

# SOCIAL LANDSCAPES

SOCIAL INTERACTION FOSTERING A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

by

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A REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Department of Landscape Architecture, Regional and Community Planning  
College of Architecture, Planning, and Design

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Manhattan, Kansas

2014

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## ABSTRACT

It is easier for users to say that they frequent a park because they like the greenery than to say instead, that a park offers opportunities to meet or watch other people (Marcus, 1998). One of the main reasons people visit parks is to engage in both overt and covert social interaction (Gehl, 2010). Many people desire the opportunity to interact with others as a means of fulfilling their social well-being, but it is often unattainable in a civic space due to the lack of activities that promote social interaction.

The lack of activities is specifically relevant in and around Washington Square Park, primarily due to a series of physical and social dilemmas the site faces. Washington Square Park is an underused civic space that has the potential to establish itself as a social civic anchor for downtown Kansas City, Missouri. Developing Washington Square Park into a civic space that promotes social interaction will achieve this potential. It will also help to bridge the gap between the current physical and social dilemmas that hinder the space.

Through a process of literature review, precedent studies, and site analysis, project goals were established. To achieve these goals a set of design interventions were formed to address the physical and social dilemmas in and around the site. These interactions will then inform a final design for Washington Square Park that promotes a healthier lifestyle through social interaction for the users of the site.



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Social Landscapes | Social Interaciton Fostering Healthier Lifestyles

A master's report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA), 2014

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
/ REGIONAL & COMMUNITY PLANNING

THE COLLEGE of  
ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING & DESIGN // K-STATE

## ABSTRACT

It is easier for users to say that they frequent a park because they like the greenery than to say instead, that a park offers opportunities to meet or watch other people (Marcus, 1998). One of the main reasons people visit parks is to engage in both overt and covert social interaction (Gehl, 2010). Many people desire the opportunity to interact with others as a means of fulfilling their social well-being, but it is often unattainable in a civic space due to the lack of activities that promote social interaction.

The lack of activities is specifically relevant in and around Washington Square Park, primarily due to a series of physical and social dilemmas the site faces. Washington Square Park is an underused civic space that has the potential to establish itself as a social civic anchor for downtown Kansas City, Missouri. Developing Washington Square Park into a civic space that promotes social interaction will help to achieve this potential. It will also help to bridge the gap with the current physical and social dilemmas that hinder the space.

Through a process of literature review, precedent studies, and site analysis, project goals were established. To achieve these goals a set of design interventions were formed to address the physical and social dilemmas in and around the site. These interactions will then inform a final design for Washington Square Park that promotes a healthier lifestyle through social interaction for the users of the site.



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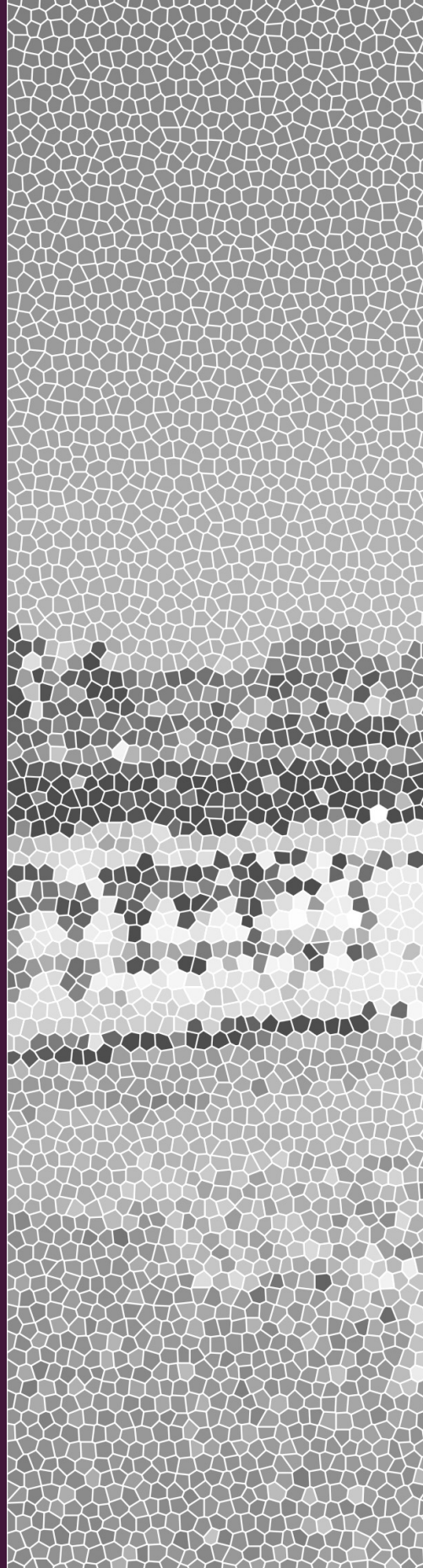


# 01

## INTRODUCE

This chapter starts with the driving forces that shape this project. My personal interest and project goals are expanded upon to connect my interests to this design.

Next, the dilemma and thesis are explained. Lastly, the chapter addresses the design process.



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### Driving Forces

"With its prime urban location, Washington Square Park has the potential to transform into a gathering place and civic hub, serving Crown Center, the surrounding office buildings, the Crossroads District, as well as the broader community. The design for Washington Square Park should reinforce its relationship within the Park & Boulevard System as a destination and compliment plans for Grand Boulevard and Pershing Road. The park should also be a dynamic place that welcomes people of all ages and of all abilities for both everyday use and for special events. Areas for recreation and connections to multi-modal transportation should also be accommodated." (Parks and Recreation Department, 2013). This is the primary goal for the Parks and Recreation Department of Kansas City for Washington Square Park. In partnership with the Kansas City Design Center (KCDC), the Civic Space in Urban Development group and the Resilience Theory and Urban Development groups from

Kansas State have embarked on a year long study of Washington Square Park and its surrounding context. This study provides a broader contextualization of the project including ongoing planning and urban redevelopment initiatives in the Kansas City area.

This project is also integrated into the work of the Civic Space and Urban Development Masters group from Kansas State University (H.E.R.D). The group is composed of five students from landscape architecture and planning backgrounds that are each working on individual Master's projects and reports. Each of the five group members have focused their work on different research topics that are site specific to Washington Square Park in Kansas City, Missouri. Once these documents have met the requirements for Kansas State's College of Architecture Planning and Design, the Master's projects and reports will be shared as

supporting resources with stakeholders and design consultants for any future designs of the site. My intent for this Master's project is to create a resource that helps to establish and promote social interaction within Washington Square Park. The site's unique location, nestled between highly active districts (Crown Center and Crossroads), can potentially attract many types of users to the site in addition to increasing activity in the area.



▲ FIGURE 1.1 | Design Proposal for Washington Square Park (by Author)

## Personal Interest

My personal interest for this Masters project and report stems from a deeper interest in the social aspects of design. Creating spaces that invite users to foster relationships with one another because of the design and programming of a site is a very special gift that landscape architects have. The social interaction fostered within these spaces works as a “driver to the engine of human’s well-being” (Berglund 2013).

As humans, we strive to improve our well-being, which for most people means their physical, mental, and community health. In our growing field, many researchers are discovering new and insightful ways that we can improve our way of life. As humans we have developed the notion that, “nature is good for us” (ASLA, 2013). Evidence-based design strategies that build on increasing social interaction in public spaces can expose people to a healthier lifestyle, and become a critical planning strategy for urban areas.

This Masters project and report challenges me to create a design that not only increases social interaction in an urban civic space but also exposes the users to the benefits of nature, which can lead them to living a healthier lifestyle. Ultimately, a project like this can not only improve individual user’s way of life, but also foster community relationships by bringing neighbors together to collectively learn from and interact with one another.

## Project Goals

In order to keep my Masters project and report progressing and ultimately reaching an end result, I established personal project goals. These goals reflect of the standards I had set forth in order to accomplish a successful report. Holding myself accountable to these goals was critical in maintaining sight of the end result.

- ▶ Identify a dilemma within Washington Square Park that resonates with my interests within the design profession.
- ▶ Synthesize critical information derived from existing plans and literature to create a cohesive design program.
- ▶ Maintain an awareness of today's urban civic space designs and push boundaries into unfamiliar territories in order to develop a distinct proposal for Washington Square Park.
- ▶ Challenge my personal design methods to find the best possible solution that can be developed for Washington Square Park.
- ▶ Create a resource for the stakeholders and consultant's of the site that offers on programming solutions for Washington Square Park that will help increase social interaction.
- ▶ Establish a dilemma, methods, and approach that can be followed through until the end.



## HISTORY

The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners acquired Washington Square Park in 1921. The following year, the Patriots and Pioneers Memorial Foundation was established to raise money for a statue of George Washington in Kansas City. The statue was placed on the north side of Pershing Road, where Washington would be facing south, just east of the center of the park. On the day of the dedication the park had no official name. After being called "Washington Square" by the Kansas City Star newspaper, it officially took the name of Washington Square Park in January, 1926 (Parks and Recreation, 2013).

The original landscape architecture firm who designed the original site plan for Washington Square Park was Hare and Hare. Throughout the years however, there were changes made to the park. The statue of George Washington moved from its south facing position to the southeast corner of the park facing southeast. The latest master plan for Washington Square Park was designed by Sasaki and approved in the 1980's. The implementation of

this plan paved the way for new development in the surrounding area, specifically around the existing Crown Center Plaza. With the development came a shift in the user behavior of the park. In 2011, the Korean War Memorial was dedicated near the southwest corner of the park, and is the latest installment into the park (Parks and Recreation, 2013). The existing character of the park is expressed through an abundance of linden trees and decorative pavers. A skywalk is also on site and provides pedestrian access from Crown Center to Union Station (Parks and Recreation, 2013).

The potential of this park can be observed through several festivals, parades, and other civic events that take place in the park at different times of the year (Parks and Recreation, 2013). While this space already hosts these large events, identifying programs to increase activity before, during and after these events would increase the daily utilization of this space and make it a more regular destination for the people of downtown Kansas City.



▲ FIGURE 1.2 | George Washington Statue (by Author)

## PROJECT SPECIFICS

### Dilemma

Kansas City has developed a vision that focuses on connecting their neighborhoods to create strong urban communities that flourish with diversity; fostering business, maintaining historic neighborhood identities, and sustaining a safe, vibrant, and a healthy greater downtown area for current and future generations (City of Kansas City, Missouri 2011). Currently Washington Square Park lies in the heart of Kansas City, Missouri, but lacks many of the characteristics the city envisions. Nevertheless, with a well-developed design proposal, Washington Square Park holds a great deal of potential to become an urban civic space embodies Kansas City's vision, as a safe, vibrant and healthy civic anchor.

Kansas City is exceptionally diverse, and while this diversity can be a benefit to the city, segregation persists amongst the neighborhoods (Dziadkowiec, 2009). This is especially relevant in and around Washington

Square Park, primarily through a physical and social disconnect.

Currently, the site's main physical challenge is that the railroad to the north of the site creates a significant separation from the downtown core neighborhoods and activities. In addition, the existing street-level connections to the park from adjacent urban spaces in the west, south, and east are not readily accessible. Part of the social disconnect comes from Washington Square Park's lack of an inviting natural ambiance that might draw people from the surrounding neighborhoods. The Crown Center, Union Station, and the Cross Roads District users mainly stay within their neighborhood boundaries, instead of coming together through healthy daily outdoor exposure within the site.

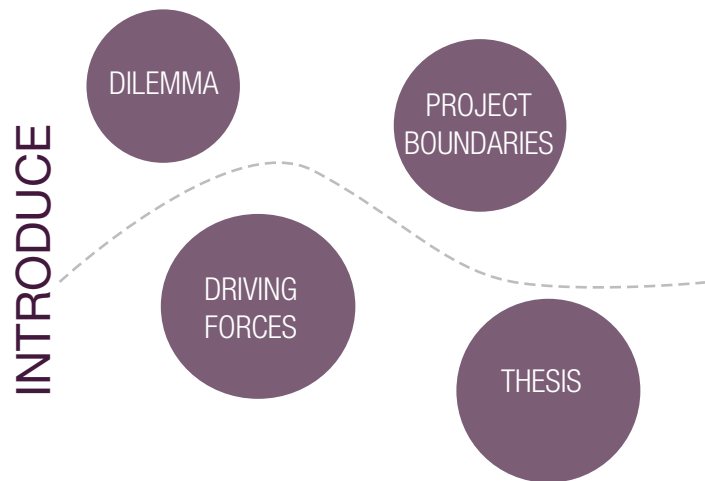
## Research Question

Through the assessment of the existing conditions, I was able to create my primary research question for this proposal is:

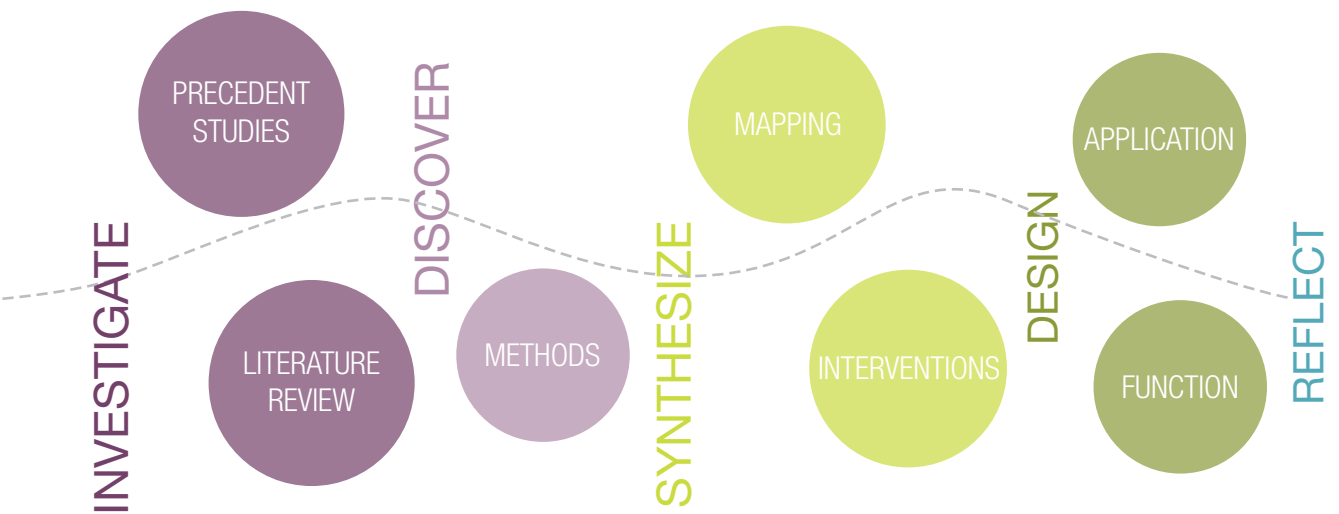
What design interventions can be made in Washington Square Park that will foster social interaction and contribute to the health and well-being of the site's users?

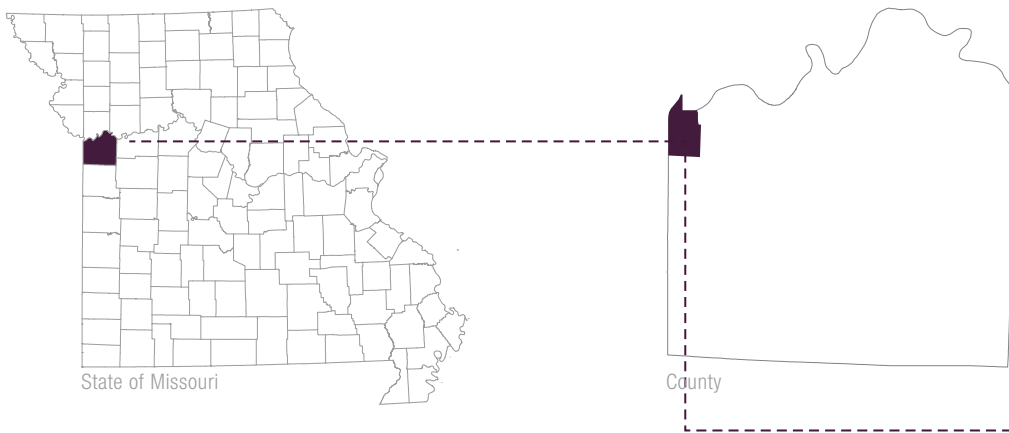
## Research Proposition

A five-part methodology was followed in order to address the initial research question. The initial three parts include a literature review, precedent studies, and site inventory and analysis. From these initial parts I synthesized the relevant information and compiled a list of goals + objectives. These goals + objectives helped inform the final two parts of my projects, which are the design interventions and ultimately a design proposal for Washington Square Park. An illustration of the project time line and overall design process and how they relate to one another are illustrated in Figure 1.3.



▲ FIGURE 1.3 | Design Process (by Author)





## PROJECT BOUNDARIES

### Location of Washington Square Park

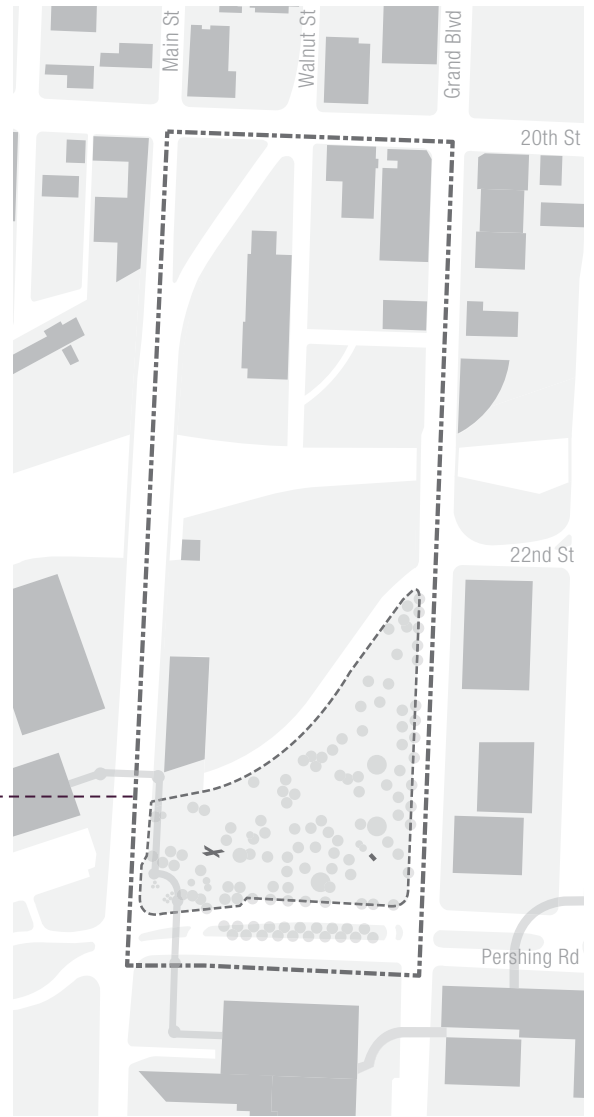
Washington Square Park is a 4.74-acre park that is located in the Kansas City Urban Core (see Figure 1.4). The park is bounded by Main Street and Union Station on the west, by Pershing Road and Crown Center on the south, by Grand Blvd on the east, and on the north by a large depressed parking lot (Parks and Recreation, 2013). For the purpose of this project, I will be extending the site boundaries to the north in order to create a stronger connection to the urban core (see Figure 1.5).

developed to integrate the downtown area as it grows, as well as allowing Washington Square Park to serve as urban node areas reconnecting the Crossroads and Crown Center (KCDC, 2013). This extension of the project boundaries contributes to Washington Square Park by drawing more users to the site and influencing what types of activities can occur on the site to increase social interaction.

Through a combination of research studies from KCDC's analysis and research for this report, project boundaries were established to alter the existing site boundaries and positively influence Washington Square Park. The proposed boundaries are similar to those of created by the Kansas City Design Center proposal of 2013. This alteration would extend the existing site boundaries to the north, to capitalize on several existing plans Kansas City as it



▲ FIGURE 1.4 | Washington Square Park Context (by Author)



▲ FIGURE 1.5 | Project Boundaries (by Author)

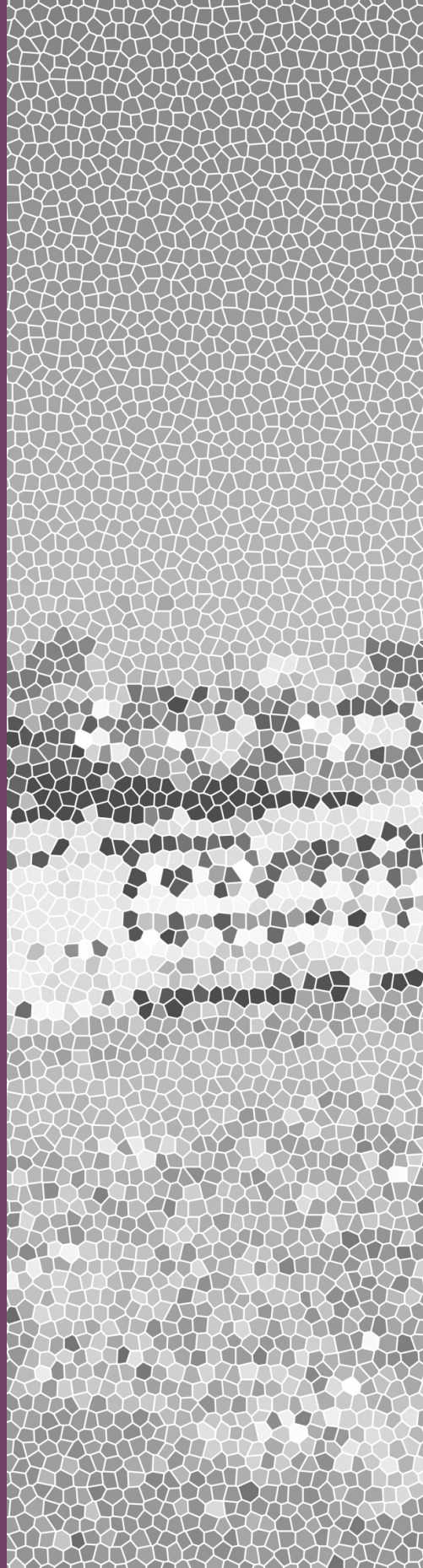


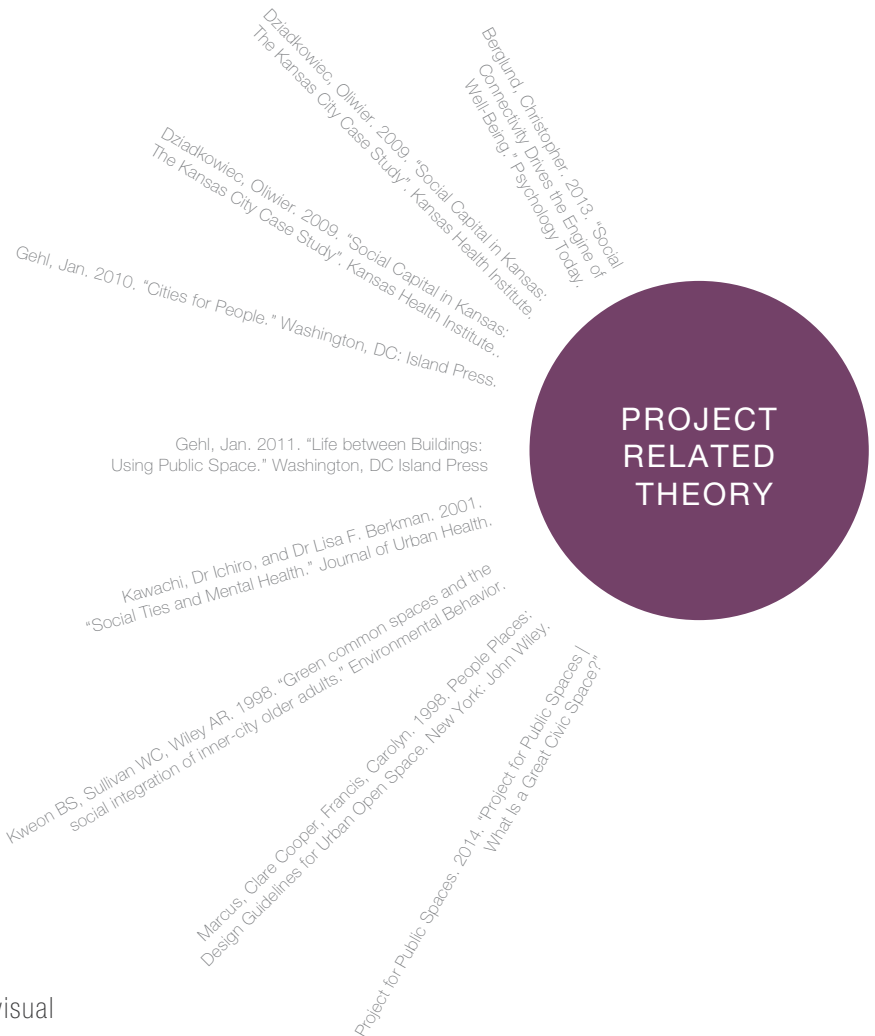


# 02

## INVESTIGATE

This chapter presents the literature review. The creation of this chapter derives from the investigation of important historical facts about the site, existing plans that include Washington Square Park and the surrounding context, and project related literature. Synthesizing this information is critical in determining project goals + objectives.





## LITERATURE MAP

The literature map (Figure 2.1) is a visual representation of the topics covered through the literature review. The literature review can be divided into three main categories, existing plans, project related theory, and precedent studies. The synthesis of these topics helps to create the project goals that inform design interventions for Washington Square Park.

▲ FIGURE 2.1 | Literature Map (by Author)

## EXISTING PLANS

City of Kansas City, Missouri. 2011. "Greater Downtown Area Plan".

City of Kansas City Missouri. 2012. "Kansas City Downtown Streetcar, Tiger IV Grant Application

"NextRail KC System Overview." 2014. Issue

Parks and Recreation Department, City of Kansas City Missouri. 2013. "Washington Square Park: Request for Qualifications/Proposals".

PROJECT GOALS FOR  
WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK  
THAT INFORM DESIGN  
INTERVENTIONS  
TO INCREASE  
SOCIAL INTERACTION

## PRECEDENT STUDIES

Francis, Mark. 2001. "A Case Study Method For Landscape Architecture." Landscape Journal. ASLA. 2012. "Lafayette Greens." 2012 ASLA Professional Awards.

ASLA. 2011. "CityGarden." 2011 ASLA Professional Awards.

Brooklyn Bridge Park. 2013. "Pier One." "Discovery Green." 2013. "Discovery Green." Brooklyn Bridge Park.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Using social interaction as a driver for programming and design in order to activate Washington Square Park requires an understanding of the city's goals, topical theory, and precedent studies that inform insight into successful design interventions for the redevelopment of the site.

A review of the existing plans for the park and city provide an understanding of the goals and vision that the city and stakeholders have for the redevelopment of the park. A review of the topical theory provides a fundamental component to understanding concepts of social interaction, user well-being, and urban civic space programming.

Lastly, a series of precedent studies conducted during this project provide insight to successful civic spaces that were designed to promote healthy lifestyles. Further synthesis of each of the precedents allows an understanding of how these design interventions can be adapted for Washington Square Park. From each of these three sections, a series of goals are identified that are used in the development of an intervention rubric for social interaction in Washington Square Park. (see Figure 2.0X)



## EXISTING PLANS

A number of existing plans have been developed as the downtown Kansas City area has flourished. Of these plans, four are relevant to the redevelopment of Washington Square Park. The most relevant include the Greater Downtown Area Plan (GDAP) and the current Request for Qualifications/Proposal (RFQ/P) that were specifically created for the current initiative to redevelop the existing site. In addition, the Kansas City Design Centers (KCDC) plan for Washington Square Park, and the Downtown Streetcar Plan play an important role for understanding the overarching vision of the city and stakeholders for Washington Square Park. The following section summarizes each of these documents and identifies key goals from each plan. In summation, these goals are categorized based upon the GDAP's elements of an ideal downtown neighborhood. Topical theory goals are also categorized based on these elements and serve as a framework for developing design interventions for Washington Square Park.

## Greater Downtown Area Plan

The Greater Downtown Area Plan (GDAP) is a collective vision for the Greater Downtown Area that includes strategies to sustain the rebirth of the downtown core, by capitalizing on their strengths. This plan is highly relevant to the development of the site because it identifies the goals + objectives of the city and will help identify how a successful development of Washington Square Park will fit into their vision (City of Kansas City, Missouri, 2011).

The main vision for the GDAP is as follows, "We must focus on connecting our neighborhoods to create a strong urban community, flourishing with diversity, fostering business, maintaining historic neighborhood identities, and sustaining a safe, vibrant, and healthy Greater Downtown Area for current and future generations.". To complement their vision the city put forth a set of elements that reflect the character of the downtown neighborhoods: *Urban, Thriving, Sustainable, Livable, Vibrant, Walkable, Distinct,*

*Authentic, Safe, and Connected* (City of Kansas City, Missouri, 2011).

In order to stay connected to the overarching vision of Downtown Kansas City the proposed redevelopment design for Washington Square Park will focus on the most relevant of these elements: *urban, vibrant, walkable, distinct, and connected*. Each of these elements is explained in the GDAP, summarized in the following ways.

An *urban downtown* is a dense and diverse mix of buildings and uses situated on compact pedestrian scale blocks with high lot coverage. It typically is at a higher scale and intensity than other areas of the city. Washington Square Park is a perfect example of an urban civic space that is surrounded by many of these 'urban' characteristics. The well-established neighborhoods in the area are critical to drawing users to the site and increasing social interaction amongst them.



A *vibrant* downtown is an attractive and lively environment. It has a diverse array of events, attractive public spaces, and opportunities for social interaction. In order to increase social interaction within the site, it will need to undergo large amount of design interventions. These interventions will dramatically change the currently under used site to become a destination where people, not only from the surrounding neighborhoods, but also from the greater metro area would want to visit.

A walkable downtown is the highest pedestrian level of service in which street crossings are not barriers, routes are direct, sidewalks are continuous, wide, and in good condition, private development and public spaces are designed to encourage pedestrian activity. In addition, transportation alternatives are abundant. Connecting the site to the adjacent neighborhoods and prioritizing pedestrian service and public transportation will be critical.

A distinct downtown provides a unique environment to the region and is an inviting alternative to suburban living. There are many potential users around the site, especially in the Crown Center plaza area. However, while they work in this area many of them do not live there. Increasing the attractiveness of the site would open people's minds up to the possibilities that an urban area can offer for them.

A connected downtown provides visual and physical connections between neighborhoods and districts. While this element may relate closely to walkability, the physical conditions of the site and how it connects to surrounding neighborhoods, is a key point to address for future development of the site.

These are all elements that reflect the needs and hopes of the neighborhoods of Downtown Kansas City and how they have defined a path

“to nurture a vibrant, healthy society that embraces its heritage and celebrates its role as the real and symbolic heart of Kansas City.” (City of Kansas City, Missouri, 2011).

In addition to identifying the goals + objectives for the city, the GDAP also identifies Washington Square Park as a catalyst project. The GDAP defines these catalyst projects as areas that have the potential to trigger redevelopment in the surrounding area. Establishing a redevelopment proposal that not only encompasses the city’s vision but also establishes Washington Square Park as an urban civic anchor for the area will ensure the possibility for future development in the area.

## GOALS + OBJECTIVES TAKEN FROM GDAP

---

- ▶ Maintain a dense and diverse mix of buildings and uses situated on compact pedestrian scale blocks with high lot coverage.
- ▶ Create a diverse array of events, attractive public spaces, and opportunities for social interaction.
- ▶ Create a walkable downtown with the highest pedestrian level of service.
- ▶ Ensure that connections to the nearby uses are prominent and accessible.
- ▶ Create connections to nearby public transportation. Incorporate proposals for transit methods that may not currently be in this area.
- ▶ Create a unique environment in the region and an inviting alternative to suburban living.
- ▶ Create a connected downtown that provides visual and physical connections between neighborhoods and districts.

▲ FIGURE 2.2 | Goals + Objectives Taken from GDAP (by Author)

## Washington Square Park Request for Qualifications/Proposals

The Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ/RFP) is a detailed description of Washington Square Park and the services required. The document was initiated by the Kansas City Downtown Council, funded by PIAC (Public Improvements Advisory Committee), and is now being administered by the Parks and Recreation Department. The document was created to determine what design professional would be best suited to redesign and revitalize the existing Washington Square Park through their proposal submittal.

The document introduces the site through a brief history and background of Washington Square Park. It also identifies Washington Square Park as a catalyst project for the Greater Downtown Development Plan (GDAP). The next component to this document introduces the scope of services for the project that the chosen consultant, Coen + Partners would need to accomplish. Next the

document explains the goals of the project, why the redevelopment of this site is needed, and how and when the stakeholders will take part in this project. This is a critical portion of the document because an explanation from the involvement of KCDC in completing the master plan is given that establishes Kansas State Masters Group's (H.E.R.D) connection to the project as a sub-consultant under KCDC (City of Kansas City, Missouri, 2013)

This document will serve as a critical component to the overall report by reinforcing the relationship that the existing plans have with the redevelopment goal. By grounding my design goals with those of the RFQ/P, my final design will complement the redevelopment goals that the City of Kansas City and Parks and Recreation have set forth.

## GOALS + OBJECTIVES TAKEN FROM RFQ/P

---

- ▶ Design interventions should focus on increasing the activities within the site.
- ▶ Reinforce the redevelopment of the site with the GDAP plans for the city.
- ▶ Incorporate areas for recreation within the site.
- ▶ Create a dynamic space that welcomes people of all ages.
- ▶ Create the space into a gathering place and civic hub, serving the Crown Center, and the surrounding office buildings, the Crossroads District, as well as the broader community.

▲ FIGURE 2.3 | Goals + Objectives Taken from RFQ/P (by Author)

## Kansas City Design Center's Design Proposal for Washington Square Park

The Kansas City Design Center's design proposal identifies Washington Square Park as an anchor park that can be "redesigned to become an iconic, multi-purpose destination space" (KCDC, 2012). Their design proposal not only addresses the existing site but also extends the current site boundaries to the existing rail lines. "By extending Washington Square Park across the rail lines and capitalizes on the proposed street car and Grand Boulevard improvement projects, Washington Square Park will serve as an urban node to reconnect Crown Center to the Crossroad and the Loop." (KCDC, 2012). KCDC's design proposal is an important reference for the development of goals + objectives of this project, because of their in-depth research of the area and understanding of existing development plans. By referencing these plans it has helped to inform design decisions for a civic urban space that fosters social interaction in Washington Square Park.

### GOALS + OBJECTIVES TAKEN FROM KCDC

- ▶ Create a site that will become an iconic, multi-purpose destination space.
- ▶ Mitigate the physical constraints of the adjacent land by making use of it and capping the site.
- ▶ Create a strong connection with the existing urban core.
- ▶ Capitalize on the location and views of the site.

▲ FIGURE 2.4 | Goals + Objectives Taken from KCDC Proposal (by Author)



▲ FIGURE 2.5 | KCDC Design Proposal for Washington Square Park (by KCDC)

## Kansas City's Downtown Streetcar Plan

The Kansas City Downtown Street Car Plan is a detailed project description of the proposed streetcar line in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. Their proposal to incorporate a modern transit solution to fill a long-noted gap in the city's resurging downtown would greatly strengthen the downtown core. Currently the streetcars proposed main route will run from north to south with the southernmost stop located on Main St. next to Union Station just west of Washington Square Park (City of Kansas City Missouri, 2012). Incorporating this new transit system and its potential expansion will be critical to the redevelopment Washington Square Park. If successful, this plan has the potential to increase amount of people having access to Washington Square Park.

### GOALS + OBJECTIVES TAKEN FROM KANSAS CITY'S STREETCAR PLAN

- Incorporate a complete transit system that increasing connectivity through the downtown activity centers.
- Improve the pedestrian environment and accessibility, by reducing an auto-oriented corridor.
- Reduce surface parking lots in the downtown core  
Reduce future congestion on Main St. by giving alternative forms of to public transit.
- Improve access to parks and recreation facilities by installing a streetcar line that stretches from the northern most part and to the southernmost part of the downtown core.

▲ FIGURE 2.6 | Goals + Objectives Taken from KC Streetcar Proposal (by Author)



▲ FIGURE 2.7 | Kansas City Streetcar Proposal (by NextRail KC)



## Synthesis of Existing Plans

Analysis of each plan in terms of relevant goals + objectives identified many similarities between the existing plan goal. Common themes include: providing opportunities for social interaction, creating a variety of different events on the site, and creating a distinct public place for all types of users to enjoy.

In order to increase social interaction on the site the most important step is to get the users to the site. Expanding the current breadth of social, economic, and cultural opportunities on the site will increase the number of people who will visit Washington Square Park. Increased visitation can, in term, create a positive reaction for the area, making it a catalyst site and civic anchor.

Walkability is an important component in all of these plans. If the right amenities are developed in and around the site, then the users should be more willing to get to the

site. Public transportation such as the new streetcar, bus, train, and bikes will allow a broader range of users access to the site. Accessibility by foot is also an important way of attracting users to the site, as long as the surrounding area uses the highest pedestrian level, creating a walkable downtown. Such considerations will help to increase the pedestrian experience in the Washington Square Park area. Improving the walkability will increase the aesthetics of the site, and make the civic space more desirable to the users in the surrounding districts.

Creating a distinct downtown that provides a unique environment within the region is an important element in the existing plans. Capitalizing on the existing site and emphasizing its unique attributes can increase the desire to visit the site. Maintaining the views that the existing site offers, responding to the urban form that surrounds the site,

and responding to the needs of the city, stakeholders, and potential users. These goals will be combined with goals derived from the project related theory and precedent studies to develop a synthesized set of goals + objectives that will inform the design interventions for Washington Square Park.

## PROJECT RELATED THEORY

### Literature Review

The first section of this chapter identified goals for the Washington Square Park redevelopment project based on existing plans that the city of Kansas City, MO has created. The existing plans identify the needs of the city as well as the needs of the stakeholders overseeing the redevelopment of the site. Further research is needed to address relevant theory about the importance of social interaction in public space, as well as civic urban spaces. This section identifies key topics that will be investigated to develop a successful strategy for Washington Square Park. Additional project goals are derived from the project related theory and listed at the summation of each synthesized topic.

By further investigating social interaction in public spaces and what types of effect this can have on the users well being I can determine what types of design interventions are most appropriate for the redevelopment of

Washington Square Park. Creating an active urban civic anchor for the area not only attracts people to the site, it also restores the connections between the surrounding districts.



## User Well-being

For this project my main research question not only focuses on finding a solution to increase social interaction in Washington Square Park, but it also questions how social interaction can contribute to users of the site leading a healthier lifestyle through their increased social interaction.

Social interaction is directly related to increasing a person's overall well-being. For example one's mental well-being (a component to their overarching well-being) has been studied through a model, which has been put forward, by Cohen and Wills to explain the mechanisms by which social relationships influence health outcomes: the main effect model. This model proposes that social relationships have a beneficial effect regardless if they are under stress. (Kawachi et al., 2001)

## User Well-being

Health, defined by the World Health Organization is "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (World Health Organization, 2013) This broad view goes well beyond a narrow biomedical view to include many dimensions of comfort and well-being. Health not only revolves around the physical aspect of health but can also be based on the mental health benefits and how users can increase their well-being through positive exposure to the activities that civic spaces have. Incorporating design interventions for Washington Square Park that exposes the users to the different types of positive health stimulating activities will ultimately lead to continuous use of the space.

## Health Benefits in Nature

Healthy environments can increase the quality and characteristics of the setting we inhabit and affect our mental well-being in a positive way. “Built environments promote mental health and well-being, increase the development of social ties, facilitate recovery from mental fatigue, affect anxiety and depression, and contribute to aggression and violence.” (Dannenberg et. al., 2011).

Physical and social features of the environment may also affect behavior in nature. Studies show that there is a correlation between various user groups with a variety of psychological, emotional, and mental health benefits (Oht M. et al., 2007). The provision and access to green space also positively affects reported stress and quality of life. A study done in the Netherlands found a positive correlation between the quantity of urban green space and the perception of general health (Maas et al. 2006). Green spaces may also influence social interaction by providing a meeting place for users to develop

and maintain neighborhood social ties (Kweon BS. Et al., 1998). Social interaction is a key component to enhancing the personal and social communication skills of users (Bedimo-Rung AL, et al., 2005). The presence of green vegetation and the formation of neighborhood social ties in urban areas in turn significantly contributes to residents' sense of safety and adjustment.

## Urban Civic Spaces

In order to create successful design interventions for an urban civic space, I must consider what a successful civic space truly embodies. The following review of the literature further investigates civic spaces and their role in public lives. Characteristics of successful civic spaces are a critical component to understand before any programming considerations can be made. Once the role of a civic space is, then I will be able to assess what type of successful design interventions can make Washington Square Park into a civic anchor where all types of people can come together and enjoy this space.

## Characteristics of Great Urban Spaces

"Civic spaces are an extension of the community. When they work well, they serve as a stage for our public lives. If they function in their true civic role, they can be the settings where celebrations are held, where social and economic exchanges take place, where friends run into each other, and where cultures mix." (Project for Public Spaces, 2014).

The Project for Public Spaces has written an article that identifies the key characteristics that explains what a great civic space is. They focus on several key characteristics such as the benefits, the identity that it can create for a city or neighborhood, the economic benefits that it can create for a city, how it can help the environment, and how it can provide a setting for cultural and social activities.

Certain characteristics that stood out to me were; how public spaces can contribute to community health, whether socially, economically, culturally, or environmentally these spaces can create an enhancement to

their users and their neighborhoods. In addition, civic spaces can create identities for an area. Currently Washington Square Park sits at a crossroads of several popular districts in the downtown Kansas City area, anything to unite them. Washington Square Park has the potential to serve as an anchor to all of these districts and to bring people together to share this special place, which could lead to a mutual sense of pride and ownership across groups. Lastly, this space has the opportunity to provide a setting for cultural and social activities. Washington Square Park currently hosts three annual festivals, but it is not being used to its potential. The opportunities to expand the number of social activities held in this space are yet to be revealed, and would only aid in the ultimate goal for this project of increasing social connectivity.

Several of the characteristics stood out to me in a great way, specifically because of their close relation to the vision statement that was

created for the Greater Downtown Area Plan. The goals + objectives synthesized from these characteristics will help to create a foundation for the design interventions that are in tune with that of the greater downtown Kansas City area.



## Outdoor Activities in Urban Spaces

Increasing social interaction within a space is dependent on the social activities that are created within the space, but the activities are dependent upon the presence of others in the space. "Social activities occur spontaneously, as a direct consequence of people moving about and being in the same spaces. This implies that the social activities are indirectly supported whenever necessary and optional activities are given better condition in public spaces." (Gehl, 2011). In order to successfully increase social interaction in Washington Square Park, a successful theory such as Jan Gehl's Three Types of Outdoor Activities will help to inform the types of activities that can occur in an outdoor space and how we can design accordingly to have an ample amount of amenities on the site that support the activities.

According to Gehl, many activities occur in outdoor spaces. Pedestrians pass on sidewalks, children play in the grass, people sit on benches, two passersby's greet on the

sidewalk, or a group of people engage in a conversation. A number of conditions influence all of the different types of outdoor activities. The physical environment is one of the most influential factors to these activities. In the book *Life Between Buildings*, Jan Gehl argues: "outdoor activities in public spaces can be divided into three categories, each of which places very different demands on the physical environment: necessary activities, optional activities, and social activities." (Gehl, 2011). Necessary activities are less compulsory, every day activities for people such as going to work or school, shopping, waiting at the bus stop, or running an errand. These are all activities in which a person is most likely to do on their own. Optional activities are just that, optional, these activities are things that people wish about doing if only they have the time, place, and optimal outdoor conditions to make the activity happen. "This relationship is particularly important in connection with physical planning because most of the recreational activities that

are especially pleasant to pursue outdoors are found precisely in this category of activities.” (Gehl, 2011). These activities include taking a walk to get a breath of fresh air, standing around enjoying life, or sitting and sunbathing.

The last category consist of resultant/social activities. These depend on the presence of others in public spaces. They include children at play, greeting and conversations, communal activities, seeing or hearing people, and passive contacts. “These can also be called ‘resultant’ activities because nearly in all instances they evolve from activities linked to the other two activity categories. They develop in connection with the other activities because people are in the same space, meet, pass by one another, or are merely within view.” (Gehl 2011). In order to optimize the amount of social interaction that can take place within Washington Square Park design interventions that are closely linked to the programming of the site will be critical.

## GOALS + OBJECTIVES TAKEN FROM PROJECT RELATED THEORY

- ▶ Encourage different types of recreation activities; necessary, optional, or resultant activities.
- ▶ Create routes to the site that are easily accessible for pedestrians.
- ▶ Provide a diverse amount of amenities on site.
- ▶ Incorporate activities that create volunteer opportunities for the community.
- ▶ Use mixed-use development to activate spaces adjacent to the site.
- ▶ Create a physical environment that represents the values of the community.
- ▶ Create spaces for seasonal entertainment and performances.
- ▶ Users should feel safe at all times of the day on site.

▲ FIGURE 2.8 | Goals + Objectives Taken from Project Related Theory (by Author)

## PRECEDENT STUDIES

### Precedent Selection

In addition to examining the existing plans and project related theory, I completed a series of precedent studies to identify additional goals for the development of Washington Square Park. An analysis of relevant precedents can offer insight to the site's dilemmas, identify possible solutions for a design, and begin to determine the limitations and opportunities of further research that focuses on increasing social interaction in public spaces. (Refer to Appendix C for full analysis summary)

Selecting precedents that were current and relevant to the profession was a critical component to narrowing down the precedent list. The primary source for my selection was a new guide on Health Benefits of Nature that was released by the American Society of Landscape Architects in September of 2013. This guide explains the long and short-term health benefits of spending time in outdoor spaces. Although my main research question

focuses on increasing social interaction in urban spaces, an added component to my question is how this interaction can lead to living a healthier lifestyle.

Analyzing these precedents will highlight a wide variety of successful designs in urban communities that show how certain design interventions can be integrated into the built environment to foster healthy lifestyles.



## Precedent Study Analysis

Four civic spaces were selected for the precedent studies. These include: Pier 1 of the Brooklyn Bridge Park in Brooklyn, New York, Lafayette Greens in Detroit, Michigan, Discovery Green in Houston, Texas, and CityGarden in St. Louis, Missouri. These precedents are analyzed based on Mark Francis' "Critical Dimensions of Case Studies." This assessment contains categories that will allow me to extract critical information from each of the four projects that can help to advance this proposal by identifying the successes and constraints of each project (Francis 2001). Each precedent responds to a series of analysis criteria. Findings from each of the precedent studies are summarized in the following pages. Results from the precedent studies are then added to the set of goals + objectives for Washington Square Park that was explained in the beginning of this chapter (see Figure 2.9).

## SYNTHESIS OF PRECEDENT STUDY ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS CRITERIA	CRITERIA DESCRIPTION
► BASELINE INFORMATION	Project name, location, date designed/completed, designer, cost, size, context, and keywords.
► DILEMMA	What problem(s) is the project trying to solve? Was it solved?
► PROJECT GOALS	What are the key goals (social, ecological, aesthetic)?
► PROGRAMMING	How was the program developed? Was it modified during the course of the project?
► KEY CONCEPTS + GOALS	What are the key concepts? How did the designer translate their goals into form?
► USES + ACTIVITIES	How is the site used? Who uses it?
► MAINTENANCE + MANAGEMENT	What are the problems of management and maintenance?
► SUCCESSES	Describe the site-specific successes in comparison to the more general issues?
► CONSTRAINTS	Why was the project done? What are the question(s) it is trying to answer?

▲ FIGURE 2.9 | Synthesis of Precedent Study Analysis (by Author)

## Pier One Brooklyn Bridge Park

SIZE 9.5 acres

CONTEXT Urban | Brooklyn, New York

DILEMMAS Public access, lack of recreational activities, and open space.

GOALS Allow the site's emotional power and intensity to resonate in a new ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable park setting.

PROGRAMS Pier One features two large lawns, a waterfront promenade, playground, and mixed-use development.

DESIGN CONCEPTS Waterfront access and circulation, water dependent uses, bikeways, and habitat restoration.

MAINTENANCE + MANAGEMENT Park operations staff use a variety of sustainable practices to maintain the park, including participation in public recycling programs, light dimming control and storm water reuse.





FIGURE 2.12 | Childrens Playground (courtesy of Creative Commons) *Bottom*

FIGURE 2.11 | Harbor View Lawn (courtesy of Etienne Fossard) *Top Right*

▼ FIGURE 2.10 | Movies With a View (courtesy of Etienne Fossard) *Top Left*





## Lafayette Greens

SIZE .47 acres

CONTEXT Urban | Detroit, Michigan

DILEMMAS Creating a public space to serve the citizens of downtown Detroit.

GOALS Productive, Beautiful, Inspiring, were the 3 key concepts kept in mind for the creation of this urban garden in downtown Detroit.

PROGRAMS Orchard, raised garden beds, promenade, garden trellis, open lawn space, bioswale, terrace, children's garden, and garden sheds.

DESIGN CONCEPTS A space where a community can come together and learn about sustainable methods: stormwater management and water usage, material re-use, urban bio-diversity, efficient organic growing methods

MAINTENANCE + MANAGEMENT This site is tended by Compuware volunteers and fellow city dwellers.

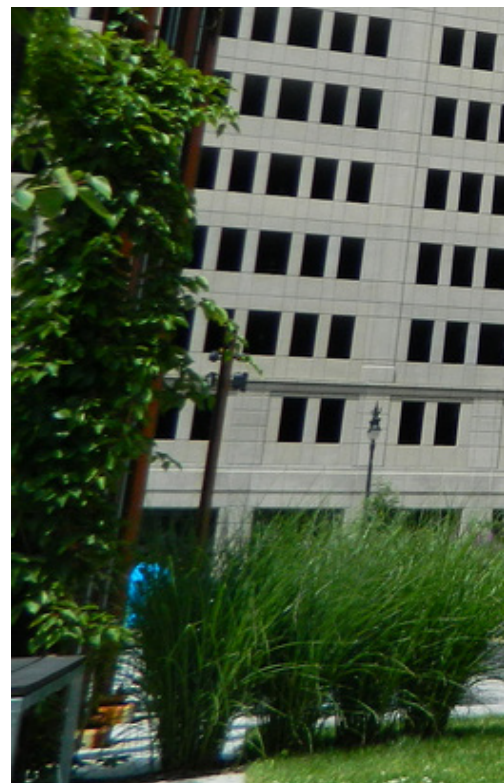
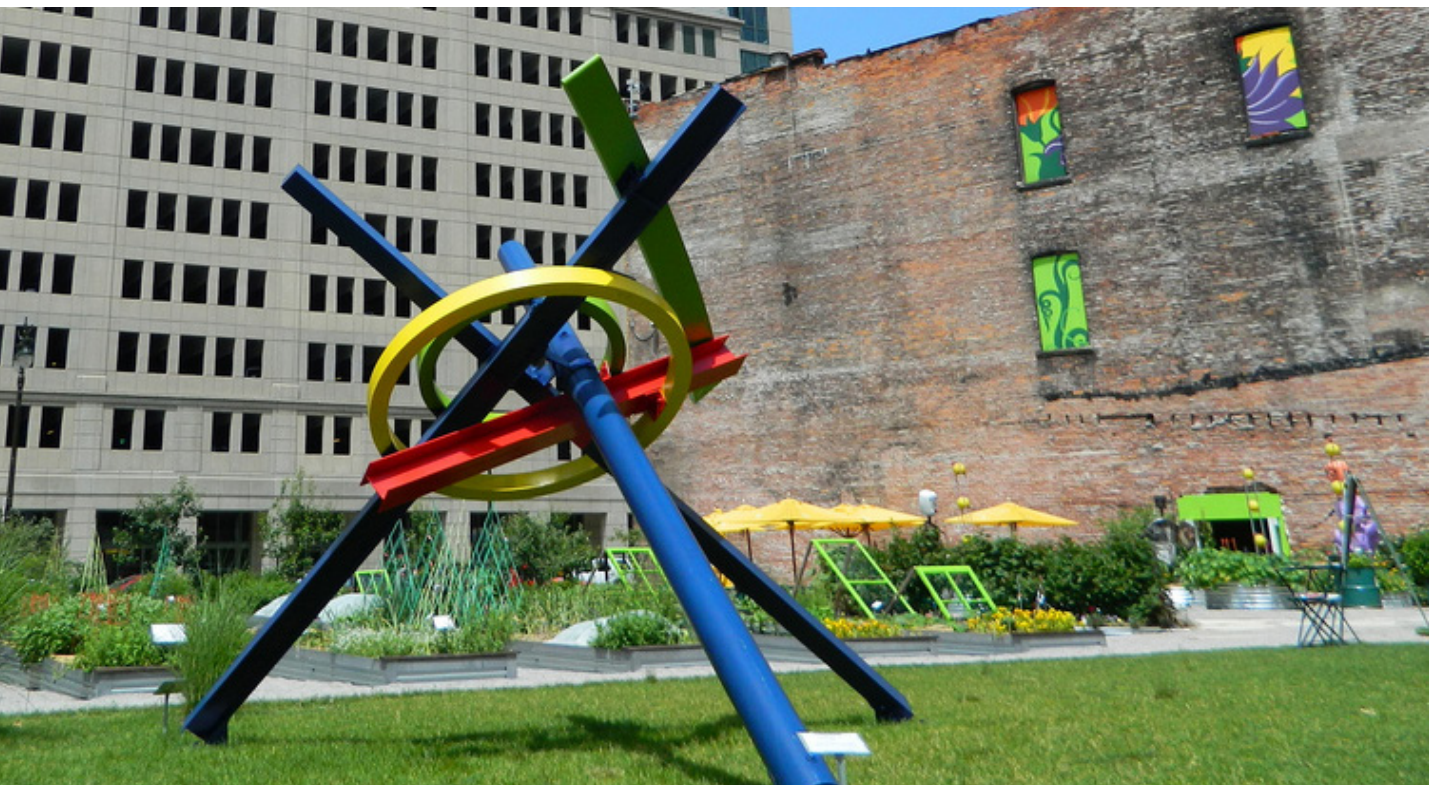


FIGURE 2.14 | Community Education Class (courtesy of Creative Commons) *Top*

▼ FIGURE 2.13 | Lafayette Greens Sculpture (courtesy of Jeff Ruben) *Bottom*





## Discovery Green

SIZE 12 acres

CONTEXT Urban | Houston, Texas

DILEMMAS Underdeveloped concrete eyesore.

GOALS Provide an uncommonly beautiful, urban green space in the heart of Houston that serves as a village green for our city, a source of health and happiness for our citizens and a window into the incredible diversity of talents and traditions

PROGRAMS Interactive fountain, pond and water gardens, playground, botanical gardens, below grade parking, landform amphitheater, outdoor stage frames, a great lawn, and cafe.

DESIGN CONCEPTS The design of the park emphasizes connectivity to the city surrounding it, accommodates a wide range of activities while still providing the experience of a green oasis. The result is a space that celebrates the city's heritage, but also features a wide range of amenities.

MAINTENANCE + MANAGEMENT In addition to maintenance staff that works on the grounds there is a also a volunteer program that aids in the site's maintenance.

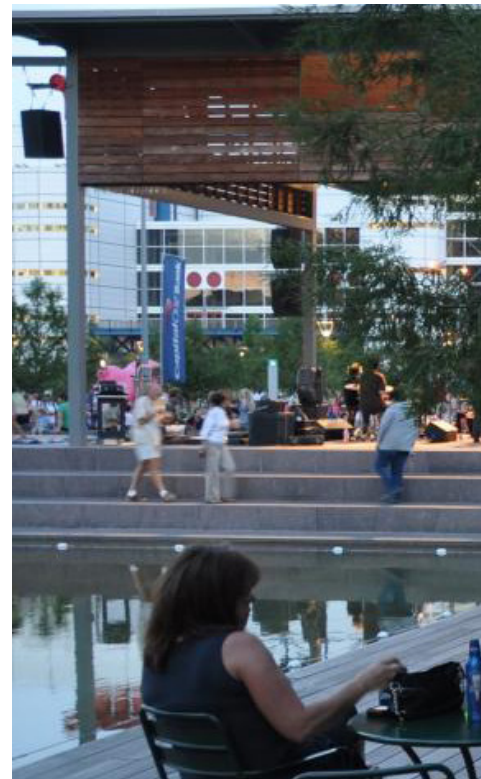
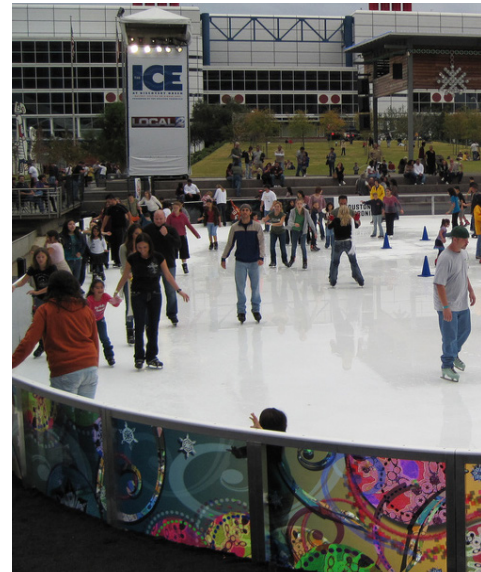


FIGURE 2.17 | Evening Amenities (courtesy of Creative Commons) *Bottom*

FIGURE 2.16 | Community Workout Class (courtesy of Creative Commons) *Top Left*

▼ FIGURE 2.15 | Ice Skating Rink (courtesy of Creative Commons) *Top Left*





## CityGarden

SIZE 3 acres

CONTEXT Urban | St. Louis, Missouri

DILEMMAS Underdeveloped civic space, disconnected from other activities.

GOALS Make an inviting and inspiring public place displaying twenty four contemporary sculptures; create diverse spaces and experiences; make it beautiful, engaging, and accessible year-round; and provide plenty of shade and water.

PROGRAMS Sculptures for viewing and climbing, rain gardens, spray plaza, video wall, terrace overlook, seating areas, and fountains.

DESIGN CONCEPTS Weaves innovative stormwater management strategies with abstractions of local geology, hydrology, and plant communities to create a multi-faceted public space that has become a magnet for locals and tourists alike.

MAINTENANCE + MANAGEMENT 24-hours a day security staff and cameras.

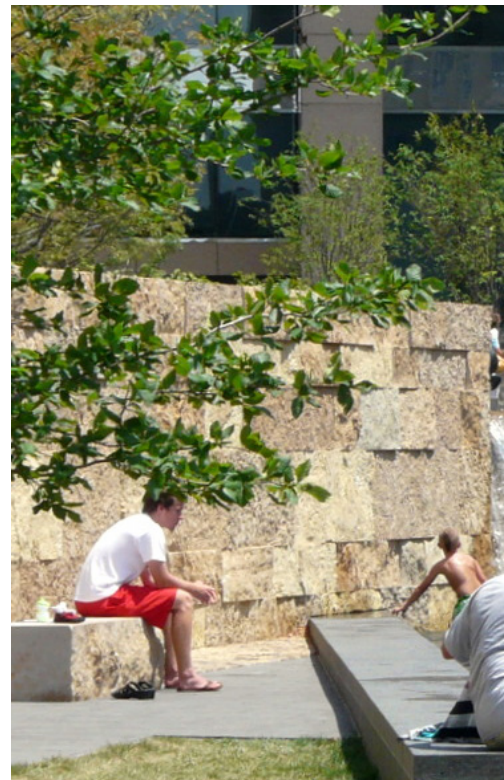




FIGURE 2.20 | Split Basin (courtesy of Creative Commons) Bottom

FIGURE 2.19 | Food Truck Stand (courtesy of Creative Commons) Top Right

▼ FIGURE 2.18 | Spray Plaza (courtesy of Creative Commons) Top Left



## Synthesis of Precedent Amenities

There are many amenities that are identified through the precedent study analysis. The study of these amenities is a critical component in understanding the types of amenities that should be implemented into Washington Square Park in order to maximum amount of activities to occur on site. Figure 2.21 provides a summary of the amenities found throughout the precedent analysis. Use of gardens, terracing, and fixed seating is seen in all the precedents. Interventions that had varied vegetation, different level spaces, a variation of seating, and on-site art installations provided amenities that helped the success of the design. While these designs were successful, spaces for open lawn and recreational courts were seen less throughout the precedents. This does not mean that these amenities were not related to successful designs, rather that the site may not have been able to accommodate a space of that size within its boundaries. Further investigation of options of how to implement

large scale amenities in a small civic space will be done in order to maximize the amount of amenities that can be implemented into the site.

## SUMMARY OF PRECEDENT AMENITIES

AMENITIES	PIER 1	LAFAYETTE GREENS	DISCOVERY GREEN	CITY GARDEN
OPEN LAWN	●		●	
GARDENS	●	●	●	●
TERRACE	●	●	●	●
PLAZA			●	●
WATER FEATURE	●		●	●
PLANTERS	●	●	●	●
AMPHITHEATER			●	
FIXED SEATING	●	●	●	●
MOVABLE SEATING		●		
ART INSTALLATIONS		●	●	●
INTERACTIVE INSTALLATIONS			●	●
WALKING/RUNNING PATHS	●		●	
BIKE PATHS	●		●	
TRANSPORTATION ACCESS		●	●	●
RECREATIONAL COURTS	●			
FOOD	●		●	
RESTROOMS	●		●	●
RECYCLING	●	●	●	●
PARKING			●	●

▲ FIGURE 2.21 | Summary of Precedent Amenities (by Author)



## Synthesis of Precedents

Through the analysis of the precedents, we gain insight on how each design may be related to the goals for this project, and how that relationship is translated onto the site through possible amenities for Washington Square Park. All four designs focused on creating a well-rounded destination for the users of the site by including some type of social, economic, and cultural amenities within the site boundaries. All of the sites included programming that was suited for the type of users they foresaw using the site, which mainly consisted of all age groups. Amenities repeated throughout these studies included: terraces, planters, fixed seating, transportation access, and recycling. In addition, in two of the designs community programs were initialized. These programs have helped to create a completely different level of interaction amongst the users of the site. Other insightful design moves included: incorporating art/interactive installations to offer conversation topics on the site, exercise amenities that

created opportunities for individual or group activity, and increasing accessibility to the surrounding context of the site. These precedents provide insight into the kinds of successful designs that have an effect on the users well-being. Along with the existing plans and project related literature goals, these precedent goals + objectives will be added to the final goals + objectives for Washington Square Park.



## Chapter Summary

The review of the existing plans, project related literature, and precedents has helped to establish a set of project goals + objectives. An individual set of goals + objectives was derived from each of the chapter sections which were then combined into a set of project goals + objectives as summarized in figure 2.22. The compilation of these goals offers a representation of the needs of the stakeholders, the city, user groups, and the knowledge of professionals in the realm of research and design. By drawing from several resources, I am confident that the analysis, design interventions, and design all are based on a strong foundation that is theory based and sensitive to the goals of the city and stakeholders, as well as remaining true to the personal goals that I set forward at the beginning of this project.

## PROJECT GOALS

	GDAP	RFQ/FP	KDCC PLAN	STREETCAP PLAN	SOCIAL INTERACTION	USER WELL-BEING	URBAN CIVIC SPACES	PIER ONE	LAFAYETTE GARDENS	DISCOVERY GREEN	CITYGARDEN
<b>VIBRANT</b>											
► Create a diverse array of events, gathering places, and opportunities to foster social interaction.	●		●								
► Incorporate activities for user to visit at all times of the day.	●	●									
► Design interventions should focus on increasing activities.											
► Create a dynamic space that welcomes all ages.				●		●	●	●	●	●	●
► Implement activities that foster human interaction.				●	●		●	●	●	●	●
► Offer a wide range of natural settings to soften the aesthetic.								●	●	●	
<b>DISTINCT</b>											
► Create a unique built environment that of what is already existing in the area.	●										
► Incorporate areas for recreation within the site.		●		●							
► Create the space into a gathering place and civic hub, serving Crown Center, the Crossroads district, as well as the surrounding buildings.		●									
► Create a site that will become an iconic, multi-purpose destination space.			●			●	●	●	●	●	●
► Offer a wide variety of site amenities for its users.			●	●		●	●		●	●	●
► Provide activities that vary in scale.				●	●	●	●		●	●	●
► Incorporate health promoting activities on the site.				●	●		●	●	●	●	●
► Introduce activities/programs that create volunteer opportunities for the community.						●		●	●		
<b>CONNECTED</b>											
► Incorporate transit proposals to the final design of the site.	●		●						●	●	
► Create a connected downtown that provides a visual and physical connection between districts.		●	●					●	●	●	
► Mitigate the physical constraints of the adjacent land by making use of it and capping it, in order to extend the park closer to Crossroads District.			●								
► Incorporate stops for a complete transit system that increases connectivity though the downtown activity centers.			●			●		●	●	●	●
► Remove pedestrian connections that deter users from interacting with the site.				●		●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>URBAN</b>											
► Maintain a dense mix of buildings and uses.	●		●			●					
► Reinforce the redevelopment of the site with the goals of the GDAP.		●									
► Reduce surface parking lots.			●	●							
► Consider the types of meeting places on site so that social interaction can occur at a community wide scale, which can help to strengthen the urban culture.				●	●	●					
► Reduce surface parking lots.								●	●	●	
<b>WALKABLE</b>											
► Ensure connection are prominent and accessible.	●						●	●	●	●	
► Create a walkable downtown with the highest pedestrian design level.	●										
► Improve pedestrian environment and accessibility by reducing an auto-oriented corridor.	●		●	●							
► Reduce pedestrian barriers that help to increase the accessibility from district to districts.				●		●					

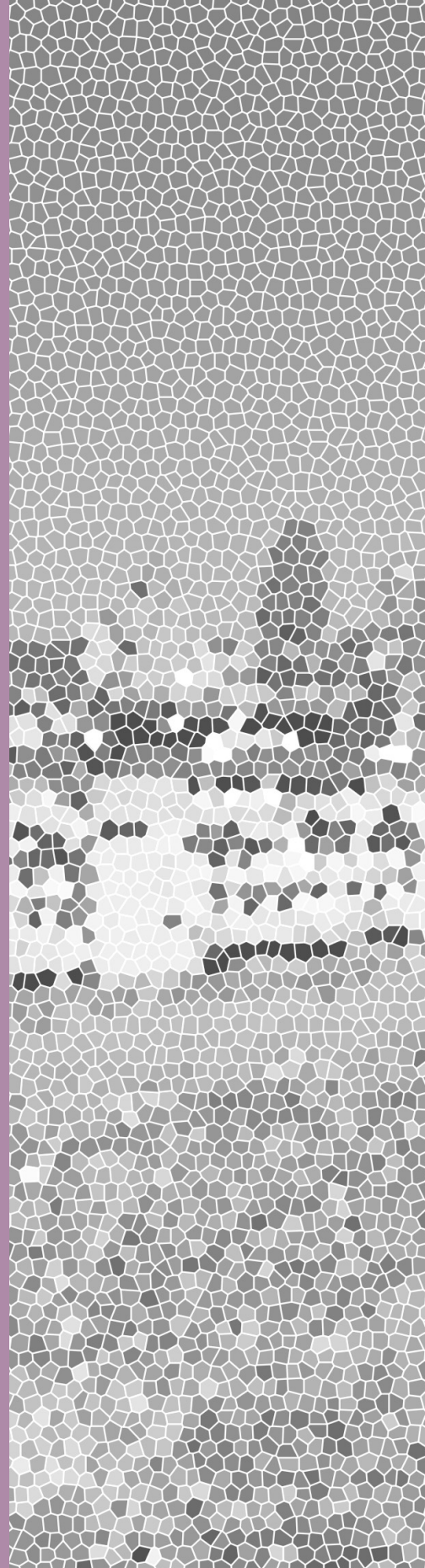
▲ FIGURE 2.22 | Project Goals (by Author)



# 03

## DISCOVER

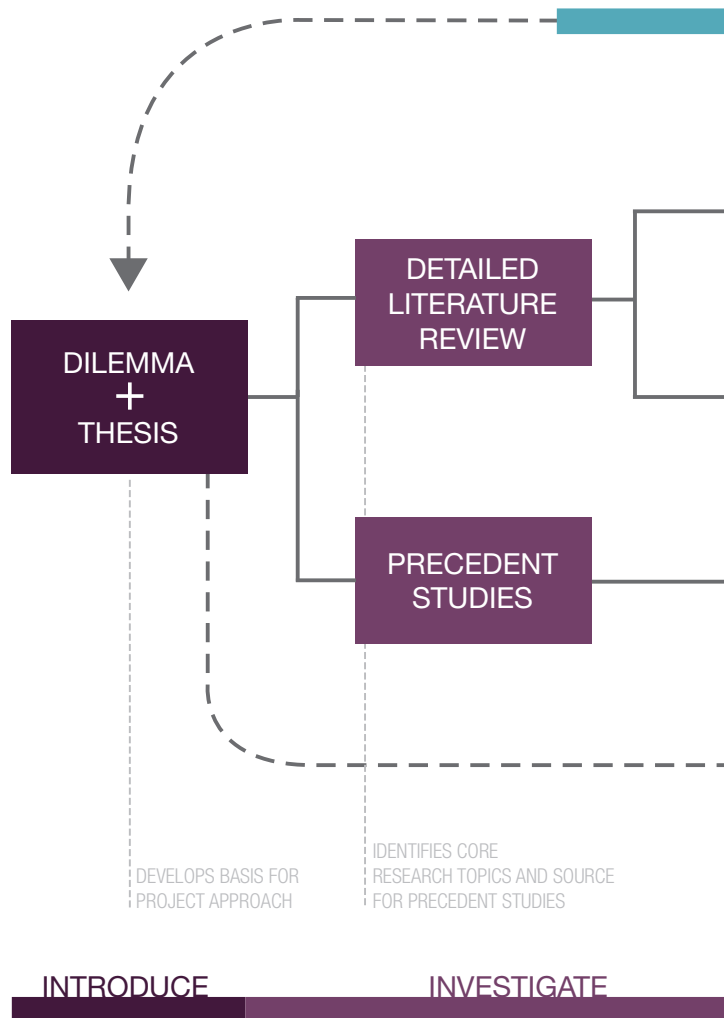
This chapter expands on the discoveries that are made through the process of research. This chapter introduces the path of methods that this project takes in order to answer the initial research question.



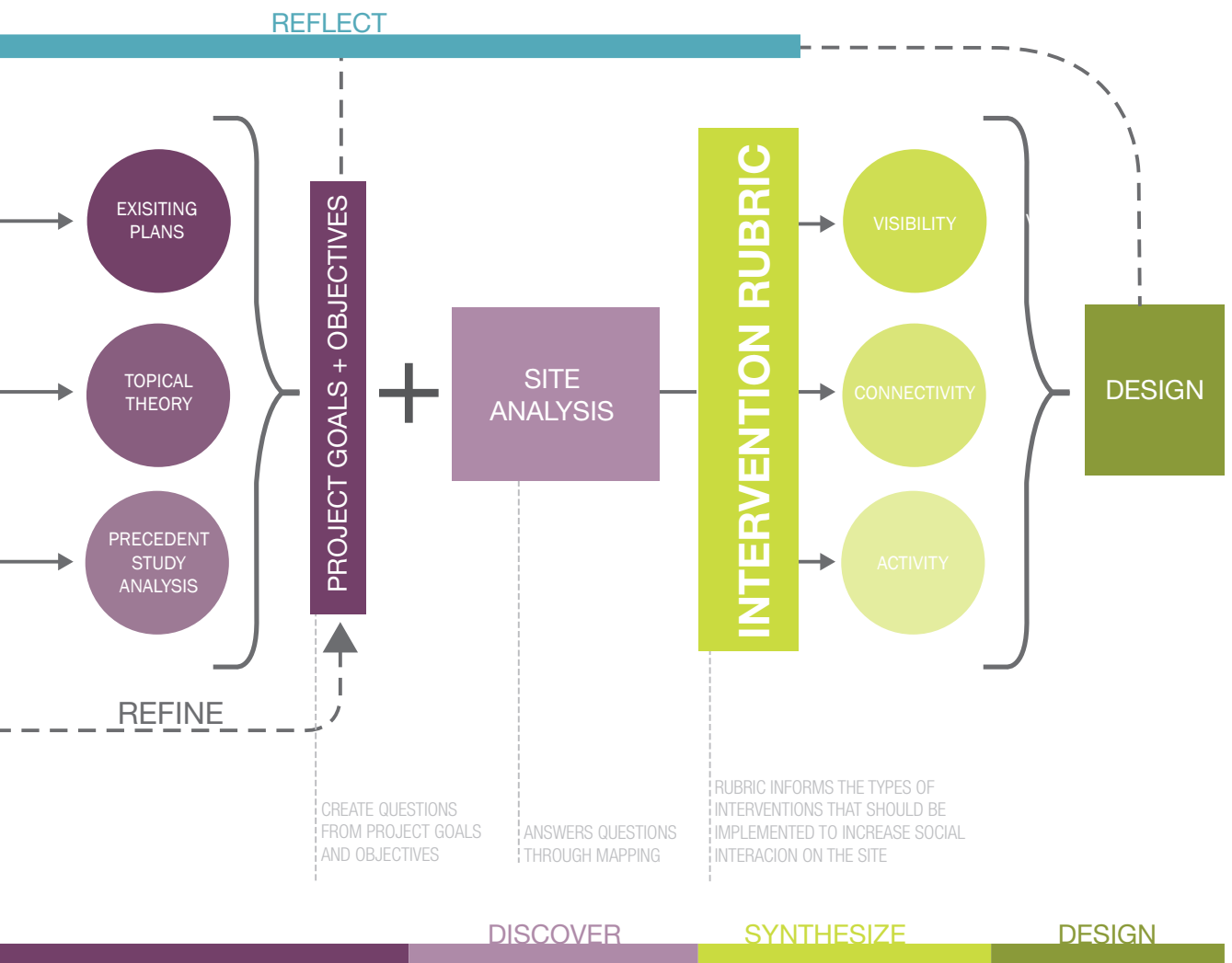
## METHODOLOGY

### Path of Methods

In order to address this question I will be following a five-part methodology. The initial three parts will include a literature review, precedent studies, and site inventory and analysis. From these initial parts I will synthesis the relevant information and compile a list of goals + objectives. These goals + objectives will help to inform the final two parts of my methods, which are an intervention rubric and ultimately a design proposal for Washington Square Park. (see Figure 3.1)



▲ FIGURE 3.1 | Path of Methods (by Author)





## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Existing Plans + Project Related Theory

The first step of this research project was to review of the literature. An initial review of the literature was summarized in the previous section. The section divided the literature into three categories: existing plans, project related literature, and precedent studies.

In order to keep with the over arching vision of the Greater Downtown Kansas City Area, it was critical to assess the existing plans for the city. The first plan that was analyzed at was the Greater Downtown Area Plan created by the City of Kansas City, which addressed the site at a regional scale. It is a collective vision for the Greater Downtown Area that includes strategies for future development. The Washington Square Park request for Qualification/Proposal addresses the site as a site-specific design project. While this request is focused on Washington Square Park many of the ideas stem from the GDAP. In addition, the Kansas City Design Center's proposal for Washington

Square Park was identified as a plan that can broaden the knowledge of the site through a different site proposal. Lastly, the Kansas City Downtown Street Car plan, which provided an understanding of the connections to the surrounding neighborhoods that this plan could create, specifically by increasing the accessibility to potential users of the site. The second set of literature is derived from the synthesis of key topics from project related theory. The key topics that are included in this section are social connectivity, user well-being, and urban civic spaces.

The synthesis of the literature helped to identify a set of goals + objectives for the project, that were grounded through existing plans and existing theories that address both regional and local issues of the site. Ultimately, these goals will help to inform the design proposal for Washington Square Park.

## Precedent Studies

The third section of the literature incorporated a discussion about precedent studies. A series of precedent studies served as a component to the methods of this project in order to identify successful built environments that have been designed to promote healthy lifestyles. These design strategies will be the basis that will help to inform good design techniques when creating built environments that help to increase the user's social interaction as well as their general well-being. For the most part these precedents are projects that have been created for civic urban spaces.

Selecting precedents that were current and relevant to the profession was a critical component to narrowing down the precedent list. The primary source for my selection was a new guide on *Health Benefits of Nature* that was released by the American Society of Landscape Architects in September of 2013. This guide explains the long and short-term

health benefits of spending time in outdoor spaces. Although my main research question focuses on increasing social interaction in urban spaces, an added component to my research is understanding how this interaction can lead to living a healthier lifestyle. As discussed in the literature portion of my proposal social interaction is a key component directly related to increasing a person's overall well-being. By analyzing these precedents it will highlight a wide variety of successful designs in urban communities that show how certain design interventions can be integrated into the built environment to foster user well-being.

## SITE INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

In order to establish the current conditions of the site a site inventory and analysis was conducted for the site. Understanding the site conditions and its surrounding context from a site users perspective helped to inform whether there are any obstacles that may not be able to be identified through maps. This is an important part of this process because the information gathered during this process fuels the site analysis and ultimately the design process.

An initial site visit was made in the early fall semester followed by one later in the fall semester. These were both casual visits to the site that allowed for a better understanding of the scale of the site and its context. Site visits are needed in order to conduct an in-depth site inventory. The findings from these visits yielded diagrams and maps, which elaborate on the existing conditions of the site. These maps were determined by a series of questions asked once the synthesis of project goals was completed.

## INTERVENTION RUBRIC

The intervention rubric for this project categorizes the design interventions that were established throughout the mapping phase of this project. These maps help to identify what realistic opportunities could be implemented into the redevelopment of Washington Square Park.

The opportunities that were identified through the mapping process helped to reveal a commonality amongst the opportunities that helped to divide the rubric into three sections; interventions that focused on activity, connectivity, and visibility for Washington Square Park. Distilling the opportunities into these three categories will provide a set of design interventions for Washington Square Park that mitigate the site's current social and physical issues that hinder social interaction from occurring in this space.

## Design Proposal

The final component to the masters report is the application of the intervention rubric. The rubric will help to inform that design proposal for the redevelopment of Washington Square Park. The proposal will include a variety of design components that fulfill the opportunities identified throughout the mapping portion of the project. This process will be visualized through graphic representation of supporting diagrams and a conceptual design.

## Chapter Summary

The path of methods for this project is focused around creating a set of interventions for Washington Square Park that increases social interaction. By using a process that synthesizes critical information from the literature review, then questions the goals through a site inventory and analysis, opportunities for the site are able to be distilled in order to create an intervention rubric. This rubric is the compilation of the research, questioning, and mapping done in order to apply a set of design interventions that will inform a final design proposal for a social landscape in Washington Square Park (see Figure 3.2).

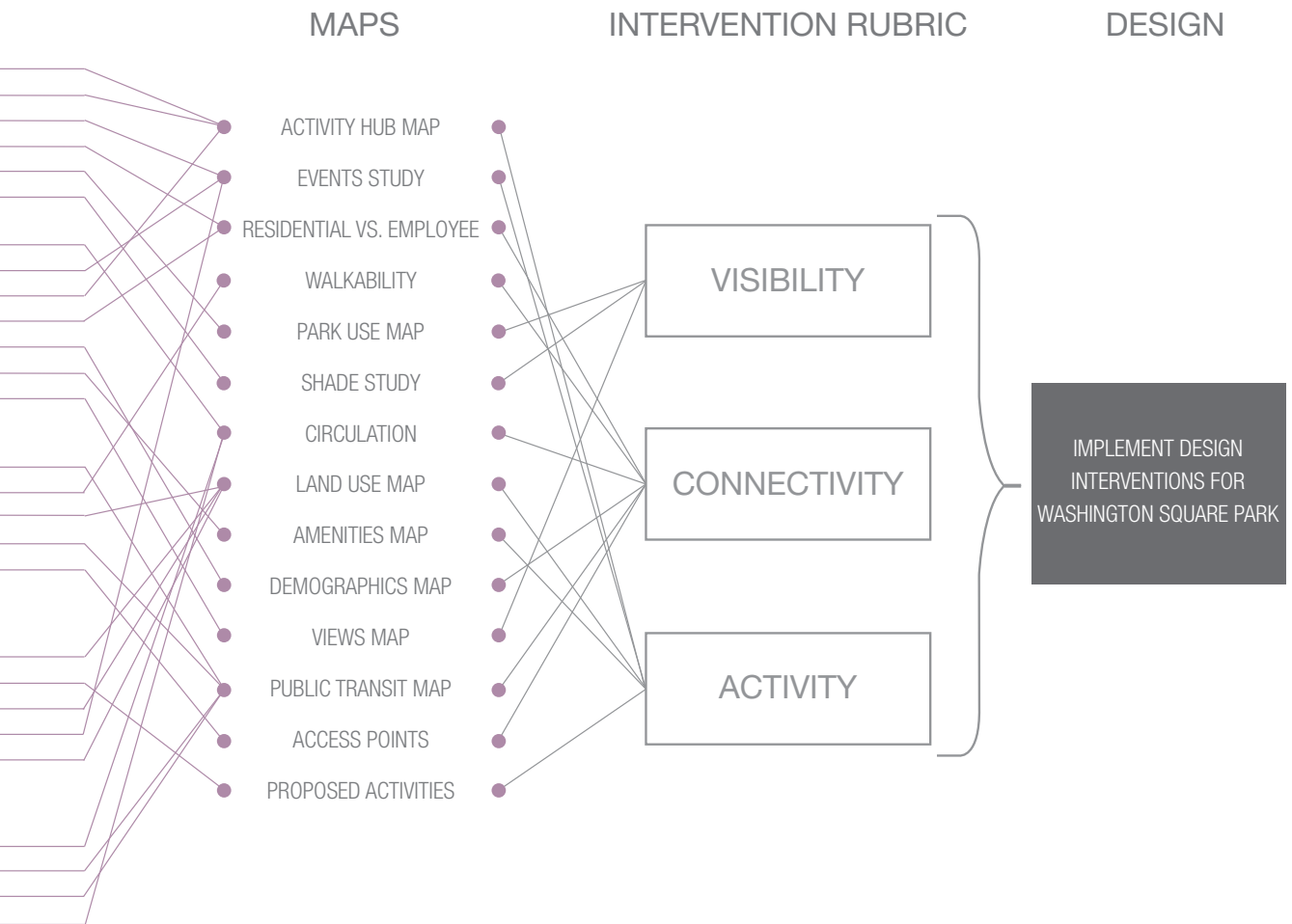
GOALS + OBJECTIVES

VIBRANT	Create a diverse array of events, gathering places + opportunities for social interaction. Incorporate activities for users to visit at all times of the day. Design interventions should focus on increasing activities. Create dynamic space, that welcomes all ages. Implement activities that foster human activities. Offer a wide range of natural settings to soften aesthetic.
DISTINCT	Create a unique built environment to that of what already exists. Incorporate areas of recreation. Create a civic hub that serves the Crossroad sand Crown Center district. Create a site that will become an iconic, multi-purpose destination space. Offer a wide variety of site amenities. Provide amenities that vary in scale. Introduce activities that create volunteer opportunities for the community.
CONNECTED	Incorporate transit proposals to final design. Create a connected downtown that provides a visual and physical connection between districts. Mitigate the physical constraints of the adjacent land by making use of it and capping the site. Incorporate stops for a complete transit system that increases connectivity between districts. Remove pedestrian connections that deter users from interacting with the site.
URBAN	Maintain dense mix of building uses Reinforce the redevelopment of the site with the goals of the GDAP. Reduce surface parking lots to increase amount of civic space around the site. Consider the types of meeting places on site so that interaction can occur at a community scale. Increase mixed use development in order to activate edges or spaces adjacent to a site-wide scale.
WALKABLE	Ensure connections are prominent and accessible. Create a walkable downtown with the highest level of pedestrian design. Improve pedestrian environment and accessibility by revealing auto-oriented corridor. Reduce pedestrian barriers that help to increase the accessibility from surrounding districts.

QUESTIONS

What other activities can be found in neighborhood districts? What type of annual activities occur on site? What type of activities that currently occur on site? Who will be using the areas? What times is the park used the most? Where would natural elements be best suited?
What are the existing trails in the area? What other activity hubs are in the area? What amenities does the site have? Who currently uses the site the most often? What are the demographics of the area? What types of community programs are offered on site? What are unique features of the site?
Where are the closest public transit stops? How far away are the Crossroads and Crown Center district? What spaces adjacent to the site can be capitalized on? How can existing public transit be connections be strengthened? What are the existing pedestrian connections to the site?
What are the surrounding building uses? What design concepts can be applied from the precedents? What spaces adjacent to the site can be capitalized on? What type of community events occur on site? Where are there residential/mixed use buildings?
Where is the most active pathway? Are there bikeshare stations close to the site? Where are the parking areas on the site? What physical barriers are around the site?

▲ FIGURE 3.2 | Approach of Methods to Implement Design (by Author)



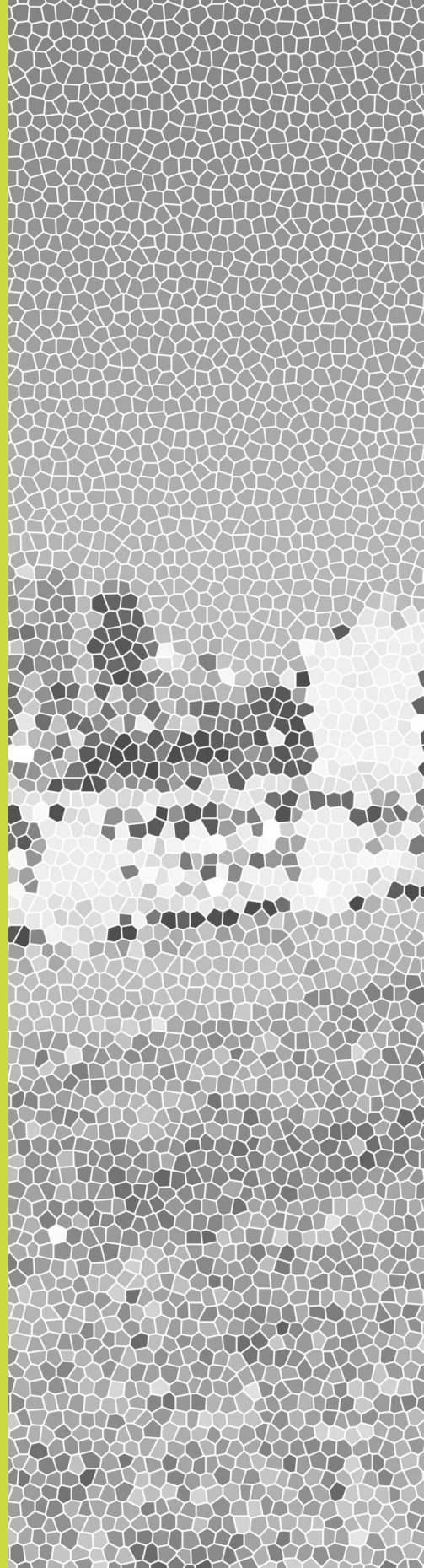




# 04

## SYNTHESIZE

This chapter reveals the synthesis of the site inventory and analysis. Project goals derived from the previous chapter informed the scope of analysis to be narrowed down to create a set of analysis maps. These maps will identify the intervention rubric for Washington Square Park.



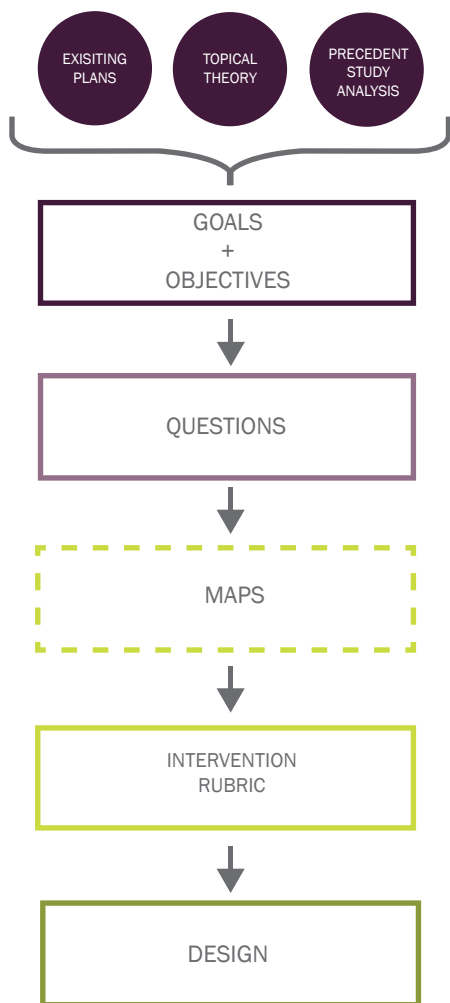
## SITE INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

### Approach

Upon the completion of the literature review, a set of project goals + objectives were derived that reflected relevant project theory, the needs of Downtown Kansas City and the stakeholders of Washington Square Park, and successfully built urban civic spaces in landscape architecture. The combination of the goals derived from the literature were the initial drivers for a design strategy for Washington Square Park. In order to create a final design for the site, a site analysis was completed to inform the intervention rubric for the site.

Project goals derived from the previous chapter informed a series of questions that were asked, in order to narrow down the scope of analysis. These questions pertained to the current site and its context, and determined how the goals could be applied to the site. Ultimately these questions informed a set of maps for the analysis portion of the project.

Once the inventory and analysis were completed the content was synthesized once again. The culmination of data gathered was then analyzed again and commonalities between the maps helped to distill the information into three common categories. These categories are activity, connectivity, and visibility. It is these categories that make up the three focus areas in which the design interventions are categorized.

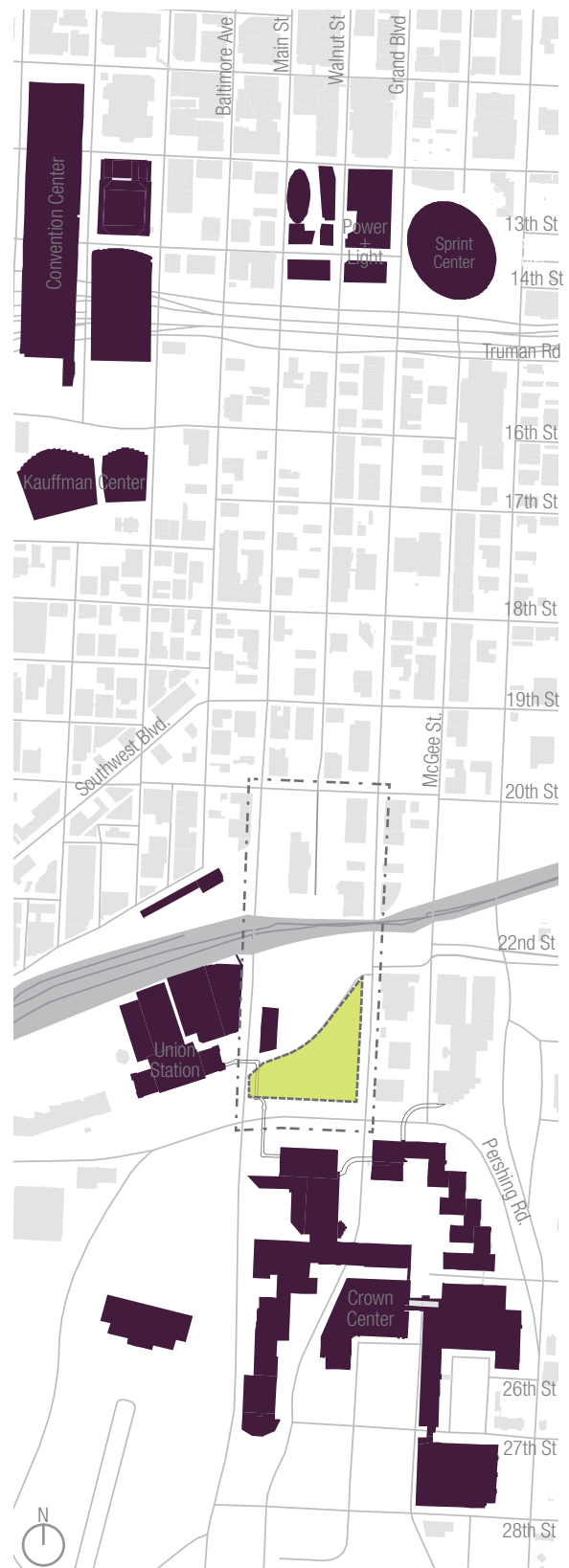


▲ FIGURE 4.1 | Design Approach (by Author)

## ACTIVITY

### Activity Hubs

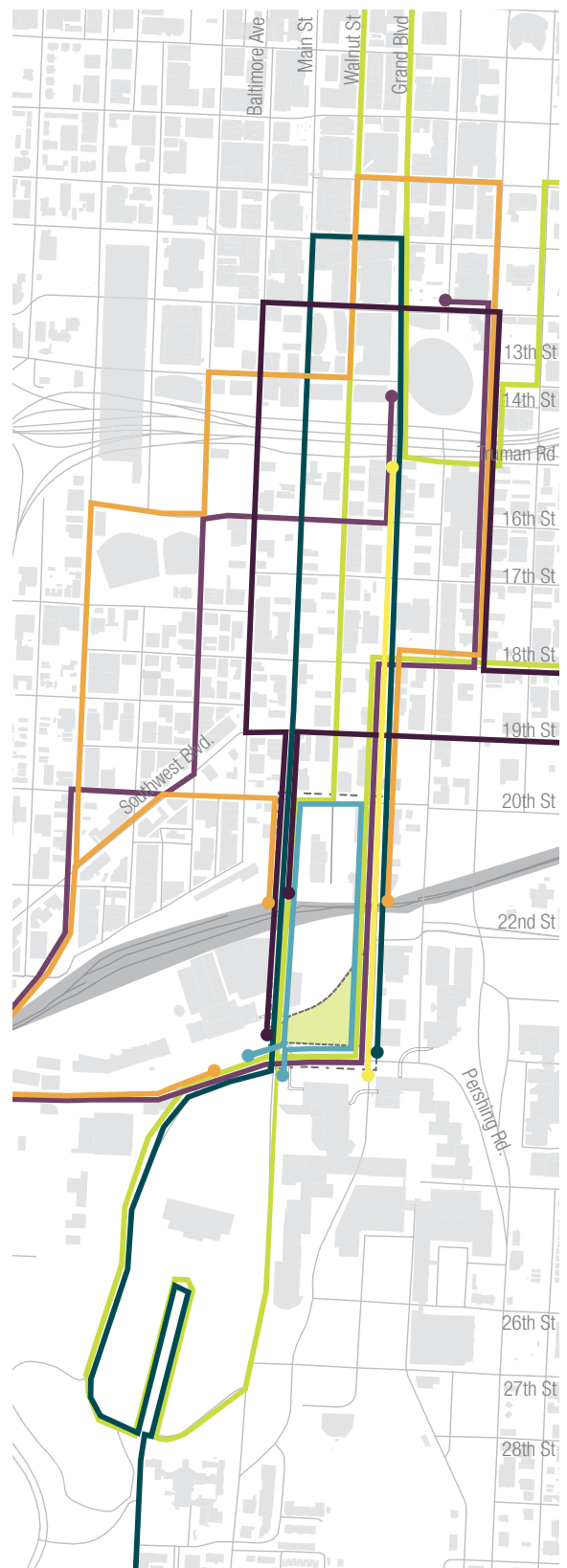
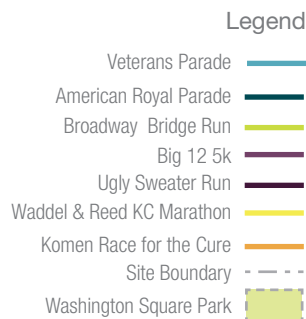
Identifying the existing activity hubs of the Downtown Kansas City area revealed that many of these hubs are located adjacent to the site. Figure 4.2 locates these sites and identifies where potential users are activating areas in the neighboring districts. These hubs inform us that there are large amounts of activity in certain areas, as well as the opportunity to draw users from those hubs into Washington Square Park. Crown Center and Union Station offer the most promise in attracting users to the site, through possible implementation of site connections.



▲ FIGURE 4.2 | Activity Hubs (by Author)

## Events

There is a lack of community events that occur in Washington Square Park. Currently only one event takes place on site, which is the Irish Fest. All other events are races which take place around the site and do not actively engage people into Washington Square Park. Developing permanent amenities that allow events to be held on site would be beneficial, in order to establish Washington Square Park as an urban civic hub. Allowing for a variety of different scaled amenities can appeal to various scales of user groups.



▲ FIGURE 4.3 | Events (by Author)

## ACTIVITY

### Site Activity

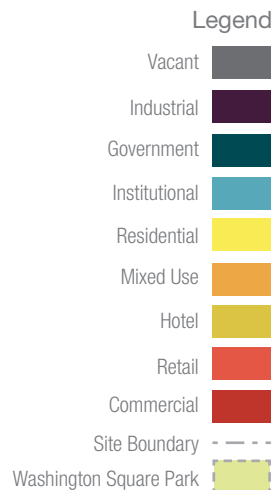
Observations done on site allowed to gain a better understanding of how the site was being used throughout the day and if social interaction was prevalent by users on the site. Figure 4.4 illustrates the hierarchy of activity within the site. From the observations I was able to make it was noted that the majority of the users were pedestrians that were using edges of the space as routes to get them to and from destinations on Main St or Grand Blvd. Users that stayed on the site had limited amenities. The users consisted mainly of business workers taking their lunch on a bench, or patrons of the transit system that were waiting for the bus to arrive. While the lack of amenities for users was unfortunate to observe, the inactive space allows for extreme interventions to take place in order to increase interaction amongst users.



▲ FIGURE 4.4 | Site Activity (by Author)

## Land Use

Assessing the surrounding context of the site is a critical component in determining the types of social interactions that may already be taking place in and or around the site. Figure 4.5 identifies that local retail businesses and food and beverage establishments are missing around the existing site. Introducing these types of businesses on or around the site could potentially draw a whole new type of users group to the site.



▲ FIGURE 4.5 | Land Use (by Author)



# CONNECTIVITY

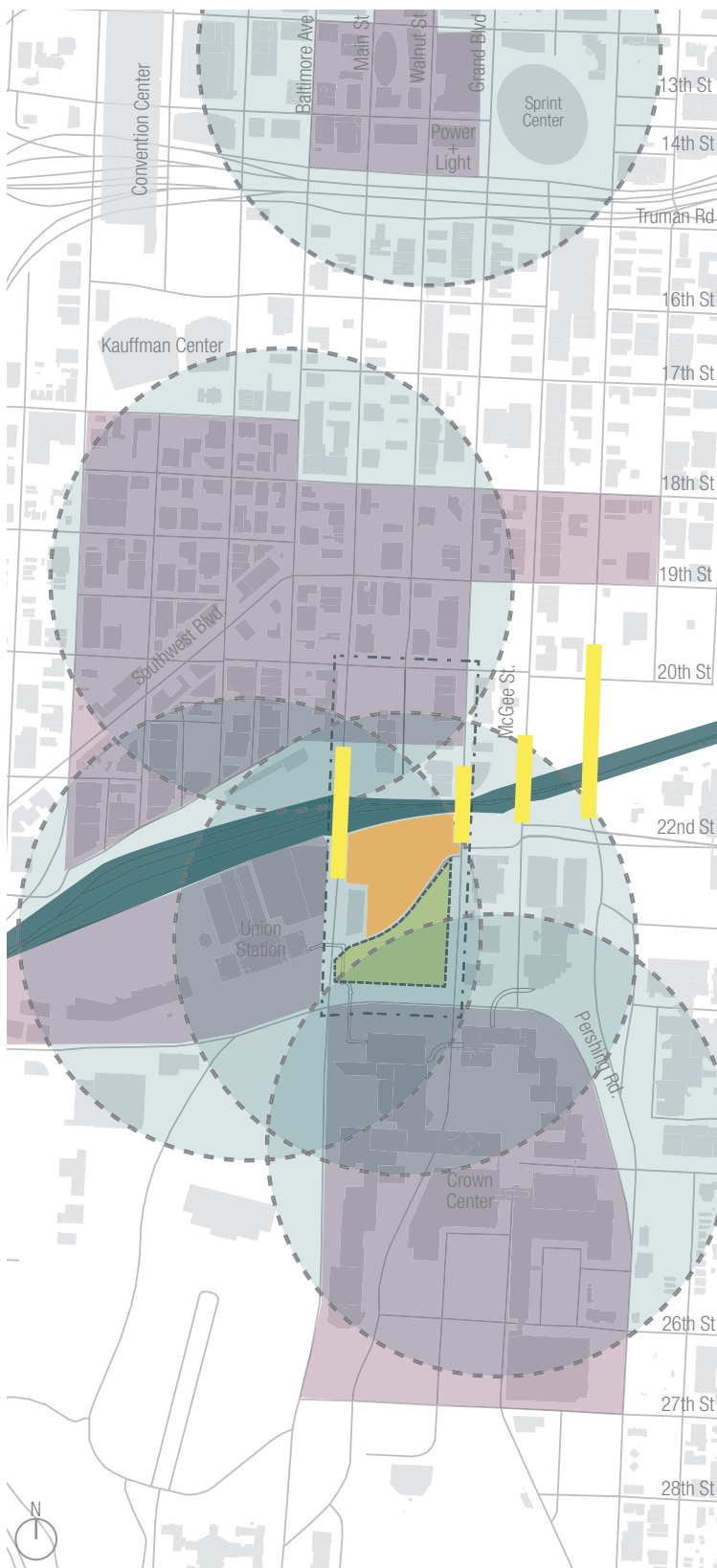
## Walkability

Observations done on site allowed me to gain a better understanding of how the site was being used throughout the day, and if social interaction was prevalent by users on the site. Figure 4.10 illustrates the hierarchy of activity within the site. From the observations I was able to make I noted that the majority of the users of the site are pedestrians that are using edges of the space as routes to get them to and from destinations on Main Street or Grand Blvd. Users that stayed on the site had limited amenities. The users consisted mainly of business workers taking their lunch on a bench, or patrons of the transit system that were waiting for the bus to arrive. While the lack of amenities for users was unfortunate to observe, the inactive space allows for extreme interventions to take place in order to increase interaction amongst users.



Legend

- 1/4 Mile Walking Radius
- Pedestrian Barriers
- Rail Road
- Topographic Barrier
- Districts
- Site Boundary
- Washington Square Park

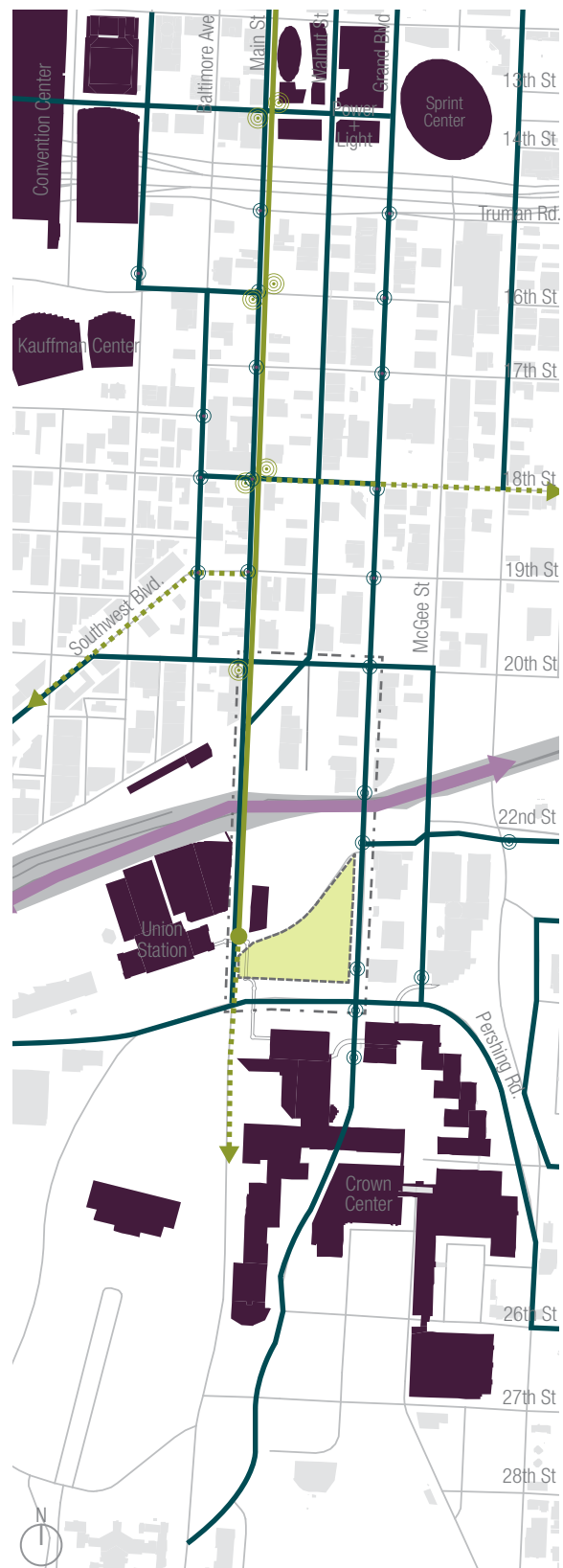
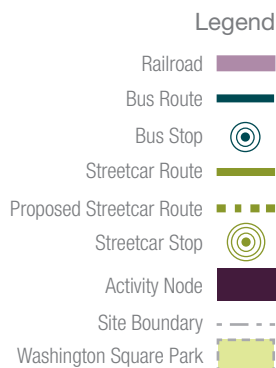


▲ FIGURE 4.6 | Walkability (by Author)

## CONNECTIVITY

### Public Transit

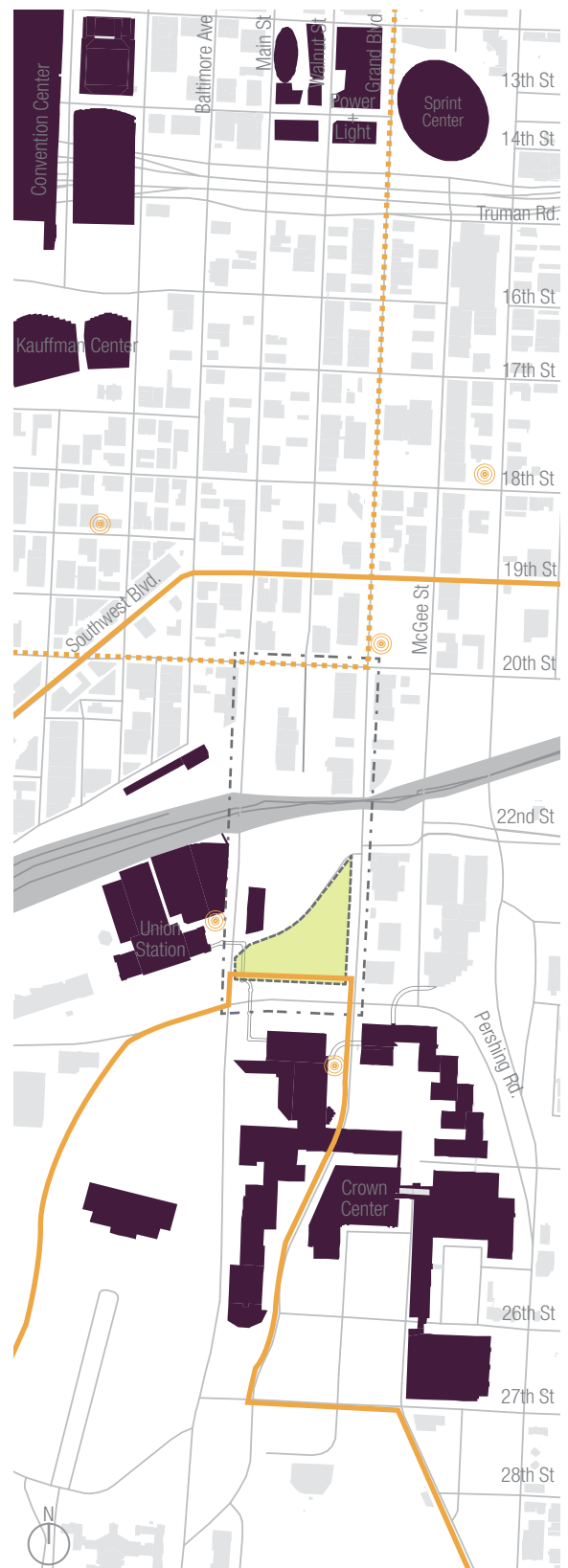
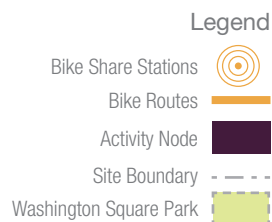
Washington Square Park is surrounded by various modes of public transit. The use of these public transit stations have an important role in the development of the space. There are several connections that allow users to easily access the bus, bikes share stations, and the proposed streetcar. Having a variety of transit systems so close to the site can have a positive impact on the success of the site. These systems can impact the amount of people who can visit the site that are farther than a 1/4 mile walking distance from the site.



▲ FIGURE 4.7 | Public Transit (by Author)

## Bike Routes

In addition to the existing bus system and streetcar system, bike systems are existing to the north and south of the site. While the systems are located close to the site that is an obvious disconnect between the neighboring systems. Establishing a suitable route for users to access on site that connects to the existing routes and allows areas for added bike share stations could increase health related amenities on site.



▲ FIGURE 4.8 | Bike Routes (by Author)

## CONNECTIVITY

### Residential

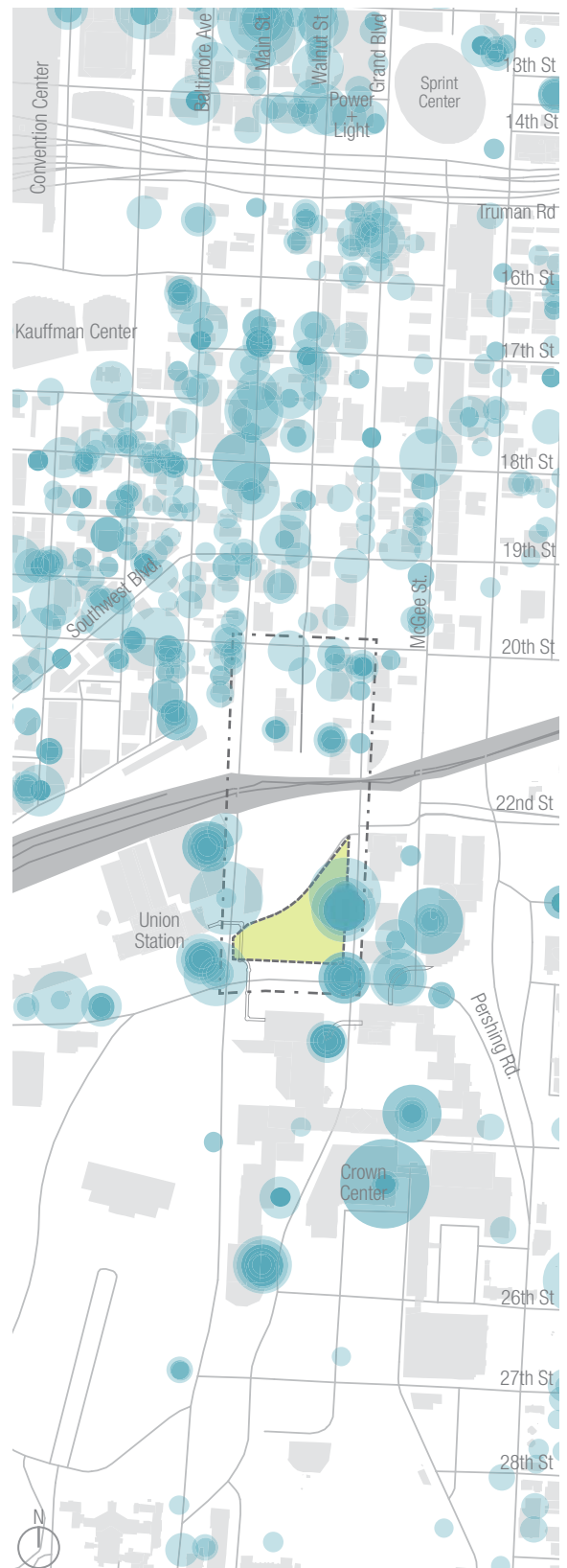
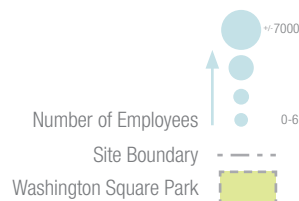
The residential population in the neighboring districts are sparse. The only residents that have a direct connection to Washington Square Park, are located to the south in condominiums within Crown Center and to the north in multi-family residential spaces found in the Western Auto Building. The lack of residents is a critical issue in the success of Washington Square Park. In order to create a space that fosters social interaction at a personal and community scale, there must be residential development. By increasing the housing in the area, it will help to mend the residential gap between districts and also increases the amount of potential users in the area that can live in a walkable distance from the site.



▲ FIGURE 4.9 | Residential (by Author)

## Employees

There are many urban amenities around Washington Square Park area that can increase the types of potential users that could be attracted to the site. These people could be anyone working, living, shopping, or touring the area. In addition to residents of the area, employees are potential users that should be accounted for in the redevelopment of the site. The analysis in Figure 4.16 adapted from KCDC shows that there is a large amount of employees that surround the site, specifically in the southern half of the proposed site, where many of the office buildings are located. Understanding the employees needs and incorporating accessible pathways and programming to fit their schedules can potentially attract a large user group to the site.

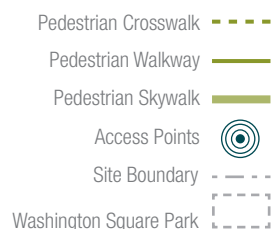


▲ FIGURE 4.10 | Employees (adapted from KCDC)

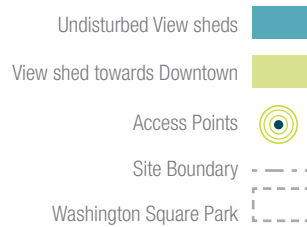
## VISIBILITY

### Pedestrian Accessibility

There are many existing paths and access points that can be found in and around Washington Square Park. These pathways are critical to assess so that the highest level of pedestrian accessibility is being met. While there are many paths within and around the site they are not providing the best possible use to the site and its surrounding spaces. Evaluating the adjacent spaces and creating direct routes that engage people into the site in an efficient manner will provide more opportunities for potential users to access the site. In addition removing alternative pedestrian routes that deter users from accessing the site at ground level will increase the amount of potential users.



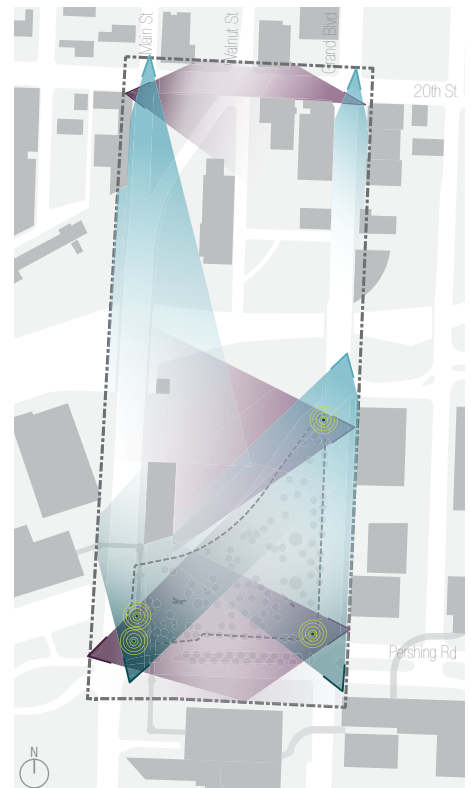
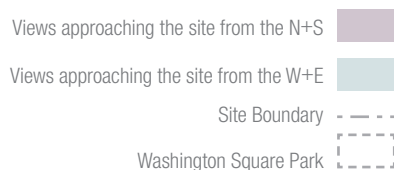
▲ FIGURE 4.11 | Pedestrian Accessibility (by Author)



▲ FIGURE 4.12 | Pedestrian Views towards Downtown (by Author)

## View Sheds

One of the main features that is seen within the site are the views to the north of Downtown Kansas City. This is a very distinct characteristic that Washington Square Park currently holds. Maintaining and enhancing these views from the park is a critical component to the development of the site. Not only is this a distinct attribute of the site, but it also reinforces the connection with the neighboring districts in the Downtown Urban Core to the north of the site. The views that are seen upon the arrival to the site are also important. These are the first views of the site that potential users will see, and will determine if the amenities on site is desirable enough to engage them past the periphery of the site. The placement of amenities and creating transparency along the edge will be critical to engage users into the site.



▲ FIGURE 4.13 | Pedestrian Views onto the Site (by Author)



## INTERVENTION RUBRIC

### Synthesis of Interventions

The analysis of each of the previously explained maps helped to inform the intervention rubric for the design of social landscapes in Washington Square Park. Commonalities between the opportunities and constraints of the site were identified throughout the analysis and divided the rubric into three categories: Activity, Connectivity, and Visibility. The individual interventions for Washington Square Park are illustrated in Figure 4.14.

### ACTIVITY

- ▶ Create a wide variety event spaces that can be used for individual or community wide interaction.
- ▶ Increase the amount of local retail and food and beverage that is accessible to users on the site.
- ▶ Create activities that cater to all ages groups, in order to make this a family friendly destination.
- ▶ Incorporate amenities that cater to community groups in order to mitigate social dilemmas that are seen throughout the neighboring districts.
- ▶ Incorporate amenities that engage users into the site, rather than just using the edges as footpaths.
- ▶ Place amenities a minimum of .25 miles away from each other on the site in order to keep activities hubs at a walkable distance from each other.

▲ FIGURE 4.14 | Intervention Rubric (by Author)

## CONNECTIVITY

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- ▶ Extend park boundaries to the north in order to create stronger connection within the Kansas City Downtown Urban Core.
- ▶ Eliminate topographic barriers by capping the adjacent parking lot, and making it easily accessible for pedestrians.
- ▶ Maintain the existing transit stops. Incorporate new transit amenities to the area that fosters social interaction from the users.
- ▶ Add a bike share station within the proposed boundaries of the site.
- ▶ Develop a plan for mixed use development into the site, in order to increase housing in the area and increase to amount of potential users.
- ▶ Emphasize street level connections by making sure that pathways are clear and safe.

## VISIBILITY

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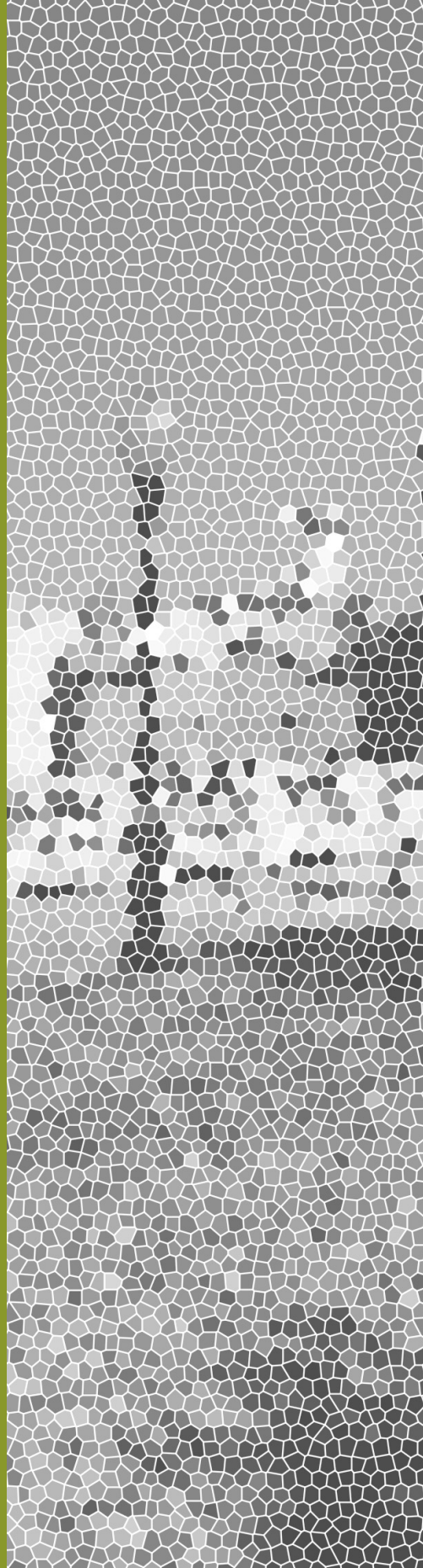
- ▶ Maintain views of downtown Kansas City that are seen to the north of the site.
- ▶ Incorporate a lush variety of vegetation that is aesthetically pleasing throughout the seasons.
- ▶ Capitalize on the views seen by users as they approach the site, by placing major amenities that create many activities in these areas.
- ▶ Incorporate amenities that cater to community groups in order to mitigate social dilemmas that are seen throughout the neighboring districts.
- ▶ Emphasize access points of the site in order to draw potential users attention into the rest of the site.
- ▶ Maintain transparency of site amenities along the periphery of the civic space.



# 05

## DESIGN

This chapter reflects the culmination of goals + objectives, questioning, and the synthesis of maps that were completed throughout this project. It is the implementation of design interventions for a social landscape in Washington Square Park.



## DESIGN PROPOSAL

The final step of the project approach is the design. The design proposal is the culmination and application of goals + objectives derived from the literature, questioning, and the synthesis of maps from the site inventory and analysis. The design proposal plays a critical role, because it applies the intervention rubric that was derived from the project approach, to a design that fits the specific needs of Washington Square Park in order to increase social interaction in and around the site.

### Design Intent

This design proposal offers a vision for Washington Square Park as an urban civic anchor for social interaction. Based on goals + objectives that were derived from literature that addresses the needs of Downtown Kansas City and the stakeholders of the site, this design takes urban civic design to another level. The proposed design reflects an approach that addresses all of the intervention rubric components for the site to become a civic anchor where residents of the downtown urban core can expose themselves to social interaction through the benefits that an urban environment can offer.

## Design Approach

This design approach is the final component to the project approach discussed in the previous chapter (see Figure 4.14). It is the application of all of the research done throughout the extent of this project. But even then the design requires an individual approach to reach the final design proposal for Washington Square Park. Through a process of design, refinement, and reflection the design is continuously assessed. This approach allowed the design to be assessed several times to ensure the design met all of the intervention standards. By following this approach this design proposal would assure that it has the potential to increase social interaction in Washington Square Park.

## Design Concept

The proposed design for Washington Square Park is based on design interventions that focus on activity, connectivity, and visibility. The three categories are parts of an intervention rubric designed specifically for the site in order to increase social interaction amongst the users of the site. The design focuses on two main ideas: expanding the site towards the north in order to strengthen the connection with the downtown urban core and maximizing on-site amenities. Creating an accessible space that potential users from the neighboring districts can access will help to populate the site and make it a civic anchor for the urban core. In addition, a wide array of amenities will also attract users to the site and help Washington Square park as a civic anchor that exposes users to a dynamic space with many activities that can improve their well-being through repetitive exposure to a social and active space.

## Legend

- Residential/Mixed-Use Infill **(A)**
- Expanded Pedestrian Connection Route **(B)**
- Rooftop Rec **(C)**
- Lounging Terraces **(D)**
- Farmers Market **(E)**
- Community Garden **(F)**
- Sidewalk Promenade **(G)**
- Entertainment Lawn **(H)**
- Great Lawn **(I)**
- Interactive Grove **(J)**
- Blue Cross Blue Shield Cafe **(K)**
- Blue Cross Butterfly Garden **(L)**
- Sculptural Playground **(M)**
- Food Truck Row **(N)**
- George Washington Statue **(O)**
- Korean War Memorial Statue **(P)**
- Water Wall **(Q)**
- Splash Plaza **(R)**



▲ FIGURE 5.1 | Illustrative Plan (by Author)

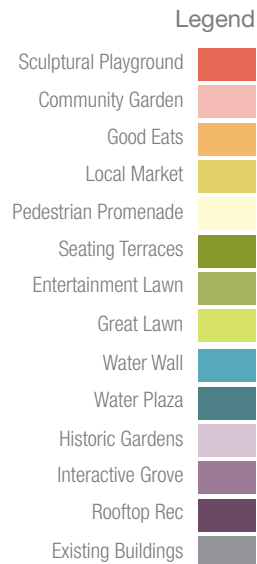


## ACTIVITY | VIBRANT + URBAN

The most critical component to this design proposal is creating a space that increases social interaction. In order to do this a diverse amount of amenities were implemented into the design proposal. These amenities offer an array of activities that foster social interaction amongst all user types. The implementation of unique amenities will incorporate new programming elements that are not actively seen in the neighboring districts and help to attract a larger group of potential users.

## Site Programming

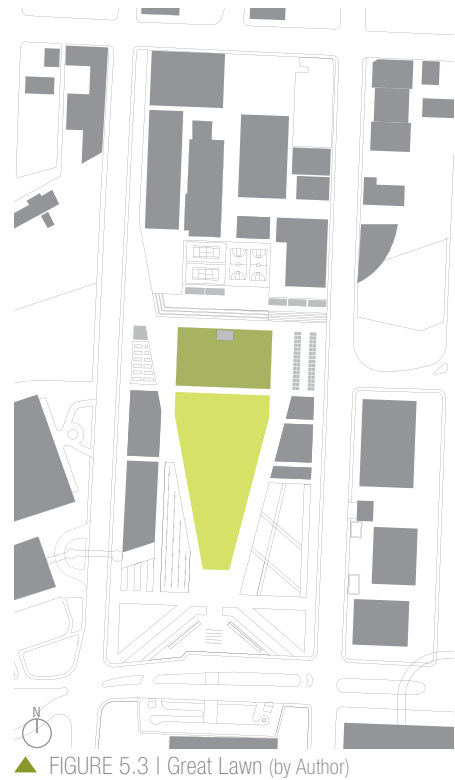
The proposed design for Washington Square park is a series of programmed spaces that encompass a communal space for all to enjoy at the core of the design. Figure 5.3 visually illustrates the site programs within the proposed site boundaries. Following this diagram a series of diagrams explain into more detail the main programmed spaces for the design.



▲ FIGURE 5.2 | Site Programming (by Author)

## Great Lawn / Entertainment Lawn

The Great Lawn is the core of the design for Washington Square Park. This is a communal space where all are welcome to interact with one another through recreational activity, casual conversation, or independent meditation. Located along the central axis it is accessible from all edges. Organically placed vegetation along the edges provides an informal edge that allows users to escape the formality of the urban fabric, while still appreciating the views of the Kansas City Skyline. The Lawn is broken into two parts, to the north the Entertainment Lawn houses a stage that can provide options for large or small scale entertainment, from live concerts to weekly community workout classes.



▲ FIGURE 5.3 | Great Lawn (by Author)

## Interactive Grove

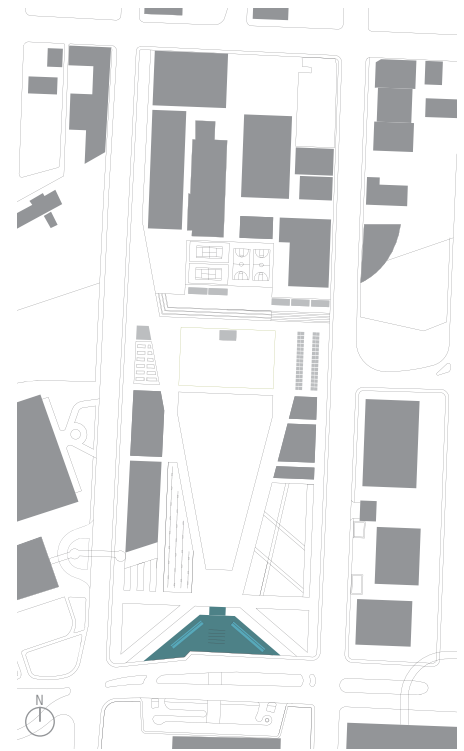
The Interactive Grove is located on the western half of the site. This space was designed for a dense canopy of trees atop a natural paving that helps to define the space. This space houses movable benches which can glide along a rail system to allow users to enjoy their preferred areas of shade or sunlight. This is a great place for potential users eat lunch on their break, meet up with a friend, or observe others in the great lawn. In this space users will be exposed the calming characteristics that nature has to offer and can escape for a moment their fast moving urban lifestyles.



▲ FIGURE 5.4 | Interactive Grove (by Author)

## Water Plaza

The Water Plaza activates the southern edge of the site. This space catches the eye of potential users traveling along Pershing Rd. and draws people in with its welcoming approach. A series of water jets in the center of the space and a cascading fountain basin offers a sensory experience for pedestrians walking along the periphery of the site. Inspired by City Garden, this space is a fun interactive destination that attracts users of all ages from near and far, to interact and enjoy in the warm summer months.



▲ FIGURE 5.5 | Water Plaza (by Author)

## Sculpture Playground

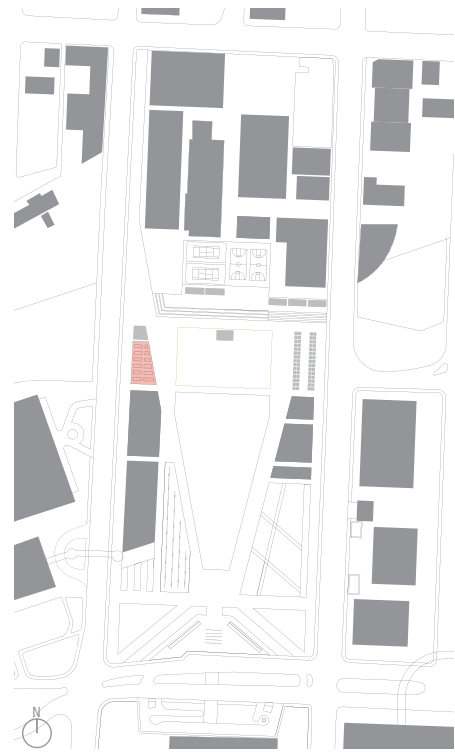
The Sculpture Playground is located just north east of the Water Plaza. This space creates an opportunity to draw younger users to the site. Instead of using typical playground equipment, the space will house local artists sculptures specifically built for interactive use. Changing these sculptures annually will allow exposure to many of the local artists currently housed in the Crossroads District. Integrating the rich art culture that is found in the surrounding districts, will create a social buzz for the site and will help to draw more people to the site from the urban core.



▲ FIGURE 5.6 | Sculptural Playground (by Author)

## Community Garden

The Community Garden is located in the northwest area of the park. While the space is small in comparison to other programs on site, it has the potential to create a large social impact with the potential users of the site. Generating activities for social groups that meet in this site can have a dramatic influence on the amount of social interaction that can take place on site. This community garden will allow community members to come together and interact through a mutual interest, and educate them on the advantages community/home gardens.



▲ FIGURE 5.7 | Community Garden (by Author)

## Good Eats

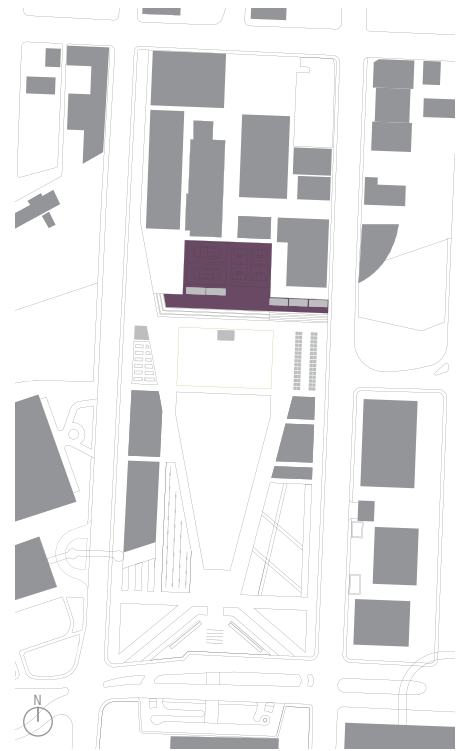
Good Eats combines food related amenities into one creative branding name. These two areas designed around integrating access to food onto the site, include the Blue Cross Blue Shield Patio Grill and Food Truck Alley. The Blue Shield Blue Cross Patio Grill is located on the west and Food Truck Alley is located on the east. Due to the high amount of employees around this area, integrating quick gourmet food options on site is a great way to draw people to the site during their lunch hour. Each of these spaces have their own design characteristics that will attract different user, but ultimately Good Eats can attract a large group of users that previously had not thought about using this site.



▲ FIGURE 5.8 | Good Eats (by Author)

## Rooftop Rec

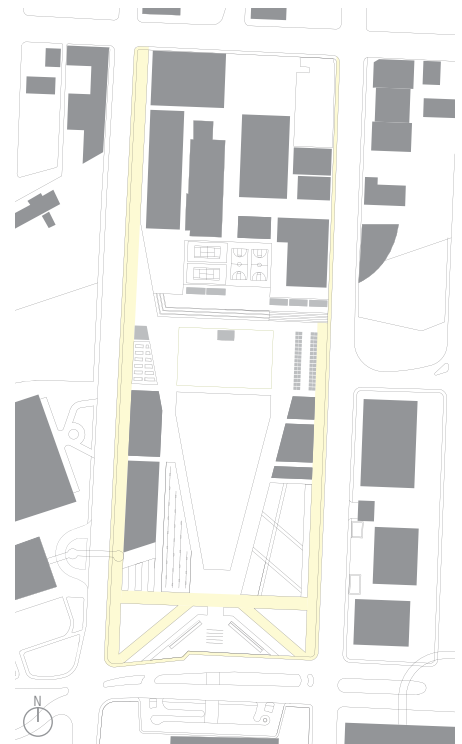
The Rooftop Rec is located at the most northern tip of the capped area. This space is an extension of the park that lays atop a proposed building to the north of the site. Multiple recreational courts will integrate organized team sports onto the site, which were previously missing. Temporary structures just south of the courts will allow users to rent sports equipment for the Rooftop Rec, or take to the Great Lawn and use.



▲ FIGURE 5.9 | Rooftop Rec (by Author)

## Pedestrian Promenade

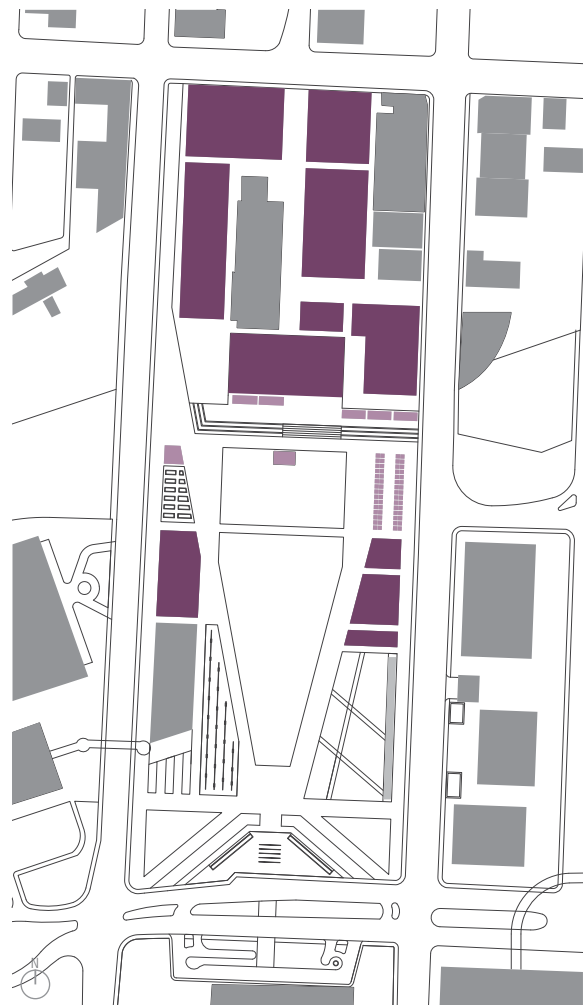
The Pedestrian Promenade was implemented throughout the periphery of the site as well as in the southern portion, where access through the site was seen most often. Large sidewalks provide ample amount of space for people to comfortably walk through an alley of shade trees. Creating an aesthetically pleasing edge will have the potential to draw people with just a first glance.



▲ FIGURE 5.10 | Pedestrian Promenade (by Author)

## Proposed Development

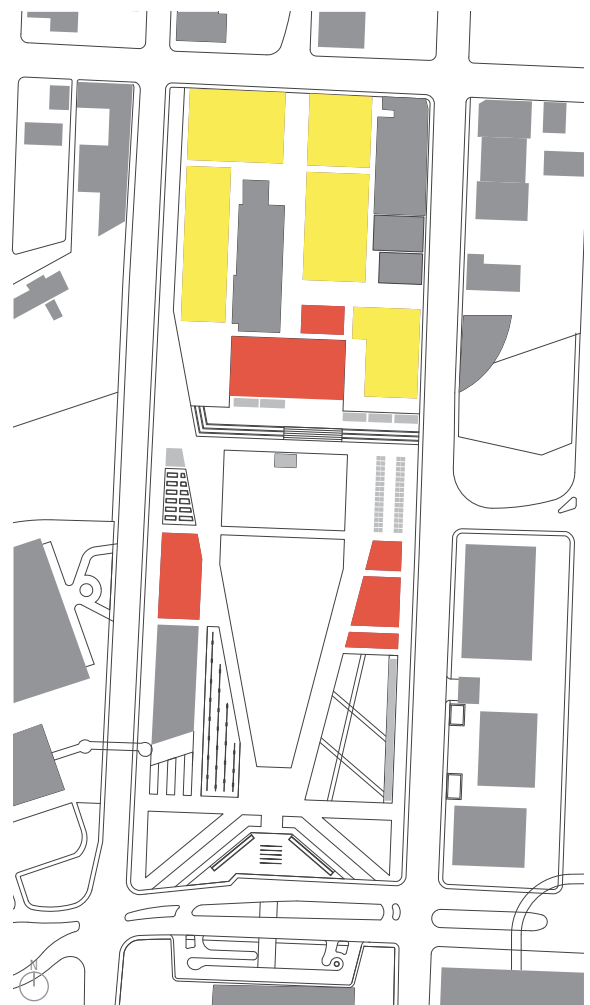
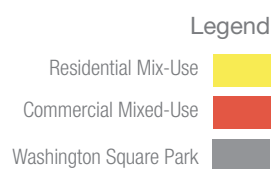
In addition to increasing amenities through programmed spaces on site, expanding the breath of amenities to include the development of retail and residential buildings is critical to successfully increase social interaction on the site. The majority of new buildings have been proposed to the north of the site. Development was also proposed along the edges of the central portion of the site in order to define the space as well as create a connection with the surrounding urban context.



▲ FIGURE 5.11 | Proposed Development (by Author)

## Building Use

The proposed buildings integrated into the design proposal are all mixed-use. On the northern edge of the site the majority are mixed-use residential buildings that offer opportunity to increase the residential housing in the area. Within the park site the buildings are commercial mixed-used which allow there to be opportunity for small retail or offices to occupy the lower level of these buildings.



▲ FIGURE 5.12 | Building Use (by Author)

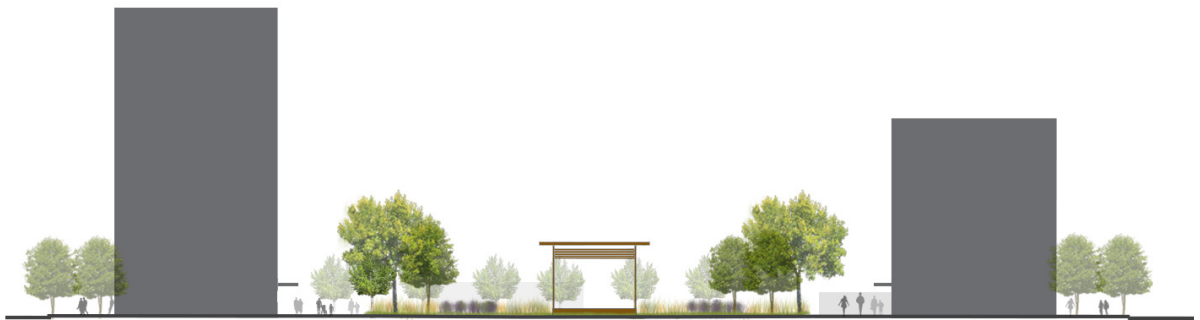


## CONNECTIVITY | WALKABLE + CONNECTED

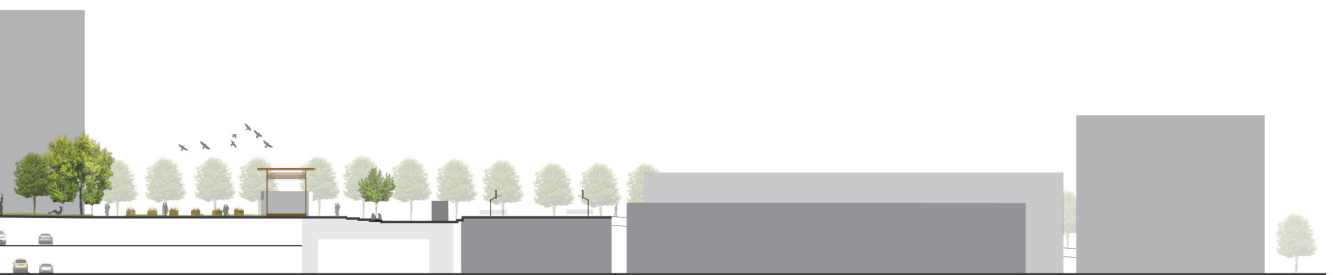
Increasing connectivity through the integration of a walkable and connected site was a critical component to the design rubric. The major design move seen in the redevelopment of the site is capping the park over an existing parking area. While this creates a dramatic change to the site, it mitigates many of the physical constraints that the site is confronted with. Accessibility to the site is dramatically altered and the connection with the downtown urban core is strengthened by extending the site boundaries to the north.



▲ FIGURE 5.13 | N-S Section Through the Park Looking West (by Author)

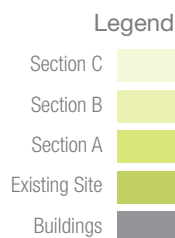


▲ FIGURE 5.14 | W-E Section Though the Park Looking North (by Author)



## Degrees of Site Capping

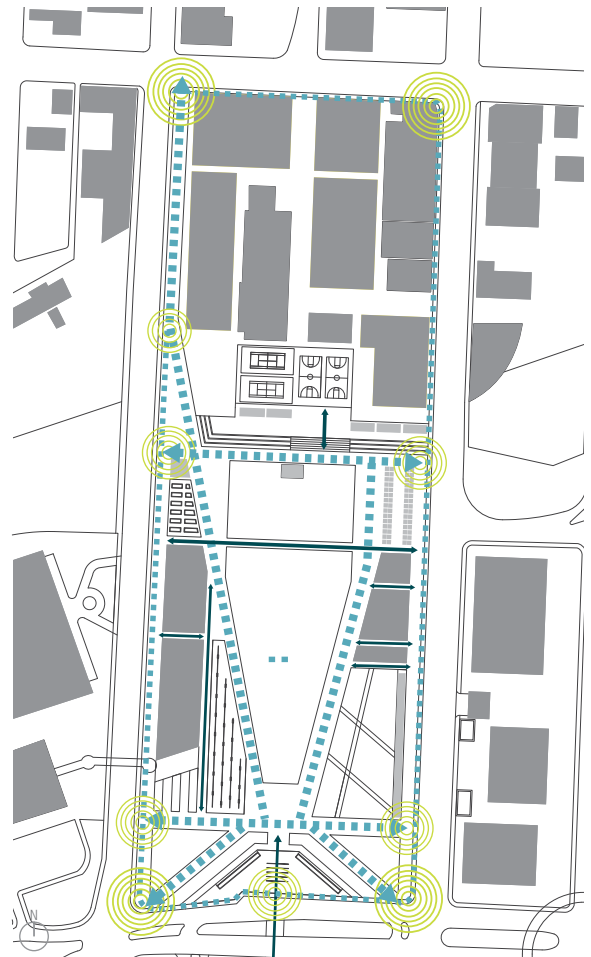
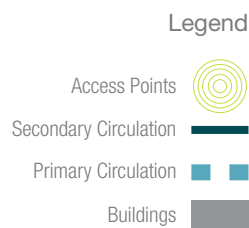
Adapting the site to conform to the existing topographic barriers that surrounds the park was critical to analyze in order to create a smooth transition from one end of the park to the other. Figure 5.16 illustrates the degrees of capping that had to occur in order to reach the final design proposal. The main area of the park (section A) is part of one smooth surface that slopes downward with the highest point being on the southern portion of the site and the lower point being to the north. Section B extends off of the larger surface and onto the top of a proposed building to the development occurring north of the site. Section C is part of the Pedestrian Promenade that has a gentle slope downward towards the north until it meets grade at the edge of the site boundary.



▲ FIGURE 5.15 | Degrees of Site Capping (by Author)

## Site Circulation

A series of circulation routes were integrated into the design proposal for Washington Square Park. Primary circulation routes within the park are seen throughout the main axes, specifically providing direct routes across the site while still engaging users through the programmed spaces. Secondary circulation routes are mainly seen as paths that connect the different programs to each other. Access points were also defined to show where the major entrances are and emphasizing their relationship with the surrounding context.



▲ FIGURE 5.16 | Site Circulation (by Author)

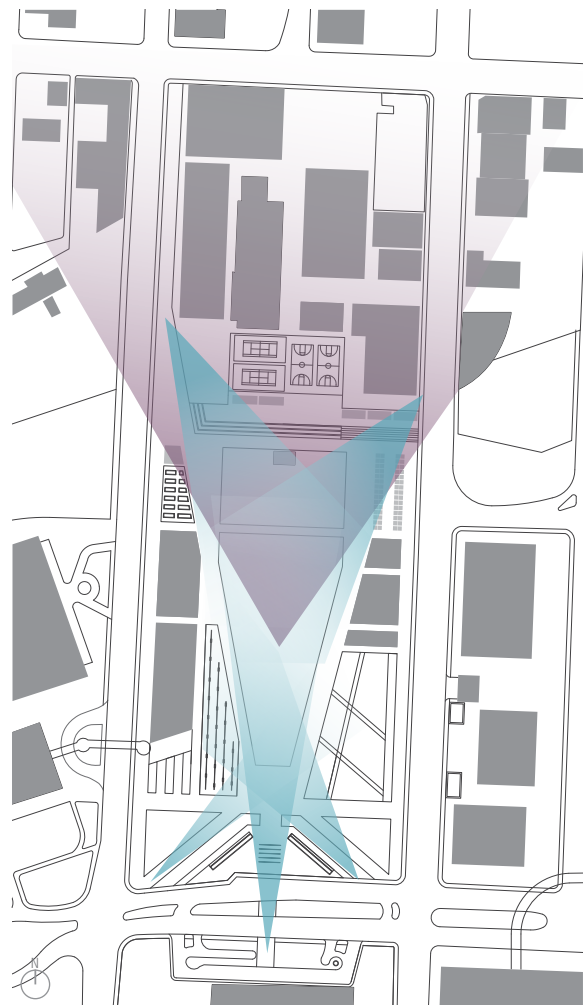
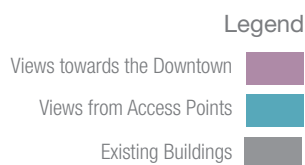
## VISIBILITY | DISTINCT

Increasing the visibility of the site was a critical component to the design rubric that ultimately informed interventions that made the site become a distinct civic space for people to visit. Maintaining characteristics of the site that made the site distinct was key. Retaining and emphasizing the views towards the downtown urban core, as well as addressing the views that pedestrians saw as they approached the site were critical to assess. By designing the space in a way that would draw people into the site through the specific design techniques, users will be more likely to on site for long periods of time.



## Views

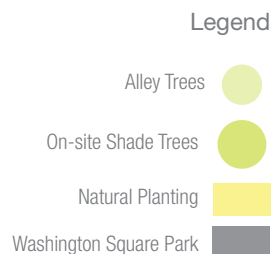
One of the critical interventions that was established in the rubric was to retain the existing views to the north of the Kansas City Skyline. These views to the north create a distinct characteristic for Washington Square Park that makes it a desirable location to visit. Extending the site to the north created a stronger physical and visual connection that helped to fill the gap in the existing urban fabric, caused by the topographic changes that occurred on site. By retaining these views not only will the site have unique characteristics only present on this site, but they will act as a conversation starter for potential users of the site.



▲ FIGURE 5.17 | Views (by Author)

## Vegetation

Integrating a lush variety of vegetation onto the site allows users to see an aesthetically pleasing space before they even enter the site boundaries. Strategically placing the vegetation throughout the site pulls people into the programmed areas and softens the rigid edges proposed throughout the design. In order to keep a transparent edge along the periphery of the site, the alley tree were placed about 40' apart allowing there to be moments of sunlight shining in between the tree canopies.



▲ FIGURE 5.18 | Vegetation (by Author)



## Chapter Summary

The design proposal for Washington Square Park is the summation of investigations, discoveries, and the synthesis of data that ultimately led up to the development of a design proposal. Based on goals + objectives that were derived from literature that addressed the needs of Downtown Kansas City and the stakeholders of the site, this design takes urban civic spaces in the Kansas City area to another level.

The application of a design rubric that was focused on Activity, Connectivity, and Visibility allowed the design to mold into a site that reflected of the city's vision of the site. In addition the design helped to mitigate many of the physical dilemmas that the site was confronted with, that deterred potential users from going to Washington Square Park.

The main intent for the design was to illustrate how the methodology for social landscapes can inform customized design interventions for a site. These interventions have the potential to create a dramatic impact on an under designed and under used urban civic space. By making social interaction the priority of the design, social landscapes focus on fulfilling the needs of the users. Through this attempt a space is created that is functional, active, and social making people want to return and ultimately improve their well-being through repeated exposure of the space.

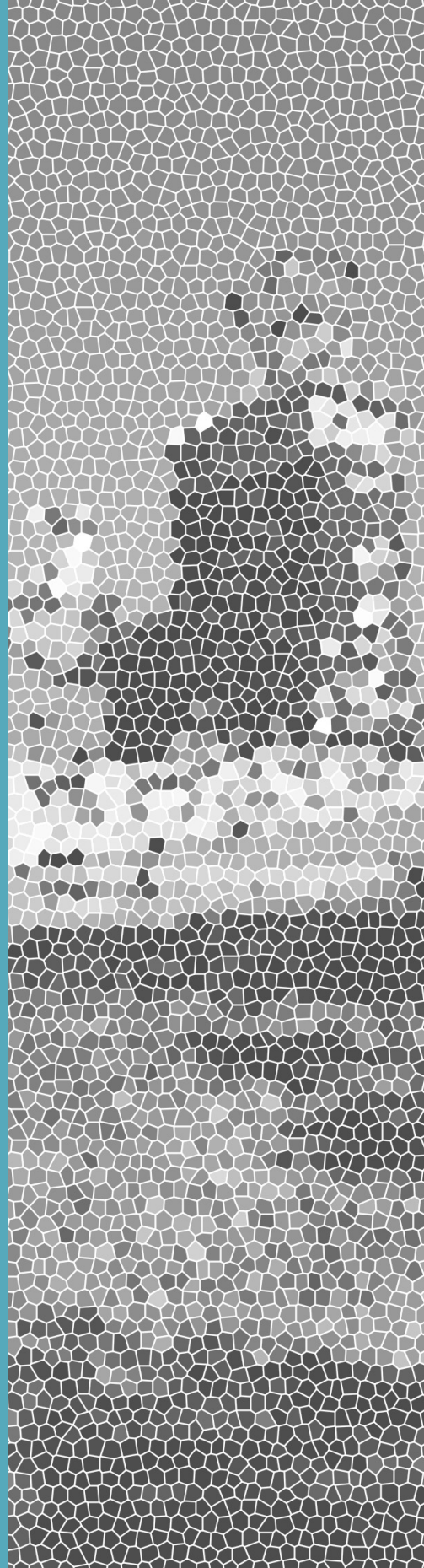




# 06

## REFLECT

This chapter is a reflective portion to the overall projects, a brief discussion of the project will occur first. Any limitations that were seen throughout the process will be brought to light, as well as any further research that could be done.



## CONCLUSION

### Discussion of Project

The culmination of this project ultimately led to creating an alternative design solution that could be helpful to the stakeholders and design team for the redevelopment of Washington Square Park. The complex team structure, discoveries, and rich knowledge gained from this process was a rewarding experience in professional and personal ways.

Social Landscapes defined an alternative approach to designing urban civic spaces that focus on increasing social interaction. The methodology for this project followed a linear process based on investigation, discoveries, synthesis and ultimately a design proposal for Washington Square Park. The design reflects interventions that guide the development of a successful urban civic anchor, as well as the vision that the City of Kansas City and stakeholders of the site have been longing for, for over 20 years. Structuring the design

around an intervention rubric based on increasing the Activity, Connectivity, and Visibility, is a direct reflection of the city's vision of Washington Square Park and the surrounding context.

While this design proposal is a dramatic change to the sites existing conditions, the dynamic design is customized to the city's vision and surrounding context. Social Landscapes exposes designers to a design approach that will lead to successfully designing for social interaction.



## Limitations of Design

There were two main limitations that hindered this project from exceeding its potential of becoming an extremely successful civic hub for social interaction for the Downtown Kansas City area. The main issues derived from the data that was collected in order to create the design interventions for Washington Square Park. First, the objective during site visits should have been planned differently in order to gain relevant data for the project. While observations are necessary throughout site inventory and analysis, site visits that included on site interviews would have been more insightful to why the site isn't used to its full potential. Creating a schedule for site visits that allowed for interviews to take place throughout all season could have given an accurate understanding of how the site is used especially during different seasons as well as what the site is lacking from a users perspective. In addition a portion of the information for the analysis was gathered from

KCDC and their preliminary analysis of the site. Since the analysis was done by them it was assumed that the data was accurate, but through the exchange of files information the accuracy of the material could have possibly been compromised.

## Further Research

Due to the time restraints that this year presented, there are certain components to this project that were not studied further in order to complete the project in the given time. If this project was researched further, an in depth understanding of the potential users current social interaction on the site and vision for Washington Square Park would be useful in deriving the design interventions.

The precedents used in this project allowed for an understanding of programming that was successful in other civic spaces, but most cities are different and the best way to fully understand the needs of the users around a specific space is through direct conversation with the user. Surveys would be a suitable way to understand exactly what the vision of the potential users are in order to integrate their ideas for the site into the initial goals + objectives derived for this project. The development of theses goals + objectives

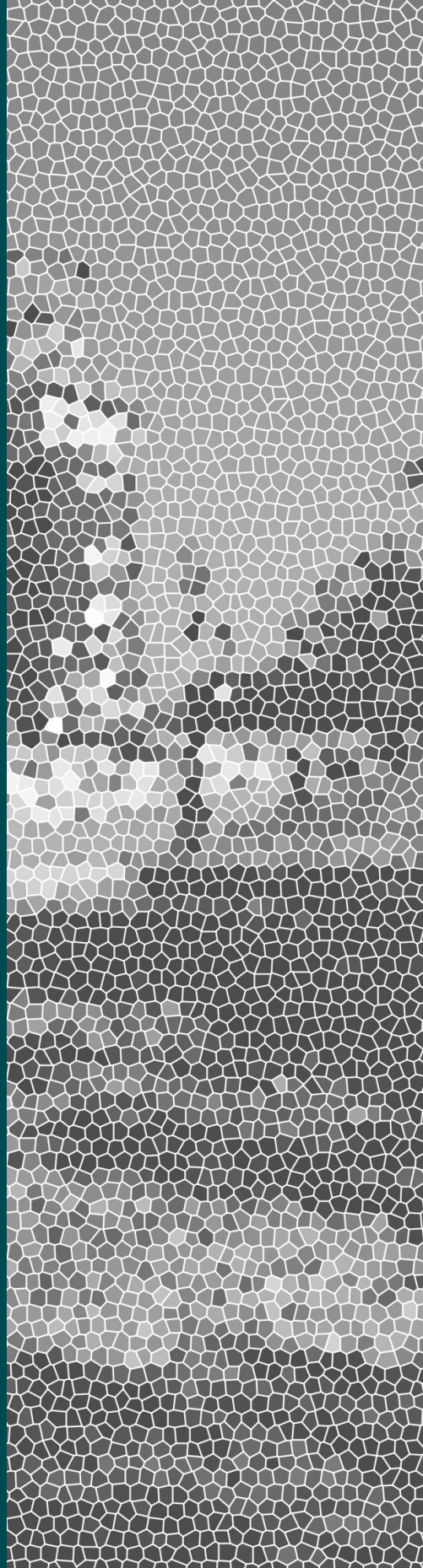
would not only include the vision of the stakeholders but also the vision of the potential users. It is likely that this research could lead to creating design interventions for the site that are well supported by the potential users. Thus creating a rapid effect on the amount of social interaction that could occur on the site.





# 07

## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### Glossary

**Built Environment** | The circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded. (Merriam-Webster, 2013)

**Connectivity** | Referring to connections in the landscape, is the degree to which the landscape facilitates or impedes movement among resource patches. Connectivity includes both structural connectivity (the physical arrangements of patches) and functional connectivity (the movement of individuals among patches). (Wikipedia, 2013)

**Health** | A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (WHO, 2003)

**Nature Contact** | The connection that one makes with the natural environment, to find tranquility, comfort, restoration, even healing when in contact with nature.

**PIAC** | Public Improvements Advisory Committee. A 13 person committee whose sole purpose is to advise the City Council on public improvement needs. Their input is used to recommend projects for funding by a 1 cent sales tax dedicated to public improvements. (PIAC, 2014)

**Social Interaction** | The circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded. (Merriam-Webster, 2013)

**Walkability** | a measure of how friendly an area is to walking. Walkability has many health, environmental, and economic benefits. Factors influencing walkability include the presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, and safety, among others. (Wikipedia, 2014)



## APPENDIX B

### Site Photos | Existing Site Conditions



▲ FIGURE 7.6 | Sidewalk on Northern Edge (by Author)



▲ FIGURE 7.7 | Existing Sidewalks (by Author)





▲ FIGURE 7.8 | Existing Amenity Conditions (by Author)



▲ FIGURE 7.9 | Existing Paths (by Author)



## APPENDIX B

### Site Photos | Existing Site Views



▲ FIGURE 7.10 | Existing Views of Downtown Kansas City (by Author)



▲ FIGURE 7.11 | Existing Views Toward the North (by Author)





## APPENDIX B

### Site Photos | Existing Site Structures



▲ FIGURE 7.12 | Korean War Memorial (by Author)





▲ FIGURE 7.13 | Skywalk (by Author)



▲ FIGURE 7.14 | George Washington Statue (by Author)



## APPENDIX B

### Site Photos | Existing Urban Context



▲ FIGURE 7.15 | Blue Cross Blue Shield Building (by Author)



▲ FIGURE 7.16 | Business District (by Author)





▲ FIGURE 7.17 | Union Station (by Author)



▲ FIGURE 7.18 | Crown Center District (by Author)

## APPENDIX C

### Precedent Study Analysis

#### Pier 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park

Location: Brooklyn, NY | Designer: Michael Van Valkenburgh & Associates | Size: 9.5 acres | 2005

*Context:* Whether taking a leisurely stroll, sinking into a good book, or spending some time out on the water, Pier 1 provides a beautiful open space for park goers. Pier 1 is the largest of the park piers, and the only pier that is built on landfill rather than on pile-supported structure. This strong foundation provides the base for a new topography including a hill at the center of the pier which provides dramatic and sweeping views of the New York Harbor and the Brooklyn Bridge.

*Dilemma:* There is a need for increased public access to the waterfront and for greater availability of publicly accessible recreational open space for residents, visitors and workers in Brooklyn. Brooklyn is second only to Manhattan when it comes to lack of open space. There are 547 residents per acre of available open space in Brooklyn, and the last time a major park was built in the borough was in the 1860s when Prospect Park was made.

*Project Goals:* The goal of the community interest groups, state and city officials, and designers involved in the development of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Master Plan was ambitious but fairly straightforward: to allow the site's emotional power and intensity to resonate in a new ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable park setting.

*Programming:* Pier One features two large lawns, a waterfront promenade, and playground. Over 500 mature trees were also planted. In 2010, a new salt marsh at the southern edge of the pier opened. The salt marsh was planted with native plants set within a salvaged granite seating area. The marsh is designed to enable people to experience the tidal river close-up and provide access for non-motorized watercraft.

*Key Design Concepts:* Waterfront access and circulation, water dependent uses, bikeways, and restored habitats.

A hill on Pier 1 creates views into the park and out towards the harbor, Governor's Island, the Statue of Liberty, Manhattan, and the Brooklyn Bridge. A pedestrian bridge across Furman Street that links the hill on Pier 1 to Squibb Park was also . This connection has helped to reactivate Squibb Park as well as provide an additional entrance into the Brooklyn Bridge Park from the adjacent community. An esplanade was implemented along a portion of the pier fronting on the East River. There shallow water habitat zones were established along the pier edge.

A mixed use hotel and residential development is was developed for the Pier 1 upland area on the site of the existing Cold Storage Warehouse buildings. The site accommodates a mix of development, including restaurant, residential and hotel. The hotel includes meeting rooms, spa and café/restaurant uses.

*Maintenance & Management:* Brooklyn Bridge Park continues the implementation of its sustainability principles from the construction of the park to its on-going maintenance. Park operations staff uses a variety of sustainable practices to maintain the park, including participation in public recycling programs, light dimming control and storm water reuse.

*Successes:* This project is quite significant to the public realm, natural resources, and environmental planning. It uses a wide range of tools to solve urban problems and does a great job of communicating the ecological and social components to the public.

\*Material was referenced from Brooklyn Bridge Park, 2013.

## CityGarden

Location: St. Louis, MO | Designer: Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects | Size: 3 acres | 2008

*Context:* CityGarden is a three-acre public sculpture garden created on the Gateway Mall in downtown St. Louis. Sponsored by a private foundation, the garden has played a primary role in reinvigorating the city's center.

*Dilemma:* CityGarden presented an even more remarkable circumstance - the chance to design an urban oasis that is a hybrid between a sculpture garden, a botanic garden and a city park.

*Project Goals:* The project began with clear direction from the clients: make an inviting and inspiring public place displaying twenty four contemporary sculptures; create diverse spaces and experiences; make it beautiful, engaging, and accessible year-round; and provide plenty of shade and water.

*Programming:* The design of CityGarden derives from the cultural and natural histories of St. Louis and its environs. The three-acre site is one of excavation in search of local stories. Acknowledging its position in the heart of the Gateway Mall, a few blocks west of the noble Arch and the Mississippi River, CityGarden is structured in three bands delineated by two walls—the arc wall and the meander wall. The northern band represents the high upland ground—the river bluffs that are so characteristic of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers in this region. The middle band represents the low ground or floodplain. The southern band represents the cultivated river terraces. While the three precincts are interconnected, each possesses distinct characteristics.

*Key Design Concepts:* The design weaves innovative stormwater management strategies with abstractions of local geology, hydrology, and plant communities to create a multi-faceted public space that has become a magnet for locals and tourists alike.

*Maintenance & Management:* CityGarden has an extensive plant pallet that requires detailed professional attention throughout the year. In addition there are many stormwater management strategies that addressed on site that require special attention. The site's stormwater drainage is managed within the boundaries of the garden. The site also provides access to the public at all times of the day and and because of this has 24 hour security that is also stationed on site.

\*Material was referenced from ASLA, 2011.  
<http://www.asla.org/2012awards/073.html>

*Successes:* CityGarden is perhaps unparalleled in its openness and accessibility. This gave the design team the freedom to innovate and create a distinctive environment that people of all ages and from all walks of life can enjoy for years to come. We are grateful to have been a part of this extraordinary project, and we hope you will experience CityGarden in all of its various guises as it continues to celebrate the intersection of art, natural process and community life.



## Lafayette Greens

Location: Detroit, MI | Designer: Kenneth Weikal Landscape Architecture | Size: .4 acres | 2010

*Context:* Lafayette greens is a vegetable and fruit garden in the heart of downtown Detroit.

*Dilemma:* As part of an ongoing effort to engage their employees in the community, Compuware enlisted a design team to design a garden that employees of Compuware and Detroit citizens could volunteer at, and enjoy on work breaks or after hours.

*Project Goals:* Productive, Beautiful, Inspiring, were the 3 key concepts that the architects had in mind when Compuware Corporation approached them with the idea of an urban garden in downtown Detroit. Built on a vacant site where the historic Lafayette Building once stood, Lafayette Greens is an organic vegetable and fruit garden in the heart of the city. Locating the garden near the Compuware headquarters was critical in order to allow easy access for the employees, in order for them to easily enjoy and participate in the garden was a priority.

*Programming:* The heirloom apple orchard and orchard meadow, Raised garden beds, lavender promenade, kiwi trellis, open lawn space, red twig dogwood bioswale, sunflower terrace, children's garden, and garden sheds all help to make this a successful site.

The overall design of Lafayette Greens was shaped by the site analysis. Raised vegetable beds were oriented for optimal sun exposure based on sun angle studies, especially critical in an environment of tall buildings. Due to its unusual shape, pedestrians had to go out of their way when passing through the area or cut across the vacant site. A wide Lavender Promenade now carries people along this desire line. Pedestrians can move through the space quickly, rest on a bench or enter the garden and explore over 200 types of vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers. A variety of seating is provided throughout the garden to encourage public use of the space and provide respite from the surrounding busy city streets which offer virtually no outdoor seating. The use of fragrant Lavender, with its documented ability to induce calm, to line the public

passage through the site reinforces the regenerative and restorative function of the garden in a bustling city environment. Views from the surrounding buildings and parking decks led to a strong visual statement in plan view. The geometry of the spaces in the garden reflects the structural order of the urban environment. Drawing from architecture, urban form and agriculture the design of the long rows of steel beds are at once urban and industrial, and yet organic and natural, overflowing with plant life. Because of challenges presented by the awkwardly shaped property, the steady rhythm of raised beds was arranged within the golden ratio to impose a calm order on the site design.

To accommodate 4 feet of grade change across the site, the vegetable beds rise out of the ground plane as it falls gently from Lafayette Blvd to Michigan Ave. This gentle but dynamic solution energizes the wide, flat, expanse of space and permits easy access to planting beds for all kinds of gardeners and visitors. A continuum of bed heights from 8" to 40" high

along the 70 foot long planters allows toddlers to get close to the action at the low ends, while the taller areas are barrier-free and back friendly.

*Key Design Concepts:* Sustainability: stormwater management and water usage, material re-use, urban bio-diversity, efficient organic growing methods; Education and Community.

*Maintenance & Management:* This site is tended by Compuware volunteers and fellow city dwellers. Produce from the garden is donated to Gleaner's Community Food Bank.

*Successes:* Lafayette Greens is an example of how Landscape Architects can set the standard for urban agriculture design that enhances the urban experience and highlights the interrelationship of landscape, food systems and the built environment.

\*Material was referenced from ASLA, 2012.  
<http://www.asla.org/2012awards/073.html>

## Discover Green

Location: Houston, TX | Designer: Hargraves Associates | Size: 12 acres | 2008

*Context:* The current site of Discovery Green was originally a high-end residential neighborhood in the late 19th century. However the space evolved over time, and eventually became the site of two large parking lots adjacent to the George R. Brown Convention Center. There was also a small strip of green space in between the parking lots, known as the Houston Center Gardens.

*Project Goals:* Discovery Green achieves its mission statement through continuous programming, attracting a diverse crowd, and maintenance to keep the park beautiful. These actions create a social, health, cultural, and economic impact on Houstonians and visitors.

*Programming:* Park highlights include an iconic interactive fountain, pond and water gardens, custom designed playground, two acres of botanical gardens, and below grade parking with artist-designed entryways. An amphitheater landform with an outdoor stage frames the three acre Great Lawn and provides expansive views of the Houston skyline.

*Key Design Concepts:* “To provide an uncommonly beautiful, urban green space in the heart of Houston that serves as a village green for our city, a source of health and happiness for our citizens and a window into the incredible diversity of talents and traditions that enrich life in Houston.” (Discovery Green, 2013)

### An Urban Green Space

Over the past two years, Discovery Green has attracted over 95,000 people to the park for 75 entertainment events such as concerts and movie nights, with the beautiful downtown Houston skyline in the background. “Even with all the activity onsite, it has a safe, community feeling, and is a comfortable setting for families, couples, school children, professionals—or anyone else who wants to find a relaxing green space without having to leave downtown.”— Diane Summers, Executive Director, University Relations, UHD

### Serves as a Village Green

In April 2012, Dr. Stephen Klineberg presented his new film, *Interesting Times*, at Discovery Green, which documents the dynamic transformations of Houston over the past 30 years. 1,500 came to the park to celebrate the City of Houston, watch performances, and listen to speakers.

### Source of Health

Over the past two years, Discovery Green has offered 579 events in our Healthy Living series, drawing more than 73,000 people to the park for exercise classes, recycling, and kayaking.

*Maintenance & Management:* In addition to maintenance staff that works on the grounds there is also a volunteer program that is centered around Discovery Green Flea, Recycling Saturdays, and Signature Events.

### Discovery Green Flea

Volunteers are used to help set up a Discovery Green Info booth, give information out to vendors and patrons, and to help in other various ways as necessary.

### Recycling Saturdays

Recycling at Discovery Green takes place every Saturday. Recycling volunteers help patrons take items out of their cars so they don't have to park to recycle. Volunteers also help ensure that the items are put into the correct recycling bins.

### Signature Events

There are a variety of Signature Events at the park. They are generally held on Fridays and Saturdays in the Spring and Fall. Each one is different and unique, so volunteer duties will vary.

\*Material was referenced from  
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## FIGURE CITATIONS

FIGURE 1.1 | Pitt-Perez, Olivia 2014. *Illustrative Plan*. AutoCAD + Adobe Illustrator + Adobe Photoshop.

FIGURE 1.2 | Pitt-Perez, Olivia 2014. *George Washington Statue*. Digital photograph.

FIGURE 1.3 | Pitt-Perez, Olivia 2014. *Design Process*. Adobe Illustrator

FIGURE 1.4 | Pitt-Perez, Olivia 2014. *Washington Square Park Context*. Adobe Illustrator + GIS. Source Date: MARC Mid America Regional Council.

FIGURE 1.5 | Pitt-Perez, Olivia 2014. *Project Boundaries*. Adobe Illustrator + AutoCAD .

FIGURE 2.1 | Pitt-Perez, Olivia 2014. *Literature Map*. Adobe Illustrator.

FIGURE 2.2 | Pitt-Perez, Olivia 2014. *Goals + Objectives Taken from GDAP*. Adobe inDesign.

FIGURE 2.3 | Pitt-Perez, Olivia 2014. *Goals + Objectives Taken from RFQ/P*. Adobe inDesign.

FIGURE 2.4 | Pitt-Perez, Olivia 2014. *Goals + Objectives Taken from KCDC Proposal*. Adobe inDesign.

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