



PRIORITIES_ “RE-IMAGINE WOOLDRIDGE SQUARE” SURVEY ANALYSIS 2013

RE-IMAGINE WOOLDRIDGE SQUARE SURVEY RESULTS

A survey initiated summer 2013 for the Lessons Learned Report asked local community members to share their thoughts about parks and the Square. From the survey results, seven key priorities emerged.

Seven Key Priorities

- gather
- learn
- perform
- play
- relax
- eat
- safety

Re-imagine Wooldridge Square



1. 1) Please share a favorite event, image, or feature of a public park that brings back rich memories. What was it about that experience or park that sparked that feeling?

	Response Count
	178
answered question	178
skipped question	14

2. 2) What would you like to see in Wooldridge Square more than anything else? What would make you go out of your way and seek out Wooldridge as a place for fun, contemplation, repose, delight?

	Response Count
	186
answered question	186
skipped question	6

GATHER

Parks are beacons for community and family gatherings

“I like the community events the county hosts (Juneteenth, Cinco de Mayo) in Wooldridge Square - good for employees and good for the community to be able to drop by and enjoy the food, entertainment and fellowship.”

“Cinco de Mayo and Juneteenth celebrations at Wooldridge Park. I love seeing a diverse population using and enjoying this historic park.”

“[...]There was a gathering in the park after the 911 terrorist attacks to show solidarity and to help in the healing process for the city.”

Sports Rallies



Juneteenth



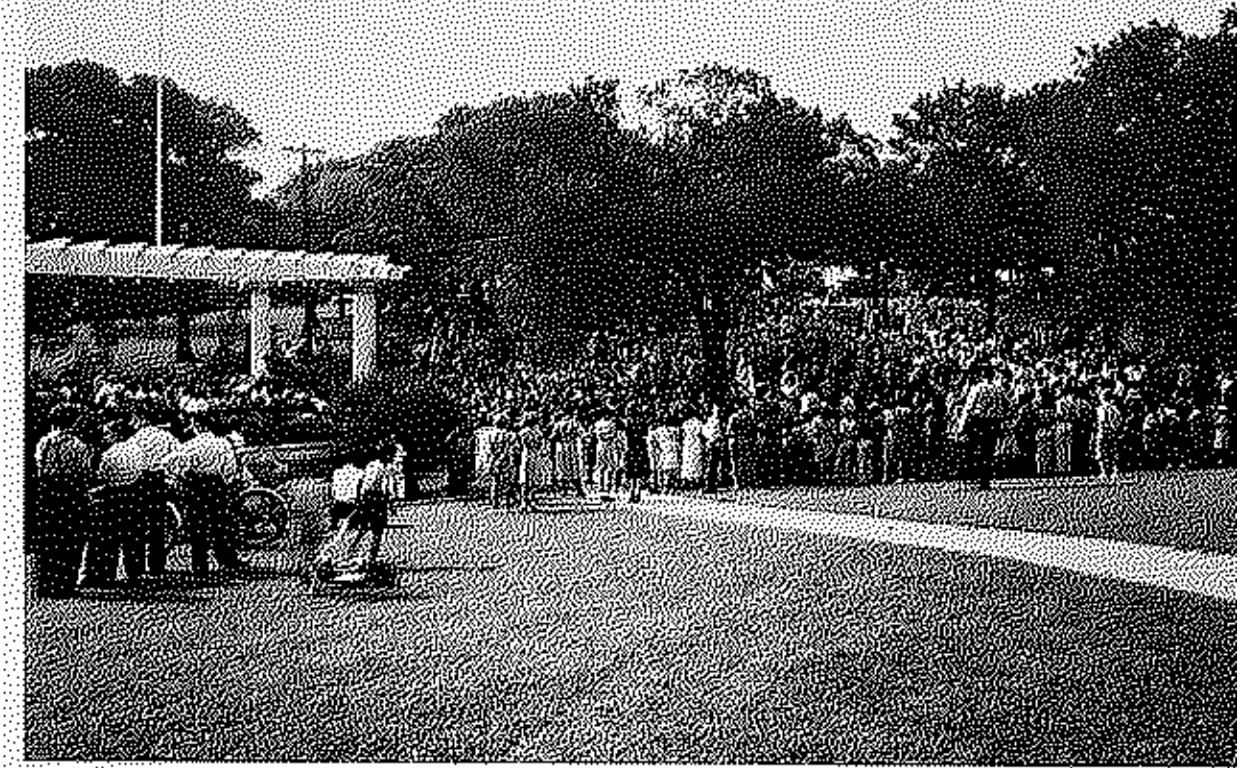
LEARN

Parks tell a story and create a space for active learning

“The historic photos of the park with huge gatherings, and wonderful water feature.”

*“Wooldridge Park should **educate users about the history of the park** as it is such a historic park in Austin, serving as the town center for political campaign.”*

Political Rallies



Dance Lessons



PERFORM

Parks provide a diverse set of activities to attract a variety of users

*“The return of the **O. Henry pun-off** (Wooldridge Square has hosted the event in the past); **acoustic concerts** (ragtime, barbershop quartet, orchestra, string quartet); History Center exhibit-related picnics (in cooler weather); **dog and cat shows**; historical re-enactments; **history talks** (Austin servant girl annihilator story? famous residents of Oakwood cemetery?); political debates (city council?); **pumpkin carving.**”*

“I love going to parks that have interactive events like chess games, horseshoes and plays / performances. These things spark “park unity” for me.”

*“I think utilizing it as **an informal amphitheater** for music, performance art, plays etc. could be a great use of the **natural topography** of Wooldridge Square.*

Outdoor Movie



Concerts



PLAY

Parks are safe and inviting spaces for adults and kids to play

*“My mother, born in 1910, grew up on Nueces Street in Austin. All my life she told be about the music events in Wooldridge Square Park. As she was growing up, families would gather at the park, the **children would play and roll down the steep sides** as the adults listened to music.”*

*“When I first came to school at UT, the Austin History Center was the public library for Austin. I can remember getting my books and going across the street to the park to read a bit while waiting for my sister to pick me up. There were others like me there, of all ages. Also **mothers would bring their children to the park to play** and people would let their dogs scamper about.”*



RELAX

Parks provide respite for the local community

*"[...] Live downtown and love it, but we do need more great parks for people to **relax and enjoy some nature.**"*

*"As a tourist once in NYC, I came across a small public park after walking all day throughout the city. I was tired and was so happy to see a patch of green to stretch out on and relax. A quartet was setting up and the sun was setting, I spent the rest of the evening listening to music, watching families emerge out of buildings and subways into this little green place, and I enjoyed seeing the skyline from a completely different view. **It's probably the one thing I remember of that day, this place of respite and relaxation after a long day of trying to do and see too much.**"*

Hammocks



Shaded Seating



EAT

Food activates a space and draws people in

“I wish we had more food cart vendors in and around the park. [...]”

“Live entertainment and vendors in Central Park. I used to love grabbing a hot pretzel from a vendor in Central Park and then listening to live music from a park bench. It was relaxing and made me feel connected with the city.”



SAFETY

Parks provide a safe and secure environment for all users

“I enjoy parks with creative lighting, in the trees, small strings of lights at the bandstand [...] and adequate lighting for safety the rest of the time.”

“This incredible asset not only belongs to all Austinites, as the capital city, it belongs to all Texans [...] A well maintained and secure park square representing government in the sunshine at its best!”

Friends



Family





PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN_2010

Draft

DOWNTOWN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

Downtown Austin Plan



Prepared for the City of Austin by ROMA Austin and HR&A Advisors

Revised January 19, 2010

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN 2010

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan established an overall vision for Austin's downtown parks to create high-quality places, connect people with nature and provide recreation opportunities.

Wooldridge Square Improvement Concept

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan envisioned Wooldridge Square as an **accessible and usable space** that attracts and sustains a **strong population of park users and stewards**.

Key Goals

The Wooldridge Square Improvement Concept outlines 13 specific design recommendations. Three key goals of the design recommendations are to **preserve its historic character, improve accessibility and usability and promote active uses around the square**.

Wooldridge Square Improvement Concept

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS*

1. Implement Great Streets sidewalks and street trees
2. Provide bus shelters along Guadalupe Street (CMTA)
3. Introduce food kiosk with seating
4. Create shady informal gathering area
5. Leave area as unprogrammed open green space
6. Fill and re-grade area to create more usable meadow
7. Re-grade and shape to enhance amphitheater-like setting
8. Create ample and accessible stage area
9. Preserve historic bandstand and integrate into stage design
10. Create an accessible path through the park
11. Require pedestrian-oriented uses facing park
12. Keep West 10th Street open to traffic
13. Consider constructing public restrooms within existing garage

*recommendations implemented through 2013 PARD improvements highlighted in green



1 wooldridge square improvement concept

DESIGN SURVEY_2015





DESIGN SURVEY 2015

To address the design recommendations defined in the Parks and Open Space Master Plan, a survey was conducted with stakeholders in October 2015.

Wooldridge Square Improvement Concept

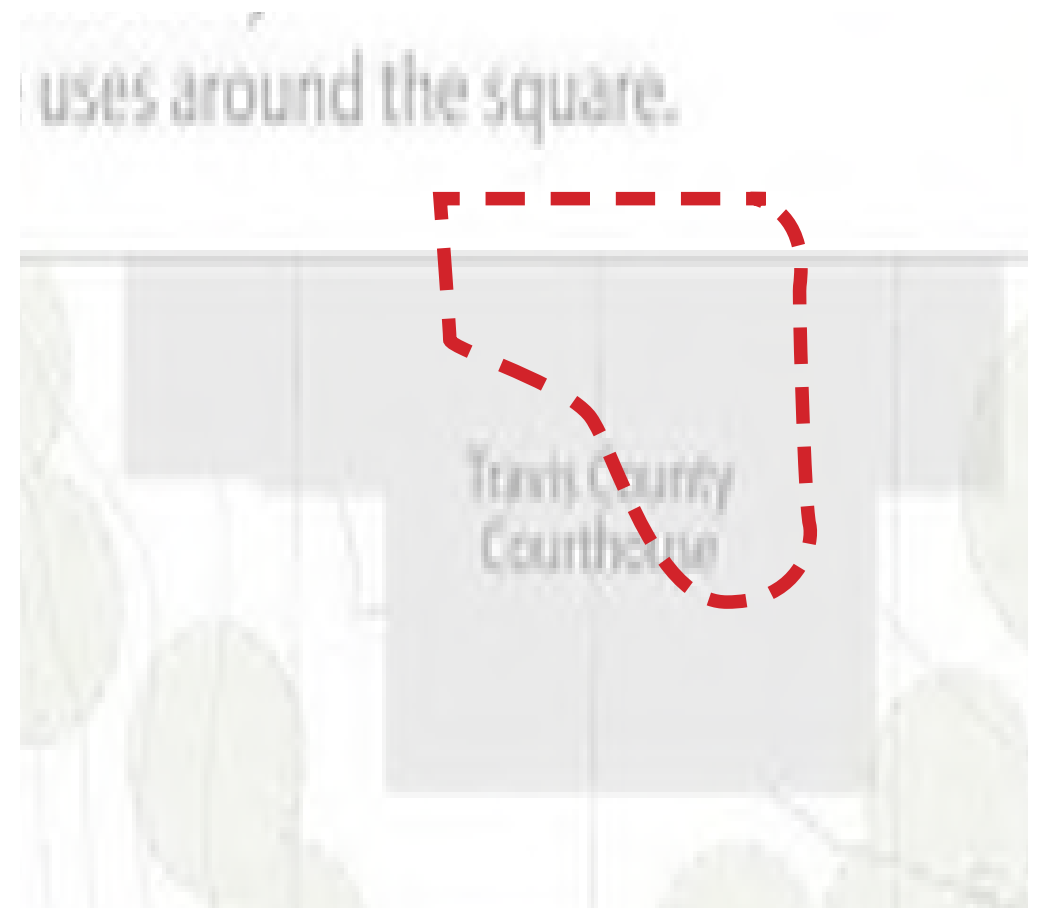
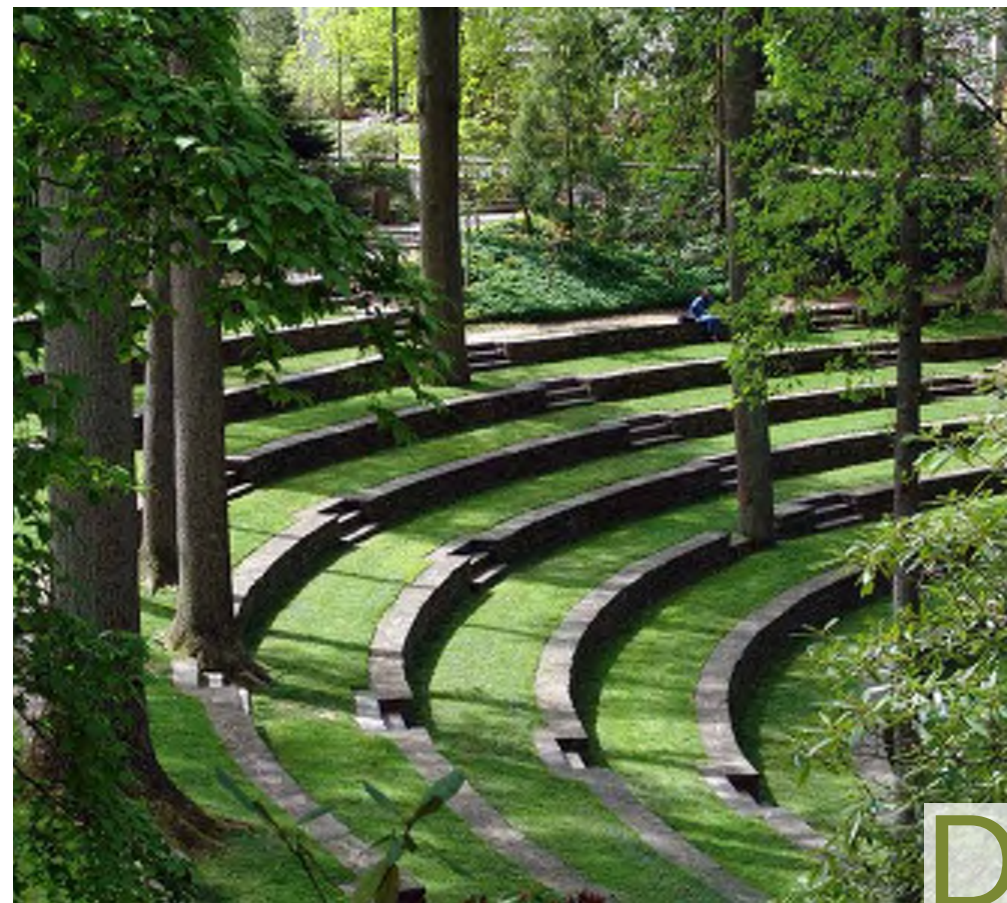
The survey addressed four key design concepts of the **Wooldridge Square Improvement Concept**: gathering space, pedestrian oriented edges, active square, usable meadow. Stakeholders were asked to rate and comment on four different design options related to each concept.

Stakeholder Feedback

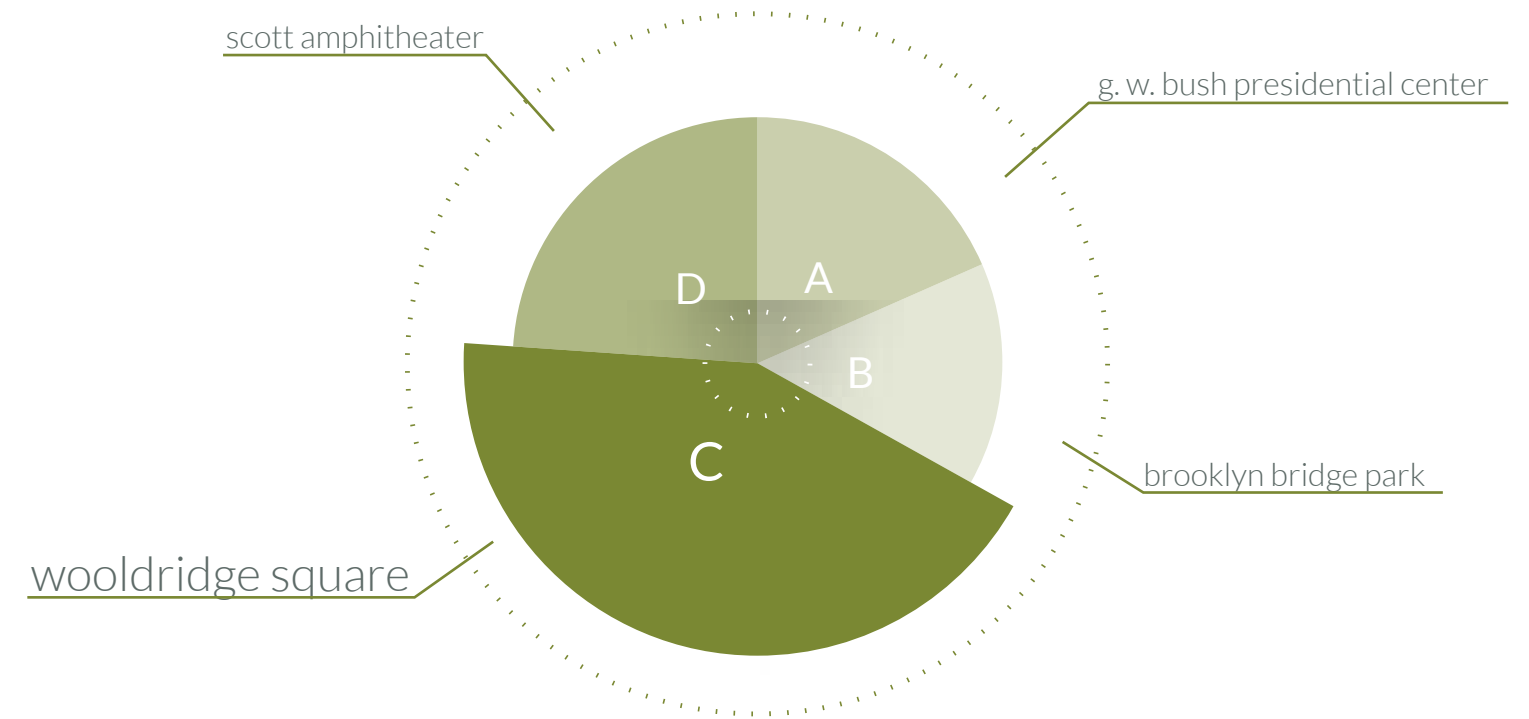
Stakeholders from the **Friends of Wooldridge Square, Texas Historical Commission, Austin History Center, Downtown Austin Alliance, PARD, Austin Parks Foundation, CapMetro and Travis County** participated in the survey. Survey results were documented in the Phase I Site Analysis and Discovery report.

Gathering Space

What type of programmed hillside seating would you like to see in Wooldridge?



Stakeholder Feedback: Gathering Space



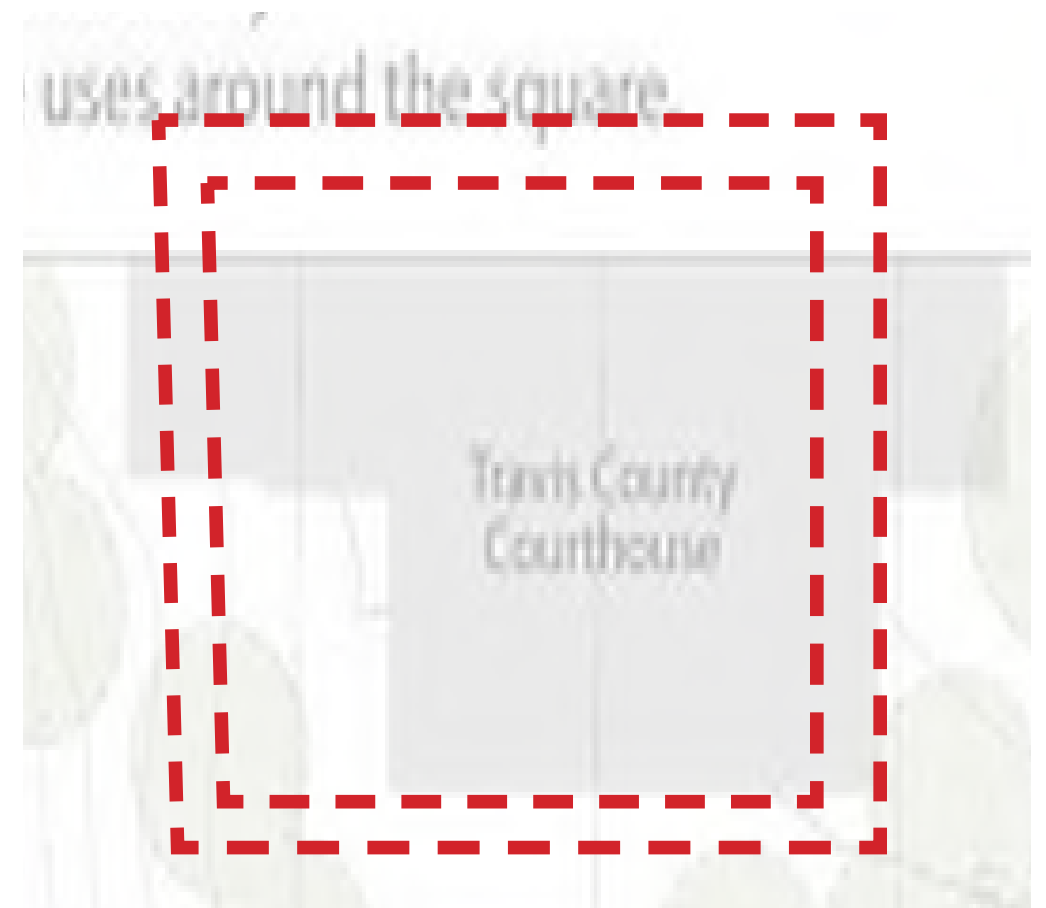
Gathering Space

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan proposes amphitheater seating in the northeast corner of the park. From a series of four precedents, including existing conditions, stakeholders overwhelmingly preferred existing conditions.

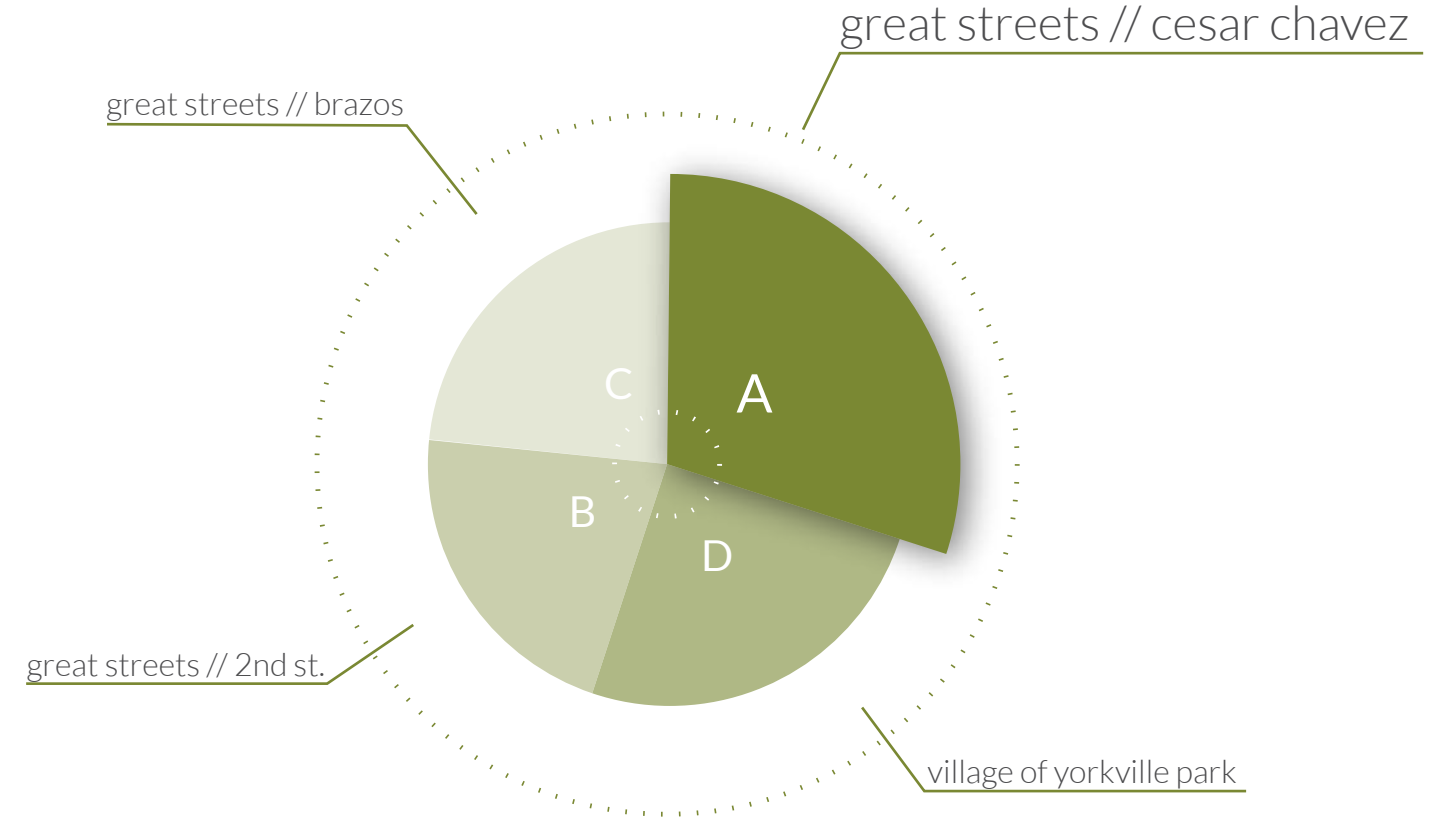
The preference for existing conditions clearly illustrates that the square's natural topography and hillside seating are perceived as critical features. Some stakeholders were concerned that the introduction of a built terrace would conflict with the square's historic character, discourage spontaneous use and limit programmatic flexibility. Others encouraged sculpting the existing hillside for better seating accommodations.

Pedestrian Oriented Edges

What type of pedestrian edges do you envision for the Square?



Stakeholder Feedback: Pedestrian Oriented Edges



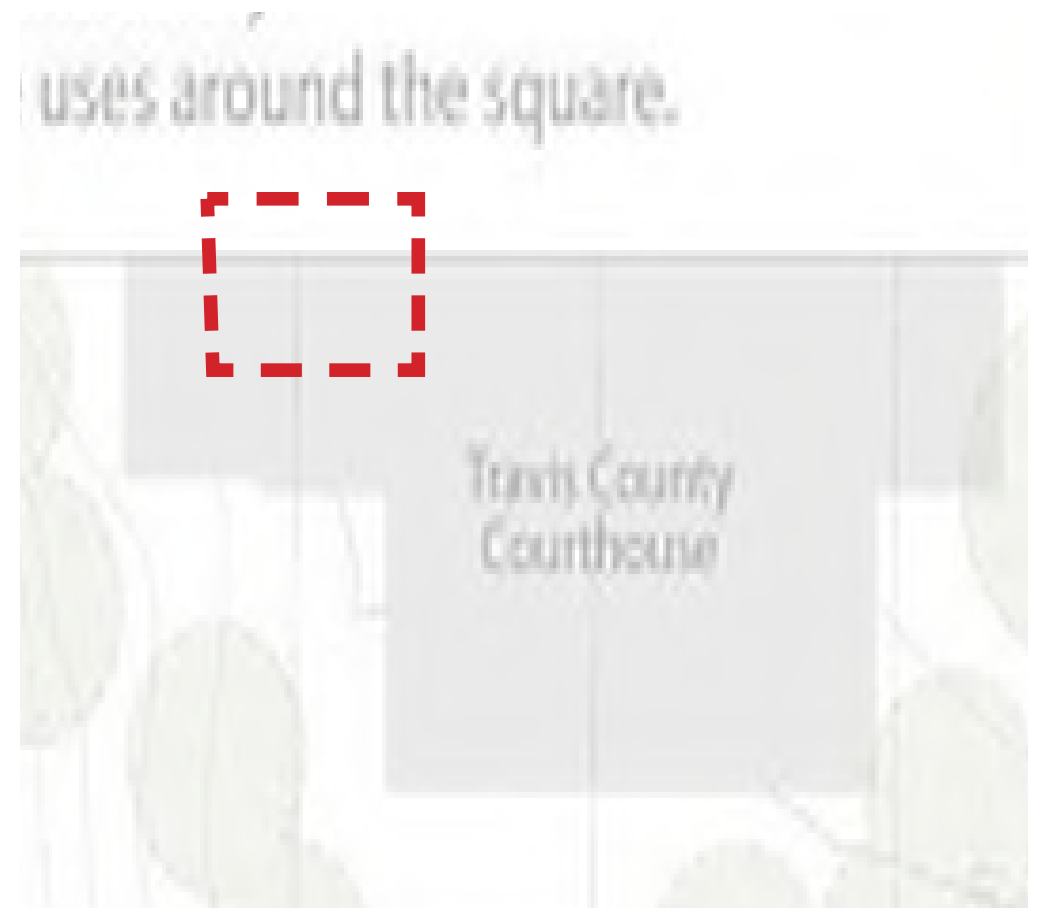
Pedestrian Oriented Edges

The Master Plan recommends implementing Great Streets sidewalks, street trees and bus shelters along the Square's perimeter to elevate the pedestrian and activate the edges. When presented with three Great Streets typologies and Yorkville Park, respondents preferred Great Streets at Cesar Chavez.

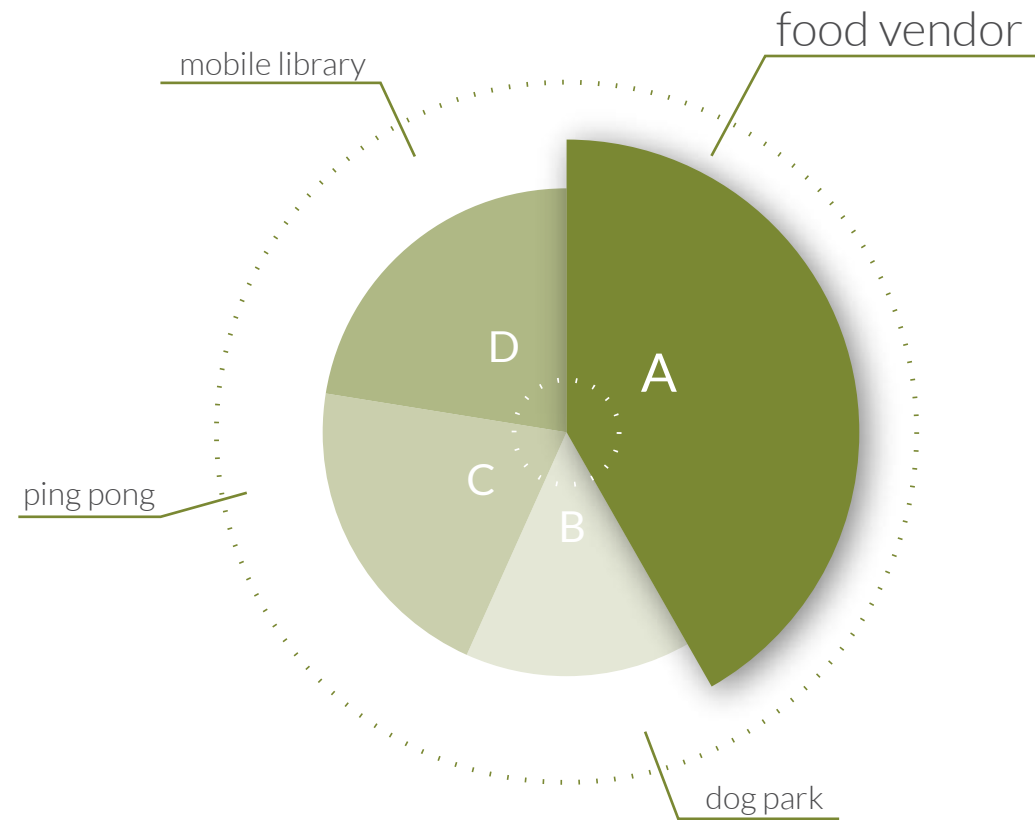
While there was no overwhelming preference, Great Streets at Cesar Chavez ranked the highest for its flexibility, simplicity and similarity to existing materials. A wide pedestrian walk and bench side seating are notable characteristics of Great Streets. Street trees and connection to the history center were also noted as potential concepts for the Square's street typology.

Active Square

What uses do we encourage to activate the Square?



Stakeholder Feedback: Active Square



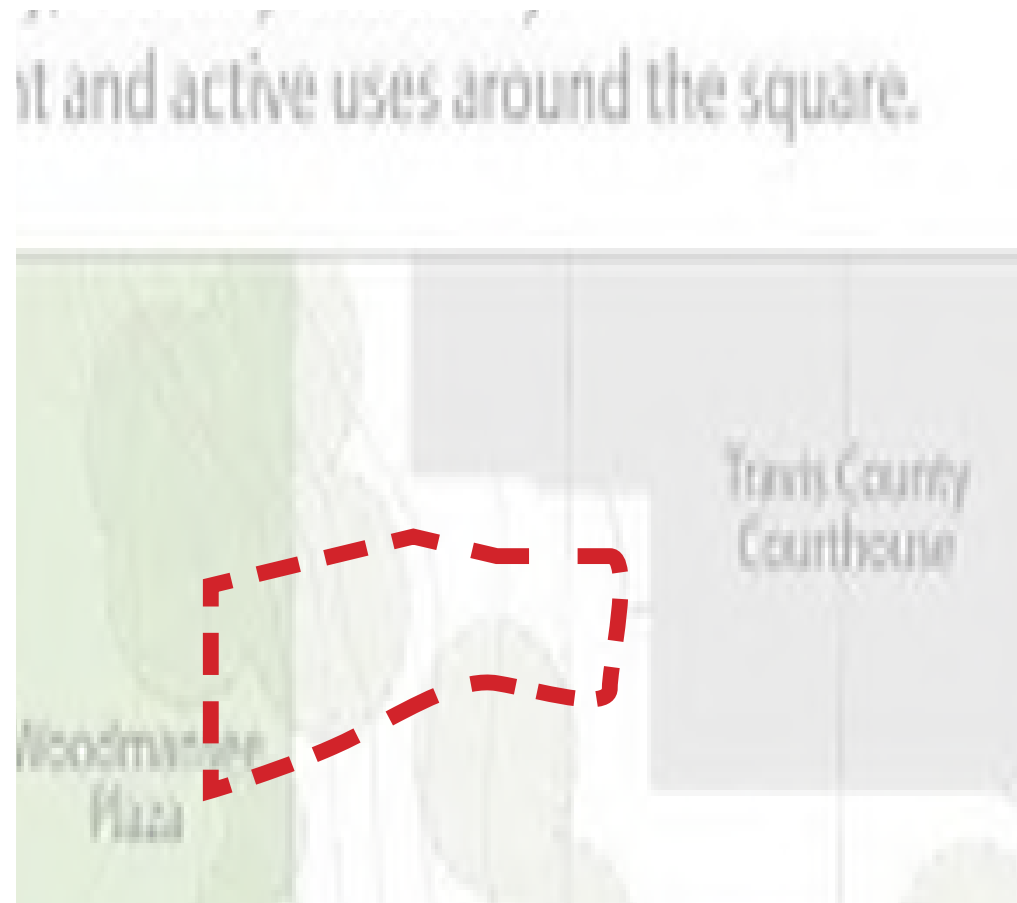
Active Square

The Master Plan includes an informal plaza and cafe in the northwest corner of the square. The plaza was constructed during the 2013 improvements, which included a contracted food truck and movable furniture. To ensure activation, stakeholders were asked to rank four different programs. The stakeholders ranked food vending as the best program for the Square.

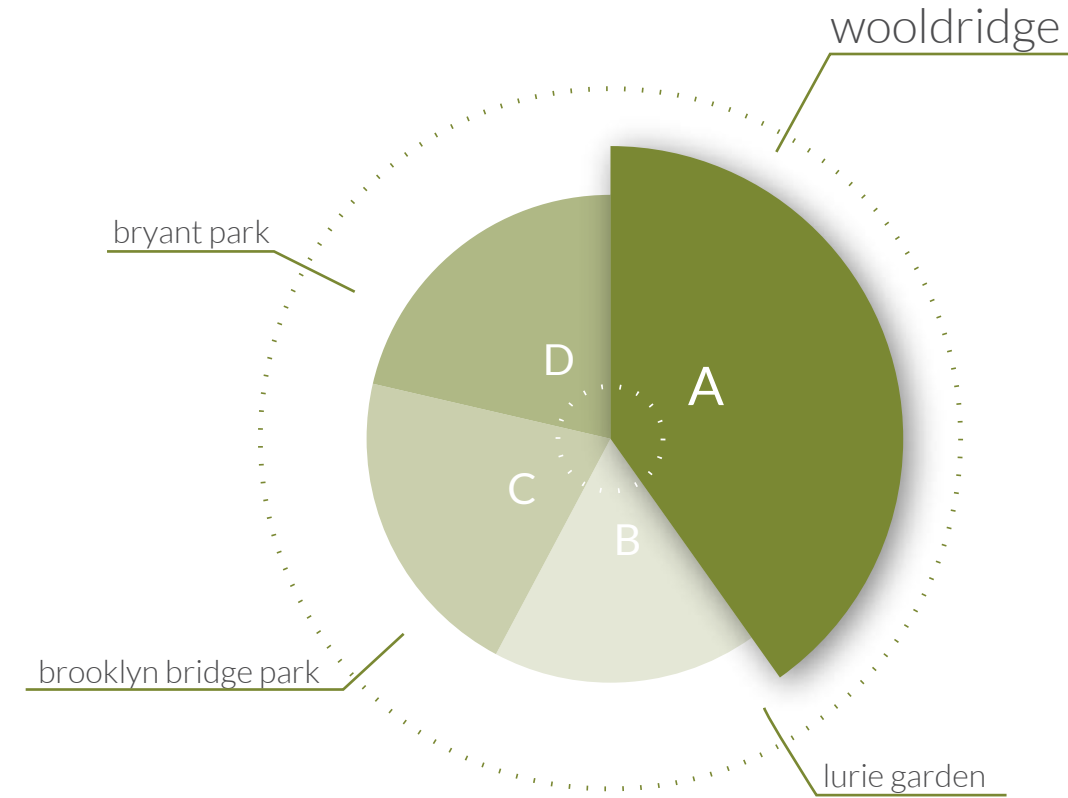
Food vending was noted as the most reliable method, however, to date this location has been unable to sustain a vendor. Respondents attributed poor visibility, low foot traffic and lack of curb cuts for accessibility to the economic and financial instability experienced by previous food vendors.

Usable / Accessible Meadow

What type of usable meadow would you like to see in Wooldridge?



Stakeholder Feedback: Usable Meadow



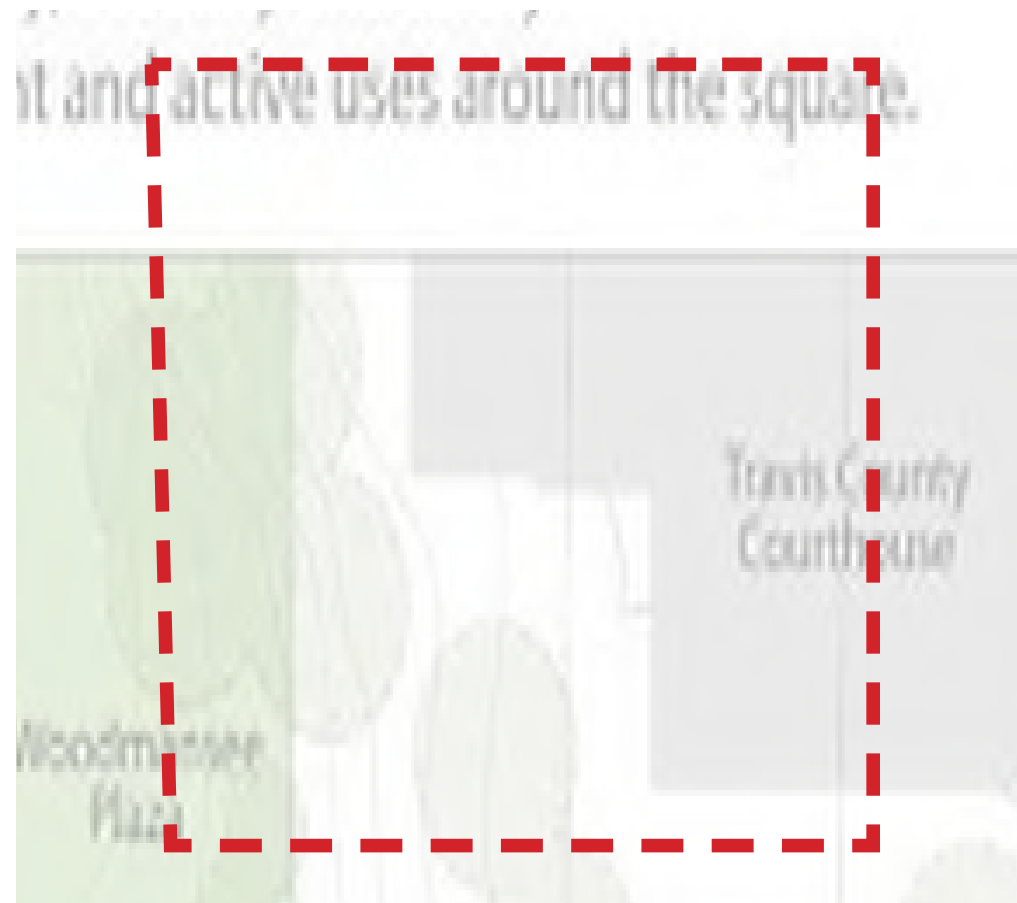
Usable Meadow

A usable and accessible meadow in the southwest corner of the square is outlined in the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The master plan suggests regrading and introducing a bio-filtration meadow for direct access and sustainable drainage. Stakeholders strongly preferred existing conditions over the other three precedents.

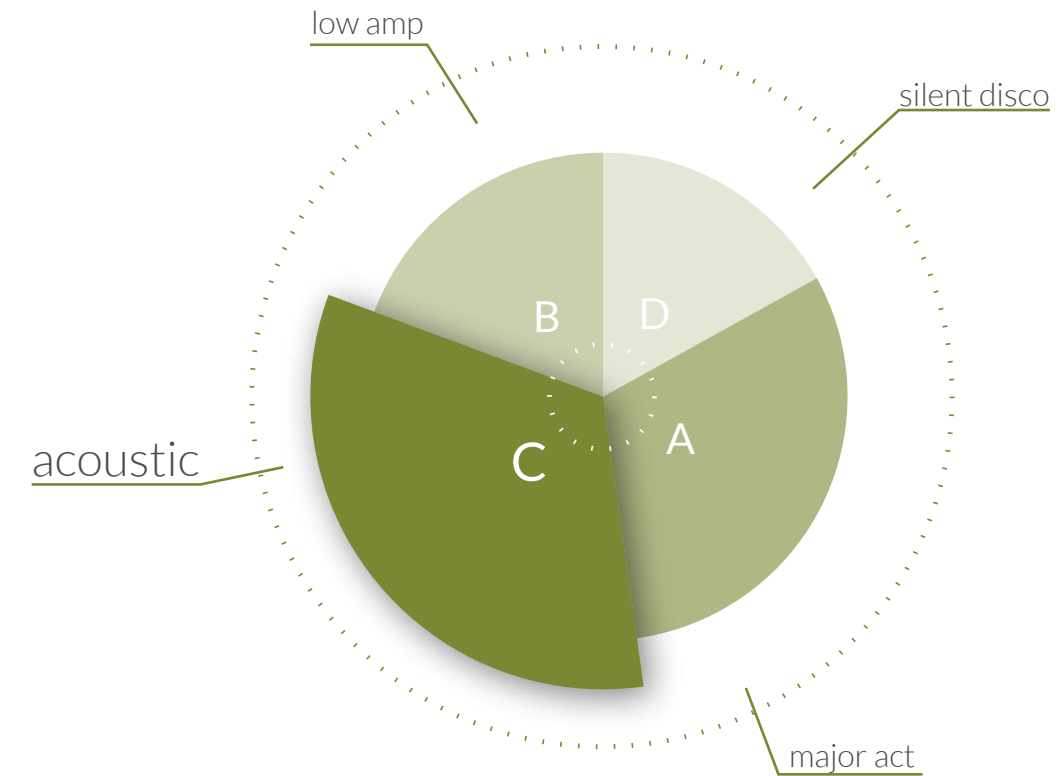
Stakeholders referenced historic context and flexibility as reasons to maintain existing conditions. Enhancement of natural topography and introduction of native planting beds were also mentioned as opportunities to upgrade the southwest corner of Wooldridge.

Intentional Programming

Per the #1 survey response from Re-Imagine Wooldridge Square, what type of concerts would you like to see in the Square?



Stakeholder Feedback: Intentional Programming



Intentional Programming

Survey results from the 2013 Lessons Learned report ranked concerts as the greatest draw for the Wooldridge Square. When asked what type of concert the Stakeholders would like to see in the Square, stakeholders selected intimate acoustic concerts followed closely by low amp productions.

Several themes emerged with the introduction of concerts in the Square. First, diversity was noted as an appropriate and necessary component of concert programming. The results were spread relatively evenly over all four concert types. Second, some respondents were concerned about accessibility and logistics for concert operations in the Square.

DEDICATED STAFF SUPPORT

Sensitive design is only one part of a successful civic space. Appointing dedicated staff support will ensure successful programming and public engagement. Dedicated staff could develop a programming vision both unique and appropriate for Wooldridge Square.

Curate

Dedicated staff could help initiate and shepherd ongoing events that work with existing conditions and resources.

Outreach

Year round public outreach could help repair the public perception of Wooldridge Square and reestablish its presence in the community.





GOALS + OPPORTUNITIES

“Its place in the history of Austin is rich and its future is our responsibility to shape.” - survey respondent “re-imagine wooldridge square”

GOALS + OPPORTUNITIES

1. *Preserve and celebrate the historic significance of the Square*
2. *Enhance the opportunity for diverse programming activity, both passive and active*
3. *Introduce ADA standards to allow equitable use and enjoyment of the Square for all users*
4. *Manage and maintain the safety of the Square for all users in perpetuity*

NEXT STEPS

1. *Compile and analyze stakeholder responses to Priorities and Design Palette*
2. *Review and update Phase 1 - Analysis + Discovery Report*
3. *Issue Analysis + Discovery Report to PARD for review*
4. *Kick-off Phase 2 - Preliminary Plan*
5. *Stakeholder Meeting #2 - TBD*

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

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CRITIQUE

(1-10 RATING)

I believe the Wooldridge Square Preliminary Plan process is heading in the right direction.

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THANK YOU