

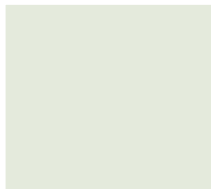
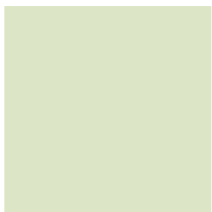
MARKET SQUARE PARK

BRINGING LIFE TO THE CROSSROADS OF A HISTORIC DISTRICT PARK

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCEPT PLANS
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PREPARED BY



MARKET SQUARE PARK BRINGING LIFE TO THE CROSSROADS OF A HISTORIC DISTRICT PARK

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Report prepared for:
Main Street Redevelopment Authority
Reinvestment Zone Number Three
City of Houston, TX

Report prepared by: Project for Public Spaces

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through numerous discussions during the group sessions and workshops, several suggestions were made that helped form the vision for Market Square.

Market Square Park will be a place where...

- All people - residents, families, downtown workers, out-of-town visitors - feel welcome and have a reason to be there
- Market Square's history is celebrated, experienced and told
- Vibrancy abounds – people, art, eating, socializing and thriving businesses surrounding Market Square
- Various attractions of downtown Houston will connect to and feed off of, creating a more vibrant historic downtown district.

With this vision and participant suggestions, the following recommendations were made.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Participants agreed that the following program elements should be included in the park:

- Food, provided by vendors or in a small kiosk, could include:
 - o Unique lunchtime food,
 - o Ice cream,
 - o Coffee and snacks,
 - o Wine bar in evenings, or
 - o Food provided from the adjacent restaurants;
- A unique Farmers Market, when local farmers have the capacity for another location;
- Informational and/or interpretive signage for Art;

- Historic District interpretation, including signage and art to tell of the park and area's history;
- A Dog Run/Park, with drinking water for dogs and covered seating for owners (see appendix for dog run information);
- Flower displays or gardens, possibly maintained by the community, University of Houston Downtown, Urban Harvest, or a garden club;
- Links to nearby downtown destinations, such as Buffalo Bayou, the Theatre District, Allen's Landing, Courthouse Square, Sesquicentennial Park, downtown festivals, the upcoming Ballet Academy, and more, through streetscape, coordinated programming and more attractive uses (both building and open space) that can bridge the gap between destinations;
- A Newsstand and/or a Lunchtime Library;
- A Play Area/Element;
- Amenities and passive enjoyment, including:
 - o Different types of seating, in the shade,
 - o Water feature,
 - o Free Wi Fi, and/or
 - o Bike racks;
- "Soft" programming and events, including:
 - o Small concerts & performances - featuring local schools, ballet and theater students, puppet shows, choirs, small music quartets, etc.,
 - o Rotating events, such as Christmas market, Flower market, Movies, Film Series,
 - o Exercise classes such as Yoga, Tai Chi, and
 - o Historical tours;



PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Common ground was also found around the following participants' suggestions:

- Re-grading to remove channeled walkways, improve visibility, safety, and drainage;
- Possible adjustments of art locations:
 - o The existing composition of the paving remnants gives park users little information as to why they are there. They could be clustered together with signage that informs visitors of their importance.
 - o The historic photo tiles are currently damaged and located in areas where park users have to bend down or turn around (while sitting) to look at. Placing them at a higher level will showcase them better, prevent skateboarding damage, and tell the story of Market Square better.
- Increasing seating opportunities using moveable benches and/or chairs;
- Additional paved or gravel areas, for outdoor seating moveable tables and chairs;
- Better lighting;
- Surrounding façade improvements;
- Landscaping, flowers, maintenance, restoration
 - keeping the mature trees;
- Water feature;
- Visually buffering existing surface parking lots
 - street trees and shrubs;
- Kiosk or structure for food and shade; and
- Bike Racks.

MARKET SQUARE CONCEPTS

PROS & CONS

CONCEPT DIAGRAM #1

PROS

- Larger consolidated lawn area for more flexible uses, i.e. small scale recreation, bigger programming & events.
- Art pieces maintain their location, and are highlighted by the new circulation patterns.
- Main plaza at corner is more visible, integrated with the sidewalk, and likewise a better area to showcase the history photo tiles and remnant masonry materials.
- Active plaza on south side is closer to district growth areas.
- Public Art and historic tiles are more identifiable located in the corner main plaza.
- Three of the four gateways are entry walks with welcoming seating areas.
- Garden seating connects to outdoor plaza.
- Playground area has more nearby seating.

CONS

- Formal “center” and symmetry is lost.
- Some corners of the park have more prominence than others.

CONCEPT DIAGRAM #2

PROS

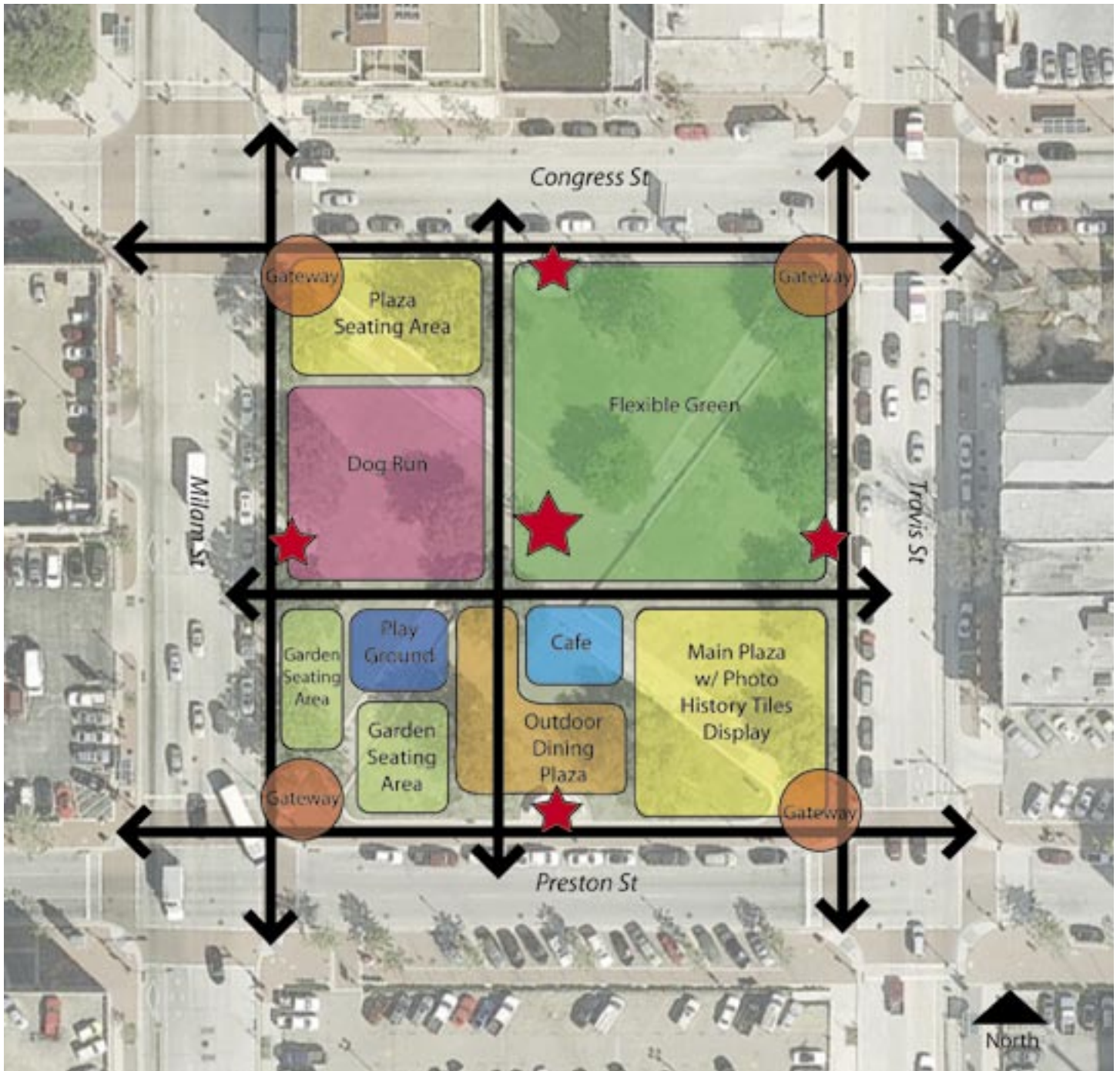
- More greenspace overall, although divided into two areas.
- Four art tiled benches maintain their locations, and mark the new circulation patterns.
- Active plaza is in a visible location that supports existing retail concentration.
- A north-south promenade showcases the history photo tiles and remnant masonry pieces.

CONS

- Public Art and history in the promenade are off-set from park gateways and thus not immediately visible.
- Slight relocation of center art piece deviates from original concept of artists.
- Lawn space divided - less opportunity for bigger recreational and/or programmatic activities.
- Wide art walk separates the park, dividing the park and its adjacent land uses into disconnected east and west sides.
- Garden seating may be disrupted by noise of dog run, and is separated from other green areas.
- Two of the four gateways are not entry walks, leading park users into passive green areas.
- Some corners of the park have more prominence than others.



CONCEPT DIAGRAM#1



CONCEPT DIAGRAM #2

