

**PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN URBAN PARKS:
A CASE STUDY OF FIVE U.S. PARKS**

A Professional Report

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by

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ABSTRACT

Public-private partnerships (P3s) are increasingly used to manage public parks. What do cities, citizens, and organizations need to know when establishing a P3 for park management? What are the opportunities and implications of these partnerships? This research provides information not readily available on the structure and operations of public-private partnerships in five U.S. parks. These parks present a range of funding sources and expenditures, programming, concessions, and historical contexts. Though these parks differ in certain aspects, distinct trends and lessons emerge. From these trends and a review of academic literature I propose recommendations for establishing and monitoring the public-private partnership process. This research began as part of an in internship with the Downtown Austin Alliance in the summer of 2010. Data on these parks were collected through interviews with park managers during the summer and fall of 2010 and supplemented by park websites or online news sources.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- P3 – Public-Private Partnership**
- DAA – Downtown Austin Alliance**
- DAP – Downtown Austin Plan**
- PARD – Austin Parks and Recreation Department**
- APF – Austin Parks Foundation**
- NGO – Non-governmental organization**
- NPO – Non-profit Organization**

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Public-private partnerships (P3s) are increasingly used to manage public parks. This is mostly due to budget cuts in city government, but is also part of a general trend in network governance, privatization of services and amenities, and the corporatization of public services. What do city governments, organizations, and citizens need to know when establishing a P3 for park management? What are the opportunities and implications of these partnerships? This research provides information not readily available on the structure and operations of public-private partnerships in five U.S. parks.

This research began as part of my internship with the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA), a public improvement district in Austin, Texas, in the summer of 2010. The DAA is seeking to increase the level of maintenance and programming in Austin's downtown parks. This report not only provides necessary information for the DAA to make policy recommendations, but also puts forth a set of metrics, a collection of current trends in P3s and park management, and recommendations for P3s in public parks.

The five parks in this study were chosen based on several factors that were guided by the DAA and also Peter Harnick's book, *Urban Green*. Those factors are: geographical significance, city population and density, park size and type, structure of the park management partnership, and national acclaim. The five parks chosen for this case study are: Citygarden in St. Louis, Missouri; Discovery Green in Houston, Texas; Waterfront Park in Louisville, Kentucky; Burnett Park in Fort Worth, Texas; and Market Square in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. All of these parks are located in or near the central business district and were renovated or created within the last three years.

I developed three metrics for evaluating and comparing the parks based on the needs and instruction of the DAA. I then frame these metrics within three public space management models developed by Ysa (2007) Carmona et al (2008), and Foster (2011). Data on these parks were collected through interviews I conducted with park managers during the summer and fall of 2010 and supplemented by park websites or online news sources. These parks present a range of funding sources and expenditures, programming, concessions, and historical contexts. Though these parks differ in certain aspects, distinct trends and lessons emerge. Based on these trends and my literature review I propose recommendations for establishing and monitoring the public-private partnership process.

The Parks and Squares of Downtown Austin

Three parks and three historic squares make up almost 23 acres of park space that lies within the central business district in downtown Austin. The squares- Republic Square, Brush Square, and Wooldridge Square- were part of the original 1839 plan for Austin by Edwin Waller, Austin's first mayor and signatory of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Figure 1 shows a map of the parks and squares in downtown Austin. A more detailed description of Austin's downtown parks is in the appendix.

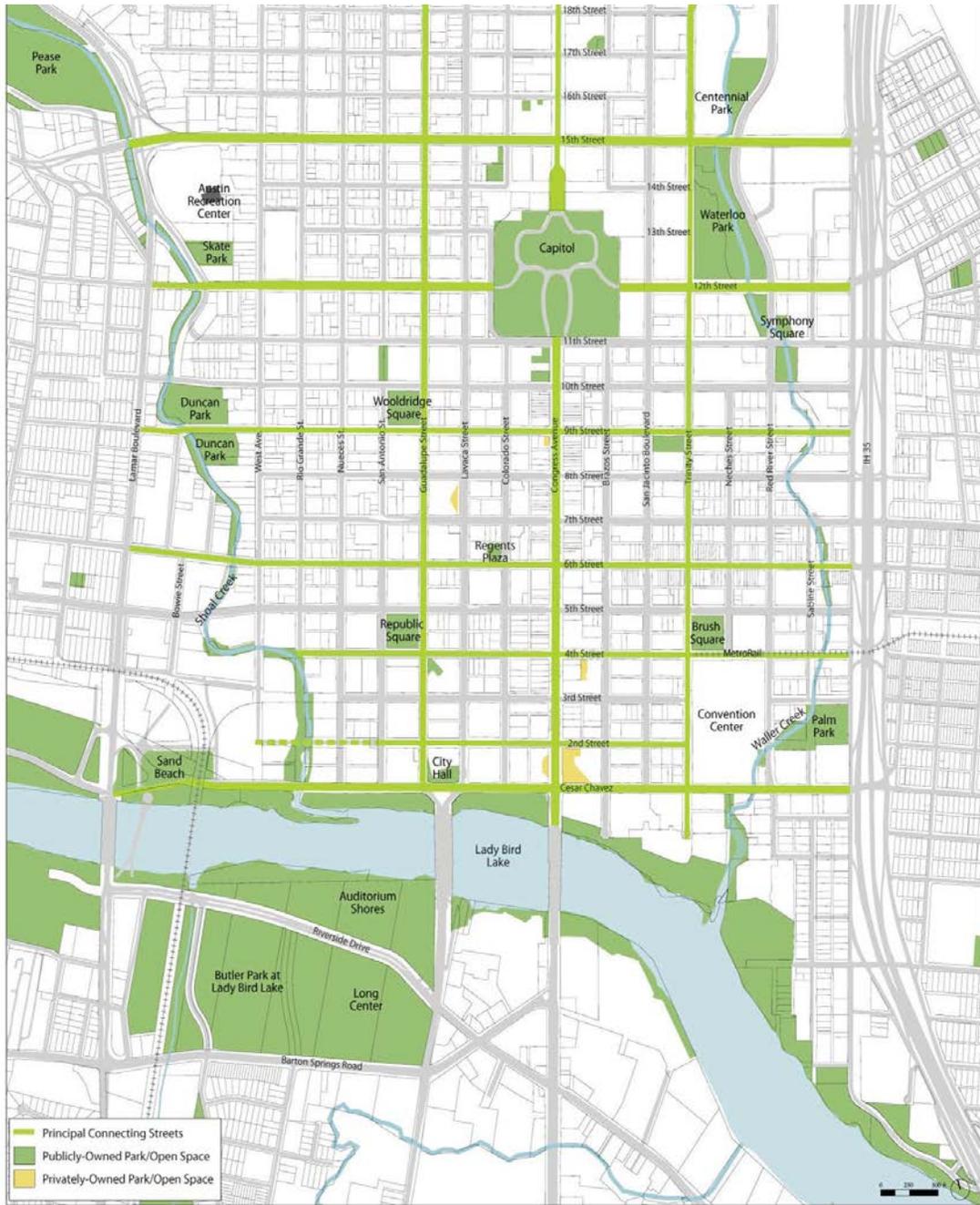


Figure 1. Parks and Squares in Austin's Central Business District
 Source: Roma Austin and HR&A Advisors, 2010

The role and use of Austin's downtown parks have changed over time as the population of downtown residents and tourism activity has steadily increased. In 2010, 9,500 residents lived downtown and 67,000 employees work in the core of

Downtown (Downtown Austin Plan, 2010, page 12), up from 6,000 residents and 67,000 daytime employees from 2008 (Capitol Market Research, 2008) and 3,855 residents in 2000 (City of Austin, 2000). 7 million people visit downtown Austin annually (Downtown Austin Alliance, no date). The increase of people living, visiting, and working in downtown has put a higher demand on the parks and squares as an amenity and economic development driver. Though the parks are well utilized during major musical events such as Austin City Limits and a weekly farmer's market in Republic Square, they have been neglected and underutilized for some time. The Downtown Austin Plan highlights the current condition of downtown parks: "With few exceptions, Downtown parks are in poor condition and, due to limited funding, poorly-maintained - with aging furnishings and few programmed activities that make them inviting places to gather."

In 2010 the City of Austin published the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP) that sets the vision for the future of downtown Austin and outlines objectives, goals, and recommendations. The DAP is the "result of a three-year dialogue with the general public and the Downtown community and stakeholders" (City of Austin, 2010, page ii). The importance of downtown parks and open space is evident throughout the plan. One of the plan's overall goals is to restore and activate the historic squares and to connect the network of parks, open space, and streets. This plan recognizes that achieving the vision for downtown parks is dependent on "increased capital investment and an adequate funding source for ongoing maintenance" (City of Austin, 2010, page 117).

Though Austin has a relatively high amount of parkland, it ranks low in total spending on parks. A 2010 report by Trust for Public Land compares Austin's parks to other cities across the country in terms of park acreage and expenditures (Trust for

Public Land, 2010). Austin ranks 50 out of 85 in total spending on parks and recreation per resident (\$69 per resident); third in acres of parkland per 1,000 residents for cities of the same population density (35.4 acres/1,000 residents for intermediate-low density cities); and 66th in operational spending (without capital spending) per resident (\$41/resident). The average amount spent on operations and maintenance per year on the downtown squares is \$4,500/acre while the average amount spent on other downtown parks is \$7,000/acre (Barry, 2010). The DAP recommends an increase in investment in downtown parks and squares through downtown work crew and increasing the maintenance and operations budget to provide long needed repairs and Level 1 maintenance at around \$23,000/acre. The DAP recommends that a “better target for the public cost of operating and maintaining excellent downtown parks would be \$10,000-\$25,000 per acre per year, based on best practices from other parks systems such as Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis and Tucson” (City of Austin, 2010, page 119).

Currently, Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) is responsible for maintenance of all city parks and squares. PARC is supported by the Austin Parks Foundation (APF) in capital improvement projects, programming, volunteer restoration, and maintenance efforts. In late 2010 the City Council passed the city budget that includes a seven-person PARC crew to focus exclusively on the daily maintenance of downtown parks. Once in the budget, maintaining the annual funding for the maintenance crew will be politically easier, but still must be approved every year.

Most of the downtown’s historic squares are in the process of some form of upgrading and improvements. Approximately \$587,000 has been spent on improvements in equipment, furnishings, and ecological restoration. As part of the

creation of a new building, the federal General Service Administration will donate \$1.2 million to Republic Square as a payment for closing a section of street between the square and the building. This will be used for capital improvements in the park. The picture below shows some of the completed improvements in Republic Square including a raised deck with moveable furniture that protect the roots of a historic oak tree.



Figure 2. Republic Square in Austin
Source: Austin Parks Foundation on Flickr

The Role of Downtown Austin Alliance in Downtown Parks and Squares

The Downtown Austin Alliance has been active in working with PARD, APF, and the friends' groups of the downtown squares to improve the level of maintenance and programming in the downtown parks. For the last year the DAA has been advocating PARD to adopt a tiered fee structure for special event fees and streamline the event permitting process. The DAA is the only public improvement district in Austin.¹ See

¹ A public improvement district (PID) is a special area created by local government to perform public improvements within that district beyond what is provided by municipalities (Hoyt, 2007). A special assessment on privately owned large properties (those over \$500,000) within the DAA district is collected to help fund the improvements. State enabling legislation determines the name of the special district. In Texas the district is PID, in New Jersey they are special improvement districts, but in most of the country they are known as business improvement districts (BIDs).

the appendix for a map of the Austin PID area. The DAA seeks to “[w]ork with key groups to revitalize and activate downtown squares, plazas, and public spaces” (M. Crane & Associates, Inc., 2008). Parks are a focus of the DAA as a means to promote economic vitality and improve the public realm downtown. The organization works to support physical improvements, advocacy, programming (such as movies and dance lesson series in the parks), planning (by participating in the Downtown Austin Plan and the Waller Creek Master Plan), and research (best practices on park reservation fees and funding and management structures). The DAA uses several metrics to assess the public spaces in their district including usage and cleanliness of parks and squares, public perception of parks and squares, public and private investments in park improvements, the number of events in the parks, and the extent to which adjacent business and property owners contribute to stewardship of parks and public squares.

DAA’s investment in downtown parks maintenance has been steadily increasing since 2007. The DAA currently spends \$116,788 or 4% of its budget on parks (Downtown Austin Alliance, 2010). This amount is up from just \$45,839, or 2% of budget in 2007-2008. The DAA has one half-time staff person dedicated to parks and contributes \$25,000 annually to the Austin Parks Foundation for their Executive Director position.

The DAA is interested in becoming more formally engaged in the maintenance, operations, and programming of downtown parks. This report explores ways in which public-private partnerships have been used to activate downtown parks in other cities. In order to create a framework for comparing case study examples of existing public-private partnerships it is useful to explore public-private partnership and park management models. In Part 2, I will provide a literature review and discuss

the reasons and causes for the emergence and proliferation of public-private partnerships for park management. Next, I will present existing models for public space management to develop my own set of metrics in which to evaluate the case study parks. In Part 4 I explain the case study methodology and then outline in detail each of the five parks Part 5. Next, in the Part 6 analysis, I draw out the trends and themes of the five parks and relate each park to the management models discussed in the literature review. Finally, in Part 7 I bring together academic literature and park trends to formulate recommendations and suggestion. These recommendations are applicable to the DAA and any other municipality or organization interested in P3s for public space management.

PART 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Emergence of Public-Private Partnerships in Parks

In her paper *Governance Forms in Urban Public-Private Partnerships*, Tamyko Ysa defines public-private partnerships, or P3s for short, as “a voluntary, stable collaborative effort between two or more public and private autonomous organizations” to share the risks, responsibilities, and benefits in the delivery of goods and services (Ysa, 2007, page 36). Public-private partnerships have emerged as a management model for a number of financial and structural reasons. In this section I outline seven factors identified by academic literature and my research that have contributed to the rise in P3s for the management of public parks.

Many municipalities are, and have been, experiencing budget cuts and simply do not have the capacity to manage, maintain, and development public parks. Local governments find it necessary to partner with non-profit and private organizations to leverage their staff and capital. A 2010 Congressional Budget Office report cites that local governments in the U.S. have reduced spending by .6% in 2008 and 1.9% in 2009 (Congressional Budget Office, 2010). 2010 data were not available at the time of this report but, “according to the National League of Cities, more than 90 percent of the cities that responded to its annual survey expected to cut expenditures in fiscal year 2010 relative to the amount needed to maintain services at the fiscal year 2009 level” (Congressional Budget Office, 2010, page 4). Local governments derive almost one-third from state aid, about one-quarter from property taxes, one-tenth from taxes, the rest mostly from fees, with federal aid amounting to about four percent (Congressional Budget Office, 2010, page 1). Local governments are not likely to see an increase from property tax revenues any time since “property tax revenues lag behind changes in house prices by three years” (Congressional Budget Office, 2010, page 2). States have

also been decreasing the amount of aid for cities. Recent data since the recession are not available yet, but a survey by National Governors Association and the National Association of State Budget Officers “indicates that 22 states reduced aid to local governments in fiscal year 2010, and 20 states have proposed additional cuts in 2011” (Congressional Budget Office, 2010, page 2).

In Austin the parks department had 170 park maintenance workers in 2008. Budget cuts reduced this number to 154 in 2010 (Albers, 2010). To further aggravate budgetary shortfalls, Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) has acquired additional parkland through bond measures that it cannot maintain, especially with the cut in staff. Maintenance is deferred until it becomes a capital improvement problem in which it can then be eligible for capital improvement funds. A cycle of under-maintenance and capital improvement projects occur in the parks. Seattle is currently experiencing a similar situation. Seattle residents voted for a \$400 million increase in property taxes for 40 new parks and 14 new or renovated community centers (Young, 2011). However there is simply not enough money or staff to maintain these parks and centers and the city is considering budget cuts, public-private partnerships, and/or raising taxes to pay for park maintenance (Young, 2011). Without enough dedicated funding to maintenance and operations, parks fall into neglect. Parks departments and local municipalities then find it necessary to look to public-private partnerships to fill the gap in funding and maintenance. Do these public-private partnerships actually result in a cost-effective increase in service and maintenance? The answer based on the parks in this report, is that it depends. For instance Discovery Green Park Conservancy receives money from the City of Houston for park maintenance, while the maintenance of Market Square, Citygarden, and Burnett Park is borne by the nongovernmental organization. This report will help illustrate both the potential for and deficiencies of private funding.

Secondly, P3s in parks are part of the overall trend from a centralized hierarchical government to network governance in which public goods and services are provided by a network of actors including government, nonprofits, for-profit firms, and informal friends groups (Lester, 2002). In *The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action: An Introduction* Lester Salamon (2002) outlines the new collaborative roles of these partnerships including setting goal and objectives, directing the delivery of public goods and services, and directing the spending of public funds. Public-private partnerships are inherent in this network governance structure.

In addition to adopting a network governance structure, more governments and agencies are incorporating corporate strategies in their strategic plans. David A. McDonald and Greg Ruiters list a few of the strategies such as profit maximization, outsourcing, cost recovery, competitive bidding, cost-benefit analysis, performance targeted salaries, outsourcing, ringfenced decision making (e.g. financial ringfencing when all resources directly involved in the delivery of a service are separated from the resources for all other services), and demand-driven investments. These methods are a shift from “the more traditional public sector operating principles of integrated planning, (cross) subsidization, supply-driven decision making, equity orientation” (McDonald and Ruiters, 2007, page 12).

Both network governance structure and corporatizing of government operations are seen as a way to increase transparency, accountability, flexibility, and efficiency. John Crompton (2005) at Texas A&M outlines four forces that brought about the privatization of parks and recreation services:

- frustration with the inflexibility and relatively high cost inherent in the traditional approach of direct service delivery;
- the convergence of political agendas from both the conservative and liberal wings of the political spectrum;

- recognition of the inherent inefficiencies associated with the monopolistic supply of services; and
- awareness of the distinction between service provision and production.

A third, more theoretical, explanation for the growth of P3s in parks is proposed by Michael Murray, a law student at Yale Law School at the time of his paper (Murray, 2010). Murray develops a theoretical model that essentially states that the management and control of funding of parks by a non-profit organization (NPO) reduces the cost of monitoring. In a government managed park system excess demand exists for more and better park improvements. This residual demand is satisfied by a non-governmental organization (NGO) taking responsibility for the park. The NGO forms a non-profit organization (NPO) and is funded, at least partly, by restricted donations that designate how the money should be used. These restricted funds increase the responsibility of the NPO and decrease the cost to monitor the NPO. Murray goes on to theorize that private NPO managers are more responsible, not necessarily 'better,' because they are a discrete person that can be contacted, not a faceless, diffuse governmental department. This singular manager can be held personally responsible and is directly responsible for funding. This manager is driven to provide successful services through donations or user fees by the need to generate revenue.

Somewhat related to Murray's theory is a fourth factor defined by Sheila Foster, a law professor at Fordham University, that she calls 'regulatory slippage' (Foster, 2011). Regulatory slippage occurs when "government authorities fail to enforce existing restrictions and prohibitions and/or tolerate widespread noncompliance ... [and] in turn, can lead to congestion and/or rivalry" (Foster, 2011, page 7). This lack of government enforcement may result from a decline in government resources, an increase in demand where government is not able to adequately respond, or when the restrictions are unrealistic or outdated in the first place. Typically, once regulatory

slippage occurs, “the governance question arises anew” and the government or those vested in the issue begin discussing different management options to bring the quality of public space back up to adequate levels (Foster, 2011, page 7).

Fifth, the growth in parks P3s is the overlap in interest of business improvement districts (BIDs) and public improvement districts (PIDs) with well-maintained park and public space. BIDs and PIDs are inherently interested in ensuring ‘clean and safe’ areas for the safety and pleasure of tourists, shoppers, employees, and residents. Park maintenance may be complimentary to duties already performed by a BID, as is the case with Market Square in Philadelphia discussed later in this report. The DAA’s 2008-2013 Strategic Plan lists improvement of the public realm for economic prosperity as one of six top priorities. The DAA’s previous Chair of the Board of Directors states that the importance of downtown parks to the Board is “on par with other initiatives of the DAA, ... funding levels [for park initiatives] are on par with Board priorities, and the Board is responsive to Parks Committee and Staff requests/recommendations for funding” (D. Bodenman, personal communication, April 4, 2011). Though BIDs and PIDs enhance the public environment in their area, they have drawn criticism from social justice advocates and academics concerned about exclusion and spatial equity.²

Sixth, park management of parks by P3s has grown because the funder of a park (re)development specifically requested an NPO manage the park. This was the case with many of the parks in this report. For instance, the private foundations that funded

² For an overview of BIDs and debates surrounding them see: (1) Hoyt, Lorlene and Devika Gopal-Agge. *The Business Improvement District Model: A Balanced Review of Contemporary Debates*. *Geography Compass* 1/4 (2007): 946–958. web.mit.edu/dusp/dusp_extension_unsec/people/faculty/lhoyt/Hoyt_Gopal-Agge_GECO.pdf. (2) Warner, Mildred, James Quazi, Brooks More, Ezra Cattan, Scott Bellen and Kerim Odekon. *Business Improvement Districts: Issues in Alternative Local Public Service Provision*, June 2002, <http://government.cce.cornell.edu/doc/reports/econdev/bids.asp>. (3) Briffault, Richard. *A Government for Our Time? Business Improvement Districts And Urban Governance*. 99 *Columbia Law Review*, 365 (1999).

and spurred the redevelopment of Market Square and Burnett Park intentionally directed their funding for operations and maintenance through the downtown BIDs. The foundations did so to ensure quality of service and design and to act as a link to the business community throughout the design and construction process.

The seventh and final reason for growth in park management by P3s is the shifting role and expectations of downtown parks. New parks, as highlighted in this case study, are often seen as a destination that provides a variety of experiences for a variety of people- entertainment, fitness, culture, music, food, relaxing. They are also a new source of revenue. The change in roles of parks may be due simply to changing social needs with people repopulating the urban core. All of the parks in this case study are experiencing an increase in the downtown residential population. Van Melik et al also see it as a reflection of the changing needs of the public brought about by the more recent trends of multiculturalism and individualism that have led to a differentiation of lifestyles. “Thus, as people’s behavior and living conditions change, their needs with regard to public space will change too” (Van Melik et al, 2007, page 31). The higher level of amenities, uses, and demand of public parks has created a need for a higher level of maintenance that local public agencies cannot satisfy. This correlates with Murray’s theory that NPOs step in to fill the gap between the needs of the public and the capability of local government.

So how prevalent are these park management public-private partnerships? New York City has 50% of parks adopted by friends groups and numerous cities such as Boston, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. have formalized management partnerships (Murray, 2010). The groups dedicated to park maintenance range from informal friends groups to an established non-profit organization. The contract between the non-government organization and the park owner (typically the City) varies from verbal agreements to a formal MOU or contract.

A recent survey conducted by Trust for Public Land sought to quantify the number of BIDs involved in park management (A. Merolli, personal communication, November 5, 2010).³ Though the survey response was low (33 out of 200 BIDs contacted) the responses provide insight on how BIDs are involved in park management across the country. 26 out of 33 responding BIDs are involved in parks within their area in one way or another. All of the parks managed by the BID are owned by either city, county, or state government. Most BIDs are partners with the city for minimal maintenance. The BIDs that have a dedicated budget for parks spend anywhere from 2-10% on park management/maintenance. A few BIDs surveyed have larger roles in the parks, such as park renovation design, or programming in the park. Bryant Park was the only surveyed BID to have a role exclusively dedicated to park maintenance, management, and capital expenditures. Most of the involvement in parks is centered on maintenance, programming, and marketing.

Public-Private Partnership and Park Management Models

Analyzing models of public-private collaborations and park management models allows us to create distinctions between the different types of public-private partnerships and creates a framework to evaluate the five parks in this report. Much academic literature has focused on public-private partnerships but few focus specifically on park management. Additionally, most of the literature relevant to parks and park management is centered on public space typologies and management and is not specific to parks.⁴ The focus of this report is on the governance and management

³ The BID survey conducted by Trust for Public Land is still in progress and is currently unpublished.

⁴ For further discussion on public space typologies, see the following articles: (1) Carr, Stephen, Mark Francis, Leanne Rivlin, & Andrew Stone. *Public Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. (2) Nemeth, Jeremy and Stephan Schmidt. *The privatization of public space: modeling and measuring publicness*. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, Vol. 38, 5-23, 2011. (3) Carmona, Matthew. *Contemporary Public Space: Critique and Classification, Part One: Critique*. *Journal of Urban Design*, Vol. 15, Issue 1, 123-148, 2010. Also see Carmona, Matthew. *Contemporary Public Space, Part Two: Classification*. *Journal of*

structure of public parks specifically. In this section I present a brief summary of public-private partnerships and park management typologies. I conclude with an analysis of Austin's current park management structure.

The first model of public-private partnerships is presented by Ysa Tamyko in her paper *Governance Forms in Urban Public-Private Partnerships*. Her typology of public-private partnerships is based on the context in which the partnership operates and is dependent on the existing form of governance in which the P3 is established, the duration and stage of the partnership, the partners themselves, and the objectives of each partner (Ysa, 2007). The form of the P3 significantly determines the incentives, meeting of objectives, government expectations, legal status, and accountability of the partnership. The P3, according to Ysa, is a process rather than an outcome.

Ysa develops three types of P3 models based on her research on business improvement districts (BIDs) in the U.S. and Town Centre Management models in the United Kingdom. The first is the Instrumental model formed to achieve a specific objective such as an infrastructure or building project. This model typically occurs in a market-based form of governance (where the market is based on supply and demand and consumer choice determines resource allocation) and the partners compete to deliver goods and services. In the second Symbolic P3 model the partnership is typically created in a hierarchical, bureaucratic, command and control governance structure in which the government partner determines the resource allocation. This partnership does not have any definite goals per se and may be merely the result of public relations by the government. The third and final partnership type is the Organic model. This occurs in network governance structures where partner relationships are based on "reciprocity, interdependence, and complementary strategic interests" and

Urban Design, Vol. 15, Issue 2, 157-173, 2010. (4) Marcuse, Peter. *Security or safety in cities? the threat of terrorism after 9/11*. International Journal of Urban & Regional Research, Vol. 30, Issue 4, 919-929, 2006.

stakeholders work towards common objectives (Ysa, 2007, page 39). These three types of model Ysa puts forth are not static and can change over time. Most lasting partnerships start out as more of an Organic partnership with a network governance context and move towards Instrumental partnerships as they mature and become more formalized.

Table 1. Ideal partnership types

| Ideal Type | Form of Governance | Relationship Between Actors |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Instrumental | Market | Competitive |
| Symbolic | Hierarchy, bureaucracy | Command and control |
| Organic | Network | Based on trust |

Source: (adapted from Ysa, 2007, page 38)

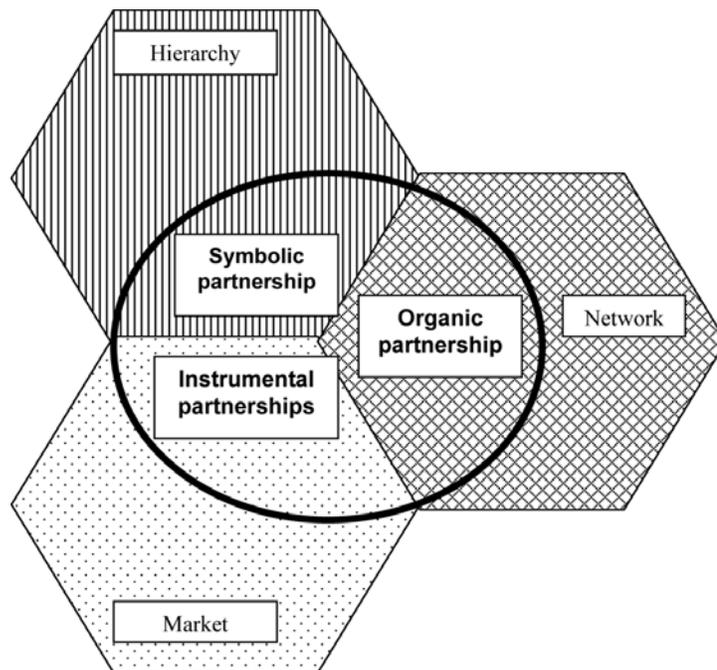


Figure 3. Partnership models with corresponding governance structure

Source: Ysa, 2007, page 50

Currently the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) and Austin Parks Foundation (APF) partner with Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) to develop common objectives for parks on levels of maintenance, fee structure to hold special events, programming, and advocacy. However, PARC does not regularly involve or seek to collaborate with the DAA; therefore Austin's existing governance structure in the management of downtown parks would most likely be considered Instrumental-Symbolic.

The second relevant typology is offered by Carmona, Magalhães, and Hammond (2008) in their book *Public Space: The Management Dimension*. The authors develop three public space management models that are differentiated by the managing organization and by four management dimensions: regulation, maintenance, coordination, and investment in that space.⁵ The three models are based on the authors' empirical research of parks in the UK and developed countries including the U.S. It is important to note that each model assumes the land is publicly owned.

The first management model, State Centered, is hierarchical with vertical lines of accountability, clear separation of policy conception and service, and an impartial and committed interest to the public. The second model, Market-Centered, is established through service-delivery contracts for the management of public space between a government and a private contractor. The relationship of this model is client-contractor in which the contractor may or may not define the management objectives. The last model is Community-Centered in which a community organization is contracted to manage public space. This is similar to the Market-Centered but differs in that the goal of the organization contractor is to provide quality service, rather than

⁵ Description of the four management dimensions are as follows: 1) Regulation: regulation of uses, framework for solving conflicts between uses, and rules of access; 2) Maintenance: maintaining physical space and facilities; 3) Coordination: coordination of all of the stakeholders, department, and actors involved in park activities; 4) Investment: financial and material resources for maintenance, programming, administration, and regulation; (Carmona et al, 2008).

make a profit. This model is closely linked with network governance in which objectives are mutually defined and achieved by government and the private sector. The diagram below presents the key dimensions of regulation, maintenance, coordination, and investment for each model (Carmona et al, 2008, page 72). These models are not mutually exclusive and the parks studied by Carmona et al have “used a combination of them, depending on policy priorities, the relative strength of the various social agents with a concern for public space, and on the nature of the management challenges at hand” (Carmona et al, 2008, page 71). The management of Austin’s downtown parks is a combination of the state-centered and community-centered models.

Table 2. Management models

| | State-Centered | Market-Centered | Community-Centered |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Public service ethos, accountability, separation of provision-use, separation of public-private | Delegation, value for money and profitability, contract relationship, overlap provision-use, separation client-contractor, overlap public and private | Delegation, civic spirit, co-production of services, overlap provision-use, overlap public-community, overlap client-contractor |
| Coordination | Hierarchies Organizational restructuring Consultation and use feedback | Contract specification Partnership design | 'cCmpact' agreement and partnership design Contract specification Stakeholder engagement |
| Regulation | Legislation and enforcement Performance management | Contract enforcement Partnership performance management | Contract enforcement Partnership design Institutional support Capacity building |
| Maintenance | Separation delivery-use Technical expertise Standards setting Consultation and user feedback | Overlap delivery-use Separation client-contractor Contract drafting Outcome specification | Contract drafting Standards setting Institutional support Local and general standards |
| Investment | Budget allocation Rationalization and efficiency gains | Alternative sources Value for money and competition Stakeholder identification and involvement Vested interests | Alternative sources Stakeholder identification and involvement Commitment Local knowledge Capacity building |

Source: (Carmona et al, 2008)

A third model of public space management is put forth by Sheila Foster (2011), a law professor at Fordham University School of Law. This model, what the author calls “collective action enabling,” reflects the current public-private partnerships that exist with entities such as park conservancies and BIDs. Foster defines collective action enabling as the “enabling [by local government] of cooperation among private actors to manage an open access, common resource” (Foster, 2011, page 4). BIDs, park

conservancies, neighborhood groups, and community gardeners are all examples of collective managers described by the author.

The author places this model in between the two other traditional responses of top-down government regulations and privatization that have traditionally been the response to public goods problems.⁶ One example of the top-down government model to public goods problems is ‘public space zoning’ for street nuisances such as panhandling. On the other end is the privatization response which assigns private property rights to public spaces; for example, homeowners associations or gated communities ownership of parks in their jurisdiction. In the collective management model, local government enables the management of public space by creating incentives and supporting the private managers. Local government enabling also has the effect on private actors of reducing costs for cooperation, helping them leverage their efforts, and stabilizing potentially fragile private actor groups.

Collective management shares aspects with privatization but differs in two key ways. First, and most obvious, government still owns the land and private property rights are not actually established as they are in fully private models. Second, policy formation authority still lies with the local government; though Foster cites the prime example of Central Park Conservancy that enjoys authority to create rules that determine the content and maximum attendance of activities within the park. The author also points out the fact that private managers “enjoy tremendous autonomy in managerial decisions, many of which have larger policy implications – e.g. access and use decisions” (Foster, 2011, page 55). Additionally, the private collective managers are not enabled to other activities that managers in purely private models have the

⁶ A public goods problem result when a public good (non-excludable in that access is not restricted and non-rival in that consumption by one person does not preclude the consumption by another person) is overused and result in congestion. One example of a public goods problem in urban parks is when Central Park was open to a wide variety of events and uses, which resulted in park degradation and conflict between users (Foster, 2011, page 2).

authority to perform such as the power to tax, exclude or limit access, or impose health or other safety standards on users.

Though the local government enables private actors through incentives and subsidies it differs from the common ‘market enabling’ method that governments typically employ as a means for economic development. With market enabling government offers incentives such as tax abatement to encourage economic competition, whereas collective management encourages economic cooperation. Collective management also differs from new governance (aka collaborative governance) in that more responsibility is delegated to private actors to collectively manage public space.

Ysa, Carmona et al, and Foster create typologies of public private partnership and park management models that draw upon several factors including the governance structures in which P3s develop, the relationship between management and owner partners, and the metrics of regulation, investment, operation, and coordination. Table 3 provides a cross-comparison of the models developed by each author. I contrast these seven different models in the areas of management, maintenance, and programming -- the same three metrics I use to measure each park’s characteristics. The management of Austin’s downtown parks could previously have been described as Symbolic (Ysa), and State-centered (Carmona et al). With the more-recent efforts of collaboration between DAA, Austin Parks Foundation, and Austin Parks and Recreation Department for programming, fee-structure, and advocacy the partnership is in transition but potentially moving to a more collaborative, Instrumental-Organic (Ysa), collectively managed (Foster), Community-Centered (Carmona et al) model. The recommendations I make in this report will be partially drawn from the opportunities and challenges associated with each of these models.

Table 3. Aggregation of park management models

| | (Ysa, 2007) | | | (Carmona, 2008) | | | (Foster, 2011) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Instrumental | Symbolic | Organic | State | Market | Community | Collective Management |
| Governance structure context | In market-based governance structure Formed for specific objective Private actors compete to deliver goods and services | In hierarchical, bureaucratic, command and control governance structure | In network governance structure Based on trust and reciprocity Flexible Information exchange | In hierarchical governance/government structure | In market-based governance | In network governance structure | Most successful in network governance structure |
| Management metric Roles, relations, and agreements between partners Impetus and context of partnership funding sources | Public and private partners jointly determine project scope and implementation Need preliminary funds Created to share risk and resources | No definite goals May be the result of gov't public relations Gov't determine resource allocation Gov't control partnership Gov't may offer incentives to elicit partner commitment | Joint goal and objective creation Nonhierarchical and self-managed partnership Informal agreements | Local gov't own and manage There may be collaboration between city agencies/levels | Client-contractor relationship Formal contracts Gov't monitor contractor performance Brings in outside financial resources Contractor interested in profit | Involves community organization Client-contractor partnership Formal contracts or 'compacts' Organizations care about quality of public space and service | Gov't create incentives and provide support to private managers Private managers have great discretion in managerial decisions Management by private actors varies depending on capacity of private manager |
| Maintenance metric Level of maintenance Funding sources | Maintenance level jointly determined | Gov't maintenance typically perform maintenance Level determined by gov't entity | Level determined by all partners | Local gov't maintain funding from city budget | Brings in outside technical resources | Maintenance standards and routines locally defined bring in local knowledge | Private managers have great discretion in managerial decisions |
| Program metric Concessions, activities, funding, and fees | Not defined | Not defined | Not defined | Not defined Activities and events presumed to be managed and provided by gov't | Not defined by authors | Not defined by authors but activities and events presumed to be locally defined | Management by private actors varies depending on capacity of private manager |

PART 3: METHODOLOGY

Framework For Analysis

The case studies in this report provide insight into how five other city governments and non-governmental partners are managing their urban public parks. These cases are meant to provide the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) with information to create policy recommendations to improve the management, maintenance, and programming in Austin's downtown parks. These three areas, or metrics, of park management set the framework in which to compare and contrast the parks and distill down the trends and lessons from each park. These components and metrics were developed by the DAA and represent the specific information they sought in order to create policy recommendations. Table 4 outlines a description of each metrics and the corresponding interview questions I asked of each park representatives. Note that I asked each park representative essentially the same question but some were left out or tailored specifically for each park, depending on information I was able to obtain prior to the interview and the time constraints of the interview itself. Having established a methodological framework based on the literature, I now explain my case study selection.

Table 4. Metrics for park analysis

| Metric | Key Components | Interview Questions |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Management | Partners' roles and relations | <p>What model(s) of public-private partnerships exist at this park?</p> <p>What is the agreement between your organization and the City/Parks Department and how did it come about?</p> <p>How is the partnership with the City and your organization maintained (board members exchange, monthly meetings, members on same committee, etc.)?</p> |
| | Impetus and context of partnership | <p>What events or policies led to the current partnership and agreement?</p> <p>What events or policies led to the renovation/creation of the park and what was the role of your organization?</p> |
| | Funding | <p>What were the sources of funding for the renovation/creation of the park and how were these funds secured?</p> |
| Maintenance | Maintenance levels | <p>What is the level of maintenance and/or security provided in the park (daily, weekly, monthly, as needed, etc.) and How many staff members are dedicated to operating the park?</p> |
| | Funding | <p>What are the sources of funding for regular operations & maintenance and programming of the park?</p> |
| Programming | Concessions | <p>Are there any concessions in the park? If so, who pays for building and maintenance of the structure?</p> <p>What is the agreement between your organization and the concession?</p> |
| | Events and activities | <p>What events (private or public) are allowed in the park?</p> <p>Does your organization manage event planning and reservations?</p> |
| | Funding and fees | <p>How much revenue, if any, is generated by or in the park and how is this revenue dispersed?</p> <p>Do you charge a fee for park usage? How are user fees determined? Are the fees on a tiered scale?</p> |

Park Selection

This report provides case studies on the management, finance, and programming of five urban parks:

- Citygarden in St. Louis, Missouri
- Discovery Green in Houston, Texas
- Waterfront Park in Louisville, Kentucky
- Burnett Park in Fort Worth, Texas
- Market Square in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Figure 4. Map of case study parks

All parks studied are located within the Central Business District, though Waterfront Park is about a 10 minute walk from downtown Louisville. Though the five parks have key similarities, they all represent different management structures and public-private partnerships. Parks for this study were chosen based on several factors guided by the DAA:

- Geographical significance- parks in downtown central business districts were sought, as well as parks in Texas were sought to create greater buy-in, similarities in cultural and political environment.

- City population and density- Parks in cities with a similar metropolitan population and population density were sought to provide an accurate comparison.
- Park size and type- Other parks of similar size to Austin’s downtown parks and squares (1-10 acres) and parks focused on the cultural and personal experience, as opposed to ecological, were sought.
- Structure of park management partnership- All of the parks have a different combination of owners and managing partners.
- National acclaim- Parks that have received national recognition for their design were sought to provide a model and inspiration.

A detailed justification of these factors is located in the appendix. Table 5 below marks the factor associated with of each park.

Table 5. Factors for choosing case study parks

| Park | Geographical Significance | City Population & Density | Size & Type | Structure of management partnership | National Acclaim |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Citygarden (St. Louis) | | | X | X | X |
| Burnett Park (Ft. Worth) | X | | X | X | |
| Discovery Green (Houston) | X | | X | X | X |
| Waterfront Park (Louisville) | | X | | X | X |
| Market Square (Pittsburgh) | | | X | X | |

Table 6 provides city population and park data for Austin and each case study city. Data are based on Trust for Public Land’s 2010 City Park Facts that quantifies data for the 85 most populous cities in the U.S.

Table 6. Demographic and park data of Austin and case study parks

| Park/City | Population ⁷ | Density ⁸ | Parkland as percentage of city area | Parkland per 1,000 residents | Spending on parks and recreation per resident* |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Austin | 757,688 | Intermediate-low | 16.7% | 35.4 acres | Total: \$69/resident Ranked #50 |
| | | | | | Operational: \$41/resident Ranked #66 |
| Citygarden (St. Louis) | 356,730 | Intermediate-high | 8.6% | 9.6 acres | Total: \$66/resident Ranked #51 |
| | | | | | Operational: \$51/resident Ranked #51 |
| Burnett Park (Ft. Worth) | 187,222 | Low | 5.9% | 15.8 acres | No data |
| Discovery Green (Houston) | 2,242,193 | Intermediate-low | 13.7% | 22.6 acres | Total: \$36/resident Ranked #72 |
| | | | | | Operational: \$29/resident Ranked #74 |
| Waterfront Park (Louisville) | 246,400 | Low | 6.5% | 22.3 acres | Total: \$42/resident Ranked #68 |
| | | | | | Operational: \$33/resident Ranked #72 |
| Market Square (Pittsburgh) | 310,037 | Intermediate-high | 8.8% | 10.1 acres | Total: \$88/resident Ranked #40 |
| | | | | | Operational: \$48/resident Ranked #57 |

This report is based on initial research done as part of an internship I did in the summer of 2010 with the Downtown Austin Alliance. Information was gathered

⁷ Population is a measurement of the population of only the city municipality, not the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

⁸ “The density categories were determined by taking the mean of all 85 cities and then the standard deviation. The two middle categories (i.e. Intermediate-High and Intermediate-Low) are within ½ standard deviation of the mean. The two outside categories (i.e. High and Low) fall above and below the ½ standard deviation point described above. Where each city falls is determined by their population density (population/land area)” (Trust for Public Land, 2010).

through interviews with park managers during the summer and fall of 2010 and supplemented by park websites, online news sources, and other local online sources. Park managers I interviewed were mostly higher-level management, typically with the Executive Director or Business Manager. Interviews of all the parks were conducted in July and August 2010 except Market Square which was conducted in November. See Appendix for interview questions. When possible, budget and financial reports were obtained from each park representative. With the exception of Discovery Green, all interviews were conducted over the phone. The Discovery Green interview was conducted at the park and included a walking tour. The duration of all phone interviews was between 30-60 minutes.

PART 4: CASE STUDY DESCRIPTION

Park 1: CITYGARDEN | St. Louis, Missouri



Figure 5. Citygarden and Gateway Mall

Photo credit: Steve Hall/Hedrich Blessing (Duffy and Peterson, 2009)

Citygarden.

Figure 6. Citygarden logo

Source: Citygardenstl.org

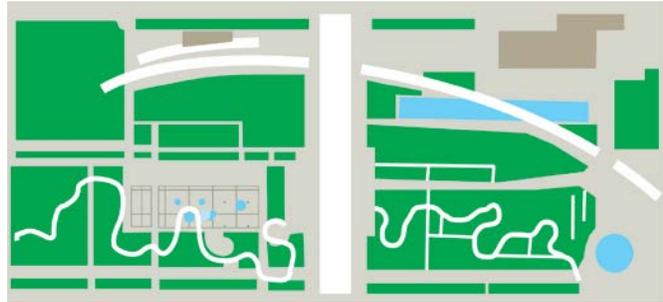


Figure 7. Citygarden schematic

Citygarden is a 2.9 acre, two-block sculpture garden in the heart of St. Louis' central business district. Completed in July 2009, Citygarden is part of the Gateway Mall, a 1.1 mile long ribbon of park land that stretches out from the Mississippi River into downtown. The St. Louis Gateway Arch marks the eastern end of the Mall at the river. "The Gateway Mall was envisioned as a grand Beaux-Arts inspired design by landscape architect and planner George Kessler in the city's 1907 Plan" (Citygardenstl.org, no date). The majority of the Mall is undeveloped but efforts to renovate the strip are currently underway with an international design competition held in 2010 to solicit designs for the Mall (excluding Citygarden). I interviewed the Executive Director of the Gateway Foundation, Christy Fox, over the phone in July of 2010.

Surrounding Area + History

Various government and office buildings, sports arenas, and entertainment complexes, including Busch Stadium, surround the park as seen in the map below.



Figure 8. Map of St. Louis

Like many other American cities downtown St. Louis began a long-period of economic decline and population loss starting in the 1950s. It wasn't until the late 1990s and early 2000s that the downtown area began to pick back up. Driving the recent revitalization of downtown was the new Busch Stadium – home of the St. Louis Cardinals, the relocation of residents and retail from the suburbs, and plans for a mixed-use neighborhood adjacent to downtown. The site designated for Citygarden was previously vacant flat lawn area.

Management

The creation of Citygarden cost \$25-\$30 million and was funded entirely by the Gateway Foundation. This amount includes design, construction, and front-end soft costs (legal support, education materials, etc.) and does not include the cost of the 24 sculptures in the park. The Gateway Foundation is a local, non-profit foundation

focused on designing and funding public space improvements. The Foundation's past projects include the lighting of the Gateway Arch, the Civil Courts Building and the Grand Ave Water Tower, and the design and purchasing and locating sculptures in various City locations. The Gateway Foundation has an agreement with the City to manage the park for the next 15 years. The City of St. Louis owns the land while the Foundation owns the sculptures. Going forward, the Foundation will pay for all costs of Citygarden except water and electricity.

Efforts to build Citygarden began in 1999 when the City drafted the Downtown Development Action Plan. This plan identified a series of strategies for the revitalization of downtown including the creation of a "world class sculpture garden and a location for a restaurant" (City of St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency, 2007), now Citygarden. At the City's request the Gateway Foundation funded a detail master plan for the mall in 2006 and entered into a cooperative agreement with the City in July 2007 to fund the park design process, construction, and soft costs. During the design of the park, the Gateway Foundation decided to take on management of the park because, as explained by the Foundation's Director, the Foundation's Board President and Director became so involved in the design and construction they thought the organization was in the best position to maintain the park and management of the sculpture garden would fit the Foundation's mission.

Maintenance

The Gateway Foundation spends \$1 million annually on Citygarden's operations and maintenance – approximately \$333,000 per acre. This amount is dedicated entirely to operations and maintenance and does not include fundraising, marketing, and other overhead costs. The Gateway Foundation has two staff whose salaries and time are not included in this budget. All maintenance and landscaping is contracted out using a variety of contractors. Maintenance such as trash removal and landscaping occurs

daily, while larger projects are done on a seasonal basis. There is a security guard on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

During our interview, the Director explained the possible future shift of operations and maintenance of the park. The Gateway Mall Conservancy recently formed to support the development and operations of the rest of the Gateway Mall. The Foundation's Director noted that is still too early to tell, but this new Conservancy may eventually take over park management.

Programming

Amenities + Design

The park contains a mixture of natural, art, and recreational play elements including:

- + 24 pieces of internationally recognized sculpture,
- + One restaurant with a green roof
- + One large video wall built into the arching wall
- + Three fountains including a spray plaza play area and a small waterfall
- + 550 foot-long arching wall capped in polished granite made from Missouri quarried limestone,
- + Native plants throughout and six rain gardens

The design of Citygarden, by Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects from Charlottesville, Virginia, is meant to relate to the regional context and was inspired by the great riverine landscape of the Mississippi River. The park incorporates historical aspects such as old property lines and alleys taken from a 1916 Sanborn map and is planted with native vegetation. Below is a diagram of the park. The pink circles denote the location of the art sculptures.

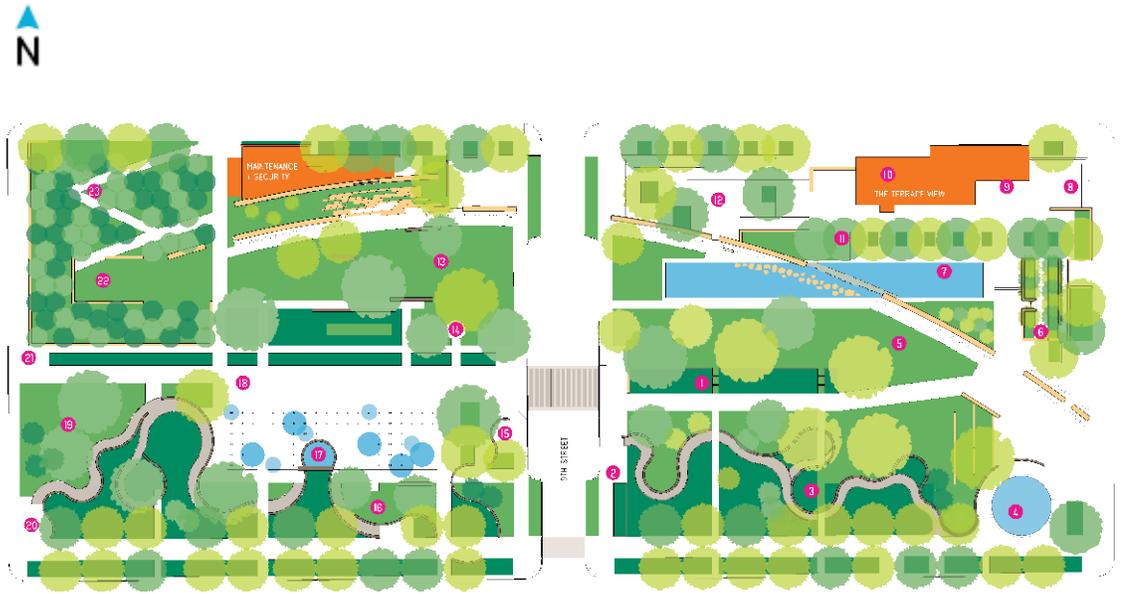


Figure 9. Map of Citygarden
Source: citygardenstl.org

Concessions

Within Citygarden is Terrace View Café, a mid-price range restaurant operated by a local restaurant chain. The restaurant does not pay any fees or rent to the Foundation or the City and as defined by their seven-year renewable contract with the City, any revenue generated by the restaurant will go towards capital improvements of the building. As of July, 2010 the cafe has not generated any revenue. A second vendor sells high-quality ice cream out of an antique fire truck parked on the street adjacent to the park. This vendor has a standard concession agreement with the city's parks department.

Events

Private events are not allowed in the park due to lack of staff's capacity to handle event coordination, the disruption it would cause to the visitor experience, and the lack of capacity of the park itself to handle events. However, as Ms. Fox explained, the foundation would welcome events held by a nonprofit such as the St. Louis Symphony or the Shakespeare Festival if it was free and open to the public.

Park 2: BURNETT PARK | Ft. Worth, Texas



Figure 10. Burnett Park's iconic cowboy sculpture
Source: forthworthology.com

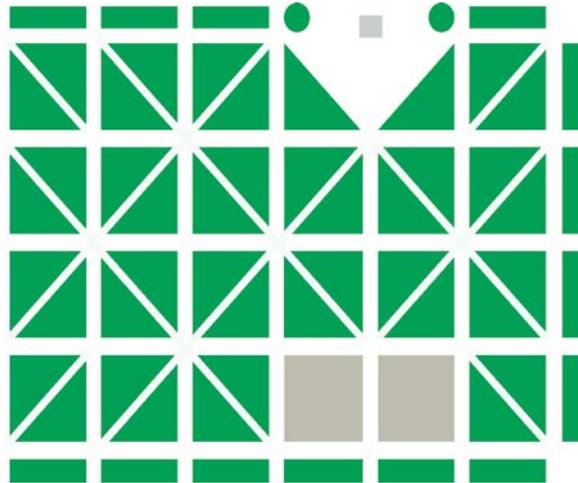


Figure 11. Burnett Park schematic

Burnett Park is a 3-acre park in downtown Ft. Worth named after Samuel Burnett, a pioneer oil man and rancher that gifted the land to the city after he passed away in 1922. Renovation of the park was completed in May 2010. I interviewed Todd Holzaepfel, Planning and Operations Vice President and PID (public improvement district) Manager at Downtown Fort Worth, Inc., over the phone in July of 2010.

Surrounding Area + History

Burnett Park, in Ft. Worth's central business district, shares the block with historic Burnett Tower, the city's largest office building. The park is surrounded by other private and government office buildings park along with residential buildings nearby. There are about 1,700 residents living in downtown Ft. Worth and four other parks in the city's central core, each smaller or comparable in size to Burnett Park (Downtown Fort Worth, Inc., 2010). The previous park design had a crisscrossing pattern of sidewalks across the park with a fountain at its center. Prior to the 2010 renovation, the park was under-used despite its central location.

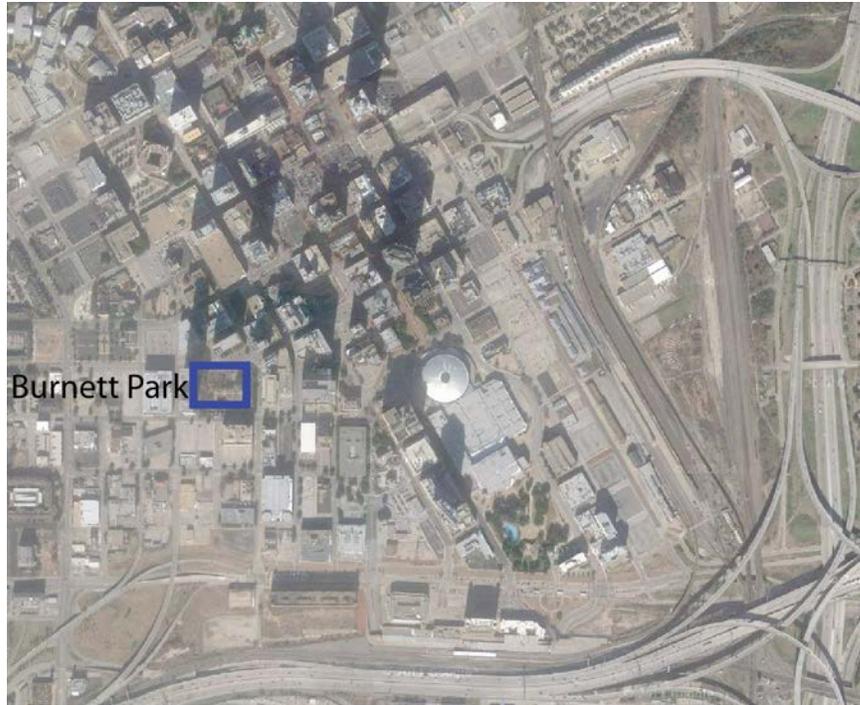


Figure 12. Map of Ft. Worth

Management

The City of Ft. Worth owns the land and pays Downtown Ft. Worth Initiatives, Inc. (DFWII, an arm of Downtown Ft. Worth, Inc.) to perform park maintenance (\$37,830). The Burnett Foundation completely funds the remaining amount needed for park management through a grant to DFWII. PCSD performs park inspections to ensure adequate maintenance and safety of the playground equipment. Communication between The Foundation, PCSD, and DFWII is on an as-needed basis but is somewhat regular as the Executive Vice President of The Burnett Foundation is also a member of DFWI.

The current maintenance and management arrangement stems from problems that arose after the 1985 renovation. The Burnett Foundation, linked to park benefactor Samuel Burnett, planted additional trees in the park after the 1985 renovation to provide shade. Unfortunately these new trees dropped leaves into the central fountain,

creating expensive maintenance problems. The Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department (PCSD) was in charge of park maintenance at the time and did not have the resources to properly maintain the fountain and park. The Burnett Foundation supplemented the additional funding needed and paid the City \$186,000 annually to maintain the park at an acceptable level.

Around 1998 the Burnett Foundation asked Downtown Ft. Worth Initiatives, Inc. to become involved in the maintenance of the park and oversee PCSD's performance. Beginning around 2001 DFWII began administering a private contract for the maintenance. This was funded, at least in part, by PCSD contributing what it would normally spend on maintenance of the park (roughly \$36,000 a year). Prior to the 2010 renovation the cost to maintain the park and the problematic fountains was \$230,000. In 2006 the Burnett Foundation partnered with the City of Fort Worth and Downtown Fort Worth Inc. to reexamine the park's use and high maintenance cost. Renovation of the park began in 2009 and was completed in May 2010. Renovation cost \$1 million and was completely funded by the Burnett Foundation.

Maintenance

Two DFWII employees coordinate the management of the park and oversee the small maintenance staff. Maintenance is performed daily by one to two workers from 7 am to 4 pm every weekday and by one worker for four hours on each weekend day. DFWII also contracts out a horticulturalist from Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas. Following the most recent renovation a request for proposal went out for maintenance of the park. The lowest bid of around \$112,500 reduces the cost of maintenance by almost half to roughly \$34,000 per acre.

Programming

Amenities + Design

The redesign of this park was a response to the increase in residents living downtown and the failures of the previous design. The park now has:

- + A great lawn area for concerts and events
- + A small playground area with a tensile climbing structure
- + Moveable tables and chairs
- + Enhanced lighting features

Peter Walker Architects in Berkeley designed both the 2010 and 1985 renovations. The new design kept most elements of the previous layout including the crisscrossing network of sidewalks and a vegetated perimeter. The 1985 design arranged the park around a central fountain. A raised lawn area took the place of the problematic fountains.

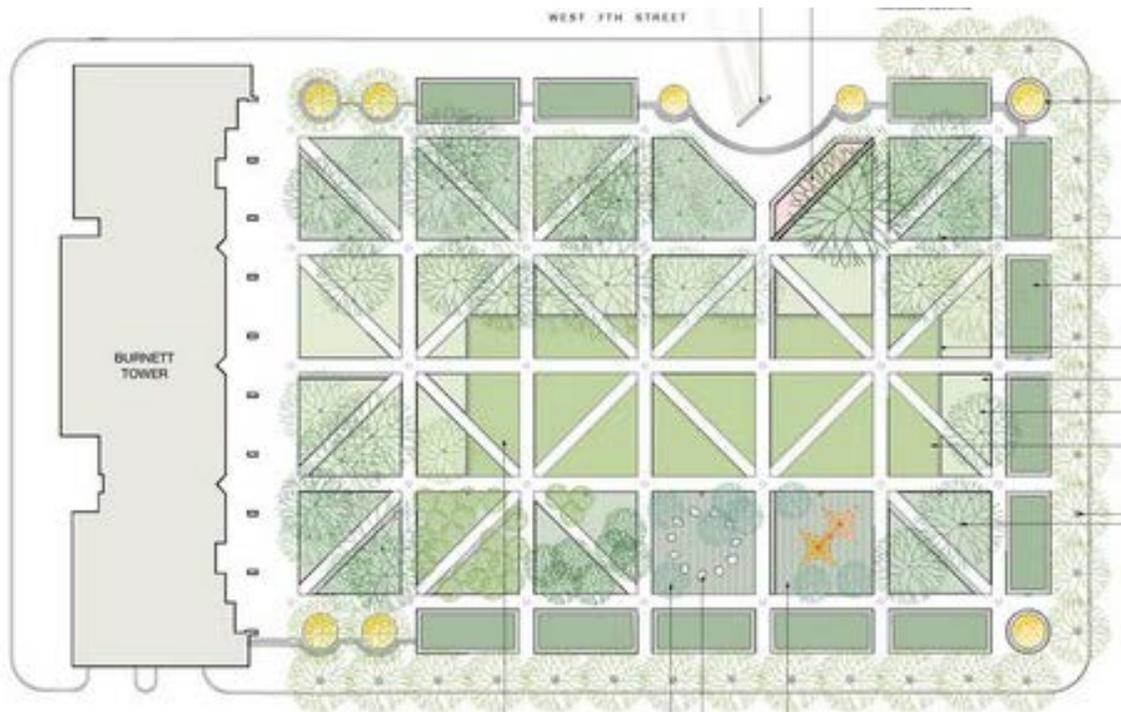


Figure 13. Layout of Burnett Park
Source: dfwi.org

Concessions

No concessions are allowed in the park as directed by city policy. There is one hot dog vender allowed at edge of park on the sidewalk that pays a minimal fee to the city.

Programming

DFWII recently gained the right from the City to administer the park's event permitting process and receive 100% of the proceeds. DFWII established a tiered user fee structure that varies depending on non-profit status, expected attendance, and event duration. Non-profits receive a 50% discount. Due to a lack of programming funds DFWII does not hold regular events in the park.

Park 3: DISCOVERY GREEN | Houston, Texas



Figure 14. Discovery Green logo

Source: discoverygreen.com



Figure 15. Discovery Green's Mist Tree

Source: discoverygreen.com



Figure 16. Discovery Green schematic

Discovery Green is a 12-acre park covering eight city blocks in downtown Houston, Texas. The development of this park was completed in April 2008 after 17 months of construction. With over 400 events held in one year, this park is the most active and programmed park in this report. I visited the park and met with Melinda Parmer, the Business Manager of Discovery Green Conservancy in July, 2010. Unless otherwise noted the following information is based on the interview with supplemental information from Discovery Green Conservancy's website.

Surrounding Area + History

Discovery Green is located in the central business district directly across the street from the George R. Brown Convention Center, two high-end hotels, and a luxury high-rise residential building. Within a few blocks of Discovery Green are the Houston Rockets'

Toyota Center, Minute Maid Park for the Houston Astros, the Houston Pavilions (a shopping, dining, and entertainment complex), and The Shops at Houston Center (retail and office complex). Over 3,800 residents now live downtown, up from only 1,400 in the 1990's (Houston Downtown Management District, no date). Less than a mile away, within the Central business district, is the Buffalo Bayou corridor – a network of parks, trails, and boat landings. This regional park and trails system is at various stages of completion but will eventually be part of a contiguous regional trail and park system.

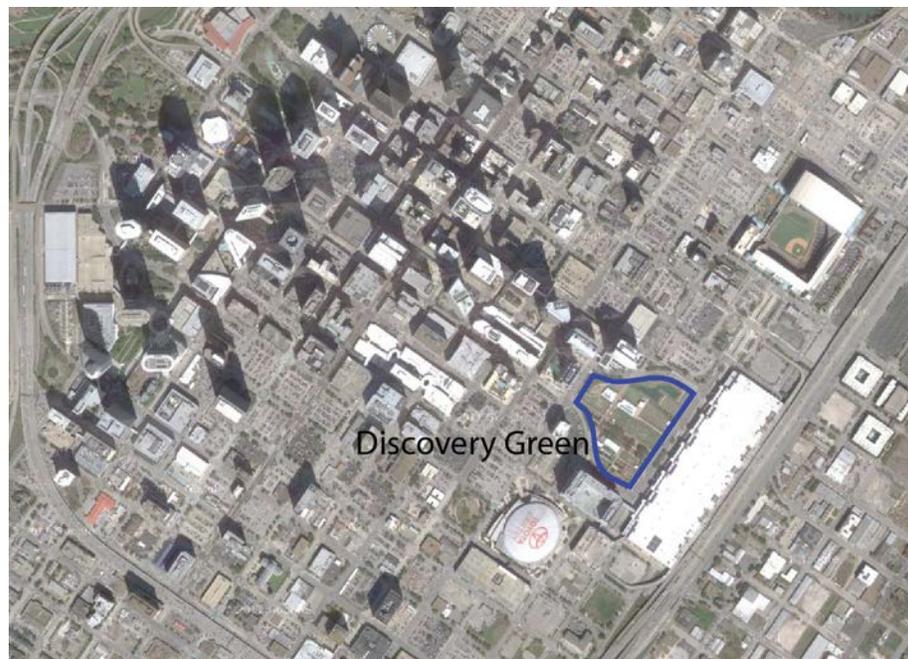


Figure 17. Map of Houston

Prior to the development of Discovery Green, the area was a mix of vacant land, parking lot, and a small park. Below are two pictures depicting the area before and after Discovery Green.



Figure 18. Discovery Green - Before and After
Source: discoverygreen.com

Management

The Discovery Green Conservancy owns the park, while the Houston Downtown Park Corporation (HDPC) owns the land. The HDPC is a local government corporation whose general powers and duties center around the park's development and maintenance (Houston Downtown Park Corporation, no date). Underneath the park is a parking garage that is operated by the City with management contracted out to Republic Parking. The Houston Parks and Recreation Department does not have any involvement in the park.

The impetus for the development of Discovery Green came from local foundations. A group of philanthropists led by The Brown Foundation and the Kinder Foundation approached then-Mayor Bill White with their idea to create a permanent downtown green space and public park. The Mayor soon supported their idea and several other foundations, including the Wortham Foundation and the Houston Endowment, Inc., joined the effort.

Discovery Green's website provides a detailed description of the history of the acquisition and creation of the park land. In 2002, two large parking lots (labeled North Parcel and South Parcel in the photograph to the right) were sold to the City as

part of an unrelated legal settlement. The center parcel was owned by Crescent, a Real Estate Investment Trust and sold the parcel to the City at the end of 2004. Land acquisition for the entire area was complete in December of 2004. During this time, the City and the foundations began creating the Discovery Green Conservancy and the HDPC. The site was formerly industrial land and was remediated as part of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Voluntary Cleanup Program.



Figure 19. Parcels acquired for Discovery Green
Source: Discoverygreen.com

In December 2004, the Conservancy entered into a Development Management Agreement with the Houston Downtown Park Corporation to lead the design, financing, and construction of the park. The Conservancy has a 50-year management contract (two 25-year renewal terms) with the HDPC and has the right to establish rental rates and park rules. According to the Business Manager I interviewed, the Corporation and the Conservancy are essentially the same organization and share some board members but differ slightly in that the chair of the Corporation is appointed by the Mayor.

The Project for Public Spaces assisted with public meetings, workshops, and focus groups to come up with a concept and design for the park. “After exhaustive

interaction, research, and consultation with Project for Public Spaces, the Discovery Green Conservancy held a public meeting to share the initial site activity concepts for the park, which formed the basis to the park's design. It was the birth of Discovery Green” (Discovery Green Conservancy, no date).

The total cost to build the park was \$122 million. Of this amount, \$57 million went towards land acquisition (on top of a partial contribution from City), \$38 million was for park features and improvements, \$21 million from the City was spent on construction of the below-ground parking garage, and \$6 million bought the art installations in the park. The City of Houston contributed 6.4 acres of land and \$7.9m toward acquisition of the remaining 5.4 acres.

Of the total price tag, the City of Houston contributed \$63 million and the Conservancy raised over \$62 million in private funds, mostly in gifts from four local philanthropic giants - the Brown Foundation, the Wortham Foundation, the Houston Endowment, and the Kinder Foundation. Hundreds of smaller donations from individuals were also contributed. Private donors also sponsored specific amenities and sections of the park. With construction paid for, the Conservancy is now focused transitioning to a sustainable revenue model and sponsorships.

Maintenance

The Conservancy employs 18 full-time staff and an additional seasonal 10-12 Park Ambassadors that act as camp counselors or life guards in the kids play areas. There are guards on the premise 24 hours a day: an off-duty police officer and a security guard. The maintenance staff does some landscaping, but most of it is done by contracted crew. According to the 2009-2010 financial statement \$7,688,961 is spent annually on park operations. This does not include annual administrative (\$458,720) or fundraising (\$409,860) costs. Money for operations comes from concessions,

sponsorships, venue rentals, city contracts and other sources with \$1.2 million covered by city contract.

Programming

Amenities + Design

This park is dense with different activity spaces including:

- + A children's playground
- + Public art in the form of sculpture and the entrances to the parking garage
- + Houston Public Library satellite location
- + A five-star restaurant
- + A casual café
- + An interactive water fountain
- + One-acre lake for sailing remote-controlled boats in summer and ice skating in winter
- + Bocce ball court
- + Horseshoe pitch
- + Jogging trail
- + Putting green
- + Separate dog runs for large and small dogs
- + A large, open lawn for casual sports and large gatherings
- + Amphitheater stage
- + Underground parking garage



Figure 20. Layout of Discovery Green Park
 Source: discoverygreen.com

Hargreaves Associates oversaw the design effort, PageSoutherlandPage designed the park's architecture (with Larry Speck as the lead architect, former dean of the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture), and Lauren Griffith Associates provided landscape and horticultural design services. In addition, the Conservancy engaged Project for Public Spaces and Elmore PR, a public relations firm, to ensure a high level of ongoing communication and engagement with the public.

Discovery Green Park has won numerous awards including the Austin Chapter AIA Design Award, the Houston Chapter AIA Design Award for The Grove Restaurant, Urban Land Institute-Houston Development of Distinction Award, and U.S. Green Building Council-Houston Outstanding Environmental Project.

Concessions

The Conservancy built and owns the two restaurant buildings in the park. The two restaurants are owned by the Schiller Del Grande Restaurant Group and have a 10-year lease (two 5-year options) with the Conservancy. The Lake House, a casual café, and The Grove, a five-star restaurant, pay a percentage of their annual gross income (minimum of \$500,000) annually to the Conservancy. There are two other small vending carts in temporary structures owned and managed by the same restaurant group. The carts may change, but at the time of my visit they were selling donuts and ice cream.

Events

According to the Conservancy's website, the park had more than 1.5 million visitors and hosted more than 800 public and private events in its first two years. These events include weekly concerts, fitness classes, a weekly farmer's market, movie nights, and temporary art exhibits. Seasonal events include helium balloon rides in the fall and ice-skating in the winter. The Conservancy has secured sponsorships for some events but

also pays some event partners, such as the symphony, to perform headliner events. Urban Harvest, the organization that organizes the farmer's market, does not pay anything to use the park.

Ten park areas may be reserved for public and private events. There are no restrictions on the type of event that may be held in the park. Nonprofits are given a discount on event fees based on the event inclusiveness: 50% discount if the event is open and free to the public; 40% discount for public fundraiser; and 25% discount for events not open to the public.

Park 4: WATERFRONT PARK | Louisville, Kentucky



Figure 21. Waterfront Park
Source: flicker member 8664



Figure 22. Waterfront Park logo
Source: Louisvillewaterfront.com

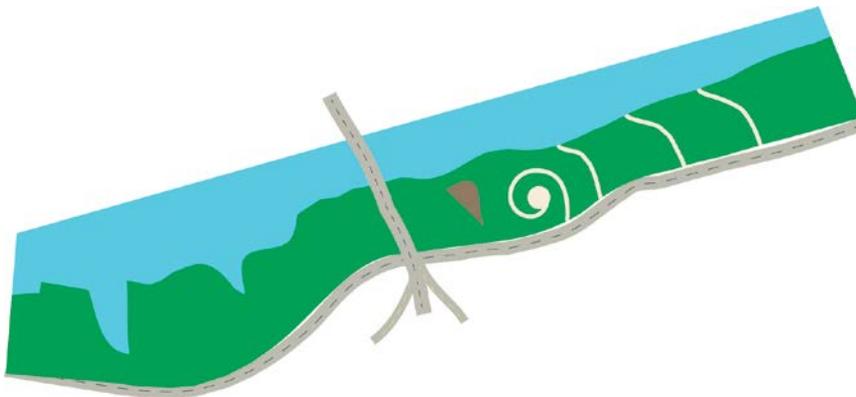


Figure 23. Waterfront Park schematic

Waterfront Park is located adjacent to downtown Louisville along the Ohio River and at 85 acres it is the largest park in this report. The park was constructed in three phases over 12 years and was completed in 2009. Preliminary work towards the park creation actually began in 1988 with the acquisition and clearing of land, designing, and fundraising campaign.

I interviewed the President of Louisville Waterfront Development Corporation (LWDC), David Karem, over the phone in July, 2010. Additional information was also gathered during a site-visit later that month by Marshall Jones, Downtown Austin Alliance board member and Chair of DAA's Parks Committee.

Surrounding Area + History

Louisville Waterfront Park is a five to ten minute walk to downtown and is located across from Louisville Slugger Field baseball stadium and Louisville Extreme Park, a skateboard and bike park. Interstates 65, 64, and 71 intersect and border the park. Historically, the area along the waterfront was neglected industrial land that was cut off from downtown by the construction of the elevated I-64 highway in the 1960s. Below are a map of Louisville and two pictures of the waterfront area prior to the park's creation.



Figure 24. Map of Louisville



Figure 25. Louisville's waterfront prior to Waterfront Park
Source: Louisvillewaterfront.com

Management

LWDC owns about 40% of the 85 acres; the City of Louisville owns the rest. LWDC, a non-profit government corporation, is responsible for the management, maintenance, and programming of the park. The City, Louisville Metro (regional government body), and Louisville Metro Parks are not involved in the park. LWDC managed the entire design and construction process.

The LWDC was established in 1986 to oversee the development of the waterfront area. David Karem, a state senator at the time, became the President of LWDC the following year. In 1991 the City adopted the Louisville Waterfront Master Plan that, in part, guided the design and development of Waterfront Park and sought to reestablish connection between the downtown and the waterfront that was severed by the construction of the highways. LWDC's mission has evolved to encompass three parts: park planning and construction, park maintenance, and event production and coordination. LWDC also manages the Belle of Louisville, a historic steamboat docked to the west of the park.

Construction of the park cost a total of \$115 million. Of that total, \$40 million came from private donations. The fundraising campaign was based on a matching fund strategy in which an initial donor would match the largest donation by a non-governmental entity. \$7 million was raised in the first 30 days of fundraising. The LWDC also employed the matching fund strategy with State grants and was successful in acquiring a total of \$24 million of State funds. Design of the park was funded equally by the City, County of and State, with each contributing about \$130,000. This amount covered the staff time and the design process for the first three years.

Maintenance

Roughly \$1 million, or about \$12,000 per acre, is spent on maintenance annually. The Louisville Metro government contributes 55-60% of the budget to operate Waterfront

Park, while the State of provides 20-25% of the budget. Other income is earned from the two restaurants in the park. Special event fees also supply a small portion of the budget. LWDC has a dedicated maintenance crew that works seven days a week. LWDC hires an additional crew of 10-12 young adults and college students to work the summer months. This crew, called the Clean Team, performs fine-tune maintenance and maintains the high usage areas and the restrooms. This crew is completely paid for by a local business sponsorship.

Programming

Amenities + Design

The park includes a great deal of flexible event space, as well as dedicated-use areas and amenities such as:

- + Abraham Lincoln memorial with statue
- + Large lawn for large events
- + Smaller lawns throughout the park for smaller events
- + Spray gardens and children's play areas
- + Two restaurants
- + Sculptures
- + Walking and biking trail
- + 'Swing garden' of seated swings
- + Outdoor amphitheater
- + Three picnic areas
- + Ten parking areas

Waterfront Park was designed by Hargreaves Associates. Transparency was one of the main goals throughout the design process. The park has won several awards: the

2003 Phoenix Award Grand Prize for Excellence in Brownfield Redevelopment, the 2001 Honor Award for design from American Society of Landscape Architects, and a place in the 2006 Top Ten Urban Parks in the nation by the Urban Land Institute. The following page shows a map of Waterfront Park.

Concessions

There are two restaurants within the park, Joe's Crab Shack and Tumbleweed Southwest Grill, and two seasonal vendors – a bike rental shop and hot dog vendor. LWDC receives 3.5% of gross sales from each restaurant.

Events

As pointed out by the LWDC president during our interview, the park is meant to be used in a different way than any other parks in Louisville. All types of public and private events are held in the park from health walks and company picnics to large musical performances. LWDC also host several large signature events including the July 4th Celebration and Waterfront Wednesdays featuring local bands, a full bar, and upscale food. LWDC employs a tiered fee structure for special event rentals based on attendance and impact of the event. These user fees are reviewed annually.

Louisville Waterfront Park
 (www.louisvillewaterfront.com)

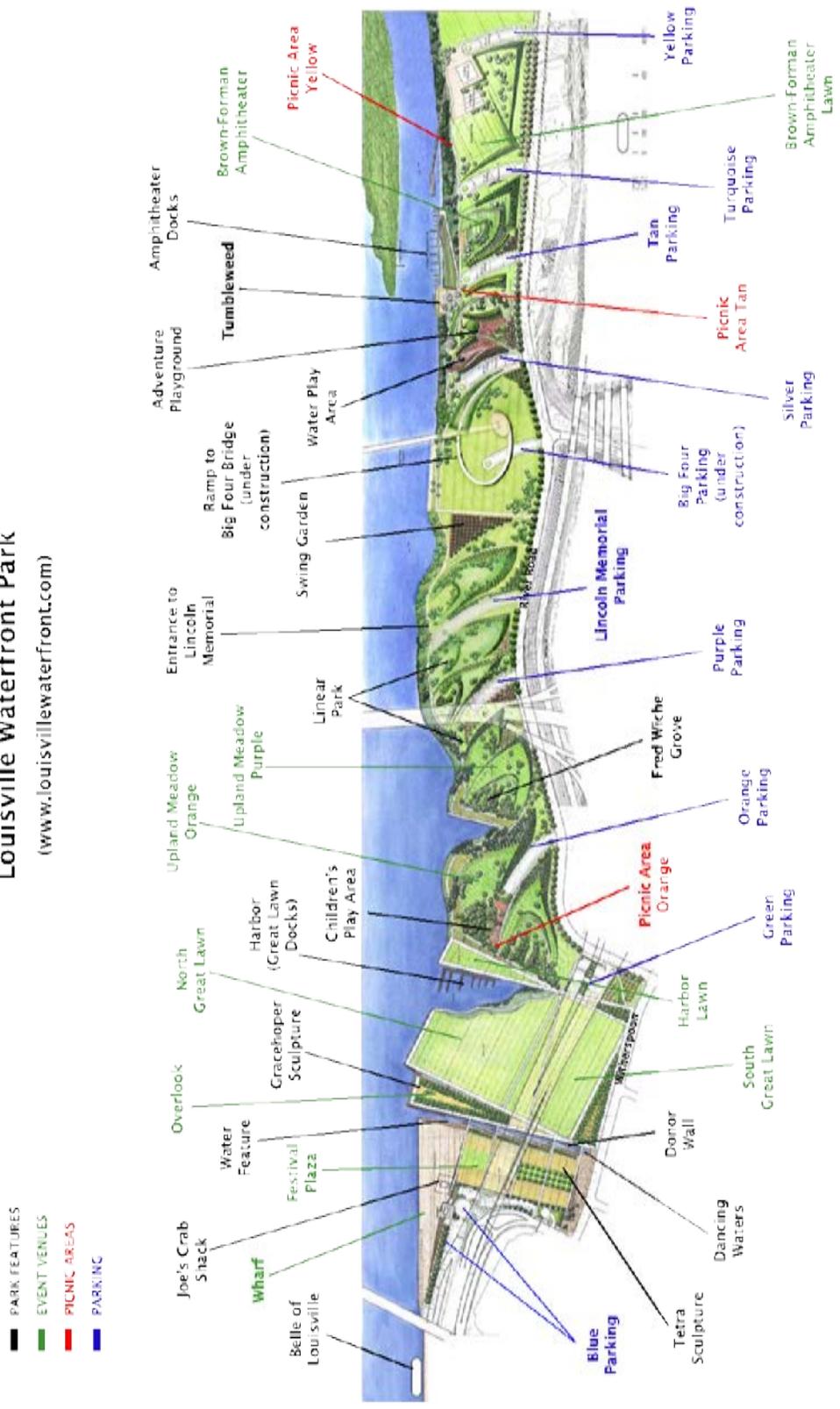


Figure 26. Map of Waterfront Park
 Source: Louisvillewaterfront.com

Park 5: MARKET SQUARE | Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Figure 27. Market Square logo
Source: marketsquarepgh.blogspot.com



Figure 28. Market Square
Source: marketsquarepgh.blogspot.com

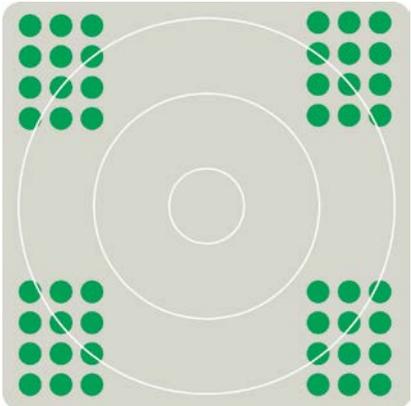


Figure 29. Market Square schematic

Market Square is 1.5 acres of open space in downtown Pittsburgh and was part of the original 1784 plan for Pittsburgh. Renovation construction began in 2009 and was finished in May 2010. In addition to enhancing open space, the renovation also allowed for the upgrade and improvement of electric, gas, and sewer utilities. I interviewed the Program and Events Manager at Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP), Katie Zawrotniak, over the phone in November, 2010.

Surrounding Area + History

Market Square is surrounded by office buildings with ground-level retail. According to a 2010 survey by PDP 126,370 employees work downtown. After nearly two centuries of successful existence, Market Square fell into neglect after the adjoining Market building was torn down in the 1960s. Prior to the recent renovation “people [spoke] more frequently about how dirty and unsafe it is than about its assets. Although the square is

fairly well maintained, it has few amenities for people to use and there is little to do” (Project for Public Space, 2006). The square was previously dissected by two streets that created four separate sections. One of the sections contained a raised platform stage area.



Figure 30. Map of Pittsburgh

Management

Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP), a business improvement district, operates and manages the square. During construction, the land was transferred from the City to the Urban Redevelopment Authority, and upon completion, was transferred back to the City. The City maintains the trees and covers the cost of electricity. The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh managed the construction and renovation of the square while PDP was involved in the design and the public input process. PDP's Program and Events Manager highlighted two main benefits of their involvement in the process. First, PDP was instrumental in pushing up the project completion date so as not to have the surrounding businesses suffer any more than necessary during construction. Second, PDP acted as a liaison between businesses and the City, acting as a buffer between any complaining business owners and the City and Mayor. During

construction PDP dedicated two employees to the renovation project that were funded through a housing department grant, two foundations, and additional funding from smaller foundations and event sponsors.

In 2006 the Fifth and Market Strategic Action Plan was initiated by former Mayor O'Connor and PDP to coordinate redevelopment efforts in the area. Part of this redevelopment was a two-month sting operation ordered by O'Conner to close businesses surrounding the square that were known to be involved in drug dealing. The City's planning department, Urban Redevelopment Authority, and PDP worked with Project for Public Spaces from 2006-2007 to engage the community and stakeholders in developing a vision and work plan for the redevelopment of Market Square. In 2008 a final design concept for the square's renovation was proposed. Funding for the Project for Public Spaces Report came from a group of local foundations (Colcom Foundation, Heinz Endowments, Richard King Mellon Foundation, and The Hillman Corporation). Once a plan was drafted, the foundations contributed an additional \$200,000 to carry out the report's recommendations. Mayor Luke Ravenstahl asked PDP to lead the programming and management of the square and the Foundations chose to give their money directly to PDP as a way to ensure oversight in the design and management process. PDP's board was very cautious and prudent and allowed the BIDs involvement only on a limited and temporary basis.

The total cost for the renovation of Market Square was \$5 million of which \$2.75 million came from local private foundations (Colcom Foundation, Heinz Endowments, Richard King Mellon Foundation and The Hillman Corporation) and \$2 million came from matching State RCAP funds. The total cost includes funding for the management and programming of the square for the first three years. The same group of foundations each gave \$100,000 for two years for the testing of design and programming concepts as a way to inform the final design. Capital purchases, such as

tables, chairs and umbrellas, were funded by foundations or corporate sponsorships. The group of local foundations fully funds the programming and management of Market Square. At the time of our interview, PDP had another funding request in to the foundations to support an expanded programming effort as part of a greater economic development strategy for downtown. PDP does not receive any funds from the City for the management of Market Square.



Figure 31. P3 plaque at Market Square
Source: Marketsquarepgh.blogspot.com

PDP and the City have been in the process of creating a formal MOU since 2010. This MOU will establish a streamlined system for permitting, among other things, and is required for the state funding. During our interview the Program and Events Manager reflected that PDP should have considered an advanced contract with the businesses surrounding the square that would have allowed PDP to assess a higher fee to those businesses receiving the most benefits from the renovation as a way to pay for continued park improvements. PDP has found a 25-50% increase in sales of adjacent businesses since the square's renovation.

Maintenance

The square has two caretakers to maintain the park and the streets leading into the square from 6am to 11pm. PDP currently funds these positions through the Clean & Safe budget but is now looking for a separate, designated funding source such as sponsorships or a revised BID assessment on the surrounding properties. The Police Department provides a daytime beat officer, three foot patrols, and three evening officers to cover the entire downtown. Currently, the management of Market Square is distributed among several employees of PDP: the Program and Events Manager (65% of her time; this will probably drop down to 20%), the Economic Development Manager (50% or less of their time), the VP of Economic Development (35% of their time), and the CEO (about 10% of his time).

Programming

Amenities + Design

The moveable table and chairs and an open layout of Market Square is reminiscent of European plazas and allows for a flexible programming. Free wi-fi is available in the square. The square is mostly hardscape with a cluster of trees in the four corners of the park, as seen in the picture below. Klavon Design Associates of Pittsburgh designed the new Market Square. The new design enhanced the square by improving “lighting, thinning trees, and developing a targeted program of activities and events specifically designed to draw a more diverse year-round audience, and developing a more inclusive management program” (Project for Public Spaces, 2006).



Figure 32. Aerial view of Market Square
Source: community.guinnessworldrecords.com

Concessions

The Program and Events Manager explained that there are no concessions in the park due to the unfair competition this would create for the surrounding businesses; however there has been discussion about opening up a newsstand kiosk.

Events

The square is a city park and a designated free speech zone and is available for rental to anyone. All events must go through the City's event application process. There is no rental fee to reserve Market Square, but a small permit processing fee is required. PDP's Program and Events Manager works closely with the City's Special Events Permitting Coordinator and together they team-up and defer to one another for special event permitting and planning. PDP hosts several weekly public events at the square including a farmer's market and concert, KidsPlay! program for children, and a library book sale. PDP also hosts signature events such as Light Up the Night in December and a Fourth of July celebration.

PART 5: ANALYSIS

The parks in this case study represent a number of different public-private partnerships. Table 7 below summarizes the management, funding and investment, programming, and historical context of each park.

Table 7. Summary of case study parks

| | Citygarden (St. Louis) | Burnett Park (Ft. Worth) | Discovery Green (Houston) | Waterfront Park (Louisville) | Market Square (Pittsburgh) |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| New or Renovated | New, 2009 | Renovated, 2010 | New, 2008 | New, 2009 | Renovated, 2010 |
| Size | 3 acres | 3 acres | 12 acres | 85 acres | 1.5 acres |
| Land Owner | City of St. Louis | City of Ft. Worth | Houston Downtown Park Corporation | Louisville Waterfront Development Corporation & City of Louisville | City of Pittsburgh |
| Managing Agency | Gateway Foundation | Downtown Fort Worth Initiatives Inc., part of Downtown Fort Worth Inc. | Discovery Green Conservancy / Houston Downtown Park Corporation | Louisville Waterfront Development Corporation | Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership |
| Managing Agency Type | Local Non-Profit Foundation for Arts & Culture | Public Improvement District | Conservancy / Development Corporation | Non-Profit Government Corporation | Business Improvement District |
| Renovation Funder | Private local foundation: Gateway Foundation paid entirety | Private local foundation: Burnett Foundation paid entirety | City of Houston: \$63m Private donations raised by Conservancy: \$62m | State of Kentucky: \$24m Private donations raised by LWDC: \$40m | State funds: \$2m Private foundations: \$2.75m |
| Construction / Renovation Cost | \$25-30 million | \$1 million | \$122 million | \$115 million | \$5 million |
| Maintenance Cost Per Acre | \$333,000 / acre | \$34,000 / acre | \$85,000 / acre | \$12,000 / acre | Included in Clean & Safe budget |
| Internal or Contracted Maintenance Crew | Contracted | Internal | Internal | Internal | Internal |
| Process | Part of Downtown Development Action Plan of 1999 | Brought about by local foundation | Brought about by local foundations + Mayor | Part of waterfront redevelopment efforts by City | Part of Fifth and Market Strategic Action Plan by Mayor |

Based on these case studies, some major trends emerge that shed light on the structure and extent of current public-private partnerships in urban parks. Below is a description of ten of those trends.

Ten Trends in the Five Case Study Parks

1. A range of formalized agreements guide the parks partnerships.

The structure of these partnerships range from informal agreements to legally-binding contracts. Citygarden, Burnett Park, and Discovery Green all have formal agreements with their city government. Market Square is in the process of creating a MOU with the City. Partnerships are maintained through ad-hoc, as needed communication between partners and not a formal, regular meeting.

2. New entities were created specifically to manage the park.

In cases where a new park was created it was necessary to create a new government or nonprofit entity to conduct part of the process. For the creation of Discovery Green, the Houston Downtown Park Corporation and the Discovery Green Conservancy were created to design, construct, manage, and hold title for the park. In St. Louis, the new Gateway Conservancy was created to manage the 9-block stretch of parkland, though it is unclear whether the Conservancy will take over maintenance of Citygarden where Gateway Foundation has a 15-year management agreement with the City.

3. NGO partnership was sought out by Mayor or foundations.

Downtown Fort Worth Initiatives Inc., the Gateway Foundation, and the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership were all asked by the Mayor to be involved in the design process and maintenance of their respective parks.

4. The park renovation/creation was part of larger revitalization efforts.

Citygarden and Waterfront Park were created as part of a larger planning effort, the 1999 Downtown Development Action Plan and the Waterfront Master Plan

respectively. Though the planning was guided the City, it must not be overlooked that the parks had the backing of a successful foundation (in the case of Citygarden) and a former state senator (David Karem with Louisville Development Corporation).

5. The renovation/creation of the park was initiated by the Mayor and foundations.

The renovation of Market Square was led by the Mayor, the local business community, and local foundations. The Mayor made a concerted effort to close surrounding businesses known for illegal activity and revitalize downtown Pittsburgh. Local foundations first came to the Mayor of Houston to develop what would become Discovery Green. Burnett Park's renovation was spearheaded and funded by the Burnett Foundation.

6. The NGOs fill a unique role in the park design and management.

David Karems with the Waterfront Development Corporation stressed the importance of LWDC having control over the process and the fact that it would not have happened without their leadership. Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) served as a liaison between the business community and local government during the design and construction of Market Square. PDP pushed for a shorter construction period than normal on behalf of the surrounding businesses and fielded any complaints or concern from businesses on behalf of the City. For better or worse, NGOs are not subject to the same requirements as government agencies, such as union or minority labor requirements. This may speed the process to build a park but public benefits may not be safeguarded. It is important to note that the City Parks department did not have a partnership or advisory role in any these parks.

6. Most parks are authorized to establish and retain special event fees.

The managing organizations of Waterfront Park and Discovery Green have the authority to establish the special event fee structure. Downtown Fort Worth Initiatives,

Inc. is in the process of negotiating with the City to manage Burnett Park's event permitting process and keep 100% of the proceeds. All of these parks utilize a tiered user fee structure that allows nonprofits to receive a discount. Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership does not have the authority to establish fees for use of Market Square and instead supports the City with event permits. Citygarden is the only park that intentionally does not allow private events in order to preserve the park for use by all.

7. These parks are highly marketed and branded.

Most of the parks in this report are highly branded with their own logo, website, and logos for their large and regularly occurring events. Marketing is highly tied in to the programming of the events held at the park and is done by the managing organization. Below are a few logos of the parks and two event logos.



Figure 33. Event logos

Sources: marketsquarepgh.blogspot.com, louisvillewaterfront.com

8. Many of the parks rely on sponsorship for construction and programming.

Elements of Waterfront Park and Discovery Green were unbundled to allow for sponsorship. Discovery Green had a sponsor for almost every distinct section of the park, Waterfront Park has a sponsor for their summer maintenance crew, and all of the parks that have major or regularly occurring events have sponsors for those events. Municipal bonds were not used in the (re)development of any of these parks.

9. All of the parks receive an extremely high level of maintenance.

All of the parks have a dedicated work crew that works every day of the week. David Karem with Waterfront Park stated that during the planning process it was evident that the park needed a work crew dedicated exclusively to maintenance of the park and that

the parks department would not be able to provide adequate service since they only work during the week and during business hours. The Burnett Foundation directed DFII's involvement in the Burnett Park's maintenance to ensure a higher level of quality than what the City was able to provide. Citygarden costs around \$333,000 per acre; Burnett Park is about \$34,000 per acre to maintain; Discovery Green costs about \$83,000 per acre; Waterfront Park is around \$12,000 per acre to maintain; and it is not clear how much Market Square is to maintain because this is bundled with Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership's Clean & Safe budget. It is also not clear exactly why Citygarden's maintenance budget is so high compared to the other parks, though this is the only park that does not have an internal maintenance crew and instead uses a contracted crew.

10. Concessions are a well-utilized method to bring in revenue and park visitors.

Three of the five parks have some sort of restaurant concession within the park. The management organization acts as a landlord. Out of these three, Citygarden is the only one that does not collect any revenue from the restaurant. The two parks without concessions, Burnett Park and Market Square, do so because it is not allowed by city code and to avoid competition with surrounding businesses.

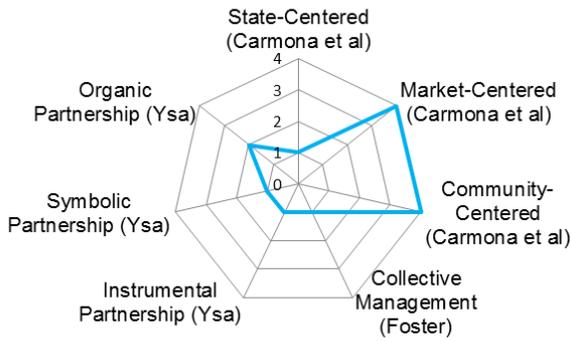
Analysis of Park Management Models

To compare each case study park I ranked each using the management models of Ysa (2007), Carmona et al (2008), and Foster (2011), as seen in Table 8 and Figures 34 and 35 on the next several pages.

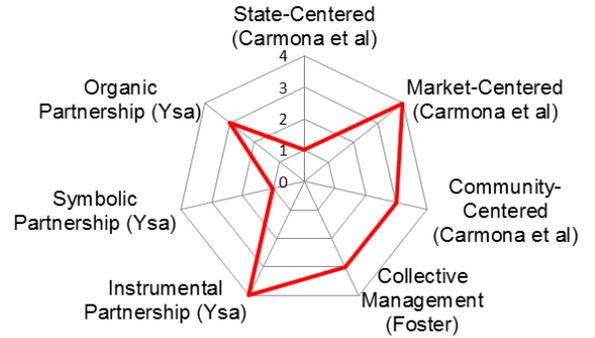
Table 8. Rankings of case-study parks across alternative management models

| | (Ysa, 2007) | | | (Carmona et al, 2008) | | | (Foster, 2011) | Rationale |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Instrumental | Symbolic | Organic | State-Centered | Market-Centered | Community-Centered | Collective Management | |
| Citygarden (St. Louis) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | Nonprofit, mission-driven Foundation completely in charge of park. City requested foundation support and would not have feasible w/o Foundation |
| Burnett Park (Ft. Worth) | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | BID acts as contracted manager, low gov't involvement, BID and foundation determine maintenance and programming |
| Discovery Green (Houston) | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | Conservancy conducts all areas of management including creating park rules, essentially own the land, City has little involvement and oversight after construction |
| Waterfront Park (Louisville) | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | Government Corporation conducts all areas of management and partly owns land, City has little involvement and oversight after construction |
| Market Square (Pittsburgh) | 3 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | BID acts as contracted manager, regularly collaborate with City, City creates rules, BID has discrete role in maintenance and programming |

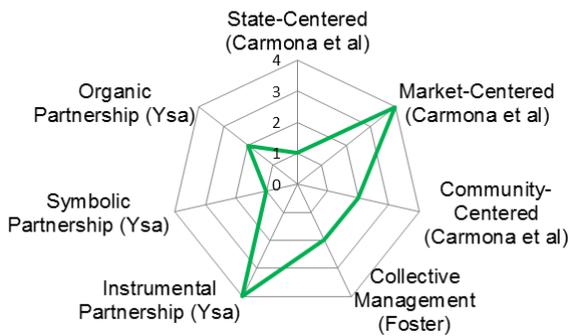
Citygarden



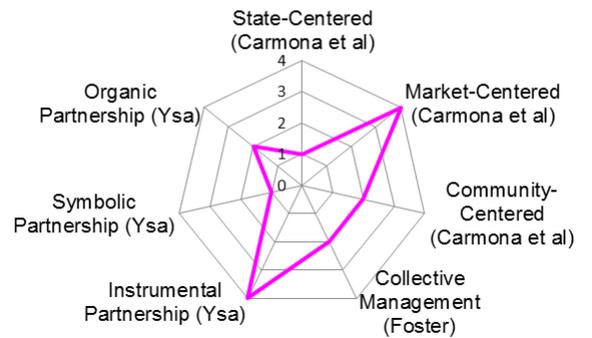
Burnett Park



Discovery Green



Waterfront Park



Market Square

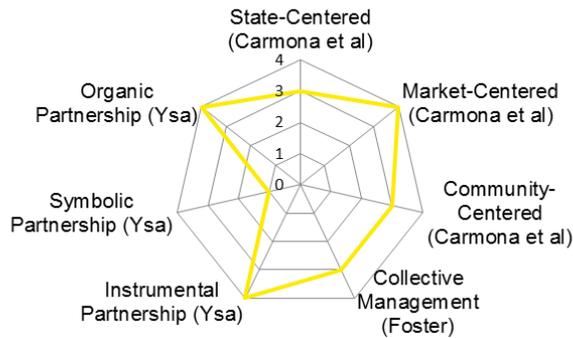


Figure 34. Visual rankings of case study park management models

Aggregation of Park Management Models

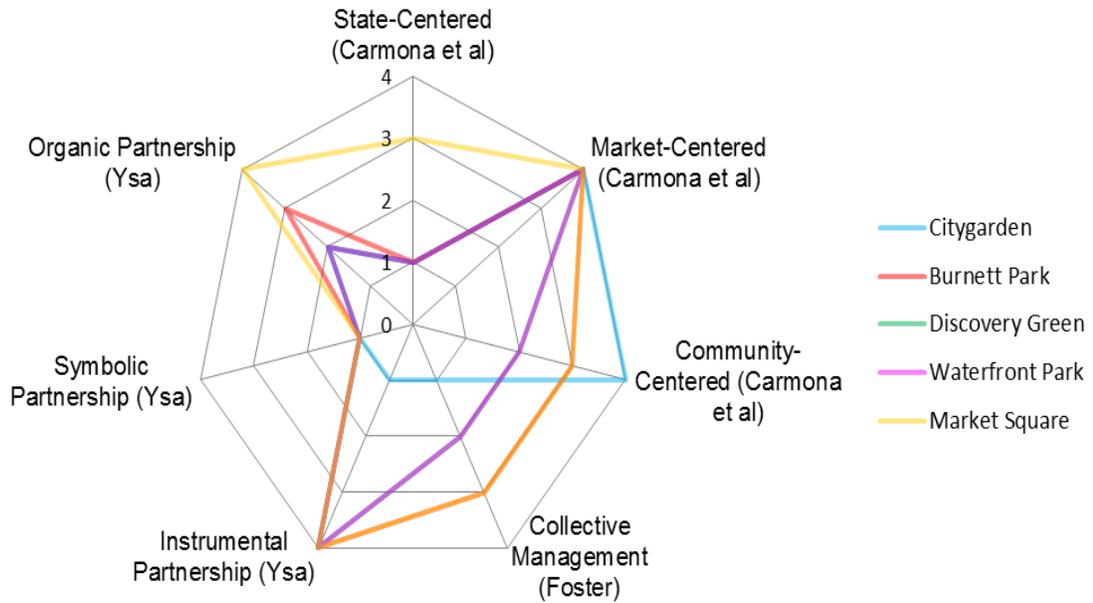


Figure 35. Visual ranking of park management models for all case-study parks

*Note that Discovery Green and Waterfront Park are ranked the same for each management model type and therefore the lines overlap making the two colors indistinguishable.

As seen in the Figures 34 and 35 and Table 8, most of the parks have a market-based governance structure (Carmona et al) and are an Instrumental type of P3 (Ysa). The public and private partners jointly developed the project scope and goals, at least initially. These partnerships all represent the client-contractor relationship where the private partner was brought in for their technical and financial resources. It is not apparent how much oversight, if any, the local government exercises. All of the P3 relationships are relevant, needed, and valued; hence all of the parks ranked zero for the Symbolic partnership type.

Only two parks come close to being collectively managed (Foster). Burnett Park and Market Square, both managed by BIDs, are the most community-focused management model of all of the case study parks. These two parks being rank the highest in Collective Management (Foster), Organic partnerships (Ysa), and Community-Centeredness (of Carmona et al). Both parks are City-owned, however, Burnett Park is more autonomous and has less involvement with the City than Market Square; hence Market Square is ranked higher for Organic partnerships.

Discovery Green and Waterfront Park rank the lowest in community focus as they are both owned (at least partially) and managed by an entity that has little involvement or oversight with the City and are essentially autonomous. Discovery Green Conservancy was created for the purpose of managing the park. Louisville Waterfront Development Corporation was created just before the Waterfront started to conduct economic revitalization and development efforts along Louisville's waterfront.

The graph for Market Square in Figure 34 shows the wide scope of that public-private partnership. Market Square ranks the highest in both State-Centered and Organic partnership type. This is initially surprising since it seems that the two partnership types would be mutually exclusive. This is not the case, however, since the

manager, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, has a more collaborative relationship with their City government than the other parks do.

PART 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

Current Parks Partnership Environment of Downtown Austin Alliance

The current state of parks in downtown Austin is set by some key contextual events such as: A new PARD Director was hired in 2010; City Council passed funding for a downtown parks maintenance crew in late 2010; friends groups for downtown parks and squares exist and are active at varying levels; for the most part downtown parks are underutilized but see high use during several major musical events such as Austin City Limits; the Downtown Austin Plan was published in 2010; and the Waller Creek Tunnel, part of the downtown Waller Creek Park, just received funding and construction that will begin in April 2011; and City Council member Chris Riley led the Urban Parks Working Group in 2010 to identify park needs and policies needed to implement those needs. There is obviously a lot of momentum behind parks now in Austin, especially for downtown parks. It is not likely that management will be transferred to Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) any time soon and it remains to be seen what the role of the DAA will be in moving forward on management, maintenance, and/or programming of Austin's downtown parks.

Recommendations for Public-Private Partnerships in Parks

The Director of the Gateway Foundation, Christy Fox, stated that each park and city must find what works best for that location and situation. She pointed out that Citygarden in St. Louis could not pull off the same development and programming of Millennium Park in Chicago. Each park manager and partner must chart out their own path that works best with their partners and location. However, I have come up with some general recommendations that could be applied to virtually any context and partnership and can be implemented at virtually any stage of the partnership process.

These recommendations are based on the case studies in this report and outside literature. I have denoted recommendations that are specifically for the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) with their logo:



1. Establish a formal partnership process and policy.

Encourage PARD to have a formal process and policy for partnerships. Portland Parks and Recreation has a Friends & Allied Partners Policy that lists best practices, key duties associated with each level of collaboration (e.g. advisory, Shared Responsibilities for Service Provision, and independent operation of site), steps in forming a partnership, and a template of a Statement of Intent.  In going forward the Board of DAA can use Market Square as an example for a limited, discrete role in the design process and emphasize an experimental approach to find what design elements would work best for the square.

Similarly, the partnership could create a park concession manual much like Portland Parks and Recreation's *Guidelines for Commercial Activity and Concession Sales within Portland Parks*. This manual outlines sustainability requirements (such as using compostable plates and utensils) and designates which specific parks will be permitted to have concessions, and the types of concessions allowed.

Often, park management partnerships will have a sunset provision. While it is not likely that the partnership would be dissolved, a limiting provision such as this provides a good opportunity to evaluate and make any changes to the structure or operation of the partnership. Central Park Conservancy last renewed their agreement with New York City in 2006 (Barron, 2006). This renewal allowed the partners to negotiate a new contract that takes into account the rising cost of maintenance.

2. Find a fair way to keep the funds for downtown parks flowing.

Guaranteed City funding

Murray describes in his paper *Private management of Public Spaces: Nonprofit Organizations and Urban Parks* (2010) the history of Central Park Conservancy (CPC). One of the measures that CPC took to protect city funding from being reduced was to establish an agreement with the City to prevent what's called reverse crowding out. This occurs when an influx of private funds reduces government funds because they become diverted to other parks in the system. This agreement guaranteed funding sources for the park three ways: CPC was now able to keep a portion of the revenue from concessions in the park; the City agreed to a certain amount of funding per year (if CPC raised \$5 million, the City would contribute \$1million and match private donations over a certain amount); and the City Parks Department would not reduce funding in the park unless it was part of an overall reduction of the Parks Department budget.

This is very beneficial to CPC but brings up issues of equality within the parks system. An article in Next American City describes the inequalities within the same park system that can occur between those parks that have a friends group (especially with a large budget) and those parks without a friends group relying solely on the Parks Department (Arden, 2010). Parks that don't have a friend's groups or an ability to fundraise are neglected by the City, the Parks Department, and public officials.

 If the DAA seeks a financial agreement with the City and PARD it should consider any inadvertent effects it may cause to other parks in the Austin parks system. Chicago has a program called Focus Parks in which fifty parks are chosen every few years and receive increased attention on all levels of capital and maintenance improvements (New Yorkers for Parks, page 15). The DAA may initiate its own similar

program or advocate for PARD to create a similar program as a means of focusing on otherwise potentially neglected parks.

Private donations

Much of the funding for design, construction, and maintenance for the parks in this report is from private donations and sponsorships. But, similar to guaranteeing City funding, this has implications for equal distribution of funds in throughout the park system and even within a single park. Many large donations are restricted and specifically dictate how and where that money will be spent. One example is in Central Park where more improvements have been developed in the southern portion of Central Park per donors' wishes and fewer improvements have been made in the northern Harlem end of the park. If the DAA solicits private donations for capital improvements and maintenance, it should consider public purpose goals and work to distribute efforts throughout the park system.

Concessions and programming

Concessions are often used as a means to raise revenue that stays, at least partially, within the park. Any revenue raised by the restaurant in Citygarden goes towards building maintenance. For Discovery Green and Waterfront Park the amount generated by concessions is significant and stays within the park. Burnett Park is in negotiations to keep 100% of the proceeds from events. Since DAA's goal is to improve the condition of all downtown parks, the organization may wish to keep revenue from events and concessions for all downtown parks, rather than a single park. The parks in this study have different expectations and agreements with concessions. Citygarden does not require any fees or percent of revenue to be paid by their restaurant, but Discovery Green, on the other hand, requires their concessions to pay at least \$500,000 annually. While concessions have the potential to bring visitors and income to the park, they have the potential to detract from the inclusiveness of the park. For instance, moveable

furniture and the area surrounding a café may feel off limits to visitors that do not purchase anything even though it is open for anyone to use.

Tiered fee for PID members



The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership discussed their wish to institute a graduated level of membership that requires a higher membership fee for businesses surrounding Market Square. DAA may wish to consider implementing a similar fee structure.

Parks District

Parks Districts collect taxes for their jurisdiction that go directly to the park system instead of general city budget. These are common in many cities and are one way of bringing a relatively secure source of revenue. However, this would require a great deal of effort to establish and is not a likely possibility for the DAA. Additionally, creating another layer of government may complicate efforts for multiple jurisdictions (such as county, school district or water districts) to collaborate and work towards common goals.

3. Create avenues for citizen involvement and oversight.

Public participation policy

In addition to creating a policy on the park management partnership itself (in recommendation #1 above) the park management agency should create a policy on public participation and citizen engagement that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the managers and citizens, participation principles, the specific circumstances that require public input, possible stakeholders, and methods of engagement. Though I was not able to find any such policy for parks managed by a NGO, many park agencies have adopted such policies.⁹ And, as part of maintaining transparency, annual reports,

⁹ A few examples of park agencies that have adopted a public participation policy include Raleigh (Public Participation Policy), Denver (Public and Civic Engagement Policy), and

budgets, and the cost and history of development should be posted online and made available in print form by request.

Citizen advisory committee

An advisory committee that oversees the board of the park manager would help ensure that the operations, activities, and maintenance of the park reflected the needs of the community. Only one of the parks in this case study (Market Square) had any type of apparent City or resident oversight, due to the more State-Centered nature of that partnership. One could claim that Burnett Park has citizen oversight because it is managed by Downtown Fort Worth Initiatives, Inc. and their board members are citizens. However, this is not the same because their board does not represent the greater community or residents. A citizen advisory board would benefit the park managers by helping them maintain flexibility and adaptivity. The board or park managers should conduct an annual review of the partnership and management that includes the public and private partners, as well as the community.

Public hearings and open deliberation

In addition to a special advisory committee, the public should be given a chance to provide feedback and engage in deliberation with the NGO manager through public hearings, open houses, participatory budgeting, focus groups, and surveys. As with any citizen engagement effort, the NGO manager must be willing to incorporate public input and forthright in disclosing the goal and intention of public engagement. There are numerous other ways in which park managers can engage the public and managers must strive to include all groups of people – renters, occasional and frequent park users, youth, minorities, etc.

Tacoma (Policy on Public Participation). Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board is currently in the process of developing their own policy.

Reporting park conditions

DAA might want to consider advocating for a performance measurement tool similar to San Francisco's ParkScan tool that is "a citizen-driven parks inspection program" to "increase the transparency and accountability" (New Yorkers for Parks, page 7). City parks are rated satisfactory or unsatisfactory on different elements and are prioritized by importance. The base level of service for each park is agreed upon by public officials and the public. Rating information is uploaded to ParkScan's website and is used by the Recreation and Parks Department. See www.parkscansf.org for more information. Portland Parks and Recreation Department (in Portland, Oregon) also has a ParkScan system.  Even without an in-depth reporting process, the DAA may report back to PARD park conditions through DAA's Downtown Rangers and the Clean and Safe crew.

4. Adopt metrics that include public benefits.

Adopt public agency requirements

One of the benefits of having a non-government agency managing and developing a park is fewer restrictions, regulations, and bureaucratic red tape. However, this can bring less accountability to public goals such as living wage and union requirements for maintenance and construction workers, and environmental regulations. As a best practice, NGO managers should abide by the same labor and environmental guidelines as city agencies. This should be outlined in the contract or agreement between the NGO and the City.

Incorporate community building activities into the programming

Most of the parks in the case study conducted some type of programming; mostly farmer's markets and live music events. Events at the parks were for the most part focused on entertainment. Discovery Green boasted the most programming "with more than 400 events per year" (discovergreen.com). While these events can potentially

attract a diverse crowd and act to enliven the park, they may not necessarily perform other civic functions related to community building. Below are a few ideas on how to incorporate more public purpose goals into daily park programming.

Create a volunteer program. Volunteers and friends groups are typically successful in outreach and advocacy roles. Adults who volunteer are more likely to engage in other forms of civic engagement (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2010). Having a volunteer program is also another method to provide direct feedback to the managing organization.

Incorporate aspects of a community center. The parks in this case study are centers of entertainment and gathering, but not necessarily civic engagement. Adopting some of the function of a typical community center can help in community building. A few ways to do this include: making the facility available for use by the public or nonprofits or community meetings; offering it as a venue for local candidates' political debates; and providing adult and children education opportunities. Park managers could also actively engage in the surrounding community by working with other community development groups such as community development corporations and attending nearby neighborhood association meetings.

Public engagement. All of the citizen engagement strategies listed in number 3 above act to build community by providing a means for direct public feedback, allowing the space for citizens to interact with and get to know one another, include those who

Incorporate 'publicness' as a metric

Magalhães (2010) proposes that public spaces can be measured by assessing the contracts and agreements of the park management partners using a 'publicness' metric. Magalhães' 'publicness' metric is three-fold and encompasses the rights of access,

rights of use, and the control/ownership of the public space. The author defines the rights of access as the rules and mechanisms that regulate how individuals access particular components of a public space, be it access to a park, a facility, or even the ability to walk your dog. Rights of use encompass the rules and the enforcement mechanisms that regulate conduct and behavior in the public space. The rights of control and ownership include the ways in which a variety of stakeholders of a public space are recognized in its governance and the rules and mechanisms in place for handling conflict between different stakeholders. Any partnership for park management should carefully consider and include all of these aspects.

PART 7: CONCLUSION

Two trends are occurring more frequently in downtowns across the country: park creation/renovation as a means of community and economic development and the presence of public private partnerships in creating and managing public space. With local municipalities facing budget cuts, public-private partnerships have, and will continue to, become an ever-increasing means of providing public services.

This report presents a case study of five urban parks throughout the U.S. that differ in partnership strategies, size, use and activities, budgets, and operations and maintenance capabilities. In this report I synthesize existing academic literature, law review articles, and my own case-study research to identify trends in public park management and the possible positive and negative implications of such partnerships in urban parks. Few studies or reports have been published examining these partnerships in depth. This case study is meant to provide the Downtown Austin Alliance, as well as other municipalities and organizations information not readily available in order to develop policy and planning strategies in their own community. From this report, readers will be able to identify trends in park design and management; park management strategies that may work best in their community; issues that should be considered and addressed in forming public-private partnerships for park development and management; and policy recommendations and strategies for forming public-private partnerships in urban parks. Forthcoming is an abbreviated 5-page version of this report geared more towards practitioners with little time for outside reading and research.

While conducting research for this report over the past year several main questions have surfaced. First and foremost is the question of whether NGO park manager are actually more efficient at park management; do NGO managers realize the

same economies of scale as a public parks department? Second, by ‘contracting out’ the management of a park, are local municipalities undercutting support and the grounds for future public funding in parks? Third, what park services are most likely to be contracted out successfully?¹⁰ And last, what are the implications for design, user experience, and public benefits when parks are developed/renovated as a means of economic development rather than for recreation or ecological services goals? These questions require further research and are important if we are to be able to create or modify truly successful public-private partnerships.

¹⁰ Mowen et al (2009) looked at the public support of privatization of park services and amenities and found that state park visitors support outsourcing food and beverage services and special events but prefer the public agency to perform operations and maintenance, environmental education programs, and campground operations. The authors found that household income, prior use of concession services/amenities, and perceived fiscal performance of state parks were significant predictors of privatization support.

APPENDIX

1. Austin's downtown park info

| Park | Size | Use |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brush Square | 1.8 Acres | Historic – 2 historic structures Passive |
| Republic Square | 1.8 Acres | Active –regular Farmer's Market, fitness classes, Movies in the Park, Passive – moveable furniture for sitting |
| Woolridge Square | 1.8 Acres | Giant Chess weekly 7 Picnic Tables Bandstand - 1 Reservable Facility |
| Palm Park | 2.4 Acres | 2 Multipurpose Fields 1 Picnic Shelters 1 Picnic Tables Decommissioned Pool Non reservable Annual arts event planned for Spring 2012 |
| Waterloo Park | 10 Acres | Picnic shelters Playground Commemorative statues Redevelopment 2010-2014 |
| Waller Creek Greenbelt | APF says 15 Acres along 1.6 miles of creek | Trail along Waller Creek Natural area Some areas accessible by peds and cyclists Connects to Waterloo Park |

2. Downtown Austin Alliance boundary map

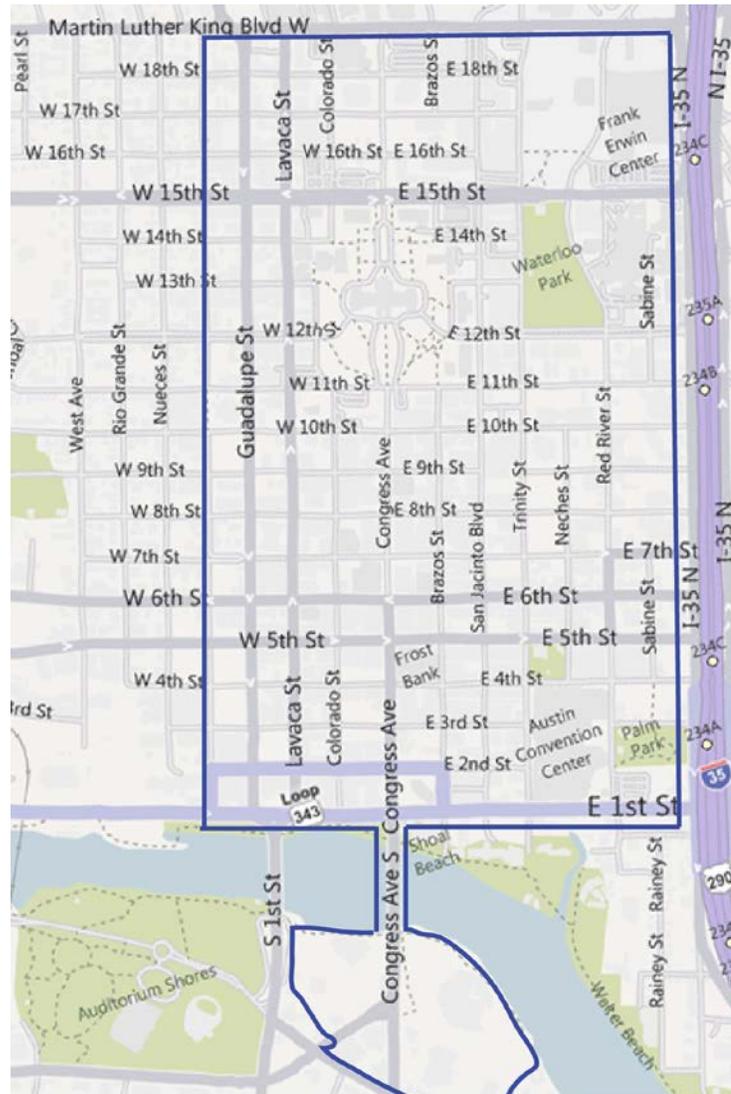


Figure 36. Downtown Austin Alliance PID district map

3. Justification of factors for parks selection

Geographical Significance

Parks in other cities throughout Texas are considered more relevant, as well as accessible, than the other parks throughout the country. These cities share a common history and cultural identity that is unique to Texas. As one of the main reasons for this report is to inform future policy recommendations, gathering information on these

parks could create greater buy-in from the DAA board, Austin's Parks and Recreation Department, and the Austin City Council. It is also more likely that employees with these organizations are already familiar with these parks or can easily visit them. Three parks in cities throughout Texas were interviewed- Discovery Green and Burnett Park. While these parks share certain characteristics, they differ in population, resources available, and history. Studying urban parks in Texas was necessary, but it is also important to highlight cities and parks with different cultural identities and resources. Four parks were chosen outside of Texas in St. Louis, Louisville, Pittsburgh, and Portland.

City Population & Density

It is most useful to compare parks in cities of similar density (Harnik, 2010). As categorized by the 2010 City Park Facts, Austin has an Intermediate-Low population density. Other cities in this study with density similar to Austin are Portland, Dallas, Houston, and Ft. Worth. Austin has 35.4 acres of parkland per 1000 residents for intermediate-low population density cities, well above the median of 15.8 acres. Other cities with similar park density are San Diego (36.1) and Kansas City (36.0) though these cities both spend a much greater amount on parks and recreation. Kansas City spends \$129/resident and San Diego spends \$120/resident while Austin spends \$69/resident.

Park Type & Size

The parks in downtown Austin are fairly small, ranging in size from 1.75 to 10+ acres. Three of the six downtown parks are historic squares. Four of the case study parks are similar to Austin's downtown parks in historical character and size: Citygarden, Burnett Park, Market Square. Patron usage of the case study parks varies from very active to passive use. Park use is measured in different ways. For instance, Portland (Oregon) Parks and Recreation Department categorizes parks based on visitor

experience using the Nature-People-Experience approach. This approach is described in the document Draft Park System Plan: People, Places, Experiences from May 2009. Park type and use may also be determined by amenities. The parks in this study cover the range of different uses and often have a mix of uses within each park. For instance, Citygarden is designed for passive use of strolling on paths through gardens and enjoyment of art through viewing art sculptures. There is also a water play areas and a restaurant. Other parks such as Discovery Green has areas for active play such as bocce ball court and open fields for unstructured play.

Managing Organization Structure

A diverse set of park managing agencies was sought to represent the broad spectrum of those organizations involved in park management and programming. The organizations that manage the parks described in this report are business improvement districts, quasi-government development corporations, a nonprofit private foundation, a nonprofit park conservancy, a nonprofit friend's group, and a city parks department. The unique relationships these organizations have with their city government, the city parks department, and other nonprofits directly determine their budget, programming, and the cost and scope of the park's renovation.

National Acclaim

Nationally acclaimed urban parks were studied to provide a model and inspiration for Austin's downtown parks. Discovery Green, Citygarden, and Waterfront Park have all been recognized by park groups including Project for Public Spaces, American Society of Landscape Architects, and the American Planning Association. Rittenhouse Square tops multiple lists of one of the oldest and best public parks in the U.S. and Louisville's Waterfront Park is in the top 50 of the most visited parks in the country (#46).

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