Visualizing Change: Stories of Community Activism in Digital Commonwealth Collections

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Who we are

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

The Leventhal Map and Education Center is a nonprofit education and research center housed in the Boston Public Library.

Focus on creative educational use of maps in center and digitally.

250,000 maps, historical atlases, digital geospatial data, globes and other primary source materials, 10,000 of which have been digitized.
How can maps and digital mapping be used to help students envision their city and propose change?
Visualizing Change and Activism in Boston

How can maps help us see change?

What has stayed the same over time? What has changed?

How did this change happen? What is the role of activism in this change?
Case Studies

- Tent City
- Dudley Triangle
- Southwest Corridor
- Parcel C
Tent City
Evidence of Change

Looking and thinking about these two maps side by side, what kinds of changes do you see? What do you see that has stayed the same?

What do these maps tell you about the neighborhood or city?

What don't they tell you about the neighborhood or city that would help you understand it better?
Changemakers

What did you learn that helped you make sense of either of the maps, or both of them?

Who were the people that created the change in the location on your maps, and why did they feel the change was important?

What is a question you have about this place after learning some things about it?
Documenting the Role of Activism through Digital Collections
South End urban renewal area R-56: property map
Boston Redevelopment Authority
August 1965

Boston Public Library
Boston Public Library Collection
Young students look into Boston Redevelopment Authority South End office during BRA sit-in
April 25, 1968

Boston Public Library
Brearley Collection
People, not Cars
This is a place
where homes should be.
Other Highlights from the Activism in Boston Over Time Primary Source Set
Inner belt protest march in Cambridge,
Carrol J. Myett
February 26, 1966

Cambridge Historical Commission
Cambridge Photo Morgue Collection
DUDLEY STREET NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUMMARY

The plan begins with a description of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and the process for selecting the consultants.

This is followed by a detailed description of the neighborhood and residents and their aspirations.

Two key concepts drive the revitalization plan: One is critical mass and the other tandem strategy:

- Critical mass is the process of putting together a project of sufficient size so that we can successfully control the character of our neighborhood.

- Tandem strategy: Discuss our process of developing new construction and rehabilitation of existing housing at the same time.

1. REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

The development strategy proposes to use an Urban Village as the key concept. This “village” would have a commons with retail and recreational space. Between 800 and 1000 units of new housing would be constructed and 1089 housing units would be rehabbed. The program would take place over 5 years and is estimated to cost $134,855,016. New housing would be available for families with an income of $10-15,000 or more which requires a subsidy program valued at $26,000,000. A limited amount of rental housing would be available to families earning less than $10,000.

The third purpose is to identify techniques and strategies which will increase the accountability of human service providers to the neighborhood(s) which they serve and to provide mechanisms which organized neighborhood residents can utilize to achieve a greater degree of control over the services being provided.

The fourth purpose is to foster greater coordination and provide opportunities for increased agency/resident cooperation.

Strategy Four: MARKETING RESEARCH APPROACH
- Replace conventional research approach with focus groups/marketing research.

Strategy Five: COMMUNITY REVIEW
- Public hearings through which residents can influence human service program priorities and funding.

Strategy Six: THE FORCE
- Major mobilization of community to eliminate crime and drug abuse.
- Self help project development.

Strategy Seven: STRENGTHEN THE RACIAL, ETHNIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY
- Provide assistance to Cape Verdean Community to develop human service programs.
- Encourage agency collaboration in determining best way to build on neighborhood diversity.

Strategy Eight: CHILD CARE
- Child care advocacy and central neighborhood registry for infants through teenagers.

Strategy Nine: RECREATION AND ATHLETICS
- Obtain staff person from Department of Parks to develop recreation master plan for neighborhood.
Parcel C

Chinatown residents march in Parcel C protest September 1993

Northeastern University Library
Chinese Progressive Association records (M163)
Want to learn more?

Tune in on **Thursday, September 28th**
3:00PM–4:30PM EST for **Visualizing Change in Boston: Using Digital Commonwealth Collections to Tell Stories of Places and Activism**, a more detailed look at our new primary source sets and accompanying lesson.

Registration info coming soon!
Thank you!

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