

FRANKLIN PARK

VISION AND TRANSFORMATION PLAN

ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS NEWSLETTER



You're Invited!!!

The National Park Service (NPS), the DC Office of Planning, the DC Department of Parks and Recreation and the Downtown BID are holding a public meeting to present concept design alternative for the restoration and transformation of Franklin Park on **Wednesday, February 19, 2014 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Hilton Garden Inn, 815 14th St NW, Washington, DC**. The meeting will feature a presentation of concept design alternatives and an interactive workshop with meeting participants to gather their feedback and input.

We are interested in hearing your input on restoring and transforming Franklin Park, specifically your comments on the proposed concept designs alternatives. There are two ways to be involved: submitting written or electronic comments (see last page for more information about how to submit comments), or by attending the public meeting.

BACKGROUND

Franklin Park is located between K and I Streets, NW and 13th and 14th Streets, NW in downtown Washington, DC and is owned by NPS. The park sits within a rapidly growing neighborhood of Center City DC. Currently the park does not meet the diverse needs of neighborhood residents, workers or visitors; however, there is the potential to transform Franklin Park into one of our nation's premier urban parks. To realize this dramatic transformation, the National Park Service and its partners are investigating options for increasing recreational opportunities, adding services such as food and restrooms, increasing events and programs, restoring historic resources, incorporating sustainable and ecologically sensitive materials and practices, enhancing surrounding streetscape and transportation connections, and using a public/private partnership to oversee the long-term maintenance and management of the park.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The purpose of the project is to revitalize Franklin Park in a manner that respects and enhances the historic and urban qualities of the park while transforming it into an active, flexible, and sustainable park that is connected to its community.

As a large park situated within the increasingly populated center city, lacking access to open space, Franklin Park provides a unique opportunity to serve the community and enhance urban living. Currently, park features are deteriorated and essential services, such as adequate seating and programming, are lacking. In addition, opportunities exist for better connections to both the historic and current urban context. The project is needed to address these deficiencies and revitalize the park so that it attracts and serves all visitors.

PLANNING PROCESS

- 1st Technical and Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings—September 18th, 2013
- Public scoping meeting for the Environmental Assessment—November 7th, 2013
- 2nd Technical and Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings—December 10th, 2013
- Concept design alternatives development—December 2013/January 2014
- 3rd Technical and Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings—February 3rd, 2014
- Concept design alternatives released for public comment— February 10th, 2014



- **Franklin Public Meeting #2: Presentation of Concept Design Alternatives—February 19th, 2014**
- National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation meeting – February 26th, 2014
- Refine alternatives and select the preferred design alternative – Spring 2014
- Release Environmental Assessment to the public – Summer 2014
- Prepare and publish Decision Document – Fall 2014
- Public meeting on Final Design – Winter 2014



EXISTING CONDITIONS

PARK INFRASTRUCTURE

The park has fallen into disrepair; the paths are crumbling and seating is inadequate. It lacks the public amenities typical of urban parks, and its natural and cultural resources are degraded and under threat.

LIMITED ACCESSIBILITY

Only one accessible route exists to enter the central plaza, while other entrances require one to navigate stairs. 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 central plaza. Park users, especially commuters, tend to move quickly through the space and given its disrepair and lack of programming are not engaged enough to linger. Circulation for the park needs to be studied in order to design for the present-day user.

IMPACT OF ADJACENT USES

Wear on the lawn and compaction of the soil is evident adjacent to the bus shelters and along 13th Street where people cross the invisible threshold between park and street edge to wait for services. Sanitation of the site is also compromised by the unmanaged charity missions that take place most weekends for homeless feedings and clothing donations.

TREE HEALTH

The overall health of the park's existing trees is fair, at best. With 37% of the inventory consisting of mature trees, the aging canopy must be managed properly and a strategy for ensuring a healthier stock of younger trees must be implemented.



ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT DESIGNS

A range of concept design alternatives have been developed to respond to the project purpose, address the project need and study options that minimize impacts on natural, historic and cultural resources. In addition, the alternatives incorporate desired park uses and programs prioritized both from public comments submitted to NPS and feedback received at the Franklin Park Public Scoping Meeting.

THE CENTER CONCEPT

Under this alternative, the basic framework and circulation of the park would remain unchanged. This alternative would include a few actions to make the park a more active place. The focus of this concept would be to restore the center of the park with a refurbished quatrefoil fountain, framed by seasonal plantings.

In order to serve the growing demographic of families with young children in this center city neighborhood, a children's play area would be located within the northern half of the east lawn. Additional improvements to the park include ample seating for park users and bus commuters; amenities, such as electric charging stations and street trees along 13th Street; and bike racks along K Street.

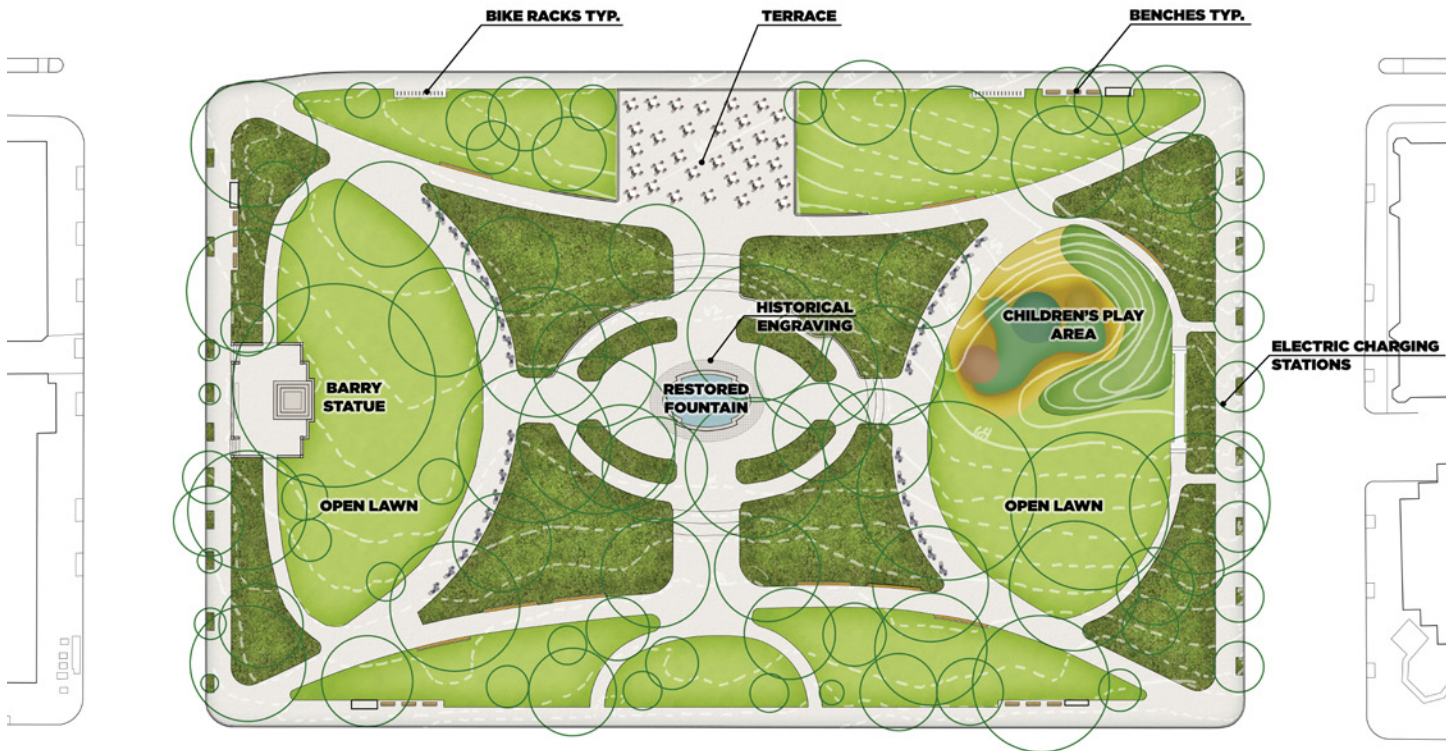
The design of the park would be further enhanced with a moderately sized terrace to the north of the central plaza. In Center Concept B this plaza features a building to house essential services, such as restrooms, tables and chairs, park information and storage. In order to accommodate small-scale events, the arc paths to the east and west of the park's center would be widened to 20 feet. This increase in pavement would allow for events, such as craft or farmer's markets. The pavement would also serve as a durable surface to locate a stage for a musical or theatrical performance, or a screen for movies in the park.

The Commodore Barry statue would be shifted to the east and/or rotated towards the center of the site in order to be more integrated with the park. The scheme preserves an unobstructed view to the historic Franklin School and the history of the site as a source of water for the White House would be noted in an engraving in the pavement of the central plaza.

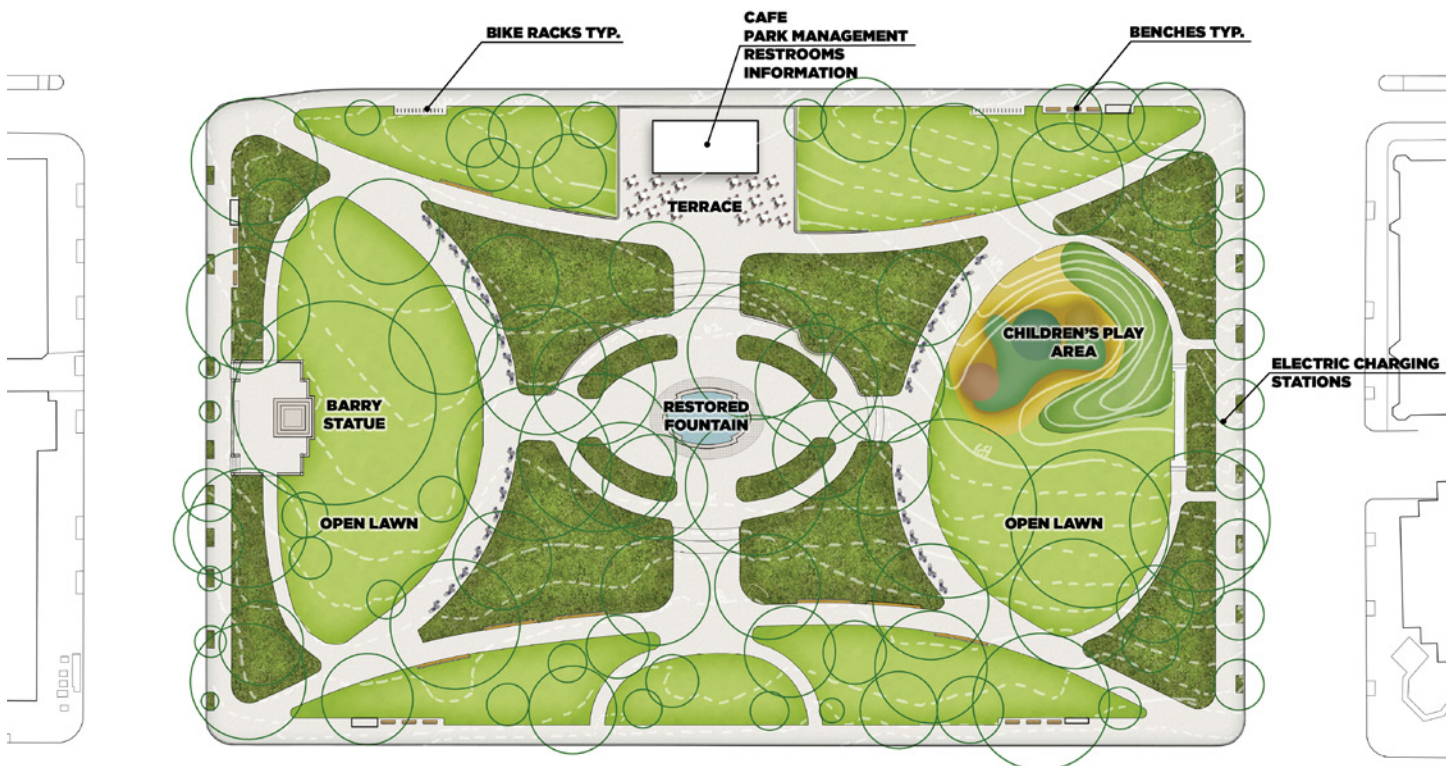
With these minor modifications, this concept alternative would preserve approximately 90% of the existing trees in Franklin Park.

THE CENTER





THE CENTER: A



THE CENTER: B

THE EDGE CONCEPT

This alternative would include enhanced program elements and circulation improvements to make the park a more active and sustainable place. The basic structure of the park would remain consistent with the existing design; however, the southern pathway that currently extends from the southwest corner of the site to the south east corner of the site would be shifted north towards the center of the park to increase accessibility to the central plaza. The pathways on the diagonal from the southwest corner of the site to the northeast corner of the site would be reworked to allow for an accessible path along this desired route.

At the center of the site would be a newly designed interactive fountain that would allow park users to comfortably sit along its edge and engage the water. This concept would locate the children's play area with a tot lot in the northern half of the east lawn. A natural water feature, would originate north of the central plaza and terminate at the children's play area as an educational and interactive water element. Additional improvements to the park include ample seating for park users and bus commuters; amenities, such as electric charging stations and street trees along 13th Street; and bike racks and street trees along K Street.

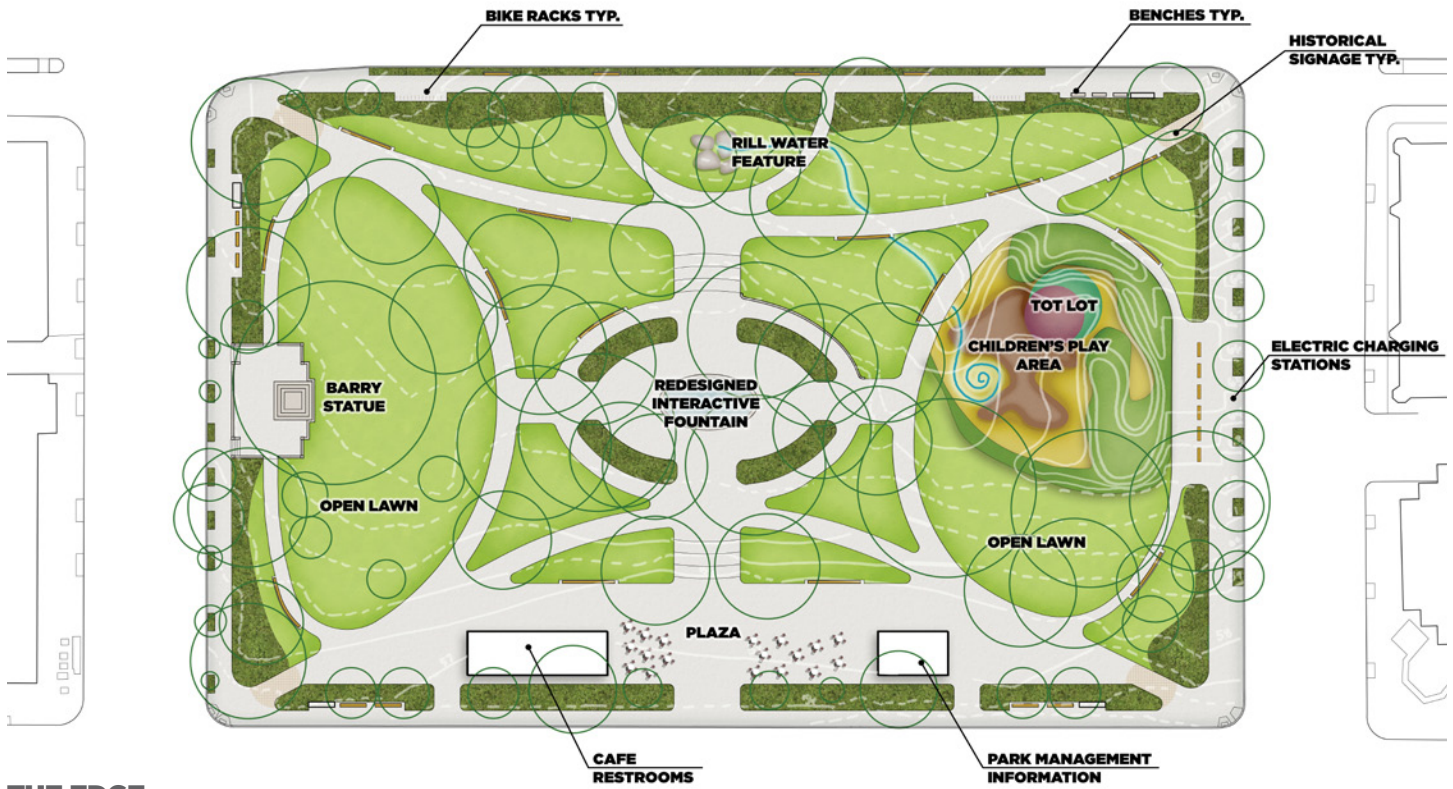
The design of the park would be further enhanced with a linear plaza along the southern edge of the site. This plaza is sized to accommodate two buildings that would house essential services, such as restrooms, tables and chairs, park information, park maintenance and storage. The larger of the two buildings could also contain a café. This plaza along I Street would also appropriate for staging events; markets, festivals and performances, for example. The seasonal plantings in this concept would be concentrated along the edge to provide a sense of threshold between the park and the street edge.

The Commodore Barry statue would be shifted to the east and rotated towards the center of the site in order to be more integrated with the park. The scheme preserves an unobstructed view to the historic Franklin School and history would be further revealed through signage and wayfinding, programmatic elements or landscape design.

With these modifications to the park, this concept alternative would preserve approximately 77% of the existing tree canopy in Franklin Park.

THE EDGE





THE EDGE

THE DIAGONAL CONCEPT

This alternative would include several actions to transform this site into an active, flexible, and sustainable park. A diagonal path connects the northeast corner with the southwest corner to increase accessibility to the central plaza, while also facilitating ease of circulation for commuters. At the center of this path and the center of the site would be an interactive fountain with playful water jets that could be turned off, and disappear into the pavement, to allow for the flexible use of the plaza for large and small events.

This concept would locate the children's play area, with a splash play element, in the northern half of the east lawn. The tot lot would be across the diagonal path in an independent space. Additional improvements to the park would include ample seating for park users and bus commuters; amenities, such as electric charging stations and street trees along 13th Street; and bike racks and street trees along K Street.

A cafe would be located in the southwest corner of the site, along 14th Street. This building would also house essential services, such as restrooms, park information, park maintenance and storage. The cafe would have a small dining terrace adjacent to it, while also using the Commodore Barry plinth for additional seating.

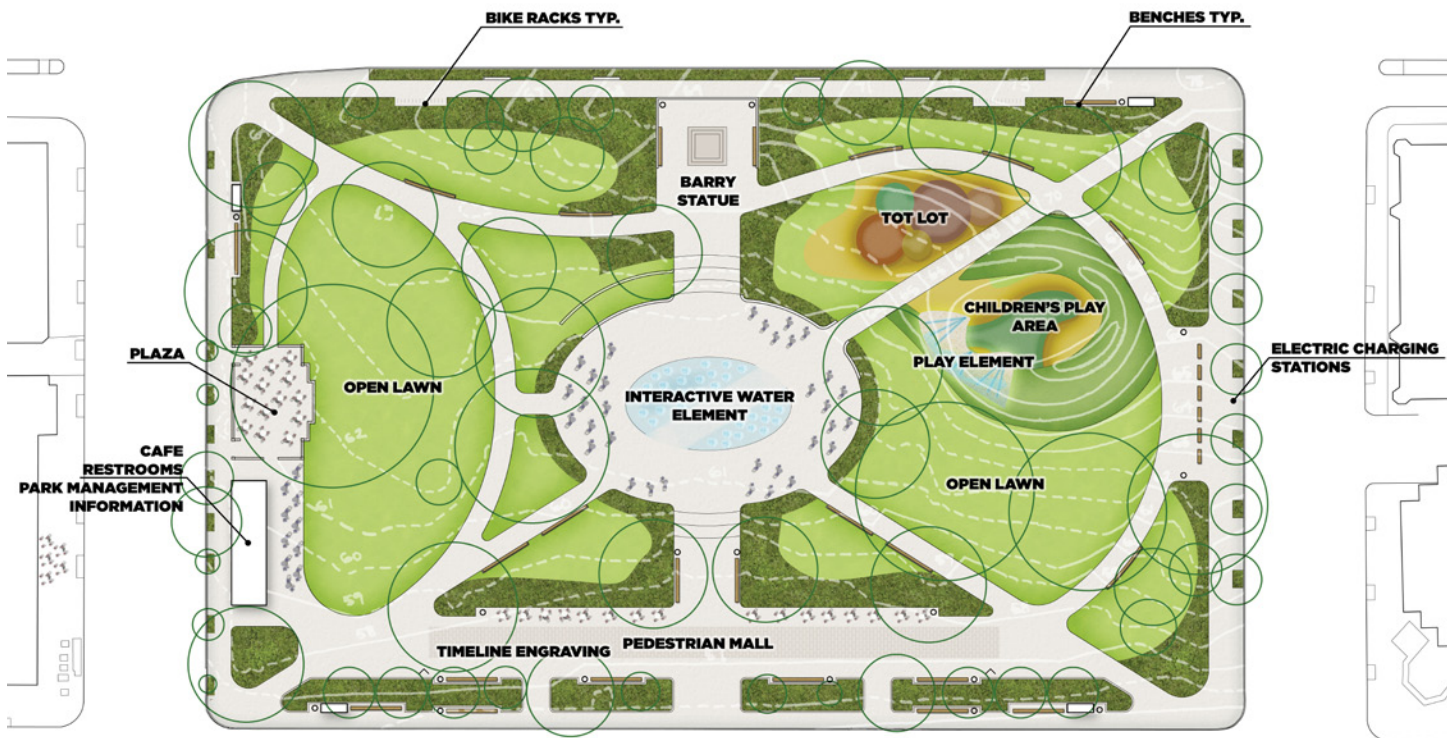
Additionally, a pedestrian mall would extend from the southwest corner of the park to the southeast corner. This paved area would have ample seating on its periphery and allow park users to promenade along the southern edge of the park. This space would also have the flexibility to stage a number of special events.

In this design concept, the Commodore Barry statue would be relocated just north of the central plaza facing inward. The scheme preserves an unobstructed view to the historic Franklin School and history could be further revealed through signage and wayfinding, programmatic elements or landscape design. The pedestrian mall would also provide an opportunity for historic interpretation within the pavement.

With these modifications to the park, this concept alternative would preserve approximately 49% of the existing tree canopy in Franklin Park.

THE DIAGONAL





THE DIAGONAL

PLEASE LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

HOW TO COMMENT

NPS is seeking comments on the conceptual design alternatives. Specifically, NPS would like your input on the following questions:

1. Are there other alternatives or elements that should be considered?
2. Do you have any concerns or preferences regarding the conceptual alternatives or elements presented?
3. What additional information or other comments do you have?

Please submit comments through the project website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/franklinpark>, or send your comments to:

Superintendent
Attn: Franklin Park Vision and Transformation Plan
Superintendent
National Mall and Memorial Parks
900 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20024

The comment period will close March 14, 2014.

Please include your full name and e-mail/address with your comments so we may add you to our mailing list for future notices about this process. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment; however, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.