Creating Family-Friendly Downtowns

Monday, July 22, 2019 | 2:30 PM - 3:45 PM
PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

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SPEAKERS

Adrian Benepe, SVP, Director of National Programs, The Trust for Public Land
Phil Ginsburg, General Manager, San Francisco Recreation & Parks
Jennifer Smith, Program Director, Greater Kennedy Plaza, Downtown Providence Parks Conservancy
Bryant Park, New York

The revitalization of Bryant Park in the late 1980s provided the template for transforming urban centers through the creation, or in this case, reclamation, of open, green space. Known as ‘Needle Park’ prior to its restoration, the park had high crime rates and was poorly maintained. The creation of a public-private partnership, the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation, helped turn the park around and provide NYC a signature public space.

Before

After
Originally a parking garage, the current park was completed in 1992, and currently functions as a social hub in Boston’s financial district. The product of a public-private partnership spearheaded by Friends of Post Office Square (formed by Norman Leventhal in 1983), the project was funded in part by sales of the parking spaces below the structure of the park.
Prior to its current iteration, Millennium Park was an industrial site. It's now a world-renown public space, and the recipient of the 2009 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence.
Discovery Green, Houston

Prior to its transformation into a park, Discovery Green in Houston was an undeveloped concrete lot. A partnership between the Houston First Corporation and Discovery Green Conservancy helped to create the park, which opened in 2008. The park has spurred construction along its borders, functionally beginning the creation of a new city center.
Boeddeker Park, San Francisco

A joint TPL-SFRP Project, and within walking distance of 50,000 people, the park’s previous inhospitable design and minimal amenities discouraged visitors and raised safety concerns among both neighbors and law enforcement. The Trust for Public Land worked with the community and dozens of generous public and private donors to transform Boeddeker into a new neighborhood cornerstone.
Grand Park, Los Angeles

Paid for by Related Companies as part of their plan to develop the surrounding neighborhood, the park enhanced an existing public space. Its success as a convening place is an example of how parks could (and should) be included in private and public plans to revamp neighborhoods.
Celebration Plaza, Sulphur Springs, TX

A finalist for the 2019 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence, Celebration Plaza is the signature component of a revitalization effort in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Heavily programmed and frequently trafficked, the park is a big reason why the small city has taken big strides towards comprehensively providing for its residents.
Spared from destruction in the 1960s and 70s, Larimer Square is a potent example of how historic preservation can be smartly used to spur economic activity, and provide lively public spaces. Rescued by the efforts of Larimer Square Associates, the organization helped preserve and retrofit many of the deteriorating buildings, and in 1971 it became the first official historic district in Denver.
Hellen Diller Playground and Bi-Rite Cafe Kiosk

Hellen Diller Playground

Bi-Rite Café Kiosk

Kids playing in the park on a summer afternoon

Evening in Civic Center
Holiday Tree Lighting, Ice Skating Rink and Games

Holiday Tree Lighting

Winter Ice Rink in the Plaza

Volleyball at the Civic Center Plaza

Soccer World Cup Viewing Party
Civic Center Commons and Art Installations

Civic Center Commons Block Parties

Hunters Point Family Stewardship

Sui Sui Ping An- Art Installation

Invisible Man- Art Installation

Knitting the Commons
Public Realm Plan

Concept Design for the Public Realm Plan

The "Beaux-Art frame" plan, adds new public places in the plaza

Supports both small and large public gatherings
Public Realm Plan

- Lawn Terrace between the library and the Asian Art Museum
- Movie Night
- Mirror Fountain
- UN Plaza
Thank you
Creating Family Friendly Downtowns

Building Community and Transforming Public Spaces Through Play

Downtown Providence Parks Conservancy

Greater Kennedy Plaza

Providence, Rhode Island.
Public Programming Snapshot

- Burnside Music Series
- Lunchtime Music
- Food Trucks
- Farmers Market
- Family Programming
- Imagination Center
- Special Events
- Winter Lights Market
- Plaza Programming
2010: First Children + Family Program
Storytime - average attendance 20
2018: Kidoinfo Storytime + Art in the Park

Now largest single-site story hour in RI, averaging over 200 with award-winning storytellers, performers, authors, artists
2011: Mobile Playground

Pop-up playground with inexpensive materials = Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper activation
Open Air Reading Room

- Creates a quiet, restful + comfortable area
- Books to read or borrow
- Flexible and comfortable seating
Music Series + Beer Garden

Redesigning event to be family-friendly dramatically expanded audience
Measuring effects of programming

- Programming drastically improves behavior and safety
- 84% decrease in negative (anti-social) behaviors during programming
  (compared to 68% in 2016)
- 76.3% decrease in smoking during programming

77.8% increase in children during programming
36.1% increase in adult women during programming
The “Power of 10” - Food Trucks + Farmers Market

Food Trucks year round

Affordable Healthy Food Access
Expansion: Family Art, Science, Music, Nature + Dance

Effective diversification of programming through partnerships
2017: Brandon’s Beach Playground

Permanent destination playground downtown
$650,000 investment in playground + Center upgrades
Imagination Center Improvements 2017
Children’s programming inspired community engagement
150+ volunteers plant and perform park maintenance annually
CONTEXT AND COMPLEMENTARY DEVELOPMENT

Redesign and Infrastructure improvements work in concert with the engine of rapidly expanding family programming
Kennedy Plaza Redesign
Infrastructure Improvements

Burnside Park
$399,000 Foundation Grant
Retail Development / Park Activation

Underutilized Building

Retail Space
Biltmore Parking

Biltmore Park
MEMBERSHIP

Your connection to information and expertise on new urban park models, practices, and innovative partnerships.

Members have access to a suite of highly-curated resources specifically designed for the parks community including:

• Webinars
• Online resource library
• Urban park study tours
• Advocacy tools
• Discounted registration to Greater & Greener

Join City Parks Alliance today! To learn more, visit our membership table in the exhibition hall or go to cityparksalliance.org/membership.

#greatergreener