



Norman B. Leventhal
Map & Education Center
at the Boston Public Library

PRESS RELEASE

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Exploring Three Centuries of Boston's Green Spaces: Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library announces new exhibition

*"Breathing Room: Mapping Boston's Green Spaces" will be open to the public from March 24
to September 30, 2018*

Boston, MA – The Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center announces the opening of a new exhibition, *Breathing Room: Mapping Boston's Green Spaces*. The exhibition explores Boston's green spaces, from Boston Common, to the Emerald Necklace, to hundreds of neighborhood parks, playgrounds, tot lots, community gardens, playing fields, cemeteries, and urban wilds. Visitors are invited to delve into each of the featured parks, as well as to discover the long legacies of community activism, public health, and environmental stewardship that contribute to the creation and protection of these green spaces. *Breathing Room* opens this weekend on Saturday, March 24, 2018.

Boston is home to some of the oldest, and most recognizable green spaces in the country. With maps of the city and surrounding areas dating back to 1775, *Breathing Room* showcases three centuries of open space in Boston. Visitors will discover how the country's oldest public park grew from a grazing pasture to an iconic recreational and social center, how 19th-century reformers came to view parks as environmental remedies for ill health, how innovative landscape architects fashioned green oases in the midst of a booming metropolis, and what the future holds for Boston's open spaces.



The exhibition begins with maps pertaining to the Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston, the nation's first regional park system. As visitors walk through the gallery, they will encounter Charles Eliot's famous map of Massachusetts' open spaces in 1893, and in the next displays they will view maps of spaces such as the Middlesex Fells and Blue Hills Reservations, two of the four reservations that comprised the original Metropolitan Parks System.

Shifting into Boston proper, the exhibition showcases both the dreamed of and the realized green spaces found throughout the city. From Boston Common, to the celebrated Emerald Necklace, to the Southwest Corridor Park, visitors will experience Boston's open spaces and parks through a cartographic lens.

"These maps breathe life into the rich history of Boston's parks as spaces of leisure, labor, performance, and protest," said Dory Klein, Map Librarian at the Leventhal Map & Education Center and curator of the show. "We are excited to invite visitors to discover the stories behind our open spaces, and to think about their significance today and in the future."

The exhibition is curated to appeal to all ages, with thought-provoking material for adults, as well as a cartoon mascot, Chucky the Chickadee, designed by Derek Cascio, a local artist and professor of industrial design at Wentworth Institute of Technology. Children are invited to follow Chucky's footprints through the gallery to uncover scavenger hunt clues and explore kid-sized nooks with games, puzzles, questions, and activities.

We invite the public to view this new exhibition, and to attend talks and family programming to be announced. The Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center is located on the main floor of the Central Library in Copley Square and is open to the public Monday-Thursday 10am-7pm; Friday-Saturday 10am-5 pm; and Sunday 1-5pm.

A virtual version of the exhibition, including digitized maps, full captions, and a 3D gallery walkthrough, will be available at <https://www.leventhalmap.org/exhibitions/>.

The Map & Education Center is grateful for its continuing long-term partnership with the Boston Public Library and for the exhibition sponsors which include The Lawrence and Lillian Solomon Foundation, The Trust for Public Land, the Boston Cultural Council, NBBJ, and Trustees.

Community Partners who are also involved with this exhibition and its associated programming include: Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University · Boston Harbor Now · Boston Map Society · Boston Parks and Recreation Department · Boston Planning & Development Agency · Brookline Parks and Open Space · Charles River Alliance · Charles River Conservancy · Charles River Watershed Association · Emerald Necklace Conservancy · Environmental League of Massachusetts · Esplanade Association · Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site · The Freedom Trail Foundation · Friends of Post Office Square · Friends of the Public Garden · Imagine Boston 2030 · Livable Streets Alliance · Department of Conservation and Recreation – State Parks · Massachusetts Historical Society · Massachusetts Port Authority · Mount Auburn Cemetery · Muddy River Restoration Project Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee · Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy · Southwest Corridor Park Management Advisory Council · The Trust for Public Land · Trustees · University of Massachusetts Boston Archives and Special Collections Department

About the NORMAN B. LEVENTHAL MAP & EDUCATION CENTER AT THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center is ranked among the top map centers in the United States for the size of its collection, the significance of its historical (pre-1900) material, its advanced digitization program, and its exceptional exhibitions and educational programs.

The Center's mission is to use its extensive map collections to inspire curiosity and learning among people of all ages, illuminating history, geography, world cultures, science, and contemporary issues. The Center offers a robust selection of K-12 education programs for students of all levels, develops and disseminates lesson plans, and trains teachers to use maps effectively and creatively in the classroom. Public programming includes changing exhibitions, lectures, workshops, classes, and family programs. An extensive website offers free access to nearly 10,000 high resolution digitized maps of historical significance, virtual exhibitions, geo-referencing capabilities, and a Tools for Teachers section with map sets and classroom activities.

The Center was established by philanthropist Norman Leventhal as a public-private partnership with the Boston Public Library and was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 2007. The Center stewards the Boston Public Library's permanent collection of 200,000 maps and 5,000 atlases and a select group of rare maps collected by Mr. Leventhal. The collection, the second largest in the country located in a public library, is freely available for academic and public research. To learn more, visit leventhalmap.org

About BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Boston Public Library provides educational, cultural and civic enrichment, free to all, for the residents of Boston, Massachusetts and beyond, through its collections, services, programs, and spaces. Established in 1848, the Boston Public Library is a pioneer of public library service in America. It was the first large free municipal library in the United States, the first public library to lend books, the first to have a branch library, and the first to have a children's room. As a City of Boston historic cultural institution, Boston Public Library today features a Central Library, twenty-five branches, a map center, business library, archival center; extensive special collections of rare books, manuscripts, photographs, and prints; and rich digital content and online services. The award-winning renovation of the Central Library in Copley Square, completed in 2016, together with new, renovated and historic branches, provide a transformed library system for the next generation of users. Boston Public Library enriches lives, hosting thousands of free educational programs and exhibitions, and providing free library services online and in-person to millions of people each year.

To learn more, visit bpl.org

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