

## Park System Analysis: Hartford, Connecticut



“For more than 25 years....our parks have dropped in priority because other economic needs ...we want our parks to rise again...I thank The Trust for Public Land for these recommendations that we can build on.”

Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez

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### TPL Services

Bringing together its national expertise in comparative park analysis, computerized mapping, and stakeholder analysis, The Trust for Public Land partnered with the citizens of Hartford to set a strategy to revitalize the city’s historic yet struggling park system. The goal was to position the system as a true community asset that serves residents and enhances the city as a whole. TPL worked closely with leadership groups and individuals to assess if new parks are needed and what kind of parks they should be. TPL suggested how Hartford could learn from other cities’ structures, and advised on new ways to pay for park improvements.

### Project Highlights

A comparative analysis of the amount of parkland, facilities, and spending for parks in Hartford compared to other New England cities showed that the city is plentiful in parkland but not on resources to maintain it. This was supported by interviews and meetings with dozens of city officials, advocates, and residents, who provided additional insight into the aspirations and feelings of those living and working in the city. TPL also conducted a park equity analysis (through computer mapping) to discover which areas lacked parkland and what opportunities existed for filling those gaps. It found that the city’s south end was most in need for new parks, and that upgrading existing schoolyards may be one place to fill the gap. In addition, TPL conducted a computer-mapping based connectivity analysis to determine possible linkages between parks and places. The analysis showed an opportunity for a new “Greenbelt” that could link the city’s network of parks along waterways, underused land and on upgraded city streets that are more conducive to bicycling and walking. A review of public-private partnerships supporting parks revealed a need to unify and cooperate more between the different “friends of” park groups.

### Results

The report’s findings have helped the city begin restructuring its framework of private partnership organizations, set priorities for where additional parkland or re-use of schoolyards is needed, and begin the planning towards an interconnected greenway that links the existing or now-underway trail developments along the Park and Connecticut Rivers. These changes will help Hartford revitalize its park system, and result in a more economically healthy city.