Currently, Park Spirit's bylaws state that there shall be at least seven and no more than twelve board members. The organization has five officers: a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and Parliamentarian (Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc., n.d.). The Board of Directors meets six times yearly, every other month. Over time, Park Spirit has incorporated a number of friends groups into its structure as independent member organizations and acts as a fiscal custodian for the organizations. As shown in the visual representation of Park Spirit's current structure, **Figure 4-1**, these organizations include: The Friends of Newton Hill, The Green Hill Neighborhood Association, The Friends of Roger Kennedy, and the Friends of Worcester Dog Parks. In addition, Park Spirit has an Executive Committee that ensures that the organization follows its mission statement and the vision set by the Board of Directors. Park Spirit also has a Nominating Committee that is responsible for nominating officers and board members.

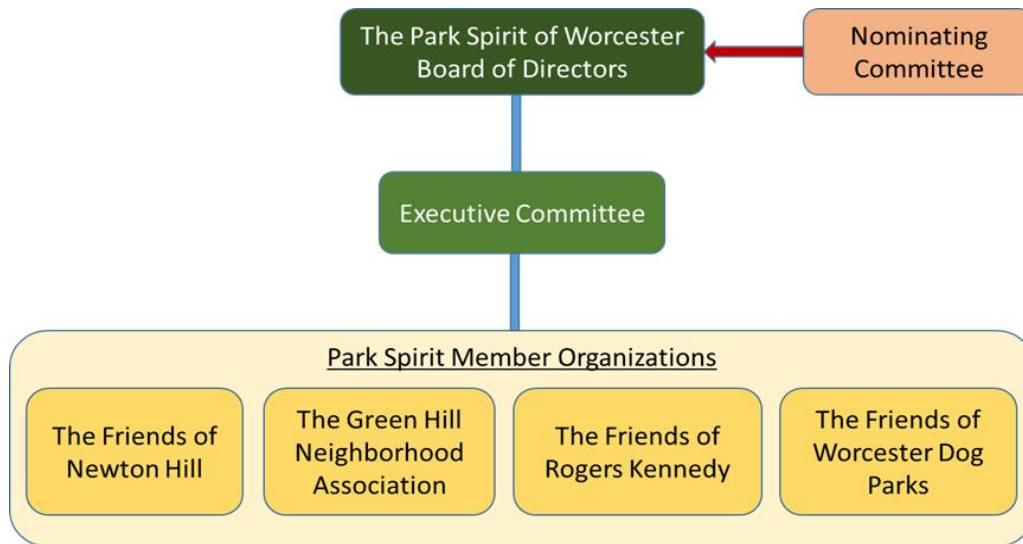


Figure 4-1 The Current Structure of Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc.:

As one of Worcester’s few nonprofit environmental preservation organizations, Park Spirit holds programs and events at parks throughout Worcester. In the summer, they host free, family-friendly music concerts at Elm Park, Newton Square, University Park, and East Park. Park Spirit also opens up Bancroft Tower to the general public every Sunday in October from 10am to 2pm. They help clean up Salisbury Park and recruit volunteers to supervise visitors. Furthermore, Park Spirit was also involved in the creation and promotion of the East-West trail. A joint effort between Park Spirit and the Greater Worcester Land Trust, the East-West trail is a 14 mile hiking trail that connects 17 different green spaces throughout Worcester. Every year, Park Spirit hosts the “Hike the Heart” challenge, which invites participants to hike the 14-mile trail (Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc., 2017).

As a nonprofit organization, it is important for Park Spirit to generate revenue in order to host events and programs. In 2016, Park Spirit received a total of \$38,672 from membership fees, donations, sponsorships, and grants in order to fund all their activities (Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. Financial Information). The majority of this money comes from sponsorships for the events that Park Spirit hosted. Park Spirit generated a total of \$20,364 from organizations

such as food truck vendors, colleges, banks, restaurants, and social service agencies.

Additionally, Park Spirit also received a large portion of their annual revenue through donations. Park Spirit made a total of \$15,838 from donations from individuals and organizations (Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. Financial Information). Some of the organizations that sponsored Park Spirit events include the Fuller Foundation, Hanover Insurance Group Foundation, and the Nathaniel Wheeler Trust. As for membership fees and grants, Park Spirit received \$1,270 and \$1,200 respectively. Most of this revenue was spent on hosting events and Park Spirit spent a total of \$30,197 in the year 2016 for costs related to events (Park Spirit Financial Information).

Park Spirit also relies on volunteers to help with maintenance duties. The organization finds volunteers either by board members recruiting individuals within their local community or by collaborating with organizations such as colleges or civic organizations such as Knights of Columbus, Boy Scouts, or church groups. In addition, Park Spirit also recruits volunteers from the member organizations of Park Spirit. The organization recruits volunteers according to the season. In the spring, Park Spirit recruits volunteers for an Earth Day program and clean up events. In the summer, they recruit staff for the park concerts and in the fall, they recruit volunteers for the opening of Bancroft Tower as well as for cleanup days. These large volunteer events offer opportunities for residents in the community to help out and maintain local parks (R. Miller, personal communication, November 5, 2017)

Park Spirit acts as an umbrella organization for some of the friends groups in Worcester (B. Legasey, personal communication, September 13, 2017). The friends groups pay a \$50 administration fee to become member organizations of Park Spirit and make use of its nonprofit status. As of November 2nd 2017, Park Spirit has 103 members. Membership costs \$10 annually and members are rewarded with a Worcester Parks Guide, early access to Bancroft Tower,

invitation to all meetings and events, and a regular parks report newsletter with updates on events and occurrences in Worcester parks (Park Spirit Information Doc.). Although Park Spirit has dedicated thousands of volunteer hours cleaning up and planning events in the parks, the labor force and its contribution towards Park Spirit's mission is not enough to sustain its park improvement and programming efforts. In order to accommodate the needs of the parks in Worcester, Park Spirit is looking to establish a conservancy for Elm Park, Salisbury Park, and potentially other Worcester parks.

Park Spirit plans to grow as an organization in order to take on more responsibility of the parks. However, the Board of Directors dedicate thousands of volunteer hours each year to keep up Park Spirit's current programs and events (B. Legasey, personal communication, November 27, 2017). This is why the next logical step for the Park Spirit of Worcester is to develop a professionally staffed conservancy. Furthermore, Park Spirit hopes to also receive the support of the city government, by proposing a formal agreement with the City of Worcester that ensures ongoing maintenance in the parks and coordination with city officials on capital improvement projects. In addition, the conservancy will also look to establish agreements with the colleges in Worcester in order to secure a sustainable source of volunteers to help out with maintenance. By establishing a conservancy, Park Spirit will ultimately be able to dedicate more time and resources to protect, promote, enhance, and advocate for Worcester Parks. In section 4.2, we lay out the phases and steps in the process of forming the Elm Park Conservancy.

#### 4.2 The Phases of Development of an Elm Park Conservancy

Each of the conservancies we researched formed and evolved in different ways and at different times in history, due to varying economic conditions, city support, corporate support, park geography, location, acreage, funding capacity, and missions. **The features, responsibilities, and characteristics of conservancies and the land they preserve vary**

greatly across the U.S. The Elm Park Conservancy (EPC) will be a unique organization that will also develop in its own way. Through our research, we have found common practices of conservancies, some of which may apply to the EPC.

We have developed a three-phase process in which we believe Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. should go about forming the EPC. This first phase involves creating a vision, developing a relationship between the EPC and the Worcester City Government, and drafting an organizational structure. The second phase involves the recruitment of board members and an Executive Director. The third phase involves implementing funding strategies and volunteer recruitment practices. **Figure 4-2** depicts the three phases and the steps within each phase. The steps in each phase are not ordered, and may be completed at any time during the phase, and all of the steps and phases relate heavily to one another. The first phase will be discussed in detail in section 4.2.1.



Figure 4-2: The Phases and Steps in the Development of The Elm Park Conservancy

#### 4.2.1 Phase One: Planning

The main purpose of the first phase is to create a concrete foundation for the Elm Park Conservancy, from which it can grow and expand. Phase One includes three steps: 1) developing a clear vision, 2) forming a strong relationship with the city of Worcester, and 3) formulating an organizational structure. These steps may be completed in any order or simultaneously.

##### *Step 1: Develop a Vision*

From our content analysis and interviews with more than twenty conservancies nationwide, **we found that developing a clear vision with an explicit explanation of the purpose of forming a conservancy is essential to the conservancy's success.** Out of the twenty conservancies we interviewed, fourteen agreed that in order to gather public support the conservancy must have a clear vision. Nine of which emphasized the importance of having a clear vision and purpose in order to have a foundation and guideline for the conservancy. Elizabeth Vizza, the Executive Director of the Friends of Public Garden in Boston, strongly recommended that in order for the Elm Park Conservancy to succeed, it has to have clear vision, strong mission, and defined purpose, which should revolve around advocating about the importance of parks and illustrating that parks are necessities and not amenities (E. Vizza, personal communication, November 10, 2017). The importance of having a vision and communicating it well is why **we recommend that Park Spirit develop a strategic plan for the EPC that encompasses at least the next five years.**

Jeff Tomaino, the Recreation Coordinator of the Worcester Park Department, explained that in order for the EPC to gain the support of the city, especially in a capital project, it has to have a strategic plan that is aligned with the park department plans for Elm Park (J. Tomaino, personal communication, November 15, 2017) Consequently, **we recommend that Park Spirit draft the strategic plan of the EPC to align with the Worcester Parks Department plan.**

From our extensive research and expertise we gained from studying, analyzing and interviewing conservancies nationwide, **we recommend that the conservancy be named the Elm Park Conservancy for the historical importance and recognition of Elm Park.** Also, **we recommend that the EPC start off with maintaining only the Newton Hill section of Elm Park as a pilot program that could potentially be applied to other parks later on.** Gary Rosen, a councilor-at-large for the Worcester City Council, shared his view that the conservancy should start by only maintaining the Newton Hill section of Elm Park because of Elm Park's historical recognition, acreage, and volume of work needed to maintain (G. Rosen, personal communication, November 17, 2017). In addition, Lindsey Grier, the Project Development Coordinator of the New York City Parks Department, mentioned that conservancies in New York City use the Central Park Conservancy as an example to follow of a successful model for themselves (L. Grier, personal communication, November 28, 2017).

*Step 2: Establish an agreement with the City of Worcester*

**Having a Public-Private Partnership between a conservancy and the city within which it operates is key in the success of a conservancy.** In order to determine the responsibilities of both parties, it is important to set up an agreement with the city. All twenty of the conservancies we interviewed and analyzed had some form of agreement with the city. Additionally, 75 % (15) of the conservancies had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or a formal agreement, that outlined responsibilities of the conservancy and the city, as shown in **Figure 4-3.**

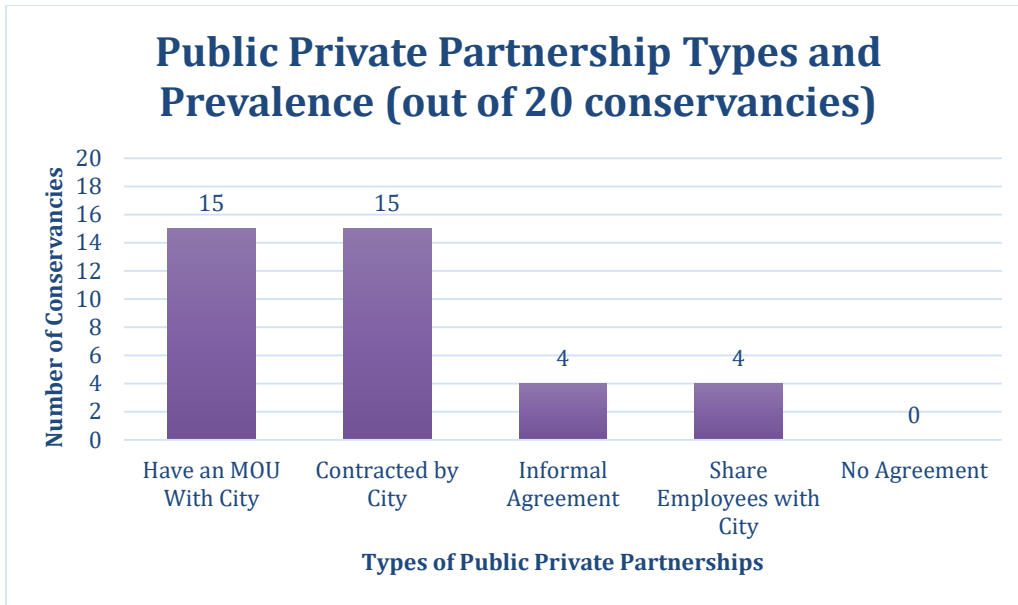


Figure 4-3: Public Private Partnership Types and Prevalence

The distribution of responsibility between the conservancies and their cities varied according to the specific conservancy and the Parks Department within the city, but **100% out of the twenty conservancies mentioned having funding and programming responsibilities** as shown in **Figure 4-4**.

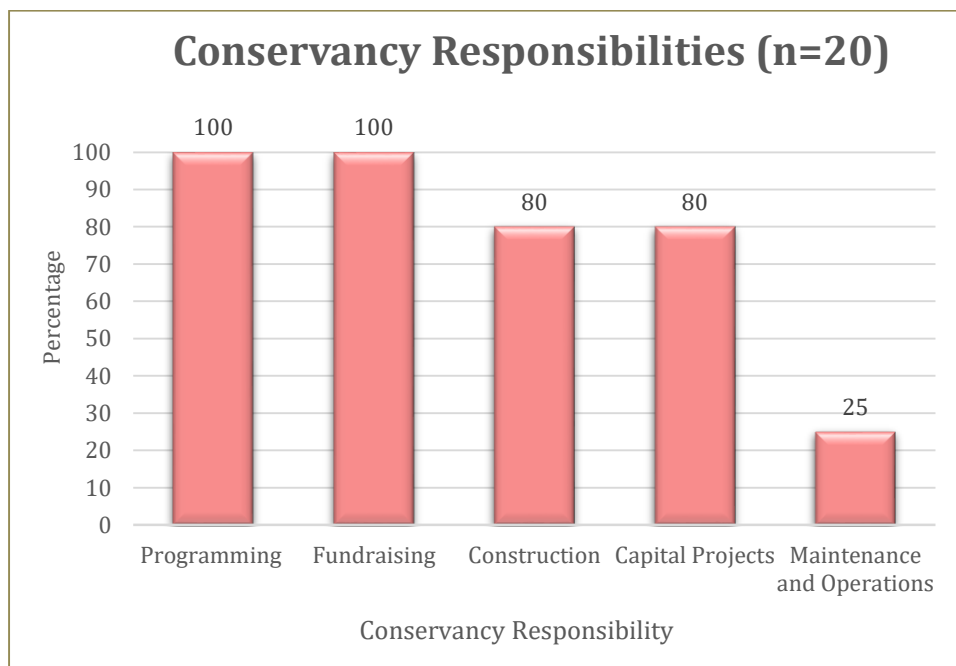


Figure 4-4: Common Conservancy Responsibilities



Currently, Park Spirit works with the city to coordinate volunteer efforts and obtain permits for events (J. Tomaino, personal communication, November 15, 2017). The Worcester Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Division recognizes the important work that Park Spirit and other friends groups do to maintain parks and green spaces (J. Tomaino, personal communication, November 15, 2017). The treasurer of Park Spirit, Rick Miller, maintains a special relationship with Rob Antonelli, the Assistant Commissioner for the Department of Public Works and Parks in Worcester. They communicate a few times a month via phone to coordinate and obtain permission for physical park improvement activities (Park Spirit General Information). However, the relationship is informal and does not encourage further coordination between the two parties (R. Miller, personal communication, October 28, 2017).

Having a formal agreement with the city government is crucial to ensuring a strong public-private partnership. In our research, we analyzed the formal agreement that the Overton Park Conservancy had with the city of Memphis, Tennessee. The agreement discussed topics such as city funding and support, maintenance duties in the parks for each party, sponsorship and advertisement rights for the conservancy, and transparency between the parties on revenue information (Overton Park Conservancy, 2011). For the EPC's partnership with the City of Worcester, **we recommend Park Spirit develop a formal agreement that outlines the maintenance responsibilities of both parties in detail.**

Through the interviews we had with city officials, we also found that the city of Worcester would be interested in this partnership as long as the city did not have to provide additional financial support. The City of Worcester understands that the Elm Park Conservancy will be able to enhance Elm Park and eventually decrease operating costs in the future (J.

Tomaino, personal communication, November 15, 2017). Once an agreement is set into motion, the next step is the creation of an organizational structure for the EPC.

*Step 3: Create Organizational Structure*

Using the data we collected from our interviews and research, we proposed a potential EPC structure to our sponsors. In general, **we recommend that Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc continue the work they already do, take on the responsibility of maintaining the Newton Hill section of Elm Park, increase fundraising and visibility in the community by restructuring themselves, and change their name to the Elm Park Conservancy.** This means that we are suggesting that Park Spirit transition into the EPC by taking on the maintenance responsibility of the Newton Hill section of Elm Park. **Figure 4-5** describes the benefits and concerns of each of the other structures we considered, as well as the reasoning behind our recommended structure (structure 4).

<b>EPC Structures Considered</b>
<p><b>1. The Elm Park Conservancy (EPC) as a member organization under Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. (Park Spirit).</b></p> <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Simplifies the relationship and powers between the EPC Board of Directors and Park Spirit’s Board of Directors</li> <li>● EPC would have an independent structure of Park Spirit</li> <li>● Would clarify the difference in each organization's vision (i.e. Park Spirit focuses on multiple parks, the EPC focuses on just the Newton Hill Section of Elm Park)</li> </ul> <p>Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● EPC would not have its own nonprofit status (and therefore appear unprofessional to donors, potential board members, and volunteers)</li> <li>● Complication of both the EPC’s and Park Spirit’s finances (The EPC would most likely raise more money than Park Spirit, and enough money to be required to file more extensive paperwork)</li> <li>● Park Spirit would not have influence in the EPC’s operation, because the EPC would be an independently administered organization</li> <li>● The hiring of an Executive Director and Caretaker by the EPC would not relieve any of Park Spirit’s stress (because they would not be working for Park Spirit)</li> </ul>

**2. The EPC as a structure within Park Spirit in which Park Spirit has influence over the EPC.**

Benefits:

- Park Spirit would have an influence in the operation of the EPC

Concerns:

- EPC would appear weak and unprofessional
- Complicates the relationship between the EPC and Park Spirit:
  - How much influence would the board of Park Spirit have on the board of the EPC? What if the boards disagree on a matter?
  - How would revenue flow?
  - Would Park Spirit be raising money for the EPC? Or would the EPC be responsible for its own fundraising?
  - Who would the Executive Director and Caretaker answer to? Park Spirit's Board or the EPC's board?

**3. The EPC as a completely separate organization from Park Spirit.**

Benefits:

- EPC would appear as professional, and therefore attract board members, donors, and volunteers
- Would simplify fundraising and finances between the two organizations

Concerns:

- The hiring of an Executive Director and Caretaker by the EPC would not be beneficial to Park Spirit, or relieve any of Park Spirit's stress
- EPC would have to gain its own nonprofit status
- Having the two organizations could be redundant, there would have to be people serving similar functions in each organization
- Park Spirit's fundraising capacity would not increase

**4. The EPC as the next phase in the Park Spirit's development (the recommended structure):**

Benefits:

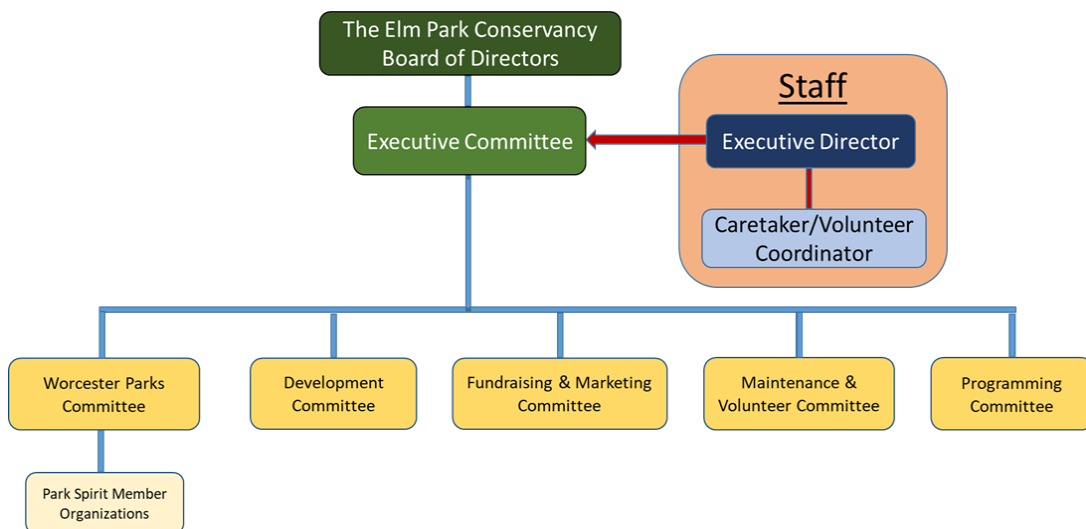
- EPC would appear as professional, and therefore attract board members, donors, and volunteers
- Park Spirit would have an influence on the operations of the EPC, because it would become the EPC
- The hiring of an Executive Director and Caretaker would be beneficial to the EPC as a whole (relieving the stress of Park Spirit)
- Would increase the visibility, professionalism, and funding capacity of the EPC as a whole, which includes Park Spirit's previous duties
- Would simplify fundraising efforts
- Would reduce redundancy of positions in each organization (because there would only be one organization)
- Would simplify the flow of money (the board would allocate money within the organization where they see fit, weather that be to the maintenance of the Newton Hill section of Elm Park, programs, capital improvements, etc.)
- Would simplify the board's duties and structure

Concerns:

- Could be seen as favoring only Elm Park, which does not line up with Park Spirit’s mission (but Park Spirit just has to clarify that the maintenance of Elm Park is a pilot program, and can later apply to other underserved parks).
- Possible conflict of missions (Park Spirit currently focuses on multiple parks, the EPC would just focus on one park, for now)

Figure 4-5: The Potential Structures of the Elm Park Conservancy

Specifically, we recommend that the EPC structure include a Board of Directors as the governance body, with the five following committees working under the Board of Directors including: Worcester Parks Committee, Maintenance & Volunteer Committee, Fundraising and Marketing Committee, Development Committee, and Programming Committee, as pictured in **Figure 4-6**. We offer additional explanations of each component of the structure in **Appendix P**. Once the structure is established and positions are well defined, the next step is to set a foundation for the many committed individuals needed for the success of the conservancy.



4-6: Proposed Structure of the Elm Park Conservancy

#### 4.2.2 Phase Two: Set the Foundation

After developing a clear vision, strategic plan and establishing an agreed upon structure, the next logical phase is to get passionate and skilled individuals involved in the cause. Phase two involves the recruitment of board members and an Executive Director. It is important to

complete phase one before moving on to phase two not only to better persuade potential board and staff members, but also to know how many people need to be recruited and what positions or qualifications need to be filled.

*Step 4: Recruit Board Members*

**We found that in order to be successful, a conservancy should have a board of directors made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds.** For most nonprofit organizations, the Board of Directors is mainly responsible for overseeing a strategic plan and supervising the growth of the organization. While the board members of many of the conservancies we researched may not have had prior experience working with a conservancy, many of them are passionate about the mission of the conservancy and want to support it (B. O'Neill, personal communication, November 16, 2017).

In our interviews with the twenty conservancies, we asked them to list the different skillsets and backgrounds of board members in their organization. From the interviews, we found that conservancies usually have board members who excel at fundraising. Looking at **Figure 4-7**, we can see that 80% (16) of twenty conservancies conveyed that they had board members who were experts in fundraising and had good relationships with the philanthropic community. Conservancies need to be able to raise enough funds so that they can host events and fund capital projects (J. Gauthier, personal communication, November 9, 2017). The next most frequent response was corporate leaders at 60% (12). People from these kinds of backgrounds make excellent board members due to the connections they have with corporations. Additionally, 55% (11) conservancies said that they had a financial expert, marketing expert, community leader, or a city representative as a part of their board. Some of the other skillsets and backgrounds of board members in these conservancies include: lawyers, politicians, engineers, landscape architects, or gardeners.

Conservancies/ Board Repretation	Lawyers	Financial Experts	Marketing	Fundraising	Politicians	Business leaders	Community Leaders
Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Bushnell Park Foundation	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Buffalo Bayou Partnership	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Detroit Riverfront Conservancy	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y
Emerald Necklace	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y
Fairmount Park Conservancy	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Forest Park Forever	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Friends of Christopher Columbus Park	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
Friends of Fair Park	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
Hudson River Park Friends	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
Friends of the Public Garden	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Grant Park Conservancy	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
Greenbelt Conservancy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Guadalupe River Park Conservancy	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
(Louisville) Olmsted Parks Conservancy	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Mount Vernon Place Conservancy	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Myriad Gardens Foundation	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Overton Park Conservancy	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
Prospect Park Alliance	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
St Paul Parks Conservancy	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Figure 4-7 Board Skillset Representation

In our interview with Colin Novick, the Executive Director of the Greater Worcester Land Trust, he noted the importance of having a “different set of skills and different offerings

from different people” (C. Novick, personal communication, November 6, 2017). He explained how having an additional advisory board composed of individuals with specialized skillsets and backgrounds allows the organization to be flexible in its approach. This is why **we recommend that the Board of the EPC have individuals with expertise in each of the following areas: finance, marketing, fundraising, politicians, business leaders, and community leaders.**

Most importantly, in order for a conservancy to host events and programs, it requires sufficient financial experience. In our phone interview with Jamie Gauthier, the Executive Director of the Fairmount Parks Conservancy, she expressed how their Board of Directors worked mainly on a fundraising capacity. She stated that a main roles of the board were to raise money for projects and programs, and connect with people who would be able to contribute donations (J. Gauthier, personal communication, November 9, 2017). As a result, board members with connections to the philanthropic community are invaluable to the funding capacity of conservancies. **Therefore, we recommend that the EPC focus mainly on recruiting board members with fundraising expertise.**

Additionally, the EPC should consider recruiting individuals who are experts in forestry or horticulture. Unlike most urban green spaces, the Newton Hill section of Elm Park is a heavily wooded area (B. Legasey, personal communication, November 5, 2017). The large wooded area of the park demands the need for forestry experts and forest management experts. These individuals can help enhance and sustain multiple forest resources and contribute to healthy and resilient landscapes (United States Forest Service, n.d.). This is why **we recommend the EPC recruit board members who have expertise in forestry and forest management.** After establishing a diverse board of directors that can work effectively as a governing body, the conservancy can then hire an Executive Director.

*Step 5: Recruit a Staff Member*

As a result of our data analysis, **we found that a typical first paid position within conservancies is an Executive Director.** The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the conservancy, and most importantly fundraising. They are also responsible for identifying consistent sources of funding for the conservancy through grants, donations, sponsors, and programs. **We recommend that the hiring of the Executive Director should be in the second phase in the formation of the EPC, since it is necessary to have a clear idea of the EPC's structure beforehand.** This step would provide Park Spirit with a person who is able to prioritize the EPC's goals in order to identify potential funding sources, coordinate volunteers, continue the working relationship with the city, and plan events.

In the conservancies that we studied, 67% or twelve of the eighteen conservancies that provided us with info about their first hired position, began by hiring an Executive Director or President (**Figure 4-8**). Of those twelve conservancies, nine hired an Executive Director. However, job descriptions of Executive Directors and Presidents were almost identical responsibilities.



4-8 First Paid Positions in Conservancies

With these statistics, it is hard to argue against hiring an Executive Director as the first paid position in a conservancy, since it has proven to be a successful strategy. However, 33% or



six out of eighteen conservancies decided to hire an Administrative Assistant, Development Director or Park Administrator first. A potential benefit to the EPC hiring an Administrative Assistant would be that the administrative tasks could be taken care of by the staff member, therefore relieving some of the stress Park Spirit currently experiences and allowing the board to focus on the development of the organization. However, **we do not recommend hiring an Administrative Assistant in place of an Executive Director because the EPC will require a skilled fundraiser to be at the helm, more similar to the Executive Director.**

In addition to fundraising experience, we also found that strong interpersonal skills were necessary for an Executive Director. Therefore, **we recommend Park Spirit hire an Executive Director with strong interpersonal skills and fundraising expertise who can guide the conservancy to become a professional organization.**

#### 4.2.3 Phase Three: Outreach and Funding

Once a strong foundation for the conservancy has been built by hiring an Executive Director and Recruiting board members, the next phase involves implementing funding strategies and volunteer recruitment practices. Phase three contains steps six and seven which provide suggestions and recommendations about potential funding sources and volunteer practices for the Elm Park Conservancy (EPC), respectively. As mentioned in steps four and five, both the Executive Director and Board of Directors will be heavily involved with fundraising responsibilities, which is why it is necessary to complete phase two before moving onto phase three.

*Step 6: Develop a Funding Strategy*

From our research, we found that conservancies have diverse streams of funding, but there are commonalities between conservancies, such as the importance of fundraising.

Figure 4-9 depicts some of the most common funding practices among the twenty conservancies that we interviewed and analyzed.

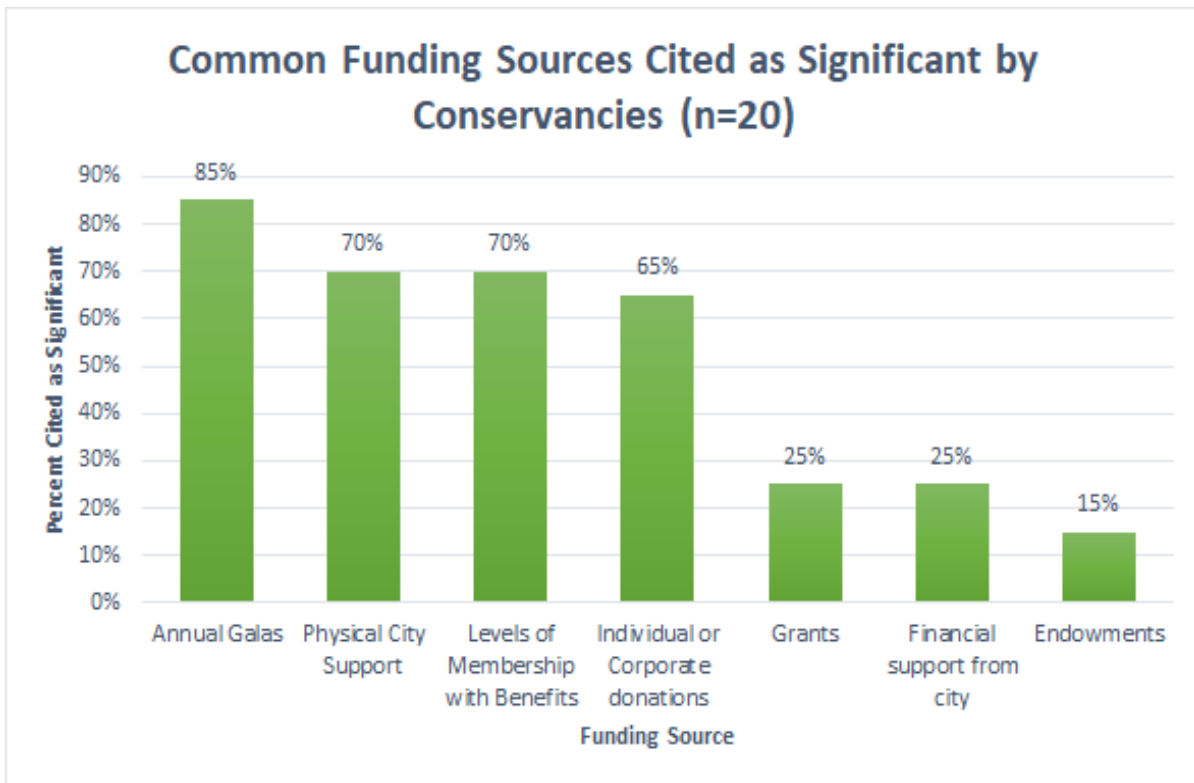


Figure 4-9: Common Funding Sources of Conservancies

One of the most important sources for the twenty conservancies we interviewed is fundraising events, such as galas. **Figure 4-9** shows that 85% (17) of the conservancies hold Galas, which are annual dinners conservancies (and various other organizations) hold in order to inform their donors, members, and stakeholders about their goals and projects for the following year, and most importantly, raise money. For example, the Boston based Friends of Christopher Columbus Park charge \$150 per gala ticket, and receive most of their annual revenue from this one night alone (M. Denenberg, personal communication, November 10, 2017). Since galas have

been proven to be a successful source of funding for conservancies, **we recommend the EPC consider holding a gala to increase revenue and attract potential donors.**

Another potential funding source that the EPC should consider is having a multi-level membership program. **We found that 70% (14) of the conservancies have multi-level membership programs,** as depicted in **Figure 4-9.** The Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy can serve as an example for how membership levels work. The Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy has seven different membership levels with fees ranging from \$50 to \$500. All members receive general benefits such as invitations to exclusive members-only events, a personal membership card, special discounts, subscription to a newsletter, a Brooklyn Bridge Park T-shirt, a map of the park, and an advance mailing of the conservancy's events calendar (Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy, n.d.).

Due to the potential of generating revenue from having multiple membership levels, **we recommend the EPC incorporate a 6-level membership program, each level with increasing benefits, and a starting membership cost of \$50.** We suggest these specifics because \$50 and 6 levels were the most common starting price and level amount for the conservancies that have multi-level membership programs. **Figure 4-10** depicts an example of what membership levels and benefits the Elm Park Conservancy could incorporate.

Member level	Benefits	Price (\$)
Level 1: Tree Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Membership card</li> <li>● E-newsletter</li> <li>● Free Worcester Park's Guide</li> <li>● Annual conservancy report</li> <li>● Early access to Bancroft Tower</li> </ul>	50
Level 2: Family Level	All benefits listed above plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 10% off one merchandise item</li> <li>● Invitation to family event</li> </ul>	100
Level 3: Bridge Level	All benefits listed above plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access to magazines and educational materials</li> <li>● Free Elm Park Conservancy water bottle</li> </ul>	150
Level 4: Forest Level	All benefits listed above plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Free Elm Park Conservancy Frisbee</li> <li>● Private historical tour of Elm and Salisbury Parks</li> </ul>	200
Level 5: Bancroft Tower Level	All benefits listed above plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Free Bancroft tower t-shirt</li> </ul>	250
Level 6: Elm Park Level	All benefits listed above plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Acknowledgement on inside cover of annual report</li> <li>● Honored at annual reception</li> </ul>	500

Figure 4-10 Suggested Membership Levels for the EPC

Donations are another significant source of revenue for conservancies. **We found that 65% (13) of the conservancies indicated individual and corporate donations as a significant funding source**, as shown in **Figure 4-9**. One ideal that Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc maintains is the fact that the public parks must remain public, and therefore charging for park amenities and activities would not be a viable option for revenue. **Consequently, we recommend that the EPC consider donations (including donations made through fundraising events and the recommended membership program) as a main source of revenue by continuing and expanding upon Park Spirit of Worcester's sponsorship program.**

The Friends of Christopher Columbus Park is an example of a conservancy that receives almost 100% of its earned revenue from donations (M. Denenberg, personal communication, November 10, 2017). Meghan Denenberg, the Executive Director of the Friends of Christopher Columbus Park, expressed the importance of recognizing donors in their annual newsletter and website. Also, she emphasized the importance of having specific explanations on their website about exactly what donations make possible in order to attract more donors and increase the conservancy's credibility (M. Denenberg, personal communication, November 10, 2017). Because of the potential to cause an increase in donations, **we recommend increasing donor recognition practices as well as the ease with which people can make donations by emphasizing the donate function to the Park Spirit of Worcester webpage.**

City support, either physical or financial, is also one of the most important factors that the conservancies we studied cited as a significant resource. **Out of the twenty conservancies we interviewed 70% (14) receive physical support from the city, including basic maintenance for the parks** (refer to **Figure 4-9**). This maintenance could include raking, trash pickup, trail maintenance, or other forms of physical support based on the area such as snow removal and planting of vegetation. Also, 25% (5) of the conservancies receive financial support from the city as represented in **Figure 4-9**. Since the City of Worcester does not have the ability or resources to provide financial support to the EPC, **we recommend that the Elm Park Conservancy not consider financial support from the City of Worcester as a potential source of revenue** (J. Tomaino, personal communication, November 15, 2017). However, **we do recommend that the Elm Park Conservancy request the city to continue its current maintenance responsibilities, and inquire about the potential sharing of equipment when establishing the Public-Private Partnership in step two of the first phase.**

Although grants are not usually considered a sustainable source of funds for the conservancies we interviewed, **25% (5) of them noted grants as sources of funds**, as represented in **Figure 4-9**. Also, all of the conservancies mentioned the importance of applying for grants regularly, even though they are not a considered a constant source. In our interview with Jonathan Cohen, a Program Officer at the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, he identified grants as a potential source of revenue for capital projects. (J. Cohen, personal communication, November 10, 2017). **Therefore, we recommend the EPC apply for any applicable grants regularly of any kind including but not limited to: state, federal, local, private, environmental, educational and historical.**

Another revenue source we looked into is an endowment. **Of the twenty conservancies we explored in depth, 15% (3) noted the use of endowments as a source of funds**, as shown in **Figure 4-9**. Although endowments are a seemingly consistent and sustainable source of funding, they require a large amount of money to start, and need to be constantly managed. Because of their complexity and the financial resources it takes to maintain an endowment, it is not feasible for the EPC to consider running an endowment campaign in its early stages. **Therefore, we recommend the EPC consider running an endowment campaign later on in its development.**

In terms of other funding sources, **we recommend that the EPC keep up the programs and events that Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. currently host as well as new events and programs in the parks to generate more donations. We also recommend that the EPC consider expanding Park Spirit's merchandise sales in order to further diversify their funding sources.** After identifying sustainable sources of funding, the next step is to generate a volunteer plan.

*Step 7: Develop Volunteer Strategy*

Volunteers are important to the operation and success of conservancies because their unpaid work can help keep costs down. **We found that 80% (16) of conservancies we interviewed rely heavily on volunteers.** Steve Fischer, the Executive Director of the Regional Environmental Council (REC) emphasized the importance of volunteers and the role that they play in executing most of the REC's programs and events (S. Fischer, personal communication, November 3, 2017). **We also found that 55% (11) of conservancies we interviewed indicated that they have at least one volunteer coordinator** (paid or unpaid) to help keep track of volunteers, assist with volunteer's skills and interests, connect with the local colleges, businesses and local residents, and to guide and train volunteers. Therefore, **we recommend the EPC recruit at least one volunteer coordinator in order to recruit, manage, and train volunteers.**

The most common volunteer sources of the twenty conservancies we interviewed are corporate, high school or college students, gardeners, nearby residents, retirees, and friends groups as depicted in **Figure 4-11**. Since corporations and schools are the most common significant sources of volunteers and can be well applied to the location of Worcester, **we recommend that the EPC offer volunteering opportunities for corporate groups as well as high school and college student groups.** An example of a conservancy that offers a corporate volunteering program is the Fairmount Park Conservancy (Fairmount Park Conservancy, n.d.). The program gives corporate groups the opportunity to do routine maintenance duties in the parks such as invasive removal, litter pick up and trail work. The Fairmount Park Conservancy program could be applied to the Newton Hill section of Elm Park, and could be adapted to include both corporate groups and student groups.

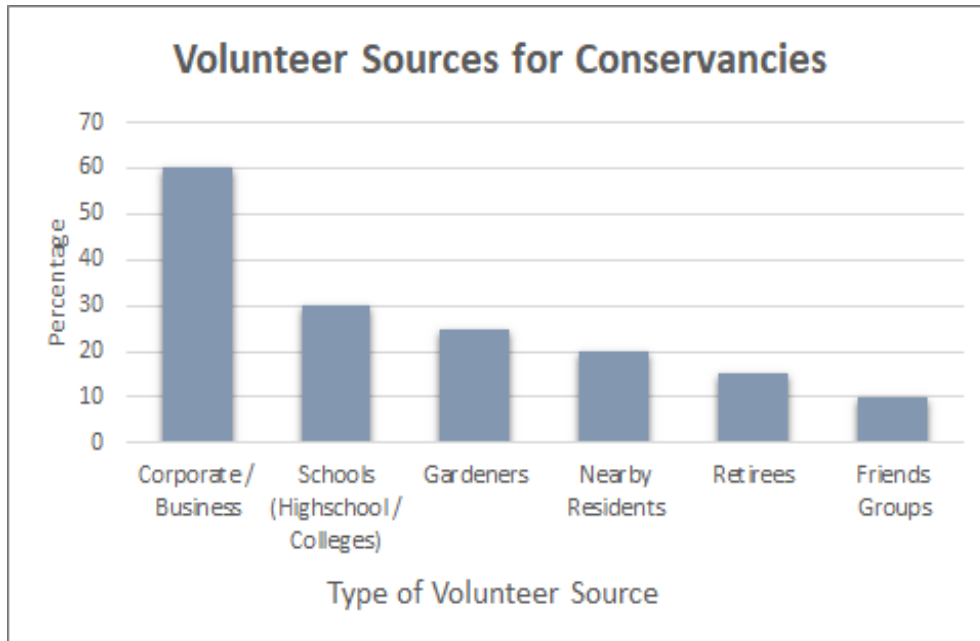


Figure 4-11 Typical Sources of Volunteers for Conservancies

We were also able to identify common strategies used by conservancies to maintain steady volunteers. **We found that the most common practices among the twenty conservancies are holding large clean-up events, annual volunteer appreciation events and having clear volunteer titles and descriptions.** Out of the twenty conservancies, 65% (13) stated having annual volunteering events, such as clean up days, clearly stated on their websites. Also, 25% (5) of the conservancies highlighted the importance of volunteer appreciation events to volunteer retention. Another important factor that 50% (10) of the conservancies do to keep volunteers engaged is assigning specific titles for volunteers. Colin Novick, the Executive Director of the Greater Worcester Land Trust, indicated that having volunteer titles contribute to volunteer retention (C. Novick, personal communication, November 6, 2017). **We recommend that the EPC establish volunteer positions according to the unique needs,** some examples of which are described in **Figure 4-12.**



Volunteer Title	Responsibility Description
Media Volunteer	Help with the EPC social media accounts and newsletters.
Event Organizer	Help with organizing events the EPC holds.
Visitor Center Volunteer	Help with directing visitors.
Infrastructure Volunteer	Help with regular maintenance (describe typical maintenance jobs).
Trail Inspector	Help with reporting any major problem and maintaining the trails.
Tour Guide	Help with giving tour to visitors to explore the park.
Gardener	Help with maintaining gardens in the park.

Figure 4-12. Potential Volunteer Positions in the EPC and Brief Descriptions.

It is now up to the future Volunteer Coordinator to develop these volunteer strategies and successfully advertise the volunteer opportunities provided by the Elm Park Conservancy. Once again, the steps within each phase are interchangeable and can occur simultaneously. Of course, the completion of the three phases is just the beginning. However, with the implementation of our recommendations discussed in the three phases, the EPC will be able to continue developing and improving. Our additional recommendations and finally, the framework of the EPC are provided in section 4.2.4.

#### 4.2.4 Additional Recommendations and Framework

All of the conservancies we analyzed and interviewed used their websites as tools to advertise for their events, emphasize donations, and recruit volunteers. **We recommend that Park Spirit reorganize and therefore redesign their website in order to emphasize**

**upcoming events, promote volunteer activity, and attract potential donors.** For this re-design, we recommend Park Spirit draw influence from the Friends of Christopher Columbus and The Friends of the Public Garden’s official websites as models. We include more specific recommendations regarding the website in **Appendix Q**. Along the same lines, **we recommend that Park Spirit develop a marketing strategy for the EPC that involves promoting its vision and goals.**

There are a few additional resources for Worcester nonprofits that Park Spirit should take advantage of. **We recommend that Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. seek advice from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation and the Worcester Public Library.** The Greater Worcester Community Foundation offers support to nonprofit organizations including general advice, workshops, as well as opportunities to apply for grants from the Foundation (J. Cohen, personal communication, November 10, 2017). There is also a “Grants Resource Center” at the Worcester Public Library that provides free information to local nonprofits about funding sources (Worcester Public Library, n.d.).

With all of this information that we gathered and analyzed, we accomplished our goal of making a framework of the organizational structure, funding strategy, and volunteer strategy of the Elm Park Conservancy. We included the framework of recommendations in **Appendix R**. **Our final recommendation for Park Spirit is that they take advantage of the momentum that this project created regarding the formation of the Elm Park Conservancy, no matter what organizational structure, funding practices, and volunteer practices they implement.**

## Chapter 5: Final Thoughts and Conclusion

In urban areas, well-maintained green spaces are a necessity to the well-being of the community around them. Since its founding in the 1980s, Park Spirit of Worcester, Inc. has made great strides to enhance Worcester's green spaces. In order to grow as an organization, Park Spirit, in coordination with the Worcester Department of Public Works and Parks, is pursuing the development of a pilot conservancy that would be responsible for the maintenance of the Newton Hill section of Elm Park, and possible Salisbury Park. Conservancies have been proven to be prevalent and successful entities that communities develop in order to enhance public parks, and the proper implementation of this Elm Park Conservancy has the potential to become a valuable asset to the City of Worcester and its residents.

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## Appendix A: Request for Park Spirit Information

- Park Spirit Structure:
  - Please describe all of the responsibilities that Park Spirit and furthermore The Friends of Newton Hill take on in both parks.
  - If possible, can we have access to all official & unofficial documents depicting:
    - the rules and regulations of Park Spirit and each volunteer organization?
    - board member responsibilities
    - how decisions are made within Park Spirit
    - Yearly information about Park Spirit membership (how much a membership costs, membership requirements, benefits of being a member, how many members per year etc.)
    - Rules and regulations that Park Spirit follows according to the city government (how often Park Spirit works with the city government, how they communicate with each other, does Park Spirit report to the city government, Park Spirit's current relationship with the city government, etc.)
    - Any schedules that Park Spirit tends to follow (i.e. general meetings)
    - Past meeting minutes and calendar of events (just to have examples, no need to send all of them)
- Historical (and current) funding information (actual dollar amounts, annual or seasonal (whatever makes sense), etc) broken down by source:
  - Donations / Philanthropic support (are there any consistent philanthropic organizations or people, etc.)
  - Sponsors (# of sponsors, types of sponsors, what they are sponsoring for...)
  - Events (concerts, sponsored events, etc.)
  - Sales (t-shirts etc.)
  - Any other way that Park Spirit generates revenue
- Historical (and current) Budget information
  - Budget (broken down as specific as possible)
    - what does Park Spirit spend its money on?
    - We understand that it is not necessarily Park Spirit spending the money, so if Park Spirit has information on how the volunteer organizations spend their money, that would be very helpful.
    - Yearly spending on equipment (rakes, shovels, trash bags, etc.)
    - Break down costs by park (The Newton Hill section of Elm Park vs Salisbury Park). What is the expenditures of each park annually?
    - Broken down by events (concerts, sponsored events, flash beautification, etc.)?
- Volunteer engagement
  - How do Park Spirit and the volunteer organizations find and retain volunteers?
  - How many volunteers are returning?
  - How many volunteers are volunteering as a part of outside organizations?
  - How the volume of volunteers changes per season
  - Volunteer demographics
- Others:
  - Any information you have about how many people attend Elm & Salisbury parks per year
  - Information on how many people attend Park Spirit events
  - If you have any more documents you want to share or you think they will be helpful for us, please send them to us

## Appendix B: List of Conservancies Analyzed

	<b>Conservancy name</b>	<b>Location (City)</b>
1	Brackenridge Park Conservancy	San Antonio
2	Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy	New York
3	Buffalo Bayou Partnership	Houston
4	Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy	Buffalo
5	Bushnell Park Foundation	Hartford
6	Central Park Conservancy	New York
7	Chastain Park Conservancy	Atlanta
8	Civic Center Conservancy	Denver
9	Detroit Riverfront Conservancy	Detroit
10	Discovery Green Conservancy	Houston
11	Emerald Necklace Conservancy	Boston
12	Fairmount Park Conservancy	Philadelphia
13	Forest Park Conservancy	Portland
14	Forest Park Forever	St. Louis
15	Friends of Christopher Columbus Park	Boston
16	Friends of Fair Park	Dallas
17	Friends of Hudson River Park	New York
18	Friends of the High Line	New York
19	Friends of the Public Garden Inc.	Boston
20	Grant Park Conservancy	Atlanta
21	Guadalupe River Park Conservancy	San Jose
22	Herman Park Conservancy	Houston
23	Historic Oakland Foundation	Atlanta
24	Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy	Louisville
25	Madison Square Park Conservancy	New York
26	Memorial Park Conservancy	Houston
27	Mount Vernon Place Conservancy	Baltimore
28	Myriad Gardens Foundation	Oklahoma City
29	Overton Park Conservancy	Memphis
30	Piedmont Park Conservancy	Atlanta

31	Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy	Pittsburgh
32	Prospect Park Alliance	New York
33	Railroad Park Foundation	Birmingham
34	Randall's Island Park Alliance	New York
35	Riverside Park Conservancy	New York
36	Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway Conservancy	Boston
37	Shelby Farms Park Conservancy	Memphis
38	St Paul Parks Conservancy	St. Paul
39	Staten Island Greenbelt Conservancy	New York
40	The Battery Conservancy	New York
41	Trust for the National Mall	Washington, D.C.
42	Woodall Rogers Park Foundation	Dallas

\*The conservancies highlighted in green represent the conservancies we interviewed, and performed a more in-depth analysis on.

## Appendix C: List of Website Matrix Parameters

1. **City**
2. **Year Founded**
3. **Acres**
4. **Number of Parks**
5. **Annual Revenue (2009-2012 averages)**
6. **Annual Spending (2009-2012 averages)**
7. **Annual Spending Per Park Acre**
8. **Earned Revenue as % of Total Revenue**
9. Annual Number of Visitors
10. Number of Board Members
11. Board Structure
12. List of Staff Member Positions (or number of staff members)
13. Volunteers Information
14. Park History
15. Geography

\*The bolded categories refer to parameters that were covered in the Trust for Public Land Study, we just transferred that information into a comparative matrix. The un-bolded parameters were filled out using the official websites of each conservancy.

## Appendix D: Interview Preamble

We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Massachusetts and we are working on a social science research project relating to Worcester's public parks. We are conducting an interview to learn more about the funding, management, and/or volunteer engagement of nonprofit organizations dedicated to conservation efforts. We believe that urban green spaces have an important role in cities. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Please remember that the information you disclose in this interview may be traced back to you or your organization, with your consent. This is a collaborative project between Park Spirit of Worcester and WPI, and your participation is greatly appreciated. If interested, a copy of our results can be provided at the conclusion of the study.

## Appendix E: List of Conservancy Interviews Conducted

	<b>Conservancy Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Contact's Position</b>
1	St. Paul Parks Conservancy	11/2/17	Dee Schutte	Account Manager
2	Chastain Park Conservancy	11/7/17	Rosa McHugh	Executive Director
3	Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy	11/7/17	Liz J. Dehart	Director of Marketing and Communications
4	Emerald Necklace Conservancy	11/8/17	Karen Mauney-Brodek Evan Bradley	Executive Director Marketing and Communications Director
5	Prospect Park Alliance	11/8/17	Jessica Wilson	VP Development & Marketing
6	Bushnell Park Foundation	11/8/17	Mary Zeman	Foundation Manager
7	Staten Island Greenbelt Conservancy	11/8/17	Steven Cain	Executive Director
8	Overton Park Conservancy	11/8/17	Melissa McMasters	Executive Director
9	Fairmount Parks Conservancy	11/9/17	Jamie Gauthier	Executive Director
10	Friends of Fair Park	11/9/17	Craig Holcomb	President
11	Friends of Forest Park	11/9/17	Renee Myers	Executive Director
12	Friends of Christopher Columbus	11/10/17	Meghan Warner Denenberg	Director-at-large
13	Friends of the Public Garden	11/10/17	Elizabeth Vizza	Executive Director
14	Detroit RiverFront Conservancy	11/13/17	Marc Pasco	Director of Communications
15	Guadalupe River Park Conservancy	11/13/17	Joe Salvato	Operations Director

16	Myriad Gardens Foundation???	11/13/17	Maureen Heffernan	Executive Director
17	Forest Park Forever	11/13/17	Heidi Dowgwillo	Executive Assistant
18	Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy	11/15/17	Nancy Webster	Executive Director
19	Mount Vernon Place Conservancy	11/15/17	Anna Brinley	Assistant Manager of Development, Management, and Programming
20	Grant Park Conservancy	11/16/17	Bob O'Neill	President
21	Buffalo Bayou Partnership	11/17/17	Anne Olson	President
22	Hudson River Park Friends	11/17/17	Connie Fishman	Executive Director

\*we did not analyze the conservancies highlighted in grey further.



## Appendix F: Conservancy Interview Template

Name of Conservancy:

Location:

Contact Information: (name, position, email, phone number)

Project Description:

Background Information on (name of conservancy):

Board Structure:

Funding / Revenue Information:

Volunteer recruitment information:

Structure Questions:

- Please explain the history and beginning of your organization.
- How has the organization developed throughout time?
- What is the first paid position that was hired?
- Who started the conservancy (city, private, both)?
- How are decisions made within the Organization?
- How are board members elected?
- What kind of community representation is there in the board?
- What are some of the different skillsets of your board members?
- What is your organization's relationship with the local government (Private-public partnership)?
- What kind of skills/characteristics do you think would be necessary for an Executive Director?

Funding Questions:

- How much city support do you receive?
- What is the breakdown of your contributions funding?
  - What percentage is from private donors?
  - What percentage is from rides?
  - What percentage is from grants?(public, private)
    - Who takes care of this?
- What is your marketing strategy?
  - Do you use social media?
  - Do you use mailing lists?
  - Do you have primary sponsors? Who? How?

Volunteer Questions:

- How do you recruit and keep steady volunteers?
- What is your volunteer strategy?

- How many volunteer hours per year?
- How many volunteers per year?
- How many volunteer coordinators do you have?
- What is your main source of volunteers?

#### General Questions

- What are your short term goals?
- What are your long term goals?
- Current Projects?
- What are some of the biggest challenges you have faced or are facing right now?
- Suggestions for us as a conservancy
- Do you have any suggestions for people or organizations we should contact who could help us with our project?

## Appendix G: List of Interview Matrix Parameters

1. General Responsibilities
2. how they started
3. development timeline
4. first position recruited
5. who started the conservancy
6. board members skillsets/community representation
7. Bylaws
8. marketing strategy
9. funding strategy
10. Short-term Plan
11. Long Term Plan
12. Volunteer Strategy
13. Public-Private Partnership
14. Suggestions
15. Other

## Appendix H: Headings and Parameters of Data Collection Matrices (1-18)

### 1. Development Matrix

1. Started as volunteer organization?
2. Year conservancy was formed
3. Became staffed?
4. Year first staff member hired
5. Difference between 2 and 4.

### 2. Committee Matrix

1. Number of Committees
2. Executive Committee?
3. Finance and Development?
4. Governance or Nominating?
5. Communications and Marketing?
6. Membership?
7. Public Relations?
8. Programs?

### 3. Membership Level Matrix

1. Different Levels?
2. Link to membership page
3. Number of levels
4. Starting Price
5. List of membership level prices
6. List of benefits of levels
7. Corporate membership levels?

### 4. Volunteer Recruitment Matrix

1. Has at least one volunteer coordinator?
2. How many volunteer coordinators
3. Rely on committees to manage volunteers?
4. Volunteer Sources:
  - a. Friends Groups
  - b. Corporate
  - c. Schools
  - d. Nearby Residents
  - e. Retirees
  - f. Gardeners
5. How volunteers are reached
  - a. Mailings
  - b. Email list
  - c. Website
  - d. Social Media

- e. Word of Mouth (story telling)
- f. Volunteer Fairs
- 6. Training
- 7. Appreciation Events

#### 5. Volunteer Website Features Matrix

- 1. Get Involved / Volunteer Tab?
- 2. Volunteer Application?
- 3. Mention large clean up days or events?
- 4. Mention regular volunteer positions or volunteer titles?

#### 6. Suggestions Matrix

- 1. Have a clear vision?
- 2. Importance of mission statement?
- 3. Gather public support?
- 4. Passionate people?
- 5. Good relationship with the city government?

#### 7. Reasons for Formation Matrix

- 1. Historical Preservation?
- 2. Park Revitalization?
- 3. Advocacy?
- 4. Fundraising?
- 5. Maintenance?

#### 8. Board of Directors Size Matrix

- 1. Board Size
- 2. Executive Committee Size
- 3. President or Chairperson?
- 4. Vice President or Vice Chair?
- 5. Multiple Vice Presidents?
- 6. Treasurer?
- 7. Secretary?
- 8. Executive Director?

#### 9. Public-Private Partnership Matrix

- 1. MOU/Formal Agreement
- 2. Contracted by City
- 3. Informal Agreement
- 4. Nothing
- 5. Share employees with Parks Department

#### 10. Vision and Plans Matrix

1. Reassess Goals and Plans every year
2. Have a Strategic Plan

#### 11. General Responsibilities Matrix

1. Programming
2. Fundraising
3. Maintenance and Operations
4. Construction and Capital Projects

#### 12. First Position Hired Matrix

1. Executive Director
2. President and CEO
3. Other
4. Hired multiple positions

#### 13. Park Features Matrix

1. Near water
2. Hiking trails
3. Walking/biking paths
4. Historical monuments or landmarks
5. Performance spaces
6. Gardens
7. Disc Golf

#### 14. Board of Directors Skillset Matrix

1. Lawyers
2. Financial Experts
3. Marketing
4. Fundraising
5. Politicians
6. Business Leaders
7. Engineers
8. Landscape Architects/ Real Estate Developers
9. Garden Clubs/Horticulturalists
10. Community Leaders

#### 15. Board of Directors Community Representation Matrix

1. Represented?
2. Community Leaders
3. City Representatives

#### 16. Types of City Support Matrix

1. Financial
2. How much?
3. Physical
4. How much?
5. None

#### 17. Fundraising Events Matrix

1. Gala
2. Money raised from Gala
3. Ticket Price

#### 18. Revenue Breakdown Matrix

1. Endowment? Percentage
2. Grants? Percentage
3. Are grants sustainable?
4. Percentage of Revenue from Membership fees
5. Percentage of revenue from Individual Donors
6. Percentage of Revenue from Corporate Donors

## Appendix I: Mass Audubon Interview Questions

- What is the structure of your organization (number of employees, funding sources, volunteer sources, how the funding is used, events and or fundraisers, grants )?
- How does the Mass Audubon maintain consistent volunteers?
- How does the Mass Audubon maintain board positions? What is the election process?
- What are the ways you advertise for your organization?
- How many sponsors do you have?
- What are the best ways to receive funding?
- What is the process in requesting, receiving, and implementing funding (donations, grants)?
- What percent from your funding is a government funding?
- Suggestions on how to fund our conservancy model? (Give them information on Park Spirit's size, funding, volunteers, etc. and let him give suggestions on how to organize it)



## Appendix J: Greater Worcester Land Trust Interview Questions

- How was your advisory council and board of directors formed? How do you recruit people to be a part of the board? How are board members chosen (through elections, appointments...)?
- How do you become a member of the board of directors and advisory council? Is the number of people on the board flexible?
- What are the current advisory board and board of directors comprised of i.e. community leaders, city representatives etc.?
- What responsibilities does the Board of Directors have, how does the decision making process of the GWLT work?
- Are there any other sources of funds besides contributions and investment funds?
- What is the biggest challenge of fundraising?
- How does your fundraising process / campaign work?
- How has the GWLT become successful and consistent at fundraising?
- Is there any advice you have regarding fundraising in Worcester specifically? For example, who do you target and who do you know not to target for funds?
- Online I saw that you have both general volunteering events as well as consistent volunteer positions such as a “Conservation Ranger.” What is the difference in strategy between how the volunteer coordinator maintains those two different types of volunteers (returning and non-returning)? How do you keep volunteers around?
- What is your volunteer recruitment strategy (to gain more volunteers)?
- Do you have any suggestions on who else we should contact who could help us in our project?

## Appendix K: Regional Environmental Council Interview Questions

- Could you please describe the structure of the Regional Environmental Council (In terms of budget and management)?
- How does the Regional Environmental Council allocate the annual budget?
- Can you further explain the role of the different food programs of the Regional Environmental Council? Are these separate organizations or just programs initiated by the REC?
- How has the REC been able to secure funding from United Way and 1% for the planet?(listed at bottom of website)
- Can you explain to us how your Community Farmers' Markets program was able to secure multiple sponsors such as People's United Bank, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, UMass Memorial Medical Center, as well as the Seven Hills Foundation?
- What are some of the ways in which the Regional Environmental Council generates revenue?
- Please explain to us more about your volunteer program.
- Would you be able to provide us with documents regarding the financials and volunteer coordination of the Regional Environmental Council?
- Do you have any suggestions for people or organizations that we should interview who could help us with our project?

## Appendix L: Greater Worcester Community Foundation Interview Questions

- Can you summarize what the GWCF does? (Please provide a history, general overview, mission)
- What types of organizations do you give grants to?
- What other green space preservation nonprofit organizations do you currently provide grants for? How much?
- What kind of preservation are these organizations responsible for?
- How do nonprofits specifically in Worcester typically fund themselves?
- How do you determine whether or not you should provide a grant? What are the different categories to determine whether or not a grant is provided
- What have been successful funding strategies and what have been unsuccessful strategies?
- What resources do they use?
- We are attempting to establish a conservancy under the Park Spirit of Worcester, what structure would you recommend for that?

## Appendix M: Worcester Department of Public Works & Parks Interview Questions

Jeff Tomaino, M.Ed., CPO  
Parks & Recreation Coordinator  
City of Worcester - DPW & Parks  
Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Division

- How did you first get involved in parks and recreation work?
- From our research, we found that the parks department is not only responsible for the maintenance of city parks but also responsible for programming events in the parks. Could you tell us a bit about the specific responsibilities that you have as the recreation coordinator?
- Please describe the basic responsibilities of the parks department for the parks in Worcester.
- What are some of the work the parks commission has done in collaboration with nonprofits?
  - Public-private partnerships
  - Is there anything that nonprofit organizations can do to better assist the parks department?
- What are some of the challenges that the parks department has?
- What are the short and long term goals of the Parks Department?
- Do you have any thoughts on what the Parks Department thinks of the Newton hill section of Elm Park?
- What is the park's commission's' position on the newton hill section of elm park?
- Can you tell us a bit about the relationship between the Park Spirit of Worcester and the Parks commission?
  - How often do you meet?
- What do you think would be required in order to establish a formal agreement with the city concerning the operation of the Elm Park Conservancy?
- Would the parks commission be open to having the commissioner or another official being a board member for the Elm Park conservancy?
- If a document such as a memorandum of understanding was established between the city and the Conservancy, what factors would be most important to the parks department in ensuring the success of the public-private partnership?
- What first steps should be taken in making this agreement? How long do you think it will take to establish this?
- Would you be willing to email us with any documents you think would be valuable to our project?
- Do you have any suggestions for people or organizations we should talk to who could help us in our project?

## Appendix N: Worcester City Councilor Interview Questions

Gary Rosen

Worcester City Councilor

Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Youth, Parks & Recreation

- How did you get involved in Worcester's Parks?
- What are the current responsibilities of the Worcester Parks Department, and are they sufficient?
- In your opinion, why does the City of Worcester need a conservancy?
- What should be done to establish a strong Public-Private Partnership?
- How can we convince (or deliver the message to) the public of the need for a conservancy?
- What challenges should our sponsors anticipate in the formation of a conservancy?
- Why is hiring an Executive Director important?
- What should the conservancy's board consist of?
- What should the conservancy's strategic plan contain?
- Is there anyone you would recommend that we contact?

## Appendix O: Office of the City Manager Discussion Questions:

- What are your first thoughts on the idea of the formation of a conservancy in Worcester?
- What kind of support could be offered by the city to the conservancy?
- Would you be willing to set up a meeting with Park Spirit in order to discuss the possibility of creating a formal or informal agreement between the future conservancy and the city government?

## Appendix P: Description of Organizational Structure Components

### **The Board of Directors and Executive Committee:**

**Board of Directors:** The Board of Directors would be made up of 18-25 individuals of varying skillsets. The board would meet 2-3 times per year, and be made up of individuals with skillsets discussed in step 4 (section 4.2.2.1). The Board will act as the governing body of the organization.

**Executive Committee (of the Board of Directors):** The Executive Committee will be comprised of a President, Vice President of Programming and Operations, Vice President of Finance and Fundraising, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Executive Committee will work closely with the Executive Director.

- **President:** Calls and facilitates Board meetings, coordinates executive committee activities, oversees executive director, stands in as figurehead of organization if executive director is absent, responsible for city government relations, acts as the City of Worcester's first contact in the EPC.
- **Vice President of Programming and Operations:** Stands in as President if President is absent, aids president, oversees Worcester Parks Committee, Maintenance & Volunteer Committee, and Programming Committee.
- **Vice President of Finance and Fundraising:** Stands in as Treasurer or Secretary if absent, aid president, oversees Fundraising and Marketing Committee and Development Committee, responsible for co-drafting the annual budget with the head of the Development Committee.
- **Treasurer:** responsible for deposits and reimbursements, maintain financial records, keep board up to date on financial status of the organization, keep track of all federal, state, and local requirements regarding tax filings and reconciliations, regular meetings with financial advisor or accounting firm.
- **Secretary:** takes and distributes minutes of board meetings, assists president with board and executive committee coordination, and is responsible for all non-financial record keeping.

### **Committees:**

**Worcester Parks Committee:** Takes on some of Park Spirit's current functions, including any administrative duties involving the Member Organizations. They will be the first contact within the Conservancy for the Member Organizations. Any member organization requests or issues will be dealt with at that level, including requests for financial assistance from the Conservancy (to be approved by the Board of Directors).

**Maintenance & Volunteer Committee:** Responsible for the maintenance of Elm Park and the Volunteer Coordination of the Newton Hill section of Elm Park Maintenance (and any future maintenance responsibilities) and the entire EPC. This committee will work closely with the Caretaker/Volunteer Coordinator.

**Fundraising & Marketing Committee:** Responsible for all fundraising activities including but not limited to: member recruitment and retainment, soliciting for individual, small business and

corporate donations, and grant writing. They will work closely with the Programming Committee and the Development Committee (particularly when applying for grants). The committee will also be responsible for marketing the EPC including responsibilities of: website maintenance, PR, social media, and program and other physical material design. This committee will work closely with the Executive Director.

**Development Committee:** Responsible for both the day-to-day aspects of the EPC's financial paperwork, as well as conceptualizing the short term and long term goals of the EPC. They will spearhead capital projects (such as the revitalization of Bancroft tower and any East-West Trail improvements), and will work closely with the Vice President of Finance and Fundraising in order to develop yearly budgets (to be proposed to and voted on by the board of directors.)

**Programming Committee:** The Committee will be responsible for Park Spirit's current programming functions. This includes the October opening of Bancroft Tower, Summer Concert Series, Cleanups, Annual Meetings, and any other programs approved by the Board of Directors.

**Member Organizations:** The Member Organizations are independent organizations that make their own decisions and have their own structures, volunteer coordination, funding responsibilities, etc. Any organization can become a member organization, as long as the goals of said organization line up with the EPC's goals. The instatement of a new membership organization must be recommended to the Board of Directors by the Worcester Parks Committee (In coordination with the Development Committee since they are in charge of proposing a budget), and receive a majority vote from the Board of Directors.

### **Staff:**

**Executive Director:** The Executive Director will be a part-time paid position. For more information about the importance of an Executive Director and skill requirements, refer to step five (section 4.2.2.2). The Executive Director will answer to the Board of Directors and work closely with the Executive Committee and Fundraising & Marketing Committee. The most important responsibilities of the Executive Director will be as follows:

- Identifying and pursuing funding sources
- Overseeing other future employees and volunteer committees
- Networking and promoting
- Acting as a figurehead for the EPC
- Completing some administrative duties

**Caretaker/Volunteer Coordinator:** The caretaker would generally be responsible for overseeing the physical maintenance of the parks, as well as the recruitment and management of all volunteers and volunteer activities. The caretaker would be a part-time position and be hired after the executive director, and when funding permits.



## Appendix Q: Example Website Reorganization

Park Events and Features	Donate	Get Involved	About the Conservancy	Contact Us
East West Trail	Become a Member	Upcoming volunteer opportunities	Vision and Purpose (including strategic plan)	Board of Directors
Fitness Circuit	Make a Donation	About volunteering (what past volunteers have done)	Programs	Staff
Disc Golf Course	Corporate Sponsors	Individual Volunteering Opportunities	Advocacy	
Bancroft Tower	Our Sponsors	Corporate Volunteering Opportunities	Maintenance	
Other major features or activities...		High School and College Volunteering Opportunities	Capital Projects	
Worcester's Parks			History	

\*The grey boxes indicate main tabs, and the white boxes represent the drop down menus under each main tab.

Other website recommendations:

- The main page of the website should be used to advertise upcoming events and capital projects
- An info@epc (or info@parkspirit) email (and other contact information) should be included on every page, to be managed by the Executive Director.
- Include descriptions of membership levels (as discussed in step 6)
- Include descriptions of volunteer opportunities (as discussed in step 7)

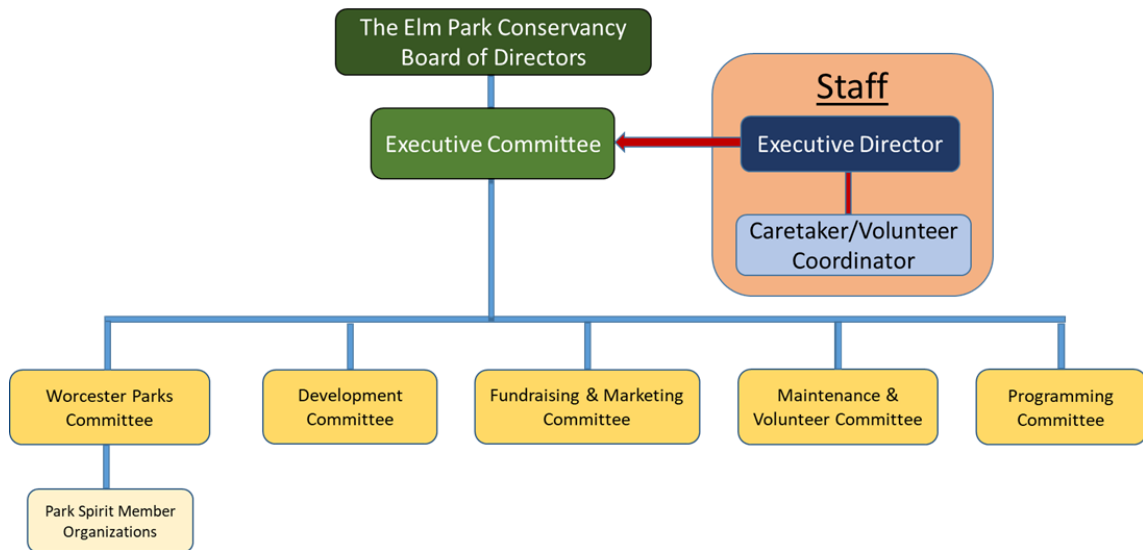
## Appendix R: The Elm Park Conservancy Framework

### The Elm Park Conservancy Framework of Recommendations:

#### I. Organizational Structure and Vision:

- A. Create a vision, mission statement and strategic plan, which is key to marketing, funding, and volunteer recruitment. Make it clear what people are getting involved in.
- B. Encourage collaboration between the EPC and the City of Worcester, as well as the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties.
- C. Form a strong 20-25 person board by recruiting high profile city representatives as well as individuals of different skillsets (the most important of which being fundraising).
- D. Formulate the organizational structure based on the needs of the conservancy. The structure that we recommend for the EPC is that Park Spirit take on the maintenance responsibilities of the Newton Hill section of Elm Park, increase fundraising, and re-structure themselves into the EPC, while continuing their current duties. A visual representation of this structure is pictured below.

The Proposed Structure of the Elm Park Conservancy



- E. Hire an Executive Director as soon as possible because the Executive Director is key to fundraising.
- F. Hire a Caretaker/Volunteer Coordinator once funding capacity permits.

#### II. Funding Strategy:

- A. The main role of the executive director will be to continually identify and pursue funding sources.
- B. Consider fundraising as a potential main source of revenue for the EPC.
- C. Research and assess the feasibility of holding galas or other fundraising events.
- D. Build strong leveled membership program, implemented on the website and through soliciting.
- E. Continue and expand upon Park Spirit’s current sponsorship program.
- F. Seek and apply for grants regularly, even though they are not considered a consistent funding source.
- G. Emphasize donations on website, and clarify what those donations are going towards.
- H. Recognize donors as often and in as many different ways as possible.
- I. Consider an endowment as a sustainable funding source later on in the EPC’s development.

**III. Volunteer Strategy:**

- A. First appoint a volunteer coordinator as an unpaid position (until the caretaker is hired) to manage and facilitate volunteer activities. The volunteer coordinator must keep track of regular volunteers and their skillsets.
- B. Create easy access to volunteer opportunities through the website by including a “get involved” tab that describes different ways to volunteer.
- C. Give titles to recurring volunteer positions according to the park’s need in order to help retain volunteers.
- D. Offer corporate and school volunteering opportunities, to be included on the website.

**IV. Additional Recommendations:**

- A. Create a new Elm Park Conservancy website (or redesign Park Spirit’s website) that emphasizes upcoming events, promotes volunteer activity, and attracts potential donors.
- B. Seek funding advice from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation and the “Grant Resource Center” at the Worcester Public Library.