



# PUBLIC SPACE PLANNING FOR SOUTHERN DOWNTOWN PARK FINAL REPORT

PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES

[WWW.PPS.ORG](http://WWW.PPS.ORG)  
[INFO@PPS.ORG](mailto:INFO@PPS.ORG)

+1 212 620 5660  
740 BROADWAY, 11TH FL  
NEW YORK, NY 10003



Prepared by:



Project for Public Spaces  
740 Broadway, 11th Fl  
New York, NY 10003  
212.620.5660  
pps.org

Prepared for::



Downtown  
Redevelopment  
Authority

Downtown Redevelopment Authority  
(DRA)/TIRZ No. 3  
909 Fannin, Suite 1650  
Houston, TX 77010

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PROJECT OVERVIEW</b>	<b>4</b>
Existing Conditions	
Timeline	
<b>THE PLACEMAKING PROCESS</b>	<b>10</b>
Elements of Great Public Spaces	
Outreach Summary	
<b>OVERALL PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>18</b>
Park Vision	
Overall Principles	
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>	<b>22</b>
Power of 10+	
Park Diagram with Power of 10+ Overlay	
Park Destinations & Programming	
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>46</b>
Building Location Study	
Survey Results	

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Southern Downtown neighborhood is a fast-growing residential area, with more than 1,500 units built in the past six years. The Downtown Redevelopment Authority (DRA), along with local partners, are working to support these development clusters by reinforcing a unique identity for downtown with a focus on green spaces, walkable streets and resident-oriented retail.

This report outlines the first steps in the public space planning process for a Southern Downtown Park, including the community outreach process, a vision for the future park and targeted guiding principles for great places.



NASHER SCULPTURE CENTER, DALLAS, TX

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

As part of Plan Downtown, a 20-year vision for an active, resident-friendly downtown Houston, the DRA has begun the planning process for a new park to be built on a downtown site, which currently houses a Goodyear Auto Service Center. After completing a ground lease for the property, which is bounded by Bell, San Jacinto, Leeland and Fannin, the DRA worked closely with Project for Public Spaces (PPS) to undertake an analysis of the space, along with a robust community outreach process, and comprehensive visioning. The space comprises three-quarters of a block and is about one acre in size. Once occupied by the new park, the space will be managed and programmed by the Houston Downtown Management District.

Additional downtown studies include:

- Plan Downtown: Converging Culture, Lifestyle & Commerce, 2017
- Southern Downtown Public Realm Plan, 2014
- ULI Technical Assistance Panel & Report: Making the Case for Urban Green Space in Southeastern Downtown, 2013
- Southern Downtown Market Assessment, 2013





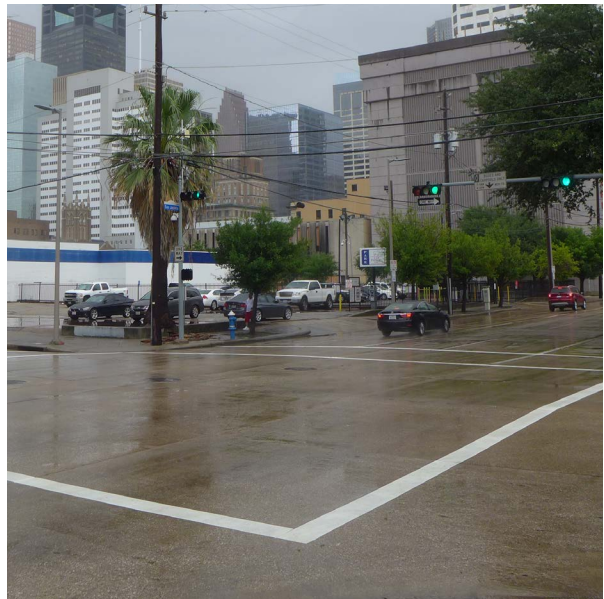
*View from Main*



*View from Fannin*



*At the corner of Fannin and Bell*



*View from San Jacinto and Leeland*

# PROJECT TIMELINE

JUNE 2018

JUNE 2018 -AUGUST 2018

AUGUST 2018 – SEPTEMBER 2018

PLACE EVALUATION & ANALYSIS

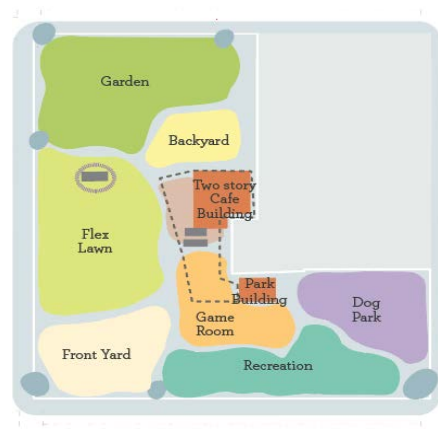
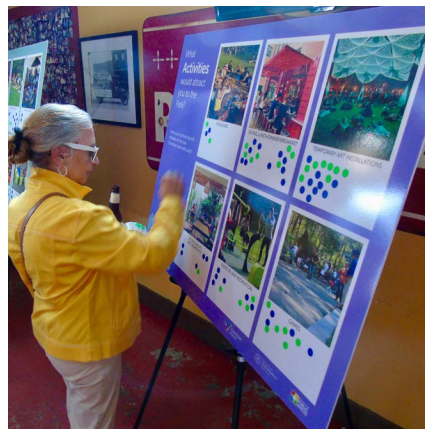
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & VISIONING

FINAL VISION AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

PPS reviewed all relevant background information, including existing planning reports, historical data and other marketing materials. PPS became familiar with downtown Houston and existing conditions, specifically the Southern Downtown neighborhood, as well as existing parks and plazas in and near downtown.

PPS utilized a diverse array of outreach methods including meetings, workshops, visioning boards and digital surveys.

Based on client and stakeholder input, PPS identified types and kinds of programming. PPS developed recommendations for a public space that includes possible amenities (including food & beverage services, seating, lighting and public art), landscape architecture, urban design, programming, circulation, ingress and egress and links to the community.





SEPTEMBER 2018 -NOVEMBER 2018

DECEMBER 2018 -JULY 2019

AUGUST 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020

**DESIGN RFQ RELEASE & DESIGN TEAM SELECTION**

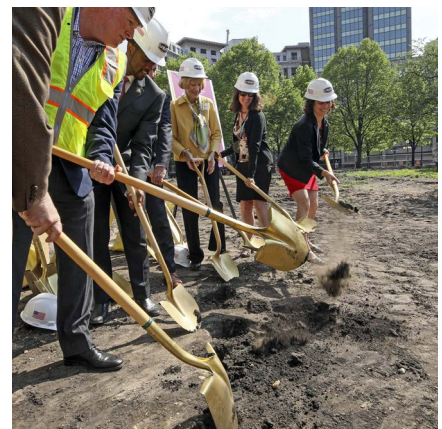
**DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS**

**PROCUREMENT & CONSTRUCTION**

The DRA will issue a Request for Qualifications in late September for design consultant procurement. Submitting qualifiers will be short-listed for an interview phase in mid-October with agreement negotiations, Board authorization and notice to proceed is anticipated in late November

The selected consultant team will develop the park plans over an 8-month duration, leading to a construction permit package to be used for contractor procurement. This design phase will develop the landscape, architectural and engineering solution guided by this programming report.

Based on a competitive bidding process, the DRA will select a general contractor to construct the Southern Downtown Park improvements. Bidding, negotiations and Board authorization will run from August to October 2019, followed by an estimated one year construction.



Note: Design through construction will be managed by the DRA; this is an estimated timeline only.

## THE PLACEMAKING PROCESS

Placemaking is the process by which a community collectively reimagines and reinvents its public spaces. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value.



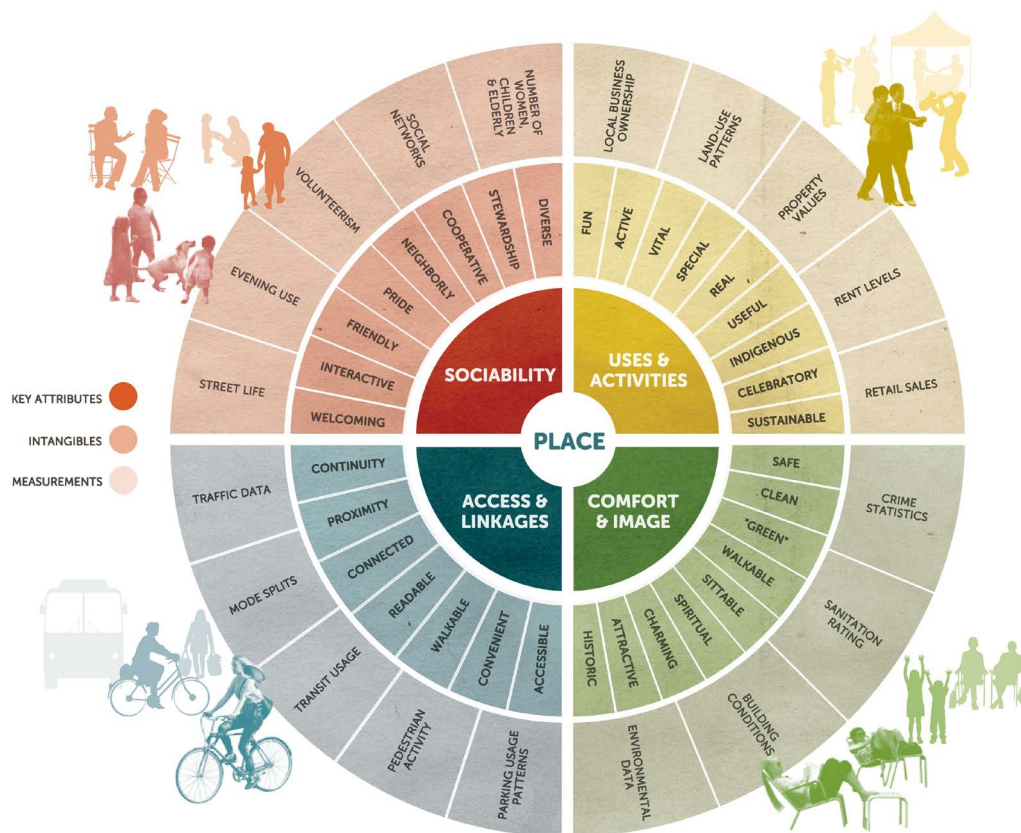
PEARL BREWERY COMPLEX, SAN ANTONIO, TX  
PHOTO CREDIT: SILVER VENTURES

## FOUR ELEMENTS OF GREAT PUBLIC SPACES:

Most great places, whether a grand downtown plaza or a humble neighborhood park, share four key attributes:

- They are **accessible** and **well connected** to other important places in the area.
- People are drawn to participate in **activities** there.
- The space is **comfortable** and projects a good **image**.
- They are **sociable** places where people like to gather, visiting again and again.

The Place Diagram was developed by Project for Public Spaces (PPS) to help communities evaluate their own places. The inner ring represents key attributes, the middle ring intangible qualities, and the outer ring, measurable data. (Diagram copyright PPS, 2018)





## SOCIABILITY

This is the most important quality for a place to achieve — and the most difficult. A great place is achieved when it becomes a favorite spot for people to meet friends, greet their neighbors, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers.



## USES & ACTIVITIES

A range of activities are the fundamental building blocks of a great place. Having something to do gives people a reason to come (and return) to a place. When there is nothing interesting to do, a space will sit empty — the best measure that something is wrong. A carefully chosen range of activities will help a place attract a variety of people at different times of the day. A playground will draw young kids during the day, while basketball courts draw older kids after school, and concerts bring everyone together during the evening.



## ACCESS & LINKAGES

One can easily judge the accessibility of a place by noting its connections to its surroundings, including visual links. A great public space is easy to get to, easy to enter, and easy to navigate. It is arranged so that most of what is going on is visible both from a distance and up close. The edges of a public space also play an important role in making it accessible. A row of shops along a street, for instance, is more interesting and generally safer to walk along than a blank wall or an empty lot. Accessible spaces can be conveniently reached by foot and, ideally, public transit, and they have high parking turnover.



## COMFORT

A space that is comfortable and looks inviting is likely to be successful. A sense of comfort includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and the availability of places to sit. A lack of seating is the surprising downfall of many otherwise good places. People are drawn to places that provide a choice of places to sit, so they can be either in or out of the sun at various times of day or year.

## OUTREACH SUMMARY

Over the course of the community engagement process, it became clear that nearby stakeholders envision the park as an intimate, green space to gather and relax. Through collaboration with local partners, it will also be a somewhat active space, with food, live music and art to enjoy. Community engagement began with a kick-off meeting in June, and continued with focus groups, workshops, dot board “voting” opportunities and an online survey.

### KICK-OFF

The kick-off meeting emphasized the importance of the park being a space for nearby residents, downtown office workers, law school students and members of nearby churches, among others.

### VISION/DOT BOARDS

Dot boards, which were utilized throughout the community outreach process, reinforced the excitement around the park as a well-shaded, comfortable local food destination, filled with temporary art exhibitions and the occasional concert. Dot board respondents also overwhelmingly preferred the new park to be a lush, green space.

### FOCUS GROUPS

Targeted focus group meetings highlighted the importance of bringing Wifi, games and bike facilities to the new park. Participants seemed to agree on a “backyard feel” for the space, which would be directed toward residents living nearby; although not the focus, they thought there should also be a place for children to play and have fun. Participants cited the success of vendors like Niko Niko’s in Market

Square Park and pointed out the possibility of using flexible spaces for health-minded programming through local partners like the YMCA.

### WORKSHOP

The workshop participants reinforced the idea of the park as a green “backyard” space, easily accessed by pedestrians and cyclists. Water features and lush plantings were identified as key to the park with intimate and meditative space, flexible seating, places to cool off and areas for dogs. Workshop participants envisioned live music, outdoor exercise space, and engagement with local partners in the arts and food service — but also hoped to avoid “over-programming” the space. Participants were enthusiastic about a full-service café and several stakeholders brought up the idea of a two-level space.

### SURVEY

PPS created an online survey, which was distributed to neighborhood stakeholders, resulting in more than 980 respondents. The survey, overwhelmingly used by residents and downtown office workers, reinforced many of the findings from previous outreach opportunities: the survey respondents envision a park filled with live music and art, as well as space to eat and enjoy the shade and greenery. Survey participants, a majority of whom report visiting existing Houston parks at least several times a month, also hoped for pop-up activities and high-quality lighting in the new park. For a detailed view of survey data, please see the Appendix.

KICKOFF	
18 JUNE	DRA and PPS met to set priorities for the new Park

VISIONING DOT BOARDS	
JULY	250+ locals participated in the dot board exercise at various residential properties and the South Texas College of Law

FOCUS GROUPS	
27 JULY	PPS led small stakeholder focus groups to better understand their relationship to the space

ONLINE SURVEY	
28 JULY	980 respondents completed a survey about their vision for the Park
26 AUG	

## TIMELINE

HAPPY HOUR	
26 JULY	Participants enjoyed discussion and gave feedback on dot boards

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP	
28 JULY	Public event open to all interested members of the community who live, work, or play near the project area

## VISIONING DOT BOARDS RESULTS

### Activities

- 1 Eating
- 2 Temporary Art Installations
- 3 Games

### Amenities

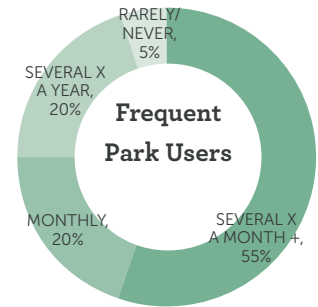
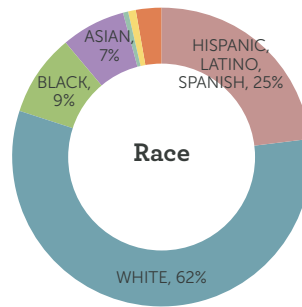
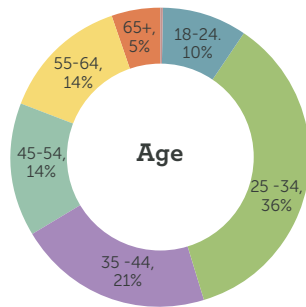
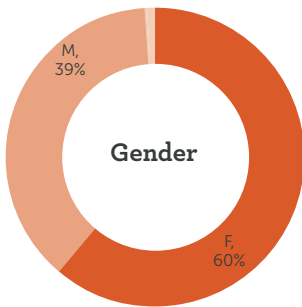
- 1 Food Trucks/Café
- 2 Shade Structure
- 3 Lighting

### Events

- 1 Live Music
- 2 Art
- 3 Film

A dot board-based visioning activity was deployed in multiple locations. More than 250 participants responded, and a majority expressed a desire for the park character to be a lush, green garden, with ample food-related activities, art, film and games.

## SURVEY RESULTS



### Activities

- 1 Eating
- 2 Temporary Art Installations
- 3 Exercise loop

### Amenities

- 1 Lawn/trees
- 2 Shade Structure
- 3 Food trucks/café

### Events

- 1 Live Music
- 2 Pop up activities
- 3 Art

More than 980 people participated in an online survey, and a majority of respondents desired a lush, green garden with places to eat, relax in the shade, and exercise. Live music, pop-up activities and art installations were also popular among participants.



## SURVEY RESULTS/CROSS-TABULATION

522 residents surveyed  
238 renters, 76 owners  
Largest age group: 25-34

### Activities

- 1 Temporary Art
- 2 Food
- 3 Exercise

### Events

- 1 Live Music
- 2 Pop-Ups
- 3 Art

### Amenities

- 1 Art
- 2 Lawn/Trees
- 3 Shade

Residents currently use Houston's public spaces to relax, eat/dine and listen to live music.

A majority of residents wanted the park character to be lush, green.

74 students surveyed  
Largest age group: 25-34

### Activities

- 1 Food
- 2 Temporary Art
- 3 Study/Work Space

### Events

- 1 Live Music
- 2 Pop-Ups
- 3 Film

### Amenities

- 1 Lawn/Trees
- 2 Shade
- 3 Art

Students were more likely to report light rail as a primary mode of transit to the new park.

A higher percentage of students had interest in Wifi and workspace.

Students currently use Houston's public spaces to relax, eat/dine and run/jog/bike.

A majority of students wanted the park character to be contemporary.

## OVERALL PRINCIPLES

As the vision for the park took shape through discussions with the DRA and engagement with stakeholders, a number of general principles emerged. These principles represent major goals for creating a successful neighborhood park that should be carefully addressed during the design process.



DISCOVERY GREEN, HOUSTON, TX

## PARK VISION

*The new Southern Downtown Park will be both a lush, modern front porch and a relaxing backyard for Houstonians: a place to gather, eat, study or cool off in the shade. It will offer an intimate green space along with year-round activities, small performances, games, food and local art to enjoy.*

Creating a new downtown park is a testament to the DRA's and Plan Downtown's vision to secure park space in this budding residential neighborhood.

While not large in size, the new park will be a great place in a rapidly changing part of downtown, demonstrating the DRA's commitment to quality of life and to an inviting, dynamic and convivial urban experience downtown.

An evolving space, the new park is intended for nearby residents, area workers, law school staff and students and Houstonians, in general. As more residential development is expected in the area, the park will succeed by allowing room for flexibility as community needs and demographics develop.

## OVERALL PRINCIPLES

### **A Setting for Spontaneous Activities**

The park should create a “setting” or a stage for simple spontaneous activities and uses that reflect the interests and needs of the surrounding residential community. When successful, such places have their own “organic” life and a true sustainability that stems from the social capital and relationships built between the people in the community – from those who host and participate in park activities,

to groups who simply contribute with their regular presence and engagement. Great public spaces foster social resilience by cultivating interaction among community members and building connections between local organizations. While there will be a certain amount of programming in the space, this park should be a place where neighbors meet for community gatherings, friends bring picnics, people enjoy a meal at the café and dog owners set up dog play-dates.

### **Sustainability**

Most importantly, the park is envisioned as lush, green environment that provides natural shade with trees and plants. An emphasis on native tree and plant species both in and around the park (i.e. street trees) can provide opportunities to create or connect to the surrounding environment. Plantings, like vines on trellises or on the sides of buildings, can also reduce re-radiated heat from any hard surfaces in the park. Beyond these more direct benefits, plants and trees are an opportunity to cultivate stewardship in the park with volunteer watering programs and tree planting initiatives.

Incorporating, piloting and showcasing environmentally sustainable practices, materials and resources are not only required by the City of Houston, but will help ensure the viability of the park over time. To accommodate increasing concerns about stormwater management, a mix of rain gardens, bioswales, and pervious/permeable/porous paving surfaces should be applied to the park and the adjacent sidewalks. Limiting the amount of hardscape/paved surfaces will also help offset the urban heat island effect, and help with cooling the park. Additionally, adequate (mature) shade trees and a shade structure – whether

in the form of a canopy or trellis can help keep users cool in the hot months, along with misting lines, fans and drinking fountains.

### **Extending the Park Beyond its Borders.**

By making improvements to the sidewalks around the park, developing signage and wayfinding and building safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to the site, the park will be both accessible and connected. By establishing a bread-crumbs trail of interesting destinations and small places that make walking more enticing and interesting throughout the area, the park can begin to link to the rest of downtown. Its influence in the future would not only be as a place to linger and as an excellent green destination, but also as a place that connects to other destinations further afield and helps knit adjacent areas together.

### **Attract People through Interactive Elements**

Interactivity is an important goal for the park that can apply to its most attractive elements, such as interactive water, art, and an iconic focal point at its main gateway. The park could incorporate local, interactive, functional art both in quiet, meditative areas, as well as in more active destinations, like a dog park. Opportunities for temporary or rotating art exhibits or elements will also help keep the park experience fresh and engaging.

### **Offer Food and Comfort**

Many of Houston's most successful parks feature food options. Whether a simple café, a sit-down restaurant, or a grab-and-go kiosk, food is in high demand in city parks, and the new Southern Downtown Park is no exception. Since this area of downtown has limited food options, public and

institutional stakeholders alike felt that a café or restaurant building would be key to attracting people to the new park. In addition, a small utility structure is envisioned to support park programs and maintenance. These two structures serve as key organizing features in the park, helping to create adjacencies and triangulate uses in the park's proposed destinations. The buildings also provide a buffer or screen between the park space and the adjacent parking lot.

## PROGRAMMING

The placemaking process identified the types and mix of programming elements that would attract people to the new park on a regular basis through in-depth community engagement. Proposed destinations within the park are defined through their function, character and essential amenities that would support uses. These destinations are described in the following pages.



BURNSIDE PARK, PROVIDENCE, RI

## POWER OF 10+

### BUILDING A CITY OF DESTINATIONS

Downtown Houston has made great strides towards becoming a place of many dynamic destinations. New development of all kinds has transformed downtown in recent years, including exciting new public spaces – Discovery Green, Market Square Park, Avenida Houston – all great places where people want to be.

The new Southern Downtown Park endeavors to become another successful downtown destination, with unique sub-places within it, each with a number of activities to engage people. Some of these activities are very simple – relax in the shade, enjoy a great view of downtown, watch other people, experience art, eat, play games, study, etc. Cumulatively, these activities, places and destinations make a great urban park and a great downtown.

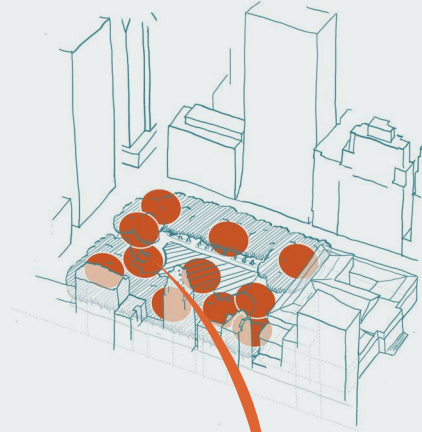
Based on this concept and using the collaborative placemaking process, PPS has identified nine different destinations or sub-places within the new park, each with its own function, character and purpose.





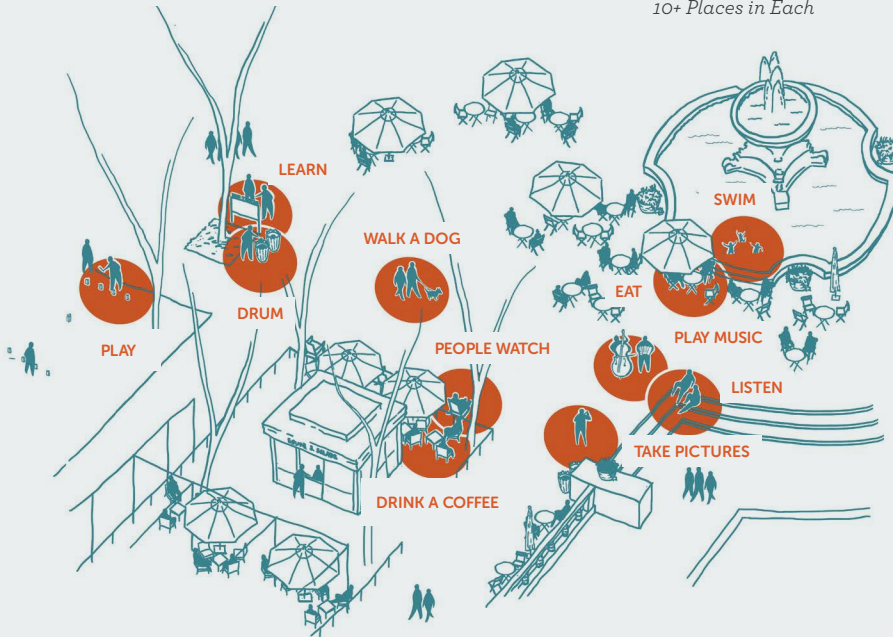
## CITY/REGION

*10+ Major Destinations*



## DESTINATION

*10+ Places in Each*



## PLACE

*10+ Things to Do, Layered  
To Create Synergy*

# PARK DIAGRAM WITH POWER OF 10+ OVERLAY



- Entry Points
- Line of canopy or second level

## PARK DESTINATIONS & PROGRAMMING

### **Park Entrances & Walkways**

Meeting and gathering place  
Signage and wayfinding  
Seating  
Art displays

### **Front Yard**

Meet-up space with information  
Formal seating  
Art: temporary and permanent art exhibits  
Food carts and other small local vendors  
Pop-up activities  
Water feature

### **Flex Lawn**

Small concerts and film screenings  
Eating, dining, picnicking  
Exercise classes  
Work/study  
Lounging/relaxing

### **Garden**

Native horticulture and shade trees  
Relaxation  
Small group seating in “alcoves”  
Intimate concerts or readings  
Water feature

### **Backyard**

Relaxing and lounging  
Eating, dining  
Small parties and receptions  
Happy hours  
Table games  
Work/study and meetings  
Reading room

### **Game Room**

Communal seating  
Table games  
Community gatherings  
Yard games  
Informal activities  
Storytelling and lending library  
Movie screenings

### **Dog Park**

Dog activities  
Socialization for owners  
Seating and shaded areas

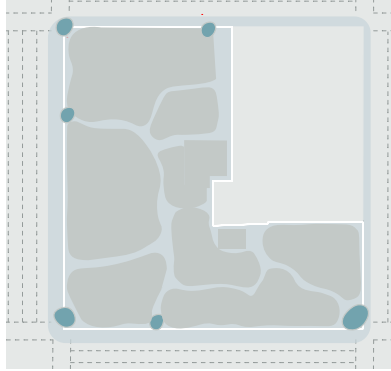
### **Recreation area**

Open-air exercise  
Exercise programs for kids and adults  
Ping pong  
Bike repair  
Kid-friendly element

### **Building(s) and Cafe Patio**

Eating, dining  
Seating  
Socialization  
Flexible patio use  
Restrooms  
Park equipment storage

## PARK ENTRANCES & WALKWAYS



### TOTAL AREA

**approx. 11%**

### OVERALL CHARACTER AND USE

The park should act as a "third place," welcoming people through multiple entry points. Each entrance can be used to provide wayfinding and information points, explaining the self-managed activities, a schedule of events, and information regarding the surrounding areas. Entry points can create a draw through comfortable seating, bike racks, planters, and art — the entrances can be thought of as a gateway to the interior destinations of the park. Additionally, the entrances can be places where people stop and enjoy the park, even without necessarily going inside.

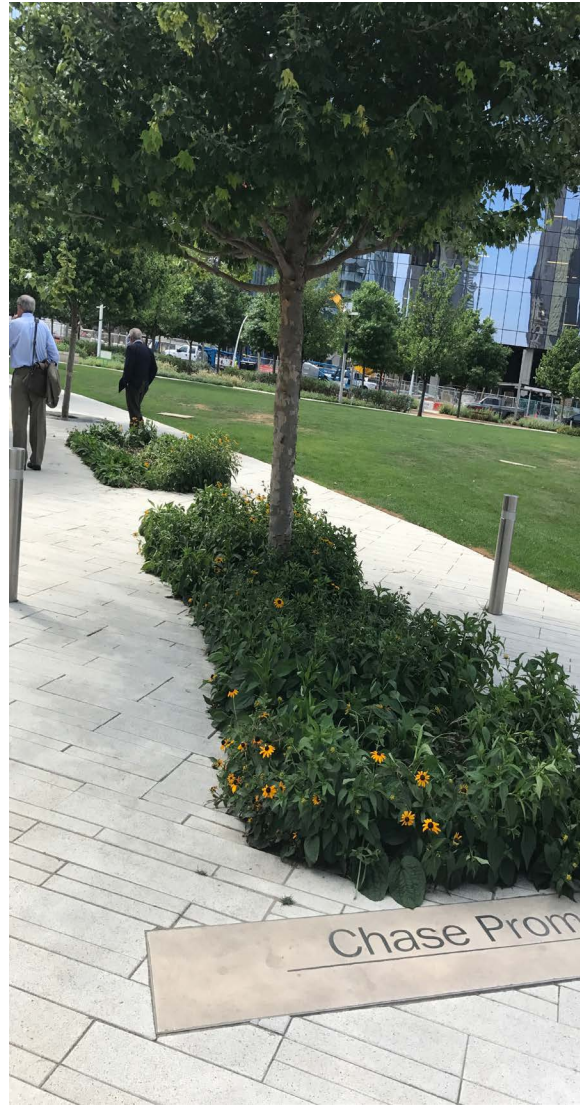
These areas should balance between creating buffered edges from surrounding streets while keeping the park permeable and visible from the outside. Sidewalk improvements and street trees, paired with edge plantings and rain gardens, can all be designed as attractive elements, rather than barriers to access. It is important for entry areas to maintain inviting pathways connecting to each destination.

### ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMING

- Meeting and gathering place
- Signage and wayfinding
- Seating
- Art displays

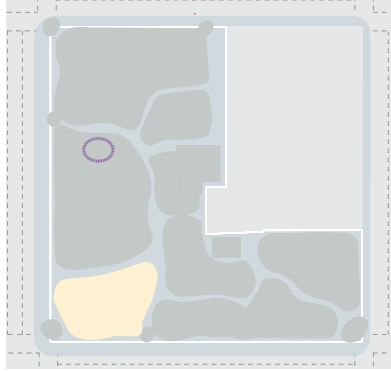
### AMENITIES

- Clear access to park pathways
- Benches
- Sidewalk improvements and buffer from traffic
- Street trees and, where possible, bioswales and edge plantings
- Attractive planting beds and rain gardens



Examples of art, landscaping and bicycle amenities creating a strong gateway and a sense of arrival and direction.

## FRONT YARD



### TOTAL AREA

**approx. 9%**

### OVERALL CHARACTER AND USE

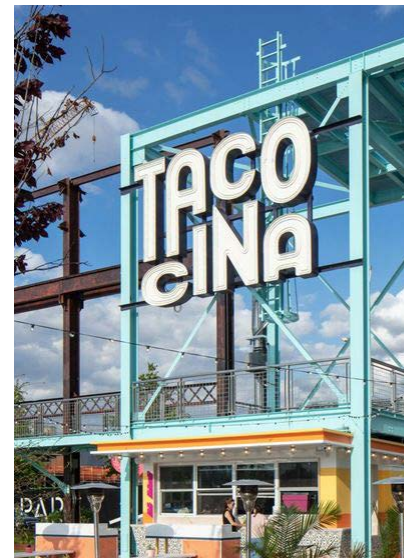
The character of the front yard should enhance the other park entrances and serve as the park's formal entryway. In addition to serving as the primary entry into the park, the front yard can set the tone for the park, be a highly visible space with an attractive design offer attractive amenities to draw people in and encourage them to linger – perhaps with seating, lush plant displays, art and the cooling presence of water features. As suggested for the other park entrances, the front yard could serve as meeting point, displaying information regarding scheduled activities happening in the park. Overall, the front yard feel can be one of welcoming, while providing a more formal entry point and multi-use community meeting space.

### ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMING

- Meet-up space with information
- Formal seating
- Art: temporary and permanent art exhibits
- Food carts and other small local vendors
- Pop-up activities
- Water feature

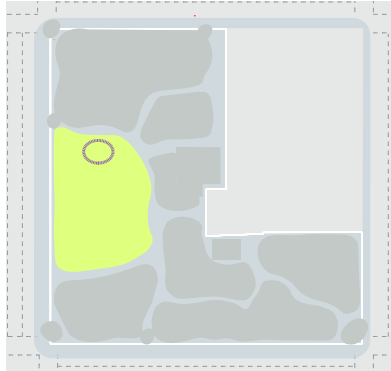
### AMENITIES

- Park information, welcome sign and wayfinding
- Water feature
- Flexible seating
- Gateway with iconic and attractive shade feature
- Interactive art focal point
- Paved area for pop-up activities
- Attractive pathways to destinations
- Bike racks and water fountain



Welcoming plaza, light feature, and a strong artistic vertical element can entice people into the park, and support a variety of activities.

## FLEX LAWN



### TOTAL AREA

**approx. 27%**

### OVERALL CHARACTER AND USE

Consider using the flex lawn as an open space for people to enjoy the sun, picnicking, and for organized events. Visibility from Fannin is important; nonetheless, the flex lawn can provide a buffer to reduce noise and maximize the sense of safety for all destinations within the park. This area can host outdoor concerts, movie nights, small performances and other events. Consider programming that will make the flex lawn a place to visit throughout the year, offering seasonal activities.

### ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMING

- Small concerts and film screenings
- Eating, dining, picnicking
- Exercise classes
- Work/study
- Lounging/relaxing

### AMENITIES

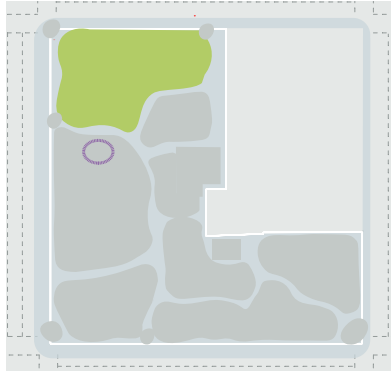
- Stage
- Seating positioned around the edges





Picnics and outdoor movies are just two of the many uses of the flex lawn.

## GARDEN



### TOTAL AREA

**approx. 18%**

### OVERALL CHARACTER AND USE

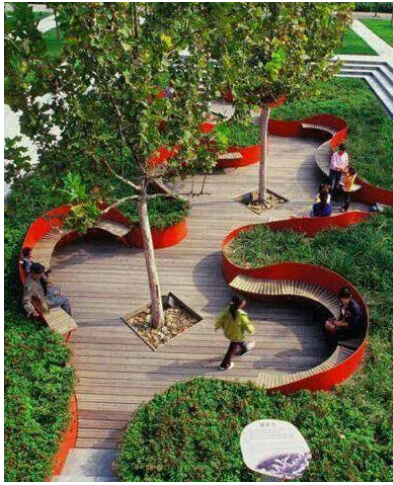
The garden area can bring the desired green character to the park, while providing cozy, intimate spaces framing the edges of the space. As a buffer from the busy Fannin thoroughfare, the garden could provide a space for lounging and small gatherings, providing a quiet, creative environment for users. Consider a relaxing, informal character for the space; additionally, one that is always well-maintained and lush.

### ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMING

- Native horticulture and shade trees
- Relaxation
- Small group seating in “alcoves”
- Intimate concerts or readings
- Water feature

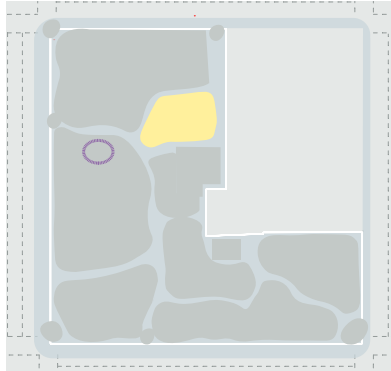
### AMENITIES

- Shade trees, native grasses and seasonal color
- Rain gardens
- Contemplative water feature
- Alcove seating with benches and garden chairs
- Small art displays
- Lighting for evening use



Colorful landscaping, shade and garden alcoves with seating and artistic lights will make the garden area attractive and relaxing.

## BACKYARD



### TOTAL AREA

**approx. 5%**

### OVERALL CHARACTER AND USE

The backyard will be an extension of the café patio, overlooking the gardens with comfortable seating in a relaxing and social environment. The destination should feature lounge seating, including couches and chairs. Consider reserving the space for low key group activities, such as having dinner with friends and social receptions, parties, and happy hours.

### ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMING

- Relaxing and lounging
- Eating, dining
- Small parties and receptions
- Happy hours
- Table games
- Work/study and meetings
- Reading room

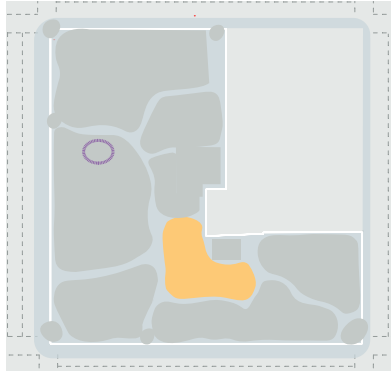
### AMENITIES

- Library and game cart
- Tables and chairs
- Couches
- Swings



Informal lounge seating, happy hours and dining can all take place in the backyard.

## GAME ROOM



### TOTAL AREA

**approx. 8%**

### OVERALL CHARACTER AND USE

The Game Room can be a neighborhood-focused gathering and play area. Consider providing multiple seating options and communal tables as well as yard games and table games. This area can be an active space transitioning between the recreation area and the café.

### ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMING

Communal seating  
Table games Community gatherings  
Yard games  
Informal activities  
Storytelling and lending library  
Movie screenings

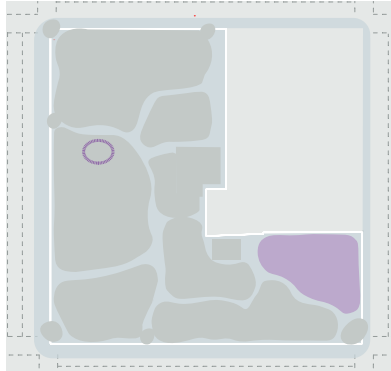
### AMENITIES

Pergola or canopy for shade  
Comfortable seating for lounging  
Communal tables and seating  
Hammocks  
Game cart



Opportunity for adults and kids to play games and socialize in a relaxed environment.

## DOG PARK



TOTAL AREA  
approx. 6%

### OVERALL CHARACTER AND USE

Easy access and visibility from the street will attract dog owners to the park at all hours of the day. Providing dogs and owners with a space that highlights play features, benches, and water will reflect the creative nature of the park, offering something to enhance owners' experience of dog-walking duties. The dog park also provides a user-friendly buffer from the busy San Jacinto Street.

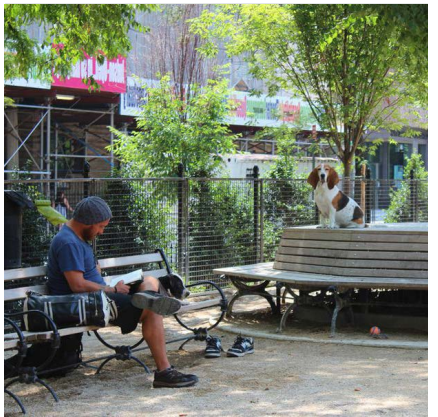
### ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMING

Dog activities  
Socialization for owners  
Sitting in shaded areas

### AMENITIES

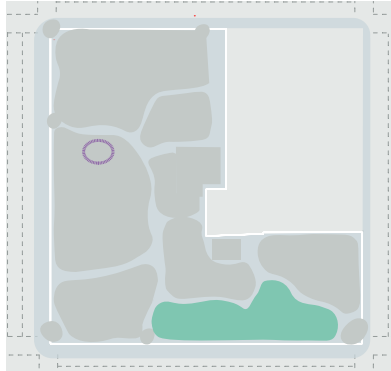
Shade, with trees and canopies  
Multiple kinds of seating  
Water features for dogs: spray fountain, hoses for clean-up





Dog parks offering simple exercise equipment for pets and plenty of space for dogs and their owners to socialize, including seating.

## RECREATION AREA



### TOTAL AREA

**approx. 8%**

### OVERALL CHARACTER AND USE

Consider providing simple park exercise and stretching equipment in a dedicated area of the park, which could also have the infrastructure and space to host smaller exercise classes. In addition, although not a major feature of the park, a kid-friendly element would be located in this area. See Appendix for more details on survey responses.

### ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMING

- Open-air exercise
- Exercise programs for kids and adults
- Ping pong
- Bike repair
- Kid-friendly element

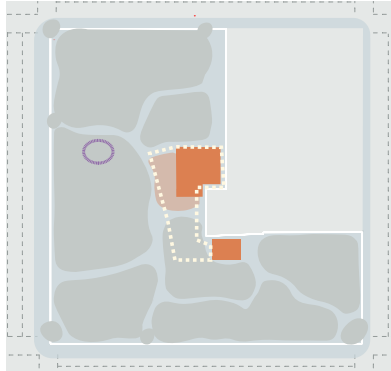
### AMENITIES

- Outdoor stretching and fitness/exercise equipment
- Small paved area
- Bike racks
- Water fountains
- Signage with walking/jogging distances
- Walking path around the park



Simple and fun elements can encourage physical activity for adults and kids.

## BUILDING(S) AND CAFÉ PATIO



### TOTAL AREA

approx. 8%

**Building 1 (Restaurant/café) =  
1,900 SF**

**Building 2 (Park building) =  
200 SF**

### OVERALL CHARACTER AND USE

Two separate buildings are proposed for the park: a two-story restaurant/café and a smaller storage building for park and municipal uses. These buildings serve as anchors for the park while providing a barrier between the park and adjacent parking lot. The café/restaurant dining room should have open pathways to the flexible lawn area, as well as large windows and retractable doors that connect it to the rest of the park. The café building can also provide a patio wrapping around it, complete with shade and cooling. Additionally, restrooms for the park could be located in, and managed by, the restaurant/café. The bathrooms should be visible, and clearly defined as a park-wide amenity. As for size, the park building should be much smaller than the restaurant, and its design should demonstrate that it is not for use by the general public. The area between the two buildings should be shaded, covered by either a canopy or a second-story terrace. Exterior walls can be used for projecting movies or art. A second story for the restaurant/café building is optional but would serve the park well as a communal space. If built, the second story should highlight the views to downtown. See the Appendix for multiple building location studies.

### ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMING

Eating, dining  
Seating  
Socialization  
Flexible patio use  
Restrooms  
Park equipment storage

### AMENITIES

Dining tables and chairs  
Communal seating  
Shade connected to the building



Park buildings could benefit from being two-story and spilling out into the adjacent areas with retractable and transparent facades.

## APPENDIX

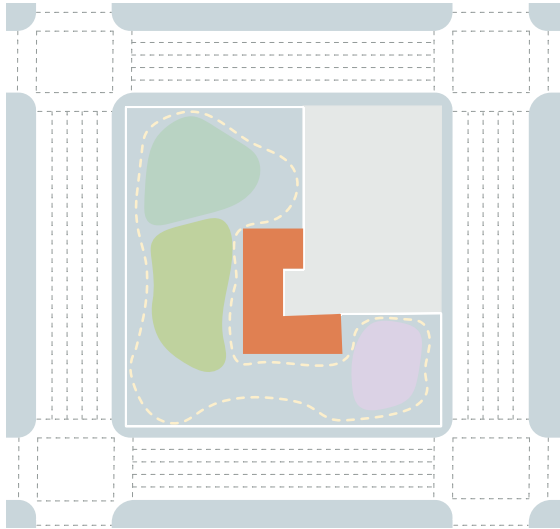
The appendix includes relevant project information including a building location study and results of the online survey to establish park programming priorities.



MONTREAL, CANADA

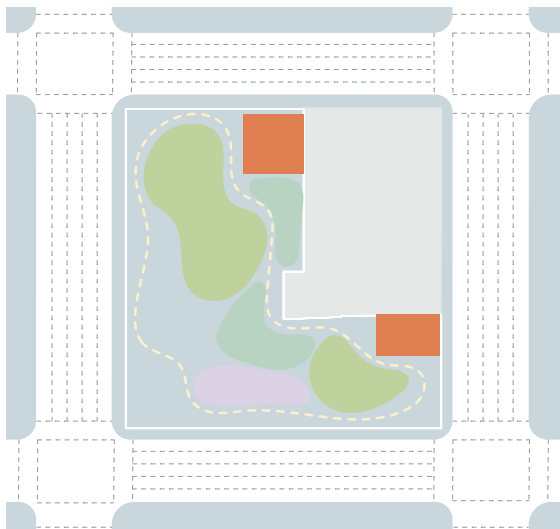
# BUILDING LOCATION STUDY

## AT PROPERTY LINE



Option 1

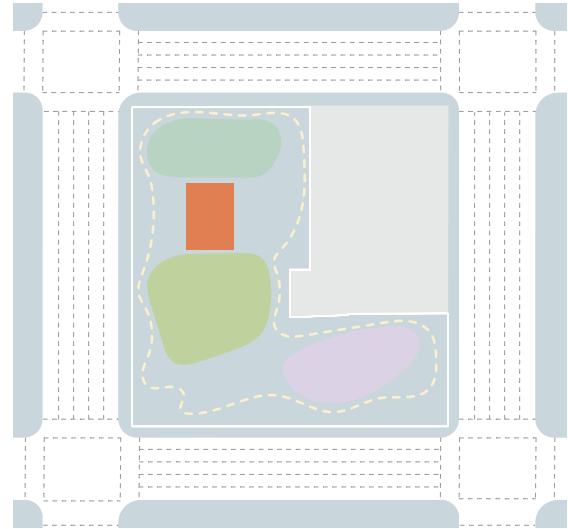
Central anchor, sound and visual buffer from parking lot.



Option 2

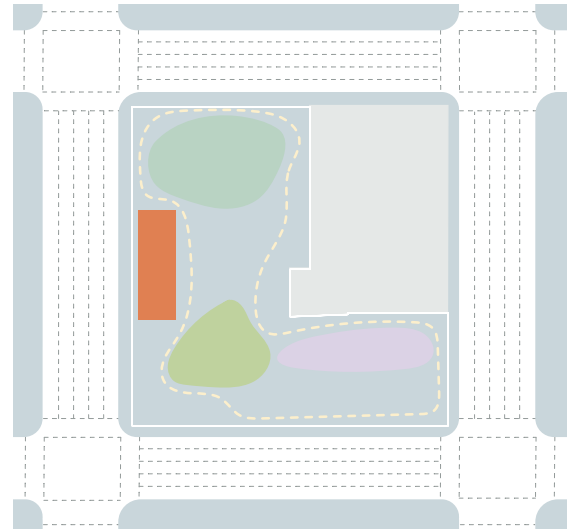
Two small buildings create an opportunity for both café and community space; create draw from both Fannin + San Jacinto edges.

## FLOATING



Option 3

Creates draw to center; building helps separate active and passive zones in the park



Option 4

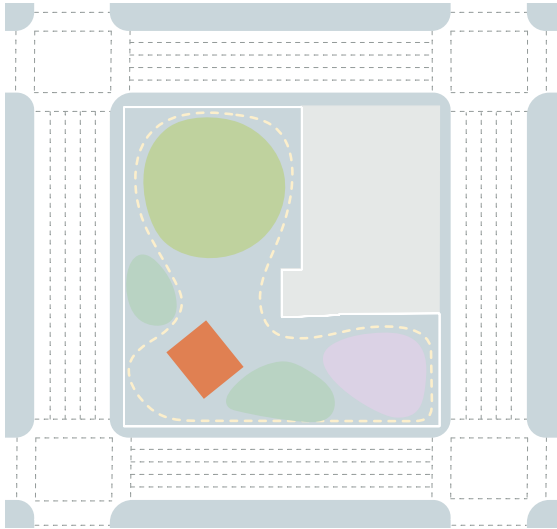
Centrally located building creates an active street presence on Fannin, while still helping separate active and passive zones.

- Building
- Running loop
- Parking
- Flexible lawn

- Gardens
- Dog run

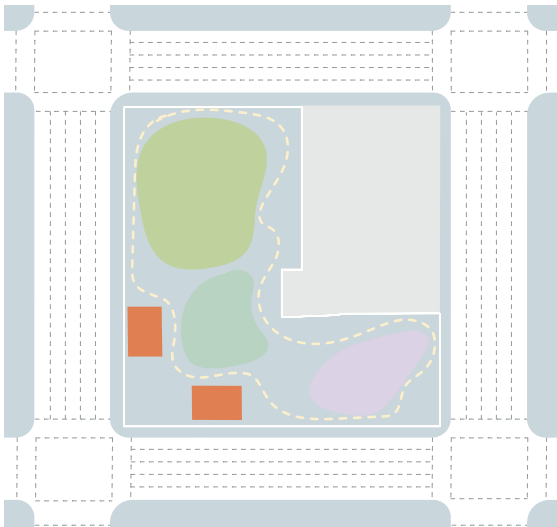


## NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAY



### Option 5

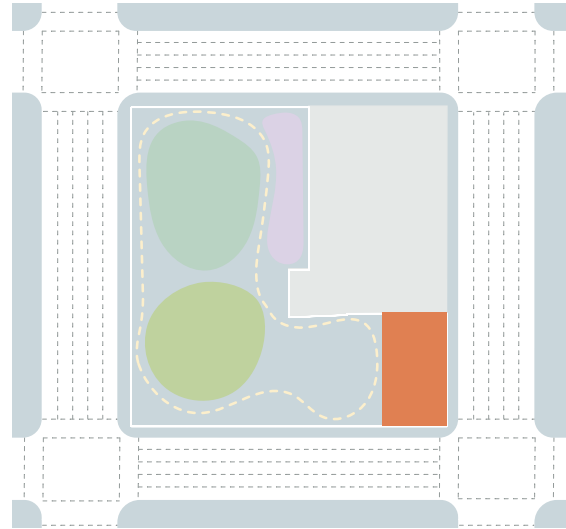
*Building becomes iconic, active gateway to park; could be open/see-through.*



### Option 6

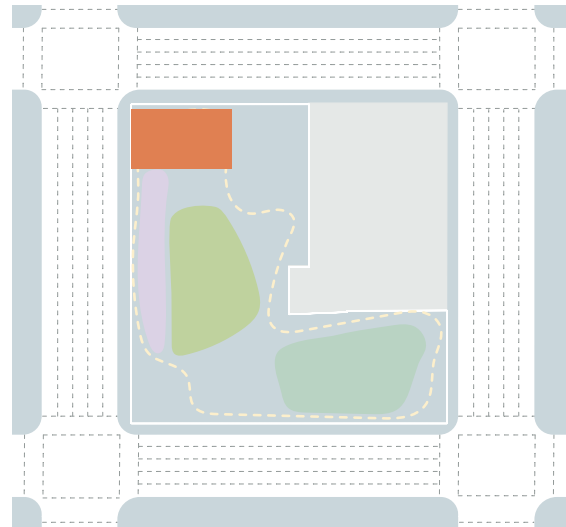
*Two separate small structures create an inviting gateway. Opportunity for both café and community space.*

## PARK CORNER



### Option 7

*Building serves as a buffer from traffic and noise on St. Jacinto, creating an active street edge and maximizing park space.*



### Option 8

*Building as an anchor at Fannin and Bell; opportunity for garden terrace and an active street edge.*

# NEW SOUTHERN DOWNTOWN PARK SURVEY RESULTS

## 1. What is your primary connection to downtown Houston? Pick all that apply.

I am a resident	52.83%	522
I am a student	7.49%	74
I work here	35.43%	350
I am a visitor	17.91%	177
Other	7.19%	71

Answered	988
Skipped	0

## 2. Do you live in Southern Downtown Houston (between Pierce, Milam, Polk, Hamilton)?

Yes	45.06%	228
No	54.94%	278

Answered	506
Skipped	482

## 3. If you live in this area, do you rent or own your home?

Rent	70.41%	238
Own	22.49%	76
Other	7.10%	24

Answered	338
Skipped	650

## 4. What events would you like to see in the park? Pick your top three.

Live Music	74.49%	590
Exercise Classes	28.28%	224
Pop-Up Activities	64.65%	512
Art Exhibits/Local Artist Shows	60.35%	478

Film	37.63%	298
Kid-Friendly Activities	21.34%	169

Answered	792
Skipped	196

## 5. What activities would attract you to the park? Pick your top three.

Picnicking	31.57%	250
Eating Lunch/Dinner/Breakfast	74.12%	587
Temporary Art Installations	77.02%	610
Study Groups and Workspace	21.97%	174
Exercise -Running/Walking Loop	41.92%	332
Games	36.49%	289

Answered	792
Skipped	196

## 6. What amenities would attract you to the park? Pick your top three.

Dog Run	26.01%	206
Playground or Play Feature	17.42%	138
Food Trucks/Café	58.71%	465
Shade Structure	63.38%	502
Bike Facilities	16.92%	134
Lawn and Trees	65.53%	519
Water Feature	45.33%	359

Answered	792
Skipped	196

## 7. What amenities would attract you to the park?

Comfortable Furniture	34.60%	274
Art	71.84%	569
Meditative/Quiet Space	49.37%	391

Communal Seating Areas	41.92%	332
Lighting	56.19%	445
Wifi/Workspace	36.74%	291

Answered	792
Skipped	196

**8. What character would you recommend for the park? Pick one.**

Funky, Artsy	30.30%	240
Lush, Green, Garden	40.91%	324
Contemporary/Sleek	28.79%	228

Answered	792
Skipped	196

**9. Should the park offer opportunities for venue rentals?**

Yes	59.37%	453
No	41.02%	313

Answered	763
Skipped	225

**10. If yes, what type of events? Please describe.**

Answered	305
Skipped	683

**11. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being highly activated, what should the activity level be in the park?**

Average Number: 5.5

Answered	785
Skipped	203

**12. How would you come to the park? Pick all that apply.**

Personal Car	55.81%	442
Bus	10.10%	80
Light Rail	36.99%	293
Bicycle	37.50%	297
Walking	63.64%	504
Rideshare (Uber, Lyft, etc.)	24.12%	191
Other (please specify)	1.01%	8

Answered	792
Skipped	196

**13. Do you currently use the parks and public spaces in downtown Houston?**

Yes	90.48%	713
No	9.52%	75

Answered	788
Skipped	200

**14. How often do you visit downtown parks and public spaces?**

Daily	7.07%	56
Weekly	24.37%	193
Several times a month	23.61%	187
Monthly	20.20%	160
Several times a year	19.70%	156
Rarely or Never	5.05%	40

Answered	792
Skipped	196

**15. What do you do when you visit parks and public spaces downtown? Check all that apply.**

Watch films	24.65%	195
Listen to live music	55.75%	441
Take exercise classes	14.54%	115
Eat/dine	68.65%	543
Visit Craft/farmers mkts	48.67%	385
Walk the dog	23.89%	189
Use off-leash dog areas	15.17%	120
Relax	66.75%	528
Visit a playground	17.19%	136
Run/Jog/Bike	34.13%	270
I do not visit downtown public spaces	1.39%	11
Other	8.34%	66
Answered	791	
Skipped	197	

**16. What time of day do you usually visit downtown parks and public spaces? Pick as many as apply.**

Morning	25.22%	199
Lunchtime/Early afternoon	33.21%	262
Early evening/After work	50.06%	395
Evening	57.54%	454
Weekends	74.52%	588
Rarely or Never	1.77%	14
Answered	789	
Skipped	199	

**17. What day(s) of the week do you usually visit downtown parks and public spaces? Pick as many as apply.**

Weekdays	54.76%	431
Weekends	85.26%	671
Holidays	26.81%	211
Rarely or Never	1.65%	13
Answered	787	
Skipped	201	

**18. What is your gender?**

Female	60.36%	472
Male	38.75%	303
Nonbinary	0.26%	2
Other	0.64%	5
Answered	782	
Skipped	206	

**19. What is your age?**

Under 18	0.39%	3
18-24	9.87%	76
25-34	36.36%	280
35-44	21.04%	162
45-54	13.77%	106
55-64	13.51%	104
65+	5.06%	39
Answered	770	
Skipped	218	

20. How would you describe yourself? Pick all that apply.

Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	24.67%	188
White	62.20%	474
Black or African American	9.19%	70
Asian or South Asian	7.35%	56
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.62%	20
Middle Eastern or North African	0.66%	5
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0.92%	7
Other (please specify)	3.02%	23
Answered	762	
Skipped	226	

PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES

[WWW.PPS.ORG](http://WWW.PPS.ORG)  
[INFO@PPS.ORG](mailto:INFO@PPS.ORG)

+1 212 620 5660  
740 BROADWAY, 11TH FL  
NEW YORK, NY 10003

