



Service Meets Design

How design and programming converged at Boston Public Library to build new relationships with children

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Central Library Children's
Services Team Leader,
Boston Public Library





Where We Started



Former Children's Room



Former Children's Room



... but what should our spaces be?

- Accessible to all
- A destination (worth returning to)
- Sensitive to children with sensory issues (i.e. autism spectrum)
- Age specific
- Engaging
- A journey
- Playful
- A space that inspires a love of learning
- A space with **a wow factor...**

(but what does that mean?)

Wow Factor & Design

What should our spaces do for patrons?

What is unique about the our Library?

How do we embrace our history and promote its future?

How do our children and teen patrons identify with our Library?



Wow Factor & Design

What should our spaces do for patrons? **GROW WITH AGE (the journey)**

What is unique about the our Library?

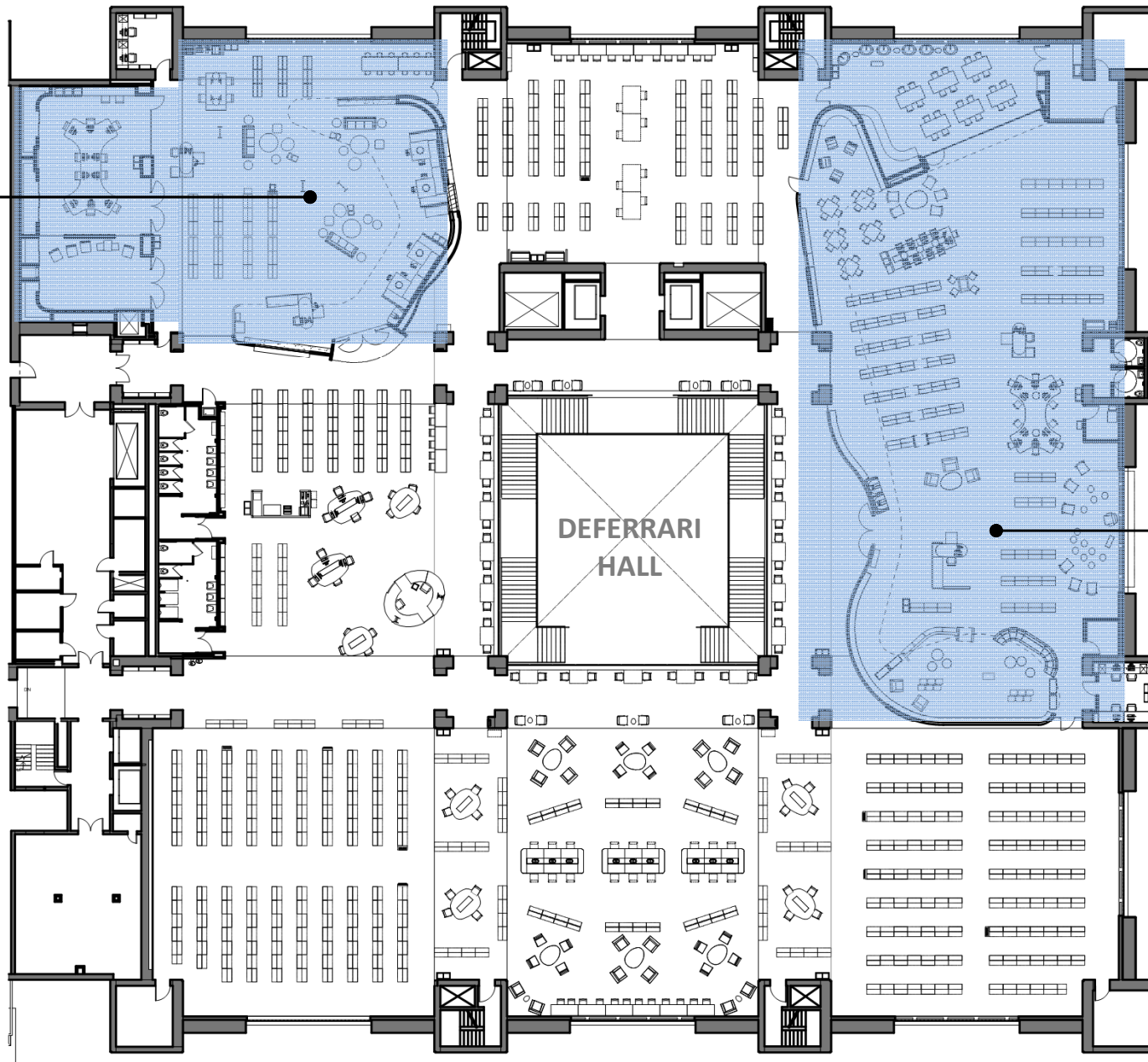
How do we embrace our history and promote its future?

What activities do we want to promote for Children and Teens at the Library?



BLAGDEN STREET

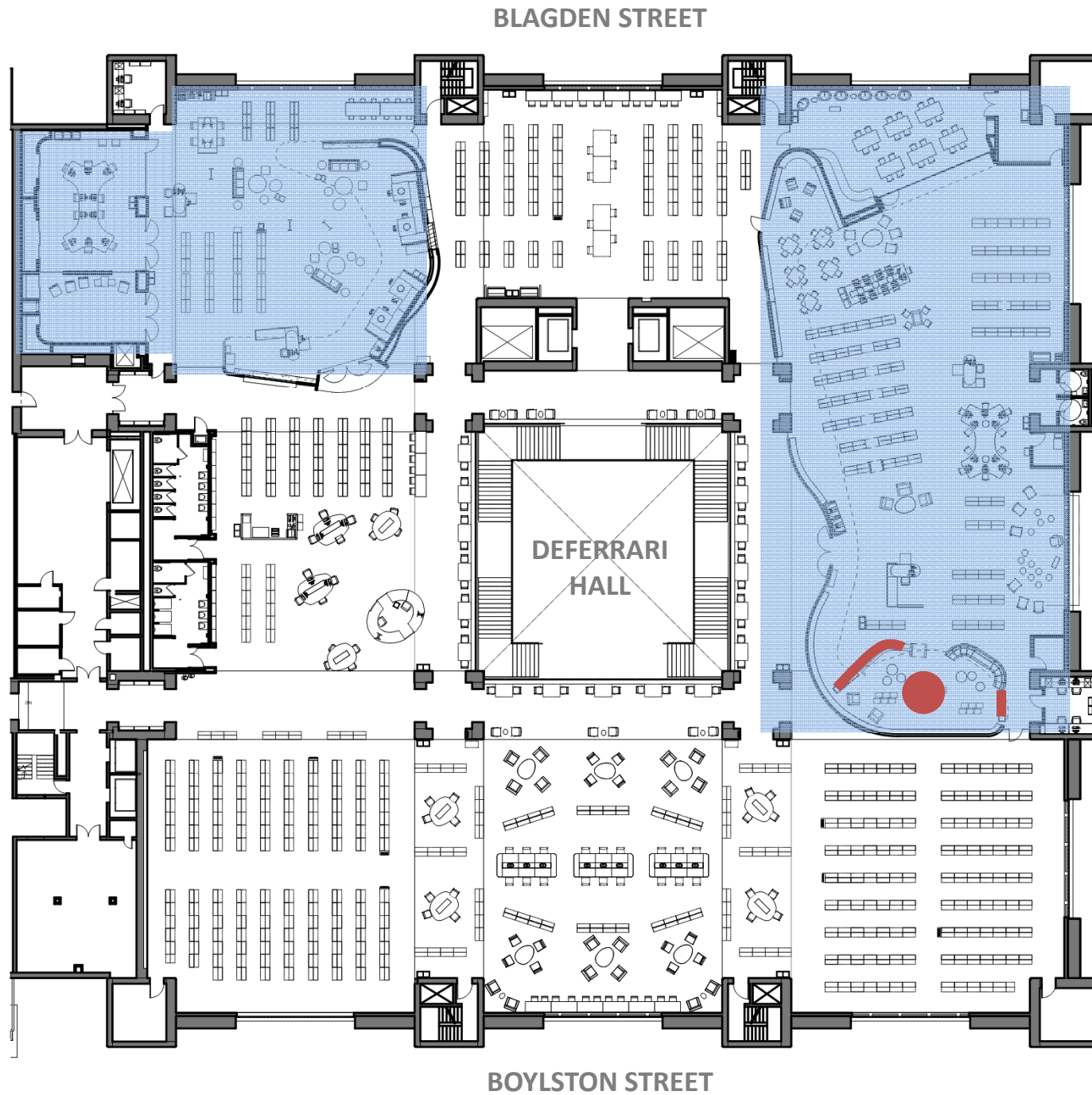
Teen Central



Children's
Library

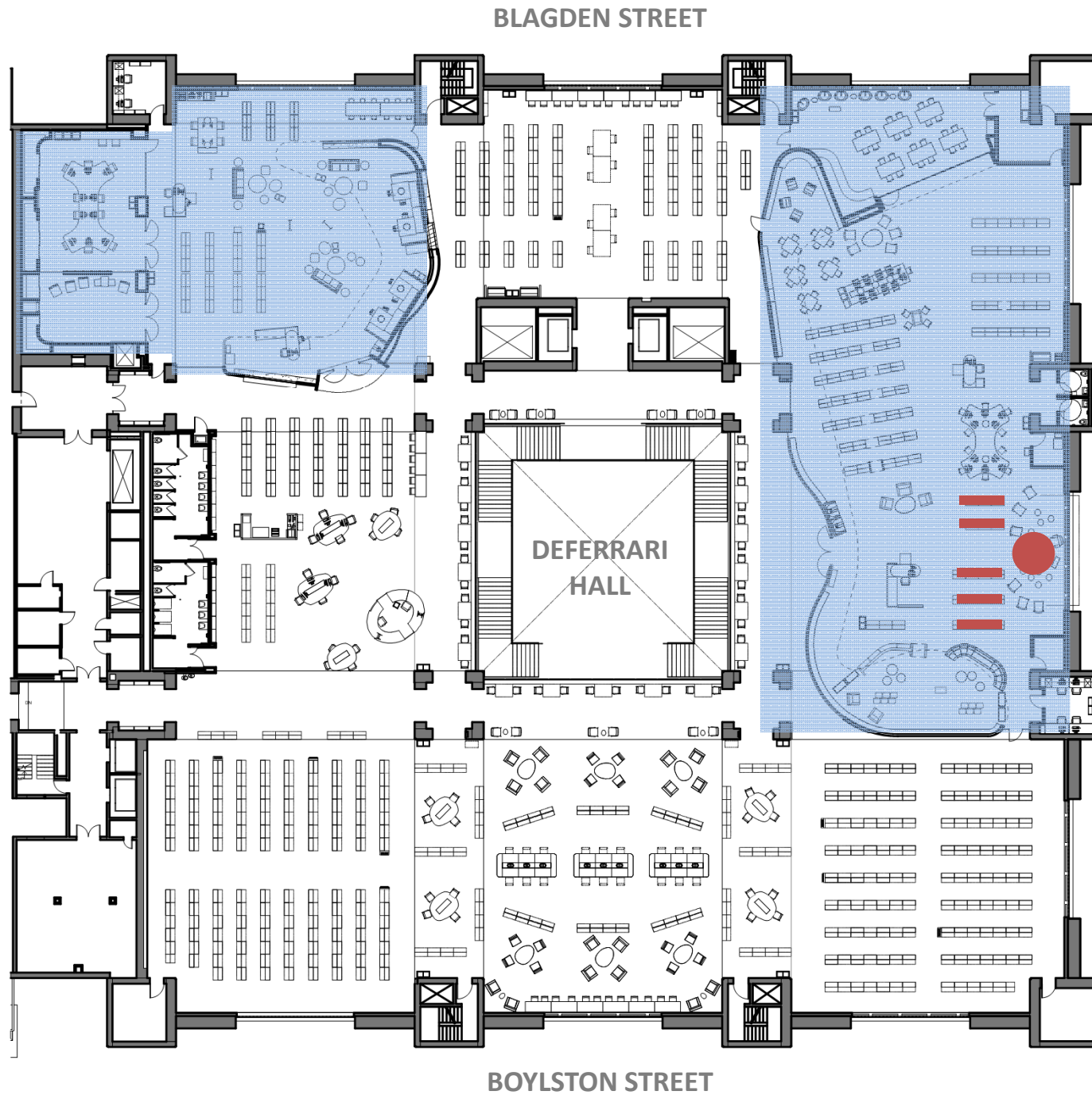
EXETER STREET

BOYLSTON STREET

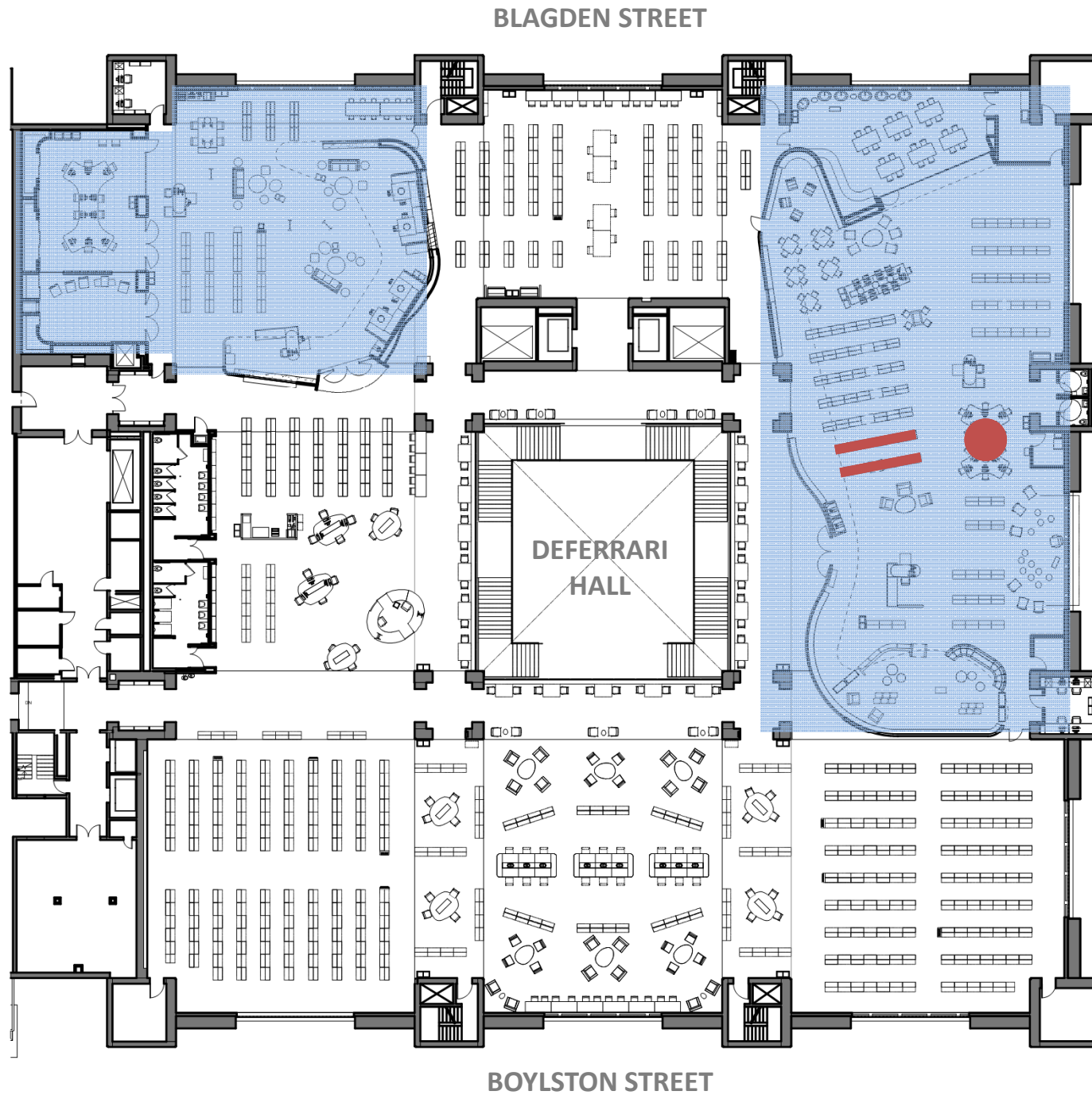


"Toddle Town"
ages 0-5
Experiential
Play + Board
Books

EXETER STREET

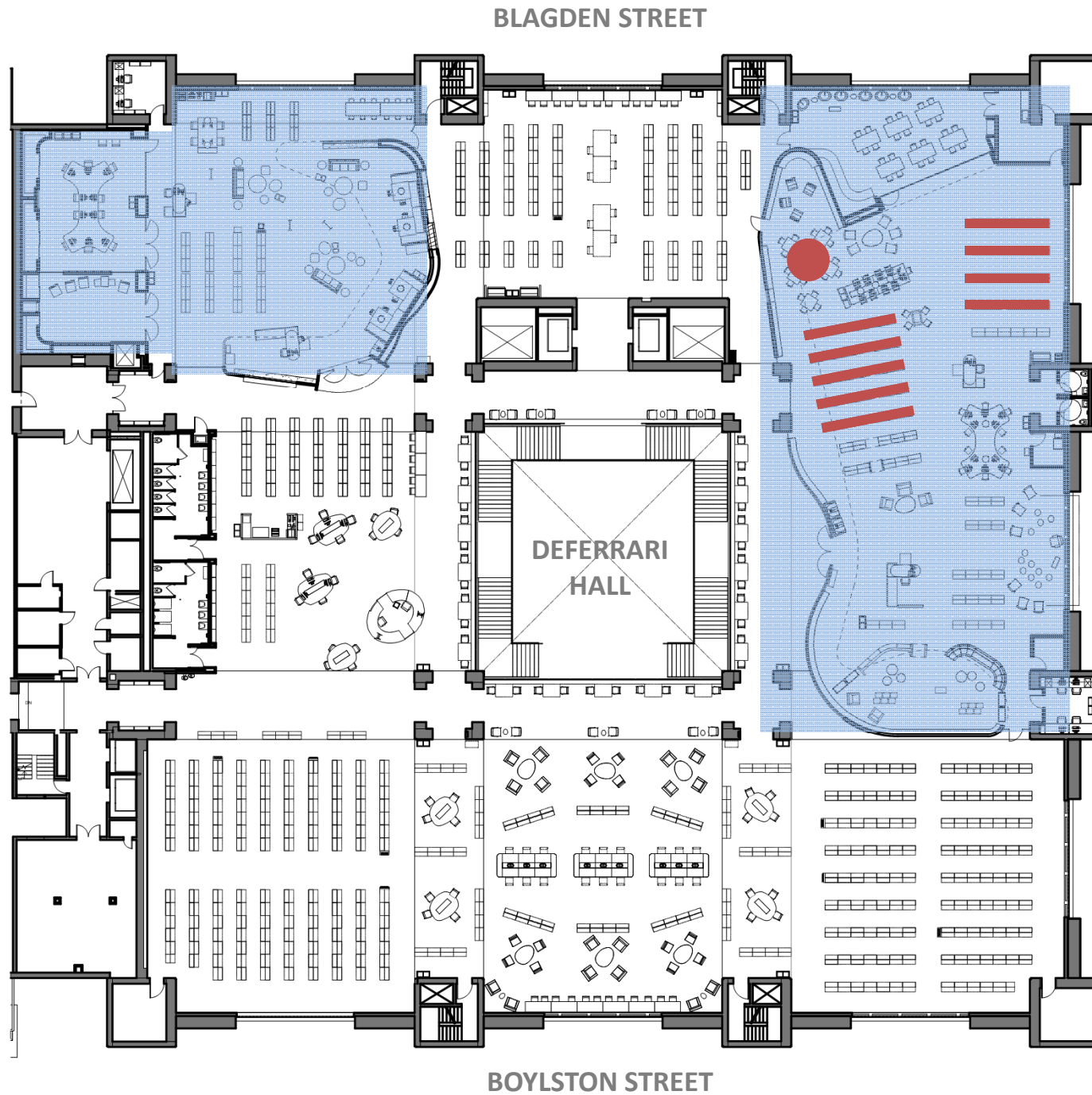


StoryScape
Ages 3-7
Imaginative
Play +
Picture Books



**Children's
Computers**
Ages 4 - 9
Easy Reader +
Early Chapter
books

EXETER STREET



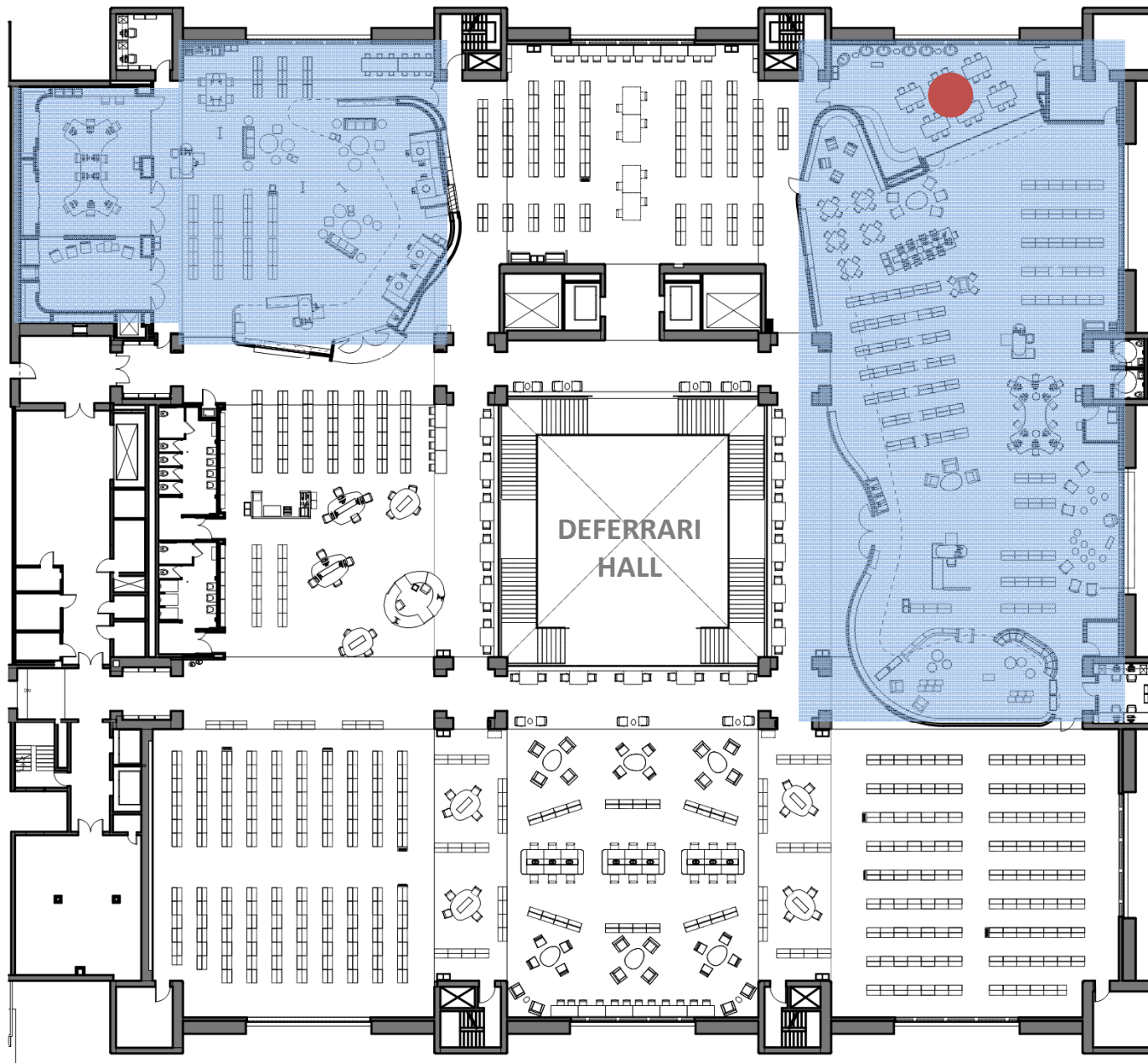
BLAGDEN STREET

**Tween Area
"The Bridge"**
Ages 8-12
Fiction
Nonfiction

EXETER STREET

BOYLSTON STREET

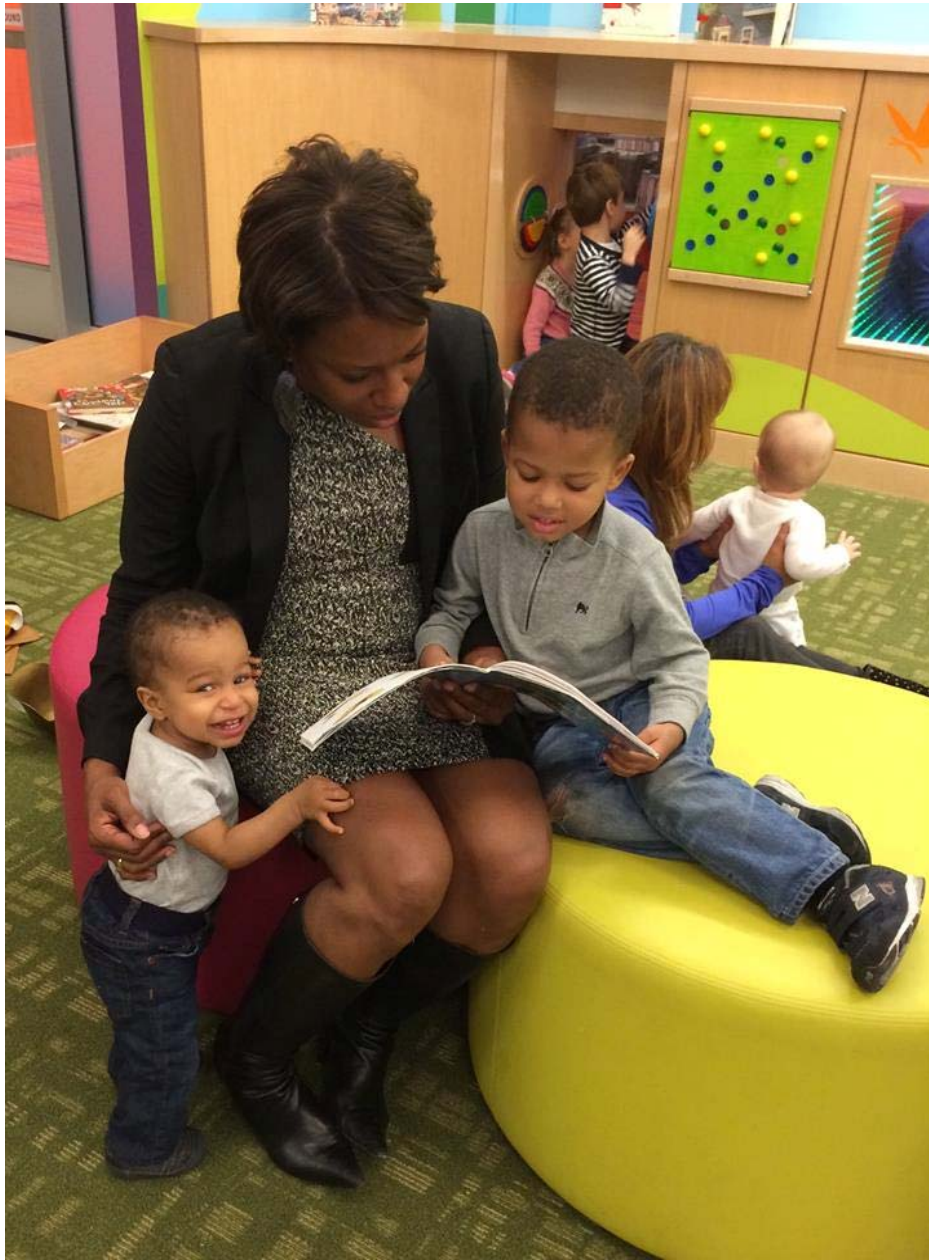
BLAGDEN STREET



Program Room
All ages

EXETER STREET

BOYLSTON STREET



Wow Factor & Design

What should our spaces do? **GROW WITH AGE** (the journey)

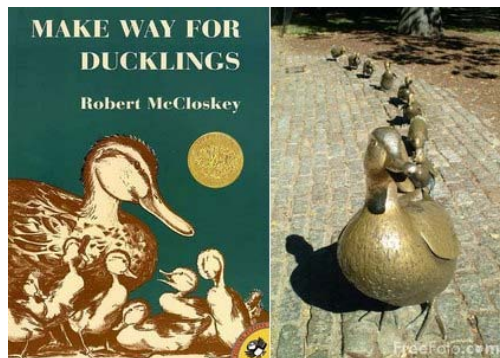
What is unique about the our Library? **ITS URBAN-NESS** (celebrate Boston)

How do we embrace our history and promote its future?

What activities do we want to promote for Children and Teens at the Library?



A Celebration of Boston



Wow Factor & Design

What should our spaces do? **GROW WITH AGE** (the journey)

What is unique about the our Library? **ITS URBAN-NESS** (celebrate Boston)

How do we embrace our history and promote its future? **STORYTELLING**

What activities do we want to promote for Children and Teens at the Library?



Storytelling



Storytelling (New England authors/stories)

Ages 0 – 5

Make Way for Ducklings

Jonathan and His Mommy

Knuffle Bunny

Bus Route to Boston

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Green Eggs and Ham

Clambake: A Wampanoag Tradition

Catie Copley

Owl Moon

Bats at the Library

Ten, Nine, Eight

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus

Seaside Dreams

The Mitten

Storytelling (New England authors/stories)

Ages 3 - 7

Clementine

Judy Moody Declares Independence

Alvin Ho

Elephant and Piggie

The Small Adventures of Popeye and Elvis

Rickshaw Girl

One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish

Ling and Ting Not Exactly the Same

Pennies for Elephants

Math Appeal

Ages 8 - 12

Diary of a Wimpy Kid

Johnny Tremain

Joey Pigza Swallows the Key

The Penderwicks

Beneath the Streets of Boston

Boston Jacky

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon

Gold Dust

The Road from Roxbury

Anastasia Krupnik

Little Women

... and others

Wow Factor & Design

What should our spaces do? **GROW WITH AGE** (the journey)

What is unique about the our Library? **ITS URBAN-NESS** (celebrate Boston)

How do we embrace our history and promote its future?

What activities do we want to promote for Children and Teens at the Library?

READ PLAY LEARN



Read, Play, Learn!



"Dewey Boxes" – Queens Public Library



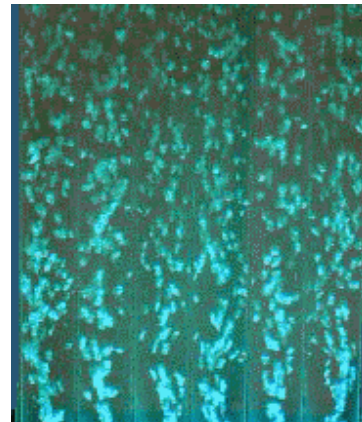
Storytelling with puppets



Interactive floor mat –
Boston Children's Museum



Interactivity &
sensory features



Child-scaled Reading &
Imagination spaces

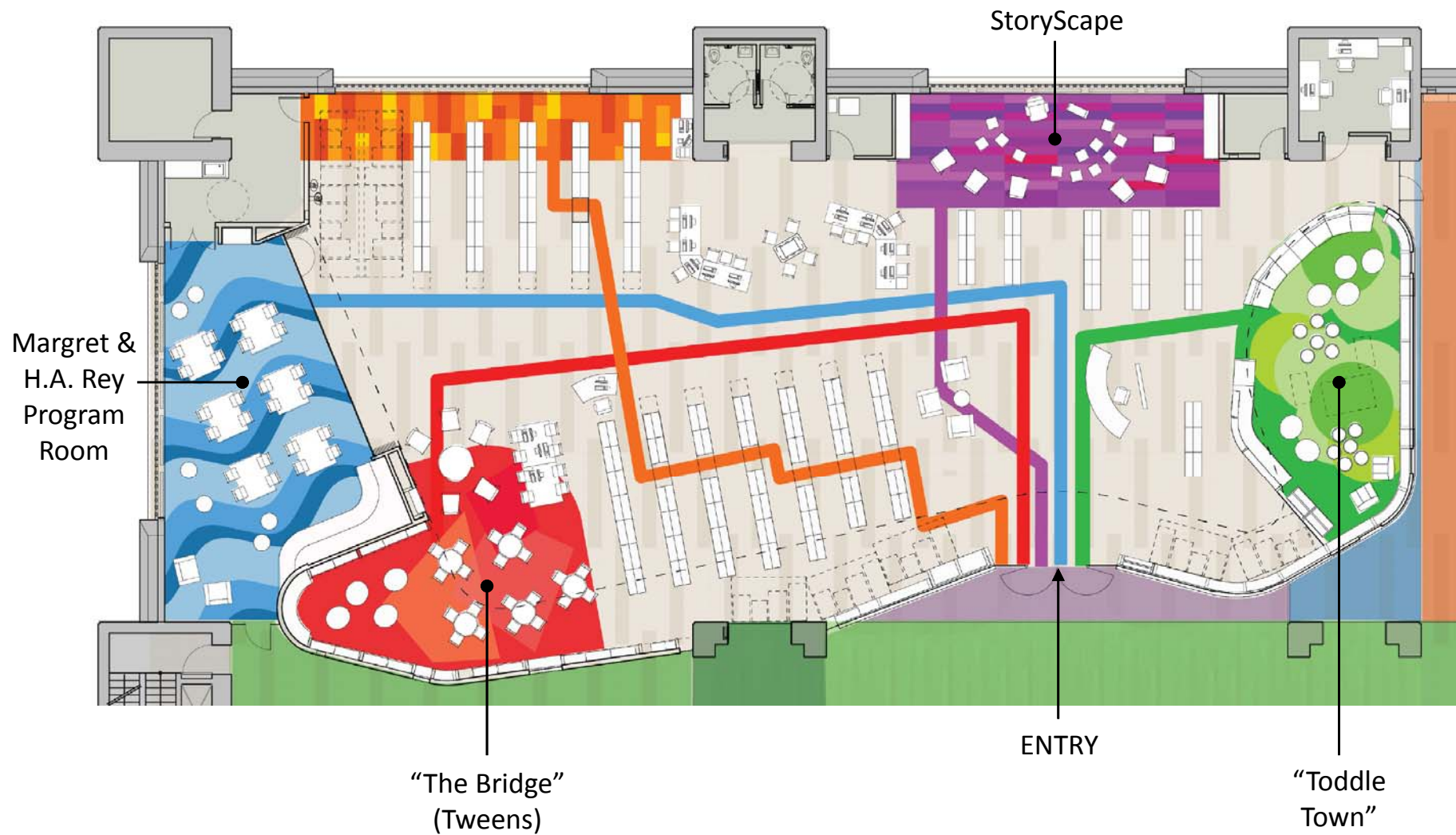
Transforming Ideas (the hardest part)



Transforming Ideas (the hardest part)



The Journey through Paths



The Journey through Paths



... and paths through stacks



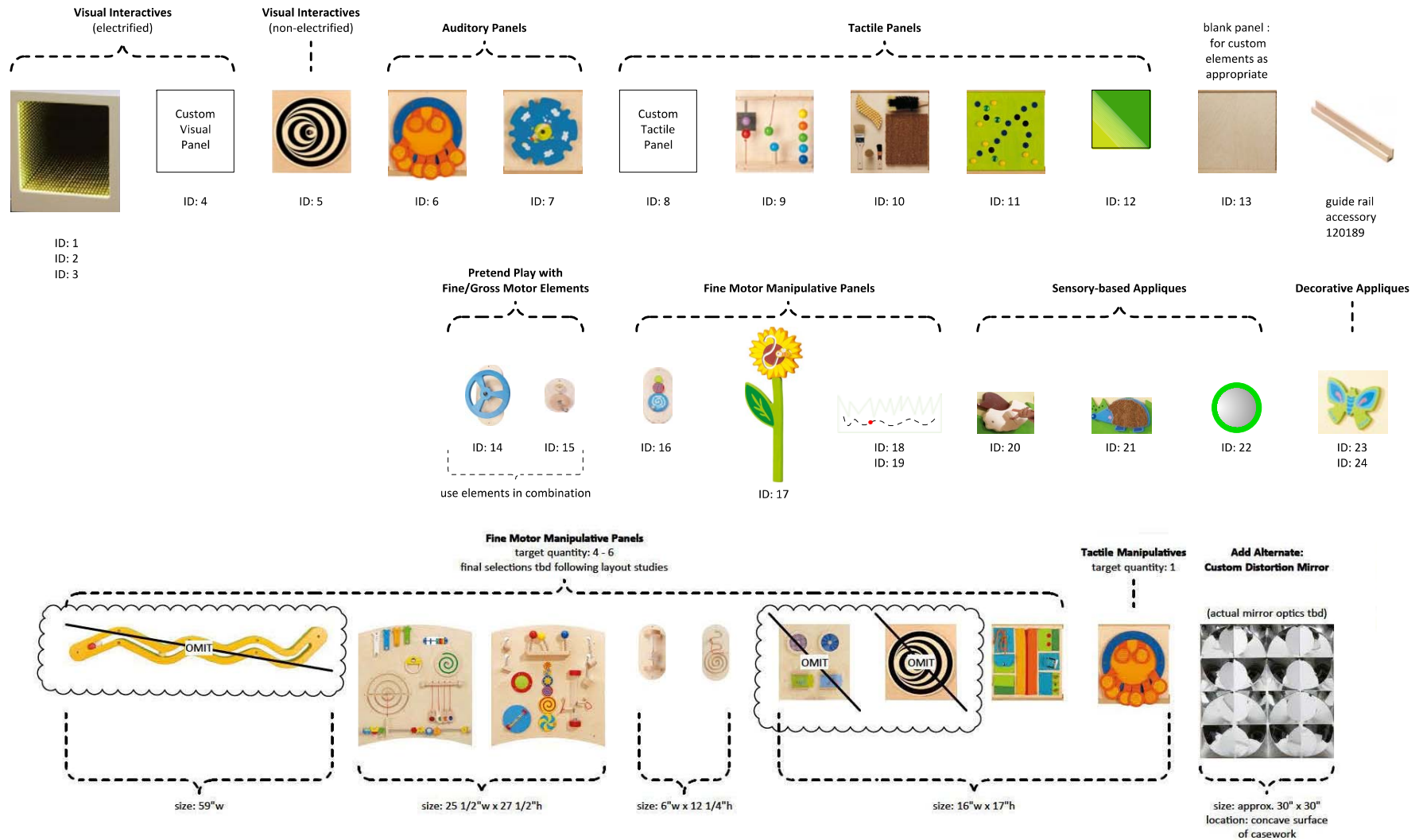


Pathway to Reading (aka sensory wall)





Pathway to Reading (aka sensory wall)



Pathway to Reading



Pathway to Reading



Pathway to Reading

Welcome to your child's pathway to reading.

Young children learn through experience, and providing a wide range of experiences is essential for infant brain development. Each new experience for a child builds new synapse connections in the brain, and these new connections can actually change the structure of the brain.

Children under the age of three are in an especially critical period of brain development – the connections built in these early years will affect learning for the rest of a child's life.

This Pathway to Reading sensory wall, generously donated by Bill and Cheryl Swanson in memory of Arthur and Louise Allen, creates a special opportunity for children and caregivers to explore new sensory experiences together.

For more information on infant brain development and early literacy, speak with a children's librarian or visit zerotothree.org.

Auditory stimuli

These sensory panels provide a limited amount of direct auditory stimuli for children. More importantly, they encourage the auditory stimulus that is most essential for brain development – a caregiver's voice.

Direct interactions with caring adults are the most important part of a young child's development. We encourage you to experience the sensory wall along with the children in your care – talk to children about what they are doing, seeing, and experiencing.

Visual stimuli

Like walking and talking, seeing is a skill that children develop over time. Children are learning how to process the visual world around them, and providing a range of visual experiences is essential for even the youngest child.

Visual sensory panels help children practice learned visual skills. Young children who engage with the visual panels are learning the ability to focus the eyes, follow movement, perceive depth, and move their eyes accurately.

Tactile stimuli

Touch is one of the first ways that children learn to explore the world, and providing a wide variety of tactile experiences encourages brain development in young children.

When interacting with the sensory wall, remember that unstructured play is one of the best ways for children to explore the world. Play encourages not only brain development, but also strengthens social skills, encourages language development, and helps create a strong bond with caregivers who play alongside a child.

Tips for engaging with the sensory wall

- Let children explore at their own pace. Notice what captures a child's attention and encourage the child to explore further.
- Talk with children about what they are doing, seeing, and feeling. Interaction with a caregiver is the best way to encourage infant brain development.
- Model behavior by engaging with the sensory wall. Children learn new behaviors by mimicking the behavior of their caregivers.
- Continue your explorations at home. Find opportunities to talk, read, sing, write, and play together to encourage brain development.

Central Library
Copley Square
700 Boylston Street
Boston MA 02116



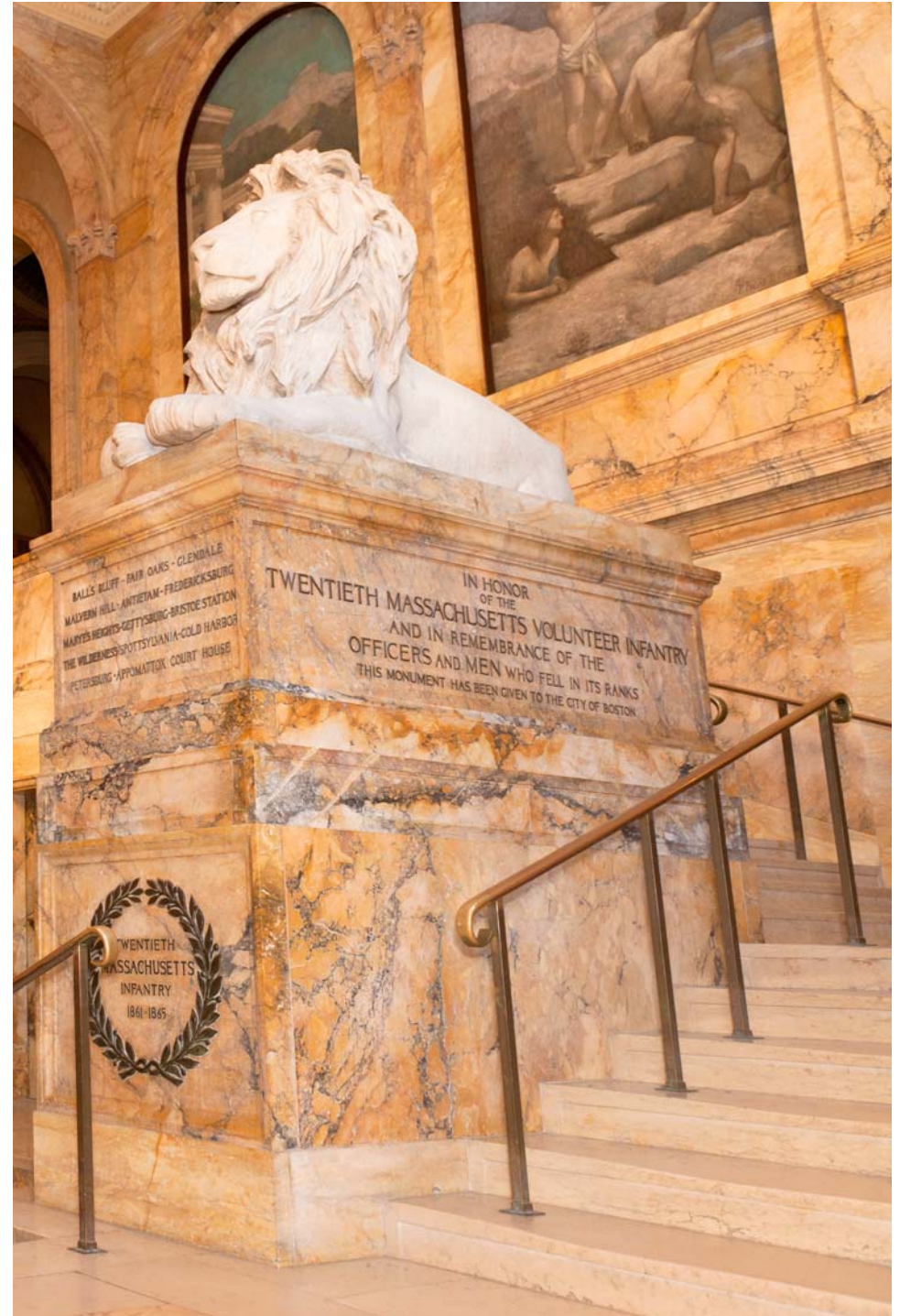
Patron Input and Engagement



Book Birds



Nods to History



Lion Cubs





Lion Cubs



Naming contest
(winning names were Leon, Cubby, and Dandelion)

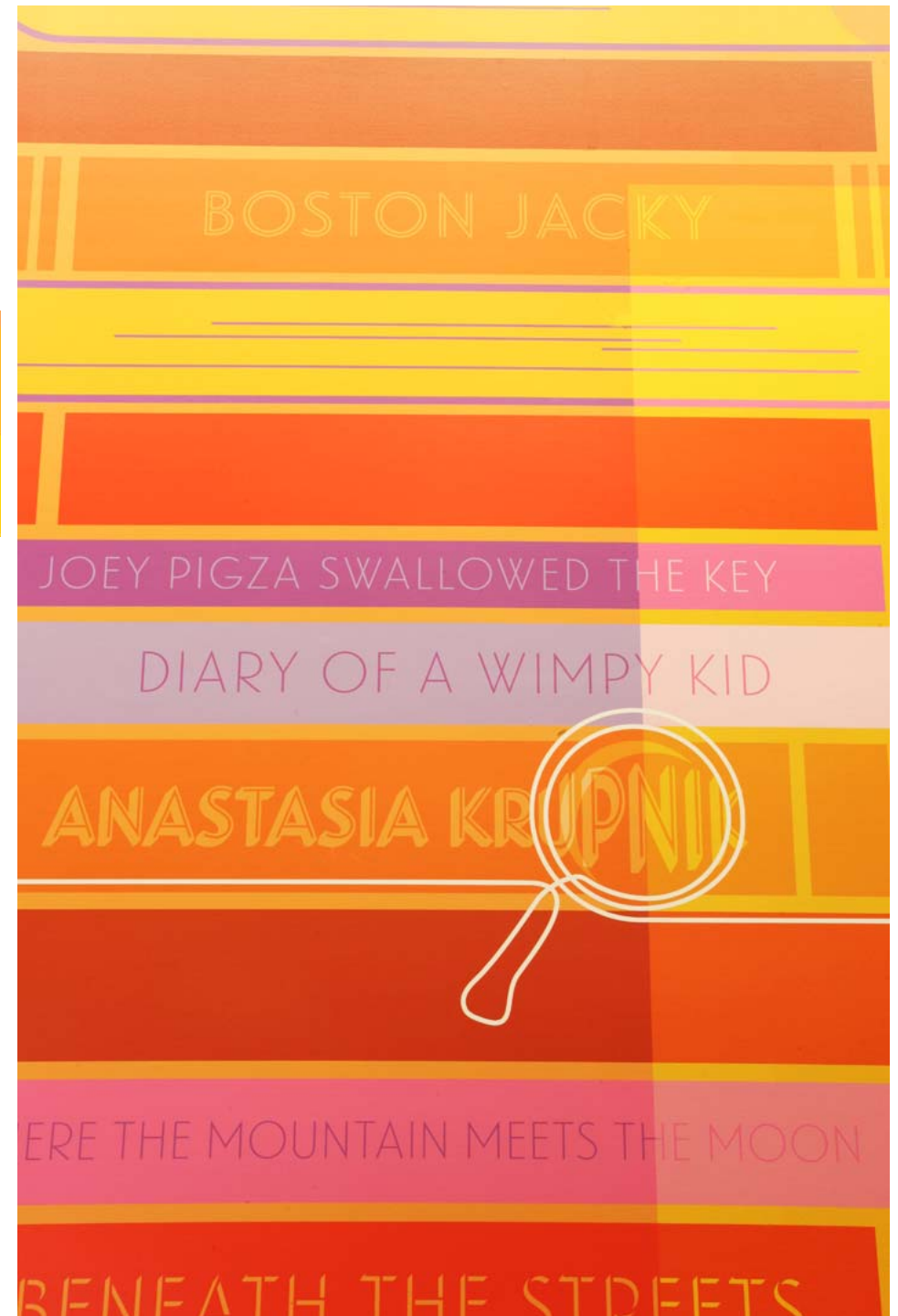




Storytelling



Celebrating New England-based authors & stories



Storytelling



Make Way for Ducklings

Storytelling

Make Way for Ducklings
Abran Paso a los Patitos
Rang lu gei ziao ya zi
Lese ti kanna yo pase
Abran Paso para Patinhos
Panu derekh al-barvezonim
Kamo-san o tori
Agi oridul hant'e kil ul
pik'yo chuseyo
Laissez Passer les Canards
Familie Schnack
Dorogu utiatum
Har kommer di!



StoryScape



StoryScape



StoryScape







The Bridge (twens)





Margret & H.A. Rey Program Room



Wow Factor & Programs

Where are the gaps in the library's programming for children and how can we fill those gaps?

How can we work with community partners to bring special cultural events to the library?

Is our children's programming in line with the Library's Compass Principles?

How can we meet the early literacy needs of our community?

















Thank you.

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