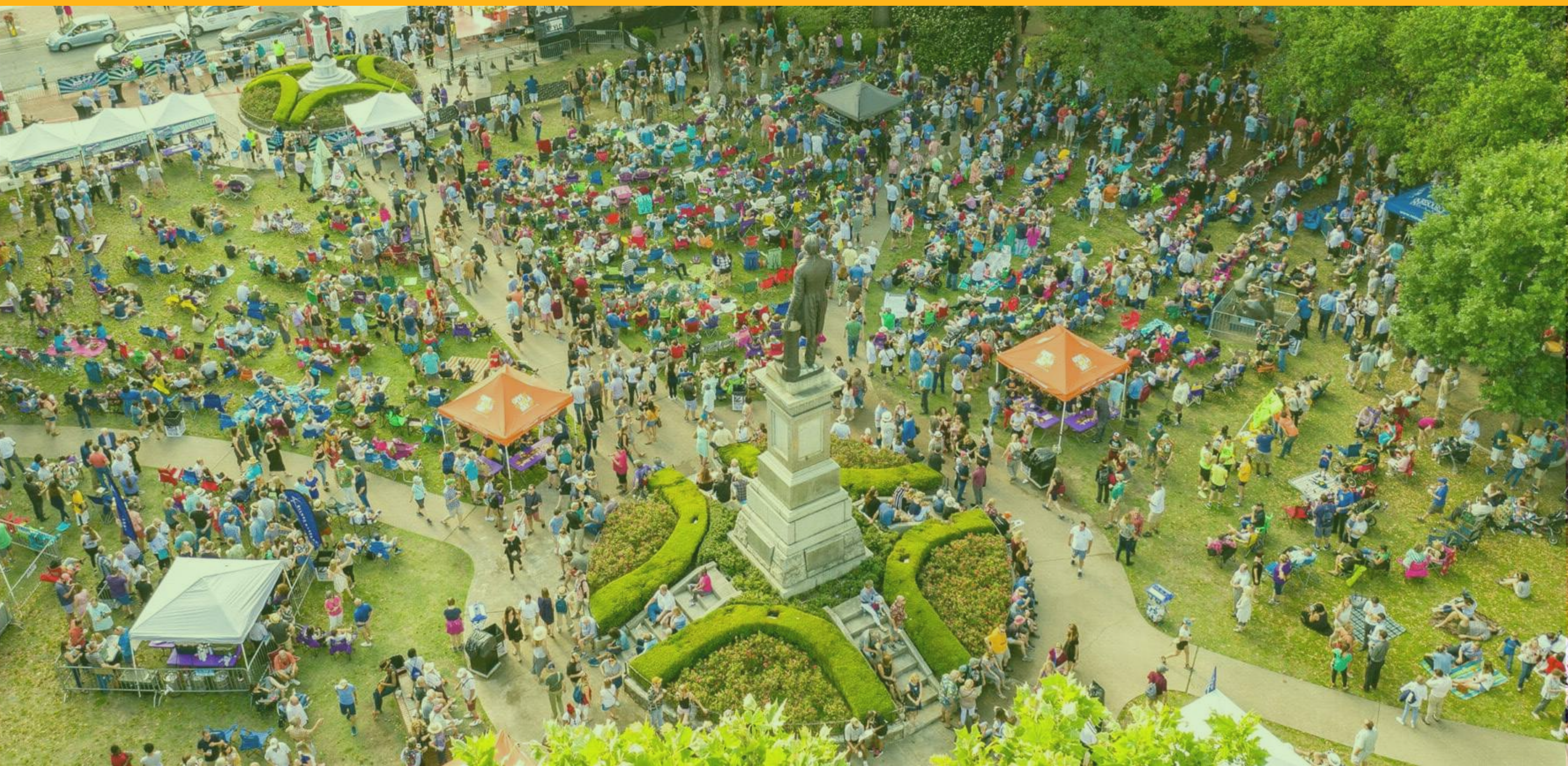


2025 Parks and Open Spaces Cultural Activation Plan



PROJECT TEAM

DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT
DISTRICT



DDD OF NEW ORLEANS
PRIMARY CONTACT

MANNING

Architecture Interiors Planning

MANNING, APC:
LEAD CONSULTANT - PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE

BURNS INNOVATION GROUP
Get Expert Policy Analysis & Solutions

BURNS INNOVATION GROUP:
COMMUNITY OUTREACH CONSULTANT

Rich Campanella

RICHARD CAMPANELLA:
HISTORIAN - TULANE UNIVERSITY

JULIEN
ENGINEERING & CONSULTING

JULIEN ENGINEERING:
CIVIL ENGINEERING CONSULTANT

smm

SPACKMAN, MOSSOP, MICHAELS:
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Document Prepared by:

Manning, APC

650 Poydras Street, Suite 1250

New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

Introduction

Page 3

2

Public Engagement Report

Page 6

3

Park Analysis and Implementation

Page 15

4

Renderings of Two Parks

Page 53

5

Appendix

Page A1

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Development District (DDD) was awarded a grant by the City of New Orleans Recreation and Culture Fund in 2023 to develop a Parks and Open Space Cultural Activation Plan. As cities recover from the changes resulting from the pandemic, many Downtowns are rethinking their public spaces and urban parks to help spur revitalization and re-imagine what our Downtowns can and should be for the public. The goal of this plan is to provide conceptualizations of infrastructure upgrades and potential programming that turns underutilized parks and open spaces into iconic, interactive, and inclusive public spaces.

The Downtown Development District of New Orleans, in partnership with its lead consultant, Manning, APC is spearheading the Parks and Open Spaces Cultural Activation Plan. This comprehensive initiative re-imagines Downtown public spaces and sets the stage for their revitalization, fostering vibrant, inclusive environments that celebrate the cultural nuances of the communities they serve and engender a sense of community. The Downtown parks included in the plan are:

- 1

Mississippi River Heritage Park
- 2

St. Mary's Park
- 3

Legacy Park
- 4

Lafayette Square
- 5

Piazza D'Italia
- 6

Molly Marine Plaza

The parks and open spaces studied in this plan are each unique in their history, current form, and potential. Some spaces are well-known and beloved urban parks and plazas, while others largely go unnoticed to many New Orleanians and visitors as they pass by. The project team was honored to dig deep into each of these spaces and work closely with those who know them best. Our efforts herein were carried out with the understanding that our outdoor public spaces are beloved and each possesses great potential to be a positive force in the lives of the many they serve.



Figure 1: Map of the Downtown Development District of New Orleans - Highlighting Parks and Open Spaces (ESRI)

Note: In this plan, “Downtown” refers to the area outlined in black on the map, which coincides with the jurisdiction of the Downtown Development District of New Orleans. This region, bounded by Claiborne Ave (I-10), Pontchartrain Expressway (US 90 Business), the Mississippi River, and Iberville Street, includes multiple neighborhoods and numerous uses similar to Downtown areas around the country and world.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following placemaking principles will guide future decisions and efforts improve Downtown parks as vibrant spaces for all New Orleanians. These principles are the results of deep listening, through public engagement outreach sessions, conversations and interactions with those whom these parks serve.

Downtown parks are...



...beautiful and offer a natural refuge within the urban environment

...sustainable and embody the resilient nature of New Orleans

...accessible and provide connections to local destinations

...safe and inclusive spaces where all are welcome

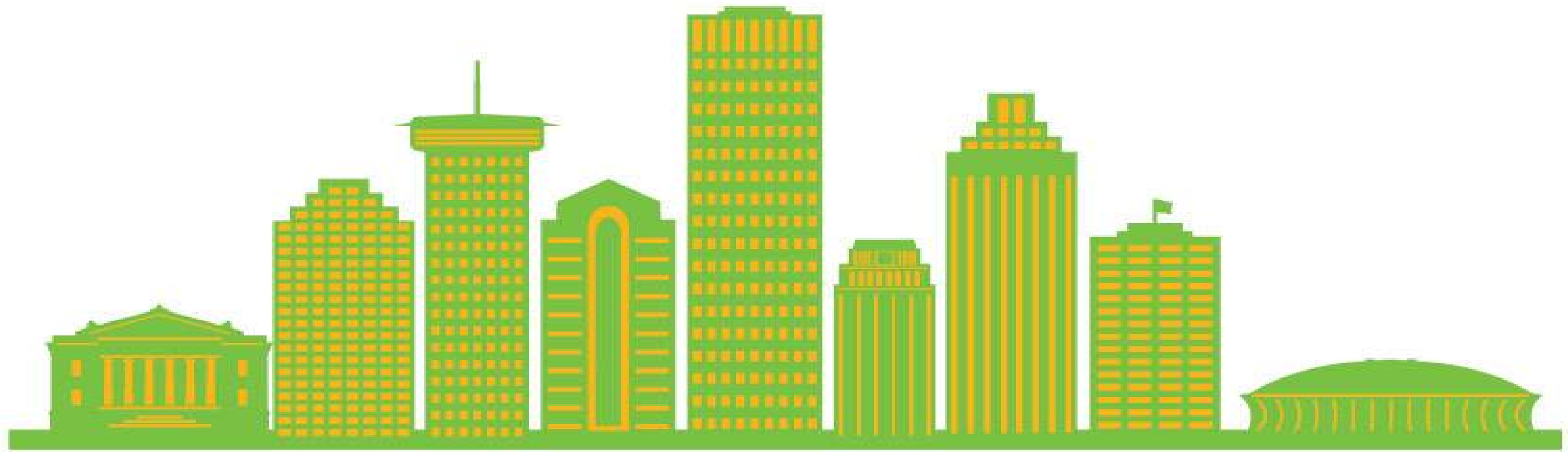
...spaces for expression, celebration, and economic opportunity

...active and promote health and wellness

VISION STATEMENT

The DDD Parks and Open Space Cultural Activation Plan developed a vision statement to guide future efforts and investment at Downtown parks and open spaces. The vision statement captures the essence of what Downtown parks and open spaces should embody and reflects the commitment to creating dynamic public spaces that are both inclusive and inviting. This vision statement was crafted through numerous community engagement events, stakeholder interviews, and additional public outreach efforts.

Downtown Development District (DDD) parks embody the welcoming and dynamic nature of the City of New Orleans. DDD parks are inclusive, active, engaging, and beautiful spaces that serve visitors, residents, and workers within our urban environment. DDD parks celebrate New Orleans culture, promote health and wellness, provide diverse opportunities for activity, and are natural refuges for all.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT



INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The community engagement process was implemented in four phases over a three-month period (June 2024 - August 2024). These phases included efforts to gather feedback and input from the public using the following elements:

- 1. Stakeholder Advisory Committee
- 2. Qualitative interviews
- 3. Community surveys
- 4. Public meeting

Community feedback informed the development of a vision statement, enhanced understanding and consensus-building, and a shared framework for the DDD park and open spaces planning process. Topics to solicit community interests related to event capacity, program infrastructure, comfort, access, day and night uses, and other potential improvements to the existing conditions, including shade, seating, and sustainability features, as well as to specific sites, including Piazza D’Italia, Mississippi River Heritage Park, St. Mary’s Park, Legacy Park, and Molly Marine Plaza.



Figure 2: Overview of the Public Engagement Strategy (Manning, APC)

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Stakeholder Visioning Exercise

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee was convened on June 14th, 2024, with goals to solicit feedback and ideas from identified, relevant stakeholders connected to various local organizations and interests, including New Orleans & Company, Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, Young Leadership Council, Office of Cultural Economy, Office of Nighttime Economy, New Orleans Building Corporation, Department of Parks & Parkways, Downtown Development District, and Downtown residents. Three Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings were held to review project updates and an initial DDD Parks & Open Spaces Cultural Activation Plan.

The primary purpose of the first meeting was to engage in a “visioning” exercise to consider aspirational goals for the existing Downtown parks and open spaces and to identify community priorities. During the visioning exercise, our team presented the preliminary key takeaways from the spring 2024 inventory of the targeted parks, as well as concept boards showcasing inspirational urban parks in other cities. Key topics included signage, nature, artwork, seating, shade, play, and event and commercial capacity, as well as master plan visioning priorities and special interests.

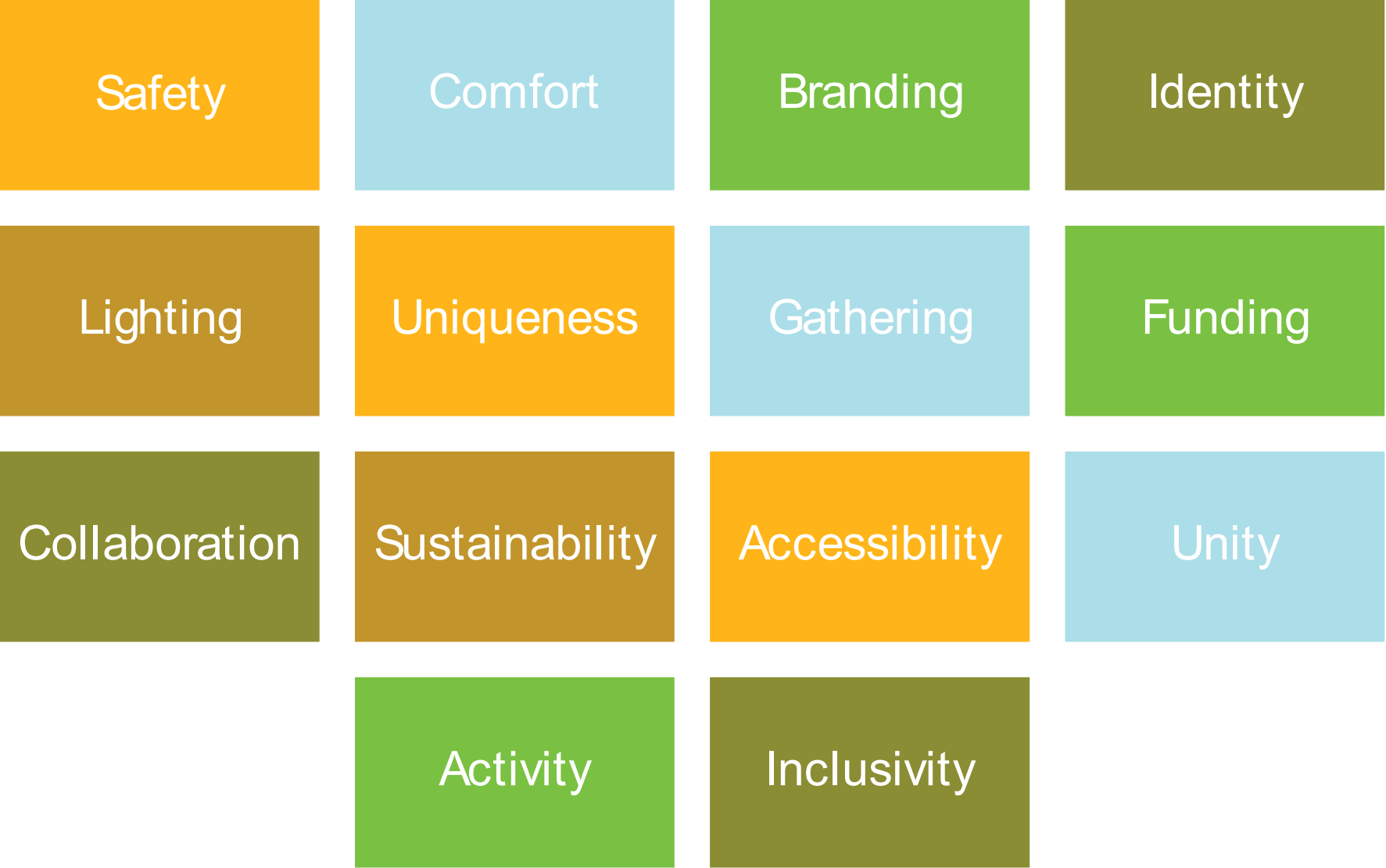


Figure 3: Chart of key findings from the June 2024 visioning exercise (Manning, APC)

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

About Stakeholder Interviews





The planning team held stakeholder interviews to gather insights from various individuals, organizations, and city offices, including community members and stakeholders affected by the DDD parks and open spaces master planning. Outreach included the Office of Youth & Families, Office of Homeless Services & Strategy, City Council District B, the Department of Safety Permits, and residential property managers, representing interests of the Downtown hotel industry, residents, property managers, public safety, educational institutions, and event organizers.

Interviews with key stakeholders were conducted from July 8th to 19th, 2024 to refine priorities and goals for the planning process. These interviews, in the form of one-on-one presentations and focus groups, aimed to shape an informed plan based on community feedback.

Mississippi River Heritage Park

-  Provide access for food trucks
-  Host marketplaces
-  Provide a space for large events
-  Add play areas or splash pads
-  Focus on water

St. Mary’s Park

-  Improve pedestrian paths
-  Increase lighting
-  Increase seating
-  Connect to nearby businesses



Legacy Park

-  Address safety and security
-  Provide a Downtown dog park




Lafayette Square

-  Improve event infrastructure
-  Increase seating
-  Increase access for food trucks

Piazza D’Italia

-  Increase signage
-  Host food and beverage vendors
-  Increase shade and seating
-  Recognize historical significance

Molly Marine Plaza

-  Connect to adjacent transit
-  Improve pedestrian paths
-  Increase lighting
-  Address safety and security

COMMUNITY SURVEY

About the Survey

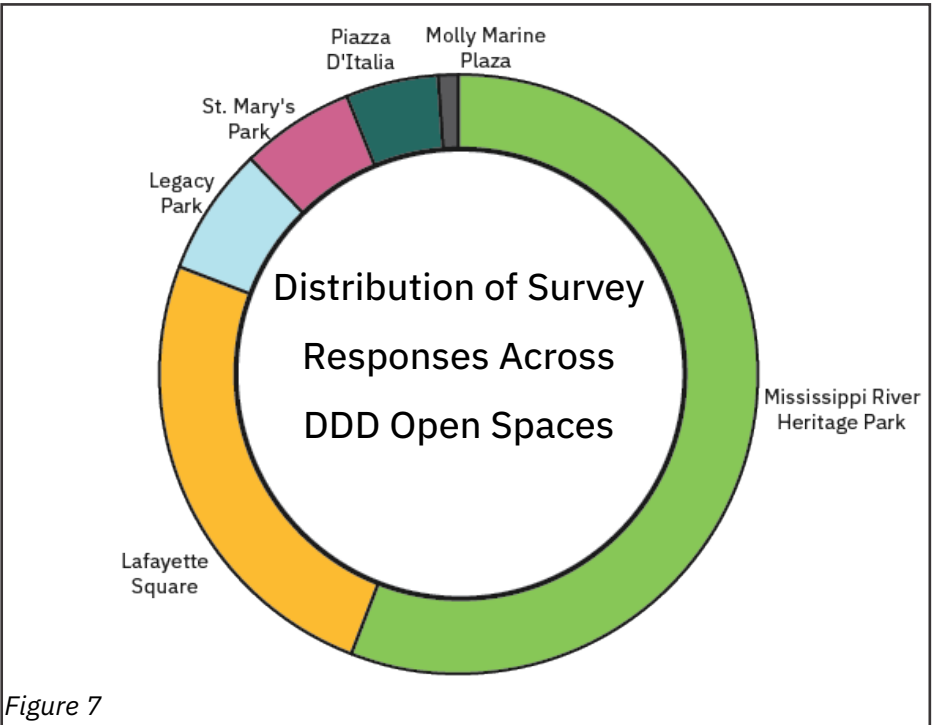
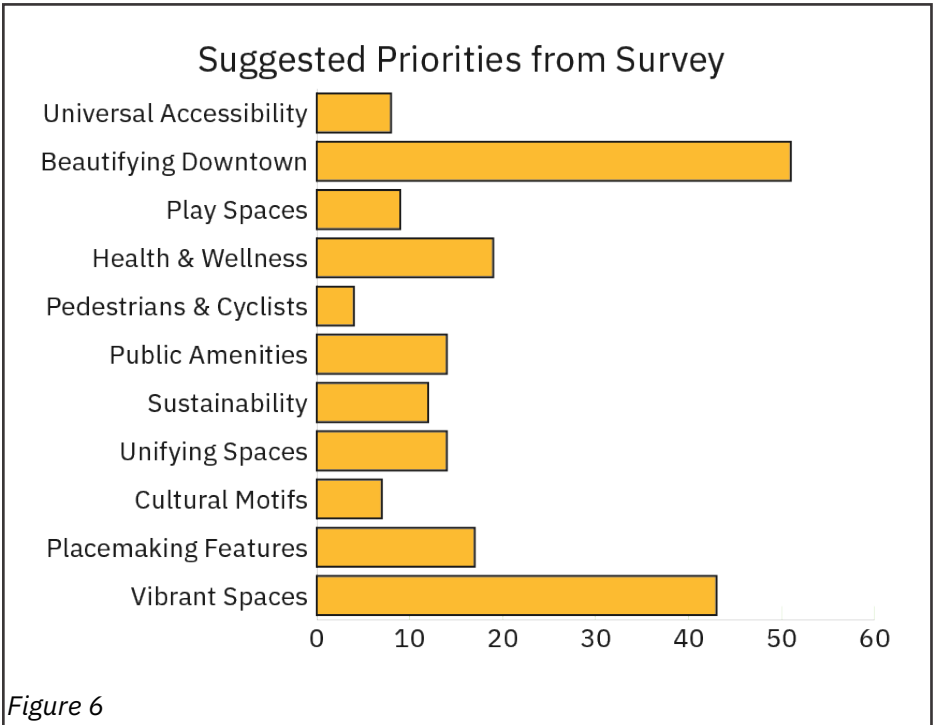
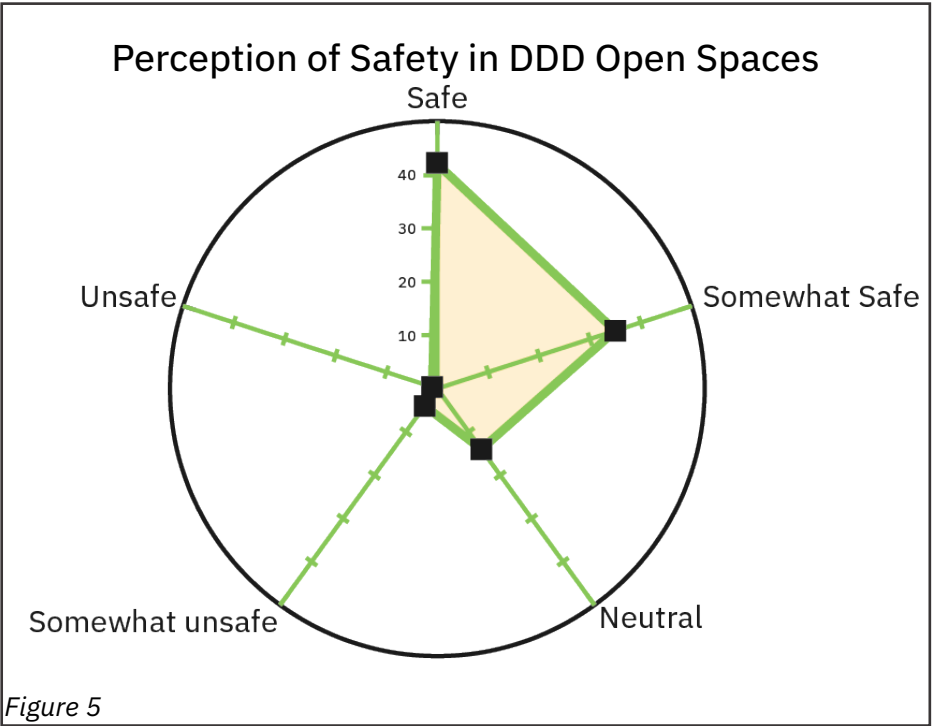
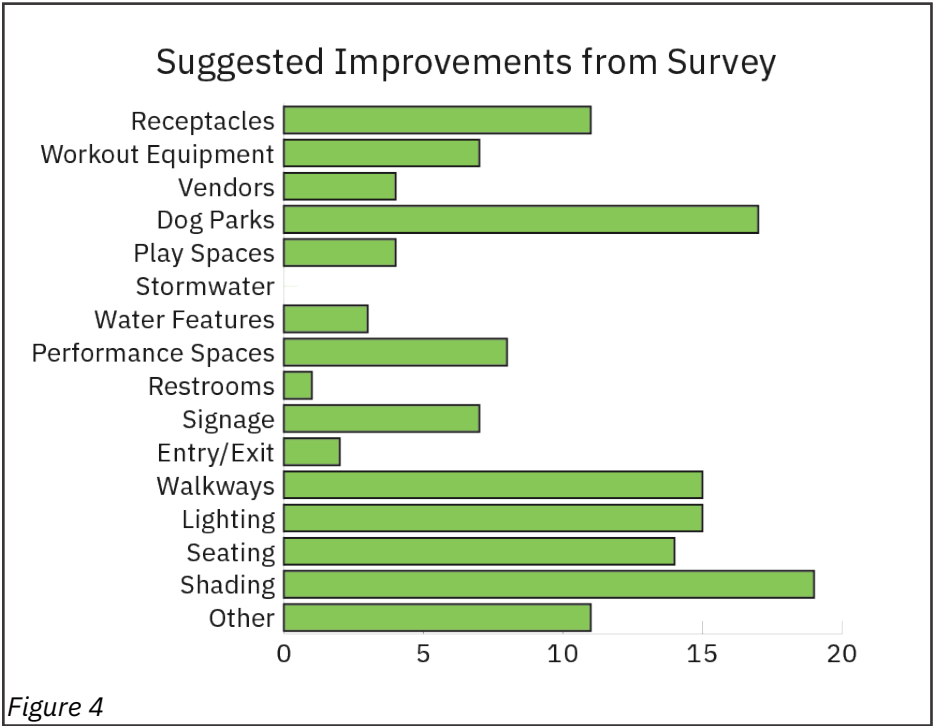
The planning team created a survey to gather public input on individual parks and the overall park system. The survey solicited feedback regarding access, comfort, event capacity, safety, ADA accommodations, signage, sustainability, health, fitness, and other amenities. Key questions included:

- 1. How can parks and open spaces be improved?
- 2. What is currently lacking?
- 3. What are community likes and dislikes?
- 4. What types of uses should be considered?
- 5. What are community sentiments on comfort and safety?

The survey provided a spatial overview of park locations and asked for input on existing conditions, improvements, and goals. There were two versions: one for park-specific feedback and one for overall feedback. The park-specific survey used branching features to focus responses on selected parks.

Community members were invited to complete the survey via the DDD website, social media, QR codes at park sites, email blasts, word of mouth, and public sessions held in August 2024.

The Data



PUBLIC MEETING

About the Public Meeting

In the public meeting that took place at Gallier Hall on Tuesday, August 13th, from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. We invited the community to an information-sharing session featuring stations for feedback on each site and overall planning priorities. Attendees evaluated examples of inspirational parks and open spaces, such as art installations, green infrastructure, creative playgrounds, cultural events, concessions, and other potential opportunities or improvements. Attendees were also able to participate in the electronic community survey during the meeting and engaged with planning team and DDD representatives.

The primary goal of this initial public meeting was to gather community input on future efforts to transform Downtown parks into vibrant, inclusive spaces.

Participants identified several key elements for consideration for improving Downtown parks and open spaces:

- Provide comfort through shade and seating at all parks
- Utilize signage to invite visitors into the parks
- Provide safe access, especially for parks in the neutral ground
- Promote sustainability through green infrastructure
- Consider a Downtown art or farmer’s market at the parks
- Provide areas and activities for children and dogs
- Prioritize the needs of residents
- Activate parks by providing gathering and event spaces

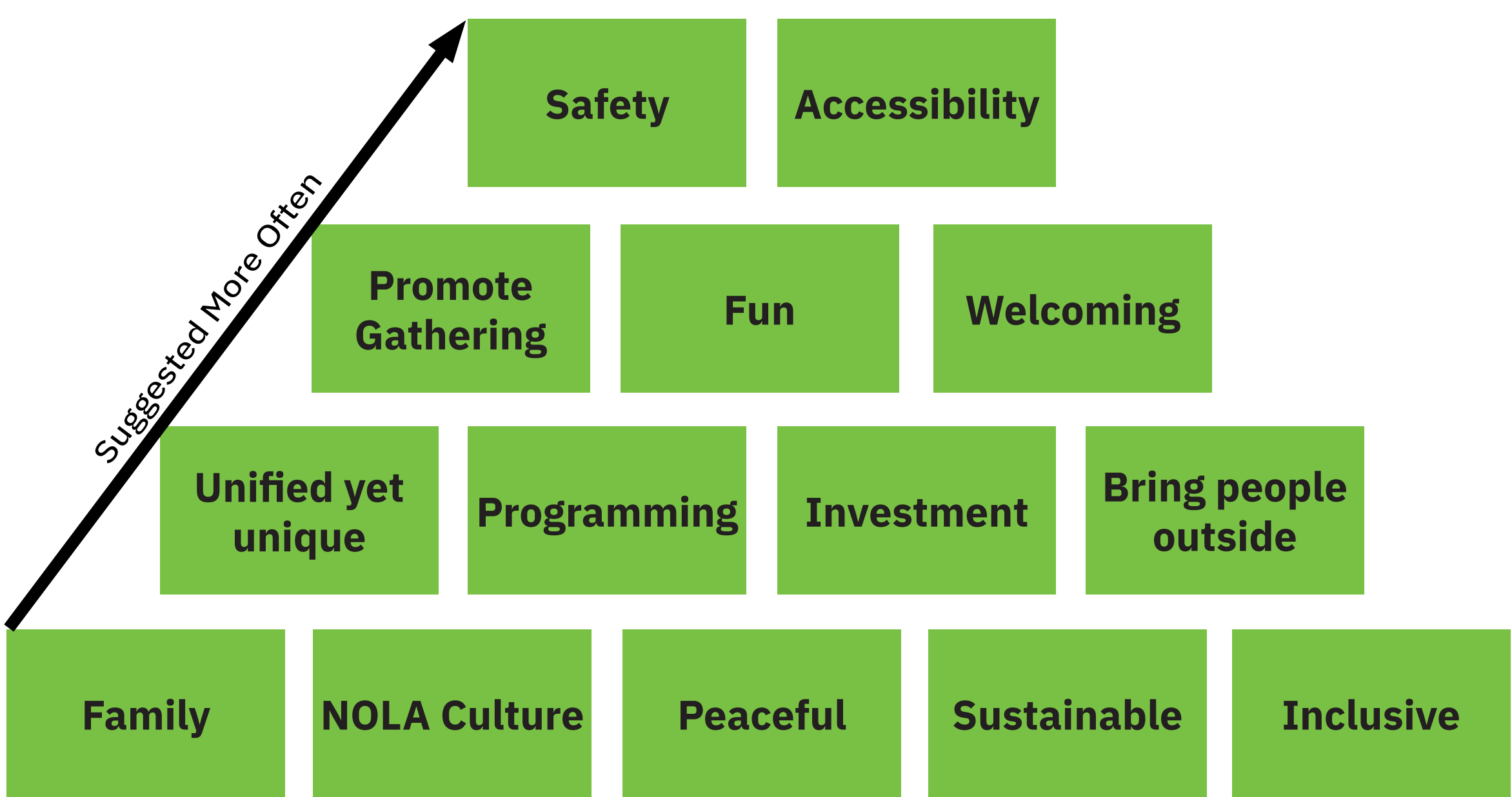


Figure 8: Photos of public engagement at Gallier Hall (Manning, APC)

COMBINED VISIONING

What is most important?

Safety and accessibility were ranked as primary considerations among participants.

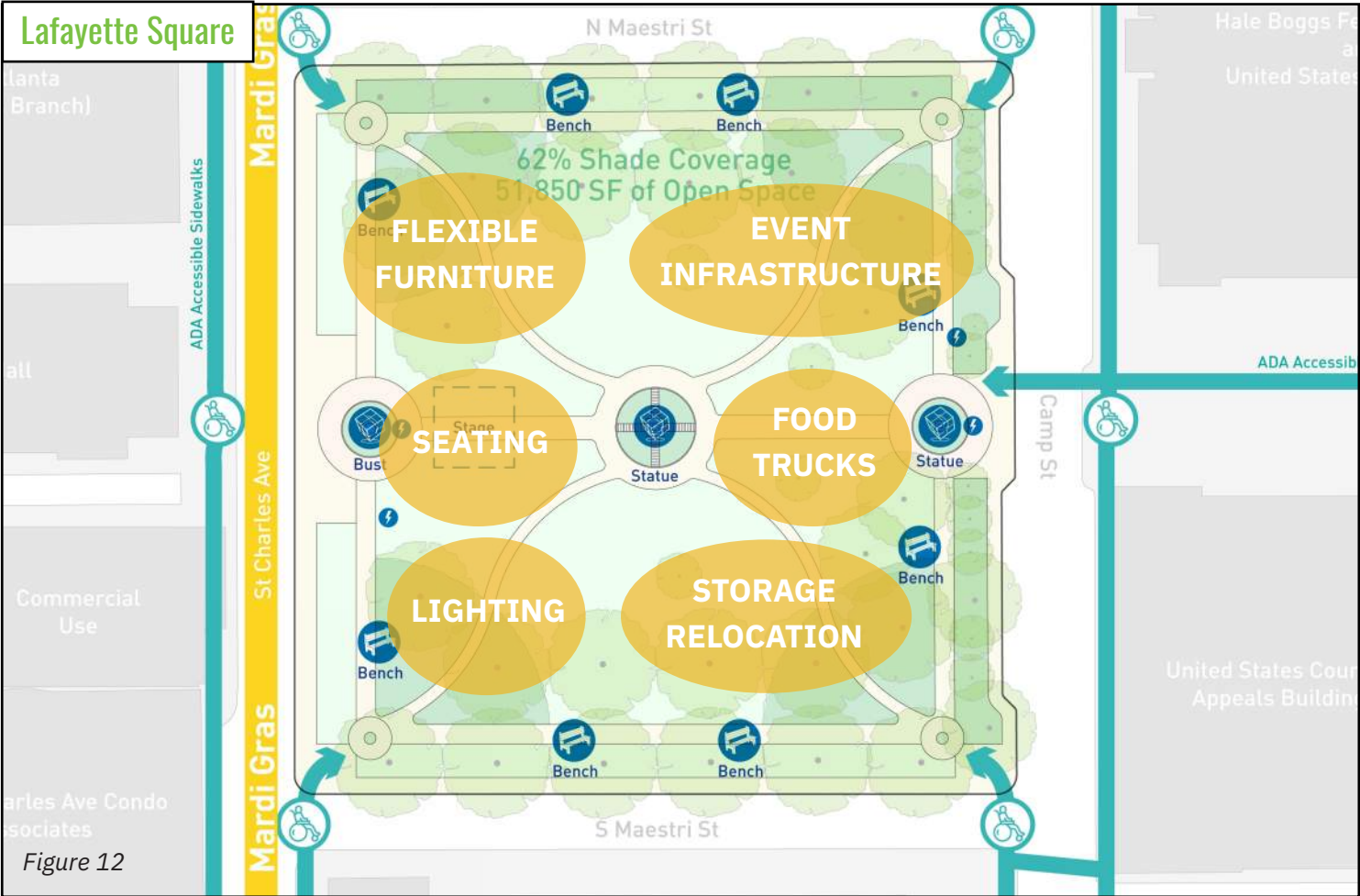
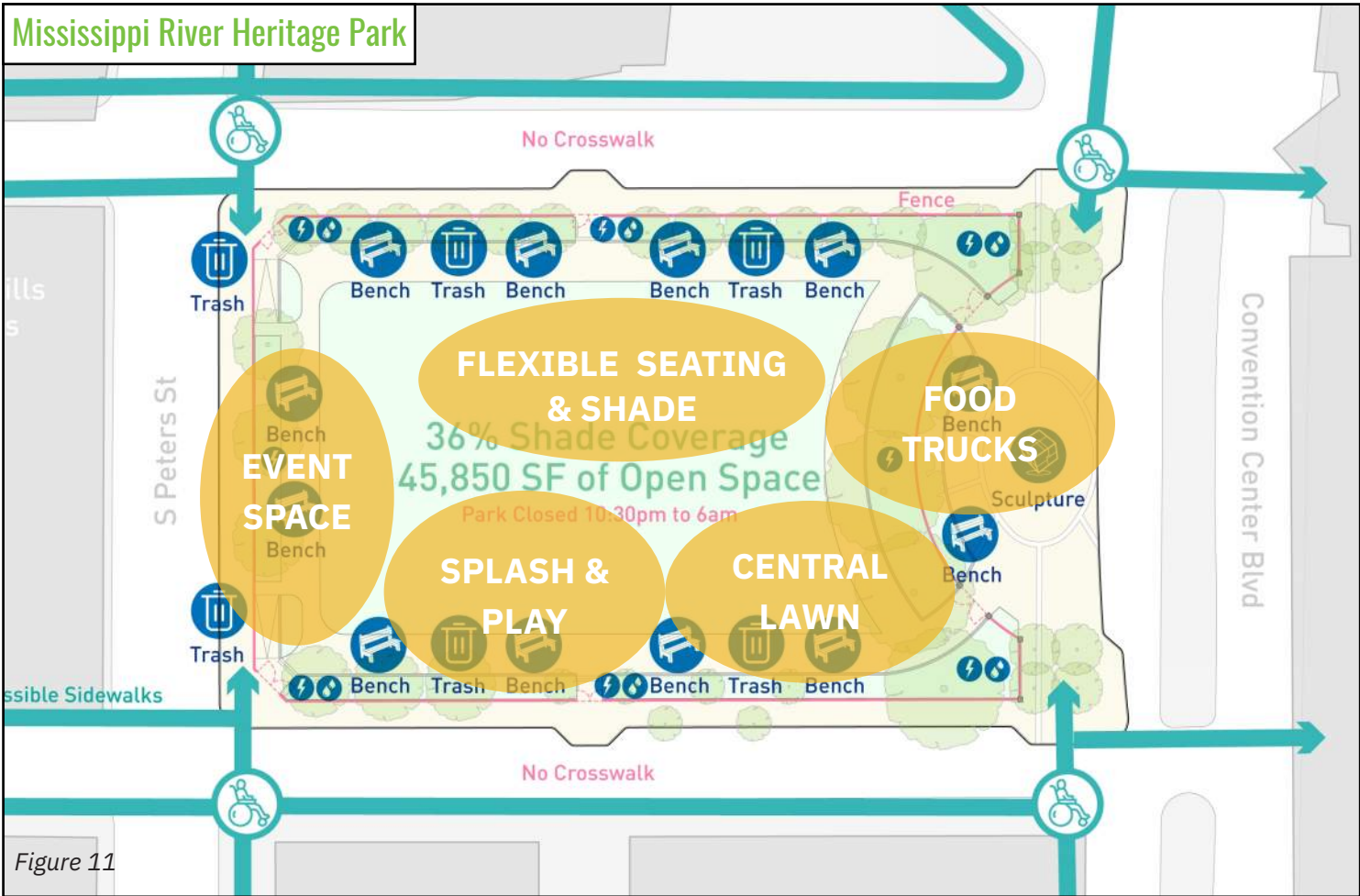
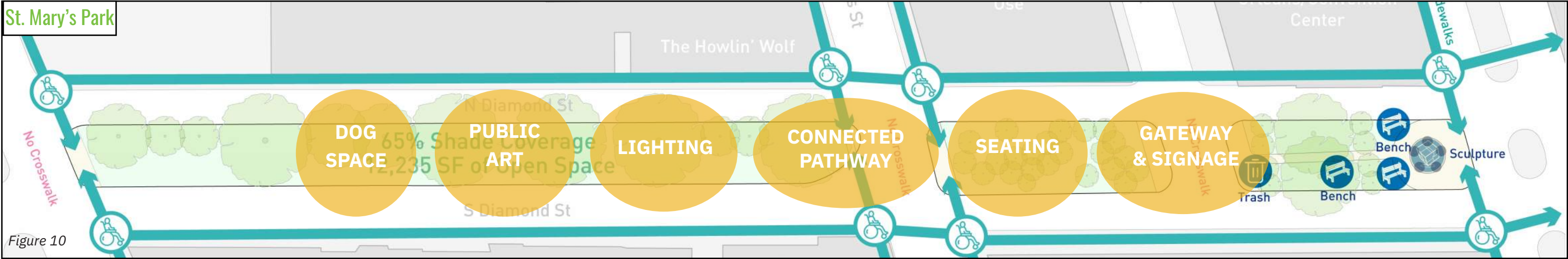


What are some special considerations?

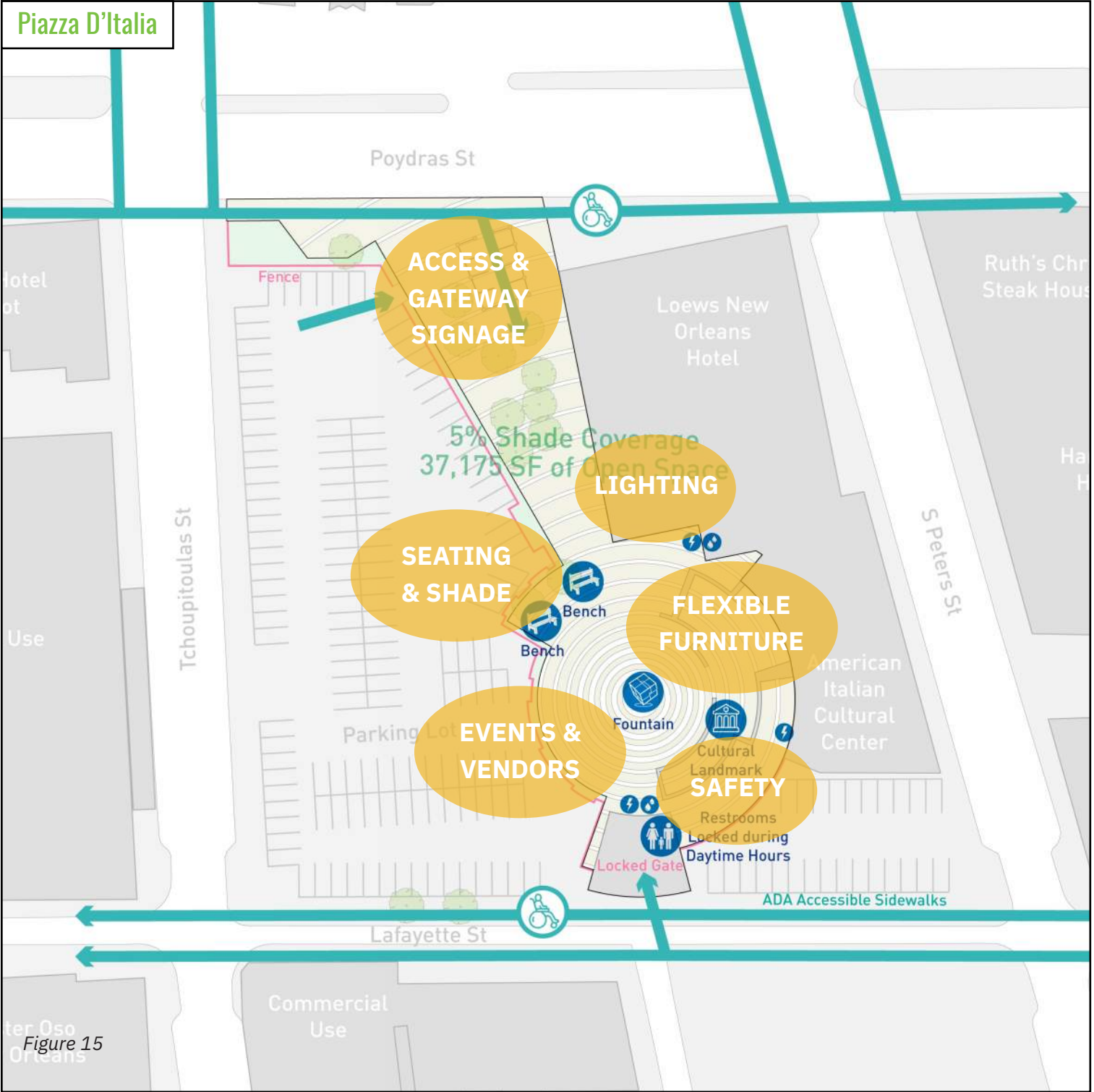
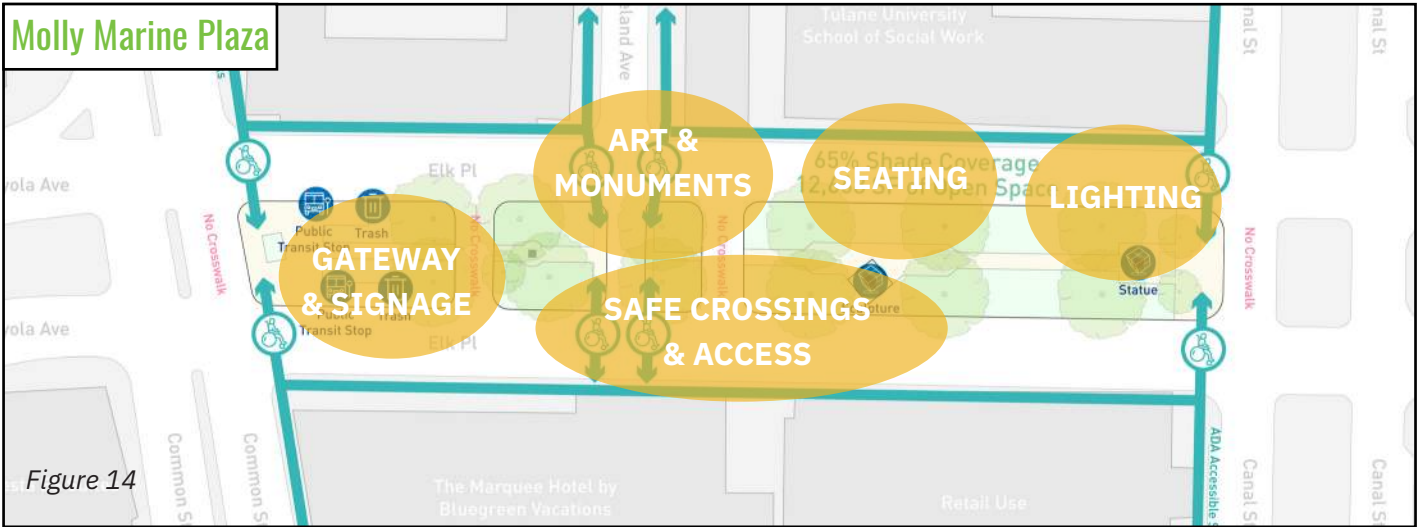
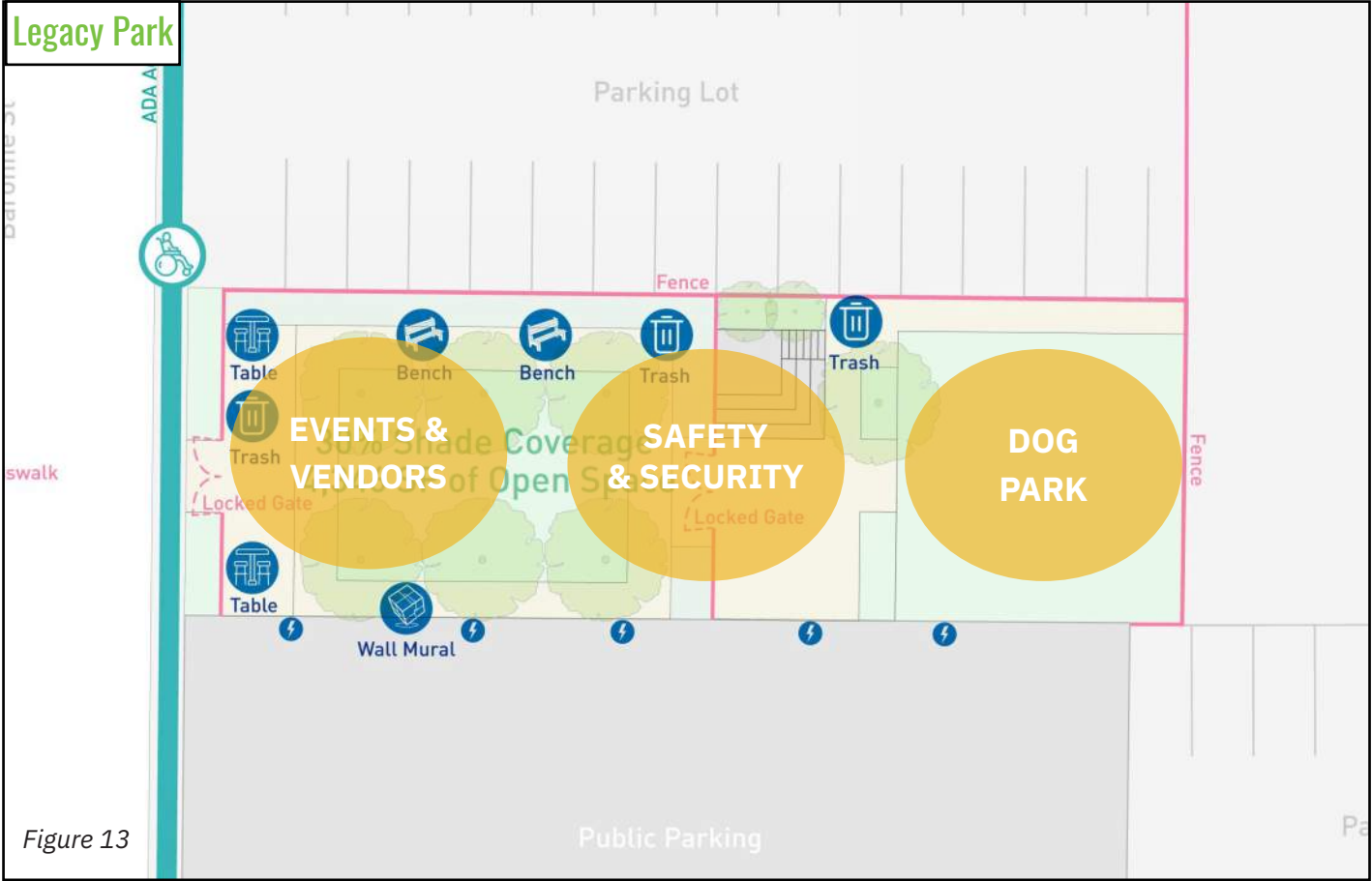
- RESIDENTS, TOURISTS, AND WORKERS
- MARDI GRAS, FESTIVALS, AND CONVENTIONS
- HISTORY OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS
- ACCESS NEEDS AND TRAFFIC

Figure 9: Top priorities among participants of all phases of public engagement (Manning, APC)

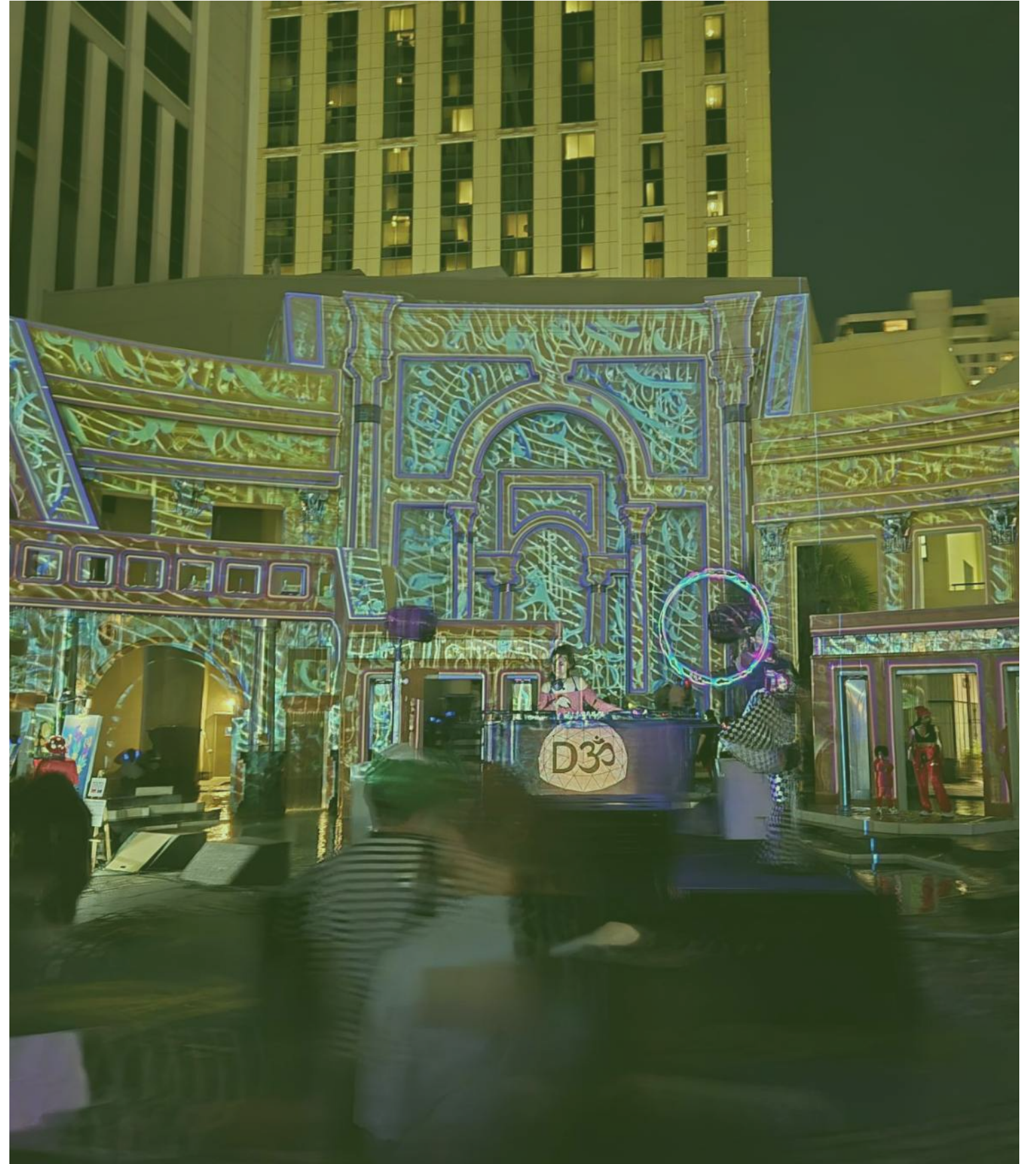
WHAT WE HEARD - EACH SPACE



WHAT WE HEARD - EACH SPACE



ANALYSIS & IMPLEMENTATION



UNIVERSAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DOWNTOWN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Based on the results from analysis and community engagement, the following universal improvements at DDD Parks are proposed:

1. Balancing Uniformity and Uniqueness:

- Develop a cohesive branding strategy that emphasizes the unique characteristics of each park while promoting them as part of the DDD park system.
- Implement a standardized design framework that allows each park to maintain its individuality while ensuring a uniform look and feel across all DDD parks. The DDD Placemaking Toolkit, released in 2023, should be consulted throughout these efforts.

2. Uniform Signage, Art, and Maps.

- Install standardized signage and art across all DDD parks to improve navigation and create a cohesive aesthetic. The DDD Placemaking Toolkit, released in 2023, should be consulted throughout these efforts.
- Develop comprehensive maps detailing the locations of all DDD parks, points of interest, and amenities.



Figure 16: Rise Park in Irvine, CA (RSM Design)



Figure 17: Seating & shade along a park pathway (Klyde Warren Park - Dallas, Texas)

3. Safety and Lighting:

- Enhance lighting in key areas such as entrances, pathways, and gathering spots. Use LED lights that are energy-efficient and have a lower environmental impact. The DDD Placemaking Toolkit, released in 2023, should be consulted throughout these efforts.
- Install high-quality surveillance cameras at strategic points to monitor activity. Implement regular patrols by park staff or security personnel to ensure the safety of visitors.

4. Seating and Shade:

- Add a variety of seating options, including benches, picnic tables, and Adirondack chairs. Ensure that seating is spread throughout the park, particularly in central spots, to accommodate different needs and preferences.
- Plant native trees and install shade structures such as pergolas or canopies. Consider the use of innovative shading solutions like solar panels that can provide both shade and renewable energy for park facilities.

5. Community Activities

- Organize events like fitness classes, concerts, movie nights, and cultural festivals. Tailor these activities to the unique features of each park to highlight local heritage and interests.
- Collaborate with local businesses, schools, and community organizations to host events. These partnerships can provide resources and expertise.

6. Sustainability:

- Install rain gardens and bioswales to manage stormwater and create habitats for local wildlife. Prioritize planting native species to enhance biodiversity and reduce maintenance needs.

7. Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- Design pathways that are wide, smooth, and free of obstructions to accommodate people of all abilities. Install accessible seating options and ensure that park facilities like restrooms and water fountains are easy to reach.



Figure 18: Event in an urban park (Discovery Green)

MISSISSIPPI RIVER HERITAGE PARK

Park Details

Address:
350 John Churchill Chase St.

Site Description:
Park occupies an entire square bounded by John Churchill Chase St., S. Peters St., Gaiennie St., Convention Center Blvd.

Ownership:
City of New Orleans

Size (Sq Ft):
52,270.00

Size (Acres):
1.2

Hours of Operation:
8AM - Sunset

Year Opened:
Unknown

Active Uses/Programming:
Private Events

Visitor Trends



Visitor Journey

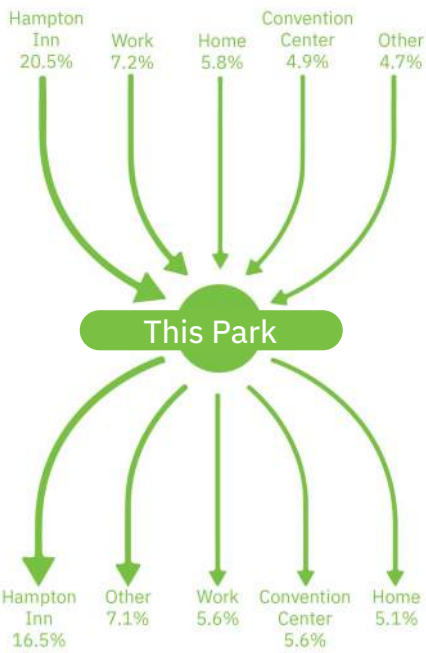


Figure 19: Visitor Trends (PlacerAI)

Park Overview

Mississippi River Heritage Park is a surprising green space and urban refuge surrounded by dense development and across the street from the sprawling Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Common users include residents of nearby warehouse condominiums, hotel guests, and convention attendees. The large central green space has great potential to be enhanced and further utilized as a vital resource and amenity in this part of Downtown. The park has played host to events spilling out of the convention center and often welcomes nearby neighbors walking their dogs. Additionally, the park is known by many locals for its “Scrap House” Katrina memorial sculpture facing Convention Center Boulevard.



Figure 20: Satellite Map of Mississippi River Heritage Park (Google Earth Pro)

MISSISSIPPI RIVER HERITAGE PARK

Park History

Mississippi River Heritage Park is a recent arrival to the urban geography of New Orleans, as both a land feature and as a green space. Originally within the channel of the Mississippi River at the time of the city’s founding, this space emerged as a batture (sandy beach) in the early 1800s, and was eventually reclaimed by the extension of levees followed by the introduction of artificial fill. For the next 150 years, this 1.36-acre block was fully developed with the sort of light industry, value-added manufacturing, warehousing, and maritime land uses that predominated throughout what we now call the Warehouse District. Around 1880, for example, the entire block comprised the International Cotton Press. Finally cleared in preparation for the 1984 Louisiana World Exposition, the space hosted the fair’s Jazz and Gospel Tent as well as station for the fair’s popular elevated monorail. In subsequent years, as the Warehouse District transformed into valuable real estate for the convention trade and for residential condominiums, the block was officially designated as Mississippi River Heritage Park.

Timeline

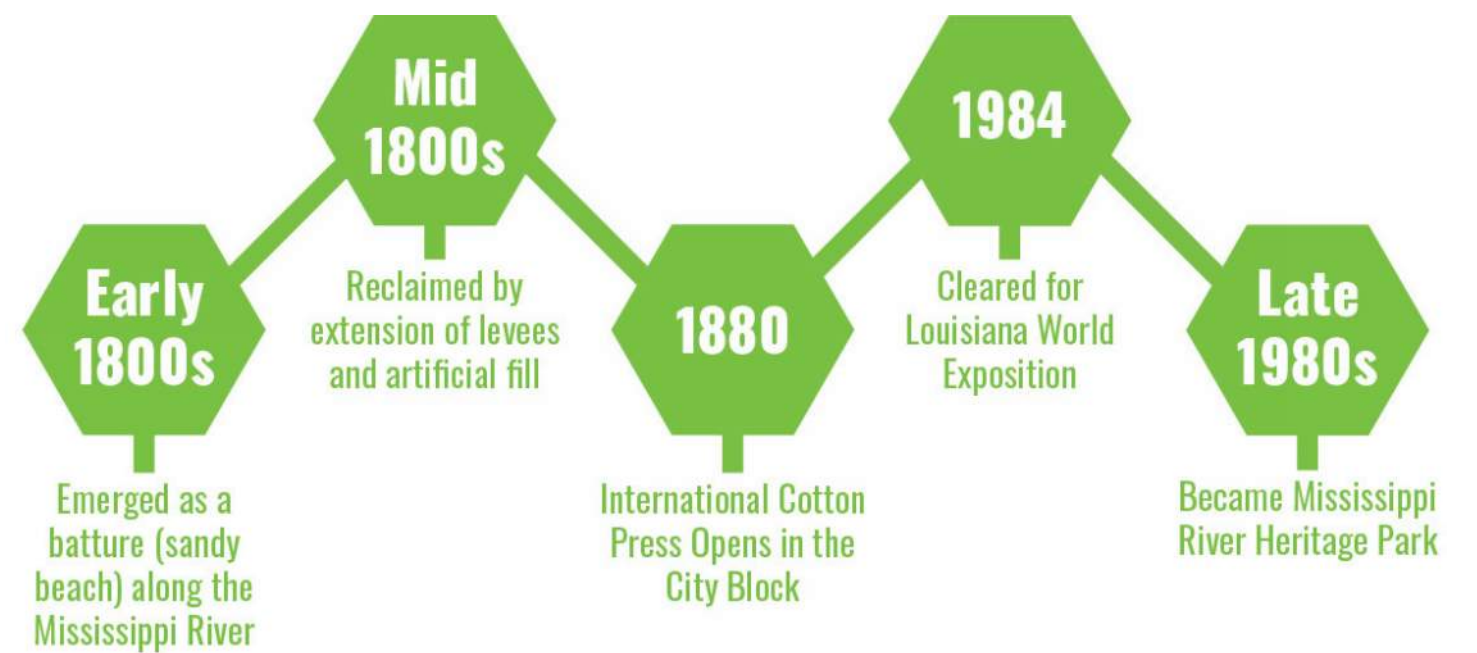


Figure 22: Postcard for the Louisiana World Exhibition, note the current location of the Mississippi River Heritage Park in the bottom left (New Orleans Public Library)

MISSISSIPPI RIVER HERITAGE PARK



Figure 23: Perspective of central green space from entrance along Convention Center Blvd. (Manning, APC)



Figure 24: “Scraphouse” Katrina Memorial at entrance plaza along Convention Center Boulevard (Manning, APC)



Figure 25: Seating and landscaping along perimeter pathway (Manning, APC)

Existing Conditions Map

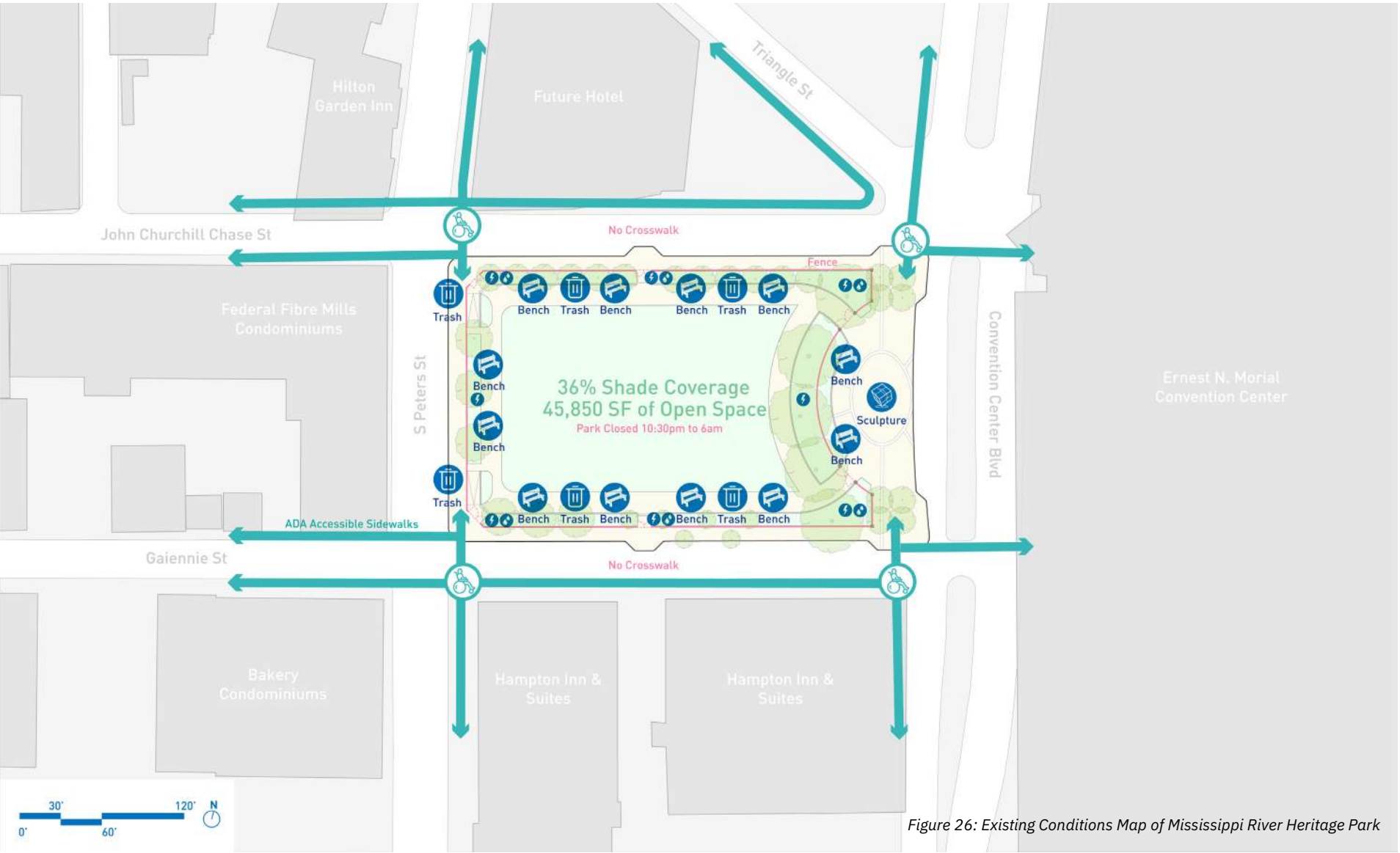


Figure 26: Existing Conditions Map of Mississippi River Heritage Park

Community Priorities



MISSISSIPPI RIVER HERITAGE PARK

Site Analysis

Access

The park is fully enclosed by iron fencing around the perimeter. Entrances to the park are provided at the four corners and at mid-block. A brick pathway encircles the park and ADA ramps are available. Very limited and basic signage placards at entrances displaying park name and hours of operation.

Comfort

Bench seating and pedestrian lighting exists along the perimeter fencing and walkway. Water fountains are installed throughout park although they most likely need refurbishment or replacement. Mature shade trees and shrubs are planted along the perimeter fencing and walkway, and the central square is planted with turf ground cover. There is no shading present in the central grassy square.

Daytime Uses

There are no programmed active daytime uses in the park. The space is generally utilized for passive uses like relaxing on the benches, dog walking, and potentially athletics and exercise in the central grassy area. Food trucks often set up along the adjacent streets and generally serve convention center clientele.

Events and Programming

The large central grassy area presents a suitable space for programming and activation. The park has hosted private events in the past and there are water and electricity hookups along the perimeter walkway. The dense, urban context in the immediate vicinity includes many hotels, mid-rise residences, and the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center is directly across the street for the park. The space is well suited for activation through events and programming.



Takeaways

- Activate the central green.
- Connect to the Convention Center.
- Potential for a performance space.
- Provide more shading.
- Support commercial activities and event capacity.
- Explore potential for play spaces.
- Incorporate water features.
- Be more inviting through increased signage and access.



Figure 27: Central green space with warehouse condos in background (Manning, APC)

MISSISSIPPI RIVER HERITAGE PARK

Vision

Mississippi River Heritage Park holds significant potential for activation due to its large central green and its proximity to the Convention Center, several large condo buildings, and numerous hotels.

The vision for the central green is to maintain the flexible open space for daily use, large events, and stormwater management. The central features of the park will be a stage and splash pad area with a shade structure at the S. Peters St. side of the park. The stage and splash pad area serve three functions. One is for everyday use, which is simply a place to sit and enjoy the park during any season of the year. A second use, during warmer weather, is as a splash pad where people can cool off and play in the water. This is meant to be a draw for the surrounding residential neighbors. Finally, during special events, the stage could host a concert or other events. While the operation would need to be coordinated with the neighbors, sound would be directed toward the Convention Center, and not directly toward the neighbors.

The green would be redesigned as a Stormwater Lawn specifically designed to manage stormwater with a subsurface sand filter. This system will hold all the stormwater from the park, and more if the adjacent properties were connected to the system. It is one of the most inexpensive and low-maintenance ways to manage stormwater. The furnishings for the central green would be movable and brought out during special events. There will be permanent seating along the edges of the park, under the shade, and at the stage and splash pad area.

Access to the park and visibility will be greatly improved by the removal of the existing wrought iron fence and the clearing of the low level plantings below the oak trees planted around the perimeter of the park. The removal of barriers and providing more direct access to the interior of the park is most important at the Convention Center Blvd. entry plaza. Visitors will be welcomed into the park through an improved entry plaza with new signage, lighting, and seating. A central feature of the new entry plaza will be dedicated food truck stalls with electrical hook-ups along Convention Center Blvd.



Figure 28: Central Green in Baton Rouge
(International Downtown Association)



Figure 29: Splash pad in an urban park
(Discovery Green)



Figure 30: Urban food truck
(Adobe Stock Photo)



Figure 31: Sarofim Picnic Lawn at the Discovery Green in Houston
(Discovery Green)

MISSISSIPPI RIVER HERITAGE PARK

Recommendations:

- 1. Stage and Splash Pad Plaza:**

Create a flexible space that will serve for everyday use and events. A shade structure and seating will serve visitors year round while the plaza will be converted into a stage during events. The in-ground splash pad will serve as a play space during warmer months.
- 2. Central Green/Stormwater Lawn:**

The central green will be specifically designed to manage stormwater with a subsurface sand filter. Movable furniture and flexible seating will be a feature of the new park.
- 3. Enhance Park Access and Visibility:**

Remove existing fences to create an open, inviting atmosphere, improving accessibility and visibility within the park. Low level plantings and bushes should be removed beneath the oak trees around the perimeter of the park.
- 4. Entry Plaza:**

Improved entry plaza with new signage, lighting, and seating. A central feature of the new entry plaza will be dedicated food truck stalls with electrical hook-ups along Convention Center Blvd.

Proposed Site Plan

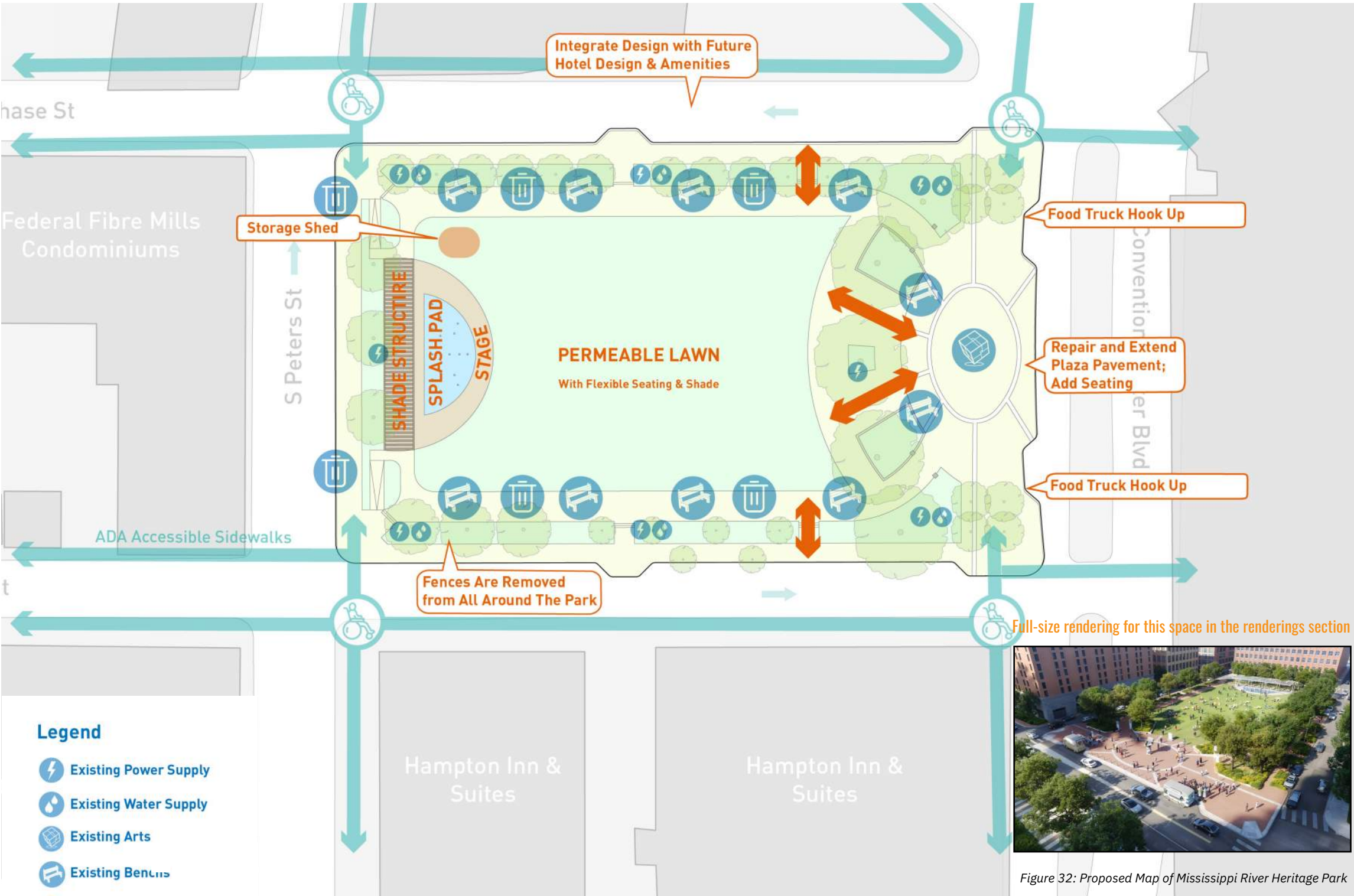


Figure 32: Proposed Map of Mississippi River Heritage Park

ST. MARY’S PARK

Park Details

Address:
Diamond St.

Site Description:
Neutral ground of
Diamond Street (45 feet)

Ownership:
City of New Orleans

Size (Sq Ft):
35,283
Segmented by Streets

Size (Acres):
0.81
Segmented by Streets

Hours of Operation:
24 Hours

Year Opened:
1906

Active Uses/Programming:
None

Visitor Trends



Visitor Journey

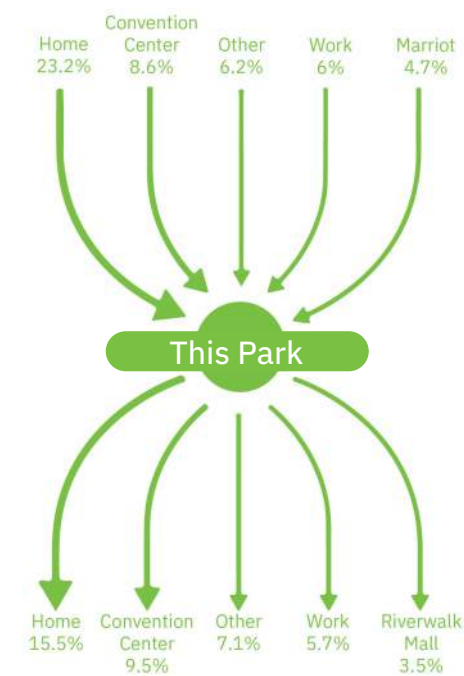


Figure 33: Visitor Trends (PlacerAI)

Park Overview

St. Mary’s Park sits within the neutral ground of Diamond Street, a corridor that serves as a connector between the sprawling Ernest N. Morial Convention Center and the bustling Warehouse District. Diamond Street’s mature tree canopy and landscaped neutral ground is an outlier in a part of town very densely developed and without many green spaces. The park is often overlooked, apart from those that frequent Diamond Street and its vicinities, as there is no visible or welcoming signage and the majority of the space is unimproved apart from its lush landscaping. Opportunities exist to further improve and establish St. Mary’s Park and the Diamond Street corridor as a key neighborhood connector, an inviting public space, and an extension of the vibrant mixed-use neighborhood that surrounds it.

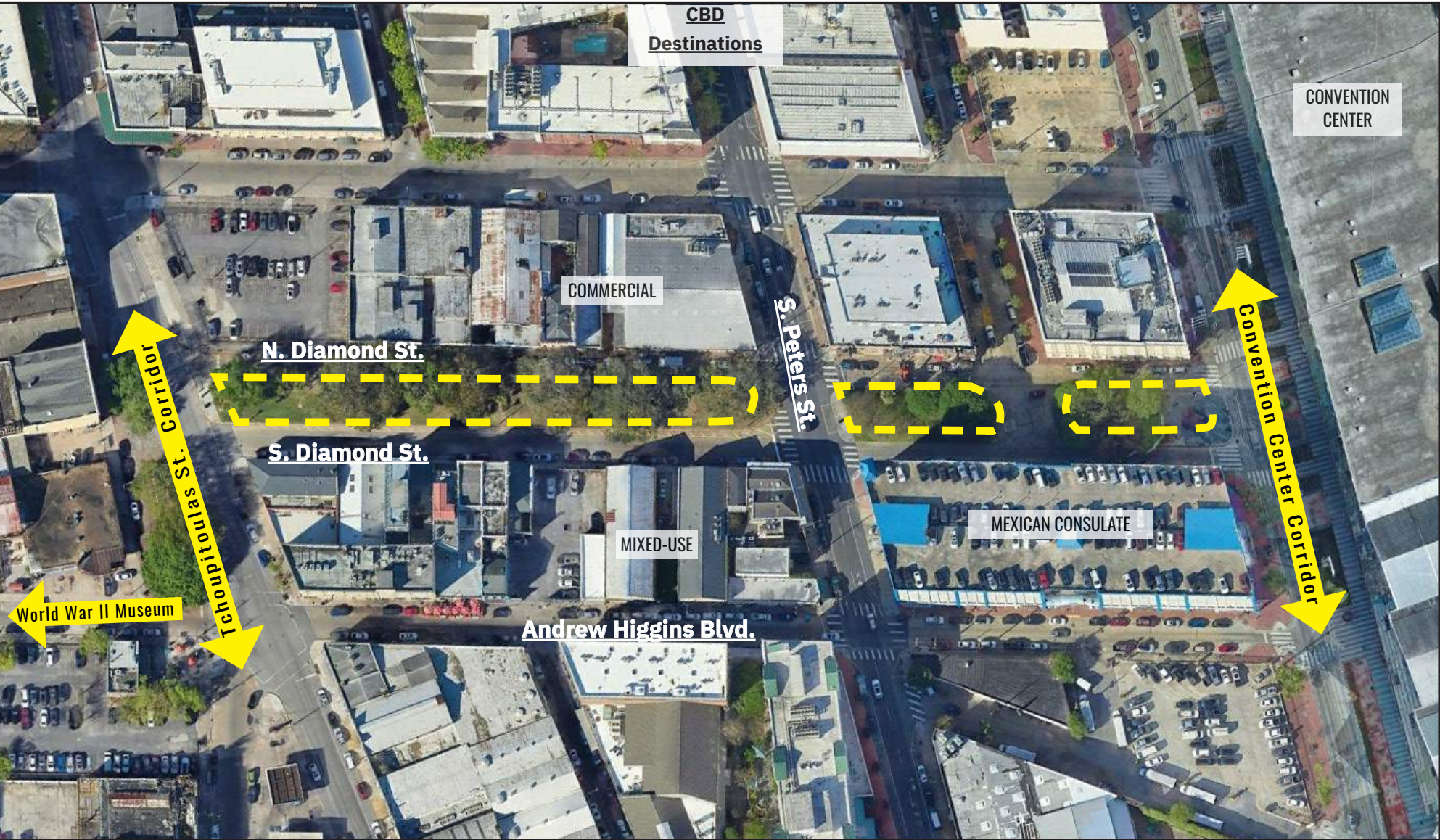


Figure 34: Satellite Map of St. Mary’s Park (Google Earth Pro)

ST. MARY'S PARK

Park History

This neutral-ground park once hosted a municipal market serving the growing English-speaking population of the Faubourg St. Mary's (today's Central Business District and parts of the Warehouse District), including recently arrived Irish immigrants. Known colloquially as the "Irish French Market," the open-stall food-retail pavilion opened in 1822 and was later doubled in length, filling most of the median from Tchoupitoulas to South Peters Street. All along, the shifting channel of the Mississippi deposited a sandy beach along the Faubourg St. Mary's riverfront, forming a batture which the city and adjacent landowners eagerly incorporated by extending the levee and reclaiming the new land from the river. What resulted was today's Warehouse District, including the extension of St. Mary's Park to South Front Street, now Convention Center Boulevard.

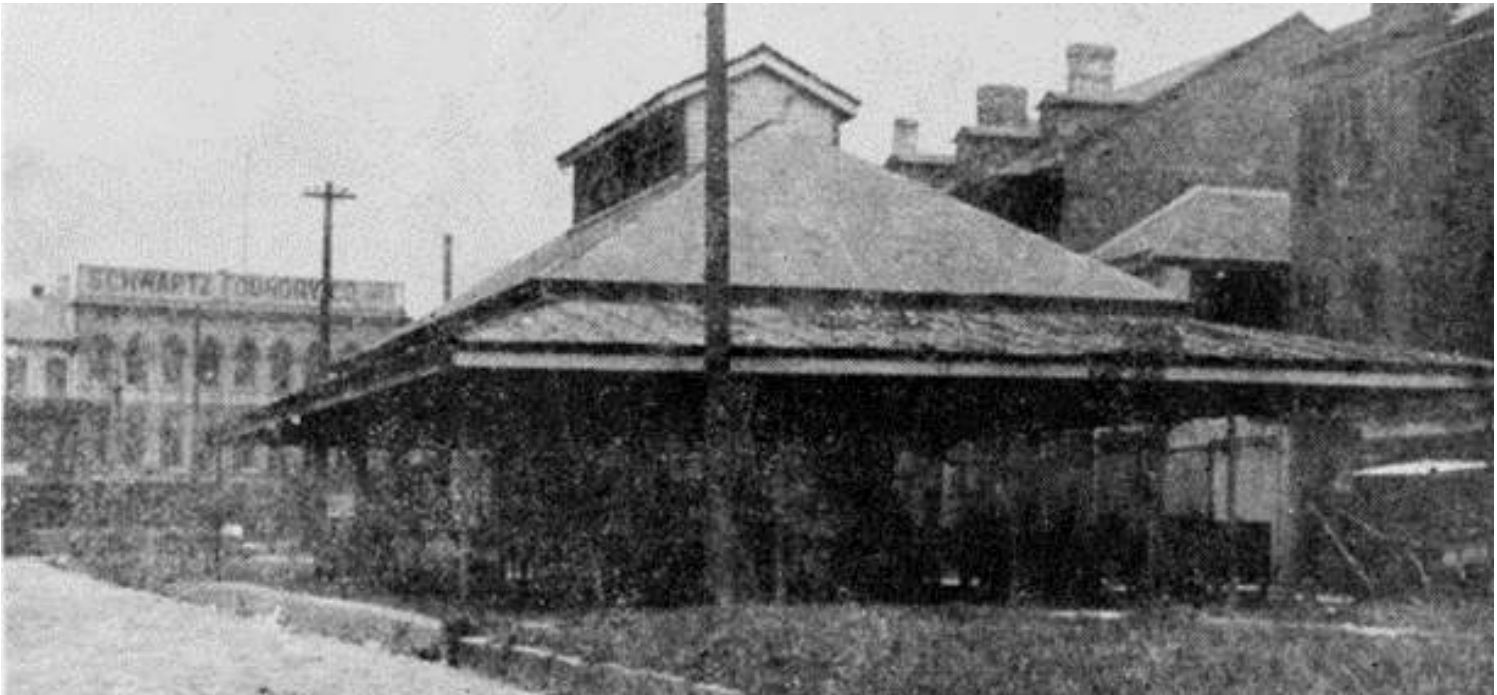


Figure 36: St. Mary's Park as it appeared in the late 1800s, home to St. Mary's Market. Note the present-day Preservation Resource Center Building in the background, fronting Tchoupitoulas Street. (Southeastern Architectural Archive, Tulane Univ.)

Timeline

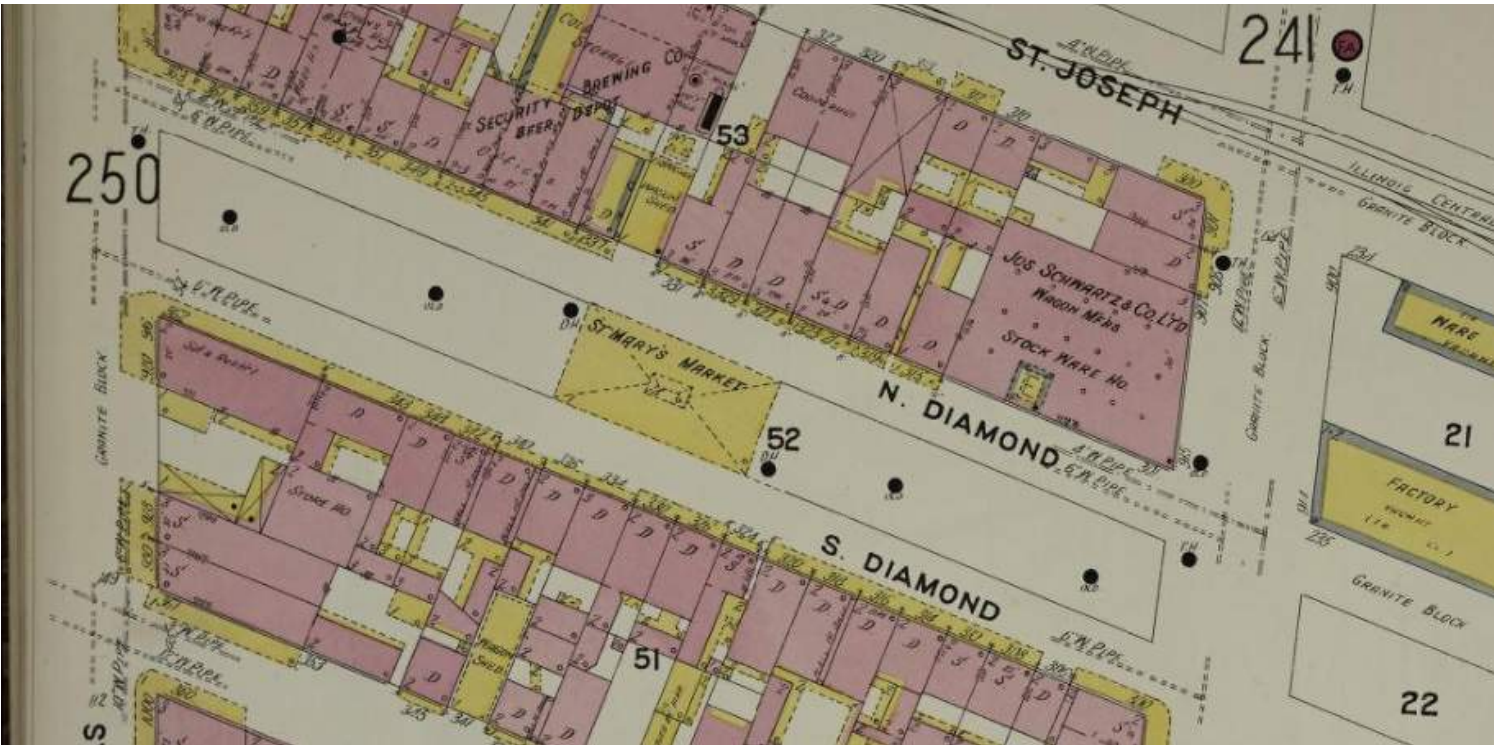
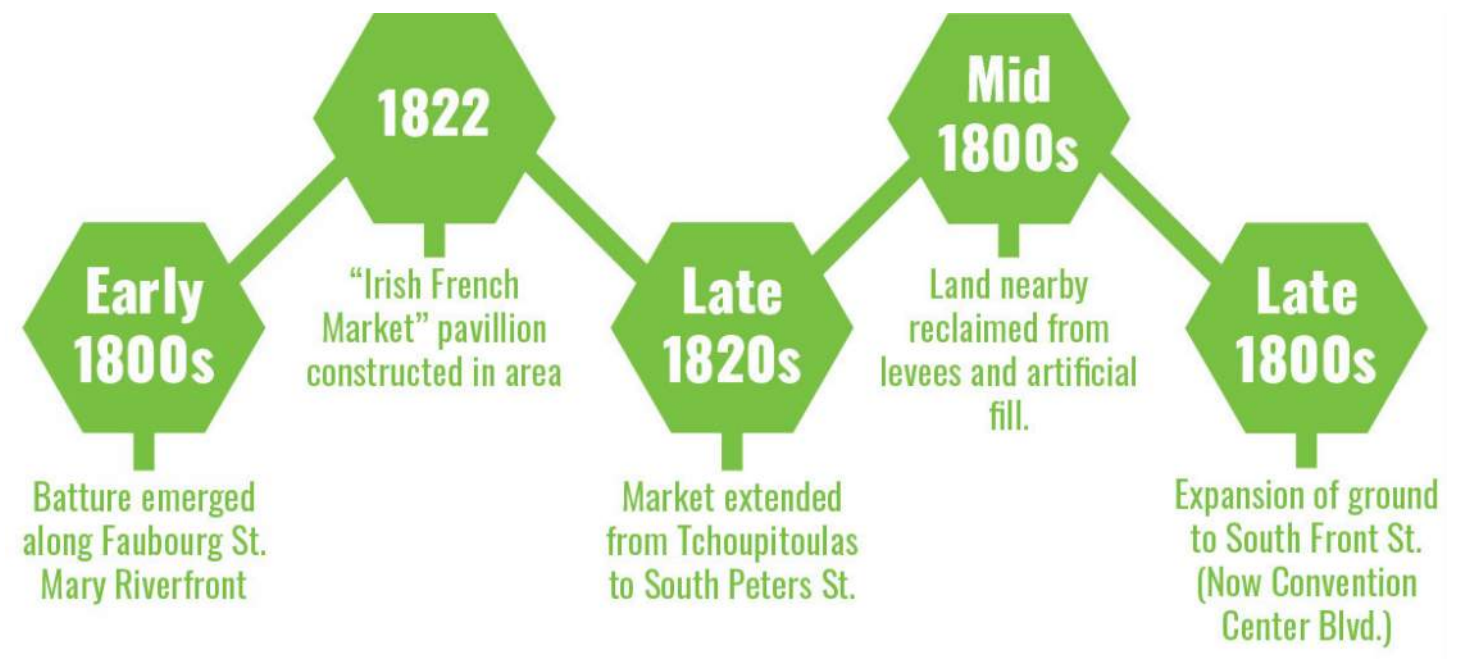


Figure 37: Sanborn Map showing St. Mary's Market and commercial activity on Diamond Street (Library of Congress)

ST. MARY'S PARK



Figure 38: Grassy promenade in the park (Manning, APC)



Figure 39: Mixed-use urban context along Diamond Street (Manning, APC)



Figure 40: Sections of park segmented by street (Manning, APC)

Existing Conditions Map

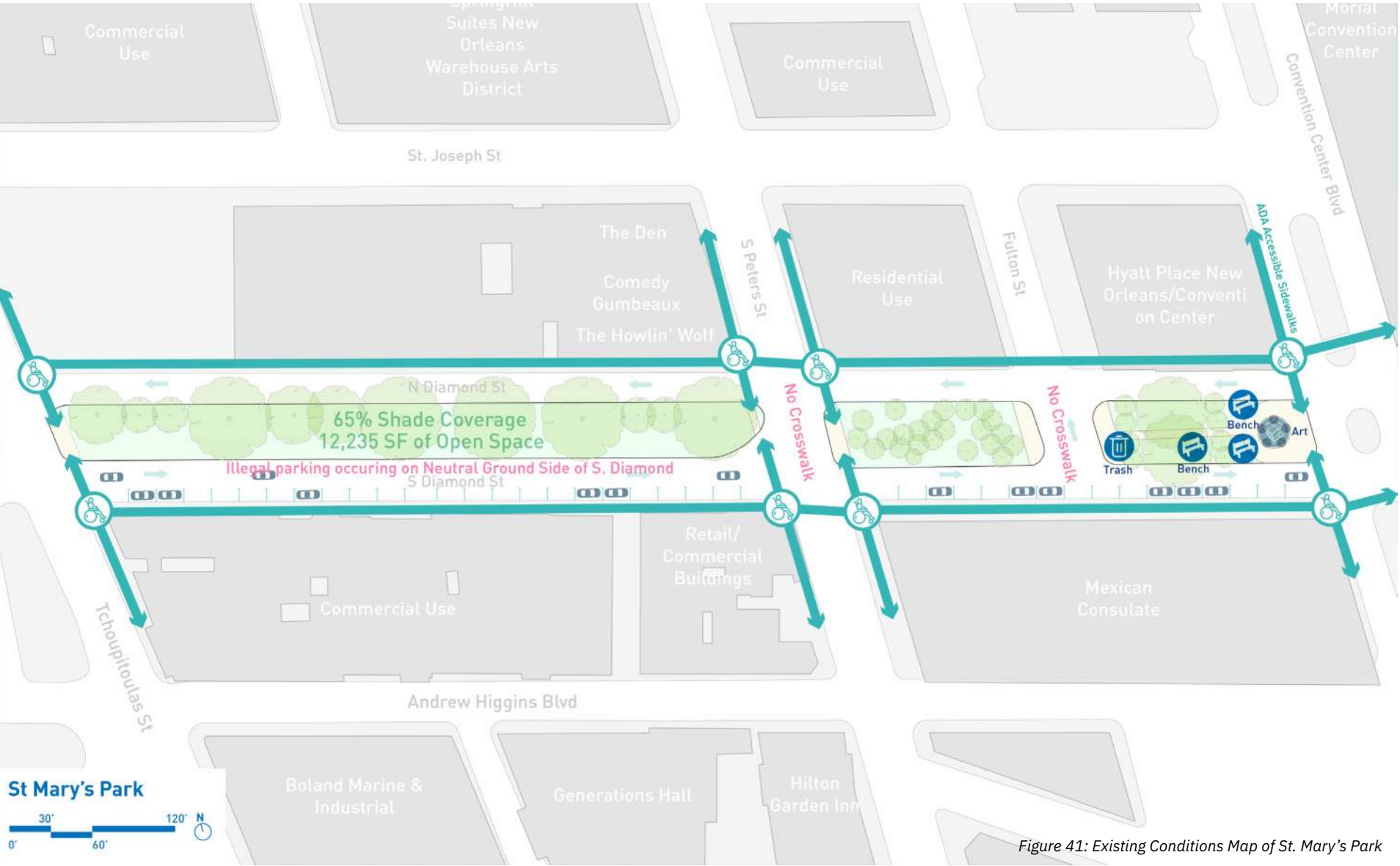
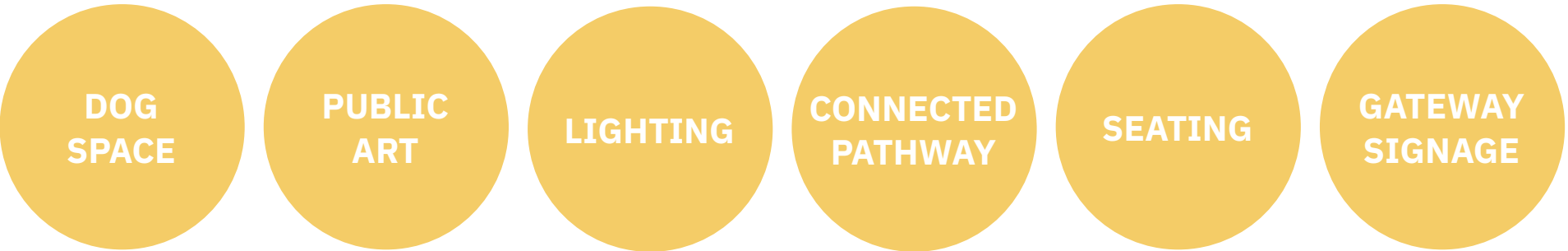


Figure 41: Existing Conditions Map of St. Mary's Park

Community Priorities



ST. MARY'S PARK

Site Analysis

Access

Visitors must pass through a lane of roadway to enter the neutral ground park, although traffic along Diamond Street is minimal. The pathway in the park begins at Convention Center Blvd. and ends at Fulton Street, leaving the majority of the park without a pathway. The park is separated by roadways at two locations. Unique and historic stone signage welcomes visitors to the park - although not very visibly.

Comfort

Trees planted along the length of the neutral ground provide a pleasant and shaded environment that is unique to streets in the area. There are a few planters and trash cans scattered throughout the park. Four stone column replica benches sit at the park entrance along Convention Center Boulevard.

Daytime Uses

Active daytime uses in the park generally consist of using the pathway to pass though the space and onto the next destination. However, the very limited seating at the Convention Center side of the park does provide a place for rest for the many visitors to the immediately adjacent Mexican Consulate. The stone column replica benches are often fully occupied by these users enjoying a moment of respite from the long wait times and lines within the busy consulate.

Event/Programming Potential

The linear space is approximately 45 feet wide throughout and with somewhat limited existing ground plane. There are currently no electrical outlets, water spigots, or bathrooms. There may be potential to interact with existing and future businesses along the corridor by hosting events where these businesses could temporarily expand into the park.



Takeaways

- Create an activate promenade.
- Provide pathways, seating, and lighting within the neutral ground.
- Diamond Street should be an important connector in the Warehouse District of Downtown.
- Invite visitors from nearby destinations to utilize the space.
- Support existing activities like dog waking.
- Announce the space with signage and gateways.
- Enhance safety and access.



Figure 42: Nighttime Perspective entering park from Convention Center Boulevard (Manning, APC)

ST. MARY'S PARK

Vision

The Diamond St. corridor’s potential for activation is most apparent in its wide, underutilized neutral ground and in its mixed-use urban context. The green and shady neutral ground is a valuable asset in this very urban part of town and should be truly celebrated. The mixed-use development pattern along Diamond St. has a historic character and a few businesses scattered along the way, although its potential is currently unrealized. Additionally, the corridor is uniquely positioned to be an important and engaging connector between the Convention Center and Warehouse District destinations like the World War II Museum, Cochon and other popular restaurants, Harmony Circle, and much more.

The new Diamond Street Promenade will feature a well-lit central pedestrian pathway that will allow nearby residents and visitors to stroll under mature live oaks, enjoy a moment of reflection or conversation on a park bench, and explore neighborhood history through interactive signage. The promenade will also feature two pedestrian plazas (one at the north side and one at the south side) that will serve as new neighborhood gathering spaces and safe places for rest and refuge during a busy day around town. Visitors approaching from Convention Center Blvd. and Tchoupitoulas St. will be welcomed onto the promenade from gateways that will bookend the corridor at each end, featuring iconic signage and public art.

Streetscape improvements along Diamond Street will further enhance and elevate the corridor into a neighborhood asset and destination. The existing thirty-foot roadway is currently too wide for a one-way one lane traffic lane, which encourages vehicles to illegally park along the neutral ground curb. By reducing this roadway width to the approximately twenty-four feet, this extra space can be reallocated to the storefront streetscape. By widening the existing eight-foot sidewalks to fifteen feet, Diamond Street will be provided valuable space for increased pedestrian traffic, enhanced economic activity, and a more vibrant streetscape. This newly expanded streetscape will be able to accommodate sidewalk dining and business displays, street trees, lighting and additional amenities.



Figure 43: Pedestrian promenade and bench seating (Central Park)



Figure 44: Pedestrian experience and activation on a commercial street (Adobe Stock)

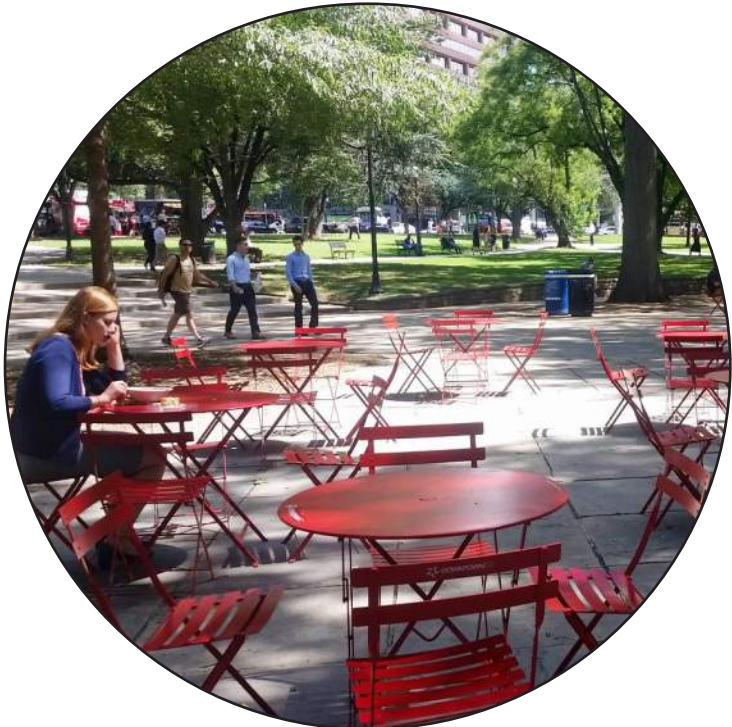


Figure 45: Pedestrian plaza with seating and beautification (Discovery Green)



Figure 46: Iconic park entrance (Adobe Firefly)

ST. MARY'S PARK

Recommendations

1. Central Pedestrian Promenade:

A wide pedestrian pathway will extend from Convention Center Boulevard to Tchoupitoulas Street, serving as an important pedestrian connector between nearby destinations and providing a place of refuge within the urban environment. Seating, lighting, public art, and historic signage will accompany visitors through this unique new public green space in the Warehouse District.

2. Gateways and Plaza Spaces:

Iconic gateways will welcome visitors to the Diamond Street Promenade from the Convention Center and Tchoupitoulas Street sides. Pedestrian plazas along the promenade will provide new public gathering spaces.

3. Streetscape Improvements and Activation along Diamond Street:

The Uptown-side sidewalk will be widened into the existing roadway to provide fifteen-foot sidewalks to enhance pedestrian access and commercial opportunities with amenities like outdoor seating and new street trees. These modifications will help create a new and vibrant commercial corridor in the Warehouse District.

4. Eliminating the Fulton Street Crossover:

Closing the existing Fulton Street vehicular cut through will create a unified promenade between Convention Center Blvd. and S. Peters St.

Proposed Site Plan

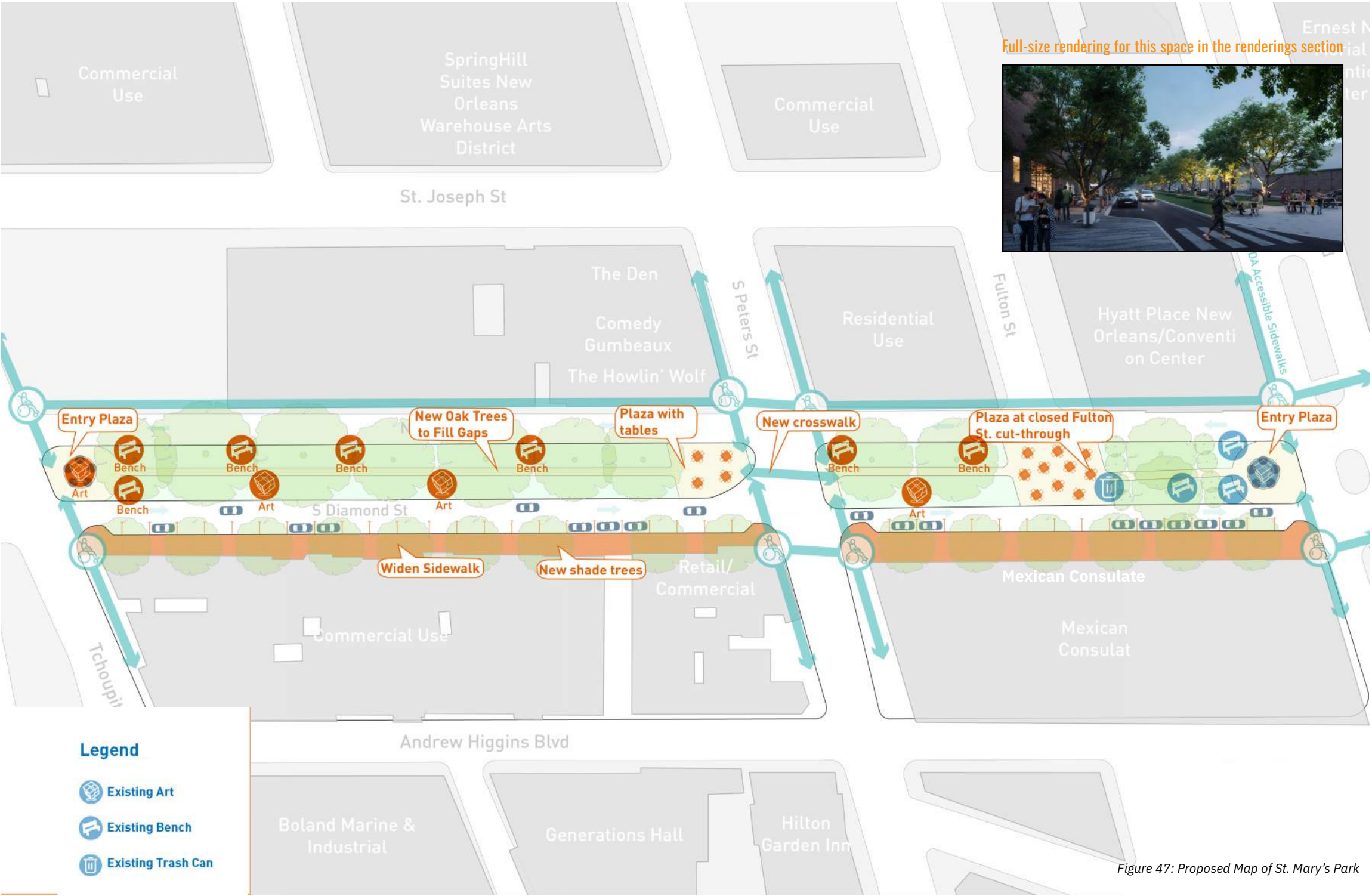


Figure 47: Proposed Map of St. Mary's Park

LEGACY PARK

Park Information

Address:
730 Baronne St.

Site Description:
Pocket park along Baronne St.
Respondents former
International High School

Ownership:
Orleans Parish School Board

Size (Sq Ft):
5,000

Size (Acres):
0.1

Hours of Operation:
7AM - 7PM

Year Opened:
2020

Active Uses/Programming:
None (previously hosted yoga
nights and DDD events)

Note: No PlacerAI to data available for
this site

Park Overview

Legacy Park is the newest addition to the Downtown parks, opening in 2020 as a collaboration between the Downtown Development District and the International High School of New Orleans. The space is a “pocket park” in a bustling section of the Warehouse District and across the street from the popular Rouses Market - a grocery store and popular Downtown lunch destination. The park provides comfortable seating, shade trees, murals, and stormwater management interventions throughout. A welcome addition to the Downtown scene, the park is going through a transitional phase as its neighbor and founding partner, the International High School, recently moved on from its facility immediately adjacent to the space.



Figure 48: Satellite Map of Legacy Park (Google Earth Pro)

LEGACY PARK

Park History

Born from a collaboration between the International High School of New Orleans and the Downtown Development District in 2020, this pocket park showcases urban planning trends like civic engagement, “tactical urbanism,” and sustainable stormwater management. Situated across from Rouse’s on Baronne, which boosted the South Market District’s residential occupancy, the park has great potential but faces challenges, causing its gate to be locked at times. Originally a surface parking lot for the school, it was meant to be an urban refuge for students, staff, and locals. Since the school moved in 2024, activity at the park has declined, though it once hosted events like yoga nights and educational sessions on stormwater management.

Timeline

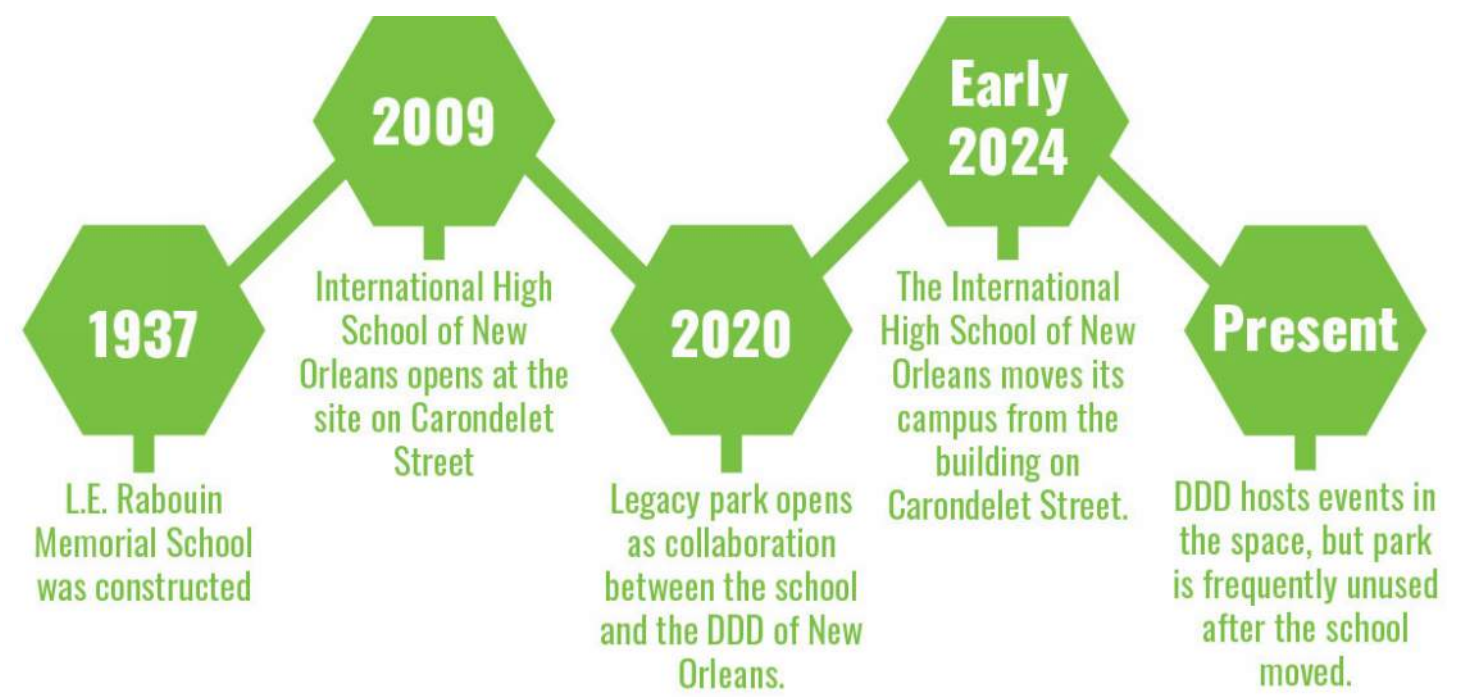


Figure 50: Former parking lot at the International High School of New Orleans - where Legacy Park is now located (Google Earth Pro)

LEGACY PARK



Figure 51: String lights illuminate the park at night (Manning, APC)



Figure 52: Stairway seating and lighting at the outdoor classroom (Manning, APC)



Figure 53: Tables and chairs at the entrance to the park (Manning, APC)

Existing Conditions Map



Figure 54: Existing Conditions Map of Legacy Park

Community Priorities

EVENTS &
VENDORS

SAFETY &
SECURITY

DOG
PARK

LEGACY PARK

Site Analysis

Access

The site is fully enclosed by metal fencing and gated access is provided along Baronne Street. The site is segmented into two separate fenced in areas. Welcoming signage is very limited and passersby can easily overlook the park.

Comfort

Assorted seating options including circular tabletops and benches, bench seating, and stairway stadium seating. Pedestrian-scaled lighting is provided in the park. Ample shade is provided by mature trees in the front portion of the park. Colorful murals contribute to an aesthetically pleasing environment and create engagement within the space.

Daytime Uses

The pocket park along busy Baronne Street allows visitors a place to stop and relax. Students and faculty/staff from International High School formerly used the park on a daily basis, but this is no longer the case as the school has relocated to a new neighborhood. The park features an outdoor classroom space at the rear.

Events and Programming

The modern space is well suited for small events as there is adequate surfacing, electrical and water access, and lighting. The park is adjacent to a very high density of walkable destinations such as mid-rise residential, commercial, hotels, and offices. Past programming includes DDD events, yoga nights, and stormwater management educational sessions.



Takeaways

- Announce the space with signage and gateways.
- Increase safety and security.
- Implement an effort of programming to welcome visitors to the space.
- Activate the rear of the space - former classroom.
- Consider use as a pocket dog park or event space.



Figure 55: Murals adorn walls throughout the park (Manning, APC)

LEGACY PARK

Vision:

Legacy Park has two exciting options for renovations, each designed to enhance the community experience. Due to concerns about security and vandalism, the park will incorporate controlled access measures. The two proposed concepts are:

- 1. Pocket Dog Park with Controlled Access:** This concept envisions a safe, clean, and enjoyable space for pet owners and their dogs. The park would be equipped with a secure entry system to maintain safety and cleanliness, ensuring that only authorized users can access the area. Key features include pet amenities such as water stations, waste disposal stations, and agility equipment, which will provide a fun and convenient environment for dogs, promoting exercise and well-being. Additionally, seating areas will offer pet owners a comfortable place to relax and socialize while their dogs play, fostering a sense of community among park-goers.
- 2. Private Outdoor Event Space:** This versatile area is designed to host a variety of small community events, from outdoor fitness classes and performances to social activities and neighborhood meetings. The space would include a flexible layout that can cater to different types of gatherings, whether it's an intimate concert, a fitness class, or a community meeting. Essential amenities like electrical outlets and seating arrangements will support various functions, making the space suitable for a wide range of activities.

Both options aim to create a welcoming and secure environment for all community members, ensuring that Legacy Park remains safe destination for everyone.



Figure 56: Entrance to a SoFA Park - a pocket dog park in San Francisco (SoFA Park)



Figure 57: A pocket dog park (SoFA Park)



Figure 58: Small event in a pocket park (Adobe Stock)



Figure 59: Games in a pocket park (Adobe Stock)

LEGACY PARK

Recommendations:

1. Perimeter Improvements:

An iconic gateway entrance will announce the space and secured access will ensure safety and controlled usage. A seven-foot opaque wall adorned with vibrant murals will encircle the park, complemented by new hedges along the edges

2. Interior Fence Removal:

Removing the existing interior fence that divides the park into two sections will create a unified open space. This modification will enhance accessibility and allow for a more cohesive park experience, encouraging fluid movement and interaction across the entire area.

3. Stepped-Seating Completion

The existing stage will be rounded off to face both sides of the park. If the park is to serve as an event space, this feature will accommodate performances and points of focus. If the dog park comes to fruition, the stage will serve as flexible, stepped seating for dog owners.

4. Park Furniture:

The park will feature a spacious harvest table designed to host community gatherings, picnics, and social interactions. The surrounding movable furniture will accommodate flexible events. These features will likely be omitted if the dog park option is chosen.

Proposed Site Plan

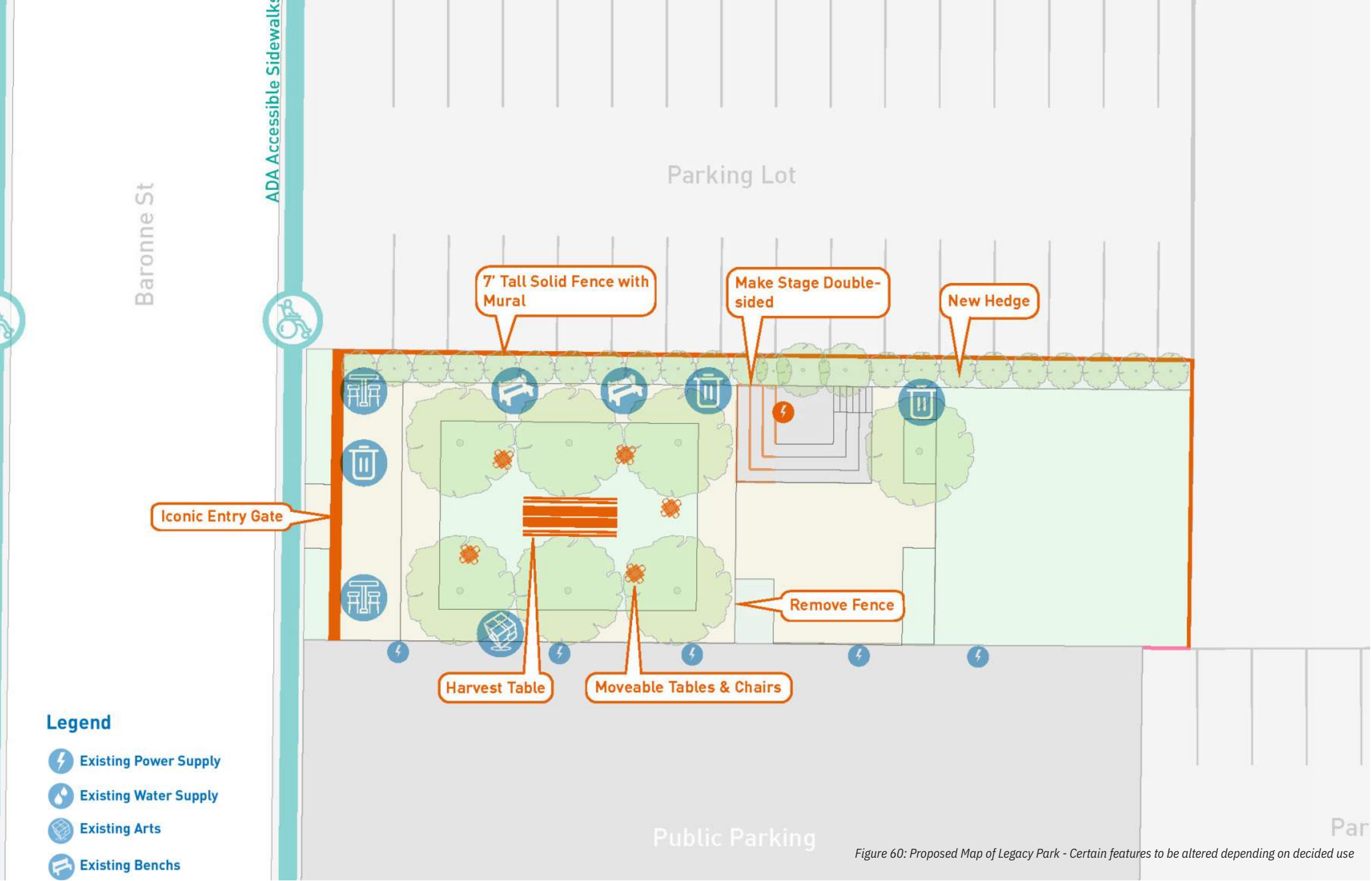


Figure 60: Proposed Map of Legacy Park - Certain features to be altered depending on decided use

LAFAYETTE SQUARE

Park Details

Address:
602 Camp Street

Site Description:
St. Charles, Camp, and
Maestri Place

Ownership:
City of New Orleans

Size (Sq Ft):
131,773

Size (Acres):
3.02

Hours of Operation:
24 Hours

Year Opened:
1800s

Active Uses/Programming:
Numerous events including
Wednesday at the Square
concert series, Blues and BBQ
Festival and more

Visitor Trends



Visitor Journey

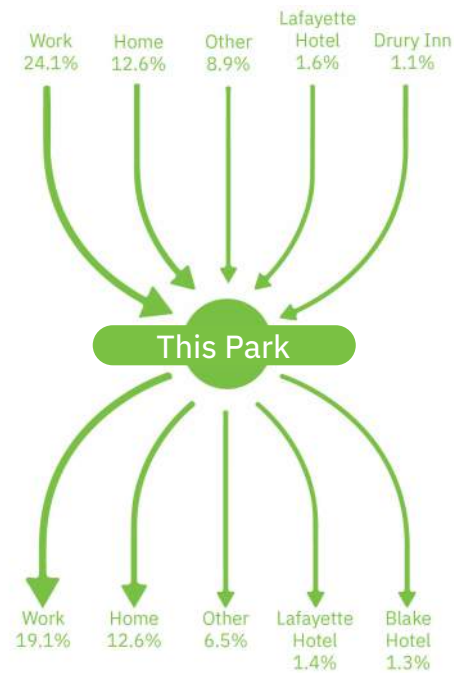


Figure 61: Visitor Trends
(PlacerAI)

Park Overview

Lafayette Square is an iconic and celebrated public space in central New Orleans. The square is lined by majestic live oaks and boasts an enviable public lawn where successful events are held and where visitors enjoy entertainment, social engagement, and relaxation. The square is often activated with lively events, including the popular Wednesday at the Square concert series that boasts live music on a central stage, food and retail vendors, and tent spaces. These events exemplify what Downtown New Orleans is and should be. Much of what makes Lafayette Square such a great urban public space should be replicated in other comparable parks and open spaces around the city. With all of that praise, there is always room to improve, and the historic square has opportunity to adapt to continue to benefit New Orleanians and their visitors.



Figure 62: Satellite Map of Lafayette Square (Google Earth Pro)

LAFAYETTE SQUARE

Park History

The oldest of the studied open spaces, and the only one formally designed as a park, Lafayette Square originated as the central plaza in Spanish surveyor Carlos Trudeau’s plan to expand New Orleans upon the Gravier Plantation in the immediate aftermath of the Good Friday Fire of 1788, which laid waste to the heart of today’s French Quarter. Labeled only as “Plaza” in what Trudeau described as the Suburbio Santa Maria, the park was named in 1825 to honor the Marquis de Lafayette during the Frenchman’s tour of the United States, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the American Revolution. Francophones called this neighborhood the Faubourg Ste. Marie, while incoming English-speakers called it St. Mary, or “the American sector.” Today Lafayette Square is the heart of the Central Business District, fronted by important public buildings of federal and local governance, including Gallier Hall (City Hall from 1852 to 1958). Growing residential occupancy in the CBD since the 1990s has brought about greater use of Lafayette Square as a festival space, programming that may be improved with the installation of appropriate infrastructure.

Timeline

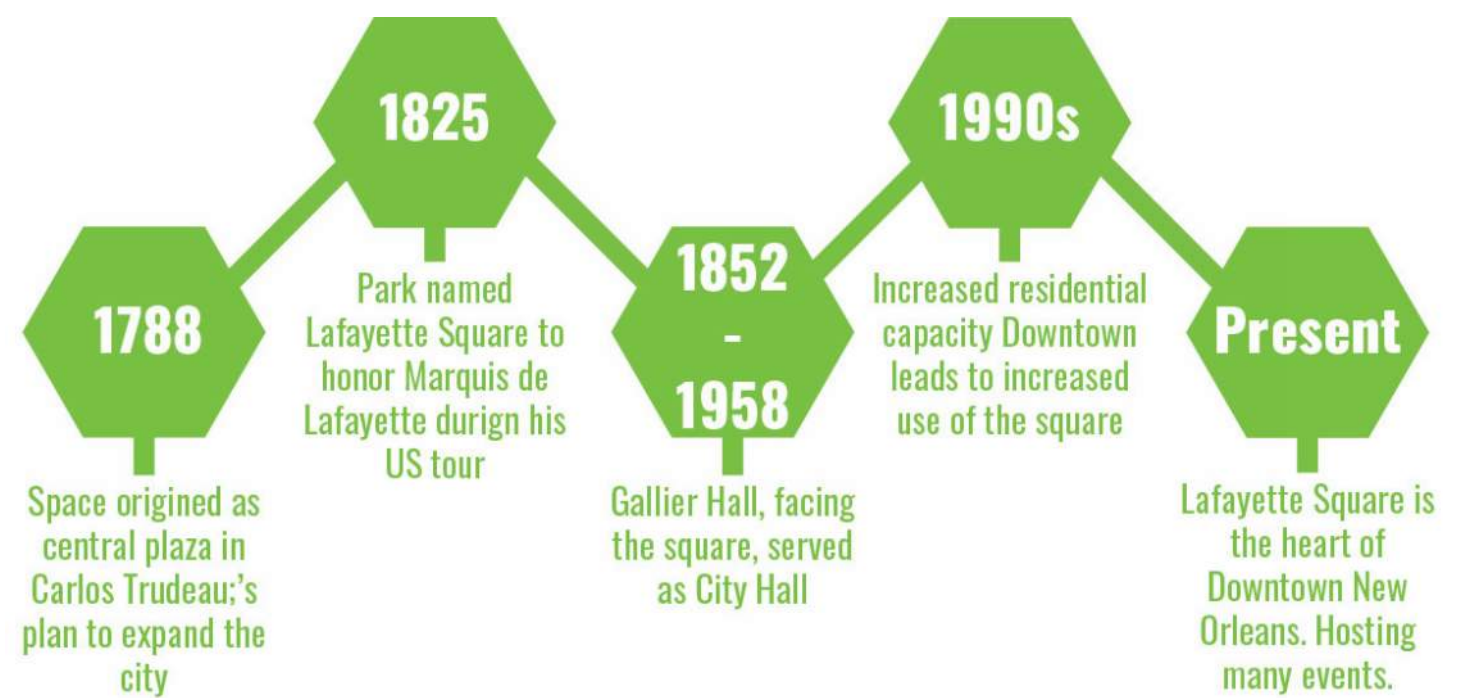


Figure 64: Lafayette Square in the early 1900s; note First Presbyterian Church at left and City Hall, now Gallier Hall, to the right (Library of Congress)

LAFAYETTE SQUARE



Figure 65: Well-Manicured Landscaping (Manning, APC)



Figure 66: Blues Fest at Lafayette Square (Manning, APC)



Figure 67: Large oak trees provide shade - facing Poydras Center office building (Manning, APC)

Existing Conditions Map

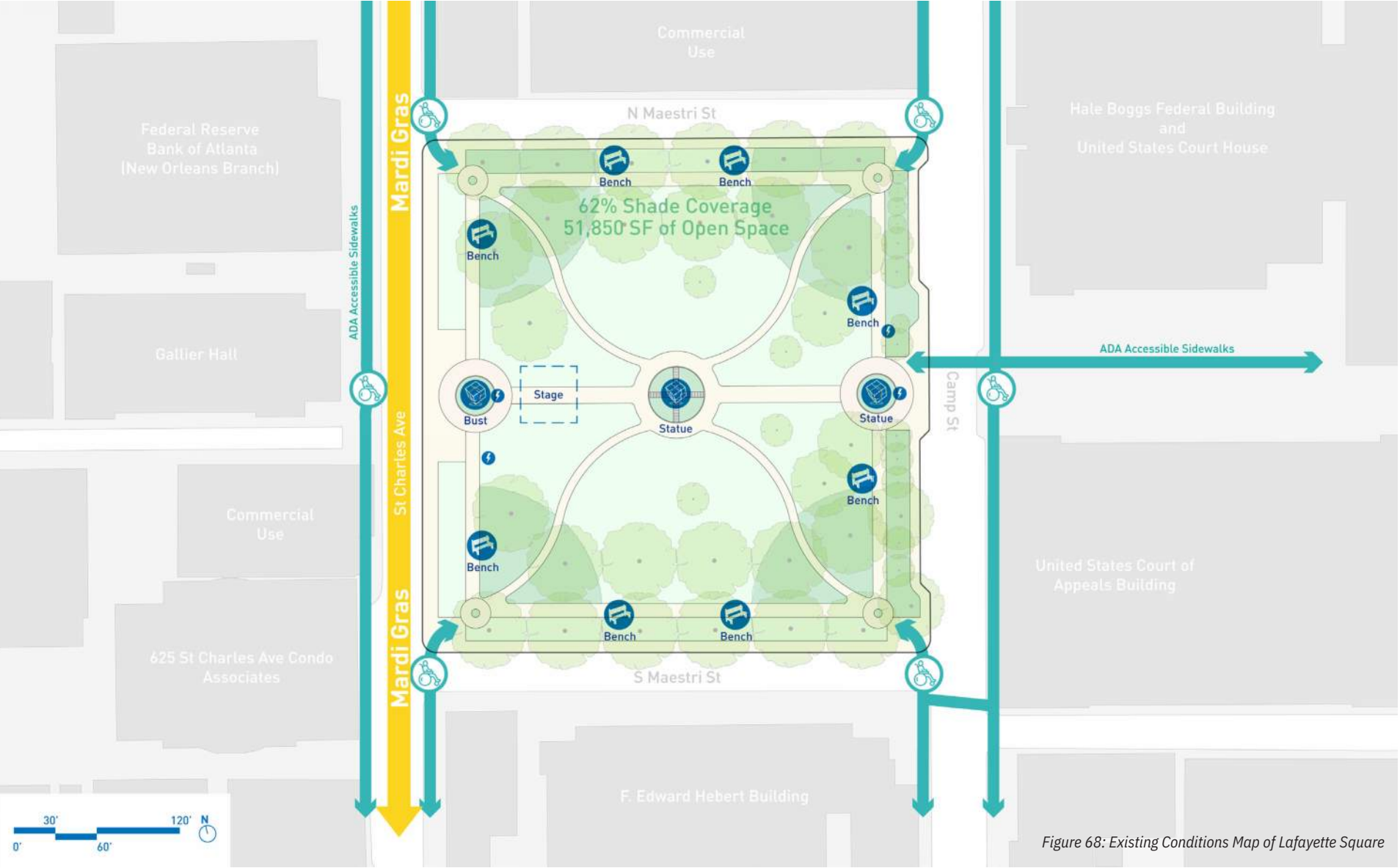
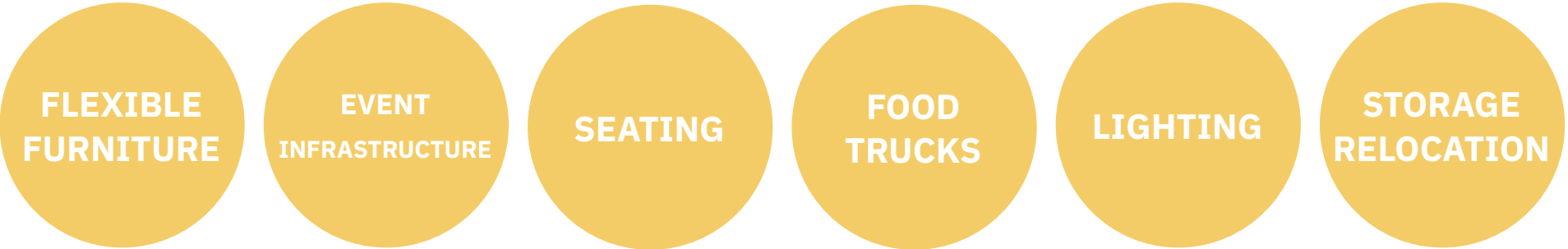


Figure 68: Existing Conditions Map of Lafayette Square

Community Priorities



LAFAYETTE SQUARE

Site Analysis

Access

The square is very accessible on all sides as there is no perimeter fencing and the site is well connected to pedestrian infrastructure. Historical signage and monuments welcome visitors into the space as well.

Comfort

Mature live oaks and other species line the park providing ample shading and additional landscaping is provided throughout the park. There is bench seating provided around the perimeter walkway and a well manicured central lawn where visitors can sit or have a picnic.

Daytime Uses

The large central lawn provides the space for many sorts of activities such as picnics, sports and recreation, yoga, etc. The shaded benches around the perimeter of the site are popular spaces to sit and relax throughout the day.

Events and Programming

Lafayette Square hosts many events throughout the year, the most popular being Wednesday at the Square which is a live concert series where food vendors and retailers set up weekly during the concert events. There is no stage, bathrooms, or electrical outlets on-site and all of this infrastructure must be brought in on a weekly basis.



Takeaways

- Support event capacity with additional infrastructure.
- Explore opportunities for additional site furniture.
- Prioritize safety and security.
- Honor the history of the park
- Replicate the success of the space in other parks around the city.



Figure 69: Perspective of square with Henry Clay Monument at center (Manning, APC)

LAFAYETTE SQUARE

Vision

Lafayette Square is the most recognizable public park in Downtown New Orleans and already possesses many of the features of a great urban green space. The popular events it hosts and centralized location make it an iconic space beloved by many. All this being so, there is always room to improve, and the design team met with event organizers and local residents to gain valuable and focused input. The focus of the recommendations for Lafayette Square is to enhance the ability to host vibrant events and to make daily interactions with the park more comfortable, safe, and convenient.

Event infrastructure improvements should include new electrical hookups and water access at the North and South Maestri sides of the park and a new storage shed for furniture and supplies, as these improvements were direct requests of event organizers. These new electrical hookups and water access will also serve as hookup stations for food trucks during events or for daily use. Additional improvements for daily use and events alike include movable furniture for the central lawn that can be stored in the new storage shed. These new amenities will allow visitors to eat lunch, gather with friends, or take a moment of rest in the central lawn that is largely underutilized on a typical day. New lighting is needed in the southeastern corner of the site and paved entryways and at the North and South Maestri sides of the park - as was mentioned by residents and event organizers.

For an iconic public space such as Lafayette Square, large scale changes are not needed or desired. However, strategic improvements born from the everyday users of the space will only enhance the space as it continues to help shape daily life in Downtown New Orleans for years to come.



Figure 70: Movable furniture in a public park
(Landscape Forms)



Figure 71: Wednesday at the Square at Lafayette Square
(Young Leadership Council of New Orleans)



Figure 72: Dedicated spaces for food trucks
(The University Star)



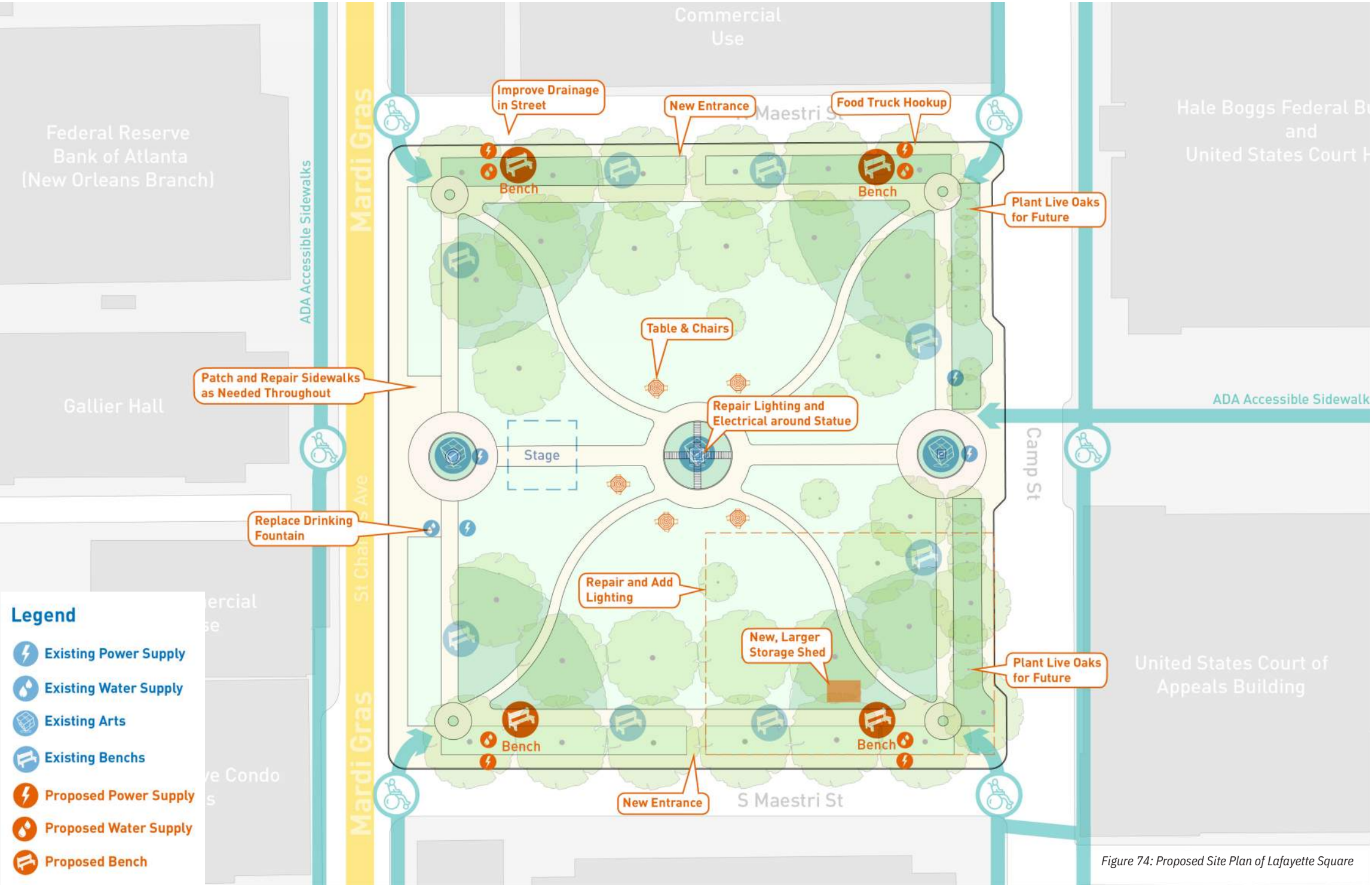
Figure 73: Pedestrian lighting along park pathway
(Adobe Stock)

LAFAYETTE SQUARE

Recommendations

- 1. Event Infrastructure - Additional electric outlets, water access, and food truck hookups:** Infrastructure to support events and everyday activities.
- 2. Movable Furniture:** Tables and chairs to activate the central lawn on a daily basis.
- 3. Sidewalk repairs and new entrances:** Repairs of existing sidewalks and adding new entrances along North and South Maestri Streets will improve access to the park.
- 4. Improved lighting:** Improving the lighting throughout the park will increase safety and access during evening hours.
- 5. New enlarged storage shed along S. Maestri Street:** Moving and enlarging the existing shed will optimize space usage along the northern end of the park and will accommodate additional storage for events.

Proposed Site Plan



PIAZZA D'ITALIA

Park Details

Address:
377 Poydras Street

Site Description:
Mid-block plaza in between Poydras and Lafayette Streets

Ownership:
City of New Orleans

Size (Sq Ft):
28,749.60

Size (Acres):
0.66

Hours of Operation:
7AM to Sunset

Year Opened:
1979

Active Uses/Programming:
Luna Fête
Italian American Festival
Opera in the Piazza
Private Events

Visitor Trends



Visitor Journey

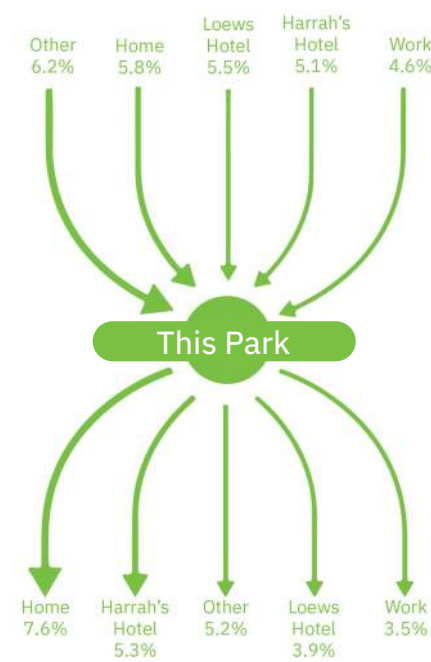


Figure 75: Visitor Trends (PlacerAI)

Park Overview

- Piazza D'Italia is an intriguing public space with a storied architectural past. Today, the piazza generally functions as a passive space that provides a quiet moment for nearby office workers and hotel employees or an exploratory pass through for wandering tourists. There are currently no regular events or active programming in the space, although such activities could be accommodated. However, the space does become activated and lively for sporadic events, including the annual Luna Fete annual festival of light, art, and technology, where the Piazza serves as a wonderful backdrop for light shows and visual displays. The Piazza's great potential for hosting large events and accommodating daily uses, is not being actualized currently as the space often sits empty and is unknown to many.



Figure 76: Satellite Map of Piazza D'Italia (Google Earth Pro)

PIAZZA D'ITALIA

Park History

Created to honor the city’s Sicilian-Italian heritage, Piazza D’Italia became famous in architectural circles after it opened in 1979 in what at the time was considered “skid row,” lower Poydras Street, replacing the final block of Commerce Street. Designed by the renowned architect Charles Moore, the outdoor pavilion features bright colors, whimsical interpretations of Roman Classicism, and a cartographical fountain complete with a boot-shaped Italian peninsula jutting into the Mediterranean Sea. By the 1990s, architectural historians credited Moore’s playful design as a paradigm of Postmodernism, and it is often featured as such in architectural survey classes and textbooks. Yet even as its surrounding neighborhood has enjoyed a revival, Piazza D’Italia’s ensconced setting has made it little more than a local curiosity, imperfect for some uses and underutilized for others.

Timeline

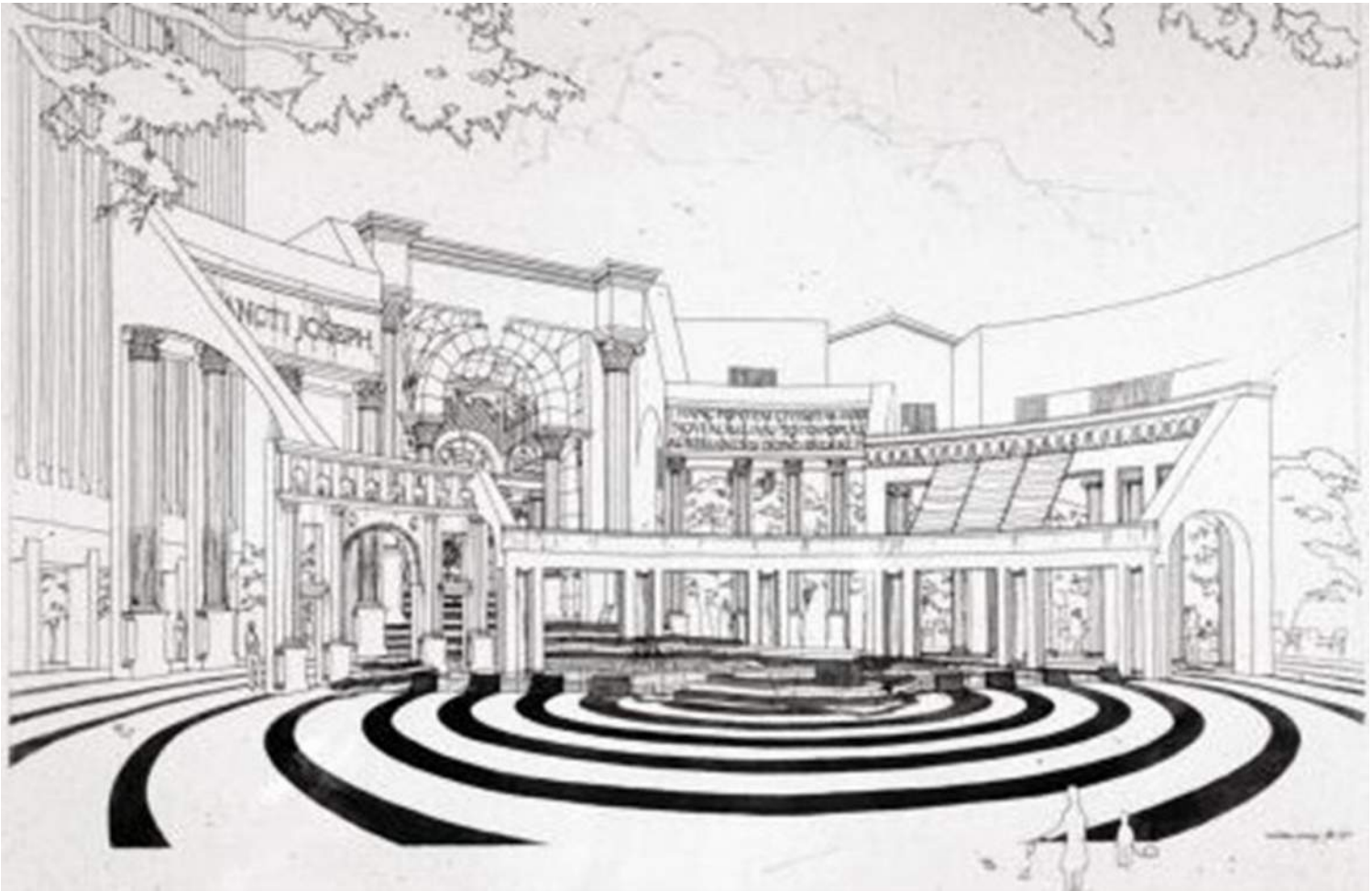
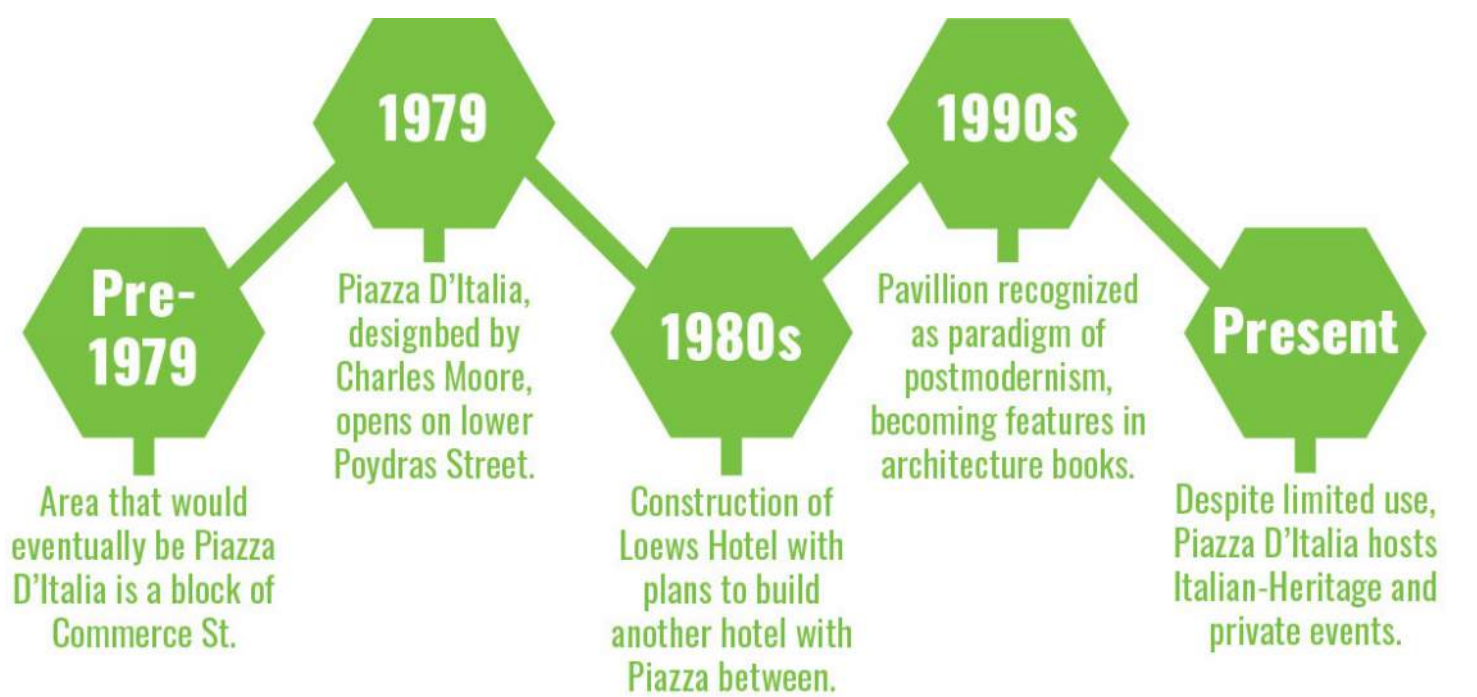


Figure 78: Piazza D’Italia (Charles Moore Foundation)

PIAZZA D'ITALIA



Figure 79: Night photo of Piazza D'Italia (Manning, APC)



Figure 80: Poydras Street entrance to Piazza D'Italia with clock in background (Manning, APC)

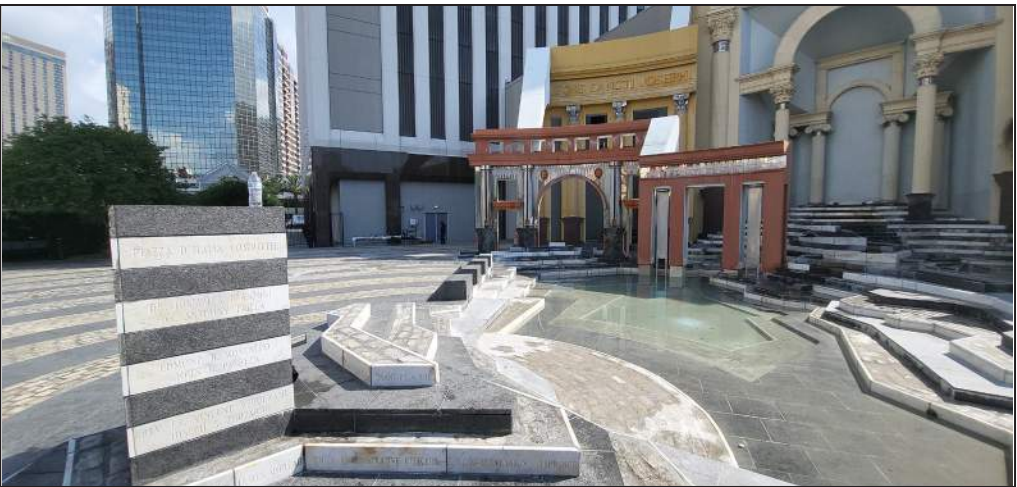


Figure 81: Central fountain in the Piazza (Manning, APC)

Existing Conditions Map

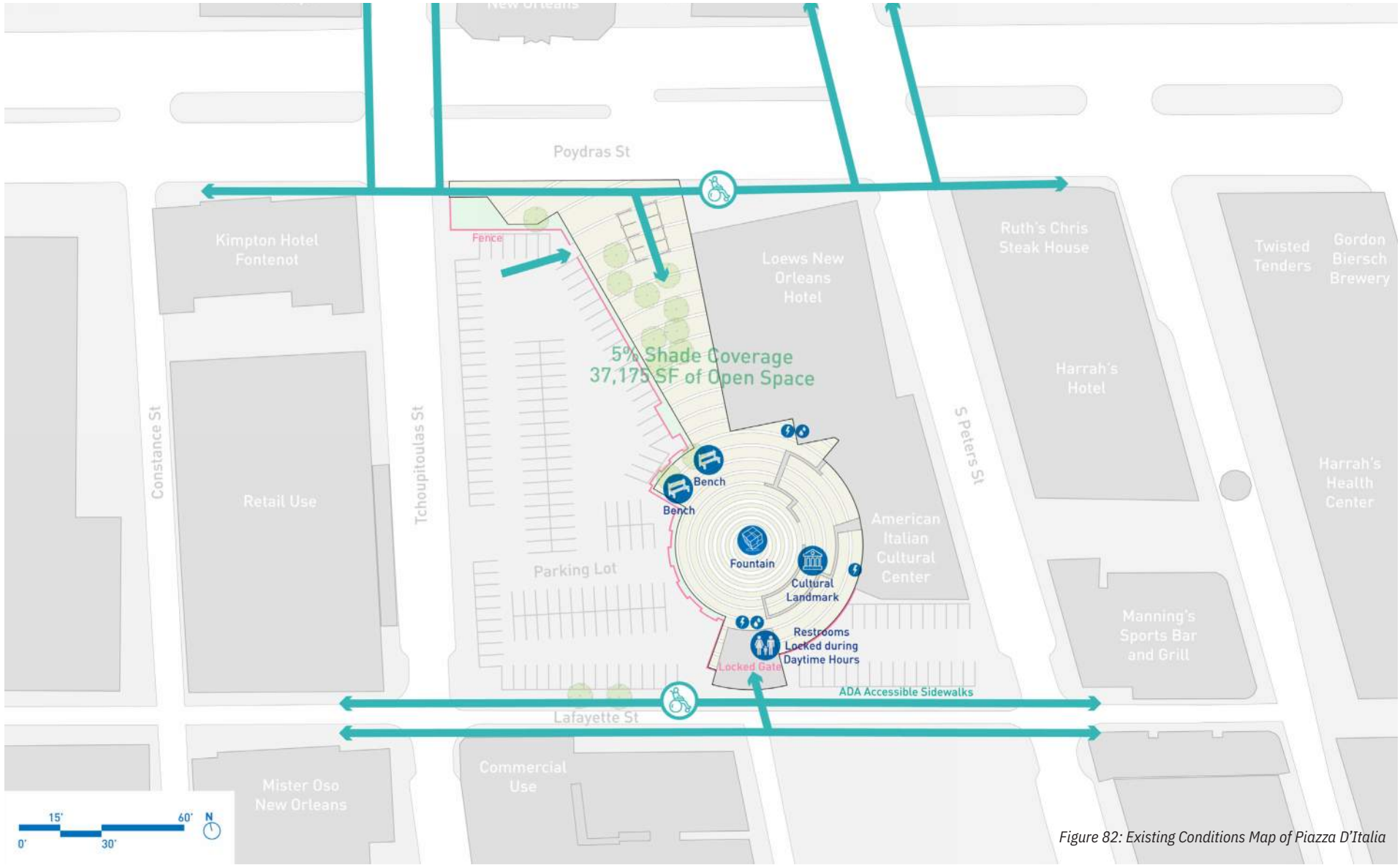


Figure 82: Existing Conditions Map of Piazza D'Italia

Community Priorities



PIAZZA D'ITALIA

Site Analysis

Access

The park is fully enclosed by fencing and adjacent structures. There are 2 gated entryways - one from the Poydras Street side and one from Lafayette Street. Visitors approaching from the Poydras Street side must pass through a lengthy promenade to reach the Piazza. Monumental signage exists along Poydras but this signage is not at the pedestrian scale and is not visible to passing pedestrians. It appears that access was provided from the adjacent Italian Cultural Center in the past but this may no longer be the case.

Comfort

There is very limited shading and landscaping with scattered trees along the fence line and near the structures along the edge of Piazza. A few benches are installed along the fence line and in the promenade leading to the Piazza from Poydras Street. The Piazza colonnade is impressively illuminated at night, but no other lighting is present. Restrooms on-site but locked during daytime hours.

Daytime Uses

Apart from viewing the central monument and fountain, there are no active daytime uses outside of limited bench seating along the perimeter. Due to its proximity to numerous destinations and uses, the Piazza is well situated to accommodate daytime uses.

Events and Programming

The stone-surfaced plaza provides a suitable ground plane for events of all sorts. The site also has access to water spigots, electrical outlets, and on-site bathrooms. Adjacent uses include a high density of hotels, office buildings, businesses and residential properties. The Piazza's unique setting and aesthetics make it an attractive locale for such uses.



Takeaways

- Support activation by providing more seating and shade.
- Announce the space with signage and gateways.
- Provide opportunities for commercial activities.
- Celebrate the history of the space through signage and interactive displays.
- Implement a sustained effort of programming and welcoming visitors to the space.



Figure 83: Perspective of the Piazza (Manning, APC)

PIAZZA D’ITALIA

Vision

The vision for Piazza D’Italia revolves around one man concept - activation. The existing piazza is already iconic, unique, and intimate, yet the space is largely unknown to visitors and locals and is regularly empty on a daily basis. Surrounded on all sides by busy tourist destinations, hotels, residences, and office buildings, the piazza’s location is not the issue but rather awareness of, ease of access to, and activation within the space. The activation plan aims to draw visitors into the piazza and then celebrate the iconic and intimate nature of the space - similar to the experience many travelers feel when the stumble into an intimate plaza on a vacation abroad.

Many passersby on the streets surrounding the piazza are not aware of its existence as signage is sparse and the large sign along Poydras is not at a pedestrian scale. Iconic and illuminated signage thats is visible to both pedestrian and automobile traffic will announce and spark interest to the space. Additionally, decorative lighting, interpretive signage, and vegetated wall providing separation from the nearby parking lot will further draw visitors down the intriguing promenade.

Once inside the piazza, there must be more to offer visitors than the unique blend of Italian architectural elements and fountains. For a daily activation of the space, the addition of movable tables and chairs with colorful umbrellas will invoke a sort of “European” experience that celebrates the architecture and legacy that gives the piazza its name. Curated vendor carts will be invited in to offer visitors items like coffee, wine, and snacks. These offerings will vary depending on the day and time of week, with coffee drawing in office workers on mornings and wine and snacks offered on evenings and weekends. Decorative lighting and music will further round out the experience.

To further capitalize on the intimate activation of the piazza, regular events should be programmed to further celebrate the culture and heritage of the space. Nearby “Wednesday’s at the Square” serves as a model but a more relaxing and sophisticated event would arise - perhaps “Evenings in Italia.”



Figure 84: Vibrant urban plaza with tables and chairs with shade (Adobe Stock)



Figure 85: Small event in Piazza D’Italia (The Times Picayune)



Figure 86: Mobile vendor coffee cart in a park (Adobe Stock)



Figure 87: Neon signage at Symphony Park in Los Angeles (Symphony Park of Los Angeles)

PIAZZA D'ITALIA

Recommendations

- 1. Enhanced Entry Signage:**
Install iconic, well-lit signs to announce the space at all entrances.
- 2. Seating and Shade:**
Introduce comfortable tables and chairs with colorful umbrellas in both the central circle and along the promenade, creating inviting spaces for visitors to relax and enjoy the surroundings.
- 3. Vendors**
Invite vendors into the piazza to further activate the space and entice visitors to stay awhile and enjoy the surroundings.
- 4. Separation from Existing Parking Lot:**
Replace the existing opaque fence with a vegetated wall adorned with vines and decorative lighting to provide separation and enhance the intimacy of the space.
- 5. Tree Lighting in the Promenade:**
Install subtle, decorative lighting in the trees along the promenade, enhancing the ambiance during evening hours and making the area more welcoming for nighttime visitors.

Proposed Site Plan

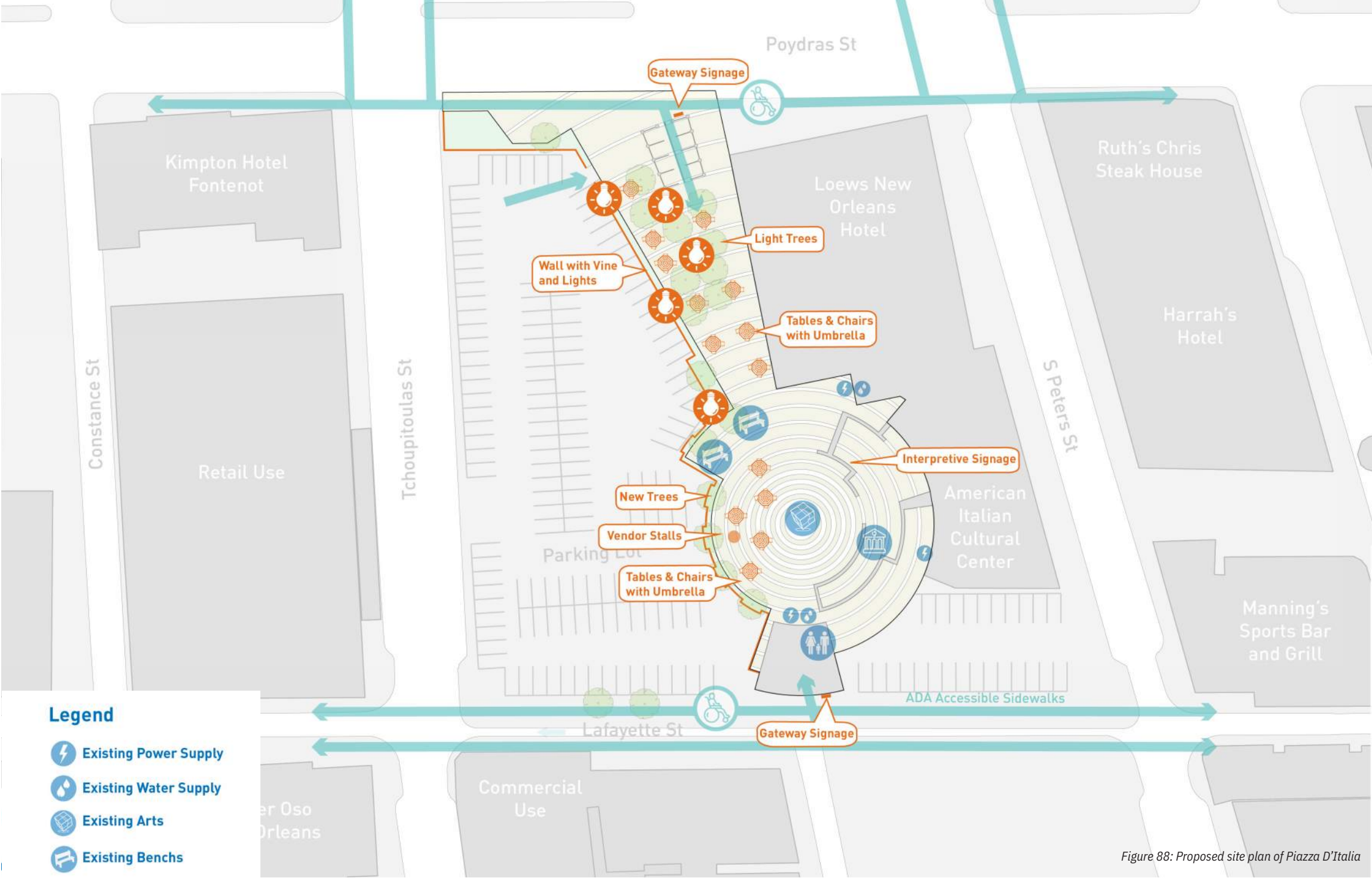


Figure 88: Proposed site plan of Piazza D'Italia

MOLLY MARINE PLAZA

Park Details

Address:
Elk Place

Site Description:
Elk Place Neutral Ground
Between Canal St and Tulane Ave

Ownership:
City of New Orleans

Size (Sq Ft):
13,939
Segmented by Streets

Size (Acres):
0.32
Segmented by Streets

Hours of Operation:
24 Hours

Year Opened:
1943

Active Uses/Programming:
None

Visitor Trends



Visitor Journey

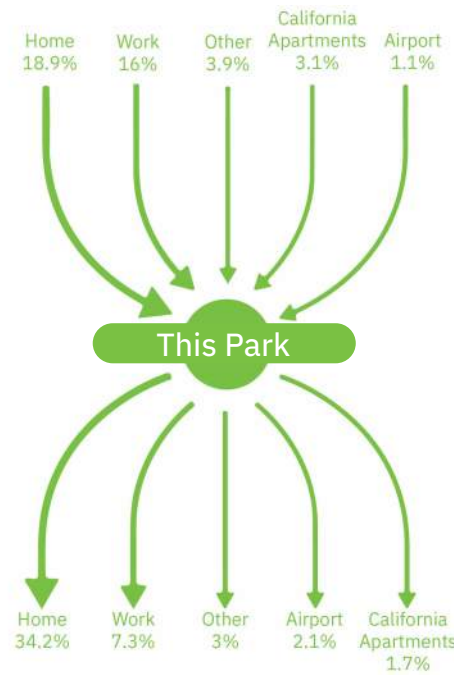


Figure 89: Visitor Trends (PlacerAI)

Park Overview

Molly Marine Plaza sits within the neutral ground of Elk’s Place and adjacent to Canal Street in one of the busiest areas of the city. The Downtown transit hub surrounds the plaza on all sides and major destinations like City Hall, the Downtown medical campuses, and the French Quarter are all within a couple of blocks. Beautiful mature oaks trees line the grounds and surprising historical monuments, markers, and public art adorn the central pathway. However, entering the site can be somewhat difficult due to the busy traffic on all sides and many passersby may not be enticed to venture in as there are no welcoming signs or structures. Molly Marine Plaza is an opportunity to improve upon a great public space in the heart of New Orleans by continuing to celebrate history while also accommodating the experience of the surrounding modern city.

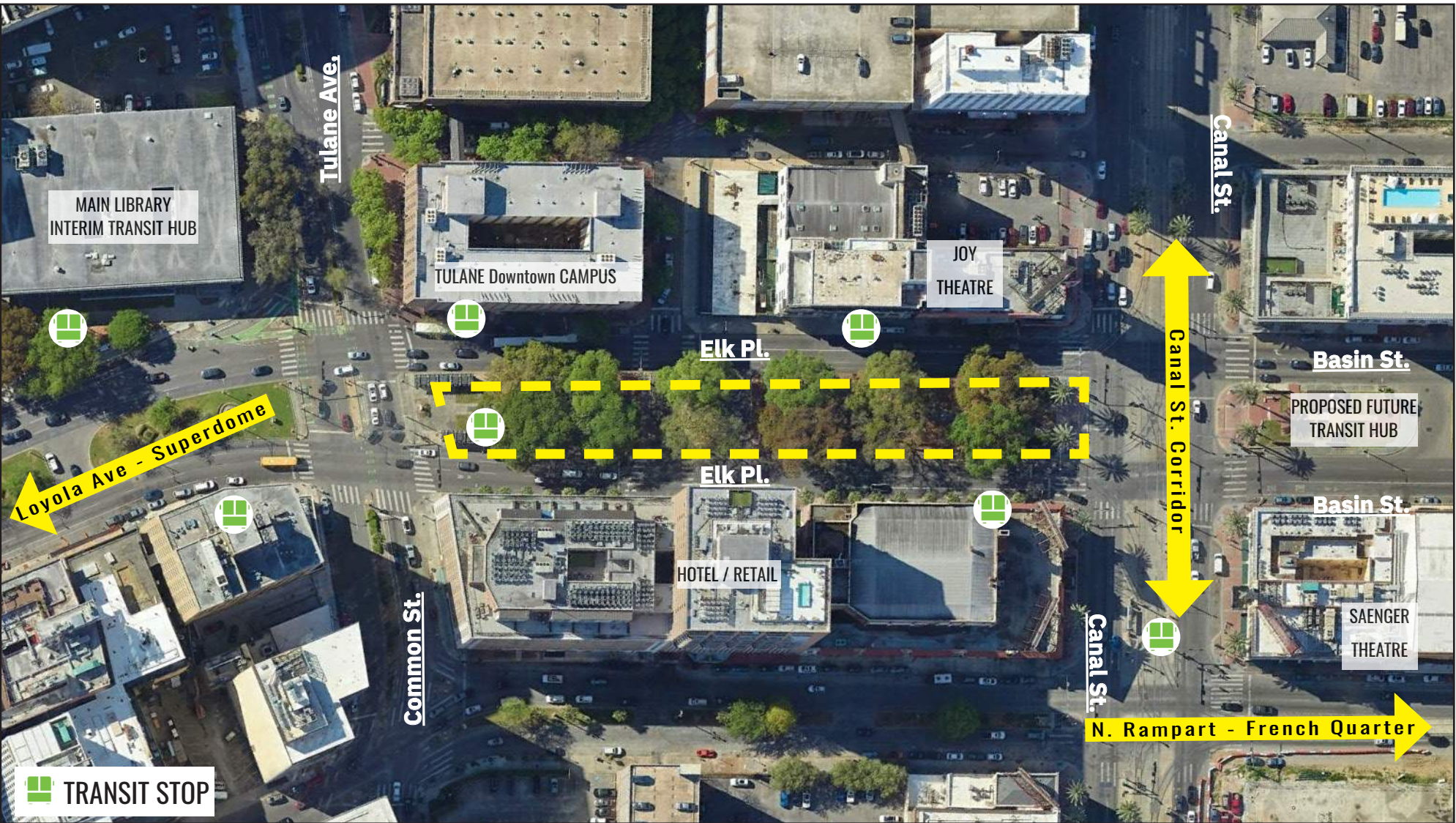


Figure 90: Satellite Map of St. Mary’s Park (Google Earth Pro)

MOLLY MARINE PLAZA

Park History

Molly Marine Park, known today for Mexican sculptor Enrique Alf  rez’s 1943 statue honoring the Woman Reservists of the U.S. Marine Corps, is a shady neutral-ground park filled with public art and commemorations. It was added to the cityscape in 1810 when surveyors laid out the street grid between Canal and Common Street, unifying the circa-1722 French Quarter with the circa-1788 Faubourg St. Marie. Its downriver counterpart, Basin Street, was laid out unusually wide for envisioned navigation, so its upriver extension was also made wide enough to accommodate a neutral ground. Years later, when the Elk Lodge (now Tulane School of Social Work) was built, the park and parallel streets were renamed Elk Place, with a bronze statue of a bull elk placed in the center of the plaza. With the imposing Criminal Court Building at one end, the Southern Railway Station across Canal Street, Chinatown, the Pythian Temple, the Theater District, and Storyville nearby, Elk Place became the heart of one of New Orleans’ most interesting districts. Today, the street is still known as Elk Place, but the park is officially called Molly Marine Plaza.

Timeline

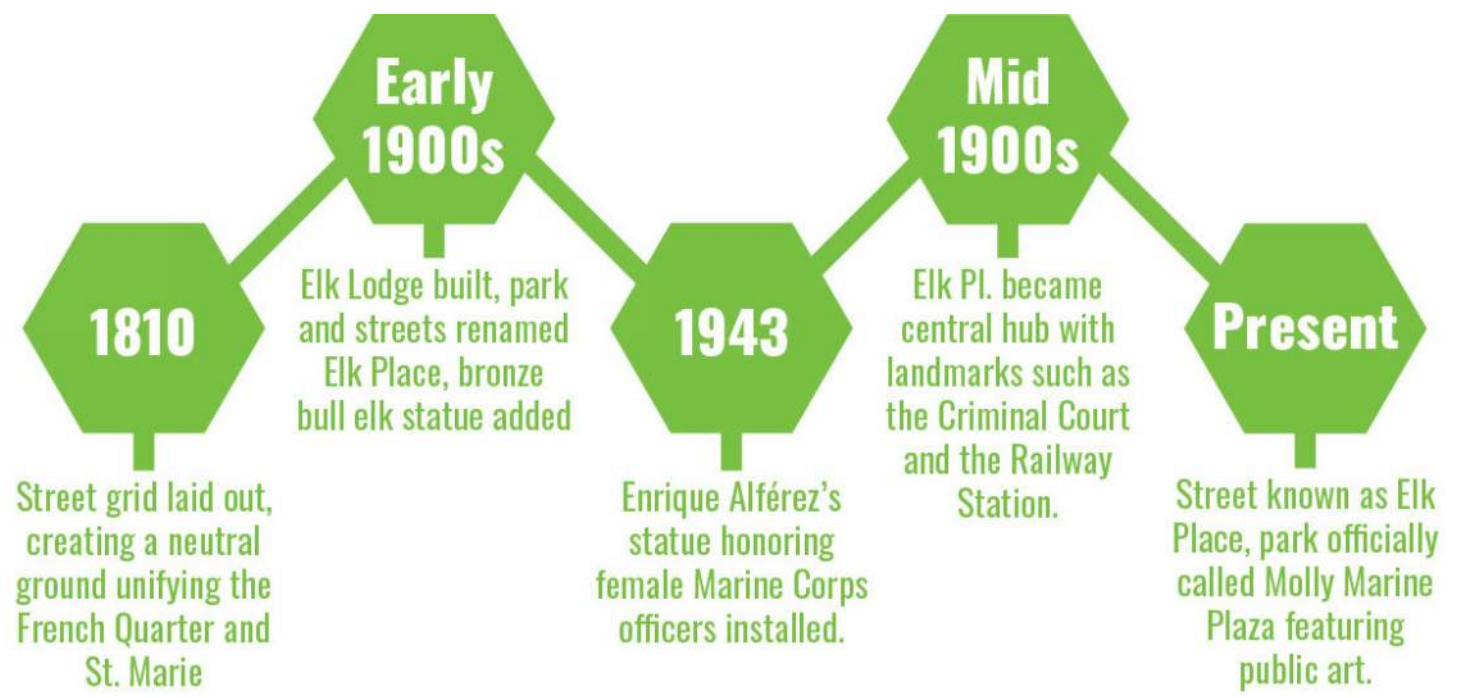


Figure 92: Elk Place, now Molly Marine Plaza, seen around 1906 with the Old Criminal Courthouse in the background (Library of Congress.)

MOLLY MARINE PLAZA



Figure 93: Molly Marine Statue with the Canal Street streetcar passing in the background (Manning, APC)



Figure 94: Monuments placed along central pathway (Manning, APC)



Figure 95: Central pathway with embedded historical markers (Manning, APC)

Existing Conditions Map

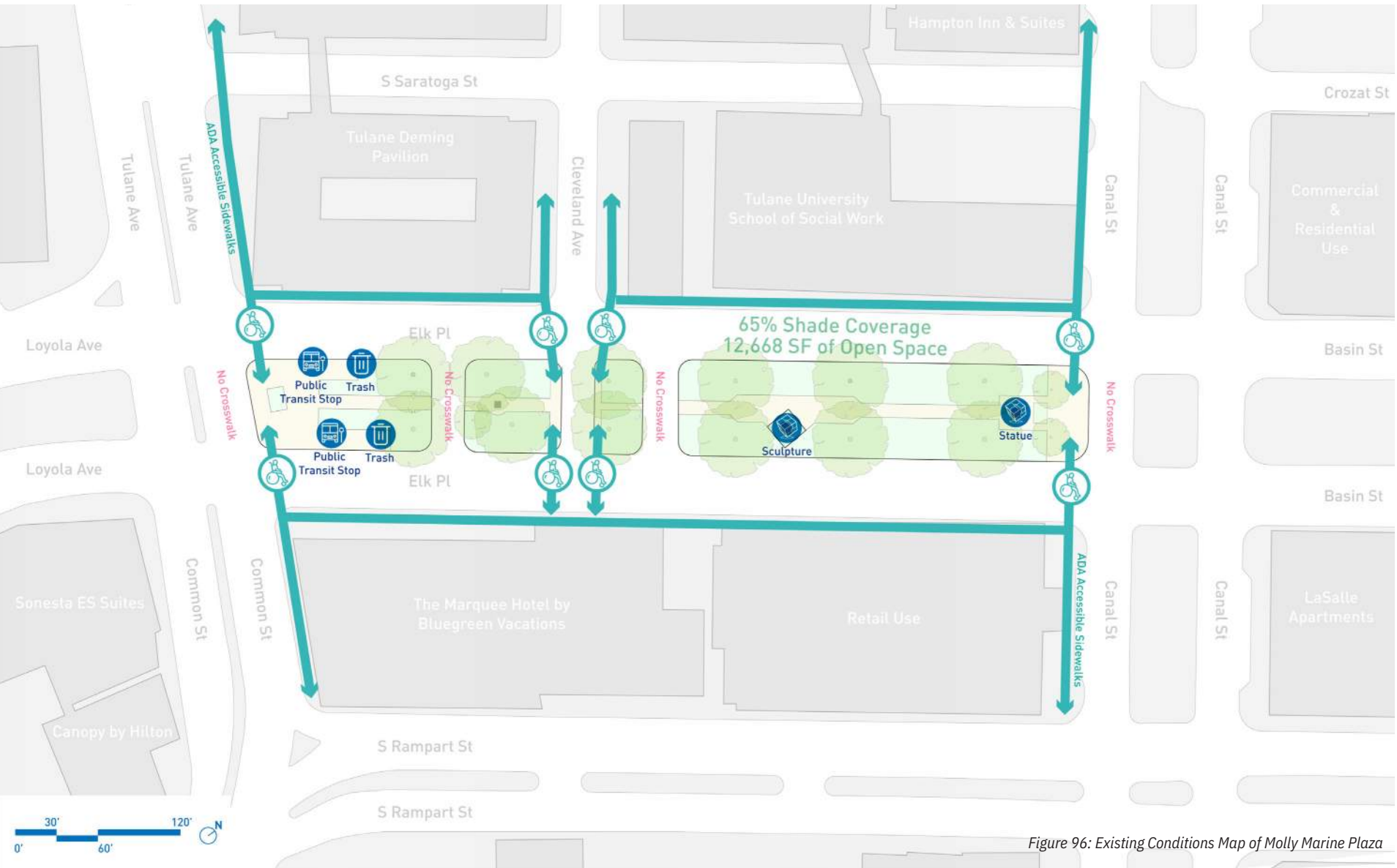
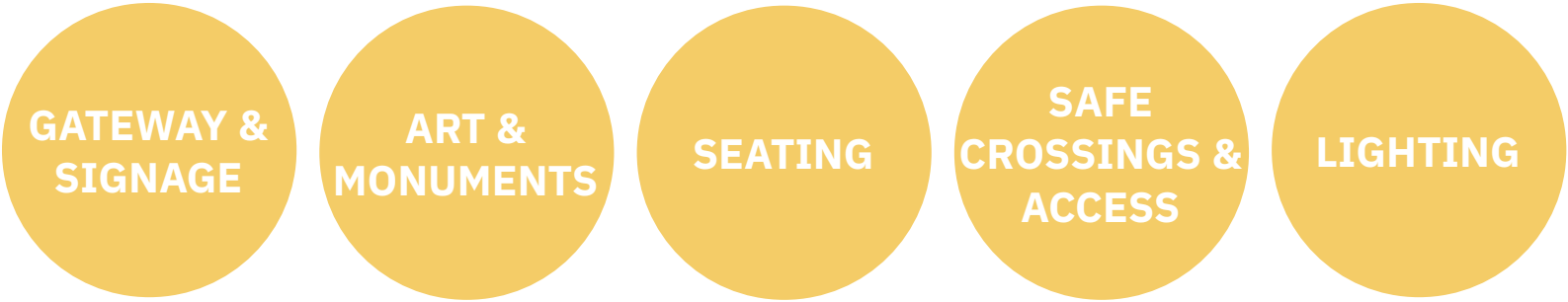


Figure 96: Existing Conditions Map of Molly Marine Plaza

Community Priorities



MOLLY MARINE PLAZA

Site Analysis

Access

Visitors must pass through three busy lanes of vehicular traffic and a streetcar line to enter the park. Signalized crosswalks occur at each intersection. A pedestrian pathway begins at Tulane Avenue and ends at Canal Street. Monument markers are provided throughout, though no signage dedicated the park itself is present.

Comfort

Mature live oaks line the park, providing ample shading, and additional landscaping is provided at monument stops. There is no seating or pedestrian scaled lighting within the park.

Daytime Uses

The park is generally a transitional space where visitors pass through along the pathway or cross the street between destinations and transit stops. Historical markers and monuments are placed throughout the park - these site elements are interesting features although little known and likely underutilized.

Events and Programming

There are currently no regular events or active programming in the space and such activities could prove difficult in the space due to heavy vehicular and transit traffic in the area. There is currently no programming/event-based infrastructure within the park.



Takeaways

- Announce the space with signage and gateways.
- Increase safety and security.
- Provide safe access to and within the space.
- Celebrate the history of the space through signage and interactive displays.
- Support and complement nearby transit activities.



Figure 97: The park is currently segmented by three vehicular turnarounds within one block (Manning, APC)

MOLLY MARINE PLAZA

Vision

The recommendations for Molly Marine Plaza are centered around access and visibility. Many who pass by the park for the first time or the hundredth time are not aware that the space is meant for visitors to enter. They also aren't sure how the space should be accessed.

Iconic signage will invite visitors into the plaza, identifying it as a public park. Signage will also tell the story of monuments and art installations. Decorative lighting will illuminate the space beneath the mature live oaks for safety and visual interest. New ADA accessible entries at Cleveland Avenue and between the neutral ground islands that separate the three sections of the park will increase accessibility for all users. We recommend creative crosswalks expressing local culture and drawing attention to the space. Additionally, a low fence and landscaping will enclose the site to discourage mid-block crossings and provide additional safety for visitors.

Another unique characteristic of the park and its location is its connection with local public transit. Two streetcar stops are located within the park itself, the temporary Downtown Transit Center is located a block away, and many of the corners around the park are high-traffic bus stop locations. In total, there are twenty-four transit stops that operate within a block of the site.

There are currently three vehicle turnarounds that bisect the park in the single block between Tulane and Cleveland Avenues. By removing the turnaround closest to Tulane Ave., the park will gain the necessary square footage to construct a weather protected seating plaza able to provide rest and refuge to transit users and everyday passersby alike. This new seating plaza would be covered by a waterproof shade structure that provides protection from weather elements. The sides would be open and the space well lit for visibility and safety. With a permanent Downtown Transit Center in the works but still years away, well-situated spaces like Molly Marine Plaza can help provide safe, comfortable, and convenient places of refuge for transit users and everyday users of the park as it transitions into a more active and utilized public space.



Figure 98: Decorative lighting illuminating a public space (Discovery Green)



Figure 99: Covered seating plaza for weather protection (Adobe Stock)



Figure 100: Inspirational public art installations for all to enjoy (Adobe Stock)



Figure 101: Creative crosswalks provide safe crossings and visual interest (Adobe Stock)

MOLLY MARINE PLAZA

Improvement Description

- 1. Transit Plaza:**
Erect a weather-proof shade structure and seating area at the closed vehicular cut-through for transit users and passersby.
- 2. Improve Park Edges;**
Install a low fence and evergreen shrubs along the park perimeter to discourage mid-block crossings and guide foot traffic to designated areas, enhancing pedestrian safety.
- 3. Mid-block Crossings**
Introduce ADA-accessible crosswalks with ramps for safe and convenient passage. Close one vehicular cut-through and improve as park space.
- 4. Enhanced Lighting:**
Improve lighting throughout the plaza to increase safety and access during evening hours, making the park more inviting and secure.
- 5. Public Art:**
Install inspiration public art features to complement existing installations and help enhance the identity of the park.

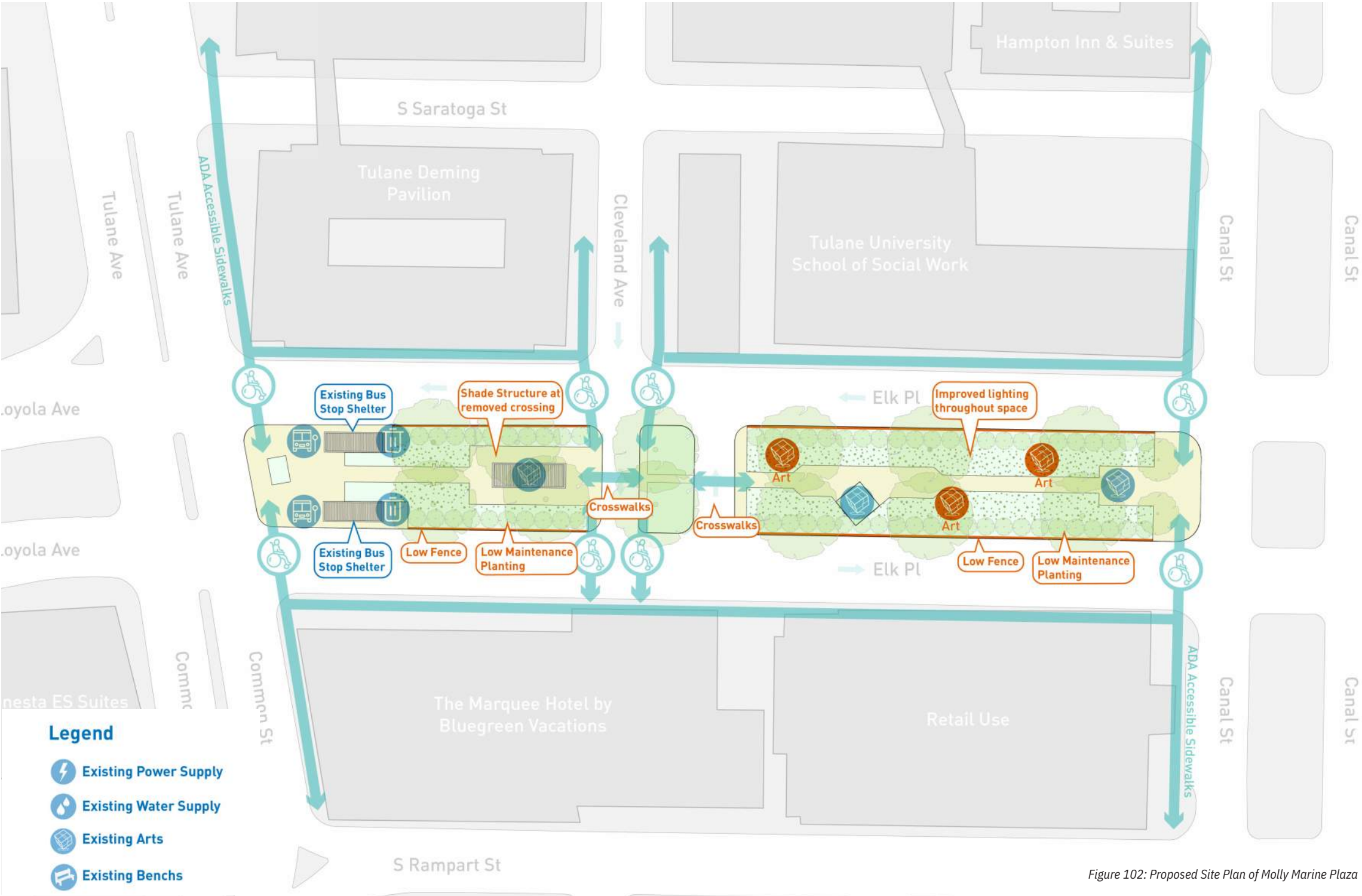
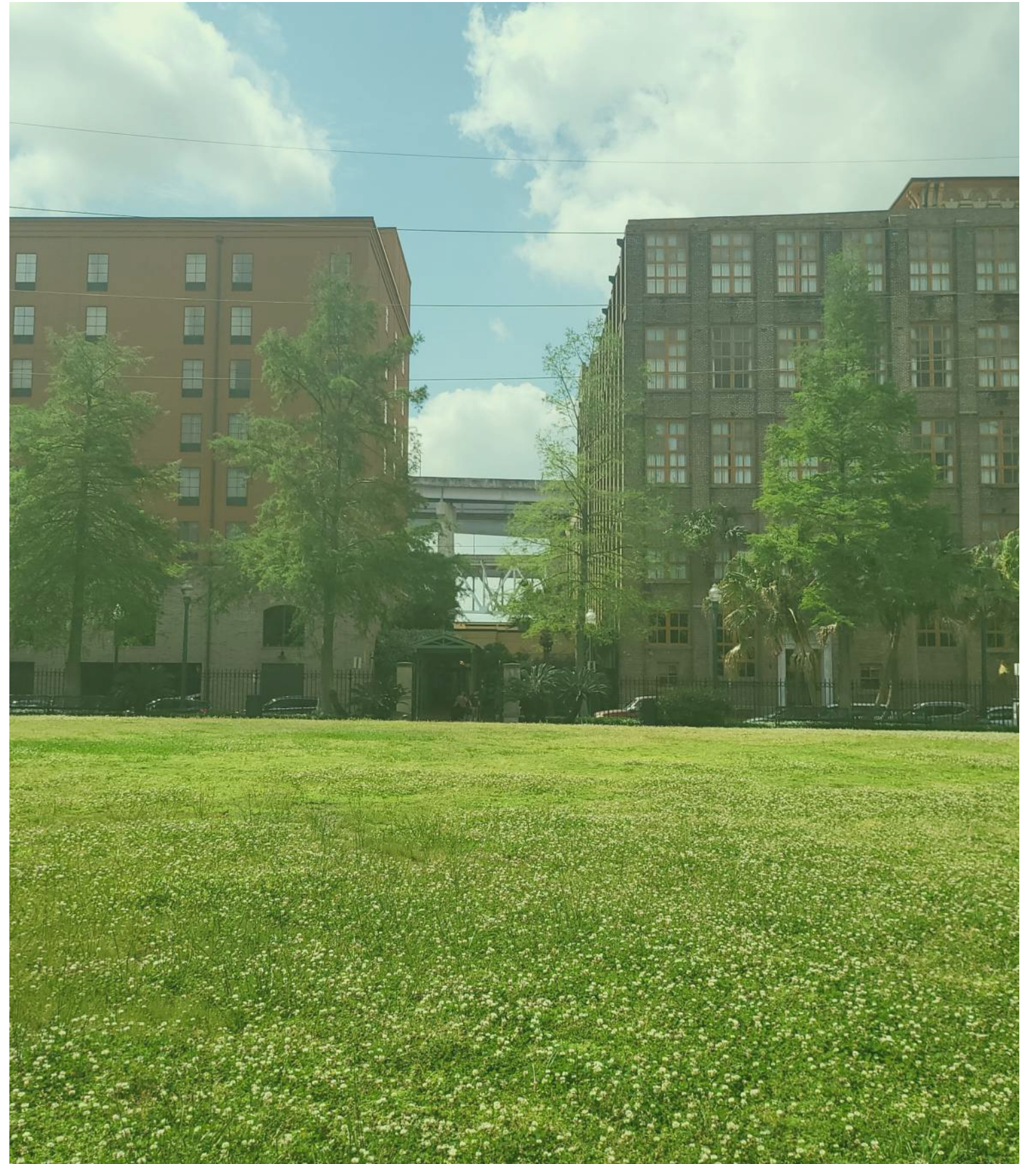


Figure 102: Proposed Site Plan of Molly Marine Plaza

RENDERINGS

SECTION 4



MISSISSIPPI RIVER HERITAGE PARK

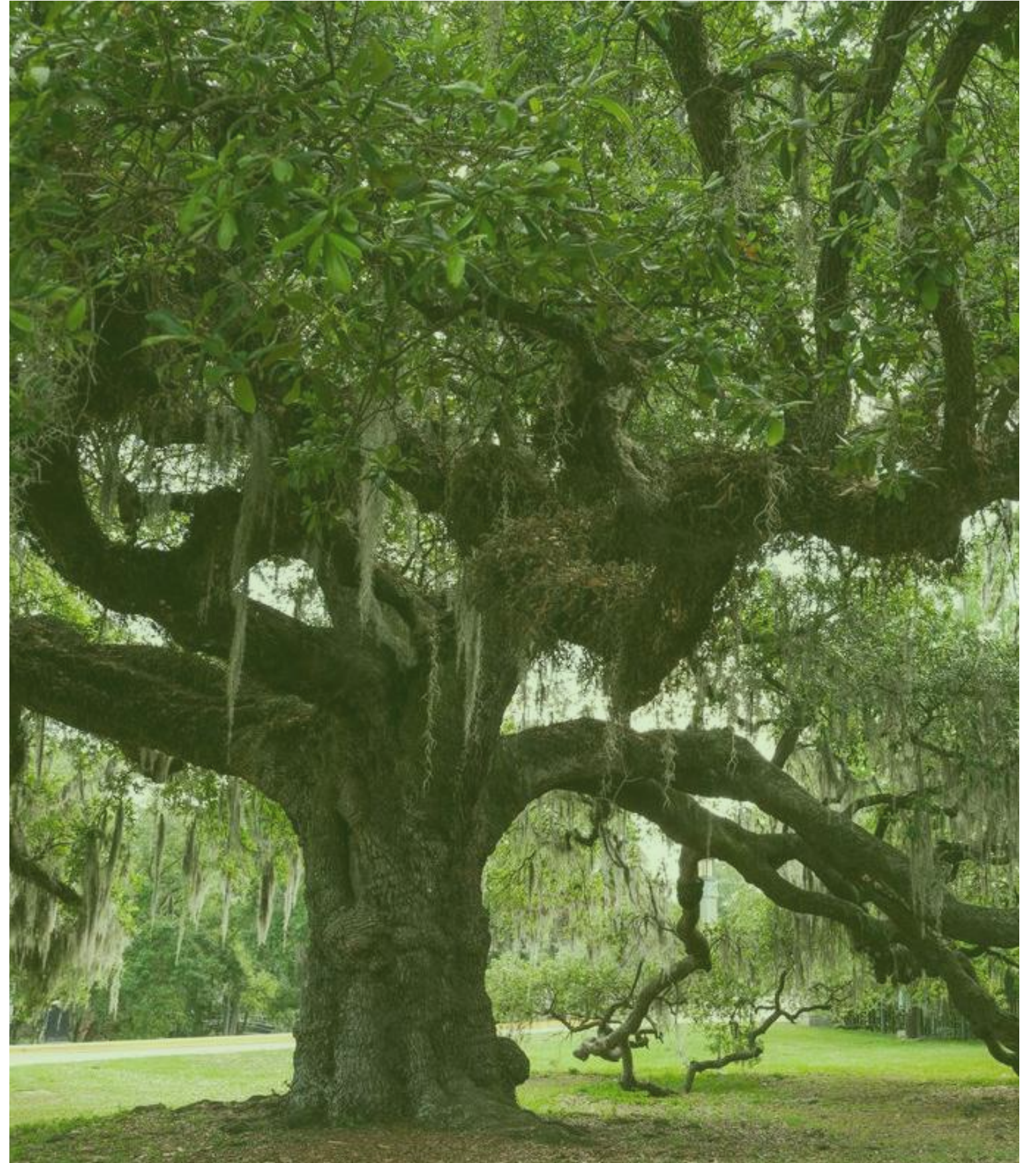


ST. MARY'S PARK



APPENDICES

- A. Cost Estimates
- B. 2024 Existing Plan Review & Analysis of Additional Parks
- C. List of Figures
- D. GIS Map Package



APPENDIX A:

Cost Estimates

Cost Breakdowns

OVERALL COST SNAPSHOT

PROJECT TYPE	AREA	UNIT	COST/SF	SUBTOTAL	FEES AND CONTINGENCIES	TOTAL
Mississippi River Heritage Park	53,225	SF	\$90.84	\$3,340,500	\$1,245,844	\$4,586,344
St. Mary’s Park	38,130	SF	\$88.28	\$2,217,994	\$1,148,278	\$3,366,272
Legacy Park	5,000	SF	\$20.35	\$231,997	\$101,499	\$333,496
Lafayette Square	131,773	SF	\$4.88	\$447,000	\$195,563	\$642,563
Piazza D’Italia	40,287	SF	\$51.52	\$1,367,500	\$707,969	\$2,075,469
Molly Marine Plaza	43,288	SF	\$46.89	\$1,337,250	\$692,338	\$2,029,588
SUBTOTAL				\$8,942,241	TOTAL	\$13,033,732

ESTIMATE ASSUMPTIONS
Estimates were compiled in December 2024. Prices are subject to change.
Anticipated Bid Date: 4th Quarter 2025 (Add 1% per quarter for market escalation beyond this point)
Design-Bid-Build delivery method
Receiving bids from at least four (4) qualified general contractors
General contractors to receive bids from at least four (4) qualified subcontractors per trade
Most of the bidders will be from the local market (within 1 hour driving distance)
Assumes normal working hours

*** Estimates were compiled in December 2024. Prices are subject to change.*

Cost Breakdowns

MISSISSIPPI RIVER HERITAGE PARK

PROJECT TYPE	#	UNIT	COST/UNIT	TOTAL (\$)
Mobilization/Demobilization	1	LS	50,000.00	50,000
Remove Iron Fence and Concrete Base/Columns Around Park	800	LF	10.00	8,000
New Shade Structure	1,200	SF	150.00	180,000
Add Electrical Utilities to Shade Structure for Stage Events	150	LF	300.00	45,000
In-Ground Splashpad Near Shade Structure, Flow-Through	1	LS	400,000.00	400,000
Pavers at Stage	1,250	SF	30.00	37,500
Add New Pedestrian Lighting at Perimeter Walkway & Shade Structure	1	LS	150,000.00	150,000
Add Uplighting & Repair Electricity to Existing Sculpture along CC blvd.	1	LS	25,000.00	25,000
New Uplighting at Oak Trees Around Perimeter of Park	1	LS	75,000.00	75,000
Replace Drinking Fountains w/ Bottle Filler Stations & Pet Drinking Bowl	2	EACH	15,000.00	30,000
Repair Drainage Lines Along John Churchill Chase and Gaiennie St.	650	LF	200.00	130,000
Stormwater Lawn with Excavation & Sand Sub-base w/R-Tank Storage	1	LS	25.00	1,000,000
Upgrade All Existing Electrical Hook Ups and Water Spigots	1	LS	25,000.00	25,000
Repair And/Or Replace Sidewalk Pavers (Repair 75%, Replace 25%)	18,000	SF	22.50	405,000
Movable Seating To Be Placed on Central Green	12	EA	250.00	3,000.00
New Storage Shed Near Stage	300	SF	100.00	30,000
Extend Curbs at Convention Center Blvd for New Food Truck Stalls	700	SF	60.00	42,000
Add Power/Data Pedestals and Water Spigots at Food Truck Hook Ups	2	EACH	15,000.00	30,000
New Crosswalks at All Intersections	1	LS	8,000.00	8,000
Remove Low Lying Shrubs and Palm Trees at Perimeter - Except Oaks	1	LS	10,000.00	10,000
New Perimeter Landscaping, Includes New Planter Walls at Landscaping	1	LS	350,000.00	350,000
New Concrete Benches (10 Each)	1	LS	30,000.00	30,000
New Informational Signage Throughout Park	1	LS	5,000.00	5,000
Add Bicycle Racks at Each Corner of the Park	4	EACH	3,000.00	12,000
New Security Cameras and Call Stations at 2 Corners of the Park	2	EACH	30,000.00	60,000
Vandal-Resistant Park Trash Cans - 15	15	EACH	2,000.00	30,000
New Ramps and Stairs into Park from Side Streets - 7 Locations	1	LS	20,000.00	20,000
Repair and Pressure Wash Brick Pavers at Heritage Park Entry Plaza	1	LS	150,000	150,000
SUBTOTAL				\$3,340,500
General Conditions & Requirements	12.0%			400,860
Bonds	1.25%			41,756
Insurance	1.5%			50,108
Contractor Fee	5.0%			167,025
Design/Estimating Contingency	15.0%			501,075
Escalation	4.0%			133,620
Unforeseen Conditions Contingency	5.0%			167,025
TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST				4,801,969



ST. MARY’S PARK

PROJECT TYPE	#	UNIT	COST/UNIT	TOTAL (\$)
Plazas at Existing Neutral Ground				
Mobilization/Demobilization	1	LS	50,000.00	50,000
Remove Fulton St. Vehicle Pass-Through, Create New Plaza w/Pavers	3,500	SF	75.00	262,500
Demo and Install New Plaza Pavers at Tchoupitoulas St	2,000	SF	50.00	100,000
Demo and Install New Plaza Pavers at S Peters St	2,750	SF	50.00	137,500
Demo and Install New Plaza Pavers at Convention Center Blvd	2,250	SF	50.00	112,500
New 6 ft concrete Pathway between Tchoupitoulas and S. Peters Streets	2,800	SF	15.00	42,000
New 6 ft concrete Pathway between S. Peters St. and new Plaza at Fulton St	850	SF	15.00	12,750
Park Benches Along Promenade	8	EACH	2,500.00	20,000
New Oak Trees to Fill Gaps	5	EA	25,000.00	125,000
Public Art Installations - Labor Only	1	LS	25,000.00	25,000
Umbrella Tables with 4 Tables at Interior Plazas - Fixed Tables	1	LS	35,000.00	35,000
New Crosswalks at Intersections	1	LS	8,000.00	8,000
New Pedestrian Lighting Throughout Promenade	1	LS	150,000.00	150,000
Bicycle Parking	1	LS	15,000.00	15,000
(4) Security Cameras, On Poles	4	EACH	12,500.00	50,000
(3) Emergency Call Stations	3	EACH	10,000.00	30,000
Low Level Landscaping Along Promenade	1	LS	100,000.00	100,000
Clean and repair existing section of sidewalk	1	LS	10,000.00	10,000
Vandal-Resistant Park Trash Cans	15	EACH	2,000.00	30,000
Streetscape Improvements - S. Diamond Street				
Widen Sidewalk by 9 Feet, Includes New Curbs	15,708	SF	18.00	282,744
New Oak Trees along this side of street	16	EA	20,000.00	320,000
New pedestrian lighting along revitalized streetscape	1	LS	100,000.00	100,000
Drainage Improvements Along Sidewalk Extensions	1	LS	150,000.00	150,000
Paving Demo/Patching Allowance Associated w/New SW & Drainage	1	LS	50,000.00	50,000
SUBTOTAL				\$2,217,994
General Conditions & Requirements	12.0%			382,500
Bonds	1.25%			44,625
Insurance	1.5%			54,219
Contractor Fee	5.0%			183,442
Design/Estimating Contingency	15.0%			577,843
Escalation	4.0%			177,205
Unforeseen Conditions Contingency	5.0%			230,367
TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST				\$3,366,272

*** Estimates were compiled in December 2024. Prices are subject to change.*

Cost Breakdowns

LEGACY PARK

PROJECT TYPE	#	UNIT	COST/UNIT	TOTAL (\$)
Iconic Signage at entrance	1	EA	50,000	50,000
Remove middle fence	35	LF	800	28,000
Seven-foot wall with mural around park	135	LF	1,000	135,000
Harvest Tables	1	EA	700	700
Security Cameras	1	LS	1,297	1,297
Controlled Access System	1	LS	2,000	2,000
Completion of stage area	820	SF	18.29	15,000
SUBTOTAL				\$231,997
General Conditions & Requirements	12.0%			27,840
Bonds	1.25%			2,900
Insurance	1.5%			3,480
Contractor Fee	5.0%			11,600
Design/Estimating Contingency	15.0%			34,800
Escalation	4.0%			9,280
Unforeseen Conditions Contingency	5.0%			11,600
TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST				\$333,496

** Estimates were compiled in December 2024. Prices are subject to change.

LAFAYETTE SQUARE

PROJECT TYPE	#	UNIT	COST/UNIT	TOTAL (\$)
New Storage Shed Near S. Maestri street	300	SF	100	30,000
New Crosswalks at St. Charles Ave	1	LS	8,000.00	8,000
Vandal-Resistant Park Trash Cans - 15	10	EACH	2,000.00	20,000
New pathway into Park from N. And S. Maestri	1	LS	6,000.00	6,000
New Security Cameras and Call Stations at 2 Corners of the Park	2	EACH	30,000.00	60,000
Add New Pedestrian Lighting at Walkways	1	EACH	4,500.00	150,000
Add Power/Data Pedestals and Water Spigots at Food Truck Hook Ups	2	EACH	15,000.00	30,000
Replace Drinking Fountains w/ Bottle Filler Stations & Pet Drinking Bowl	2	EACH	15,000.00	30,000
Add Uplighting & Repair Electricity to Existing Sculpture in Center.	1	LS	25,000.00	25,000
Movable Seating To Be Placed on Central Green	12	SF	250	3000
New Oak Trees	4	EA	20,000.00	80,000
New Informational Signage Throughout Park	1	LS	5,000.00	5,000
SUBTOTAL				\$447,000
General Conditions & Requirements	12.0%			53,640
Bonds	1.25%			5,588
Insurance	1.5%			6,705
Contractor Fee	5.0%			22,350
Design/Estimating Contingency	15.0%			67,050
Escalation	4.0%			17,880
Unforeseen Conditions Contingency	5.0%			22,350
TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST				\$642,563

** Estimates were compiled in December 2024. Prices are subject to change.

Cost Breakdowns

PIAZZA D’ITALIA

PROJECT TYPE	#	UNIT	COST/UNIT	TOTAL (\$)
Mobilization/Demobilization	1	LS	50,000.00	50,000
New Iconic Signage at Both Entrances	2	EACH	100,000.00	200,000
Replace Existing Fence w/8 foot Concrete Walls with Vines and Lighting	550	LF	1,000.00	550,000
Plant New Trees Along Outer Edge of Main Plaza	25	EACH	2,500.00	62,500
Provide Pendant Lighting in Trees Along Entryway	30	EACH	2,000.00	60,000
Umbrella Tables with 4 Chairs	14	EA	2,500.00	35,000
Lantern Lighting in Plaza Lighting	1	LS	25,000.00	25,000
Bicycle Parking	1	LS	5,000.00	5,000
Security Cameras and Call Boxes	2	LOC	30,000.00	60,000
Clean and Repair All Surfaces	1	LS	200,000.00	200,000
Vandal-Resistant Trash Cans	10	EACH	2,000.00	20,000
New Informational Signage Throughout	1	LS	10,000.00	10,000
Repair and/or Replace All Existing Lighting	1	LS	50,000.00	50,000
Mobile Vendor Stall - Coffee Cart	1	LS	10,000.00	10,000
(6) New Electrical Access Points	6	EACH	5,000.00	30,000
SUBTOTAL				\$1,367,500
General Conditions & Requirements	12.0%			164,100
Bonds	1.25%			19,145
Insurance	1.5%			23,261
Contractor Fee	5.0%			78,700
Design/Estimating Contingency	15.0%			247,906
Escalation	4.0%			76,024
Unforeseen Conditions Contingency	5.0%			98,832
TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST				2,075,469

** Estimates were compiled in December 2024. Prices are subject to change.

MOLLY MARINE PLAZA

PROJECT TYPE	#	UNIT	COST/UNIT	TOTAL (\$)
Mobilization/Demobilization	1	LS	50,000.00	50,000
Low Fence Along Perimeter, 18" to 24" high	1600	LF	45.00	72,000
Low Maintenance Planting Along Fences	1	LS	50,000.00	50,000
Remove First Cross Street (Closest to Tulane Ave) and expand plaza	2,000	SF	35.00	70,000
Shade Structure at New Plaza with appropriate bench seating and lighting	750	SF	175.00	131,250
New ADA Crosswalks at all crossings	8	EACH	1,000.00	8,000
Provide New Lighting Throughout the Plaza - Includes Central	1	LS	150,000.00	150,000
Clean and Repair Plaza Pavers, Includes New Pavers at Shade Structure	1	LS	350,000.00	350,000
Bicycle Parking	2	EACH	3,000.00	6,000
Security Cameras and Call Stations	2	EACH	30,000.00	60,000
Remove and Replace Dying Plants	1	LS	100,000.00	100,000
Remove and Replace Non-Native Plants	1	LS	50,000.00	50,000
Vandal-Resistant Trash Cans	10	EACH	2,000.00	20,000
Public Art Installations - Labor Only	1	LS	25,000.00	25,000
Tree Uplighting and Pendant Lights at Oak Trees	14	EACH	12,500.00	175,000
Prune/Clean Existing Trees	1	LS	20,000.00	20,000
SUBTOTAL				\$1,337,250
General Conditions & Requirements	12.0%			160,470
Bonds	1.25%			18,722
Insurance	1.5%			22,747
Contractor Fee	5.0%			76,959
Design/Estimating Contingency	15.0%			242,422
Escalation	4.0%			74,343
Unforeseen Conditions Contingency	5.0%			96,646
TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST				2,029,558

** Estimates were compiled in December 2024. Prices are subject to change.

APPENDIX B:

2024 EXISTING PLAN REVIEW & ANALYSIS OF ADDITIONAL PARKS

EXISTING PLAN REVIEW



Figure 103

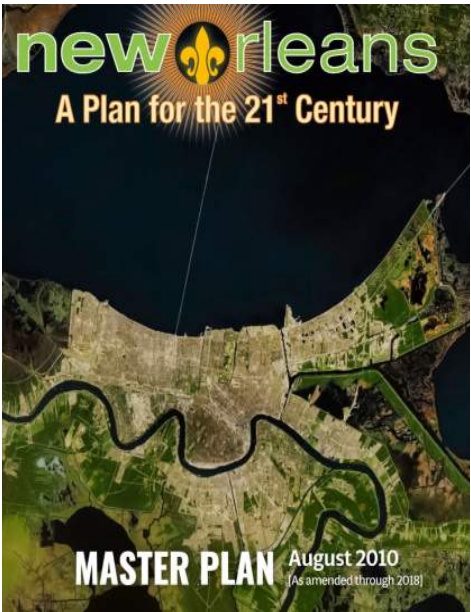


Figure 104



Figure 105

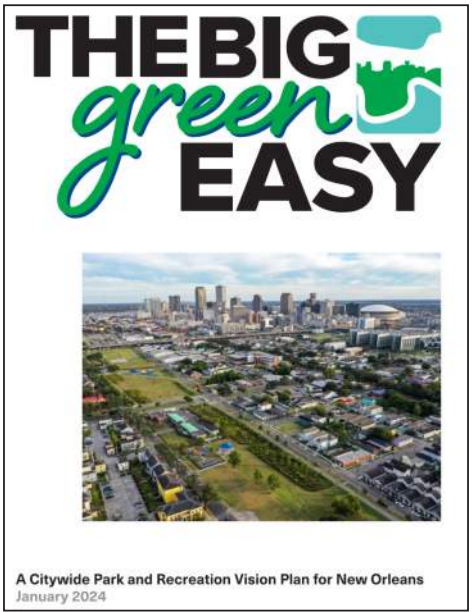


Figure 106

Louisiana Outdoor Recreation Plan

We have thoroughly reviewed the Louisiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan. This document aims to guide the development and enhancement of outdoor recreational opportunities across the state, ensuring they meet the needs and preferences of residents and visitors. Takeaways Related to Parks Include

- Multi-use Parks: Development of large, multi-use parks catering to diverse recreational needs.
- Connectivity: Enhancing connectivity to trails and greenways within urban areas.
- Environmental Balance: Balancing natural resource protection with recreational use.

New Orleans Plan for the 21st Century

This document aims to guide the sustainable development and revitalization of New Orleans, ensuring that the city's growth meets the needs and aspirations of its diverse communities while preserving its unique cultural heritage. Takeaways related to Parks include:

- Accessibility: Prioritizing walkability and accessibility to parks.
- Mixed-Use Development: Integrating parks into mixed-use neighborhoods.
- Investment in Park Infrastructure: Increasing spending on park facilities to improve quality and maintenance.

Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan

This document aims to guide the sustainable management and innovative use of water resources in the region, ensuring resilience against flooding while enhancing the quality of life for residents and supporting economic growth. Takeaways related to parks include:

- Water Management: Implementing innovative water management strategies in urban parks.
- Sustainable Design: Incorporating sustainable practices to enhance resilience against climate change.
- Community Engagement: Engaging local communities in planning and maintaining water features.

The Big Green Easy

This document aims to guide the development of green infrastructure and sustainable practices in New Orleans, enhancing urban resilience, improving environmental quality, and promoting a healthier, more vibrant community. Takeaways relating to parks include:

- Equity and Inclusion: Ensuring equitable access to parks and recreational facilities.
- Resilience: Utilizing parks to absorb stormwater and support city resilience.
- Community-Driven Planning: Prioritizing projects based on community needs and feedback.

SPANISH PLAZA

Park Information

Address:
1 Poydras Street

Site Description:
River End of Poydras St.

Ownership:
City of New Orleans

Size (Sq Ft):
110,274

Size (Acres):
2.53

Hours of Operation:
24 Hours

Year Opened:
1976

Active Uses/Programming:
French Quarter Festival

Park Overview

Spanish Plaza is a vast open space along the banks of the Mississippi River that many locals do not often frequent due to its physical isolation. The space is flanked by major hotels and tourist attractions and is largely know for its large central fountain - a gift from Spain to the people of New Orleans. During springtime the popular French Quarter Festival spills into the plaza and throughout the rest of the year shoppers spill out of the adjacent Riverwalk Outlets. The plaza underwent a redesign and improvements completed in 2019 that brought new landscaping, surfacing, and tenant spaces. Still, the emptiness of the space seems on a regular basis is unfortunate given the prime Downtown, river location near major attractions.



Figure 107: Satellite Map of Spanish Plaza
(Google Earth Pro)

No PlacerAI data available for this
space

SPANISH PLAZA

Park History

Long before the International Trade Mart tower, later renamed the World Trade Center, was erected, the land where Spanish Plaza now sits was busy industrial docks and wharfs where New Orleans engaged in its famous shipping trade. The 33-story tower was erected and completed by 1968 and at this time the plaza was just a surface parking lot. Since the early sixties, New Orleans Mayor Victor Shiro had been in talks with the Spanish government about a proposed gift from the nation of Spain. This gift was to be in the form of funds and materials for a proposed plaza connecting the new tower to the Mississippi River. After numerous delays and cost increases over a period of 18 years, dedication ceremonies were held in 1978 for the completed Spanish Plaza. The final design included a fountain and tiles representing the provinces of Spain, these materials having arrived by boat from the benefactor across the Atlantic Ocean. Modern renovations were completed in 2019 for a refurbished plaza that no longer features the surfacing tiles shipped from Spain, but the ornamental tiles within the fountain can still be seen and serve as a reminder for how Spanish Plaza received its name.

Timeline



Figure 108: Timeline of the History of Spanish Plaza (Manning,APC)



Figure 109: Future site of Spanish Plaza in 1968; note Rivergate Convention Center and Canal Street in the background (Richard Campanella)

SPANISH PLAZA

Site Analysis

Access

The plaza has an isolated feel as it is pinched in between the Public Belt Railroad and the Mississippi River, and two sides and the Riverwalk Outlets on another. Most visitors are those walking along the river from Woldenberg Park, shoppers exiting the mall, and guests from the Hilton and Four Seasons who make their way though narrow pathways to reach the plaza. The plaza is generally unknown an unannounced apart from those who discover it due to their immediate proximity.

Comfort

The newly redesigned plaza provides places to sit along the low landscaping walls and bench seating near the Riverwalk Outlets, although shaded seating is sparse. There is little shade apart from the trees in planters along the perimeter of the fountain and those near the mall entrance.

Daytime Uses

The plaza serves as an interesting space to stop and sit while visitors make their way to and from nearby destinations, but there are no active uses or programming in the plaza. There are two vacant commercial structures flanking the plaza that would serve to activate daytime activity if they were occupied by a restaurant or retail space.

Events and Programming

The spacious plaza is suitable place large events. There are water and electrical hookups around the site and a proximity to many destinations and amenities. The popular French Quarter Festival extends into the plaza annually and food trucks have often set up in the plaza’s substantial open spaces in the past.

Takeaways

- Spanish Plaza should capitalize on its riverfront location and proximity to major hotels and destinations to host regular events year-round.
- Regular programming with retailers and food vendors could activate the space on a daily basis.
- Enhanced wayfinding and signage could attract and guide more visitors to the space.
- The historic connection to Spain through the gift of the plaza and the central fountain should be more pronounced - the central fountain and its plaques should be celebrated - educational and interactive signage needed.
- More shade is needed, especially in the hot summer months. Consider portable furniture and shade devices.



Figure 110: The central fountain and sweeping views towards the Mississippi River (Manning, APC)

DUNCAN PLAZA

Park Details

Address:
343 Loyola Avenue

Site Description:
Front of City Hall; Near
Public Library;
Where Elk Pl becomes
Loyola Ave

Ownership:
City of New Orleans

Size (Sq Ft):
188,078

Size (Acres):
4.32

Hours of Operation:
24 Hours

Year Opened:
1957

Active Uses/Programming:
None

Visitor Trends



Visitor Journey

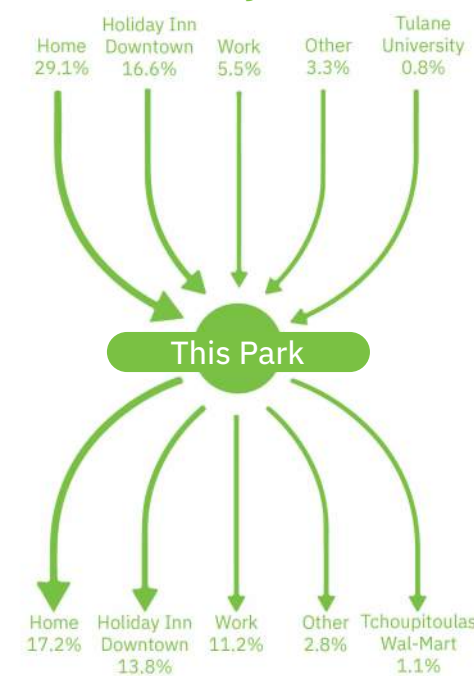


Figure 111: Visitor Trends
(PlacerAI)

Park Overview

Duncan Plaza is an iconic public space in Downtown New Orleans that provides much needed green space in the CBD and proximity to major civic uses such as New Orleans City Hall, Civil District Court House, and the main branch of New Orleans Public Library. The site is also immediately adjacent to the temporary Downtown Transit Hub for the Regional Transit Authority. The space is often host to rallies and gatherings focused on social activism due to its proximity to these important destinations. Additionally, the park has at times suffered from a negative safety perception as individuals and groups often camp in the park over night and for extended periods. There have been numerous efforts to re-imagine and breath new life into the space, the most recent being a conceptual design produced for the DDD in 2018 - a design that envisions a cultural plaza, food and beverage options, a flexible lawn, children’s play areas, and a performance plaza.

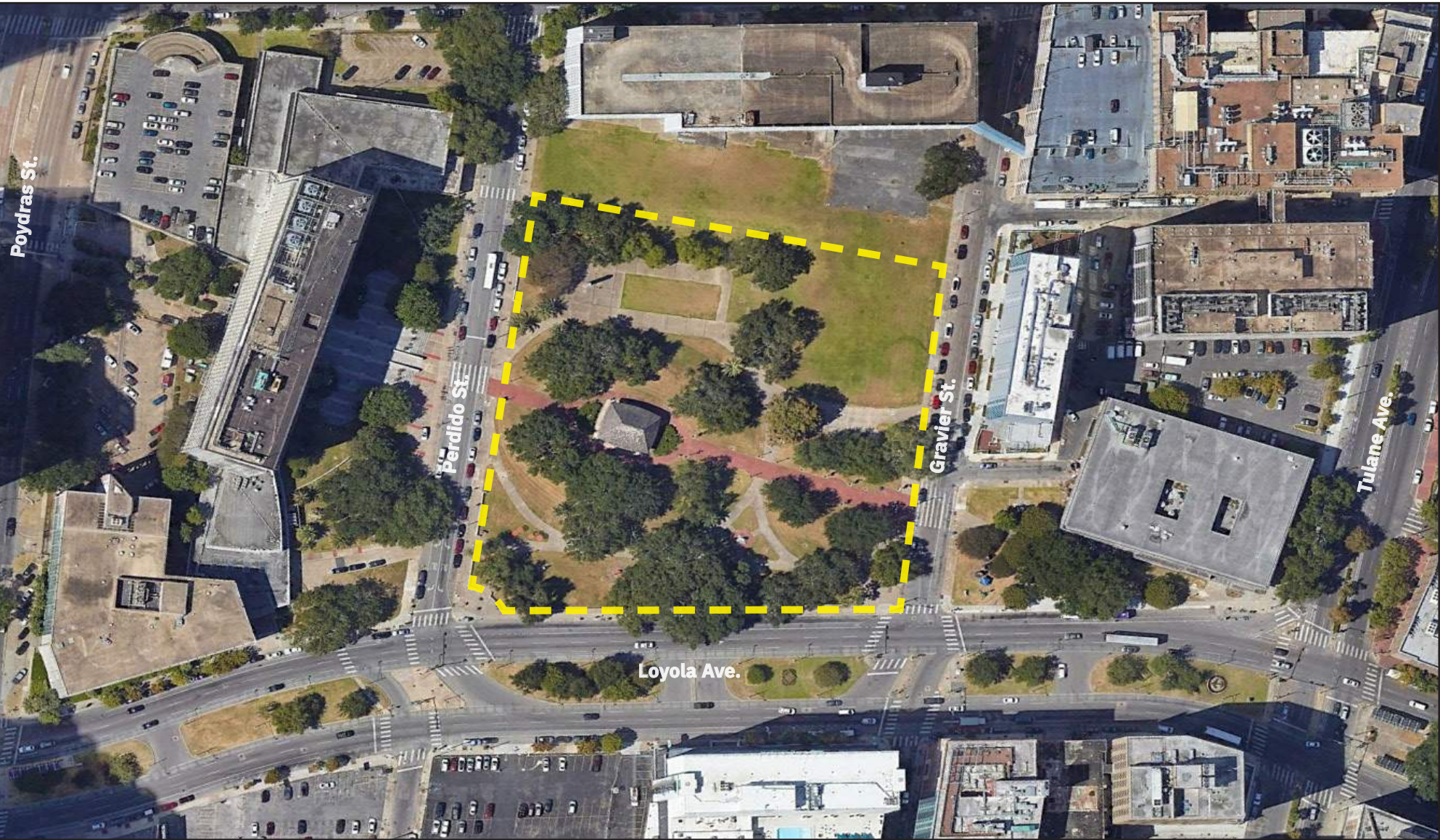


Figure 112: Satellite Map of Duncan Plaza
(Google Earth Pro)

DUNCAN PLAZA

Park History

First urbanized in 1810 and later the bustling neighborhood known as “back-of-town,” the space where Duncan Plaza currently sits has changed much from what is seen along Loyola Avenue today. Louis Armstrong, who grew up there, recalled how “the neighborhood was consisted of Negroes, Jewish people and lots of Chinese.” Others dubbed the area “the Battleground,” though it would later become appreciated for its key role in the development of jazz and other cultural contributions. Following WWII, Mayor deLesseps “Chep” Morrison sought to modernize the city and key to this plan was centralized public offices and courts for the convenience of citizens in a gleaming new Civic Center, an idea conceived by Brooke Helm Duncan, a real estate developer and the first director of the City Planning and Zoning Commission. The new City Hall opened in May 1957 with a ceremony held in Duncan Plaza, which Mayor Morrison declared would be “for this section of our city what Jackson Square is for the Vieux Carré.” The finishing touch came years later in the 1980s, when the plaza was re-landscaped with promenades, berms, trees and a central pavilion inspired by the Africa House on the Melrose Plantation near Natchitoches.

Timeline

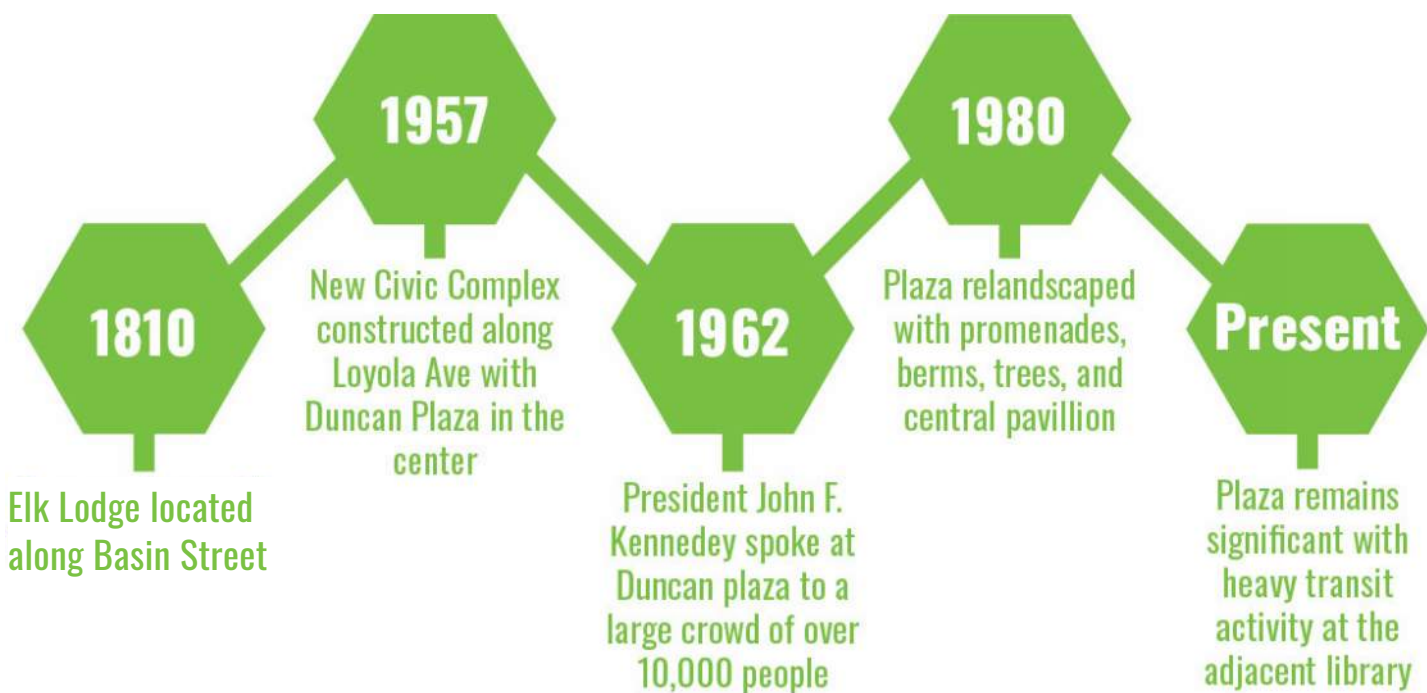


Figure 113: Timeline of the History of Duncan Plaza (Manning,APC)



Figure 114: Duncan Plaza during the construction of City Hall (New Orleans Public Library)

DUNCAN PLAZA

Site Analysis

Access

The plaza is very accessible on all sides as there is no perimeter fencing apart from a low wall on the Loyola Avenue side. The site is well connected to pedestrian infrastructure as pathways lead from City Hall, the Main Library, and all connecting sidewalks. Historical signage and art sculptures welcome visitors into the space as well.

Comfort

Mature live oaks and other species line provide ample shading throughout the park. There is bench seating provided sporadically and seemingly without much intent. Large berms throughout the park greatly hinder visibility and do not contribute to a positive perception of safety, especially at night as lighting is poor.

Daytime Uses

The highly trafficked area as City Hall, the Main Library, and the temporary RTA Transit Center directly abut the space. Daytime uses largely consist of visitors passing through, resting after a transit ride, taking a break from a nearby job, or just casually passing time. No active uses are scheduled and many park related activities cannot occur here due to the large berms that permeate throughout the space.

Events and Programming

Duncan Square does not host any formal events or have any active programming. There is currently no programming/ event based infrastructure within the park, excluding the largely defunct central stage that is often occupied by transients. The space has been host to many informal events largely consisting of political activism and social justice reform gatherings. This is due to its location directly adjacent to City Hall.

Takeaways

- Duncan Plaza is an iconic New Orleans Public space that should be revitalized. A park redesign should be considered to remove large raised berms that obstruct visibility making park feel unsafe, especially at night. These berms also restrict the amount of usable space. The existing lighting needs a drastic improvements as well.
- Events and programming could be better accommodated by providing necessary infrastructure on-site like bathrooms, electrical hookups, tent sleeves, etc. Stage infrastructure should be explored as well.
- Temporary/daily activations like additional seating and game/sport infrastructure should be explored.



Figure 115: Central stage with City Hall overlooking Duncan Plaza in the background (Manning, APC)

HARMONY CIRCLE

Park Details

Address:
Tivoli Circle

Site Description:
Intersection of St. Charles,
Howard, and Andrew Higgins;
Tivoli Circle

Ownership:
City of New Orleans

Size (Sq Ft):
63,210

Size (Acres):
1.45

Hours of Operation:
24 Hours

Year Opened:
1800s

Active Uses/Programming:
Mardi Gras festivities

Visitor Trends



Visitor Journey

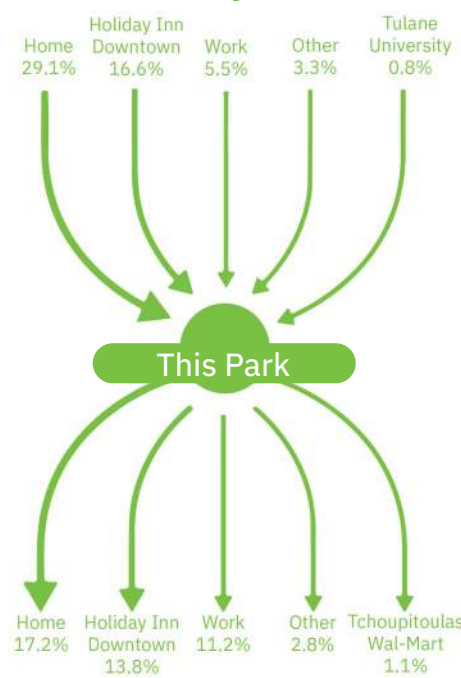


Figure 116: Visitor Trends (PlacerAI)

Park Overview

What we know today as Harmony Circle has had a long and at times contentious history. Since the removal of the Robert E. Lee statue in 2017, this has been a public space in limbo, torn between the past and present. Now that the statue is gone it is time to re-imagine what Harmony Circle will be in the coming years, decades, and beyond. The DDD recently selected a design team in May of 2024 to re-imagine the space for all New Orleanians and visitors. The intent for the new design will be to create a new Harmony Circle and an iconic public space that will be welcoming, interactive, reflective, inspiring, and resilient.

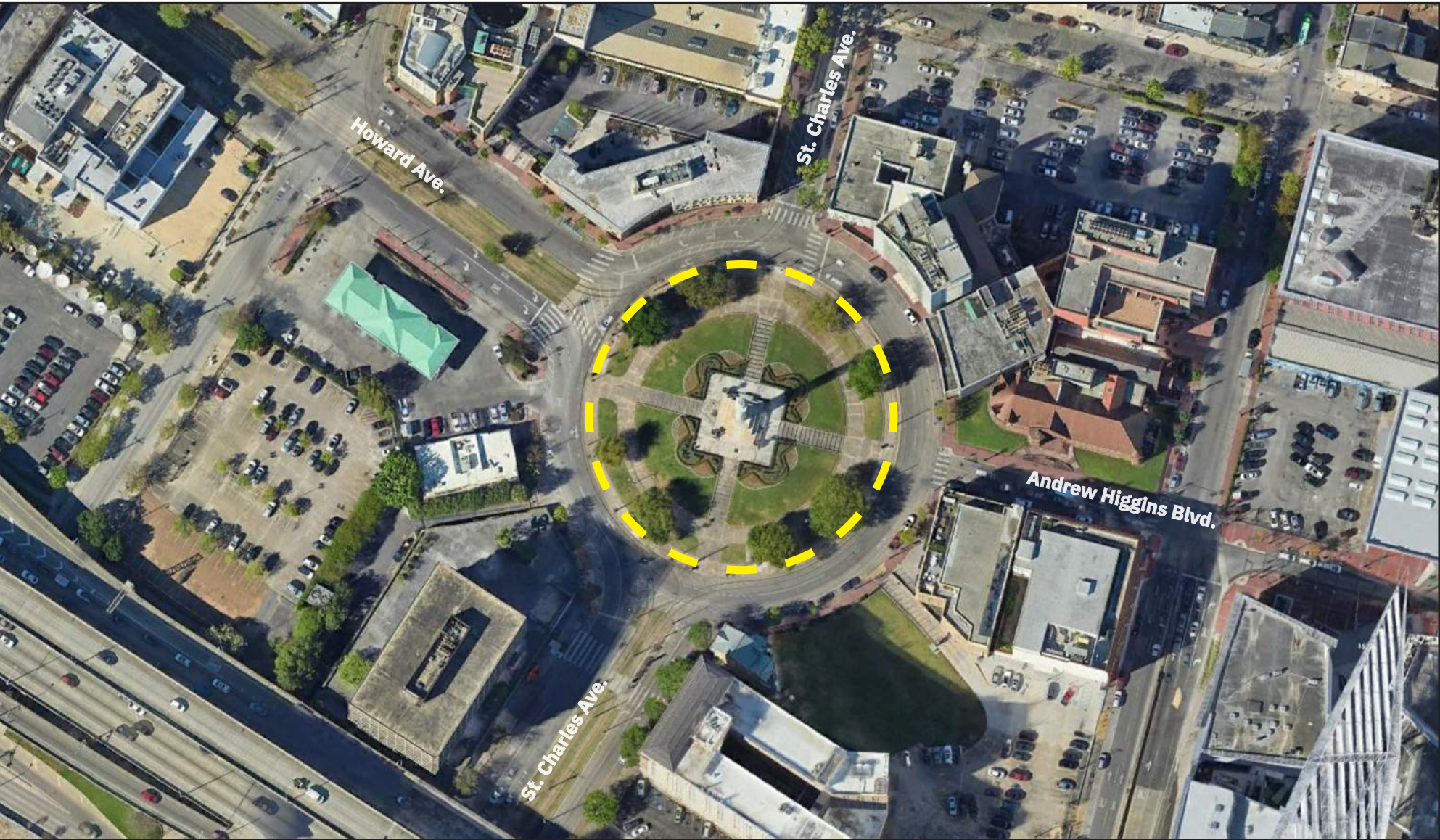


Figure 117: Satellite Map of Harmony Circle (Google Earth Pro)

HARMONY CIRCLE

Park History

Author Harnett T. Kane describes the journey of the space in his 1961 chronology as “a steaming swamp, a primitive hunting ground, an early plantation, the focus of a transplanted classical culture in the Greek style; a popular circus spot, a railroad transportation center, one of the great residential sections of New Orleans. . . . It was each of these in turn. As much as any other part of New Orleans, the area has witnessed dramatic progressions through the years, and its narrative tells much of the basic story of the Crescent City.” In 1833, railroad tracks surrounded the circle to connect the city with newly formed uptown suburbs. These tracks now serve the streetcar line. The monument to former Confederate General Robert E. Lee was dedicated on February 22, 1884. The cast bronze statue weighed 7,000 pounds, stood 16 and a half feet tall, and was perched atop a pedestal 94 feet in the air. What was once known as Tivoli Circle would now be named Lee Circle. After much debate, activism, and resistance, the Robert E. Lee monument was removed on May 19, 2017, after a 6-1 City Council vote declared the Confederate monument a nuisance. Five years later, on April 7, 2022, the public space formerly named Lee Circle was officially rechristened as Harmony Circle.

Timeline

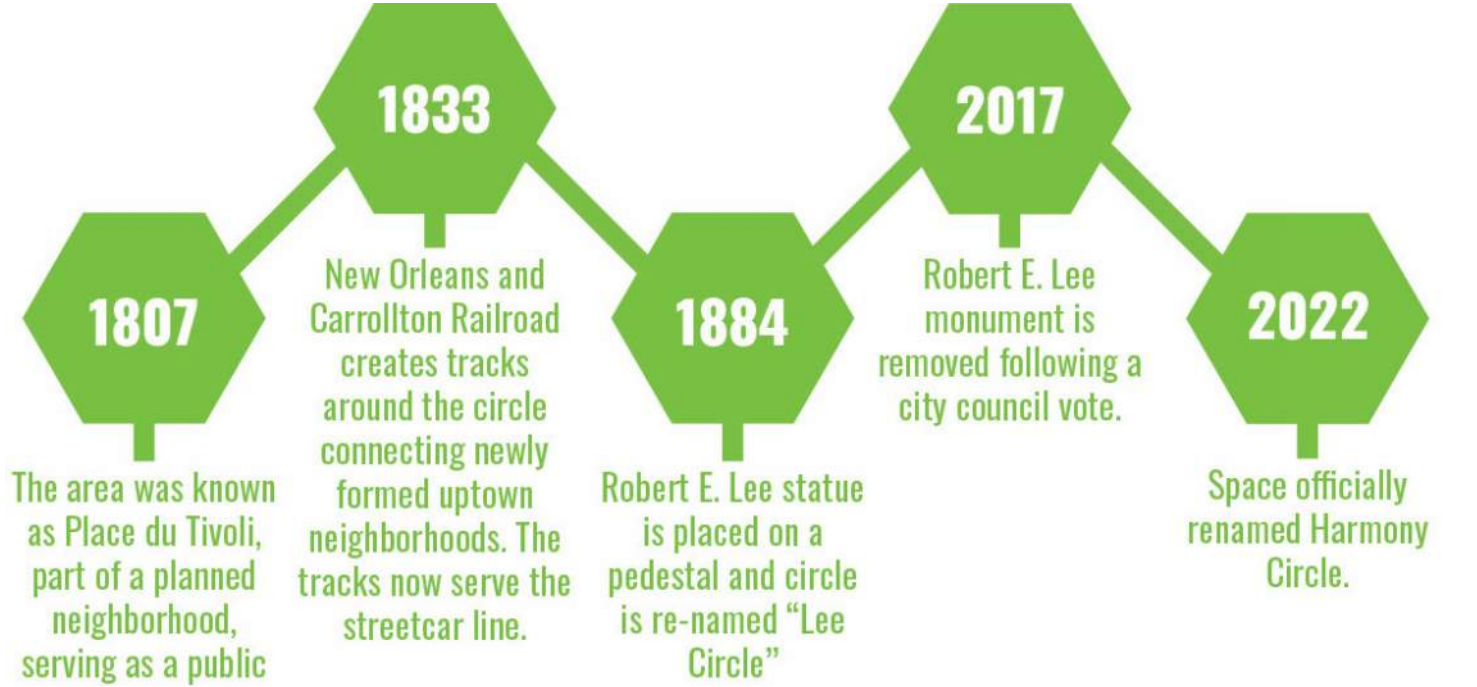


Figure 118: Timeline of the History of Harmony Circle (Manning,APC)

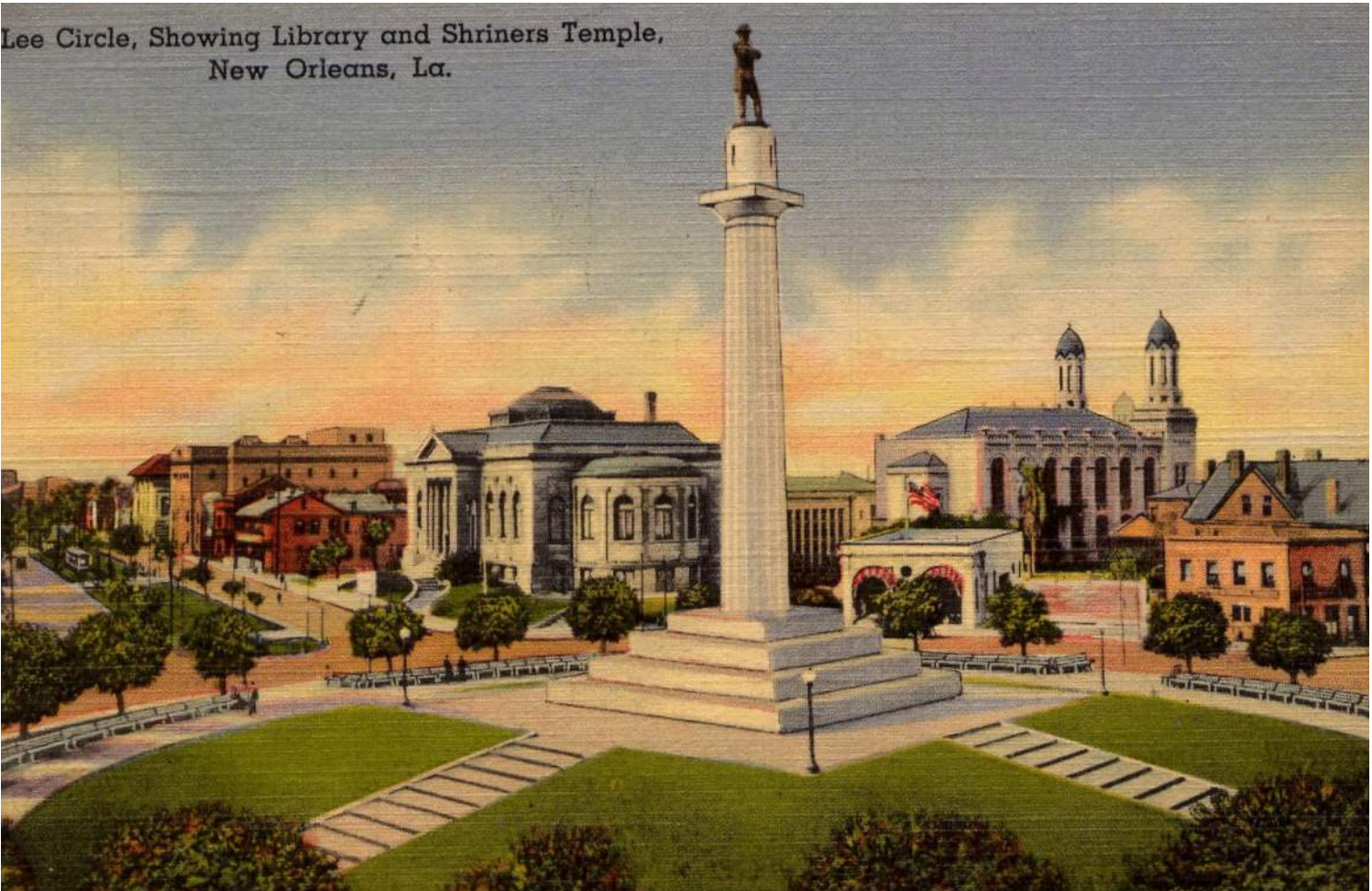


Figure 119: “Lee Circle, Showing Library and Shriners Temple, New Orleans, LA” (New Orleans Public Library)

HARMONY CIRCLE

Site Analysis

Access

The circle is not very accessible as there are traffic lanes without safe pedestrian crossings surrounding on all sides. There is limited signage explaining the history of the space despite the significance of the site. The original design of the circle was meant to be seen from afar and not intended to be an inviting public space.

Comfort

There is limited shade provided beneath the oak trees around the perimeter of the site. There is no seating and lighting is inadequate. Safety perception is not positive as this is not an active public space.

Daytime Uses

There are no daytime uses and most visitors are merely passing through the space. At times visitors will utilize the monument stairs to stop and sit as there is no formal seating within the circle.

Event/Programming Potential

Harmony Circle is generally not activated outside of the annual Mardi Gras festivities. It has been the site of informal events largely consisting of political activism and social reform gatherings. These events were almost exclusively motivated by the 2020 social justice movements that resulted in the removal of the statue of Robert E. Lee from the site formerly known as Lee Circle.

Takeaways

- A park redesign should be undertaken to re-imagine a Harmony Circle that is inviting and active rather than a space that is isolated and empty. Seating, lighting, shade, and safe crossings should be prioritized during such considerations.
- The history of the space provides great potential for a public space that is both educative and heals.
- Due to the iconic location and visibility of the circle, the space has the potential to be activated by both programming and events - although this sort of infrastructure would have to be added and safe crossings provided.



Figure 120: View of former monument pedestal (Manning, APC)

APPENDIX C:

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF FIGURES

Page	Caption (Source)	Page	Caption (Source)
3	Figure 1: <i>Map of Downtown Development District of New Orleans - Highlighting Parks and Open Spaces</i> (ESRI)	20	Figure 27: <i>Central green space with warehouse condos in the background</i> (Manning, APC)
7	Figure 2: <i>Overview of the Public Engagement Strategy</i> (Manning, APC)	21	Figure 28: <i>Central Green in Baton Rouge</i> (International Downtown Association)
8	Figure 3: <i>Chart of the key findings from the June 2024 visioning exercise</i> (Manning, APC)	21	Figure 29: <i>Splash pad in an urban park</i> (Discovery Green)
10	Figure 4: <i>Suggested Improvement from the Community Survey</i> (Manning, APC)	21	Figure 30: <i>Urban Food Truck</i> (Adobe Stock Photo)
10	Figure 5: <i>Perception of Safety in DDD Open Spaces</i> (Manning, APC)	21	Figure 31: <i>Sarofim Picnic Lawn at the Discovery Green in Houston</i> (Discovery Green)
10	Figure 6: <i>Suggested Priorities from Survey</i> (Manning, APC)	21	Figure 32: <i>Proposed Map of Mississippi River Heritage Park</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)
10	Figure 7: <i>Distribution of Survey Responses Across DDD Open Spaces</i> (Manning, APC)	23	Figure 33: <i>Visitor Trends - St. Mary's Park</i> (PlacerAI)
11	Figure 8: <i>Photos of public engagement at Gallier Hall</i> (Manning, APC)	23	Figure 34: <i>Satellite Map of St. Mary's Park</i> (Google Earth Pro)
12	Figure 9: <i>Top priorities among participants of all phases of public engagement</i> (Manning, APC)	24	Figure 35: <i>Timeline of the History of St. Mary's Park</i> (Manning, APC)
13	Figure 10: <i>Feedback - St. Mary's Park</i> (Manning, APC)	24	Figure 36: <i>St. Mary's Park as it appeared in the late 1800s, home to St. Mary's Market. Note the present-day Preservation Resource Center Building in the background, fronting Tchoupitoulas Street.</i> (Southeastern Architectural Archive, Tulane University)
13	Figure 11: <i>Feedback - Mississippi River Heritage Park</i> (Manning, APC)	24	Figure 37: <i>Sanborn Map showing St. Mary's Market and commercial activity on Diamond Street</i> (Library of Congress)
13	Figure 12: <i>Feedback - Lafayette Square</i> (Manning, APC)	25	Figure 38: <i>Grassy promenade in the park</i> (Manning, APC)
14	Figure 13: <i>Feedback - Legacy Park</i> (Manning, APC)	25	Figure 39: <i>Mixed-use urban context along Diamond Street</i> (Manning, APC)
14	Figure 14: <i>Feedback - Molly Marine Plaza</i> (Manning, APC)	25	Figure 40: <i>Sections of the park segmented by street</i> (Manning, APC)
14	Figure 15: <i>Feedback - Piazza D'Italia</i> (Manning, APC)	25	Figure 41: <i>Existing Conditions Map of St. Mary's Park</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)
16	Figure 16: <i>Rise Park in Irvine, CA</i> (RSM Design)	26	Figure 42: <i>Nighttime Perspective entering park from Convention Center Boulevard</i> (Manning, APC)
16	Figure 17: <i>Seating & shade along a park pathway</i> (Klyde Warren Park - Dallas, Texas)	27	Figure 43: <i>Pedestrian promenade and bench seating</i> (Central Park, NYC)
16	Figure 18: <i>Event in an urban park</i> (Discovery Green)	27	Figure 44: <i>Pedestrian experience and activation on a commercial street</i> (Adobe Stock)
17	Figure 19: <i>Visitor Trends - Mississippi River Heritage Park</i> (PlacerAI)	27	Figure 45: <i>Pedestrian plaza with seating and beautification</i> (Discovery Green)
17	Figure 20: <i>Satellite Map of Mississippi River Heritage Park</i> (Google Earth Pro)	27	Figure 46: <i>Iconic park entrance</i> (Adobe Firefly)
18	Figure 21: <i>Timeline of the History of Mississippi River Heritage Park</i> (Manning, APC)	28	Figure 47: <i>Proposed Map of St. Mary's Park</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)
18	Figure 22: <i>Postcard for the Louisiana World Exhibition, note the current location of the Mississippi River Heritage Park in the bottom left</i> (New Orleans Public Library)	29	Figure 48: <i>Satellite Map of Legacy Park</i> (Google Earth Pro)
19	Figure 23: <i>Perspective of central green space from entrance along Convention Center Boulevard</i> (Manning, APC)	30	Figure 49: <i>Timeline of the history of Legacy Park</i> (Manning, APC)
19	Figure 24: <i>"Scraphouse" Katrina Memorial at entrance plaza along Convention Center Boulevard</i> (Manning, APC)	30	Figure 50: <i>Former parking lot at the International High School of New Orleans - where Legacy Park is now located.</i> (Google Earth Pro)
19	Figure 25: <i>Seating and landscaping along perimeter pathway</i> (Manning, APC)		
19	Figure 26: <i>Existing Conditions Map of Mississippi River Heritage Park</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)		

LIST OF FIGURES

Page	Caption (Source)	Page	Caption (Source)
31	Figure 51: <i>String Lights Illuminate the Park at Night</i> (Manning, APC)	42	Figure 77: <i>Timeline of the History of Piazza D'Italia</i> (Manning, APC)
31	Figure 52: <i>Stairway seating and lighting at the outdoor classroom</i> (Manning, APC)	42	Figure 78: <i>Piazza D'Italia</i> (Charles Moore Foundation)
31	Figure 53: <i>Tables and chairs at the entrance to the park</i> (Manning, APC)	43	Figure 79: <i>Night photo of Piazza D'Italia</i> (Manning, APC)
31	Figure 54: <i>Existing Conditions Map of Legacy Park</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)	43	Figure 80: <i>Poydras Street entrance to Piazza D'Italia with clock in background</i> (Manning, APC)
32	Figure 55: <i>Murals adorn walls throughout the park</i> (Manning, APC)	43	Figure 81: <i>Central foundation in the Piazza</i> (Manning, APC)
33	Figure 56: <i>Entrance to a SoFA Park - a pocket dog park in San Francisco</i> (SoFA Park)	43	Figure 82: <i>Existing Conditions Map of Piazza D'Italia</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)
33	Figure 57: <i>A pocket dog park</i> (SoFA Park)	44	Figure 83: <i>Perspective of the Piazza</i> (Manning, APC)
33	Figure 58: <i>Small event in an urban park</i> (Adobe Stock)	45	Figure 84: <i>Vibrant urban plaza with tables and chairs with shade</i> (Adobe Stock)
33	Figure 59: <i>Games in a pocket park</i> (Adobe Stock)	45	Figure 85: <i>Small event in Piazza D'Italia</i> (The Times Picayune)
34	Figure 60: <i>Proposed Map of Legacy Park</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)	45	Figure 86: <i>Mobile vendor coffee cart in a park</i> (Adobe Stock)
35	Figure 61: <i>Visitor Trends - Lafayette Square</i> (PlacerAI)	45	Figure 87: <i>Neon signage at Symphony Park in Los Angeles</i> (Symphony Park of Los Angeles)
35	Figure 62: <i>Satellite Map of Lafayette Square</i> (Google Earth Pro)	46	Figure 88: <i>Proposed Map of Piazza D'Italia</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)
36	Figure 63: <i>Timeline of the History of Lafayette Square</i> (Manning, APC)	47	Figure 89: <i>Visitor Trends - Molly Marine Plaza</i> (PlacerAI)
36	Figure 64: <i>Lafayette Square in the early 1900s; note First Presbyterian Church at left and City Hall, now Gallier Hall, to the right</i> (Library of Congress)	47	Figure 90: <i>Satellite Map of Molly Marine Plaza</i> (Google Earth Pro)
37	Figure 65: <i>Well-Manicured Landscaping</i> (Manning, APC)	48	Figure 91: <i>Timeline of the history of Molly Marine Plaza</i> (Manning, APC)
37	Figure 66: <i>Blues Fest at Lafayette Square</i> (Manning, APC)	48	Figure 92: <i>Elk Place, now Molly Marine Plaza, seen around 1906 with the Old Criminal Courthouse in the background</i> (Charles Moore Foundation)
37	Figure 67: <i>Large oak trees provide shade - facing Poydras Center Office Building</i> (Manning, APC)	49	Figure 93: <i>Molly Marine Statue with the Canal Street streetcar passing in the background</i> (Manning, APC)
37	Figure 68: <i>Existing Conditions Map of Lafayette Square</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)	49	Figure 94: <i>Monuments placed along central pathway</i> (Manning, APC)
38	Figure 69: <i>Perspective of square with Henry Clay monument at center</i> (Manning, APC)	49	Figure 95: <i>Central pathway with embedded historical markers</i> (Manning, APC)
39	Figure 70: <i>Movable furniture in a public park</i> (Landscape Forms)	49	Figure 96: <i>Existing Conditions Map of Molly Marine Plaza</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)
39	Figure 71: <i>Wednesday at the Square at Lafayette Square</i> (Young Leadership Council of New Orleans)	50	Figure 97: <i>The park is currently segmented by three vehicular turnarounds within one block</i> (Manning, APC)
39	Figure 72: <i>Dedicated spaces for food trucks</i> (The University Star)	51	Figure 98: <i>Decorative lighting illuminating a public space</i> (Discovery Green)
39	Figure 73: <i>Lighting in a park with trees</i> (Adobe Stock)	51	Figure 99: <i>Covered seating plaza for weather protection</i> (Adobe Stock)
40	Figure 74: <i>Proposed Map of Lafayette Square</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)	51	Figure 100: <i>Inspirational public art installation for all to enjoy</i> (Adobe Stock)
41	Figure 75: <i>Visitor Trends - Piazza D'Italia</i> (PlacerAI)	51	Figure 101: <i>Creative crosswalks provide safe crossings and visual interest</i> (Adobe Stock)
42	Figure 76: <i>Satellite Map of Piazza D'Italia</i> (Google Earth Pro)	52	Figure 102: <i>Proposed Map of Piazza D'Italia</i> (Spackman Mossop Michaels)

LIST OF FIGURES

Page	Caption (Source)	Notes:
52	Figure 103: <i>Louisiana Outdoor Recreation Plan Cover</i> (Louisiana State Parks)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. GIS Maps: Every GIS map was meticulously crafted using ArcGIS Pro, a software by ESRI. For reference, all sources for each layer and map are included within the GIS section.2. Graphics: All graphics, designed by Manning, APC, were developed in close collaboration with the consultant team using Adobe Illustrator and Adobe InDesign, both part of the Adobe Creative Cloud Suite.3. Cover Page Photos: All cover page photos were generously contributed by various members of the project team.4. Site Visit Photos: Photos obtained by Manning, APC, were captured during several site visits to the parks at various times of day and under different weather conditions.
53	Figure 104: <i>New Orleans Plan for the 21st Century Cover</i> (City of New Orleans)	
54	Figure 105: <i>Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan Cover</i> (Wagonner & Ball)	
53	Figure 106: <i>The Big Green Easy Cover</i> (Manning, APC)	
A9	Figure 107: <i>Satellite Map of Spanish Plaza</i> (Manning, APC)	
A10	Figure 108: <i>Timeline of the history of Spanish Plaza</i> (Manning, APC)	
A10	Figure 109: <i>Future site of Spanish Plaza in 1968; note Rivergate Convention Center and Canal Street in the background</i> (Richard Campanella)	
A11	Figure 110: <i>The central fountain and sweeping views towards the Mississippi River</i> (Richard Campanella)	
A12	Figure 111: <i>Visitor trends - Duncan Plaza</i> (PlacerAI)	
A12	Figure 112: <i>Satellite Map of Duncan Plaza</i> (Manning, APC)	
A13	Figure 113: <i>Timeline of the history of Duncan Plaza</i> (Manning, APC)	
A13	Figure 114: <i>Duncan Plaza during the construction of City Hall</i> (New Orleans Public Library)	
A14	Figure 115: <i>Central stage with City Hall overlooking Duncan Plaza in the background</i> (Manning, APC)	
A15	Figure 116: <i>Visitor trends - Harmony Circle</i> (PlacerAI)	
A15	Figure 117: <i>Satellite Map of Harmony Circle</i> (Manning, APC)	
A16	Figure 118: <i>Timeline of the history of Harmony Circle</i> (Manning, APC)	
A16	Figure 119: <i>Photo: “Lee Circle, Showing Library and Shriners Temple, New Orleans, LA”</i> (New Orleans Public Library)	
A17	Figure 120: <i>View of former monument pedestal</i> (Manning, APC)	

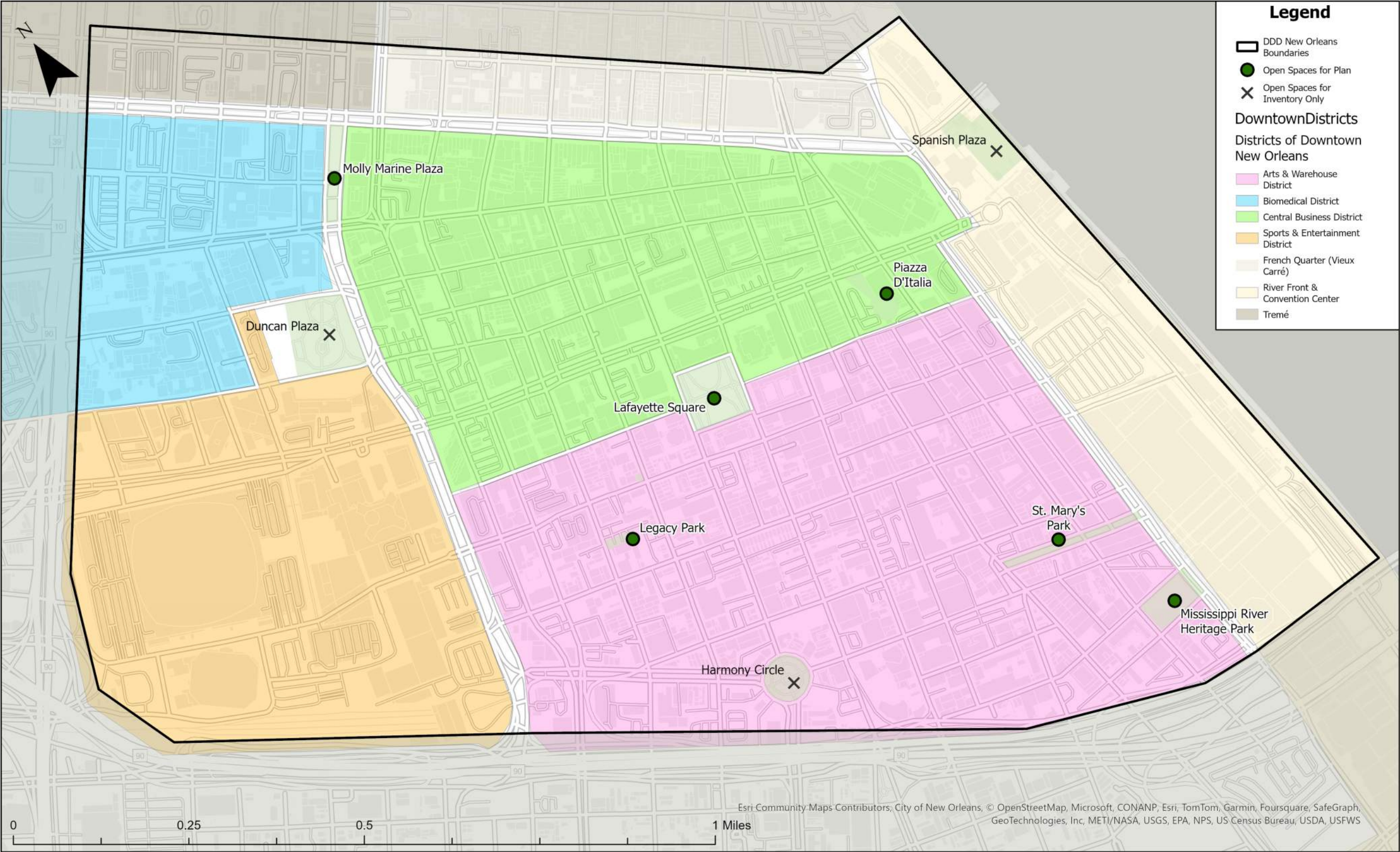
APPENDIX D:

GIS Map Package

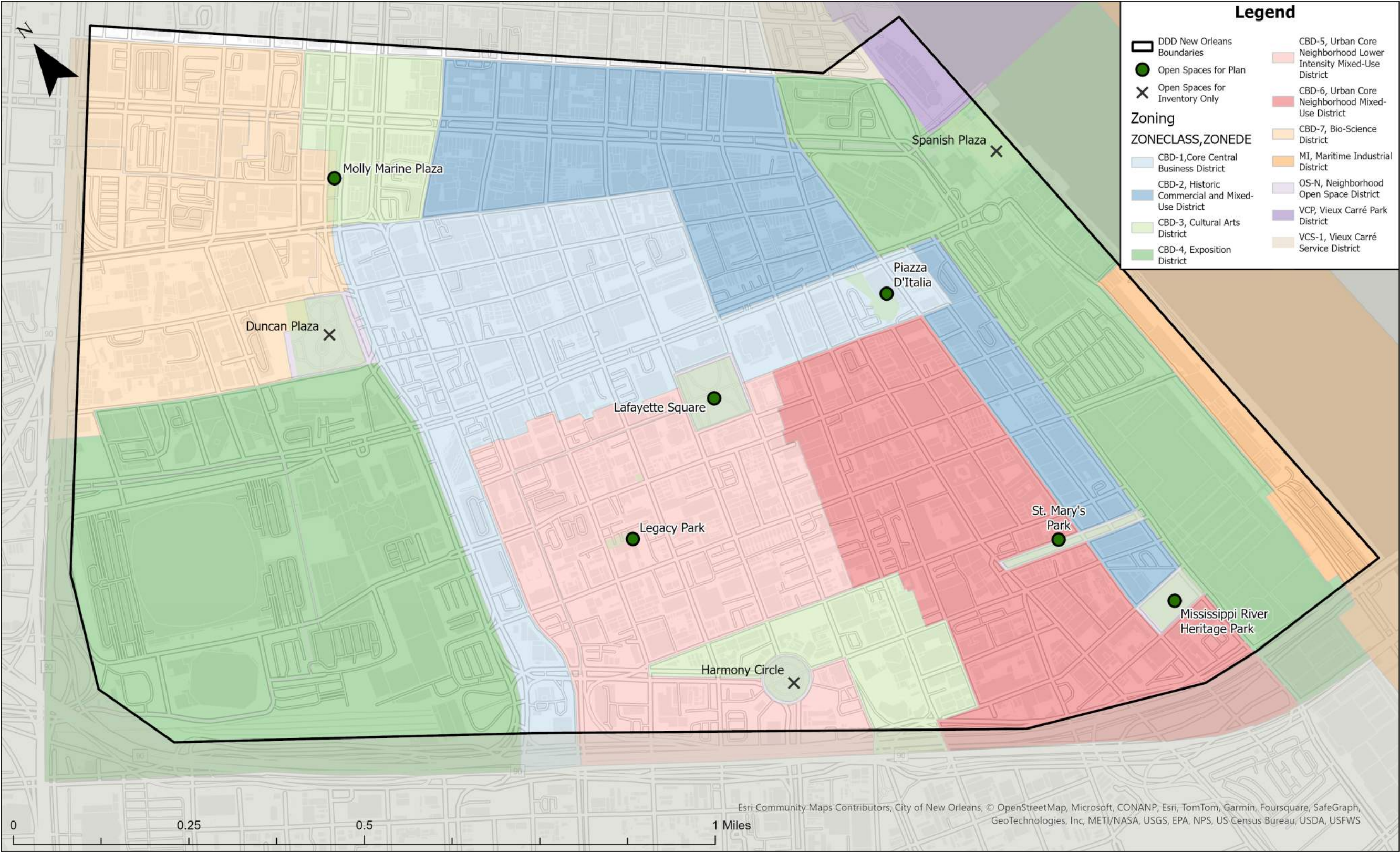
Base Map



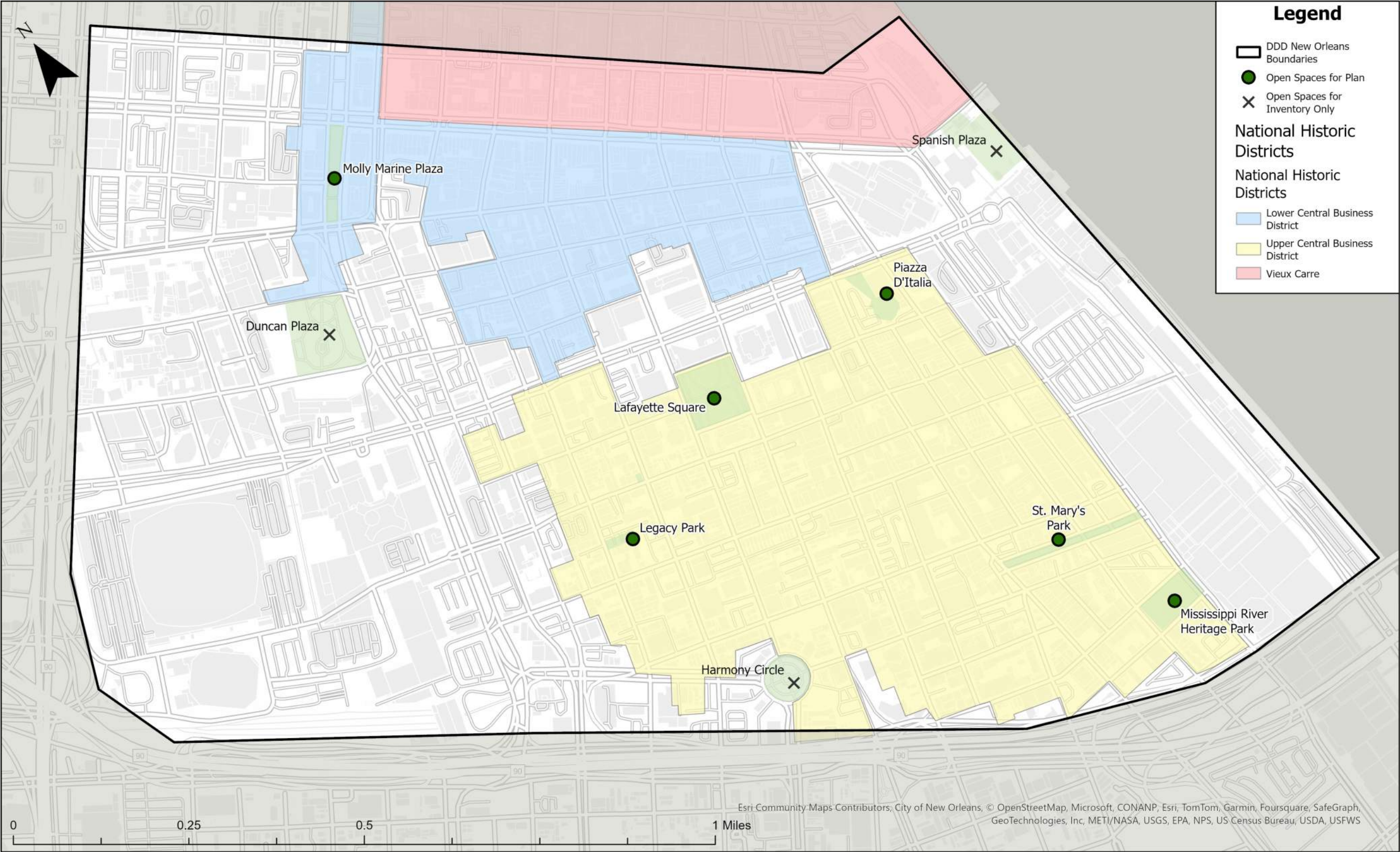
DDD Districts



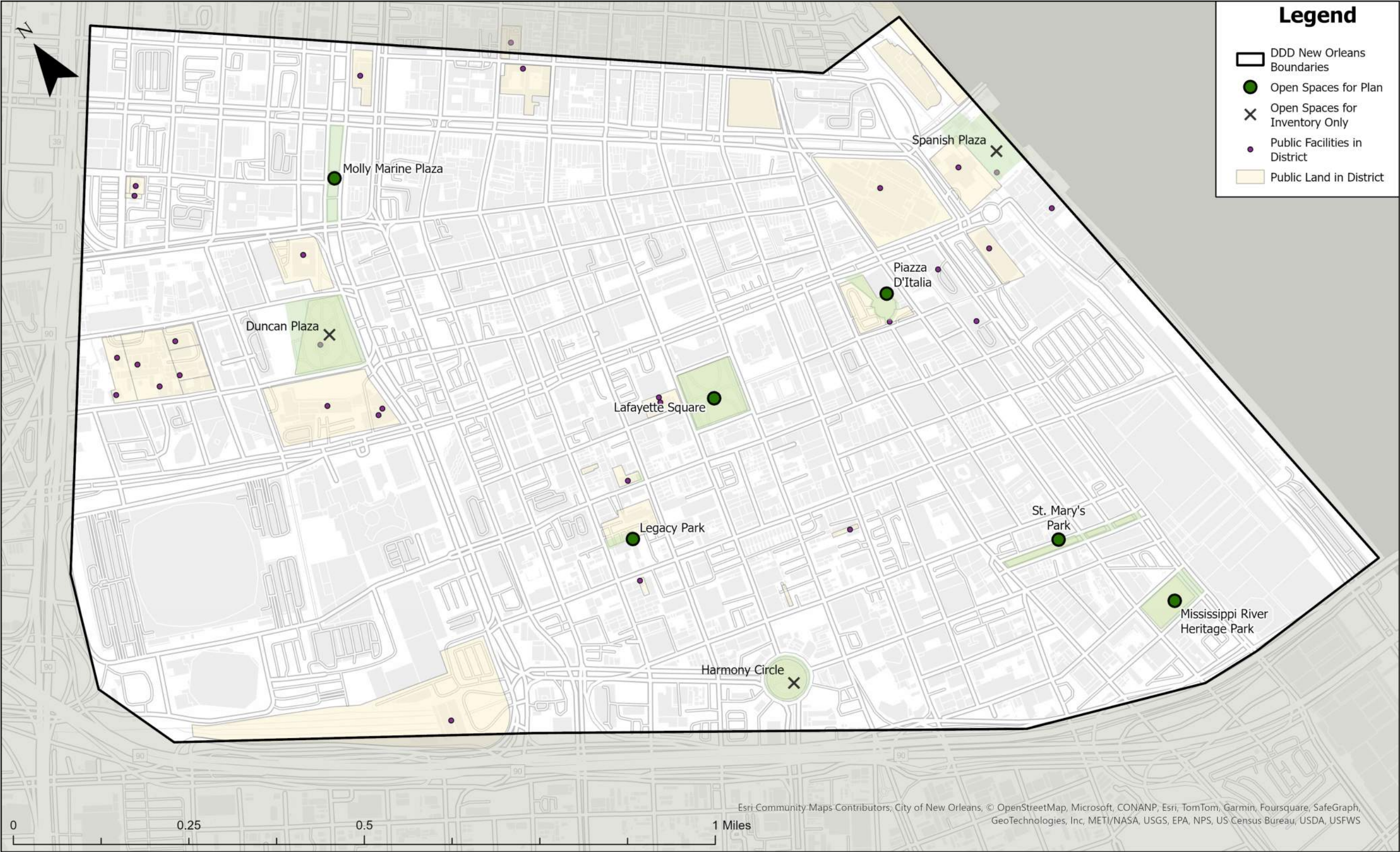
Zoning Districts



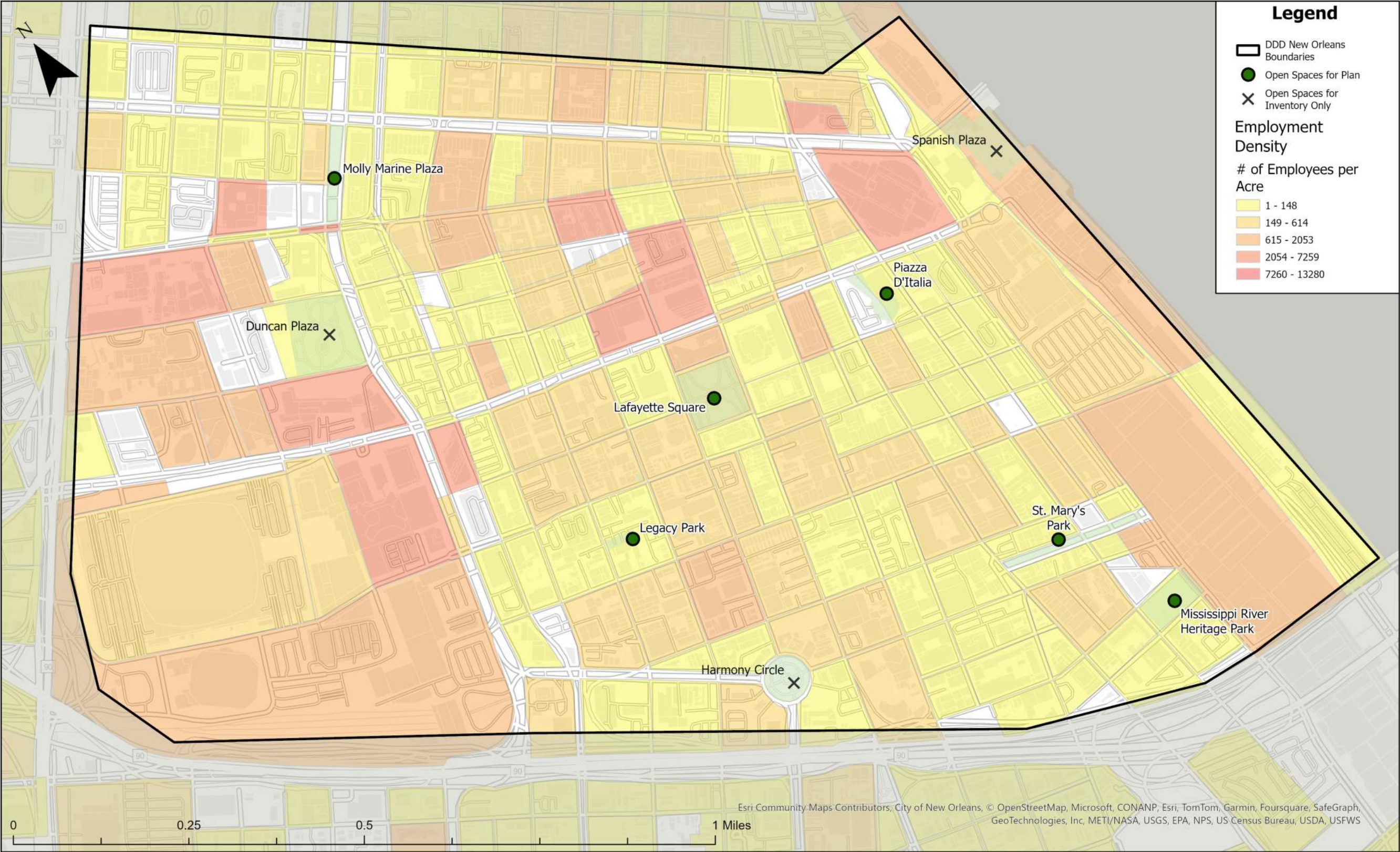
Historic Districts



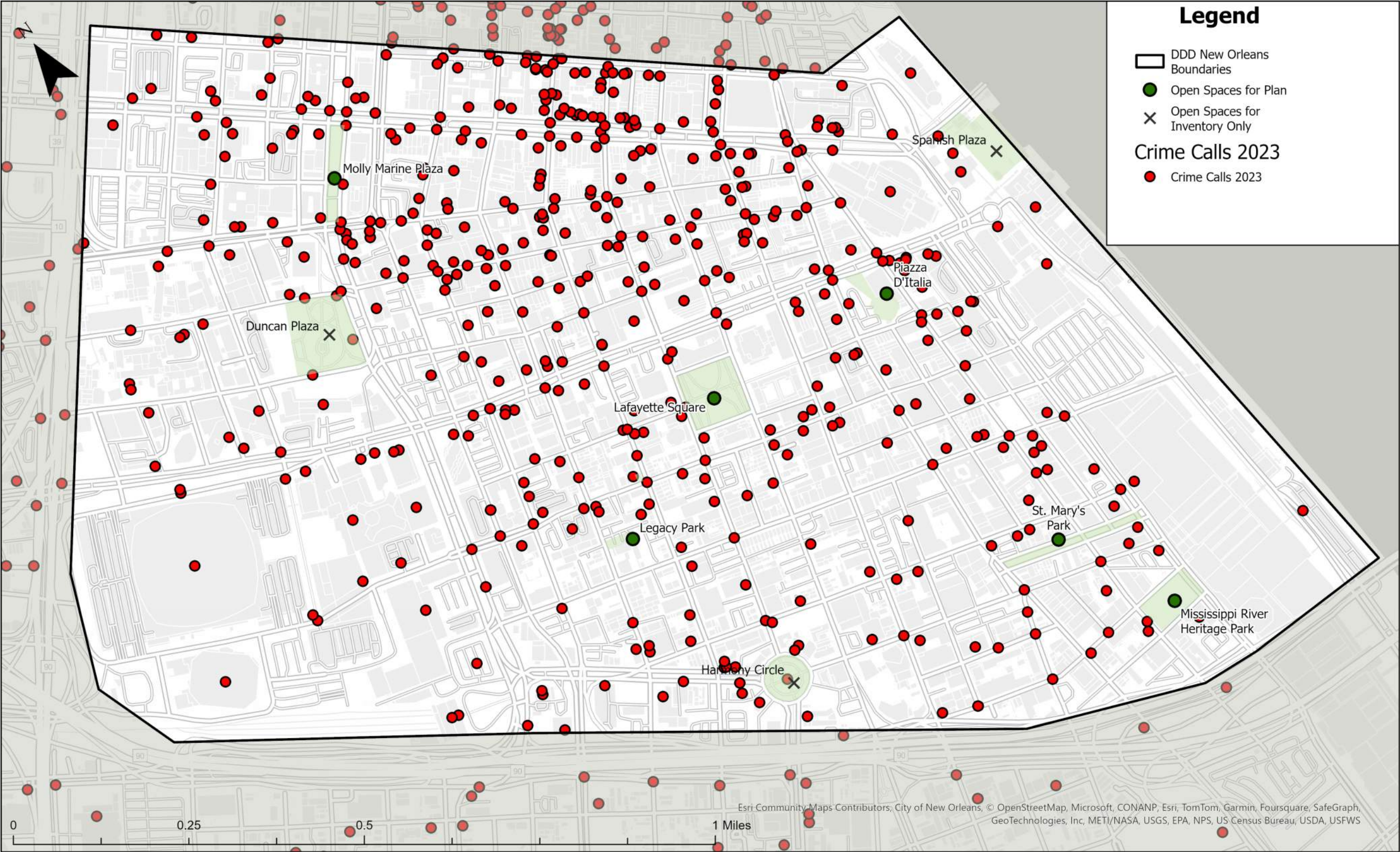
Public Land and Facilities



Employment Density



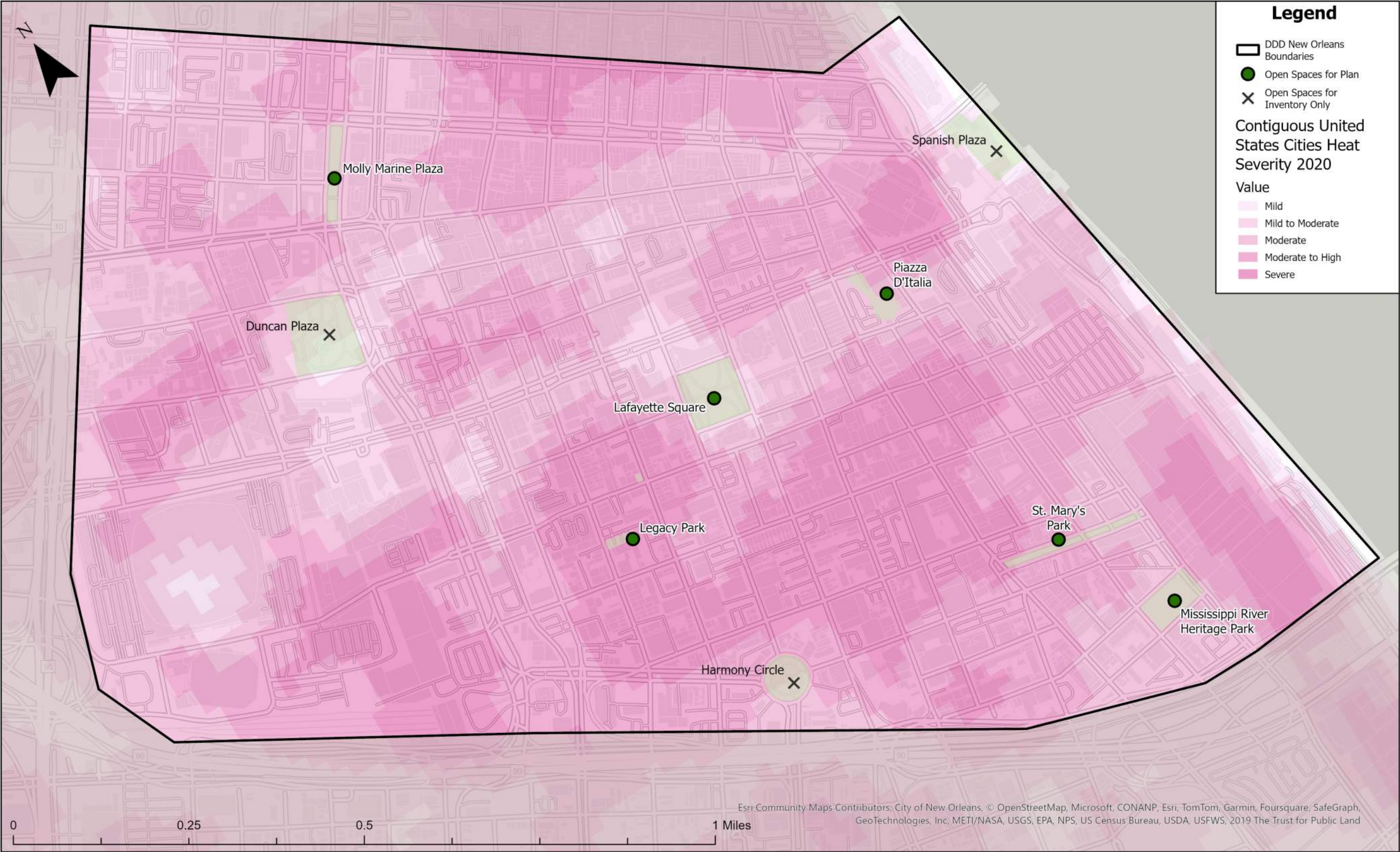
2023 Crime Calls



Trees



Urban Heat Impacts



FEMA Flood Hazards

