

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Multiple Historic Freedom Trail Sites to Close to Address Global Coronavirus Pandemic

Private operations cite responsibility to support public health goals in decision

(Boston, MA): Today multiple official historic sites on and adjacent to Boston's iconic Freedom Trail and the Freedom Trail Foundation collectively announced that they would end all public programming and tours and close to the public until at least March 31. Sites include: King's Chapel, Paul Revere House, Old North Church & Historic Site, Old South Meeting House, Old State House, USS Constitution Museum and the Museum of African American History, a leading site on Boston's Black Heritage Trail. Foundation-led walking tours will be put on hold.

"We have made the decision to suspend programming and close our sites to the public to support important public health goals and reinforce the benefits of social distancing. The Freedom Trail sites' and Freedom Trail Foundation's – who are involved in bringing the public together to experience Boston's shared history – collective message is this is not the time for operations as usual. We join Boston's other cultural institutions and major attractions and venues in this effort.

While we were taking, and could have continued to take, steps to protect the health of our individual employees, volunteers and visitors, we believe a stronger step is necessary. This decision is based on world health news regarding the spread and health impact of COVID-19, local information from elected officials, board expertise and our own collective sense of civic responsibility. This is a time for extraordinary steps to limit spread of COVID-19, support the health of our most vulnerable populations and maximize the availability of local health resources for those who need it most.

We recognize that this will be a disappointment to the tens of thousands of visitors that come to Boston each month to experience our City's history, but we are confident that this is the right decision.

Many of our sites are also part of the Trails to Freedom Partnership, comprised of organizations that manage sites along the Black Heritage and Freedom Trails that have been recognized by Congress for inclusion within the National Park Service for their outstanding national significance. While the National Park Service maintains continuity of operations throughout Boston, visitors and our local community members are urged to take extreme caution and follow all guidelines regarding social distancing and discretionary gatherings when considering a visit.

Out of an abundance of caution, effective Saturday, March 14, *USS Constitution*, under US Navy Command, is suspending normal operations to reduce the exposure of personnel to the novel

coronavirus (COVID-19). In addition, sites that are also places of worship will make independent decisions about canceling religious services.

Our organizations vary in size, number of employees and operations; each organization is taking individual steps to limit the impact of this challenging decision. In addition, we will be working together to identify ways to continue to share the history and the meaning of our sites with the general public through our websites, social media channels and other tools during this time.

We will be evaluating the situation on a weekly basis and will return to operations once it is no longer a risk to public health to do so.

We thank our loyal teams, visitors and friends for their continued support.”

Status of specific sites and organizations below:

Already closed:

- Old State House (Revolutionary Spaces)
- Old South Meeting House (Revolutionary Spaces)
- Paul Revere House
- King’s Chapel
- USS Constitution Museum

Closing by 4pm today:

- Museum of African American History

Closing by 5pm today:

- Old North Church & Historic Site
- Freedom Trail Foundation tours
- USS *Constitution*

Note: At this time, none of the above sites have a confirmed case of COVID-19 or known exposure to someone with a case of COVID-19.