

A photograph of a park with a wooden gazebo, a soccer goal, and trees under a cloudy sky. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

**Parks | Community | Health**

**Design Workshop for the  
Thomaston Green  
3.16.24**

**Sara Carr**

*School of Architecture, Health and Wellness Design Lab*

**Kathy Simmonds**

*School of Nursing, Rural Health and Health Workforce Development Initiative*

**With:**

**Noah McAllister**

**Rory O'Connor**

**Betsy Schwefler**

**Emma van Geuns**

**Faye Yu (PhD Student)**



**Northeastern University**  
**Bouvé College of Health Sciences**

school  
of  
**Architecture** at Northeastern University  
College of Arts, Media and Design



Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

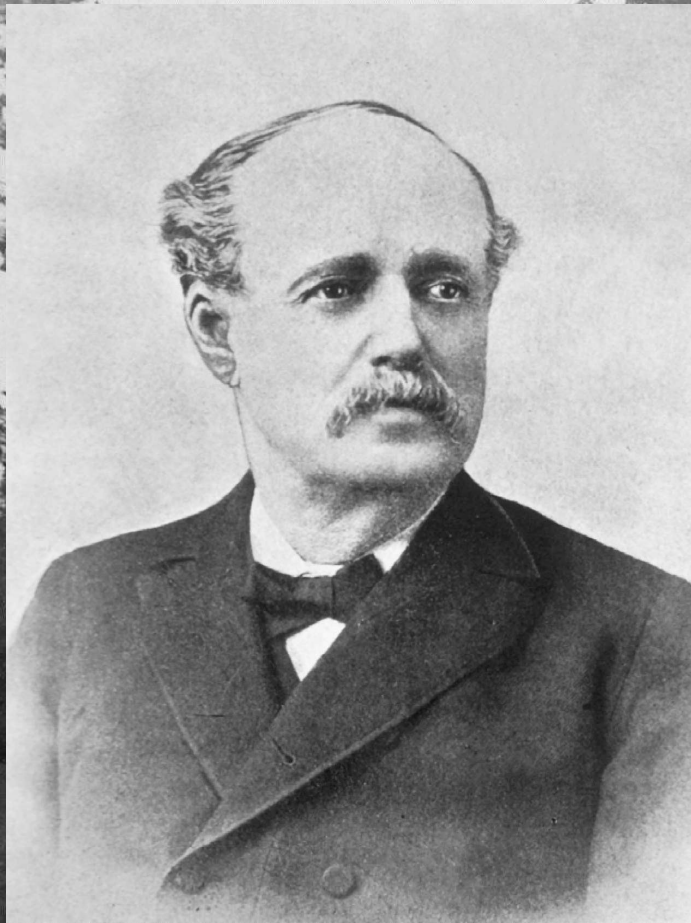


## The Power of Parks to Promote Health

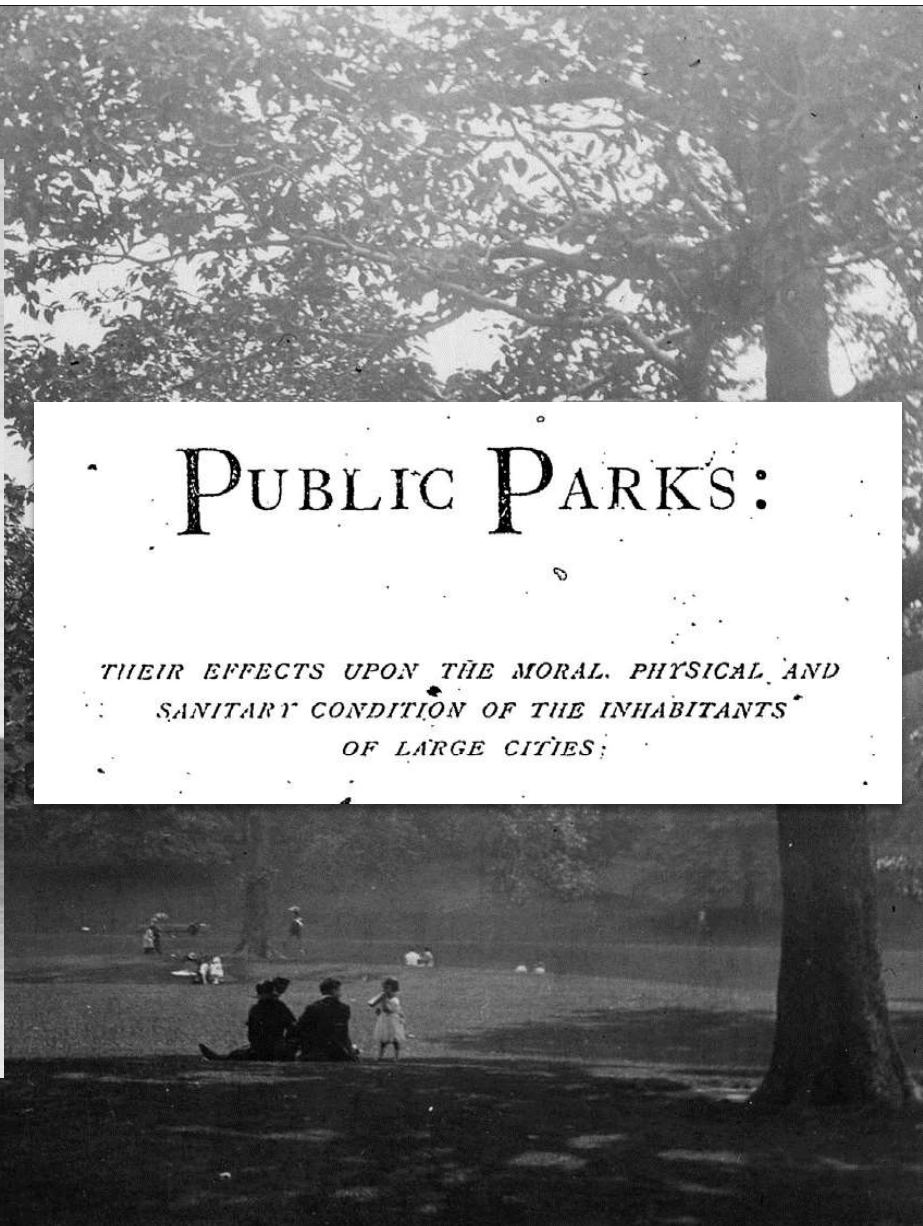
A SPECIAL REPORT

**“If we had a medicine that delivered as many benefits as parks, we would all be taking it...Parks deliver cardiovascular benefits, fight loneliness, combat osteoporosis, counter stress and anxiety, and more. And they do those things without adverse side effects and at minimal cost.”**

*-Dr. Howard Frumkin, former CDC official and dean of University of Washington School of Public Health*



**John Rauch, MD (1828-1894)**



# PUBLIC PARKS:

*THEIR EFFECTS UPON THE MORAL, PHYSICAL, AND  
SANITARY CONDITION OF THE INHABITANTS  
OF LARGE CITIES;*



**Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903)**



**Franklin Park, Boston, MA , undated photo  
(courtesy Olmsted National Historic Site)**

# Parks have a positive relationship with increased physical activity

**30 minutes a day of Physical Activity is enough to reduce:**



- By **50%**: the risk of developing coronary heart disease
- By **50%**: the risk of developing non-insulin-dependent diabetes and obesity.
- By **30%**: the risk of developing hypertension.
- The risk of colon /breast cancer
- Helping to maintain bone mass and protecting against osteoporosis.
- Increases self-esteem and overall psychological well-being.

# **Parks, social activity + community**

***Opportunities for social interaction have physical and psychological health benefits***



***...as long as spaces and activities are inclusive and accessible***

## **Biophilia Hypothesis**

**Humans have an innate relationship with nature and benefit from immersion in natural environments**

## **Restorative Environment Theory**

**A restorative environment is one that supports recovery from cognitive fatigue, stress, anxiety, and poor mood.**



# Parks and climate



***With careful design, parks can be up to 6° F cooler than surrounding neighborhoods, prevent flooding, and contribute to overall biodiversity***

# Parks and partnerships

**Parks with a health focus can partner with the healthcare industry (including insurers, hospitals, public health departments), philanthropies and nonprofits to build and maintain parks**



**Examples: writing "park prescriptions," building fitness stations, sport fields, courts, playgrounds, and trails, sponsoring programming, include park deficits in Community Health Needs Assessments**

# Agenda

**10:00** Site Visit

**10:45** Reconvene for workshop and coffee

**11-11:15** Introductions, Lightning talk on parks and health

**11:15-11:45** Design Activities (Round 1)

**11:45-12:15** Design Activities (Round 2)

**12:15** Takeaways, conclusions, next steps

# **Questions for today**

**How can we narrow down and locate desired amenities?**

**What are high, medium, and low priorities?**

**What features can make the park inclusive of the larger community?**

**What amenities are health promoting?**

**How can the new buildings (Fire/EMS Station and Knox Clinic) contribute to and partner with the overall park design?**