



## Duncan Plaza Enhancements Revealed

Thursday, the [Downtown Development District](#) and [Arts Council New Orleans](#) in partnership with [Southwest Airlines](#)® and [Project for Public Spaces](#) hosted a celebration to invite the community to explore the new enhancements to the park and learn about the upcoming fall programming. Echoing the earlier spring programming, the fete included a happy hour complete with Urban South Brewery and Latin American inspired street food by La Cocinita food truck before an outdoor screening of Black Panther. Snowballs and popcorn rounded out the night with remarks from Duncan Plaza's supporters.

This valuable greenspace nestled between City Hall and the New Orleans Public Library has often gone unnoticed, but likely not for long. In the fall of 2017, the DDD entered into an agreement with the City of New Orleans to take over the management of the park. Shortly thereafter, planning, fundraising and community outreach for the proposed redevelopment was underway. Long term plans for the park include innovative green infrastructure, a flexible lawn, water features, a permanent dog park, food and beverage plaza and a children's play area.

"We not only want people to reintroduce themselves to Duncan Plaza, but also give them a reason to stay in the park, providing a natural gathering place for Downtown residents and visitors," DDD President and CEO Kurt Weigle said. "The park will be redeveloped into an urban greenspace for all. One that hosts events such as concerts, movie screenings or health fairs while continuing to serve as a space for public demonstrations, given its location across from City Hall. We want to make it a welcoming place for everybody," Weigle added.

Thanks to the Southwest Airlines Heart of the Community program, the DDD and the Arts Council New Orleans have implemented short term programming and enhancements while continuing to work on the larger fundraising and long-term redevelopment of the park. Recent events have included Food Truck Fridays, live music, and the Spring Wellness series, all based on the feedback from the community meetings and surveys. Overall, these enhancements created a space that captured the character and charm of the city while providing programming that engaged the community and activated the park.

"The Arts Council believes in the power of art and artists to transform communities," said Heidi Schmalbach, Executive Director. "The Heart of the Community program allowed us to bring people together, often through arts and cultural programming, to help envision the future of one of our most critical public gathering spaces. Representing the cultural richness of our city, music, theater, culinary, visual, dance and movement-based practices have all played a part in this iterative placemaking process. We look forward to continuing to help position arts and culture at the center of redevelopment efforts"

“At Southwest Airlines we build strong communities wherever we are, whether at airports we serve, in our airplanes with our Customers, or in the Communities where our People and Customers live and work,” said Linda Rutherford, Southwest Airlines Senior Vice President and Chief Communications Officer. “By investing in authentic relationships and creating spaces and opportunities that bring people together, we can build connections and strengthen communities. This is the inspiration behind Southwest Airlines’ Heart of the Community program. We’re excited to see the positive impact each of these spaces will have as a result of these grants.”

At the event, a temporary dog park, a new LED light cloud and seating elements, as well as the current Fall Wellness Series, were on full display along with plans for a new Public Art Installation. Residents are encouraged to visit the park to experience the infrastructure enhancements created by [One to One Design](#), including a variety of seating including some with built-in flower boxes. An LED light cloud, provides a modern attention-grabbing display suspended from the trees and ambient light for evening events.

Picking up where the Spring Wellness Series left off, classes will continue to be held after work at 5:30pm, Monday – Thursday. Stop by on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during lunch for guided meditation at 12:15pm. The Fall Wellness Series runs the months of September and October.

Additional programming includes [marketplace](#), a curated arts market. Produced by the Arts Council it will October 13<sup>th</sup>, November 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. The events will feature visual artists, live music, food vendors, fashion designers and more. A full schedule of events can be found at [www.downtownnola.com/duncan](http://www.downtownnola.com/duncan).

#### ABOUT THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The Downtown Development District of New Orleans was created by the Louisiana Legislature in 1974 as the nation’s first assessment-based business improvement district (BID) to provide enhanced services in economic development, cleaning and safety. The DDD services the area bounded by Iberville Street, the Pontchartrain Expressway, Claiborne Avenue and the Mississippi River. The DDD is governed by an 11-member Board of Commissioners who represent a cross section of the diverse Downtown community. Appointed by local elected officials, our commissioners help guide the policies and programs of the DDD.

#### ABOUT THE ARTS COUNCIL NEW ORLEANS

The Arts Council New Orleans is an independent 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to supporting arts and culture in the city and demonstrating how art transforms communities. In partnership with the City of New Orleans, community groups, and other nonprofit organizations, we work to elevate our arts ecosystem, expand and create opportunities for diverse artistic expression, and bring the community together through programming and events that celebrate our rich multicultural heritage.

## ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

In its 48th year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 57,000 Employees to a Customer base topping 120 million passengers annually, in recent years. Southwest became the nation's largest domestic air carrier in 2003 and maintains that ranking based on the U.S. Department of Transportation's most recent reporting of domestic originating passengers boarded. During peak travel seasons, Southwest operates more than 4,000 weekday departures among a network of 99 destinations in the United States and 10 additional countries. Southwest has announced its intention to sell tickets in 2018 for service to Hawaii, subject to requisite governmental approvals.

From its first flights on June 18, 1971, Southwest Airlines launched an era of unprecedented affordability in air travel described by the U.S. Department of Transportation as "The Southwest Effect," a lowering of fares and increase in passenger traffic wherever the carrier serves. With 45 consecutive years of profitability, Southwest is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for a triple bottom line approach that contributes to the carrier's performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities they serve, and an overall commitment to efficiency and the planet.

