

## South End Audio Tour Transcript

- Begin your tour in front of SquashBusters Gym.
- Walk on the left side of the street.
- The open field is Carter Playground. Stop at the Gate.
- While here, MLK witnessed many injustices that inspired him in 1965 to lead a local march of 22,000 supporters over a mile and a half to protest unequal educational policies in the public schools – from this playground to the Boston Common. In a unique public-private partnership, Northeastern University and the City of Boston will build together a state-of-the-art athletic complex that will expand recreation opportunities for both Northeastern students and Boston residents.
- Northeastern will invest more than \$26 million to transform the city-owned William E. Carter Playground on Columbus Avenue. The shared public park – the first in Boston to be named for an African-American – is a hub of community and youth sports activity in the city's South End and Roxbury neighborhoods.
- The innovative project will provide city residents and the university community with upgraded athletic fields, tennis courts, a new children's playground, and additional open space, and will improve the existing connection to the city's Southwest Corridor Park.
- Carter School is behind the tennis courts, but not really visible from Columbus Avenue. The Carter School is a Boston Public School that offers assistance to students with severe disabilities and health needs.
- Continue walking up Columbus until you get to the intersection with Mass Ave.
- Before you cross look down Mass Ave to your left.
- Martin Luther King Jr. lived at 397 Massachusetts Ave while attending seminary at Boston University in the 1950s. He also started dating Coretta Scott King while he lived here. The Boston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was also originally located nearby but the current office is now in Roxbury.
- Cross to the other side of Mass Ave and then stop.
- Between the 1900s and 1950s, the South End was a vibrant, ethnically diverse neighborhood that served as a transitional community for immigrants. By 1950, 39 ethnic groups lived in this densely populated neighborhood. For example, Syrian, Lebanese, Armenian, and Chinese families all lived in the South End. Each group opened its own stores, stocking their native groceries and cultural items.
- The area also developed an African American community. In the 1900s, Pullman Porters and other rail workers, who were largely African-American, made their homes in the neighborhood near Back Bay Station the terminal station for the Northeast line.
- They joined African-American families moving into the neighborhood from Beacon Hill, which, as Boston developed and expanded, was becoming a primarily white, upper-class neighborhood. After WWI and WWII, more African-Americans moved into northern cities like Boston from the rural South in search of better opportunities and settled in the area too. This area became known as a

“jazz mecca.” While eventually Boston’s African-American community was focused more, though not entirely, in Roxbury to the south, the South End has a rich African-American and civil rights history.

- Make your way over to the mural on the right side of Columbus.
- These are the United South End Settlements. Since the late 1800s, South End has been a transitional community for immigrants to Boston-from a great number of countries.
- During this time, settlement houses were formed. These were charities that housed recent immigrants and helped them find permanent housing and jobs, learn English, and offered them opportunities to integrate fully into their communities. USES now offers a tremendous array of services, including but not limited to child care, youth programs, family services, and adult education.
- The South End Neighborhood Service Center is on the right. They are a community partner that provides Action for Boston Community Development services and programs.
- Continue on Columbus. Make a right onto Rutland Square.
- Make a left on to Tremont St. and a right to W Dedham St. you will see the arch of Villa Victoria on your right
- Like some of Boston’s other communities, the South End was built on former swampland. As Boston expanded, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, much of the swampland was filled in- forming the South End. It was originally dominated by wealthy residences. Boston City Hospital, now Boston Medical Center, with BU Med School, was founded in the 1860s; Boston College was originally in the South End, founded around the same time.
- The South End became increasingly working class as Boston’s industries expanded. Victorian houses were converted into workers’ tenements, and the area also became more urban with the introduction of transportation: trolley lines – first horse-drawn, then electric, and then railways.
- On the site of city Parcel 19, Villa Victoria is a result of the determination and effort of the largely Puerto Rican community who migrated here in the 1950’s and 60’s. The area was neglected by landlords and plagued with crumbling buildings, unsanitary conditions, and crime.
- Not willing to succumb to the aggressive urban renewal policies of the time, the residents organized to have a voice in what would happen to the area. They were helped out by St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church.
- Mayor Kevin White supported them and in 1968 the community activists won control over Parcel 19 – a stunning victory. They organized to renovate buildings, build new buildings, and run the whole complex cooperatively. The neighborhood has an arts center and runs community events, and youth programs.
- Continue on W Dedham and turn right at the intersection with Shawmut
- Across the street to the left is Blackstone School. Nearly 600 students ranging from Pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade attend from neighborhoods all over Boston. This school offers many programs such as English as a second language, classes for parents, the Power Lunch Program where students meet with mentors while they eat, and Technology Goes Home where students take computer lessons with

parents and families are able to purchase computers through no-interest loans. The school also has many partnerships with organizations such as City Year and Big Sisters & Big Brothers.

- Continue on Shawmut Avenue. Walk into the Square and stop at the fountain
- Blackstone and Franklin Squares were laid out by Charles Bullfinch in 1901. They are the oldest garden squares surviving in Boston. The original cast-iron fountains, each supported by 4 dolphins, are still here. This is Blackstone Square. Across on Washington Street, parallel to Shawmut is Franklin Square. Washington Street runs through the heart of the South End and into Roxbury; the Silver Line runs along it to Dudley Station.
- The Silver Line follows the path of the old Boston Elevated Rail, the original Orange Line, which ran from Sullivan Station to Dudley Station. From the 60s to the 80s, as mentioned before, parts of the South End were experiencing poverty, landlord neglect, and high rates of crime. Meanwhile, Boston business interests were focusing “urban renewal” efforts more to the west, not in the South End. So, in the 1980s, with the Southwest Corridor victory, the city agreed to build a new orange line along the more westerly corridor – which meant tearing down the original orange line that ran here. It was replaced only with buses. The Silver Line only came in the 2000s, and some say it’s not a fair replacement. On the other hand, tearing down the elevated railway allowed for Washington Street to be beautified and not to divide the neighborhood in half with a railway.
- When you exit the square keep walking on Washington St.
- Rutland/Washington Community Garden is on the right when you cross W Newton St. Known colloquially as the Gazebo Garden, the land was donated by the city of Boston in 1991. Today it is owned by the South End Lower Roxbury Community Space Land Trust. Plots are individually owned and maintained. Because of this, the gate is always locked and the flourishing plots can only be viewed from outside looking through the fence.
- Continue on Washington St. Flour Bakery and Café will be on your Right
- Flour is a local bakery/café owned by pastry chef Joanne Chang with 5 locations in the Boston area. The South End site opened first in 2000 and now there are also Flour locations in Fort Point Channel, Central Square Cambridge, and Back Bay Boston.
- Take a right after Walgreens until it meets Tremont
- In the past few decades, the South End, previously a neglected, low-income neighborhood, has been transformed. Middle-class and increasingly more affluent people admired the old Victorian-style homes and began buying them up and renovating them. With the end of Boston rent control in the 1990s, the area became even more expensive to live in, which decreased its diversity and pushed out former residents. But as we’ve seen today, thanks to community organizations and neighborhood activists, affordable housing does still exist in the South End.
- Take a left onto Tremont St. Walk on the right side
- At the corner of Tremont St. and W Concord St on the left is Old New Hope Baptist Church. This once Baptist church is in the process of being turned into 6 townhouse style condominium units.

- Located between Waltham and East Berkley St., SOWA Market, which stands for South of Washington, is one of the smaller neighborhoods within the South End that hosts an open market every Sunday from May to October. The market features several sections both outside and inside with the main attractions being a farmer's market, a vintage market, an artist's market and a food truck corral.
- The South End is home to many artist studios. Some of these studios participate in "First Fridays" which means that they open their spaces the first Friday of each month allowing visitors to view their art. Every September almost all of the South End Studios participate in a weekend long event called South End Open Studios where artists display what they have worked on in the past year.
- The South End is also full of interesting local cafes, boutiques, restaurants and galleries. It is a fun place to walk around, shop or grab a bite to eat.
- A little farther up Tremont St., after you cross over Mass Ave you will see Lenox/Kendall Community Garden on your left.
- Also owned by the South End Lower Roxbury Community Space Land Trust. Not only is this space used for gardening, but they also host programs.
- Turn right at Burke St. This will bring you back to SquashBusters Center. You can walk back to campus via the parking lot