

# Wikidata and Boston Neighborhood Public Art

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Northeastern University

**Library**

# What is the Boston Research Center?



DIGITAL  
COMMUNITY  
HISTORY &  
ARCHIVES LAB



PLATFORM STORIES  
OF HISTORICALLY  
UNDERREPRESENTED  
COMMUNITIES



REMIX AND  
RE-COMBINE  
ACROSS FORMATS  
& ORGANIZATIONS



SAFELY &  
PERMANENTLY  
HOUSE DIGITAL  
HISTORY PROJECTS

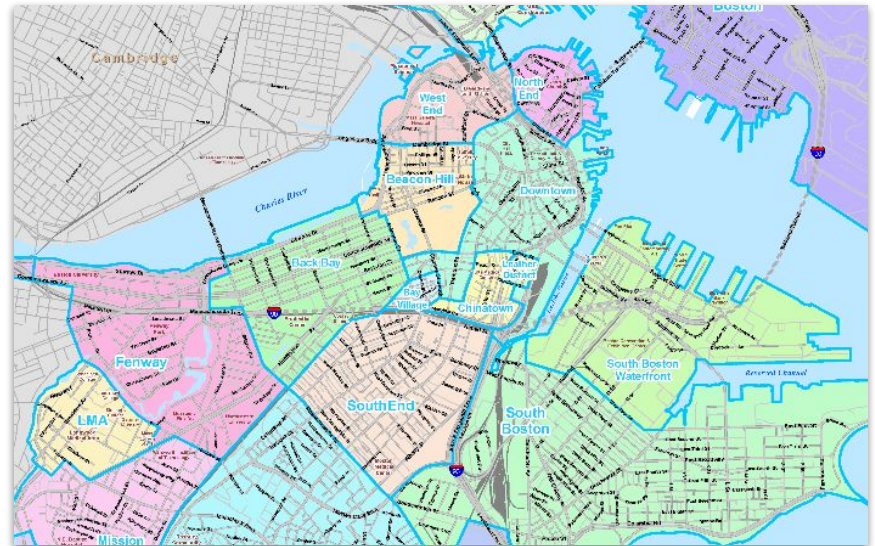
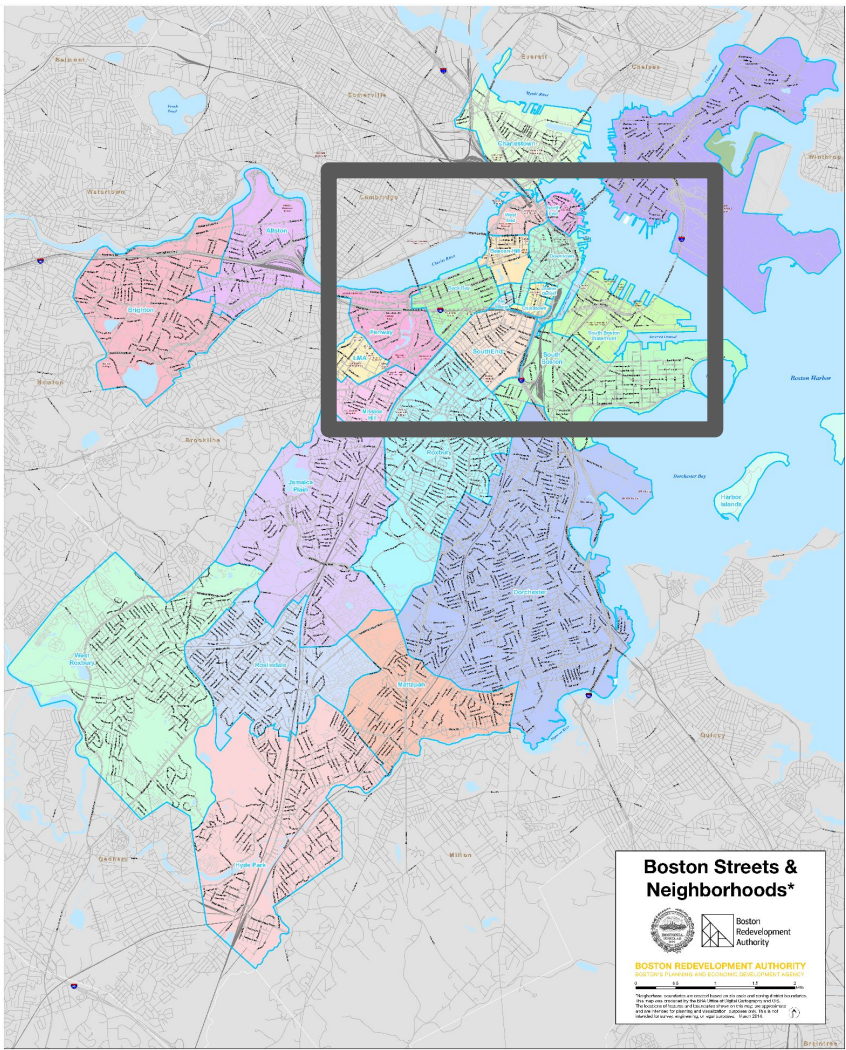


BASED ON NU/BPL  
ARCHIVES  
COLLECTIONS &  
RELATIONSHIPS



THE  
ANDREW W.

**MELLON**  
FOUNDATION



**Boston Streets & Neighborhoods\***



Boston  
Redevelopment  
Authority

**BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
BOSTON'S PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

\*This information is provided as a general reference only and does not constitute a contract. The information is provided as a general reference only and does not constitute a contract. For more information, please contact the Boston Redevelopment Authority at 225 State Street, Boston, MA 02109. © 2014 Boston Redevelopment Authority. All rights reserved.

“Boston Streets and Neighborhoods.” Boston Redevelopment Authority, March 2014. <http://www.bostonplans.org/3d-data-maps/gis-maps/citywide-maps>



**MASSART**

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE  
OF ART AND DESIGN

**CITY of BOSTON**  
**ARTS AND CULTURE**



**BOSTON  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY**



Northeastern University

**Library**

**NOW  
+ THERE**

artists for.  
**humanity** **30** YEARS  
CREATIVE JOBS FOR CREATIVE TEENS

**BOSTON  
ARCHIVES**  
PRESERVING THE PAST  
for BOSTON'S FUTURE

# Why Wikidata?

- Handling complex information and building connections between items
- Visualization tools bundled with the Wikidata Query Service
- **Community participation!**
  - Make what we have accessible
  - Invite people to contribute knowledge

# Getting started with a Wikidata project

- Deciding on data models
  - What do we have locally?
  - How are things already being done in Wikidata? (e.g., [WikiProject Public art](#))
- Cleaning and merging spreadsheets, bulk-uploading items for works and artists to Wikidata via [OpenRefine](#)
- Creating a WikiProject page to document models and tasks
- Tagging items with on focus list of Wikimedia project ([P5008](#)) Neighborhood Public Art in Boston ([Q108040915](#))
  - Can then patrol items on focus list using [recent changes tool](#)

# Show and tell

- [Our WikiProject page](#)
- [Map visualization](#)
- [Network visualization](#)
- [Timeline visualization](#) (using Histropedia)

# Show and tell: Project page

Project page [Discussion](#) [Read](#) [Edit](#) [View history](#)

## Wikidata:WikiProject Neighborhood Public Art in Boston

[Home](#)

[Data Model](#)

[List of Works](#)

[List of Artists](#)

### Contents [hide]

- Background
- Tasks
  - Create new items
  - Improve existing items
    - Add references
    - Add end dates (works)
    - Add coordinates (works)
    - Add biographical information (artists)
    - Add images
- Resources
  - Specific to Boston
  - General
- Queries
- Subpages
- Participants

### Background [edit]

Neighborhood Public Art in Boston is an initiative supported by staff at the Northeastern University Library's Boston Research Center along with staff at the Boston Public Library. Informa of organizations, and we hope to help gather this information in Wikidata to highlight the rich history of public art in Boston. We are particularly interested in highlighting the work of artists in Boston works in support of historically underserved communities. In Summer 2021 we are starting to build basic data about public art pieces, and their creators, located in the South End and Roxbury.

### Tasks [edit]

#### Create new items [edit]

There are a few different categories of items we want to create or improve to represent the Boston public art world. These data models should provide a good starting point, but are by no means sure to add on focus list of Wikimedia project (P5008) Neighborhood Public Art in Boston (Q108040918) so we can keep track of them. Our main focus is on works of public art and their artists, but organizations involved in public art (e.g., as funders or commissioners of works) and buildings, parks, squares, etc. where works in the collection are installed.

#### Improve existing items [edit]

#### Add references [edit]

For the works and artists currently on our focus list, add references to any unreferenced statements. See the Resources section below for some ideas of where to start researching.

Project page [Discussion](#) [Read](#) [Edit](#) [View history](#)

## Wikidata:WikiProject Neighborhood Public Art in Boston/Data model

<- Wikidata:WikiProject Neighborhood Public Art in Boston

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### Contents [hide]

- Works of art
  - Basic properties for works
  - External identifiers for works
- Artists
  - Basic properties for artists
  - External identifiers for artists
- Groups/organizations
  - Basic properties for organizations
  - External identifiers for organizations
- Sites/buildings
  - Basic properties for sites/buildings
  - External identifiers for sites/buildings

### Works of art [edit]

Consider using this [Cradle form](#) for simplified creation of new items. *After you create an item, don't forget to go back and add references to your statements.* For language of description and labels, use a two-letter language code (such as "en" for English). If the form fails to load, try a different browser.

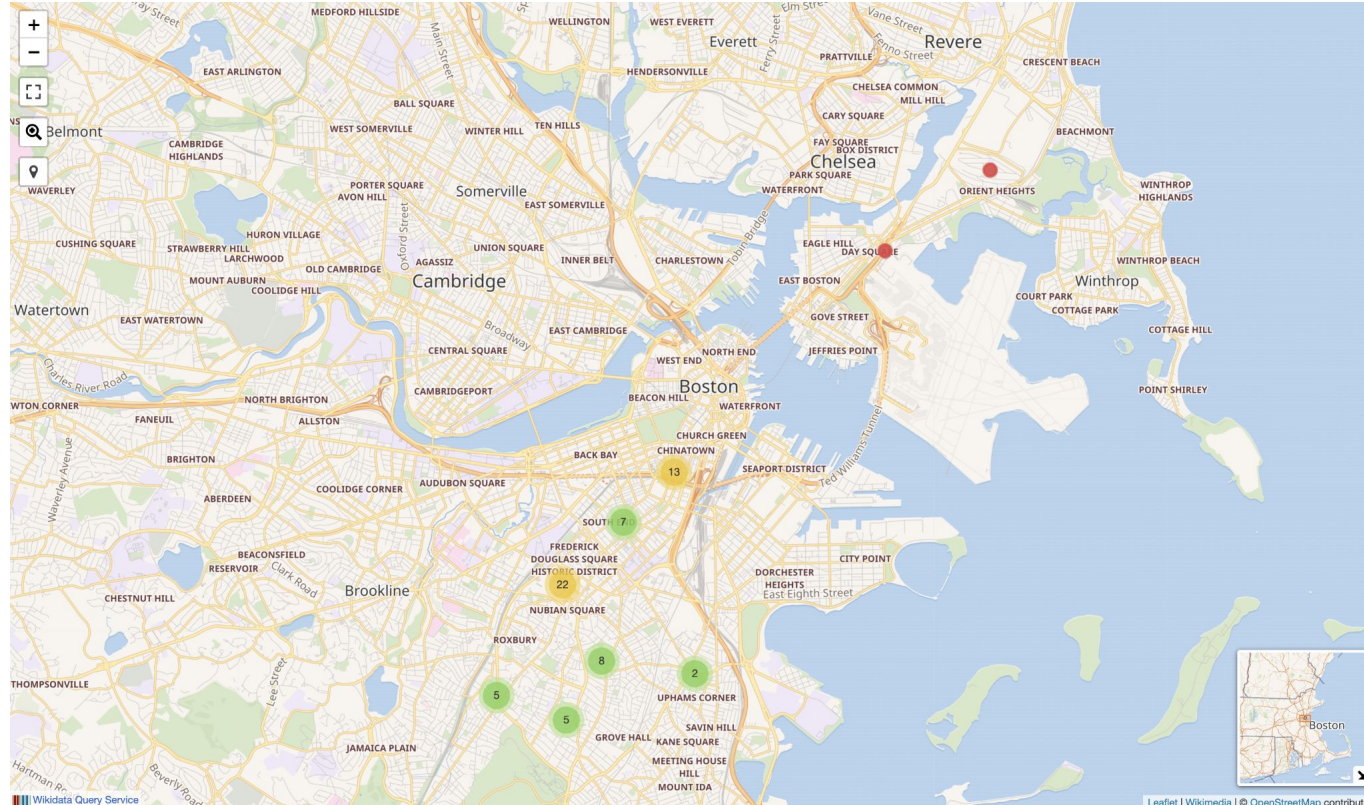
### Basic properties for works [edit]

Taken largely from Wikidata:WikiProject Public art/Data model

Title	ID	Data type	Description	Examples	Inverse
instance of	P31	Item	instance of: usually <a href="#">sculpture</a> (Q860861) or one of its subclasses; but can also be work of art (Q3838948) or one of its subclasses, <a href="#">painting</a> (Q3305213) or <a href="#">mural</a> (Q219423)...	Harriet Tubman Memorial <instance of> sculpture	-
genre	P136	Item	genre: public art (Q257141) or subclasses thereof, please always include this in items Additional values, such as <a href="#">Art Deco</a> (Q1173782), may also be included	Harriet Tubman Memorial <genre> public art	-
image	P18	Commons media file	illustration and image: a high-quality image from Wikimedia Commons which allows to see the work as fully as possible	Harriet Tubman Memorial <image> Harriet Tubman Memorial, Boston (front, uncropped).jpg	-
inception	P571	Point in time	date of establishment: date when the work was created and/or placed in situ; use qualifiers to explain further if needed	Harriet Tubman Memorial <inception> 1999	-
dissolved, abolished or demolished date	P576	Point in time	date of dissolution, abolition or demolition: date when the work was destroyed/taken down/replaced	Roxbury Love <dissolved, abolished or demolished date> 2020	-
located in the administrative territorial entity	P131	Item	administrative territorial entity: (administrative) place in which the work is situated; use the specific neighborhood of Boston when possible	Harriet Tubman Memorial <located in the administrative territorial entity> South End	-



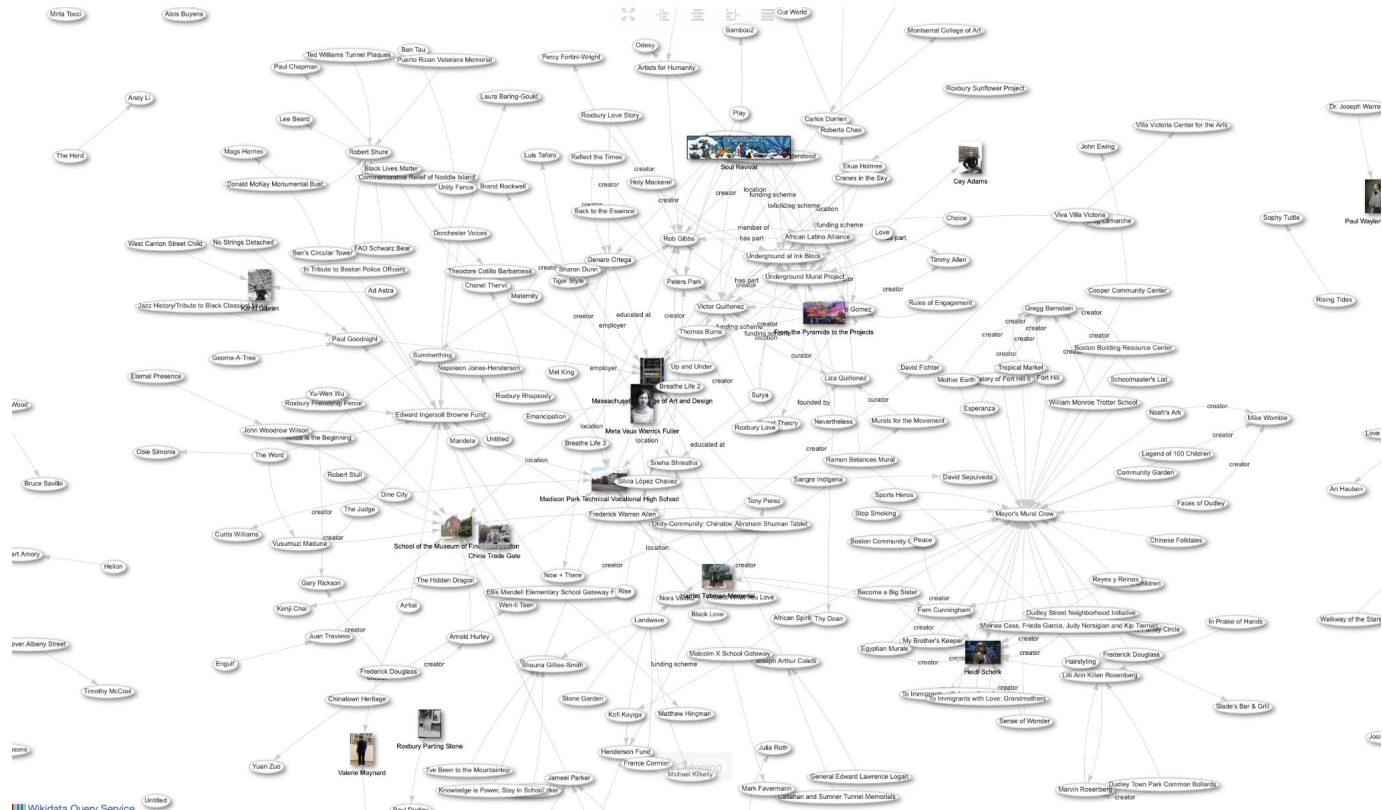
# Show and tell: Map



<https://w.wiki/4HtY>

# Show and tell: Network

<https://w.wiki/3rxm>



# Challenges/considerations

- Potential copyright issues with uploading images to Wikimedia Commons
- Citing our sources according to Wikidata reference practices
- Specific public art modeling questions
- Spotting and dealing with vandalism
- Getting wider community participation

# Hopes and dreams/next steps

- Host Wikidata edit-a-thons
  - [Boston Rock City edit-a-thon](#) as our model
- Build out connections between Wikidata items and materials in our institutional archives
- Create more advanced visualizations (looking beyond built-in tooling)

# Hopes and dreams/next steps

- Classroom activities
  - Create discrete research mini-projects - could be very short!
  - Emphasize arts documentation (guidebooks, maps, etc.)
  - Focus on local history
  - Discuss the transition from unstructured to structured data
  - Incorporate into existing activities around Wikipedia

# Wikidata and Boston Neighborhood Public Art

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