

dcr
Massachusetts



STRATEGIC READINESS ROADMAP

JUNE 2022

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Introduction

- Baker-Polito DCR Accomplishments
- Why this? Why now?
- Connection to the Special Commission Report
- Approach, Outcomes, Impact
- DCR Reimagined



Baker-Polito DCR Regional Accomplishments: Statewide

OFFICE OF CLIMATE RESILIENCE

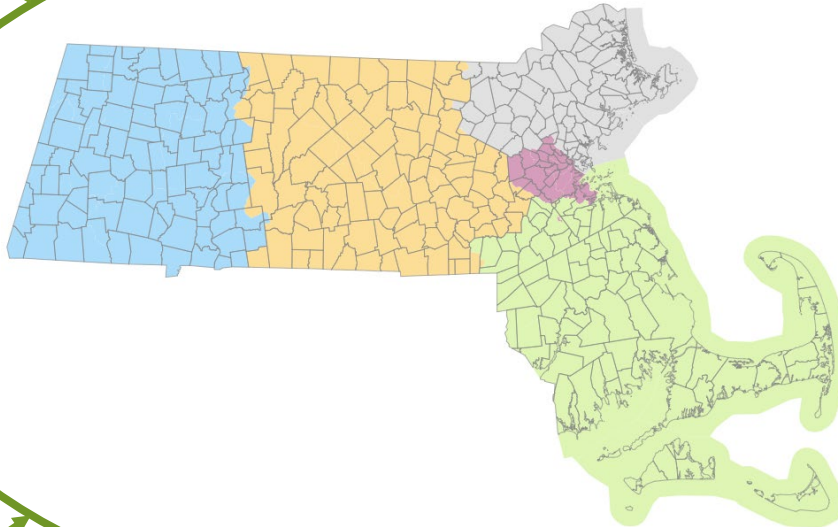
DCR established an Office of Climate Resilience focused on ensuring that climate change considerations are incorporated into agency initiatives and projects.

SUMMER NIGHTS PROGRAM

Founded in 2015, and with an investment of more than \$6.7M since inception, DCR's Summer Nights program provides young people across the Commonwealth with fun, safe recreational opportunities throughout the summer.

GREENING THE GATEWAY CITIES PROGRAM

DCR Greening the Gateway Cities program planted a total of 32,922 trees since the inception of the program. In addition, several Gateway Cities reached the 2,400th trees planted milestone.



ENERGY CONSERVATION

\$2.75M in energy conservation measures were invested across the state to support the Leading by Example initiative and Executive Order 594, including the installation of solar arrays at Murphy Rink in South Boston and the Reilly Rink in Brighton.

MASSTRAILS TEAM & PROGRAM

DCR participated in the creation of the MassTrails Team & Program in 2018 to maintain and build a trail network in the Commonwealth. The program was funded through a \$50M line item in the 2018 Environmental Bond Bill. Since 2018, the program has funded 179 local projects, assisted 150 communities, and created more than 60 miles of trails.

CLIMATE PROTECTION

Over the past 8 years, trees growing on forestlands owned by DCR have stored approximately 1,001,241 tons of carbon.

Baker-Polito DCR Regional Accomplishments: Regional Summary

NORTH

- DCR invested \$11.5M in the construction of a new operations facility at Revere Beach State Reservation to better serve the region
- DCR's busy coastal beaches across the Commonwealth hosted 486 nests from 368 pairs of listed shorebirds under the federal and state endangered species regulations, producing 374 new juveniles to effectively support the recovery of these species

BOSTON

- Completion of \$1.4M restoration of the historic Arthur Fiedler Footbridge to its original brutalist design
- DCR entered a 40-year lease through the Historic Curatorship Program for the Charles River Speedway Administration Building, representing a \$10M investment towards the rehabilitation of a threatened historical site

WEST

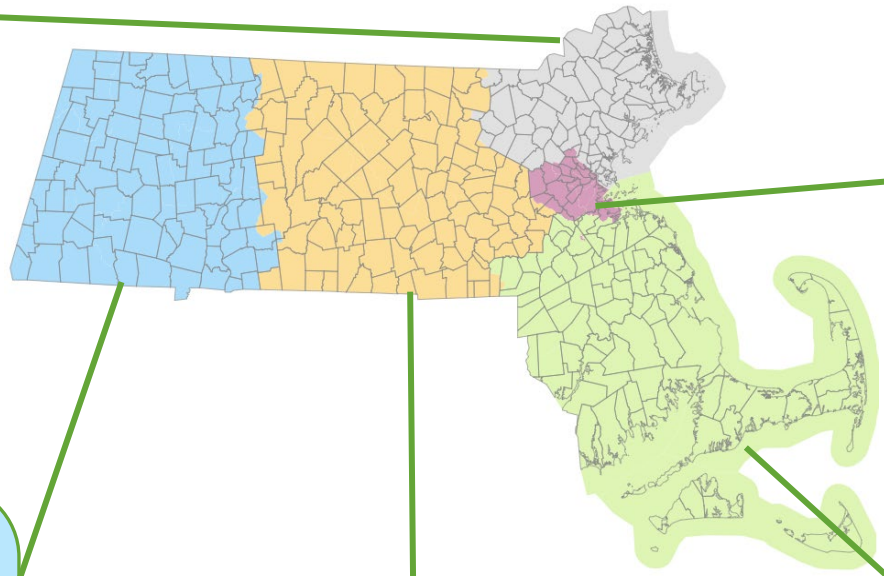
- DCR was awarded the 2019 Paul & Niki Tsongas Award for excellence in preservation for the 2018 \$2.5M rehabilitation of the Veterans War Memorial Tower at Mount Greylock State Reservation, which was named a World War I Centennial Memorial
- DCR opened a new \$1.5M playground and spray deck at Holyoke Heritage State Park

CENTRAL

- DCR protected 3,105 acres of forestland through the Quabbin to Wachusett Forest Legacy Project, a multiyear \$4.5M initiative between DCR, EEA, and federal agencies seeking to preserve forests

SOUTH

- DCR invested \$2.3M on site improvements and building rehabilitation efforts at Pilgrim Memorial Park
- DCR is completing the \$1.9M construction of the Cape Cod Rail Trail Wellfleet extension



Why This? Why Now?

Since its inception in 2003, DCR has cared for the state's expansive range of natural and cultural resources and has provided the residents and visitors of the Commonwealth with a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities.

- ❑ This summer, DCR enters its 20th year, and as we approach this milestone and look toward the future, we must adapt to meet the challenges of our changing world
- ❑ With the numerous threats of climate change, and renewed recognition that connecting with nature is paramount to our collective physical, mental, and social health, we understand the vital role DCR plays for our residents, our visitors, our economy, and our well-being
- ❑ As the largest landowner in the state, DCR will play a critical role in adapting to, and mitigating, the impacts of climate change
- ❑ The pandemic brought home for people across the Commonwealth, and across the world, the importance of being outside and building communities—DCR was the place people went to make connections, relax, and challenge themselves
- ❑ The time is right to take a meaningful, strategic look at the agency to ensure we are prepared for the dynamic future ahead of us

Connection to Special Commission Report

With the completion of Special Commission Report, DCR is seeking to take immediate actions and plan for longer-term priorities, to respond to the recommendations within the Special Commission Report and ensure the agency is prepared for the dynamic future ahead.

The Strategic Readiness Roadmap leverages findings from the Special Commission Report to lay a strong foundation for DCR's future. The following findings in the Special Commission Report are further referenced and advanced in the Strategic Readiness Roadmap:

- ✓ Limit the use of **seasonal staff** to truly seasonal activities
- ✓ Update **DCR's website** to be more **user-friendly** and provide more **streamlined information** about DCR activities and services
- ✓ **Expand awareness** of DCR's **Universal Access Program**
- ✓ Continue to **implement digital processes** for efficiency to further modernize the agency
- ✓ Retain DCR's role in **parkways** and explore opportunities for partnership into the future to address safety concerns
- ✓ Continue to embrace and **develop AMMP/CAMIS as a tool to monitor** needs and to enhance agency performance in the future

Our Approach and Outcomes

DCR engaged in a strategic evaluation and planning process to ensure it is prepared for the dynamic future ahead. This work is informed by the DCR Special Commission Report.

The Approach

Over an 8-week period, DCR worked with a team of consultants from Accenture to **shape the Strategic Readiness Roadmap**.

The intent of this roadmap is to build the foundation for DCR's future by establishing principles that will guide decision making and planning. The roadmap lays the groundwork for future big ideas as well as immediate operational improvements.

The DCR Project Team worked with Accenture to conduct extensive quantitative and qualitative benchmarking of peer agencies across 50 states, hold employee and public listening sessions, interview the DCR leadership team and Stewardship Council, research best practices, and review DCR materials including the DCR Special Commission Report. The DCR Project Team and Accenture used these findings to:

- **Evaluate feedback and craft core principles**
- **Discuss and iterate on findings and analysis**
- **Synthesize and develop recommendations**



The Outcomes

The DCR Strategic Readiness Roadmap includes:

- ✓ A set of Core Principles
- ✓ A set of Recommendations
- ✓ Peer State Benchmarking Data & Best Practices

5

Core Principles

20

Recommendations

Note: a strategic readiness roadmap includes a set of core principles and actions (recommendations) that DCR should take over a period of time to become a more strategically driven agency. This roadmap is not a strategic plan.

Our Impact

DCR is committed and obligated to the Commonwealth's people, resources, and environment—seeking positive impact for each area.

People



**...to the lives of
constituents in
the Commonwealth**

Resources



**...to the infrastructure,
assets, land,
forests, water, and places
under our care**

Environment



...to the environment

DCR Reimagined



Core Principles

- Our Mission
- Our Core Principles



Our Mission and Core Principles

Mission: To protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well-being of all

DCR strives to be an exemplary leader in conservation and recreation. DCR's staff is passionate, dedicated, and continuously employs best practices, expertise, and a sense of place in carrying out the mission. The following core principles ground the agency in its work. For the benefit and well-being of all—people and the environment—DCR pledges to:

- 1 Provide access to a diversity of outdoor recreational experiences and unique landscapes** that is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming
- 2 Conserve lands, water, and forests** by integrating science, research, and technical expertise into the management of our natural resources
- 3 Advance climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts** by implementing sustainable practices and advancing resiliency across our infrastructure, assets, and resources
- 4 Support healthy communities** by providing places for people to connect with nature and each other
- 5 Inspire generations of stewards** by recognizing and honoring our legacy through partnerships, public engagement, and education

Recommendations

- Key Highlights



Types of Recommendations

The 20 recommendations have been categorized in the following groups:



AGENCY-WIDE

- ✓ Overarching, impacting the agency as a whole



INSPIRE

- ✓ Move the needle in achieving the core principles
- ✓ Create greater impact
- ✓ Serve the constituents with greater integrity
- ✓ Increase public engagement



IMPROVE

- ✓ Enhance daily operations
- ✓ Lay a stronger foundation for driving change and achieving core principles
- ✓ Equip DCR with the appropriate investments and tools to create a sustainable and scalable impact



ALIGN

- ✓ Better position DCR to achieve its mission and core principles
- ✓ Transfer functions that are not aligned with DCR's mission to organizations that can prioritize them better
- ✓ Elevate the functions to the level of importance they deserve

Recommendations



AGENCY-WIDE

1. Strive to **increase staffing** for critical functions in the near-term and further evaluate long-term staffing levels based on national benchmarking

2. Prioritize **technology-based solutions** in future work to bring the agency to the digital age



INSPIRE



IMPROVE



ALIGN

3. Improve transparency and increase public engagement in **capital planning**

4. Improve the conditions of DCR **parks and properties** by investing in more full-time employees and decreasing reliance on a seasonal workforce

5. Modernize and enhance the **visitor experience** by providing relevant interpretation and educational programs that connect visitors to natural, cultural, and recreational resources

6. Develop a **partnership strategy** and engagement model to efficiently pursue and manage strategic partnership opportunities

7. Create **branding, marketing, and communications strategies** to better serve the public by creating awareness, engaging public on what DCR has to offer, and developing user-friendly information campaigns

8. Expand **Universal Access Programming** and prioritize investments towards maintenance of accessible facilities

9. Invest in technology to support the redesigned **capital planning** process

10. Define and evaluate **standalone facilities and pocket parks**

11. Address gaps in DCR's **legal authorities to enforce compliance with key statutes**

12. Create an agency-wide **research** agenda and implement a knowledge management system to share and apply research findings

13. Commit appropriate resources and funding to ensure sufficient operations of the mission-critical **flood control and navigation** functions

14. Transfer **State House Security** function to Bureau of the State House

15. Transfer ownership of **specific standalone facilities**, small local **road segments**, and responsibilities like **crossing guards** that do not directly support DCR's mission and core principles

16. Realign select waterways responsibilities: **commercial pier management** to **economic development agencies** and **waterways function** within DCR to **Design and Engineering**

17. Conduct further analysis to determine how to best support **dam regulatory** function

18. Obtain authority to continue successful long-term leasing agreements of **ice rinks** and explore long-term leases for remaining rinks

19. Realign Office of Water Resources programs by transferring **Water Resources Commission** technical support function to EEA and the **Flood Hazard Management** function to a more appropriate government entity while keeping the **Lakes and Ponds** program within DCR

20. Transfer the **Areas of Critical Environmental Concern** program to EEA

Agency-wide Recommendations



1. Strive to increase staffing for critical functions in the near-term and further evaluate long-term staffing levels based on the national benchmarking

- ✓ **Increasing staff by 50 full time, permanent positions within the next six months will assist in ensuring the ability to adequately care for DCR assets and resources**
- ✓ **Work with HRD to conduct a compensation audit to ensure that DCR can attract the necessary talent and technical expertise**
- ✓ **Provide excellent and enhanced experiences to visitors**



2. Prioritize technology-based solutions in future work to bring the agency to the digital age

- ✓ **Redesign the DCR website to improve the visitor experience**
- ✓ **Increase productivity with automated tasks and processes**
- ✓ **Create a consistent digital visitor experience**

Inspire Recommendations (1 of 2)



3. Improve transparency and increase public engagement in capital planning

- ✓ Create an opportunity for the public to engage in the capital planning process
- ✓ Redesign the capital process to improve transparency, thereby enabling accountability
- ✓ Employ standardized evaluation criteria



4. Improve the conditions of DCR parks and properties by investing in more full-time employees and decreasing reliance on a seasonal workforce

- ✓ Enable greater focus on strategic activities related to DCR parks and properties
- ✓ Improve visitor experience
- ✓ Reduce administrative burden of seasonal hiring
- ✓ Retain institutional knowledge and experience



5. Modernize and enhance the visitor experience by providing relevant interpretation and educational programs that connect visitors to natural, cultural, and recreational resources

- ✓ Inspire the next generation of stewards
- ✓ Elevate programming that reflects changing visitor demographics
- ✓ Foster a culture that all staff are DCR ambassadors
- ✓ Create consistent visitor experience in person and online

Inspire Recommendations (2 of 2)



6. Develop a partnership strategy and engagement model to efficiently pursue and manage strategic partnership opportunities

- ✓ Engage in partnerships more proactively
- ✓ Achieve mutually-beneficial goals
- ✓ Create a scalable and sustainable partnership model



7. Create branding, marketing, and communications strategies to better serve the public by creating awareness, engaging public on what DCR has to offer, and developing user-friendly information campaigns

- ✓ Grow public awareness, engagement, and experiences with DCR places
- ✓ Create uniform graphic and content standards for consistency across digital platforms
- ✓ Improve the general perception of DCR
- ✓ Share real-time information



8. Expand Universal Access Programming and prioritize investments towards maintenance of accessible facilities

- ✓ Provide a truly accessible visitor experience
- ✓ Share UAP's various programmatic offerings
- ✓ Expand the development of external partnerships, including collaboration with service agencies across the Commonwealth

Improve Recommendations (1 of 2)



9. Invest in technology to support the redesigned capital planning process

- ✓ Improve asset management with data-driven decisions
- ✓ Analyze, track and communicate project progress in real time
- ✓ Support updated, transparent capital planning process



10. Define and evaluate standalone facilities and pocket parks

- ✓ Identify universe of facilities and properties that are locally scaled, lack statewide appeal, or are geographically isolated from other DCR properties
- ✓ Create inventory of DCR places that may not directly support mission or core principles



11. Address gaps in DCR's legal authorities to enforce compliance with key statutes

- ✓ Ensure that DCR has appropriate legal authority
- ✓ Assess civil penalties for repeat offenders
- ✓ Explore or assess fines to prevent future violations

Improve Recommendations (2 of 2)



12. Create an agency-wide research agenda and implement a knowledge management system to share and apply research findings

- ✓ Advance climate-based resource management efforts
- ✓ Integrate best management practices into conservation efforts
- ✓ Develop repository of scientific information to incorporate into DCR's work



13. Commit appropriate resources and funding to ensure sufficient operations of the mission-critical flood control and navigation functions

- ✓ Attract and retain specialized talent
- ✓ Commit to long-term funding for operations, maintenance, and climate preparedness
- ✓ Maintain sufficient staffing levels

Align Recommendations (1 of 2)



14. Transfer State House Security function to Bureau of the State House

- ✓ Enhance State House Security by moving to organization where security is a primary responsibility
- ✓ Allow DCR to better focus resources on mission and core principles



15. Transfer ownership of specific standalone facilities, small local road segments, and responsibilities like crossing guards that do not directly support DCR's mission and core principles

- ✓ Based on unique circumstances of each property, consider options for long-term leasing or transfer of property
- ✓ Redeploy resources to better serve DCR's mission and core principles
- ✓ Better prioritize these specific standalone facilities, road segments, and responsibilities for more cohesive management



16. Realign select waterways responsibilities: commercial pier management to economic development agencies and waterways function within DCR to Design and Engineering

- ✓ Allow MassDevelopment to manage and invest in commercial piers
- ✓ Align functions with more appropriate entities and help ensure their purposes are fully realized



17. Conduct further analysis to determine how to best support dam regulatory function

- ✓ Elevate importance of dam regulatory function
- ✓ Enhance ability to address regulatory compliance for abandoned dams
- ✓ Assess resources and responsibilities for effective management and regulatory oversight of dams

Align Recommendations (2 of 2)



18. Obtain authority to continue successful long-term leasing agreements of ice rinks and explore long-term leases for remaining rinks

- ✓ Increase private investment in ice rink capital improvements
- ✓ Create better public experience through specialized ice rink management
- ✓ Maintain affordable and equitable access for users



19. Realign Office of Water Resources programs by transferring Water Resources Commission technical support function to EEA and the Flood Hazard Management function to a more appropriate government entity while keeping the Lakes and Ponds program within DCR

- ✓ Identify entity best able to support flood hazard management mission effectively for all impacted constituents
- ✓ Integrate water resource technical expertise with statewide water policy makers
- ✓ Evaluate the need to retain water conservation expertise in DCR



20. Transfer the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) program to EEA

- ✓ Develop stronger connection with community-driven conservation efforts
- ✓ Create potential for streamlined ACEC application process and reduced timeline for nominations of new ACECs

Thank You

