

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

FIRST FLOOR ADJACENCIES

EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN

EXISTING TREE CANOPY

SUN/ SHADE PATTERNS

EXISTING TOPOGRAPHY

A TILTED LANDSCAPE

ADDITIONAL SITE ISSUES

PARK USER ACTIVITY

Today, Franklin Park lies in the heart of Center City DC occupying an entire city square of 4.79 acres. It is bordered by K Street on the north, 13th Street on the east, I Street on the south, and 14th Street on the west. The park is nestled within the central business district, with residential areas just a few blocks to the north and east.

The physical characteristics of Franklin Park include a gradually sloping topography from the northern edge of the park along K Street to the southern edge along I Street. The park also has a cross slope from the northeast corner to the southwest corner of the site. This gentle slope is interrupted by a central plaza that contains a quatrefoil-shaped fountain. Other notable park

structures include the Commodore Barry Statue on 14th Street and an unprecedented canopy of mature trees. The current layout of Franklin Park closely represents the redesign of 1936, with three “ellipses” defining the pedestrian circulation throughout the park. These “ellipses” also delineate the three dominant areas of the site; the central plaza and two large lawn areas.

Unfortunately the park has fallen into disrepair; it lacks the public amenities typical of urban parks except for the benches that line the outer pathways; and its natural and cultural resources are degraded and under threat.

Franklin Park is used on a daily basis by the Downtown DC homeless population and is also a site of weekend feedings and charity for the region’s poor. This concentrated activity may partly be the result of a homeless shelter that operated in the historic Franklin School until 2008. Currently, homeless feedings by local churches regularly in the park on Tuesday mornings. On weekends, non-profit organizations and churches as far away as West Virginia and Pennsylvania come to the park to donate food and clothing, resulting in a significant trash and maintenance burden for park staff. The park offers few programmed activities, to the general public and therefore the site only attracts a more diverse group of users during lunch, when office workers from nearby businesses flock to the park as patrons of the food trucks that currently line both K and 13th Streets.

The following diagrams and images provide a detailed depiction of the existing conditions of Franklin Park.





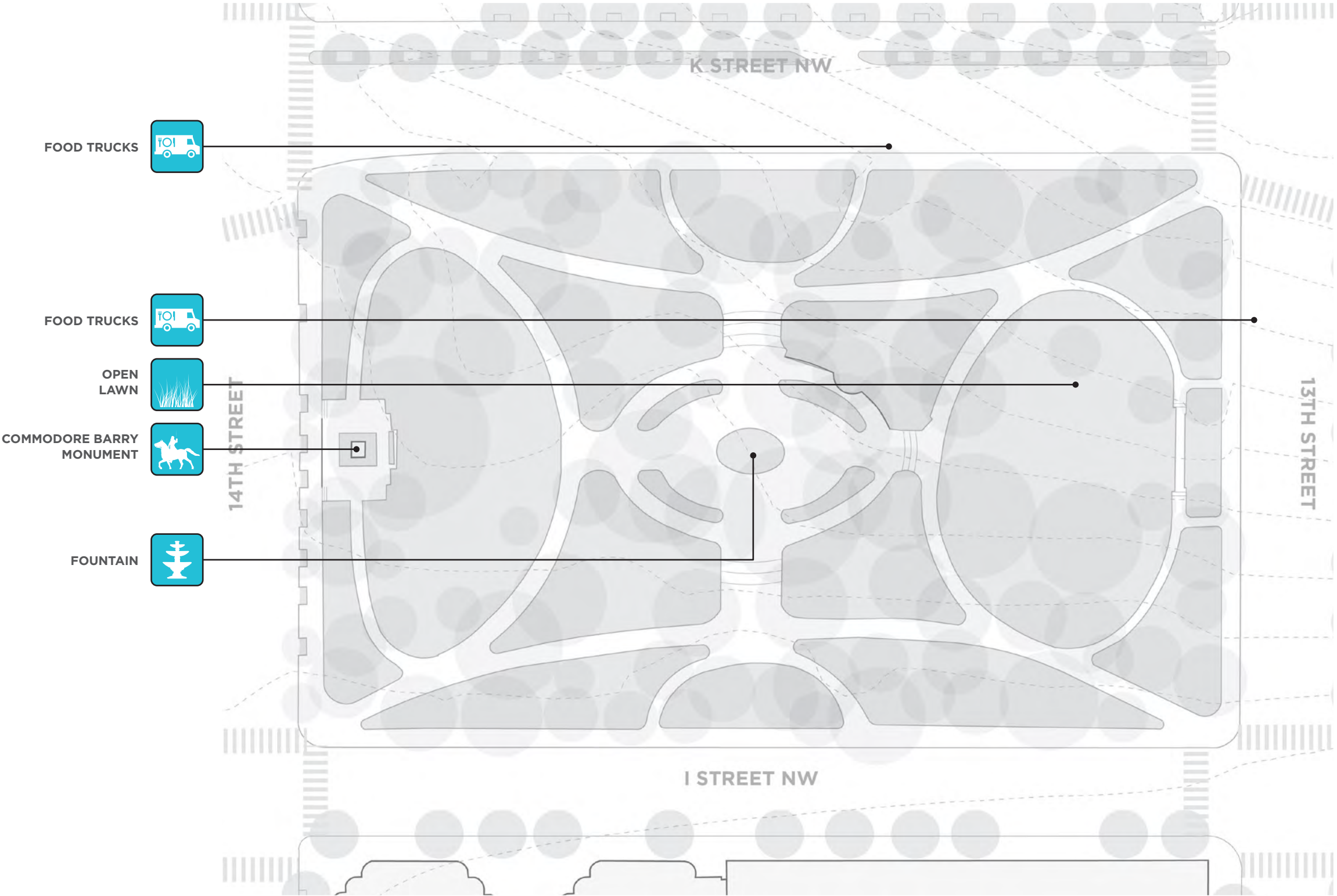
**FRANKLIN PARK**  
**WASHINGTON DC**  
**OWNER: NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE**  
**MANAGEMENT: DOWNTOWN DC BID**



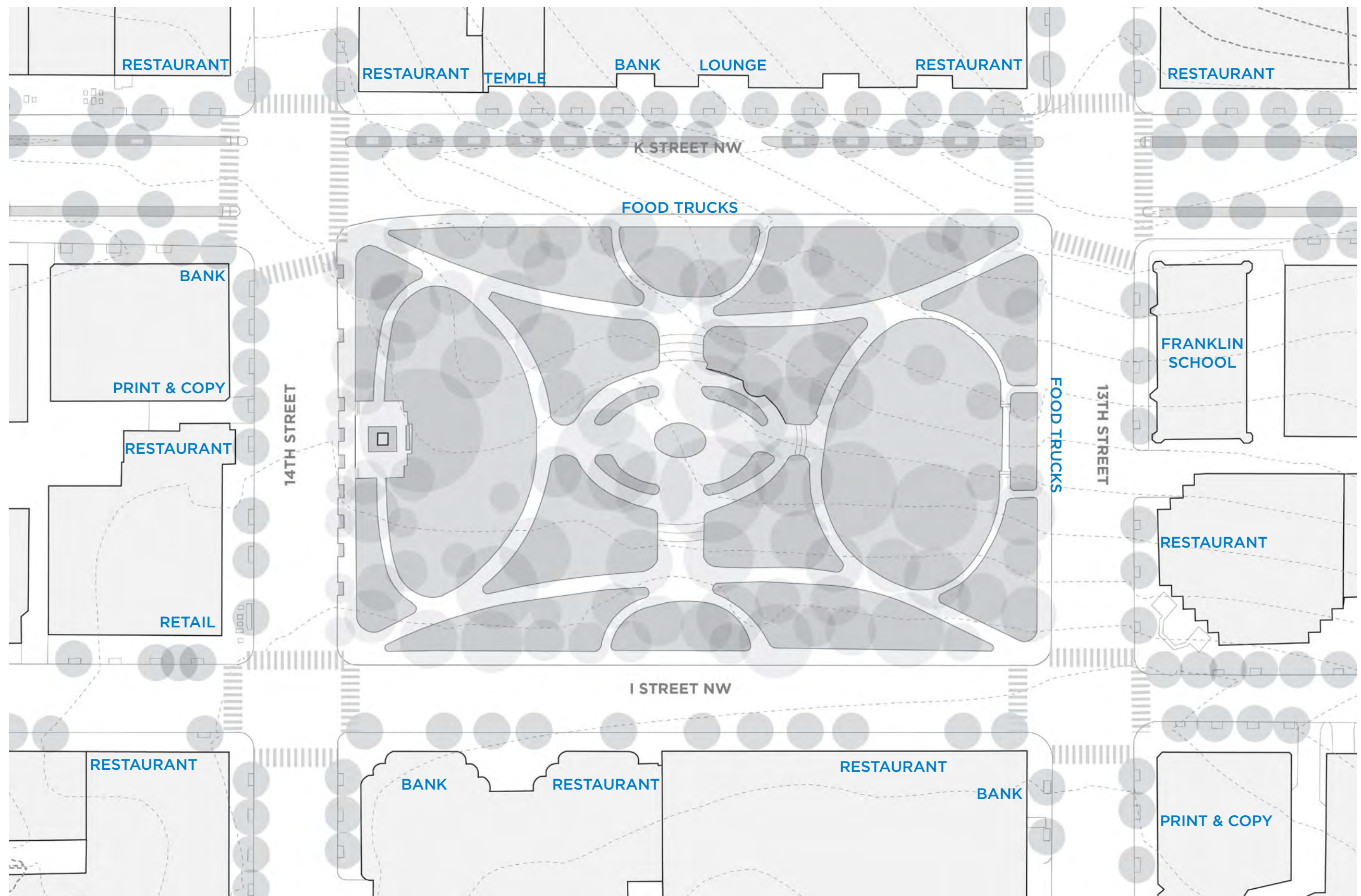
**STAFF:**  
NPS - **11**  
\*Staff assigned to maintain all uptown parks  
SAM - **2 OR MORE AS NEEDED**

**FINANCIALS:**  
DOWNTOWNDC BID - **27 K**

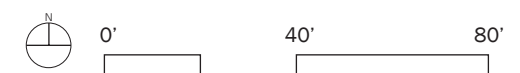
**DEMOGRAPHICS**  
OFFICE WORKERS  
LOCAL RESIDENTS  
TOURISTS  
HOMELESS FROM DOWNTOWN REGION



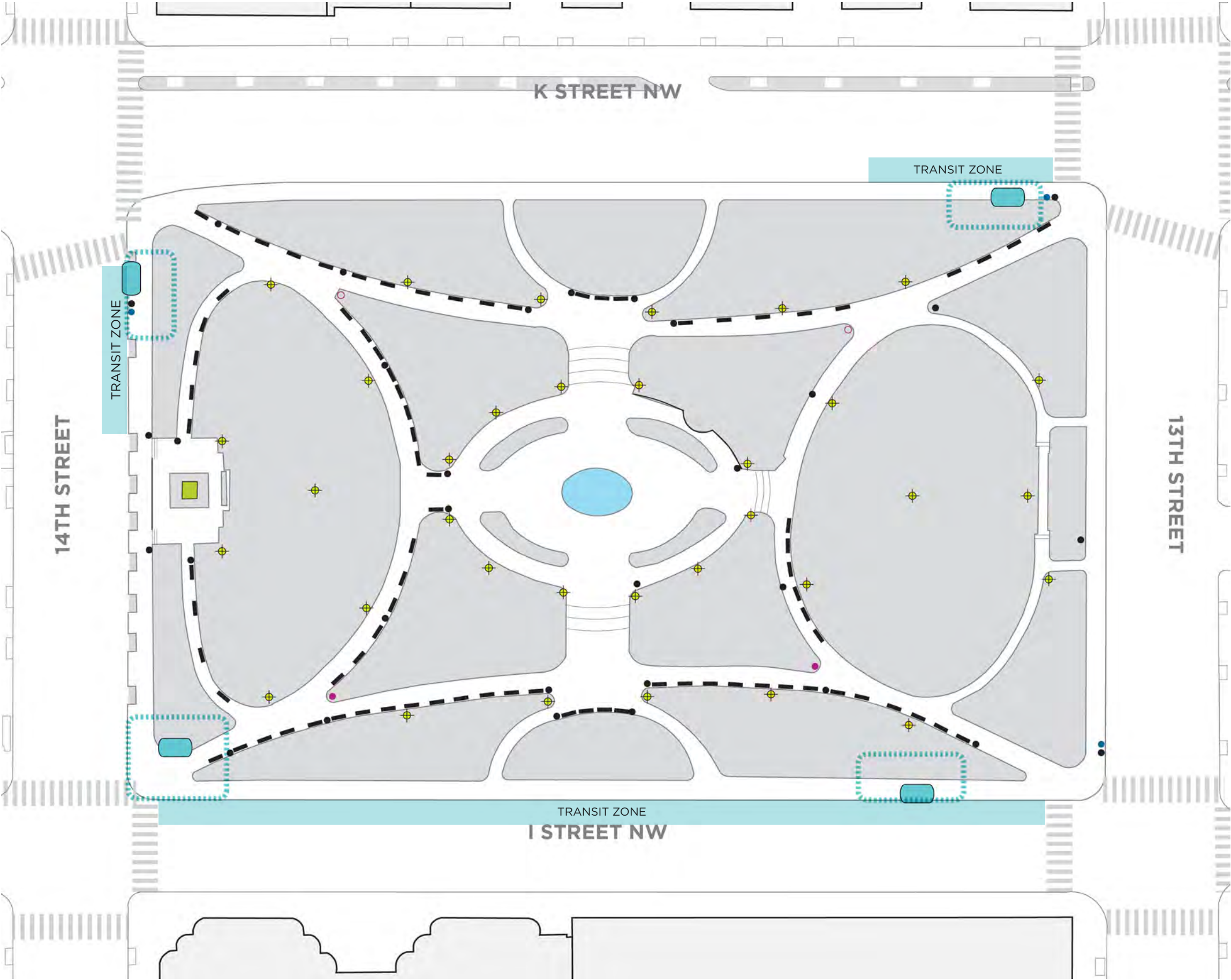




## FIRST FLOOR ADJACENCIES







**FOUNTAIN**

- The fountain lacks a filtration system and is therefore difficult to keep clean. In order to thoroughly clean the fountain, the basin must be fully drained on a regular basis
- The French jets mounted above the water level of the fountain are only partially operational as several of the nozzles seem to be broken
- Deterioration of the sandstone base and coping is evident as a majority of the material is spalling
- The design of the fountain's coping makes it difficult for park users to engage the water easily

**SITE FURNISHINGS**

- The existing light output of the lamps used do not provide a sense of security or safety in the park at night. The electrical system within the park may need to be upgraded
- The current sanitation program at the park does not adequately accommodate contemporary methods of waste management, such as recycling
- After lunch during the week or feedings for the poor on weekends, the volume of trash greatly exceeds the Park's sanitation resources
- The National Park Service standard benches only accommodate two people and do not foster social interaction for larger groups of people
- The benches require paint application which puts stress on the maintenance regime

- BENCHES
- ⊕ LIGHT POLES
- TRASH CANS
- RECYCLING CANS
- DRINKING FOUNTAINS
- MISSING DRINKING FOUNTAINS
- ▭ BUS SHELTERS
- ▭ COMMUTER ZONES
- STATUE
- WATER FOUNTAIN

**EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN**





The Saratoga fixture is powered by an outdated electrical system



Park users sitting on benches during lunch



The fountain basin collects debris which settles at the bottom and algae bloom is frequent



Overflowing trash receptacles on weekend

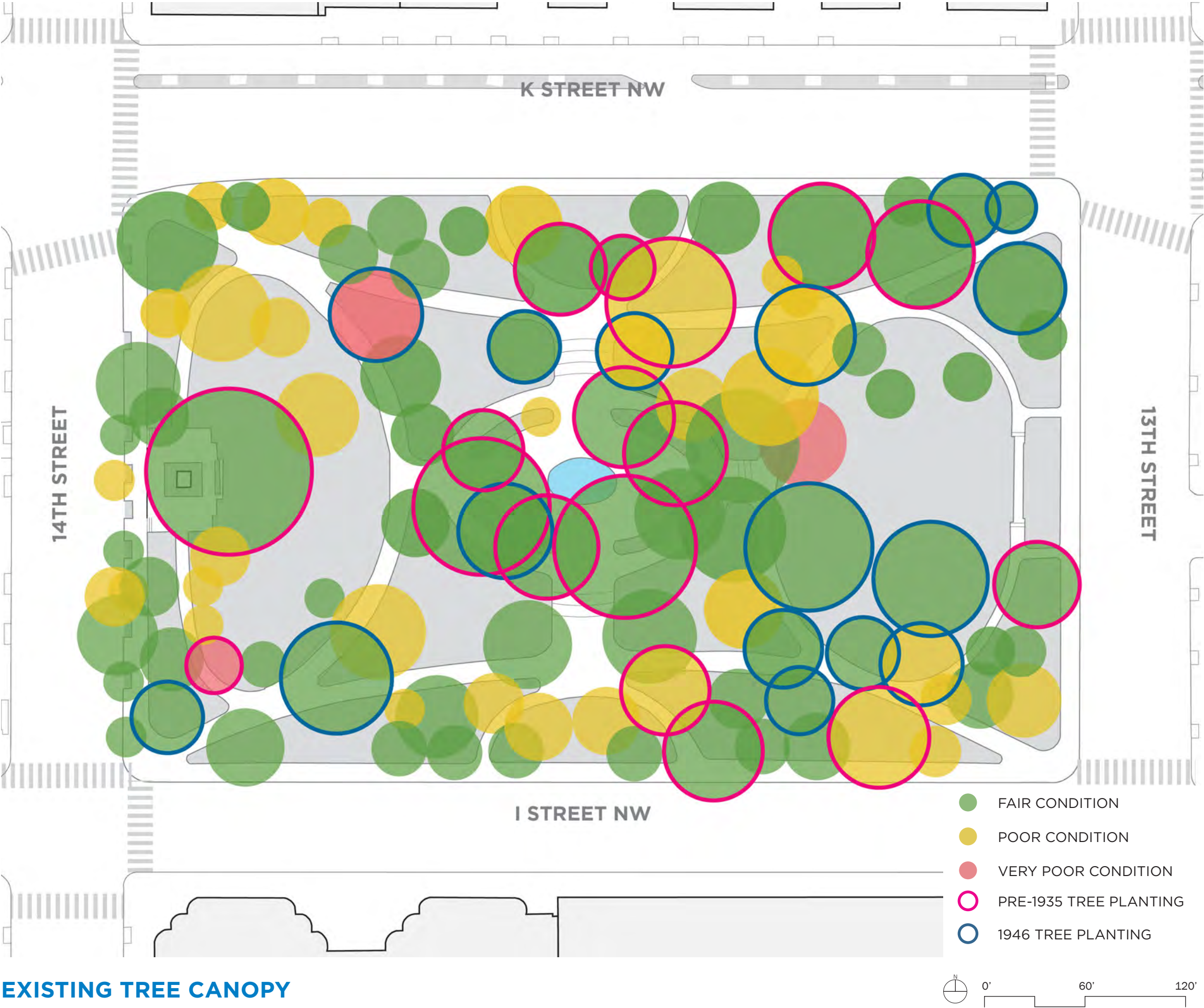


Spalling stone at the fountain



Malfunctioning nozzles on the French water jet





EXISTING TREE CANOPY



Compaction of the soil within tree root zones due to social paths



Damage to tree root flares, due to rodent burrows



TREES

- The compaction of the soil within the dripline of the existing trees put the health of the trees at risk
- The health of the trees are also put at risk by the burrowing of rodents within the root zones
- At night, the rodent population is prevalent and extensive, as they emerge from the burrows in the trees
- A tree inventory and management plan is being conducted in order to ensure the future health of the trees, as well as the safety of park users

LAWN

- Various areas of the lawn suffer from erosion, especially along the southern edge of the park
- Stumps that remain in the lawn from past tree removals, hinder the use of these areas
- Wear on the lawn and compaction of the soil is evident adjacent to the bus shelters and along K and 13th Streets where use of the sidewalk by passers-by is impeded by patrons of the food trucks who are lined up on the sidewalk
- Some of the lawn areas have challenging or uneven slopes that impede the use of the space by select user groups, such as small children, people with disabilities, and the elderly



Commuters standing in the park as they wait for the bus



A tree stump within the east lawn



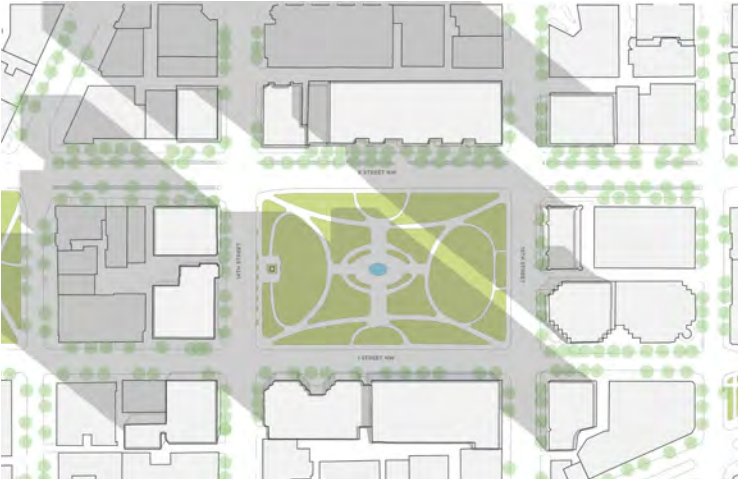
Lawn and soil conditions along 13th Street



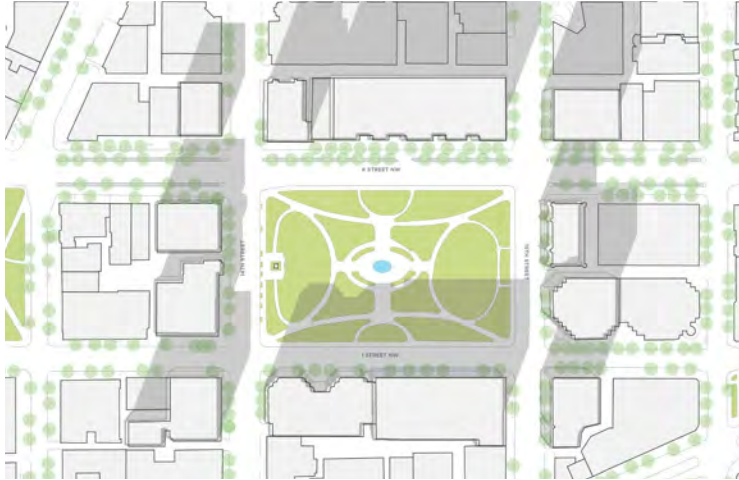
SUN + SHADE AT THE PARK

The adjacent buildings are commercial office buildings, between 4 and 14 stories, creating a consistent amount of shade on the park throughout certain times of the year. The following diagrams help us understand how the solar exposure might influence the usage patterns within the park throughout the year, in addition to placement of program and design features for maximum use and programmatic flexibility.

To note, in winter the park is mostly in shadow except during the middle of the day where the northern half of the park receives sunlight. In spring, the park receives sunlight throughout the daylight hours and summer. In the fall, the park receives sunlight throughout the day but in the morning its eastern and southern edges are shaded and in the late afternoon its western and southern edges are shaded.



11:30 AM

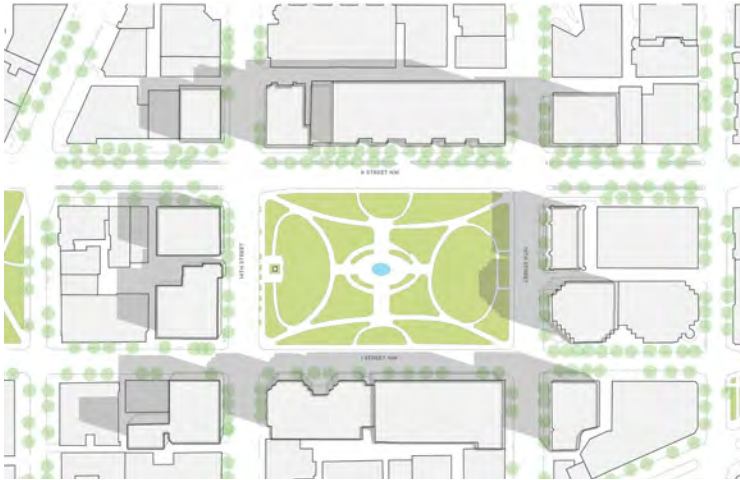


1:30 PM

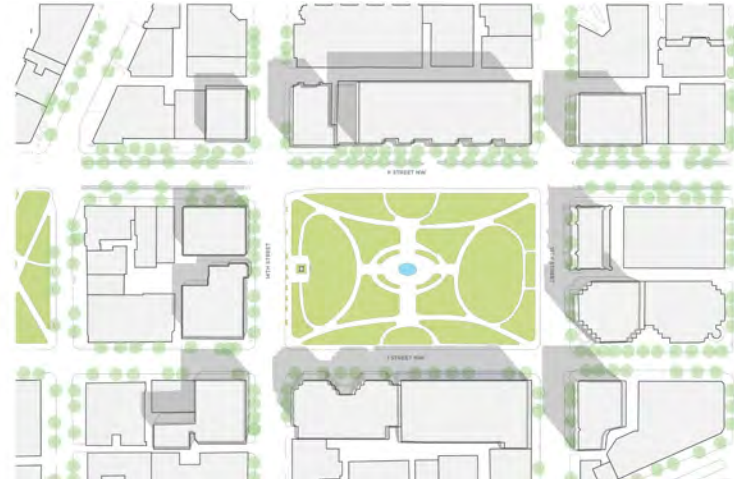


4:30 PM

SUN / SHADE PATTERNS JAN. 16TH



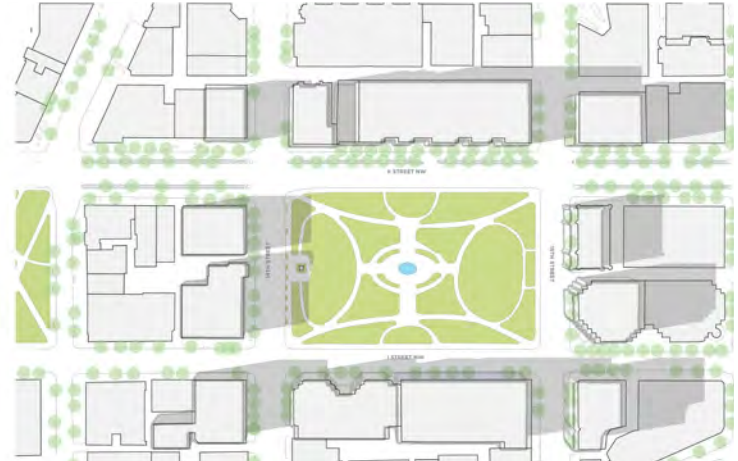
11:30 AM



1:30 PM



4:30 PM

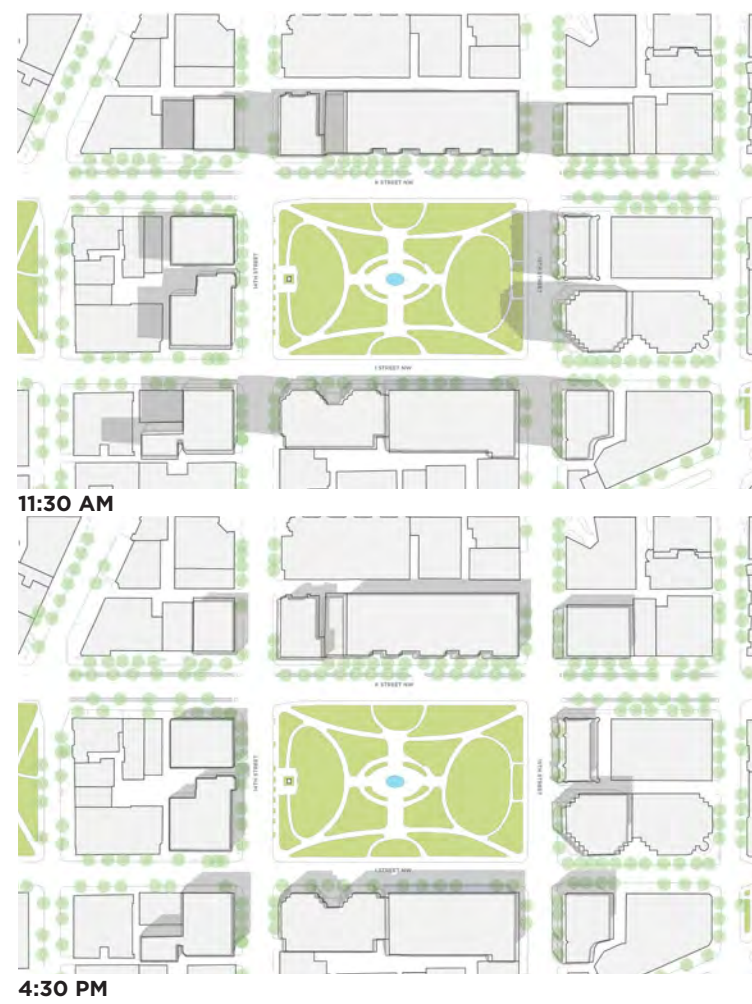


7:15 PM

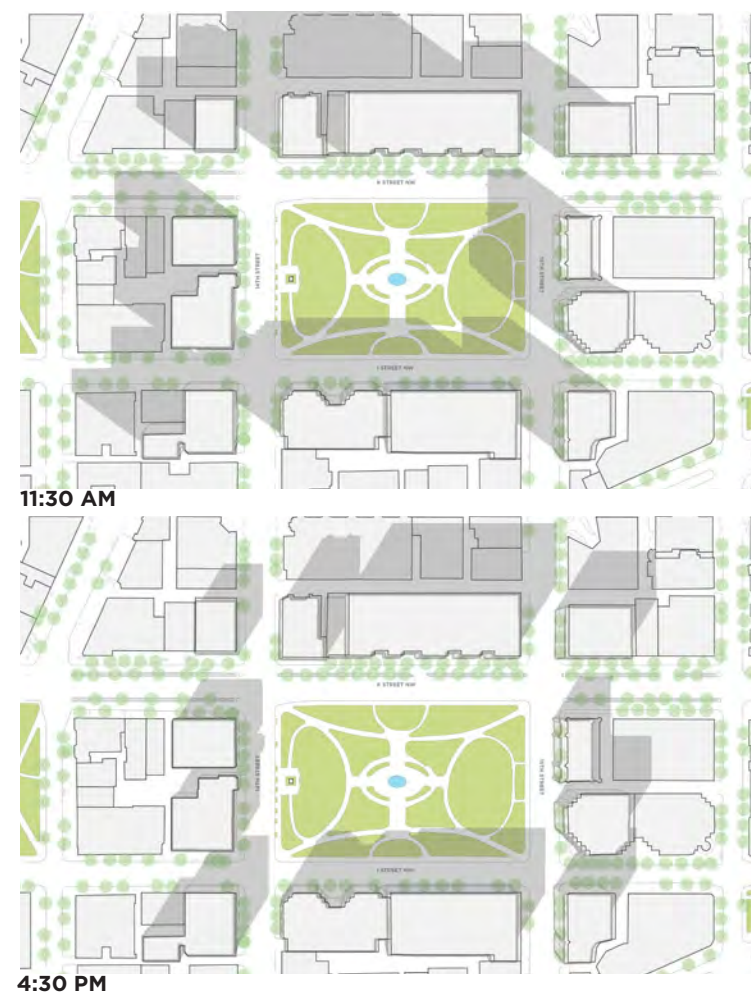
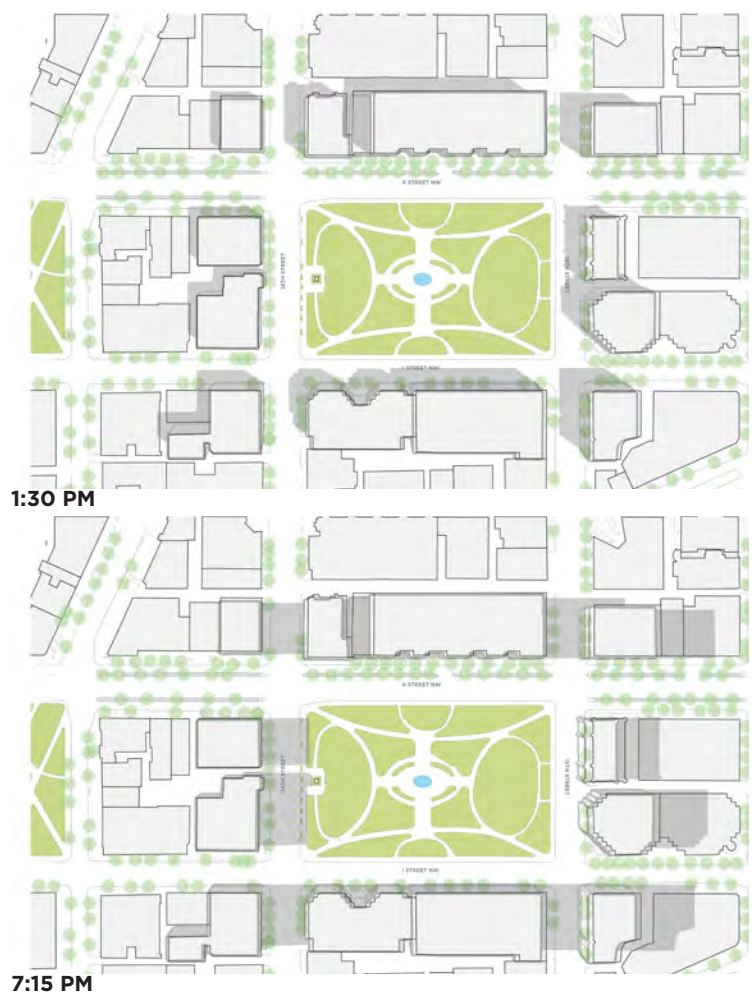
SUN / SHADE PATTERNS APR. 16TH







SUN / SHADE PATTERNS JUL. 16TH



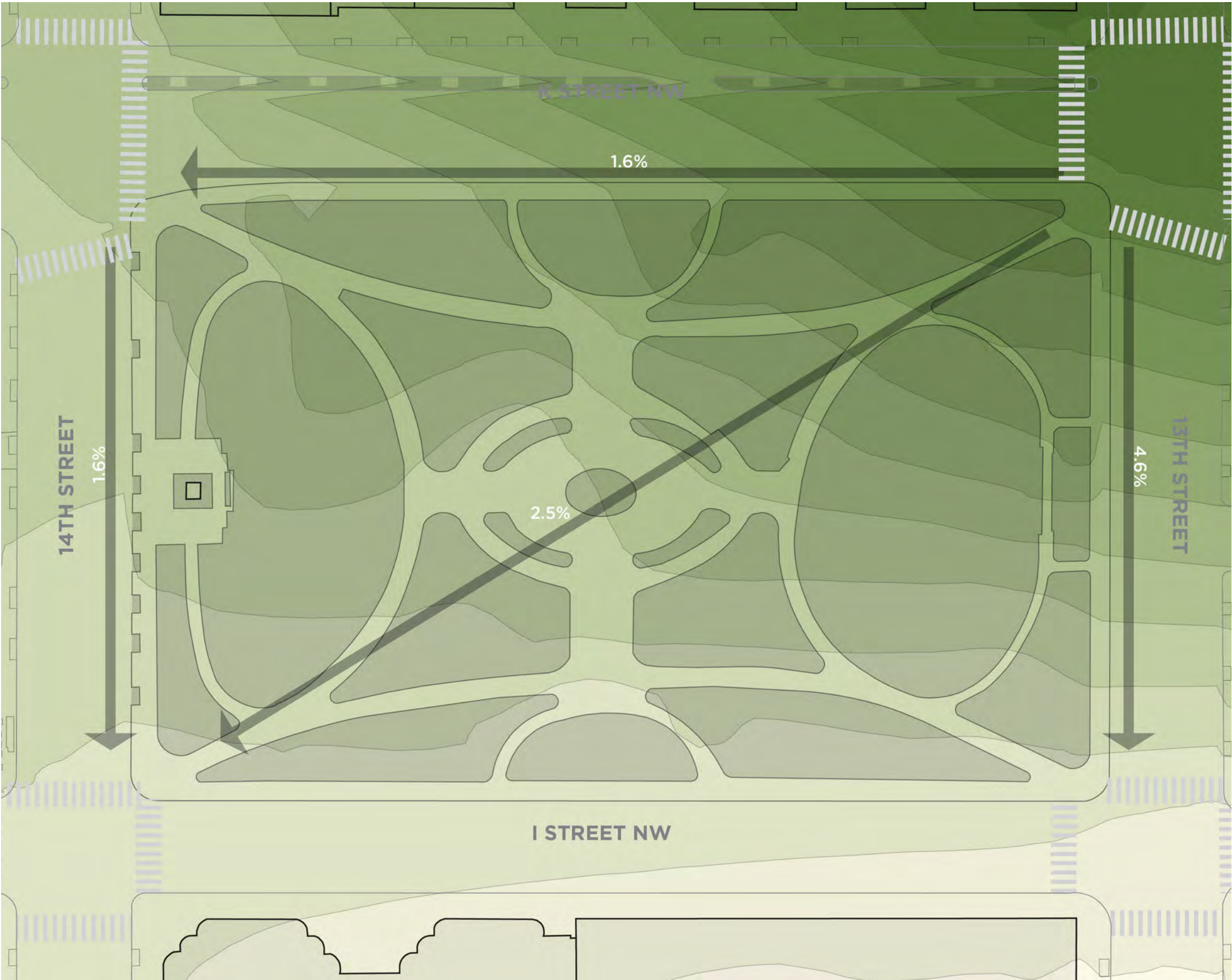
SUN / SHADE PATTERNS OCT. 16TH





A TILTED LANDSCAPE

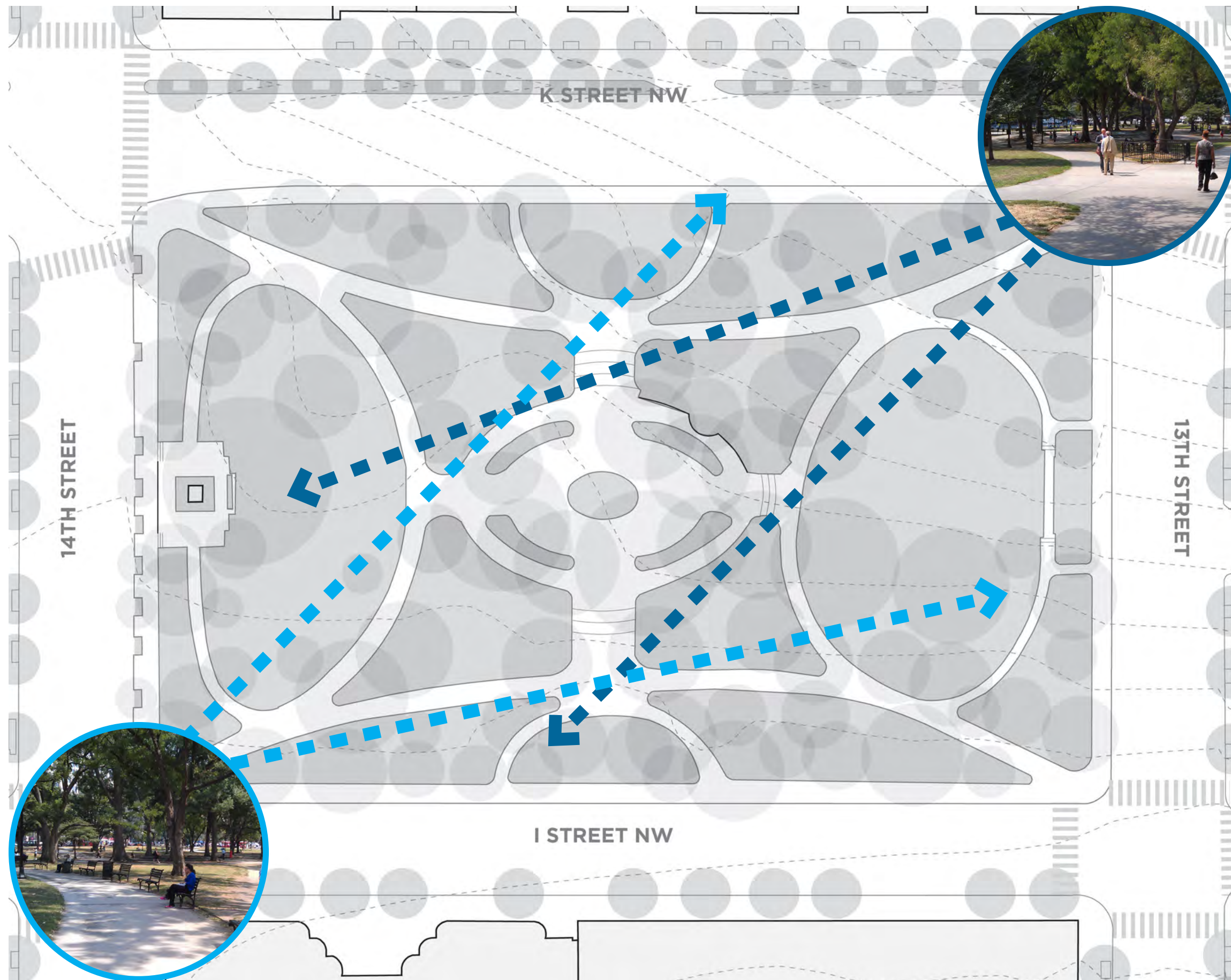
The high point of the site is at the northeast corner of the park and the topography slopes gently to the southwest corner. This topography is not typical of many city parks which have their high point at the center, allowing for visibility from the street into the park, as well as from the center out.



\* TOPOGRAPHY IS BASED ON GIS INFORMATION ONLY FULL SURVEY IS UNDERWAY AND WILL BE COMPLETE MID NOVEMBER 2013

EXISTING TOPOGRAPHY





## A TILTED LANDSCAPE



## AN OPEN VIEW

Although the Cultural Landscape Inventory has determined that no significant views exist within the park, it is important to consider how the tilted site impacts visibility into the park and from within the park.

Historically, a hornbeam hedge surrounded the central plaza creating an intimate landscape room at the center of the park. With the removal of those hedges, one can see across the entire park from the northeast corner; and from the southwest corner, there is a clear view into the central plaza and the fountain.

The Design Team shall consider visibility in relation to this sloping topography when evaluating the opportunities for accommodating new programmatic elements in the park.



Franklin Park hornbeam hedge, c. 1936



Franklin Park hornbeam hedge, c. 1936



PAVING

- Deterioration of the existing bituminous paths are extensive
- Uneven and crumbling pavement present tripping hazards for pedestrians
- Uneven and damaged pavement cause drainage issues
- The flagstone paving at the central plaza is in good condition



Crumbling pavement



Drainage issues at the site



Tripping hazard



Tripping hazard



Uneven pavement



PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

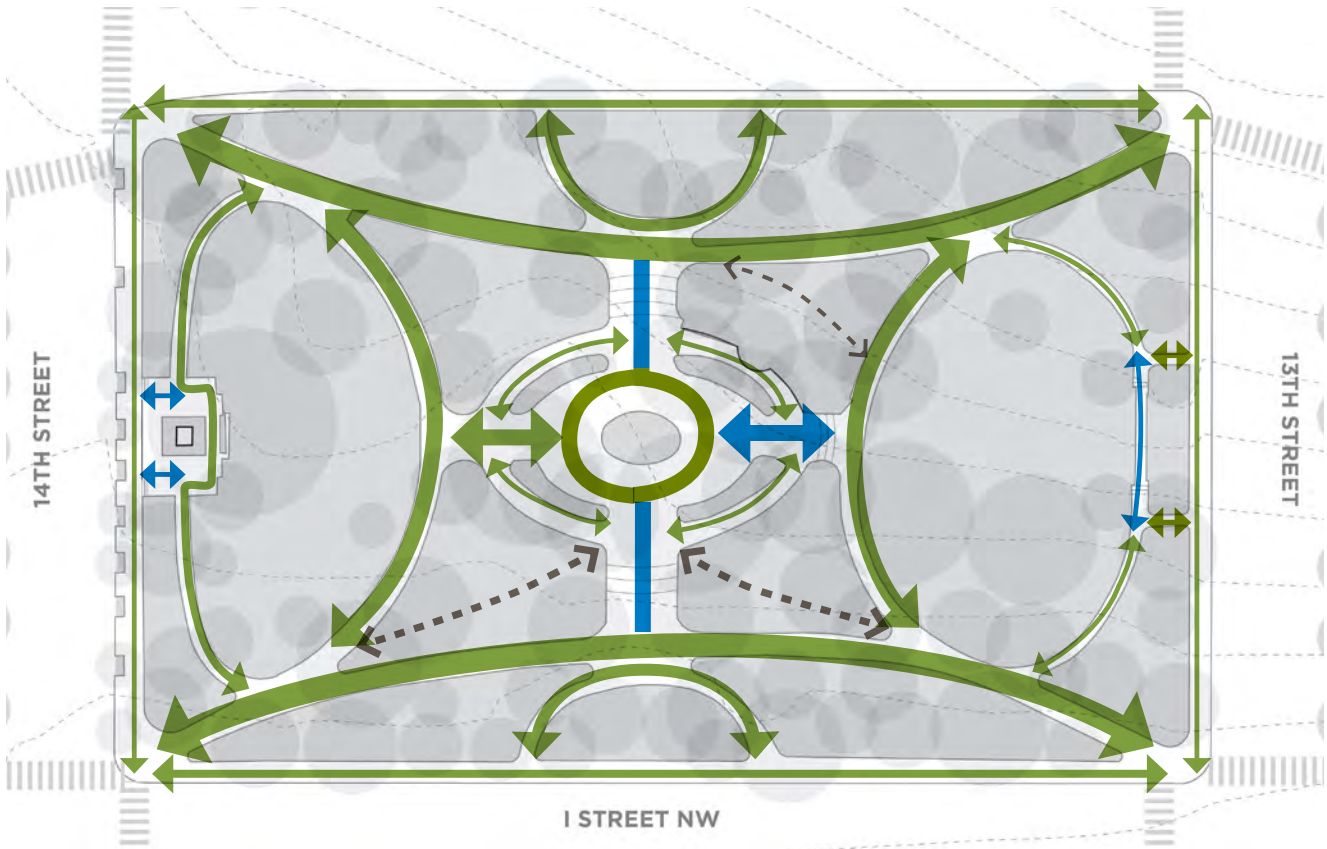
- Social paths have been worn into the existing lawns delineating the desire lines through the park for the current users. This is partly because of the removal of perennial plantings which prevented pedestrians from walking directly to the center of the plaza. In addition, with the hectic nature of contemporary life park users especially commuters tend to just move quickly through the space and given its disrepair and lack of programming are not engaged enough to linger. This is a clear statement that the historic circulation of the park is not adequate for the present-day user
- Accessible routes to facilitate movement through the park for individuals with disabilities are limited to the perimeter and outer paths of the park
- The accessible entrance to the central plaza is limited to the west side, as all other entrances require individuals to navigate stairs



Social path from the central plaza to the southwest corner of the park



Social path from the central plaza to the southeast corner of the park



Accessible entrance to the central plaza from west

- ↔ PEDESTRIAN PATH
- ↔ ACCESSIBLE PATH
- ⋯ SOCIAL PATH
- STAIRS



PARK USERS + ACTIVITY

The Project Team executed two types of user surveys in Franklin Park, individual interviews and visual observations of activity. Both surveys revealed several trends regarding use of the park, as well as common threads of concern.

The written survey asked a series of questions centered around park safety, maintenance, usage, and visitor perception of the Franklin Park. While over half of the survey respondents indicated that they made use of the park on a daily basis, most of these people use it to just “walk through the park or wait on the bus”. Efforts, such as the summer program “Workout Wednesdays” have begun to bring new life into the park; however, current and potential park users have expressed that they would like to see additional programs and activities. The demographics of the survey respondents are demonstrated in the charts to the right.

Given the survey responses, it is apparent that the most successful aspects of the park and the immediate area include the presence of the food trucks during lunch, the shade provided by the mature trees, the large open areas at the park, the park’s proximity to other destinations like work or home, and the fountain. While the elements that give visitors a negative perception of the park include the presence of the homeless, the rodent infestation, trash and the lack of recycling opportunities, the limited availability of places to sit, and the poor condition of the park and its elements.

The survey also revealed that park users feel the park would benefit greatly from several site amenities that could foster more enjoyable use of the park. The amenities most requested include, tables and chairs, art, drinking fountains, recycling cans, and plantings. The full depiction of desired amenities, per the survey results, is on the following page.

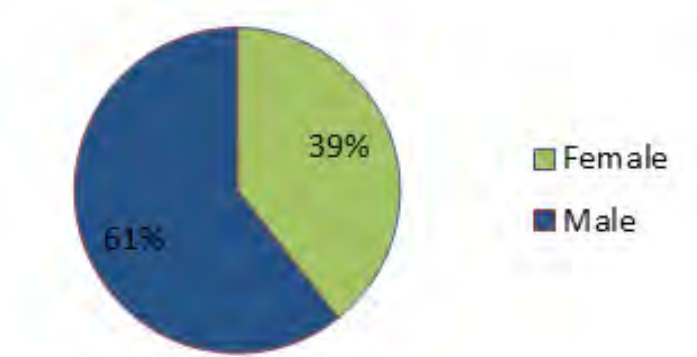


Workout Wednesdays, sponsored by the DowntownDC Business Improvement District

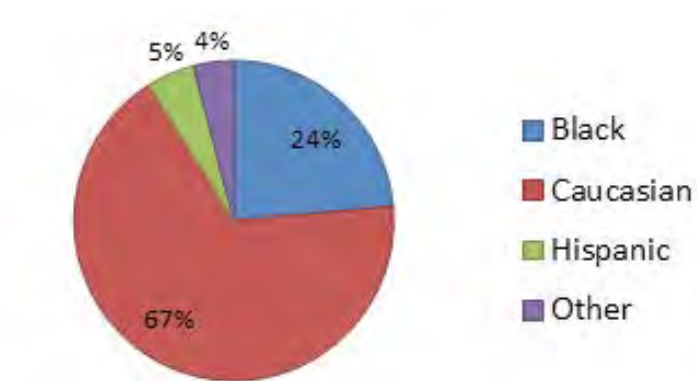


Workout Wednesdays, sponsored by the DowntownDC Business Improvement District

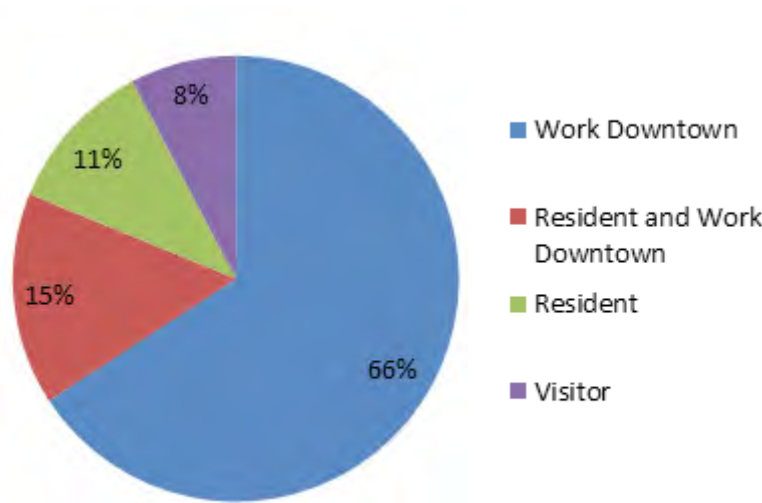
RESPONDENT SEX



RESPONDENT APPARENT RACE



RESPONDENT RESIDENCY





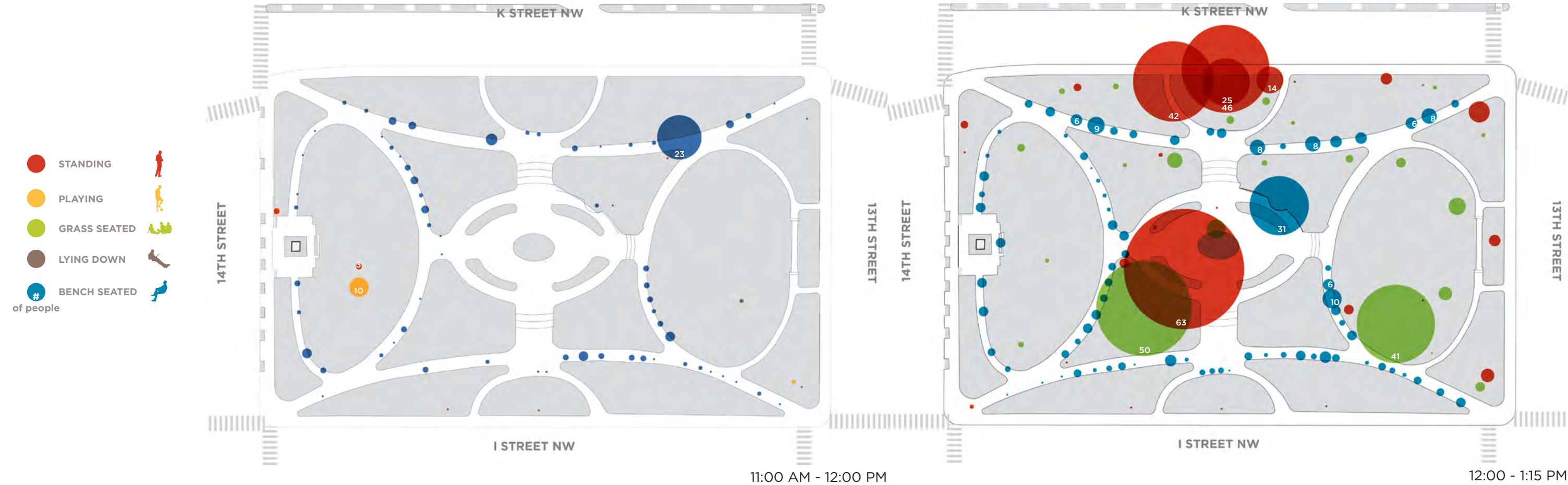
SURVEY RESULTS



WRITTEN SURVEY QUESTIONS

- 1. WHAT TIME DID YOU ARRIVE AT THE PARK TODAY?
- 2. DID YOU COME TO THE PARK WITH ANYONE ELSE TODAY?
- 3. HOW DID YOU GET TO THE PARK TODAY?
- 4. WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE PARK TODAY?
- 5. HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE FRANKLIN PARK DURING THE WARM MONTHS?
- 6. WHAT CURRENTLY PREVENTS YOU FROM USING FRANKLIN PARK MORE?
- 7. WHICH AMENITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN FRANKLIN PARK?
- 8. ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL FRANKLIN PARK IS?
- 9. ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, HOW WELL-MAINTAINED DO YOU FEEL FRANKLIN PARK IS?
- 10. WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT FRANKLIN PARK?
- 11. WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE MOST ABOUT FRANKLIN PARK?
- 12. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT ZIP CODE OF RESIDENCE?
- 13. DO YOU WORK IN DOWNTOWN DC?
- 14. WHAT YEAR WERE YOU BORN?
- 15. WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FRANKLIN PARK VISION AND TRANSFORMATION PLAN AND RECEIVE UPDATES ABOUT MEETINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INPUT AND FEEDBACK?



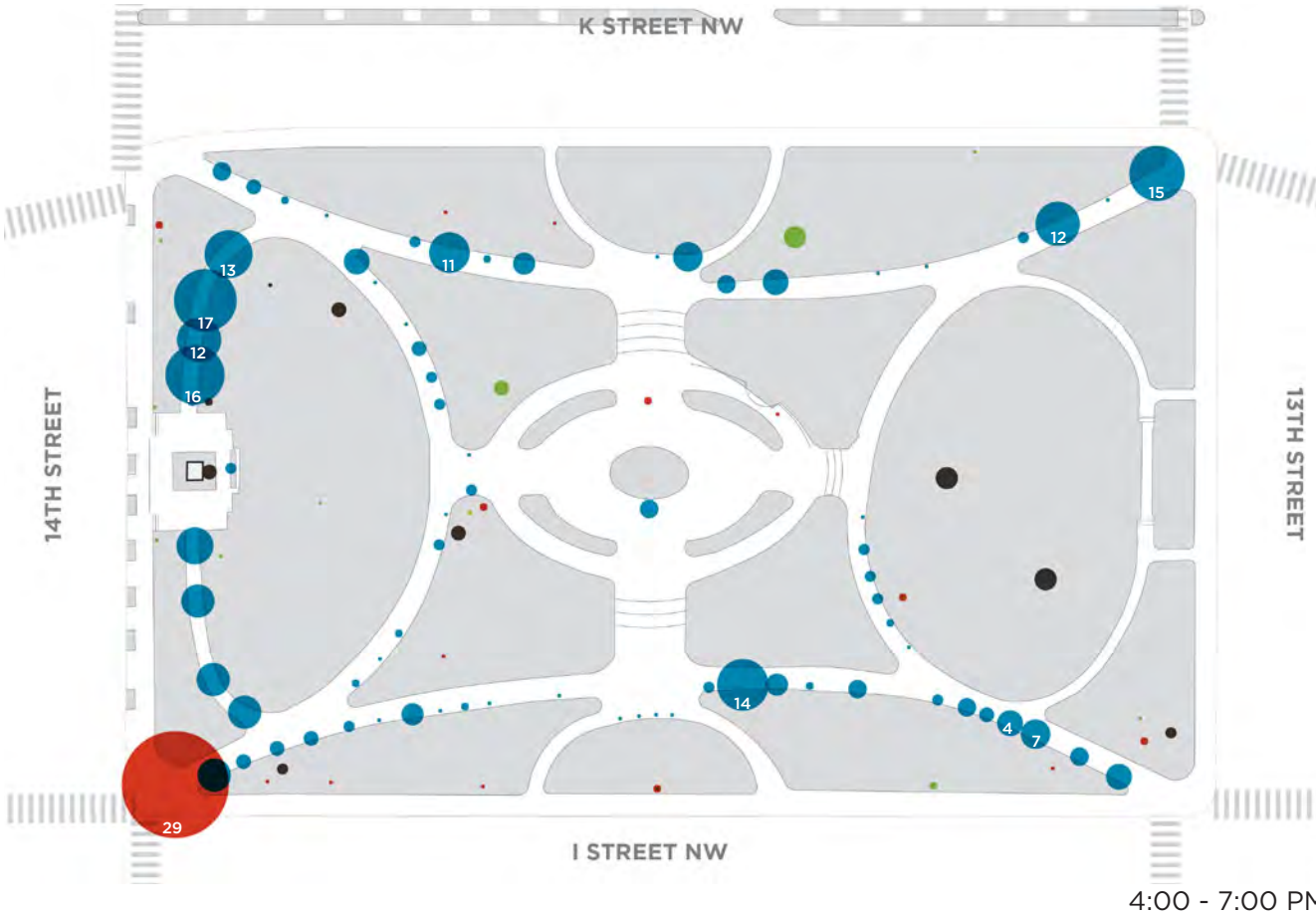
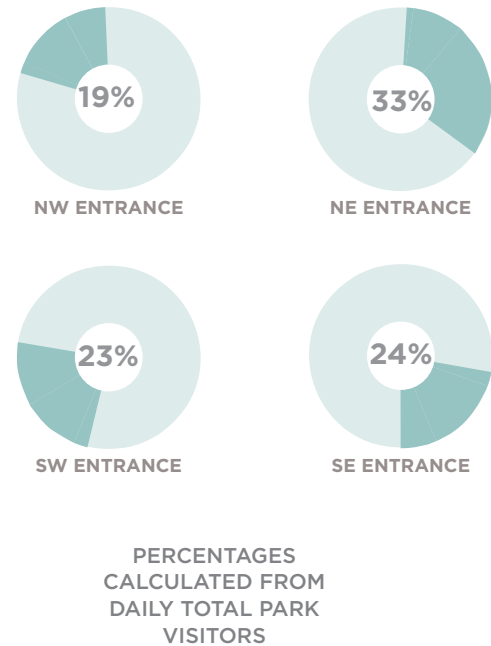


The visual observations of park users took place over three days in the summer; a Tuesday, a Friday, and a Saturday. During this visual survey, Project Team members were able to observe and therefore, better understand how people currently use the park.

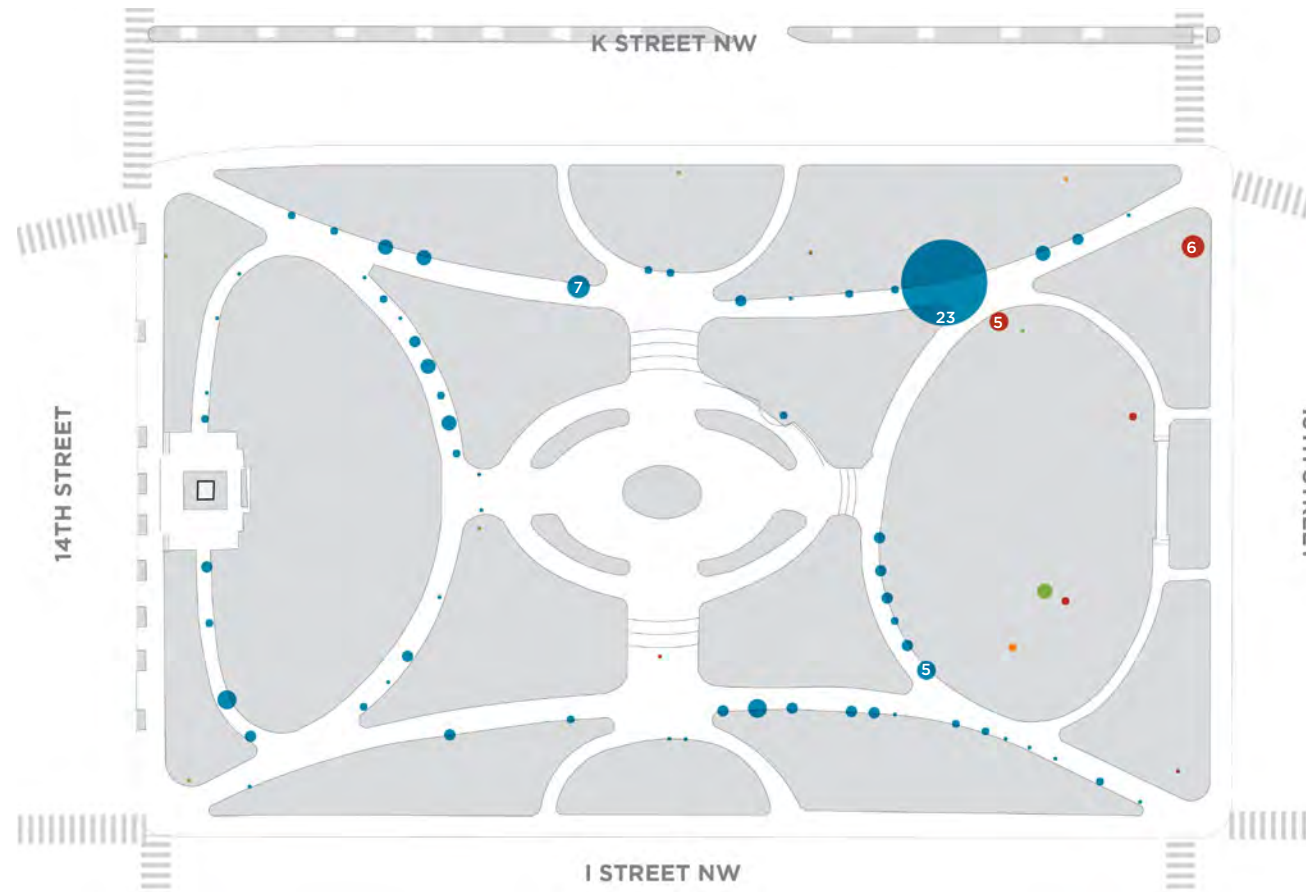
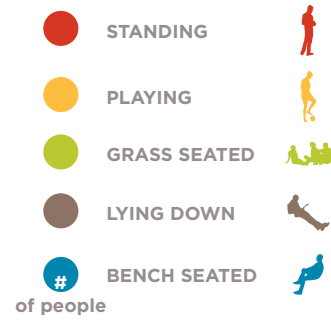
Before lunch on Tuesday, there were few users in the park, and most were sitting on benches. Also during this time, a small play group occupied the west lawn. At lunchtime, the number of users quickly increased with many people waiting in line at the food trucks along K and 13th Streets, and then sitting on the grass or the ledge around the fountain to eat. The weekly Church of the Epiphany Street religious service also took place during this time on the plaza, southwest of the fountain. During the evening rush, the majority of park users were seated on benches or lying on the grass, as commuters walked diagonally through the park to the McPherson Square Metro station or the bus stop at 14th and I Streets.

PARK USER ACTIVITIES - TUESDAY JUNE 25

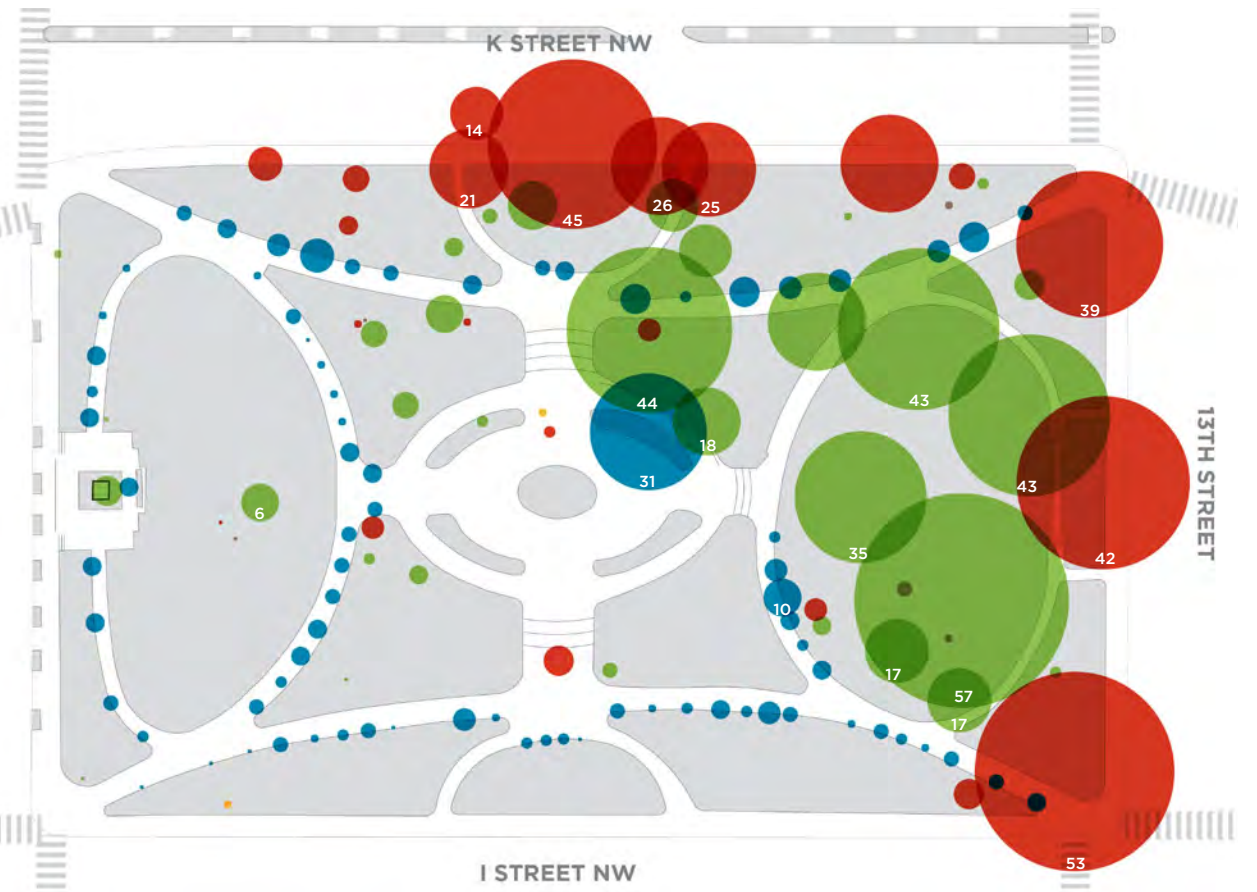
INFORMATION GATHERED AND SYNTHESIZED FROM SITE SURVEYS PERFORMED BY DCOP AN DOWNTOWNDC BID





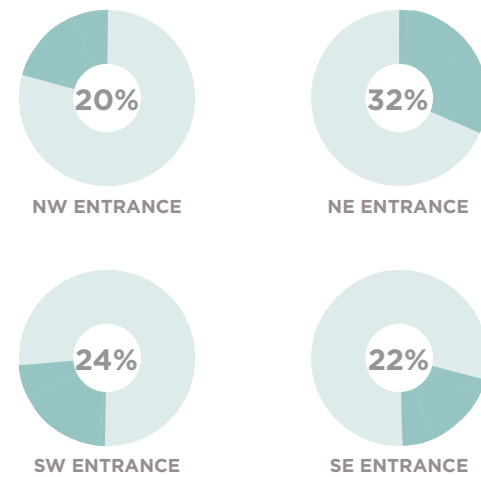


11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

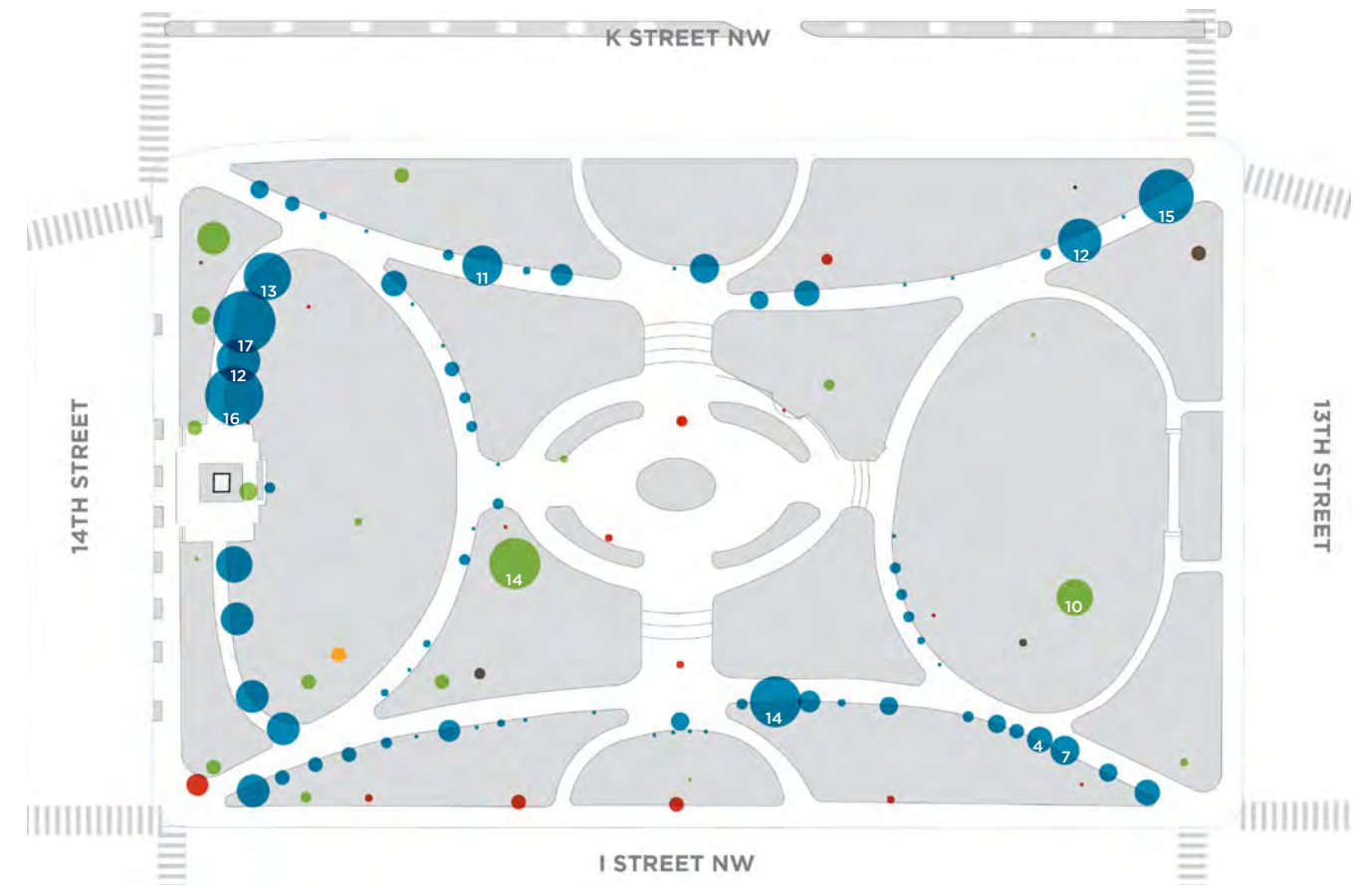


11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Friday echoed Tuesday's usage, with the exception of lunchtime. On this day, there were larger numbers of people waiting at the food trucks. The majority of these people then sat on the east lawn to eat.



PERCENTAGES  
CALCULATED FROM  
DAILY TOTAL PARK  
VISITORS

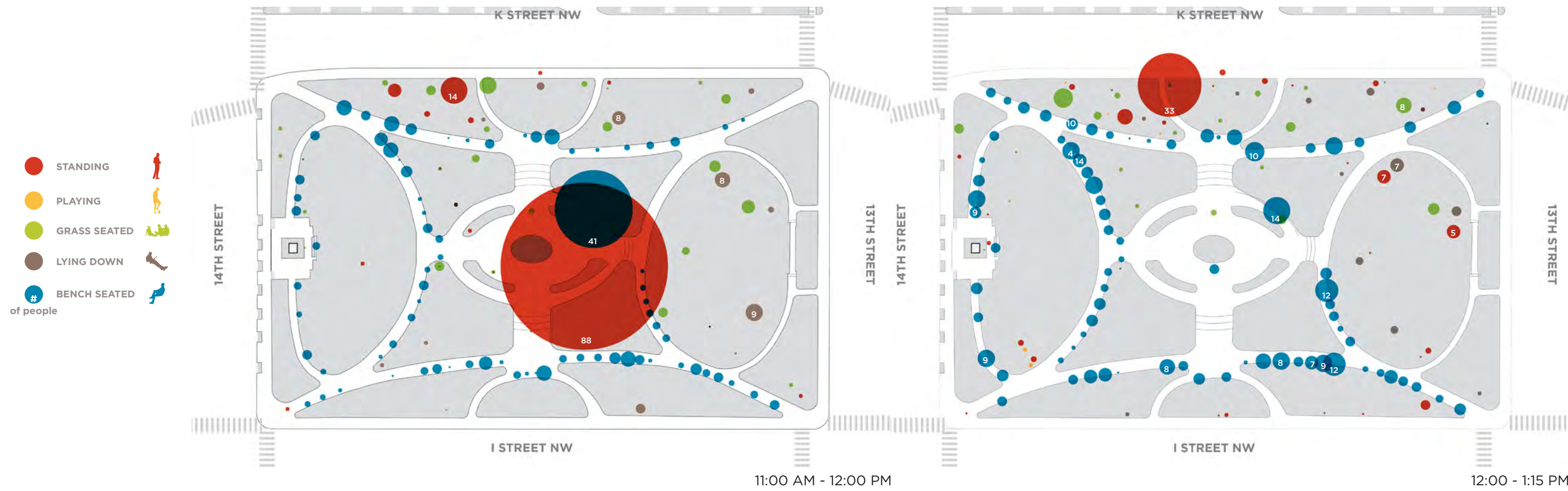


11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

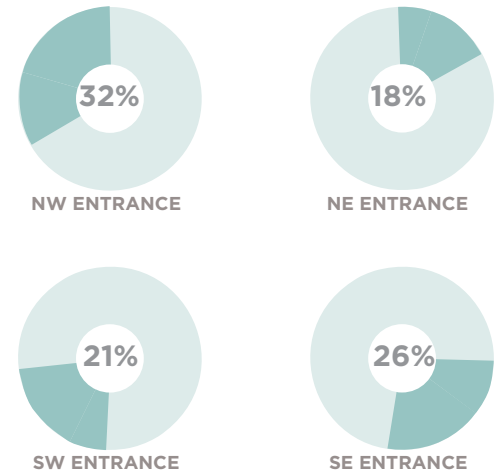
## PARK USER ACTIVITY - FRIDAY JUNE 21

INFORMATION GATHERED AND SYNTHESIZED FROM SITE SURVEYS PERFORMED BY DCOP AN DOWNTOWNDC BID





On Saturday, people were again dispersed across the park seated on benches. with groups forming in the center of the park or along the periphery for the distribution of food and clothing by volunteer groups. This information is also summarized in a series of diagrams on the following pages.

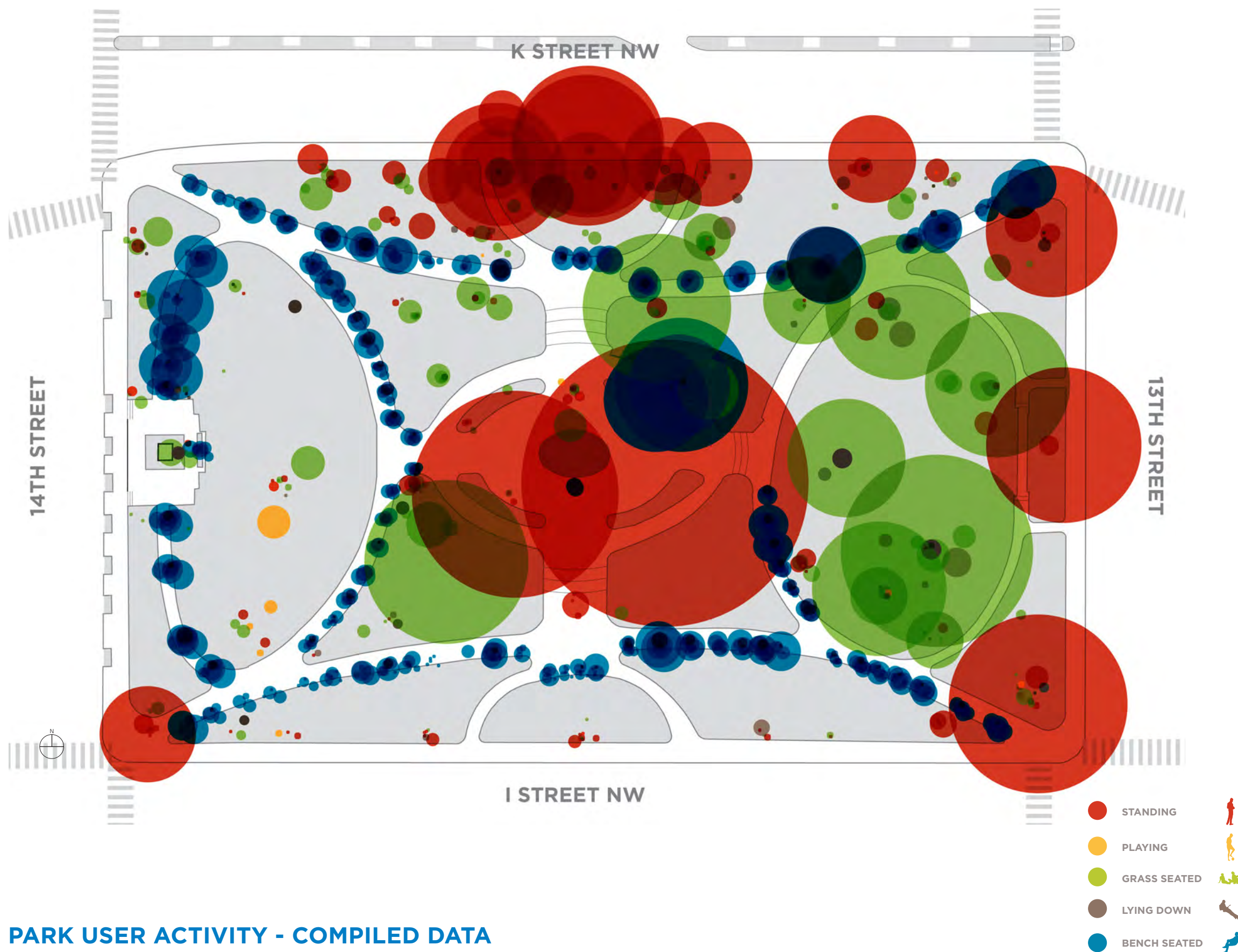


PERCENTAGES  
CALCULATED FROM  
DAILY TOTAL PARK  
VISITORS

## PARK USER ACTIVITY - SATURDAY JUNE 29TH

INFORMATION GATHERED AND SYNTHESIZED FROM SITE SURVEYS PERFORMED BY DCOP AN DOWNTOWNDC BID





## PARK USER ACTIVITY - COMPILED DATA

INFORMATION GATHERED AND SYNTHESIZED FROM SITE SURVEYS PERFORMED BY DCOP AN DOWNTOWNDC BID

### SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

Combining the survey data showcases general trends and highlights the highly used areas of Franklin Park. People standing, were typically in line at the food truck locations, waiting at the bus stops, or enjoying the Street Church services at the central plaza.

Users that were playing were typically doing so in the south west lawn panel, while users that were seated in the lawn did so on the eastern lawn panel and in large groups. Finally, people recorded as lying down typically did so in groups of one or two and were scattered throughout the park.

The seat wall adjacent to the central fountain was a highly popular sitting location, and the benches on the western and northern sides seem to get the most use throughout the days.

The Project and Design Teams will be using these data trends to interpolate appropriate design installations and programmatic proposals for the park based on current user behavior. Following the scheduled public meetings, stakeholder interviews, and review procedures, the Design Team will have a better understanding of the needs of park users and stakeholders. In a continued relationship of collaboration, the Project Team will continue to solicit thoughts, feelings, and desires from the general public and others, with regard to the vision and transformation of Franklin Park.