



Luis Perez Demorizi, BLA '16
Director of Parks & Open Space | Parks, Recreation &
Culture Department, City of Newton

Luis was born in the Dominican Republic, but after much hardship, his family emigrated to the Bronx, NY with tourist visas and the hopes to gain permanent residency. His family eventually overstayed their visas and were considered undocumented immigrants, a status that remained throughout his family's entire experience in New York City. Luis shared a one-bedroom apartment in one of the city's thousands of tenement buildings with four other family members. His experience in the Bronx was one of community, cross-culturalism, and high crime rates - a true melting pot. This experience instilled in him a heightened awareness of the urban environment and the impacts it has on people's daily lives.

After unsuccessfully gaining legal permanent residence in the U.S., Luis and his family went back to the Dominican Republic. During the time that he spent as a young adult in the Dominican Republic, his awareness of the world and others grew deeper, as well as an invaluable perspective on socio-economic injustice and inequality can breed unsafe places for people. Through these experiences and perspectives, he has developed a drive to advocate for spaces that are safe and accessible to people of all walks of life and abilities.

Luis remains a strong champion for renovating public lands and enhancing their benefits to people and wildlife. After holding a few design positions at reputable firms, Luis is currently working for the City of Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture Department to enhance public open space so that they may continue to forge memories and renewed experiences to coming generations.

