

WOOLDRIDGE SQUARE
PRELIMINARY PLAN
JULY 2017

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stakeholder & community

- Downtown Austin Alliance
- Friends of Wooldridge Square
- Austin Parks Foundation
- Old Austin Neighborhood Association
- Shoal Creek Conservancy
- City of Austin Residents

prime consultant

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civic leadership

- Austin History Center
- Historic Preservation Office
- City of Austin Planning + Zoning Department
- Preservation Austin
- Travis County
- Texas Historical Commission

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civil engineer
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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In 1829, Edwin Waller unveiled his vision for the Capitol of Texas, anchored by four city blocks dedicated as public parkland. Today Wooldridge Square is the only square that retains its original form, character and intent.

In 1829, Edwin Waller unveiled his vision for the new Capitol of Texas with the European notion of the grid and rectangular plots anchored by four squares dedicated as public parkland. This design enabled the surrounding communities easy, walkable access to open space within the city that, over time has set a precedent for other park spaces throughout the city.

Today, Wooldridge Square is the only historic square that retains its historic form, character and intent. Defined by its undulating slopes, large tree canopies and the classical bandstand, Wooldridge Square is an iconic piece of local history.

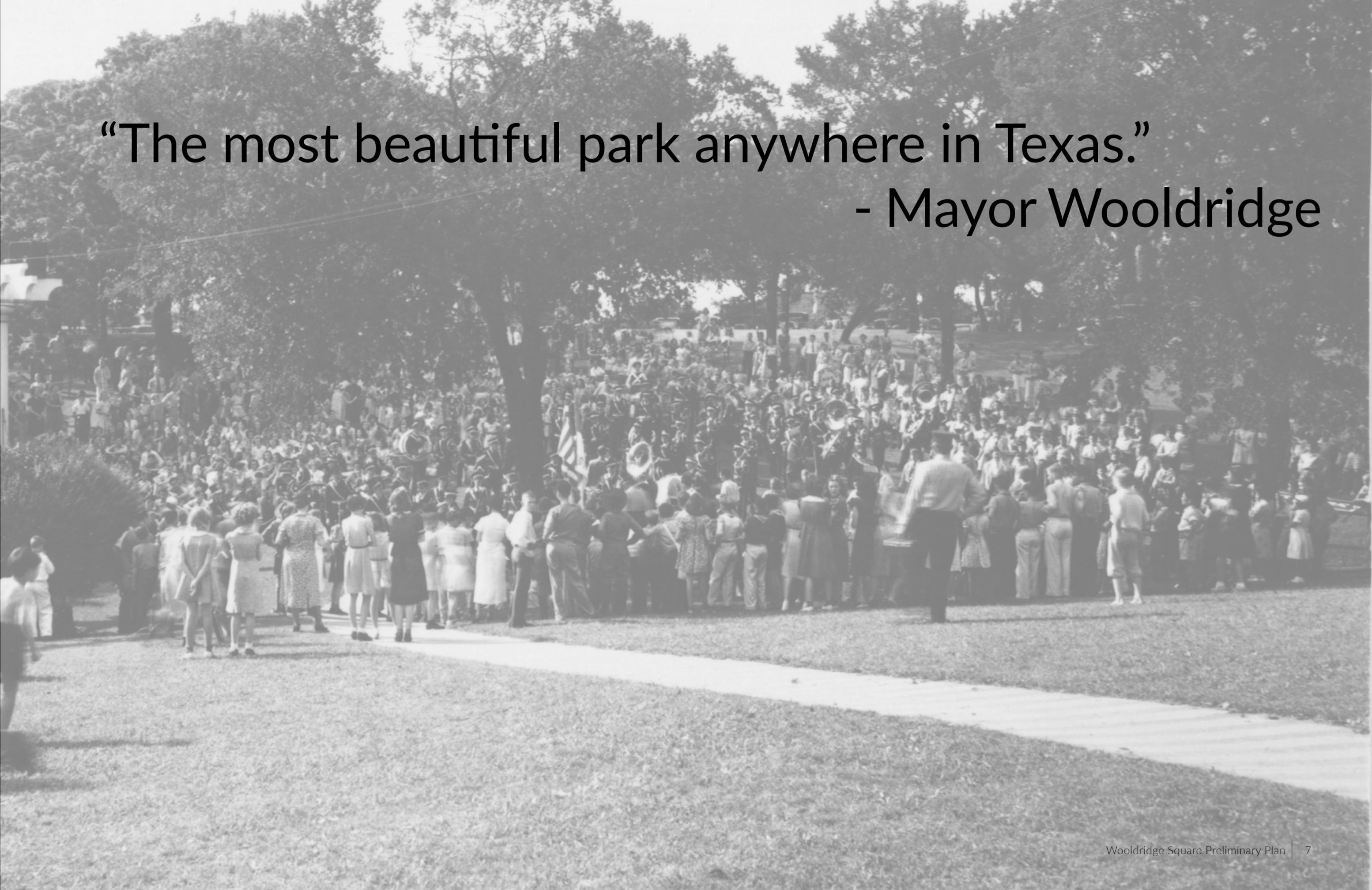
Sadly the Square has experienced periods of both prosperity and of decline. For seventy years after the Square was established, it unofficially served as the city's landfill, until Mayor Wooldridge campaigned for its rehabilitation. Mayor Wooldridge instituted a number of improvements including the curvilinear walk and Greek Revival bandstand that remain standing to this day. The bandstand has served as a stage for local concerts, political stump speeches and demonstrations, that attracted local residents and civic leaders.

Over the years, concerts and political gatherings that drew consistent activity to the Square lost momentum. Cultural and environmental factors contributed to a period of declining infrastructure, poor tree health and unsafe conditions until 2012, when the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, in collaboration with the Austin Parks Foundation and Downtown Austin Alliance, launched a restoration project. A year later, the grand reopening featured new trees, sod, irrigation system and a concession vendor space in the North-West corner of the Square. To continue this momentum, PARD partnered with stakeholders and local consultants to develop a preliminary plan that set forth a shared vision for future rehabilitation and improvements for the Square and its surrounding streetscape.



“The most beautiful park anywhere in Texas.”

- Mayor Wooldridge



Wooldridge Square Preliminary Plan

This plan develops a sustainable landscape vision that preserves the Square's historic integrity in balance with envisioning solutions to current and future needs. Anticipating and addressing universal access, environmental performance, historic preservation and park infrastructure addressing current City of Austin regulations will help ensure that Wooldridge Square remains a socially and economically viable open space resource as Austin grows and densifies.

This Preliminary Plan is part of an ongoing effort lead by stakeholders and community members to revitalize and rehabilitate the Square and reinforce its presence in the community and consider surrounding development pressures. The Wooldridge Square Preliminary Plan utilized community outreach as one of the primary methods to identify and understand site opportunities and constraints. The community outreach process also engaged the leadership of the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA), Travis County, Friends of Wooldridge Square (FOWS), Austin History Center and other notable members of the community throughout the stages of site analysis and design.

Project Scope

This Preliminary Plan reviews and validates each of the recommendations of the 2010 Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan as noted;

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

Additionally, the Preliminary Plan employs four strategic design principles to help guide the design process and ensure that the recommendations are contextually appropriate while meeting the goals and objects of the project.

1. Invest in Our Past: Utilize the Square's historic character defining features to guide low impact design solutions.
2. Elevate the Pedestrian: Activate the perimeter to create a safe and inviting experience for the pedestrian.
3. Achieve Access: Achieve universal accessibility to give everyone in the community the opportunity to experience the historic bandstand.
4. Reinforce Connections: Visually and interpretively reinforce the Square's relationship with leading civic institutions including the Austin History Center, Travis County Courthouse and State Capitol through context sensitive design and with appropriate interpretive signage.

About This Document

The Wooldridge Square Preliminary Plan presents a series of site analysis and design studies intended to understand the needs and challenges of the Square. The recommendations included in this document are **non-binding** conceptual design solutions that will require further development from a team of licensed design consultants. The implementation of these recommendations will require collaboration with the Historic Landmark Commission, Texas Historical Commission and Preservation Austin to ensure that future improvements are contextually appropriate and retain, protect and enhance the historic integrity of the Square. Additional outreach to the Travis County, Austin History Center, Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA), Austin Parks Foundation (APF) and the Friends of Wooldridge Square (FOWS) will be critical to future design development.



Wooldridge Square





CONTEXT

A Brief History

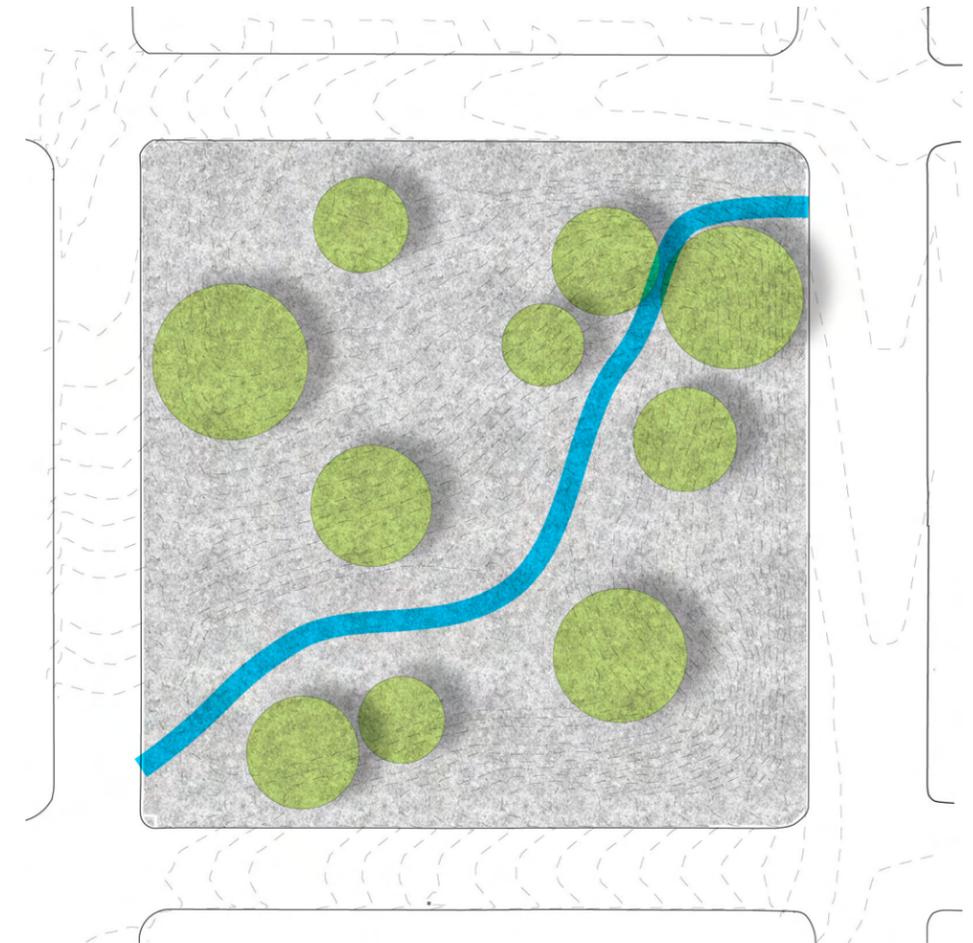
Wooldridge Square is recognized locally and nationally as a historic and cultural resource. In 1979, Wooldridge Square was nominated to the National Historic Register followed by being designated as a Texas State Antiquities Landmark in 1981 and is a City of Austin Historic Landmark. These designations officially acknowledge the Square's important role in local history and engender a sense of local pride. The designations also identify the character defining features unique to Wooldridge Square so that these features can be preserved and protected as the surrounding community develops.

Period of Historic Significance

Mayor Wooldridge's contribution of the bandstand marked a functional and aesthetic turning point for the Square. The Mayor Wooldridge years are considered one of the most historically significant periods of the Square's history that established the guidelines for future improvements. The bandstand, curvilinear walk, the tree canopy and topography are considered character defining features that should be preserved and rehabilitated as noted throughout this plan.

Future Improvements

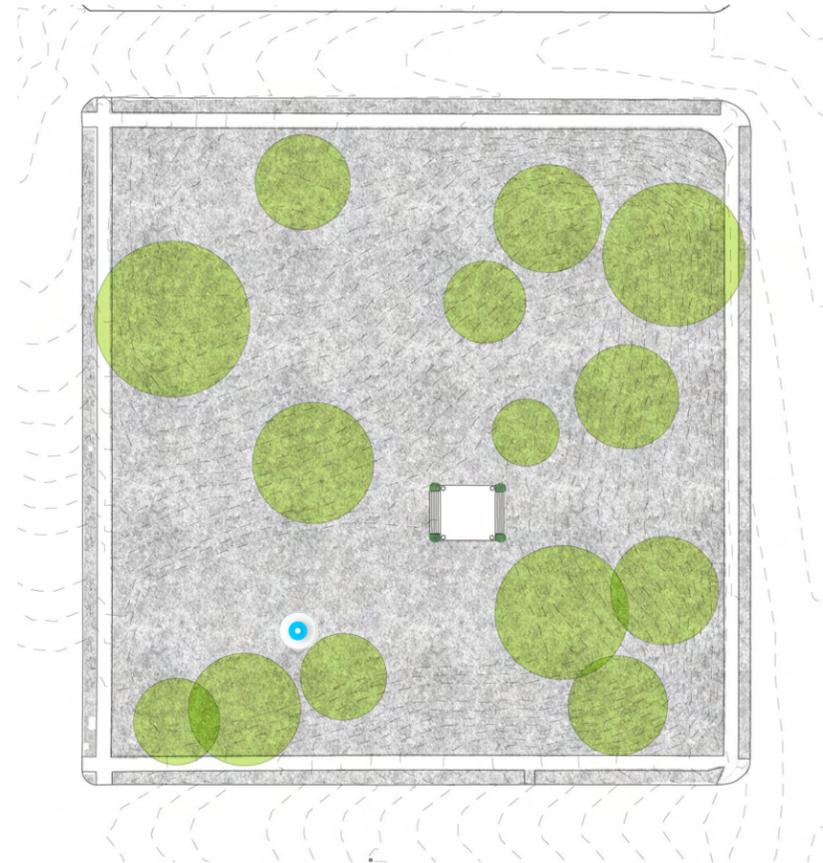
The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties outlines a set of guidelines and best practices for sites listed under the National Register. These guidelines ensure that the historic integrity and character defining features are retained while adapting to current and future needs. Future landscape improvements should be compatible with these guidelines and engage the Texas Historical Commission, Historic Landmark Commission, Preservation Austin and other preservation experts.



THE ESTABLISHMENT

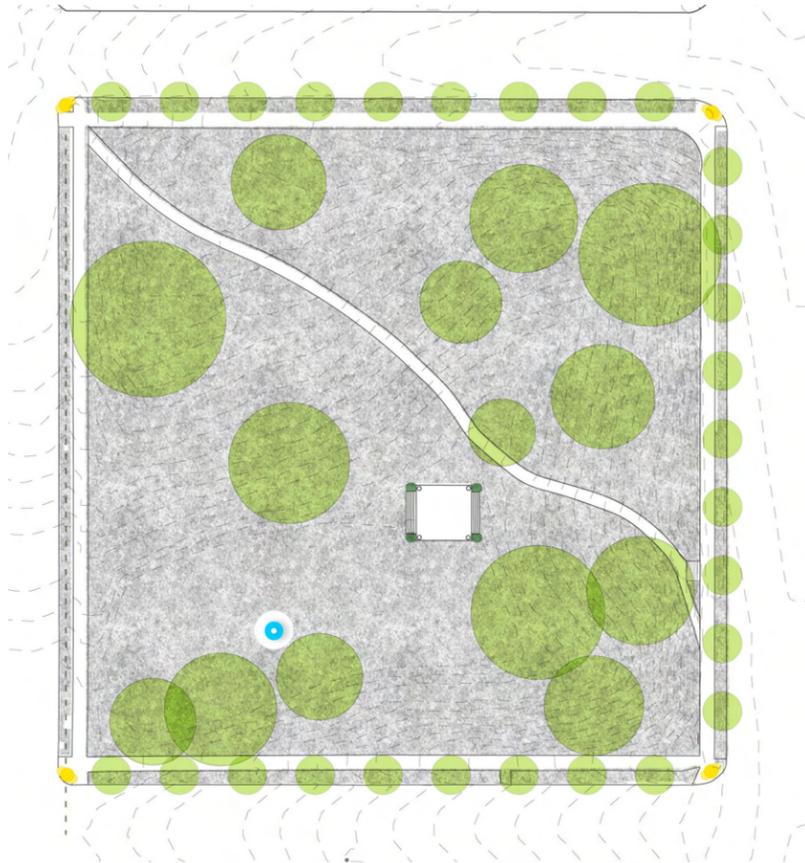
1839

In the establishment period, maps of the original layout suggest that the lawn extended to the edge of the of the road. Little Shoal Creek also flowed through the Square, shaping the topography that exists today.



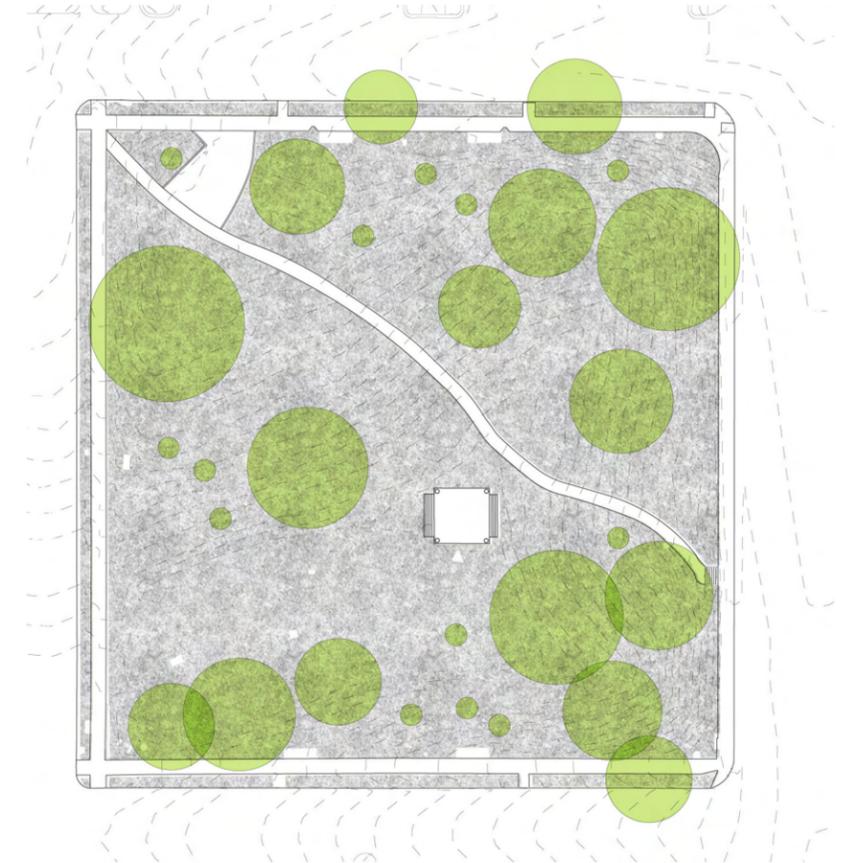
**PERIOD OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE: MAYOR WOOLDRIDGE YEARS
1909 - 1910**

Historic photos and written accounts suggest that the improvements initiated by Mayor Wooldridge included perimeter sidewalks, the bandstand and a water fountain near the bottom of the basin. Planting at the four corners of the bandstand are also attributed to and documented in historic photographs.



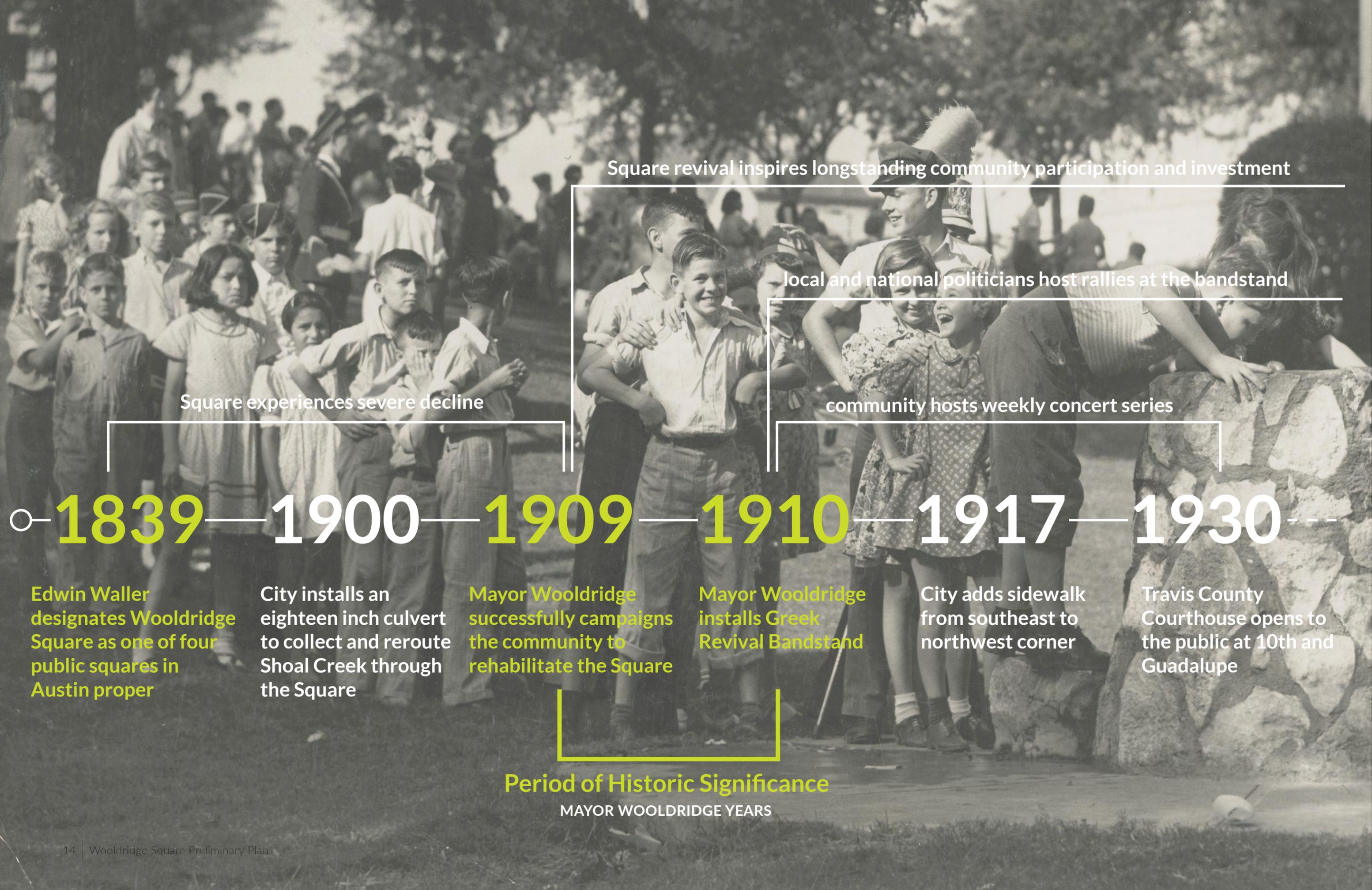
**WALK ADDITION AND PERIMETER IMPROVEMENTS
1917 - 1930**

Mayor Wooldridge successfully campaigned for a concrete sidewalk through the park in 1917. Historic photos and written accounts suggest that by 1930, perimeter street trees, perimeter planting beds and street lamps at each corner of the park were added.



**PARD IMPROVEMENTS
2013**

In 2013, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department initiated a number of improvements and park additions, including new trees and lawn, irrigation, benches, a concession space and vendor hookups in the northwest corner, site lighting and restoration of the Bandstand.



Square revival inspires longstanding community participation and investment

local and national politicians host rallies at the bandstand

community hosts weekly concert series

Square experiences severe decline

1839 — 1900 — 1909 — 1910 — 1917 — 1930

Edwin Waller designates Wooldridge Square as one of four public squares in Austin proper

City installs an eighteen inch culvert to collect and reroute Shoal Creek through the Square

Mayor Wooldridge successfully campaigns the community to rehabilitate the Square

Mayor Wooldridge installs Greek Revival Bandstand

City adds sidewalk from southeast to northwest corner

Travis County Courthouse opens to the public at 10th and Guadalupe

Period of Historic Significance

MAYOR WOOLDRIDGE YEARS

square revival

political rallies

Square experiences decline in public interest

1960

1971

1979

1981

2012

2013

Governor Lee O'Daniel holds last political rally at the bandstand

Travis County Historical Survey Committee erects Historical Marker

National Register of Historical Places nominates the Square

Texas Historical Commission dedicates the Square as a Texas State Antiquities Landmark

PARD closes square for rehabilitation

PARD reopens square in March, nine months after it was closed for rehabilitation

Character Defining Features



OPEN SPACE
EST. 1839

Edwin Waller's Plan for the City of Austin designated four public squares as parkland and open space. This tradition of open space is still expressed to this day at Wooldridge Square.



THE BANDSTAND
EST. 1910

In 1910, Mayor Wooldridge commissioned the bandstand, the park's sole structure. Designed by Page Architects, the bandstand follows a classical Greek Revival style.



TREE CANOPY
EST. 1839

Mature pecans, post oaks and cedar elms create a distinct tree canopy. This attractive composition of tree species provides unique form and shade coverage.



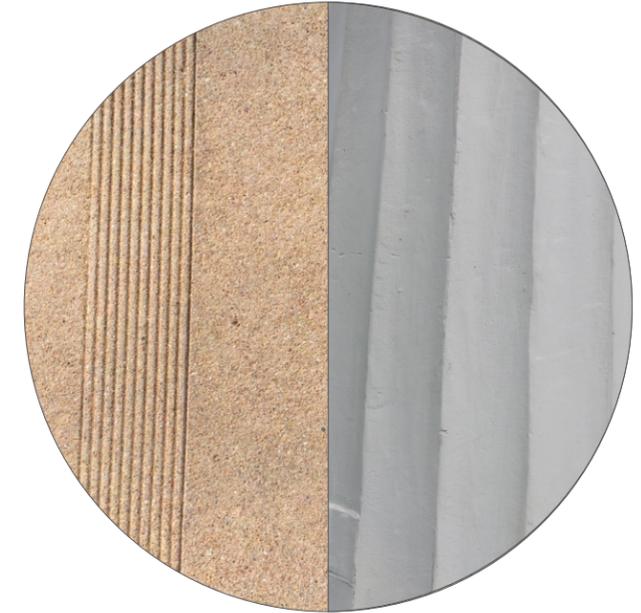
TOPOGRAPHY
EST. 1839

The topography slopes on all four sides to form a natural amphitheater and drainage basin in the center of the park. The swale that traverses from the northeast to southwest corner is reminiscent of Little Shoal Creek.



THE WALK
EST. 1917

The gently curved walk follows the natural contours of Wooldridge Square creating a pastoral feel.



MATERIALS
EST. 1910 - 1917

Due to the Square's simple architectural gesture, concrete and wood are the dominate and historic materials of Wooldridge Square.

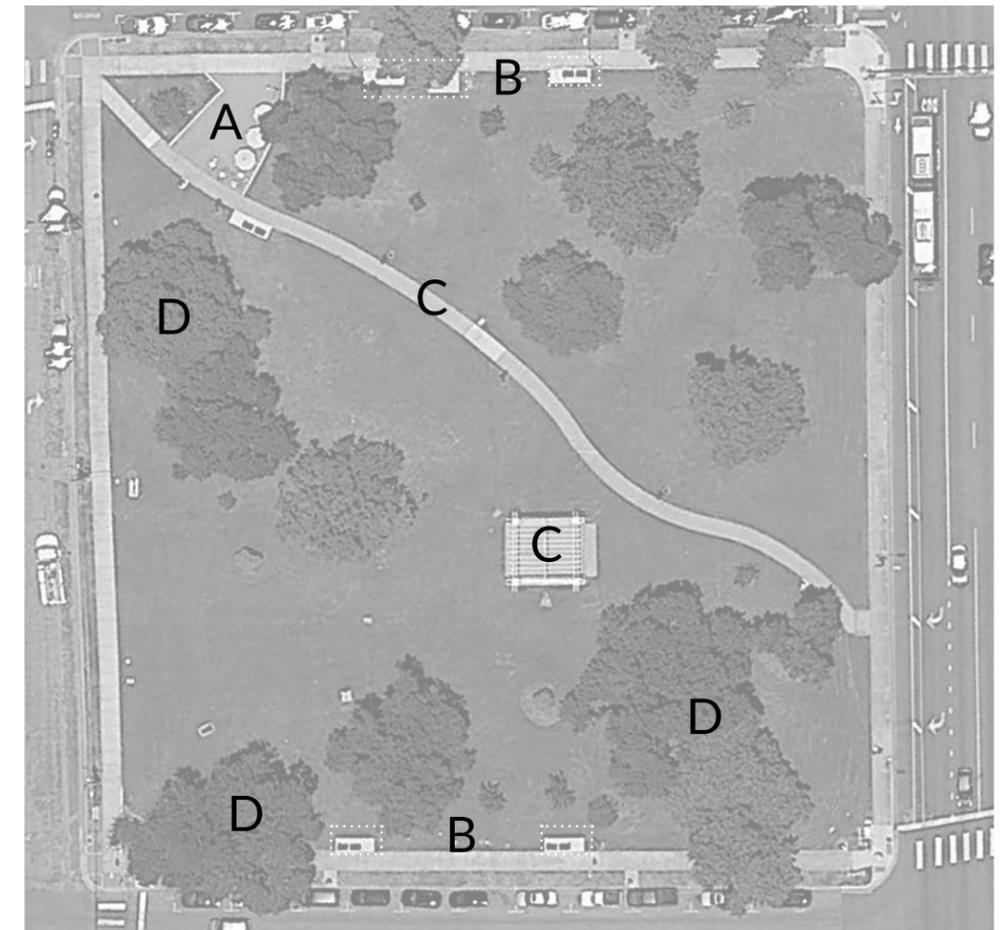
Existing Conditions

The 2013 improvements addressed the period of declining landscape performance, aesthetics and safety in the Square with a number of critical infrastructure upgrades that improved landscape performance. The improvements also expanded programming opportunities as recommended by the Downtown Austin Alliance and Friends of Wooldridge Square. Power supply, site lighting, new sod, a new generation of young trees, tree fertilization and mulch rings, a new mobile concession space, park furniture and an irrigation system set the stage for the park's reintroduction to the community. The new plaza and power supply now allows a mobile food vendor the ability operate and sell food for special events. New fixed and mobile furniture provide additional places for users to sit and recreate. These and other investments improved the health and aesthetics of the landscape.

Future Improvements

While the Square is primed for programmed and spontaneous use, daily use remains low compared to similar parks in downtown Austin. Continued investment in park infrastructure and landscape performance may help attract and retain new users and sustain ongoing programming. While there are a number of factors that contribute to low visitor use and retention, universal access to the park interior and perimeter improvements are two of the Square's main challenges. Additional challenges include the condition of the existing tree canopy and curvilinear walk, site lighting, way-finding and interpretive signage.

EXISTING CONDITIONS SITE MAP



A. MOBILE CONCESSION SPACE



B. SITE FURNISHINGS



C. BANDSTAND + WALK



D. TREE CANOPY



1 mile
to the nearest public park with a children's playground

4 blocks
to two schools one private, one public elementary

10 minutes
to walk to the Shoal Creek Trail and Duncan Park

100 feet
to the nearest bus stop



Heritage Trees

The mature tree canopy has proved to be a striking and defining feature of Wooldridge Square since its inception. The unique mix of species, size and form make this tree canopy a treasure in downtown Austin. Thirteen trees within the property boundary are designated heritage status with Pecan species making up over 40% of the tree canopy. In the last decade, drought, excessive foot traffic and other environmental stressors have impacted the tree health prompting a series of tree inventories and maintenance regimes to monitor and improve overall health. The 2013 improvements included a tree planting plan to increase tree species diversity, improve age class representation and retain the shade canopy as the heritage trees complete their life cycle. New tree species introduced to the Square were chosen for their size, form and shade capacity and include the Bald Cypress, Texas Ash, Burr Oak and Mexican White Oak.

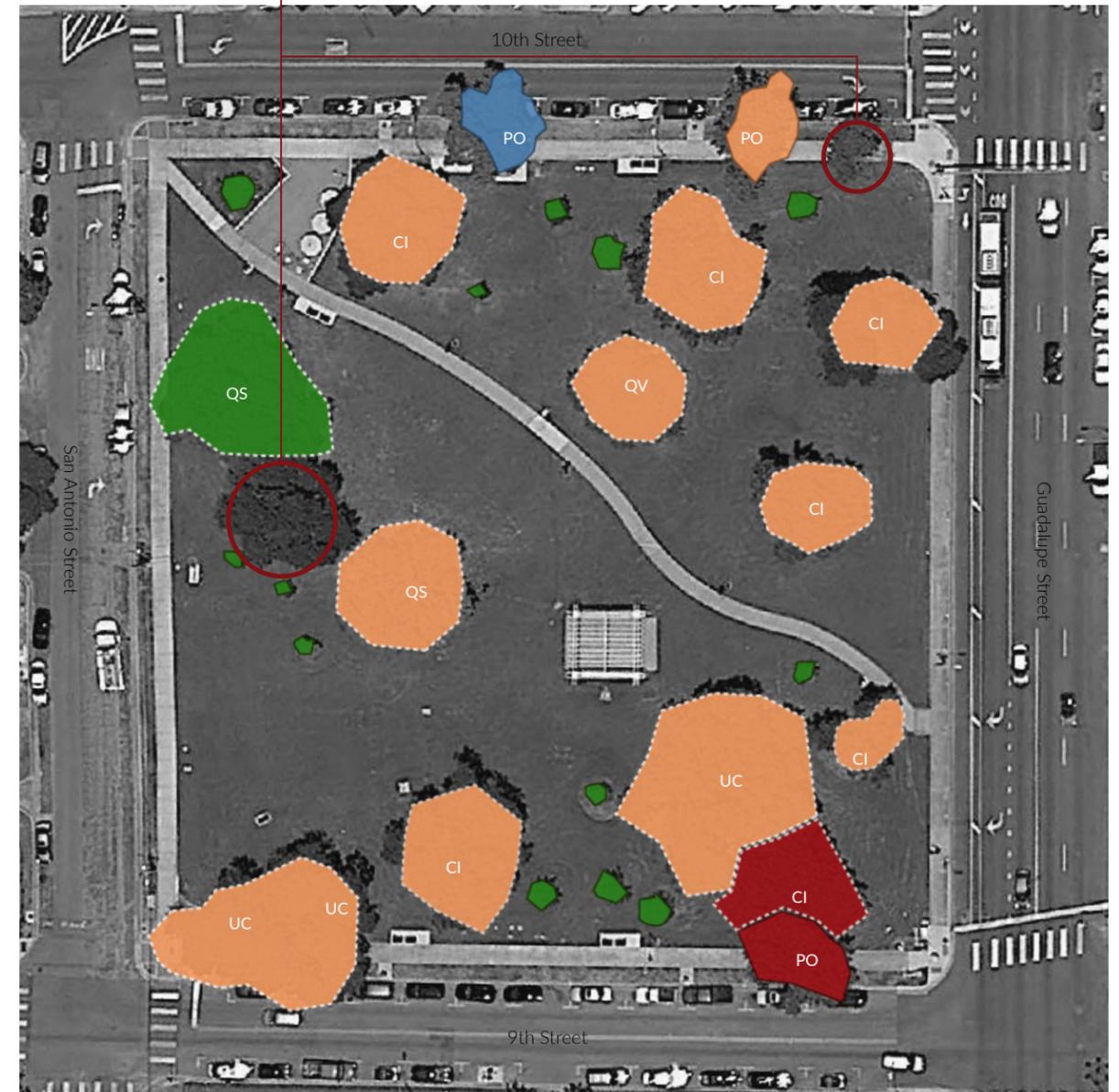
Only three of the trees planted within the rights-of-way on 9th Street, 10th Street and Guadalupe Street by Mayor Wooldridge in the 1930's remain today. Of these trees, all are in decline. Since the 2013 park rehabilitation, one heritage tree has been lost due to a severe storm. 85% of the Square's trees are in fair or declining condition.

Future Improvements

A Level 3 Advanced Assessment from a certified arborist is recommended for all mature heritage trees in the Square and right-of-way before the execution of any new landscape improvements. Due to natural aging process and recent history of environmental stress, a periodic conditions assessment and heritage tree maintenance program is recommended to identify and treat at-risk trees of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department.

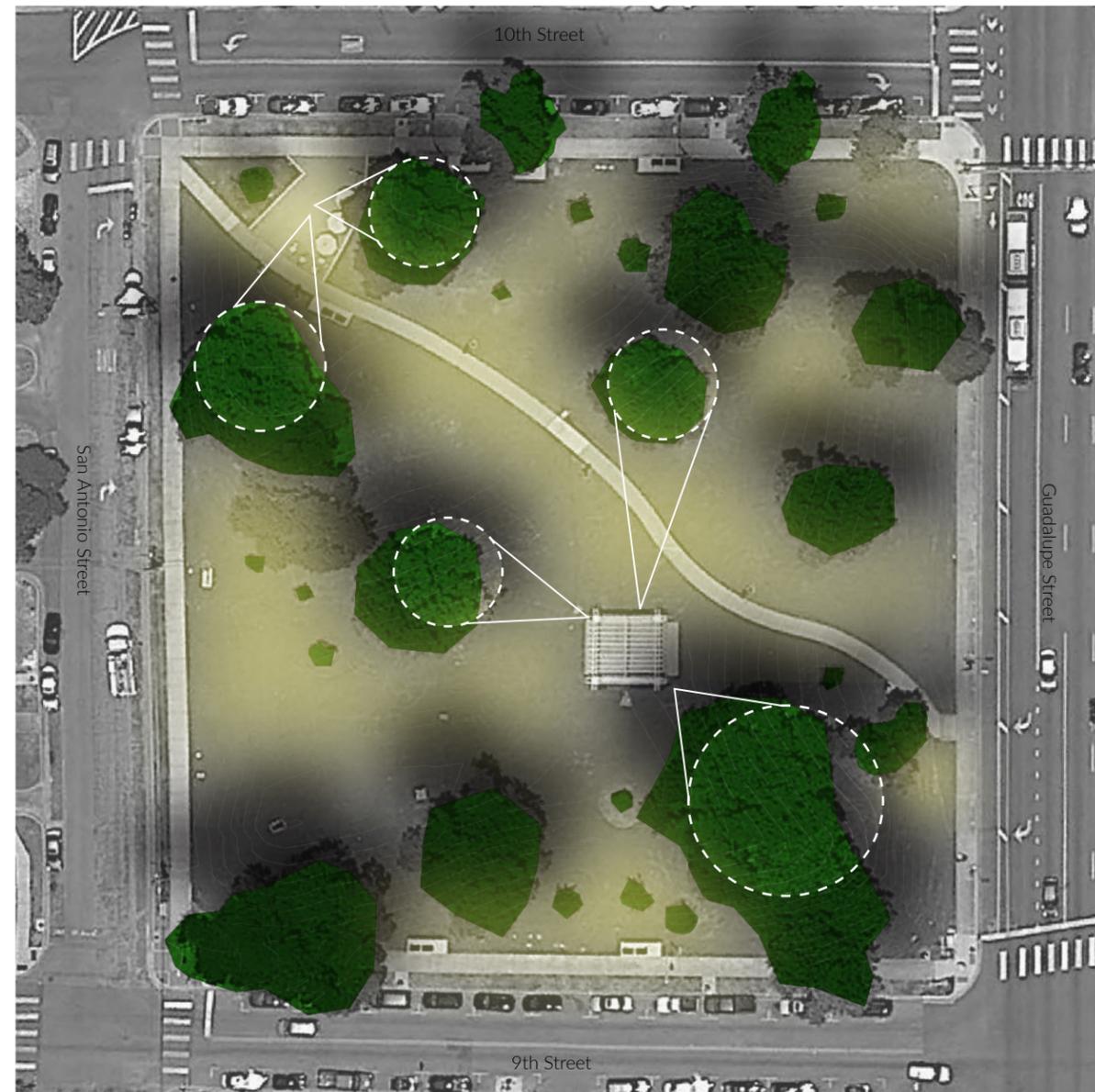
<p>2009 PARD Forestry conducts conditions assessment and new tree planting plan</p>	<p>2011 Summer Bartlett proposes tree care program for all mature trees</p>	<p>2012 Summer PARD conducts conditions assessment, identifying 85% of trees to be in fair or declining health</p>	<p>2013 COA conducts tree inventory for all heritage tree in the Central Business District including Wooldridge Square</p>
<p>2009 Spring Bartlett conducts visual inspection and conditions assessment</p>	<p>2012 Spring PARD and FOWS Square discuss tree planting plan and integrate into General Permit</p>	<p>2012 Fall PARD executes tree planting plan adding 11 new trees to the Square.; Mature trees receive fertilization and root aeration</p>	

UC/PO In 2015, a Cedar Elm fell over after a storm event and an American Sycamore in the ROW was removed. The 2013 tree inventory found both trees to be in poor health.



<p>Condition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> poor fair good 	<p>Heritage Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> heritage future heritage 	<p>Species / Quantity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CI <i>Carya illinoensis</i> Pecan / 7 QS <i>Quercus stellata</i> Post Oak / 2 PO <i>Platanus occidentalis</i> American Sycamore / 3 QV <i>Quercus virginiana</i> Live Oak / 1 UC <i>Ulmus crassifolia</i> Cedar Elm / 3
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Sun + Shade



Condition	
 tree canopy	 primary area of exposure
 primary area of shade	 gathering areas during events

The existing heritage tree canopy is the primary means of shade coverage at the Square.

During park events, the main gathering areas are clustered around the mature shade trees that are in direct view of the bandstand. During the day, visitors tend to group underneath shade trees or movable umbrellas at the plaza, indicating that natural shade coverage plays a crucial role at the Square.

Future Improvements:

Planning for the next generation of heritage trees should consider the role shade coverage can provide for planned and spontaneous park use. This may include strategic placement of young trees near existing heritage trees as well as identifying areas currently exposed to sun and heat throughout the day that, if shade were present, could serve as additional gathering areas for bandstand events.

Street trees along 9th, 10th and Guadalupe, as called for under the Great Streets program, more closely aligns the perimeter of the park to the Period of Historical Significance and provides critical shading and human comfort around the Square.

Grading and Drainage

Maps from the 1840's show Little Shoal Creek flowing through Wooldridge Square before it wound its way westward. In 1900 the city installed an 18" culvert that rerouted the creek underground. Even though Little Shoal Creek no longer flows through the Square, the main swale that traverses from the northeast to the southwest corner remains today. This swale forms a natural drainage channel that collects and directs the majority of the site's storm water runoff to a single storm drain in the southwest corner of the site. The high ratio of pervious to impervious cover allows additional storm water runoff to permeate and infiltrate through the soil medium.

Areas of Concern

The bandstand is located within the natural drainage area of the basin in the Square and the lawn area directly northeast of the bandstand is prone to poor drainage and standing water. Additionally, the perimeter on the west side of the site does incur erosion and weathering due to the steepness of the slope.

Future Improvements

Achieving ADA accessibility throughout the Square and to the bandstand should seek a solution that requires minimal impact to the existing character defining grades within the park. Comparably, the addition of Great Streets around the perimeter of the Square should seek to minimize impacts to the existing site grading and the critical root zones of the existing heritage trees.

Storm runoff and natural weathering has created areas of erosion around the perimeter of the park



A single area drain collects storm runoff from the site

Grading and Drainage

-  flow of surface runoff
-  area of maximum slope, > 33%

Great Streets improvements would necessitate the burial of the existing overhead power line along San Antonio Street



Existing Utilities

- reclaimed water line
- water line
- wastewater line
- aerial utility line
- underground utility line
- gas line
- Time Warner Cable

Utilities

Underneath our streets, sidewalks, and alleyways is a complex network of utilities that power our houses, wire our businesses and irrigate the landscape. Within the last five years, the city has invested in critical upgrades to the utility profile in and adjacent to Wooldridge Square. Inside the property boundary, the 2013 PARD improvements added an upgraded power supply, site lighting and a new irrigation system, and in the adjacent right-of-way, the City of Austin installed a reclaimed water line along 10th Street with a connection to Wooldridge Square.

The 2013 improvements targeted infrastructure crucial to programming, landscape performance, aesthetics and safety. The power supply installed in 2013 provides a 100 amp service to the bandstand and the concession pad, enough to individually power a mobile food vendor and provide a small lighting and sound to an event. The irrigation system services young and heritage trees with potable water that taps into the main line mid-block at 9th street. Site lighting is limited to the perimeter street light poles, light poles along the curvilinear walk through the square and subtle downlights on the bandstand.

Future Improvements

As the heritage trees continue to age, it is recommended that the irrigation routes be periodically assessed and modified to meet the evolving demand. To mitigate safety concerns and enhance night time aesthetics, additional, low level site lighting is recommended. However, the installation of underground utilities must preserve the critical root zones of all existing trees.

In Spring of 2017, a City of Austin reclaimed waterline will be installed on the 10th Street edge of the Square. This reclaimed water tap can be used to irrigate the park in a more sustainable manner when compared with the potable water supply currently used to irrigate the park.

Accessibility

The Architectural Barriers Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) works to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to equally experience public space. An on-site inspection performed in September 2015 found that a number of site elements in Wooldridge Square do not comply with the state-mandated TAS standards, thus, limiting the experience of the Square to all of the Austin community.

Accessible Route TAS standards require a minimum of one accessible route to connect a user from the right-of-way to primary amenities of a site. In the case of Wooldridge Square, the Bandstand and the vendor plaza have been identified as the primary amenities. However, the existing walk that bisects the Square does not comply with TAS standards. Multiple points along the path exceed 8.33% slope, the maximum allowed for an accessible route. The stairs that connect the walk to the right-of-way at Guadalupe also limit accessibility.

A study to explore an accessible walk determined that the visual impact to the surrounding landscape could potentially compromise the historic integrity of the square. The three options presented (right) provide a variety of alterations to key site amenities, avoiding the critical root zone of existing trees;

- Option 1 - Remove and replace the existing walk with a new walk that provides the maximum allowable slope of 8.33% with handrails.
- Option 2 - Remove and replace the existing walk with a longer, more circuitous walk that does not exceed a 5% slope to accommodate the existing site grading. No railings are required in this option.
- Option 3 - Retain and rehabilitate the existing historic walk and add an additional fully ADA route that minimizes the visual impact and grading of the landscape. This option also takes advantage of the relatively flat area in the right-of-way at the southwest corner of the Square, allowing the additional option of necessary accessible van parking.

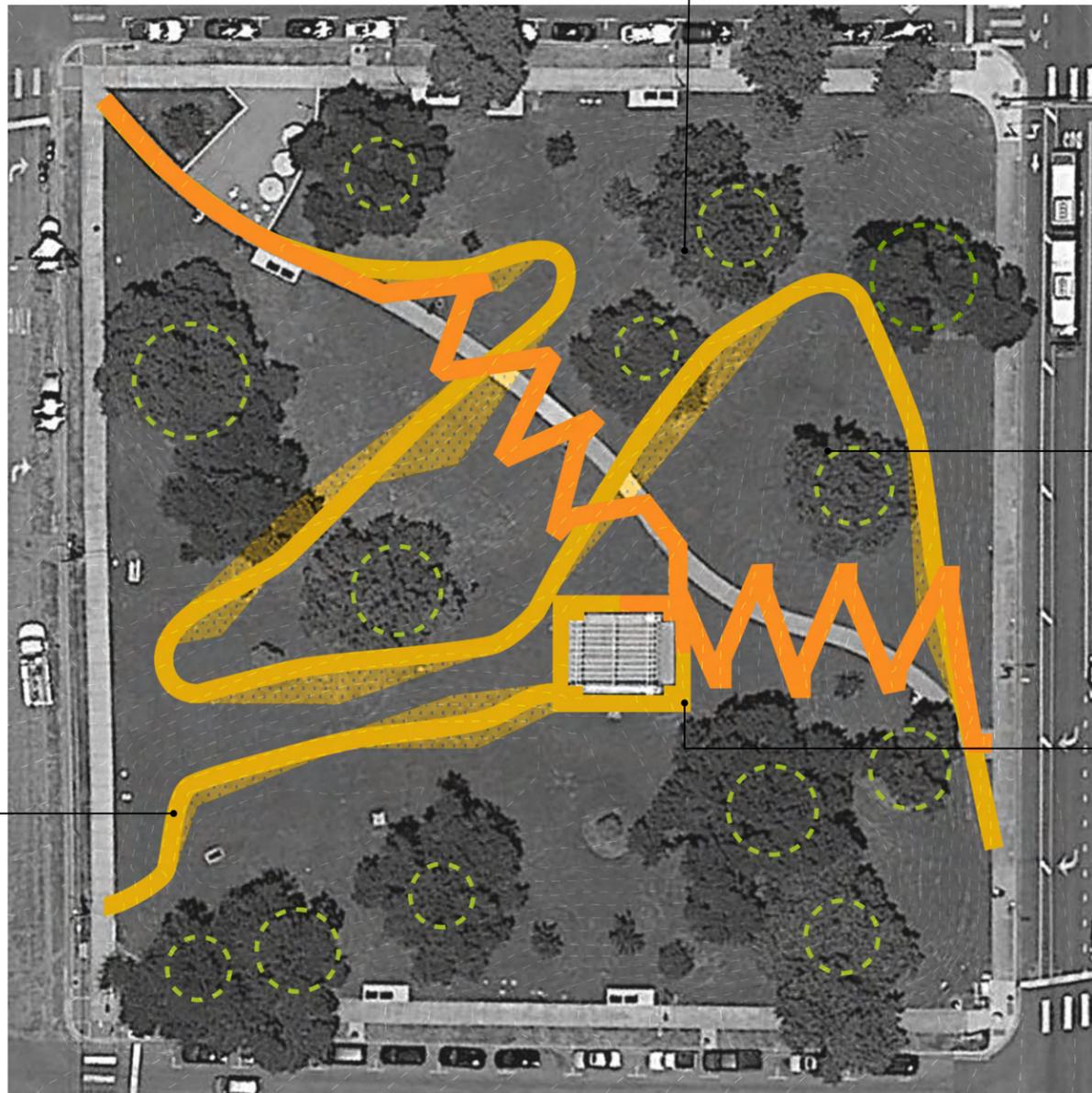
To comply with TAS standards, a site should provide equal access to site furnishings such as benches, trash cans and bike racks. The accessibility inspection found a limited number of fixed trash cans and benches that are ADA accessible. Similar to site furnishings, a site should also provide equal access to signage such as way-finding or interpretive signage. There are two existing signs at Wooldridge Square: an informational sign and an interpretive sign. To comply with TAS standards, these signs, as well as any future signage, should be legible from an accessible path.

The initial site inspection revealed access to the bandstand as one of the site's main challenges. As a primary amenity of Wooldridge Square, universal access to the bandstand is required for compliance. If the bandstand is modified at any point during future construction, access up onto the bandstand platform will also be required to comply with TAS standards. Currently, there is no accessible route from the right-of-way to the bandstand or on to the bandstand platform.

While a variance (issued by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation) to keep the Square non-compliant is an avenue that can be considered, it is only applicable if the project meets the following requirements: 1. The site is on the National Historic Register 2. The site is not being modified by the new construction. The action to seek a variance rather than provide universal access would limit the fully inclusionary use of the Square for the community that use and benefit from this public space.

In order to preserve the historic significance of the bandstand, in context with the surrounding grading, two options for achieving accessibility onto the bandstand were considered - 1) a ramp or 2) a hydraulic lift. Either scenario must maintain the integrity to the original structure as much as possible. The following page details the feasibility study recommendations for a hydraulic lift.

The development impact zone in 1/2 CRZ limits cut and fill to less than 4" depth, requiring the walk to avoid these areas



Grading Zone- moderate grading would be required to accommodate the walk

Through studies conducted to understand the impacts of altering the existing path to meet accessibility standards, it was determined that the alterations would detract too much from the site's historic quality. Instead, the path shown in red below was proposed as an additional, accessible route.

Option 3

- | | | |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Accessible Route Studies | Heritage Tree |
| OPTION 1 |  8.33% Ramp w/ Handrails |  1/2 Critical Root Zone |
| OPTION 2 |  <5% Walk without Handrails | |

Lift Feasibility Study

The challenge of accessibility to the bandstand necessitated a series of studies. Various temporary and permanent ramp configurations and outdoor rated lifts were researched and studied. In summary, an electrically powered custom outdoor rated lift is the recommended solution. The next step should involve further studies. The following represents a short summary of these findings;

Visual and Spatial Impact

The lift and its equipment should be custom-designed to have a low horizontal and vertical profile (fig. A and B). Based on the location of the bandstand steps, the historic walk, and important view sheds in and around the Square the recommended location for the lift is on the bandstand's southern side.

Security Requirements

The use of a security key or similar feature is recommended to ensure the longest lifespan possible for the lift. Though this creates conflict with making the lift accessible 24/7, a non-secured lift would be susceptible to misuse and vandalism. Recommended security features would limit access only to times when the lift is unlocked (most likely by a key-holding PARD staff member).

Alterations to Bandstand

The lift installation would require a power-operated gate at each landing - in this case, at ground level and at the bandstand platform. Hence, a small section of the existing rail at the bandstand platform would need to be modified to install this gate.

Alterations to Landscape

A level hardscape surface and a structural support wall (fig. A and B) adjacent to the lift would be required for commercial installation.

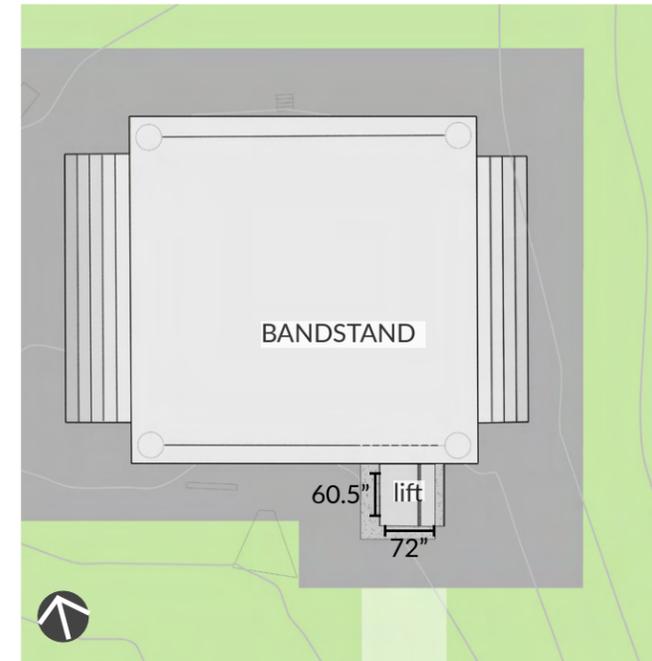


FIG. A bandstand with adjacent lift, plan view

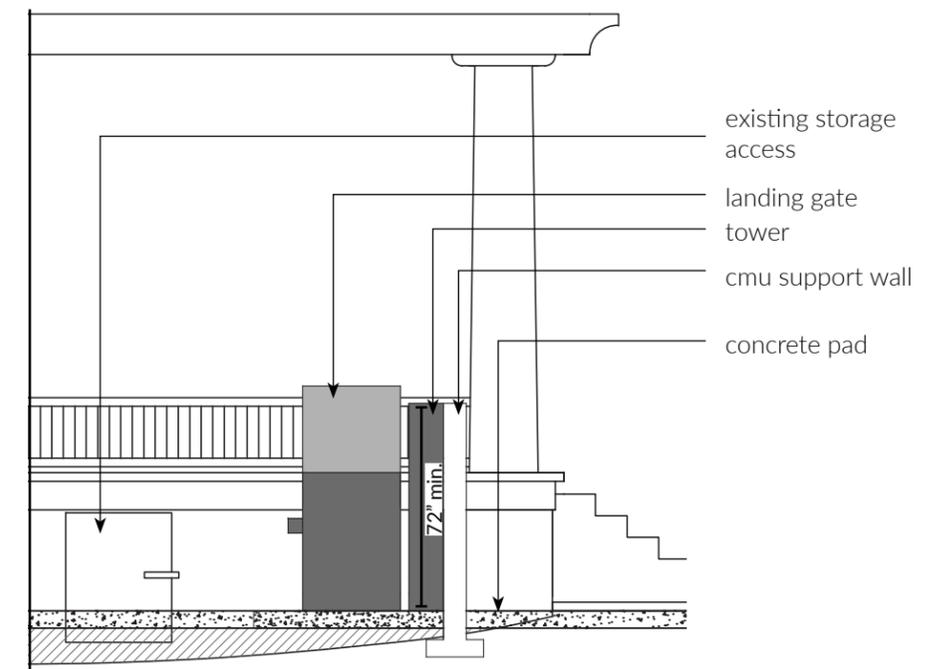


FIG. B Bandstand with adjacent lift, elevation view

Adjacencies

Sidewalks and pedestrian priority streets are vital to our communities and local economies. As the front entrance to our parks and plazas, they shape first impressions and they channel movement, connect people and facilitate commerce. Sidewalks can be an extension of downtown parks, offering additional public space for programs and events. There has been a growing effort to challenge the traditional scale of the street and re-prioritize the pedestrian to create a safe and inclusive environment. The COA's Great Streets program has developed a set of streetscape design standards with the aim of improving the quality of the right-of-way experience in downtown Austin. The Great Streets design standards envision "an active and vibrant downtown [that begins] with the premise that 'streets are for people'.

In order to understand how the design standards would potentially impact the right-of-way adjacent to the Square, the existing conditions must first be examined.

San Antonio, 10th + 9th Street - The right-of-way to the north, south and west of the square share similar conditions. San Antonio, 10th and 9th Street are two-way commuter streets with parallel parking on 10th and 9th Street. Traffic is low to moderate with the majority of the traffic limited to business hours. Parking along San Antonio Street is currently restricted to the Austin Police Department and county law enforcement.

Guadalupe Street - The right-of-way to the east is bound by Guadalupe Street, a four lane, one-way arterial road with a designated bike/bus lane that serves as one of the main routes for south bound travel into the Central Business District. Arterial roads like Guadalupe Street optimize traffic flow into downtown Austin, but these wide roadways that support heavy, accelerated traffic can create an unpleasant and isolating experience for the pedestrian or bicyclist.

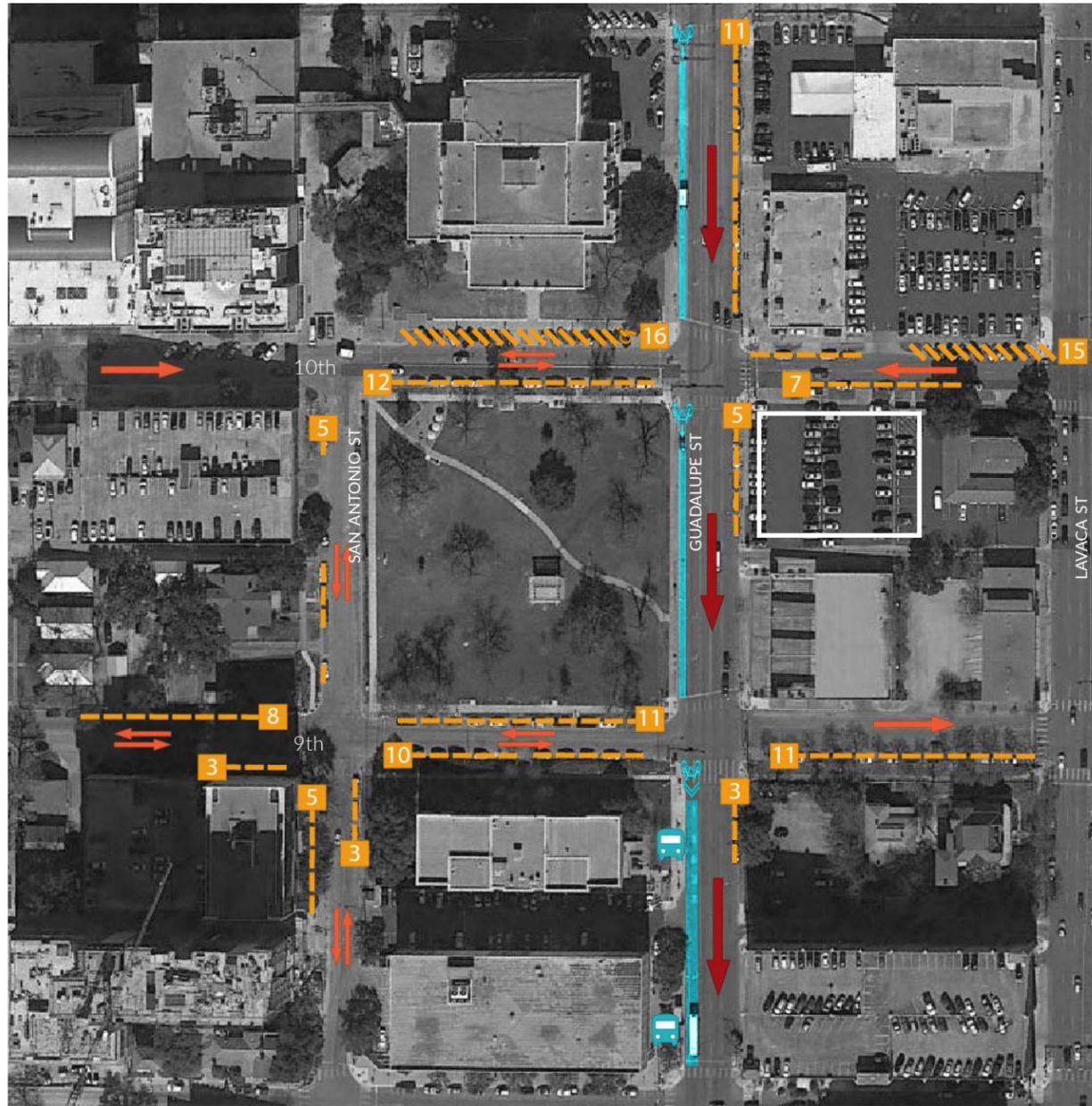
Adjacent, paid, on-street parking is currently only available on 9th Street and 10th Street. The Travis County Courthouse does not provide visitor parking and on-street parking is in high demand during business hours. Limited parking around the Square creates a challenge, particularly for accessibility and programmed events. There is one ADA parking spot on the northeast side of 10th Street and while this is in relatively close proximity to the Square, this ADA parking location does not provide an accessible route to the Square's amenities.

Wooldridge Square is well positioned to support alternative modes of transportation. There is a designated bike and bus lane along Guadalupe Street. The nearest bus stops are just one block south of the Square that connect users from the University to downtown. BCycle is a bike sharing program that provides readily available bicycles to the public for rent. BCycle expansion plans have identified Wooldridge Square as a potential site for a new station. This would provide another transportation alternative for visitors to and from the Square.

The existing sidewalk along 9th, 10th and San Antonio is a 7' walk with a vegetated median that acts as a buffer between the pedestrian and the vehicle. The absence of street trees leaves the sidewalk exposed to the sun and heat throughout the day and can discourage pedestrian use during the summer months. The sidewalk adjacent to Guadalupe Street is a 7' sidewalk that meets directly with the street. The absence of street trees or a vegetated buffer between the pedestrian and traffic can create a sense of unease.

Future Improvements

Safe, accessible sidewalks and streets can enhance public health and encourage social and economic capital. Historic photographs indicate that Wooldridge Square was once bound by street trees and a vegetated buffer. Future improvements should consider similar conditions that create a safe and inviting experience for all users, including the pedestrian. The City of Austin Great Streets program is the first step in this process. Great Street design standards should be considered within a historic context perspective and adapted to meet current needs to maintain historic integrity of the Square. Collaboration with the Planning and Zoning Department, Public Works, the Texas Historic Commission and other stakeholders will ensure that these design standards are correctly interpreted and implemented.



Street Hierarchy

- two way commuter
- one way arterial
- one way commuter
- on-street parking

Symbols

- ADA parking
- bus stop
- bike lane
- sharrow lane- bike + bus



“If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.”

- Fred Kent



Great Streets Study

The Great Streets program, as defined by the City of Austin, enables a right-of-way transformation that recalibrates the scale of space of streets for people; slowing down and integrating automobile traffic better with pedestrian traffic, transit and bicycles. The program also seeks to create more interactive streets that embody pride of character and incorporate art in the public environment.

The Preliminary Plan design intent of implementing Great Streets at Wooldridge Square serves a dual purpose:

1. Reprioritize the pedestrian realm within the right-of-way at 9th Street, 10th Street, San Antonio and Guadalupe providing safer sidewalks, updated lighting, furnishings and tree plantings for shade.
2. Re-establish the Period of Historical Significance. The Square enhancements by Mayor Wooldridge included perimeter street trees in addition to the sidewalk that meanders through the Square.

Under standard Great Streets design, improvement of the typical 18' sidewalk section "pushes in" to private property from the existing curb line. As identified in Option 1 (right), this standard approach would result in significant grading and the addition of retaining walls in the Square. Impact to the existing trees will be significant.

An alternative methodology, Option 2 (far right) "pushes-out" from the limits of the existing sidewalks around the park, pushing the 18' sidewalk section into the right-of-way of all four perimeter streets. Grading and impact to the character and the Square is avoided. However, curbs, gutters, existing parking and drive lane striping would all need to be reconfigured.

The Preliminary Plan recommends the "push-out" option.



Option 1
"push in to park"

- From existing curbs, extend the 18' typical street sidewalk profile into the Square.
- Moderate to severe grading impacts around the Square.
- Moderate to significant impact to a number of Heritage class and Class 1 protected existing trees in the Square.
- Potential addition of retaining walls to protect existing trees.
- COA Standard street trees, furnishing, and lighting configuration on all four streets.

Option 2
"push out into ROW"

- From the inside edge of the existing square's perimeter sidewalks, extend the 18' great street sidewalk profile into the streets ROW.
- Modify 10th Street on-street parking to parallel parking on both sides of street. The Wooldridge Square parking should accommodate concession vendor temporary parking.
- Modify 9th Street - one lane of parallel parking along the Austin History Center is removed to accommodate the great streets profile sidewalks.
- San Antonio Street proposes to add on-street public parking by reconfiguring the county & state reserved parking into public metered parking.
- Guadalupe Street proposes to combine the bike & bus lanes into one shared lane.
- ADA parking is proposed on San Antonio Street at the flattest section of the street- prompting ADA access to the bandstand.
- Tree spacing on 9th & 10th Street proposes a wider, random spacing that preserves views of the Square from the history center & courthouse.
- No grading occurs in the park.

PROPOSED
INFRASTRUCTURE
INVESTMENT



DEDICATED PARKING



MARKETING + OUTREACH



POWER SUPPLY



EVENT SPONSORSHIP



DEDICATED STAFF SUPPORT



ALCOHOL SALES



DRINKING FOUNTAIN



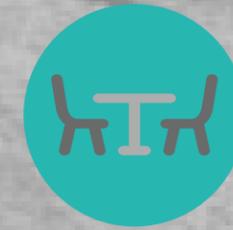
FOOD VENDING



DEDICATED RESTROOM



ADA ACCESS



MOVABLE SEATING



SECURITY

Park Infrastructure

Accessibility is only one aspect of a successful public park. A great public space, according to the Project for Public Spaces, is an engaging place - one that encourages and supports active use for a diverse demographic. The success and long term viability of Wooldridge Square is dependent on its use by the public. Unfortunately, within the last decade, the Square has suffered from a period of declining use and a reputation of poor and unsafe conditions yet the Square's rich history, natural features and location to downtown lend it great potential for sustained public use.

In her report, "Lessons Learned: The 2013 Reopening of Wooldridge Square", Ann Graham identified short and long term infrastructure to support activity and inspire programmatic and spontaneous use. Programmatic use, defined by Graham, is the scheduled and organized use of public space that is permitted, promoted and financially supported. Spontaneous use, on the other hand, is the impromptu, personal use of public space. Both types are vital to the success, health and value of Wooldridge Square and require basic park infrastructure to support and sustain these activities.

Basic park infrastructure is the backbone of an active public space. Graham's report identified infrastructure needs in the Square such as dedicated parking, restrooms and staff, marketing and outreach, power supply, event sponsorship, and ADA access. The 2013 improvements addressed several of these recommendations with the introduction of a small event plaza in the northwest corner equipped with movable seating, power supply and vendor hookups. To date, the city has been unable to retain a long-term food vendor at the plaza due to lack of a curb cut and low daily use in summer months. Additional investments are needed to ensure the success of a mobile vendor pad and planned events.

Future Improvements

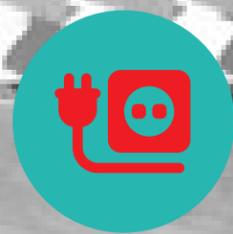
Activities give a reason to visit, use and return to a space. An engaging and active presence in the Austin community is crucial to the long-term viability of Wooldridge Square. Future design should address these areas of basic park infrastructure recommended in Graham's report to encourage use and continue the momentum of the 2013 improvements. From these recommendations, ADA access, dedicated parking and site lighting for safety and security should be a high priority for future improvements.



DEDICATED PARKING



MARKETING + OUTREACH



POWER SUPPLY



EVENT SPONSORSHIP



DEDICATED STAFF SUPPORT



ALCOHOL SALES



DRINKING FOUNTAIN



FOOD VENDING



DEDICATED RESTROOM



ADA ACCESS



MOVABLE SEATING



SECURITY

IMPLEMENTED
INFRASTRUCTURE
INVESTMENT

Programming

While the primary use of Wooldridge Square is spontaneous personal use, programming offers an opportunity to reengage the community on a larger scale. With proper park infrastructure, organized promoted events have the potential to reach a wide audience and attract first time visitors. This is especially relevant to the Aspen Heights development on 8th and Nueces, which will add 196 new apartment dwellings to the neighborhood. Engaging key partners such as the Austin Parks Foundation, Downtown Austin Alliance and the Friends of Wooldridge Square is crucial to building, implementing and sustaining robust programming.

Programming is crucial to driving activity to the Square but it should be appropriate and respect the historic integrity. Programming type should be appropriate so that the defining features are protected and used. There are two aspects of programming that can potentially accommodate events while preserving these features: 1. events planned for the interior of the park should be low impact events such as movies in the park 2. for activities that are moderate to heavy in impact, those activities should be relocated to the perimeter of the park near the existing plaza. These two approaches can help minimize impact to the Square interior and reach a consensus between providing programming for a thriving park while respecting and maintaining the historic integrity of the park.

Current programming includes movies in the park, giant chess and yoga, which are managed by the Austin Parks Foundation. Additional programming options should come from current and potential users. A 2016 survey of public stakeholders ranked the following at the top:

1. Movies in the Park
2. Night Events
3. Day Events
4. Symphony Night
5. Art Market

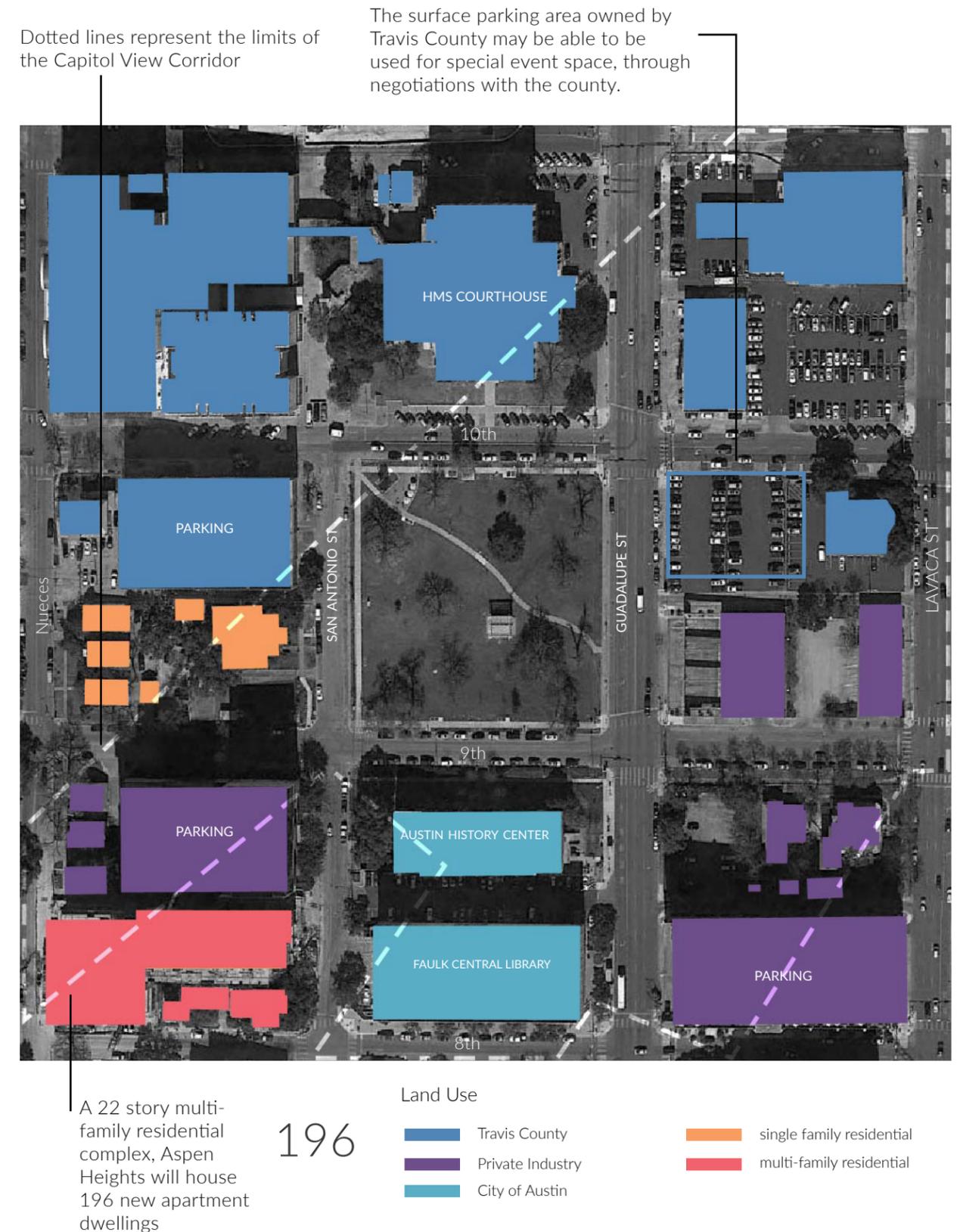
These results offer suggestions of events the community might support, while also suggesting what infrastructure more active use of the park might require. For example, two of the top five events - movies in the park and symphony night - are spectator events that require additional lighting, public restrooms and ADA accessibility.

Current Land Use

When Austin was first established, the neighborhood surrounding Wooldridge Square was primarily residential, but over time, public, private and government institutions started to replace single family residences with office buildings and parking facilities. In 2015, single and multi-family residences comprised less than 20% of the existing land use within a block of the Square making the primary user a 9 to 5 office employee. Amenities that attract visitors such as food and retail are concentrated along Congress Avenue and Lamar Boulevard, reducing incentives to visit the Square after business hours.

In a policy to maintain critical views of the Texas State Capitol from various points in the city, the Capitol View Corridor defines and legally protects critical views from encroaching development. At Wooldridge Square, building height restrictions imposed by the Capitol View Corridor restrict future development of property along the east side of Guadalupe Street adjacent to the Square.

While the Austin History Center and the Travis County Courthouse are very significant historical buildings that share a history with the Square, the Square sees significantly less use than other downtown squares and parks due to the office, government, civic and adjacent parking lots. However, with the addition of Aspen Heights apartment complex on 8th and Nueces, residential density will likely increase. Future landscape improvements may be able to capitalize on the new development by creating an infrastructure platform that attracts visitors and interest in the Square.



Future planning goals include restoration of the HMS building and the surrounding landscape

Plans for Block 126 include a five story mixed use facility and a public plaza

126



Future Land Use

The Travis County Courthouse, operated by Travis County, and the Austin History Center have proposed planning and development changes that will impact the surrounding land use of the Square. Understanding and anticipating future land use changes will help inform landscape improvements for Woolldridge Square.

Austin History Center

The City of Austin plans to relocate the Faulk Central Library to a new building on Cesar Chavez Street. Once the move takes place, the Austin History Center plans to expand to the former library building. Currently, the library attracts a constant flow of visitors to the area, providing public facilities such as internet access, public bathrooms and book and media rentals. The relocation of the library may shift the regular flow of visitor traffic to the new location, potentially reducing the number of visitors to the Square.

Travis County

The multi-story parking garage at the northwest corner of San Antonio Street currently provides over 300 parking spaces for The Travis County Courthouse employees. The Central Campus Master Plan of Travis County has identified the San Antonio parking garage as the site for the new Central Booking District. The new 72-hour housing facility planned is a ten-story building with the main entrance facing San Antonio Street, across the street from the Square's mobile concession space. With the addition of the new facility, Woolldridge Square could potentially see a dramatic increase of visitors to area.

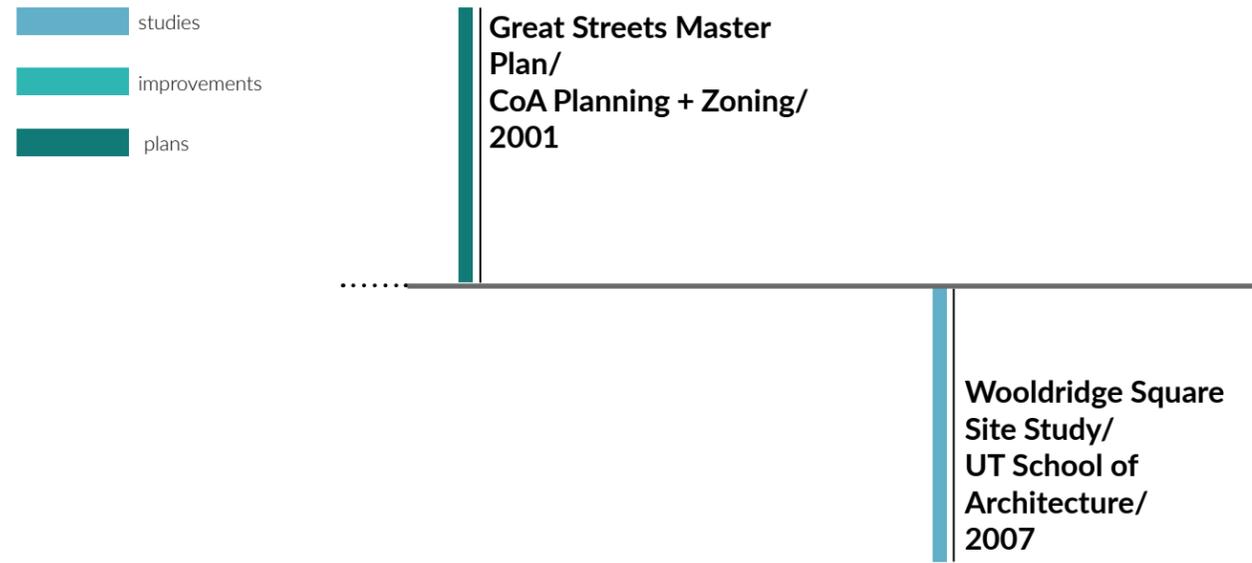
The Central Campus Master Plan also proposes to rehabilitate and preserve the Herman Marion Sweatt courthouse and re-purpose the ground level into a museum and cafe space. This could potentially enhance the sense of historic quality of the area and help tell the story of the Square's history.

The master plan includes redeveloping block 126 with one five-story building, one single-story building including a public plaza space with retail and mixed-use. This could also drive more traffic to the area, increasing the visibility of the Square.

Narrative of Planning + Improvements

There have been a number of reports and planning studies initiated by private and public organizations to understand the shifting dynamics and impacts of increasing density in downtown Austin. The growing pressure on public resources and spaces can be mitigated with proper planning and investment. The following studies include broad investigations of public spaces within the park system and right-of-way as well as other studies that directly address Wooldridge Square.

The Wooldridge Square Preliminary Plan has included observations and recommendations from these studies. The preliminary plan intends to contribute to this growing body of planning and research. Future improvements should consider recommendations from these previous studies in conjunction with recommendations from the Wooldridge Square Preliminary Plan.



Future Land Use

**Wooldridge Square Preliminary Plan/
CoA Parks + Recreation/
2016**

To continue the momentum of the 2013 Park Improvements, the Parks and Recreation Department commissioned a design study to address the recommendations of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan, ADA access and Great Streets.

**Reopening of Wooldridge Square Park/
Ann Graham/
2014**

**Way-finding Master Plan/
CoA Planning + Zoning/
2013**

**Wooldridge Park Improvements/
CoA Parks and Recreation/
2013**

The park improvements were a significant upgrade for the Square. A new irrigation system, lawn, site furnishings, a mobile vendor pad and power supply were included.

**Travis County Master Plan/
Travis County/
org. 2002 updated
2015**

While not directly addressing the Square, the County Master Plan proposes a multi-phase set of building use changes around the square together with the renovation and rehabilitation of the existing Courthouse.

**Parks + Open Space Master Plan/
CoA Parks + Recreation/
2010**

**Long Range Parks Plan/
CoA Parks and Recreation/
2010**

The Long Range Parks Plan forecasts a need for more parkland and facilities in downtown Austin. While the plan does not go into detail, the revitalization of Wooldridge Square is considered a priority for the downtown parkland initiative.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement

Wooldridge Square holds a significant place in the City of Austin's history, and sits in a significant location downtown. Community engagement was a substantial component of the planning process, which included public meetings, community surveys and meetings with state and local stakeholder groups.

The preparation of the Wooldridge Square preliminary plan has involved multiple public stakeholder meetings, facilitated by the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC).

The first public meeting began with a presentation of site analysis by dwg., covering history, Great Streets, accessibility, and vision. After the presentation, participants were split into four groups, facilitated by project leaders, where they could discuss and record their opinions about subjects in each category.

Results from these discussions, as well as a subsequent public online survey, are summarized in the following pages.

Subsequent meetings presented two design options that combined the stakeholder information about the four key scope areas of history, vision, great streets and accessibility to present a set of design options that could be considered a menu of options that were interchangeable with each other.

The feedback from these ongoing meetings and PARC input informed the final preliminary Plan design direction.





IMAGES FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS



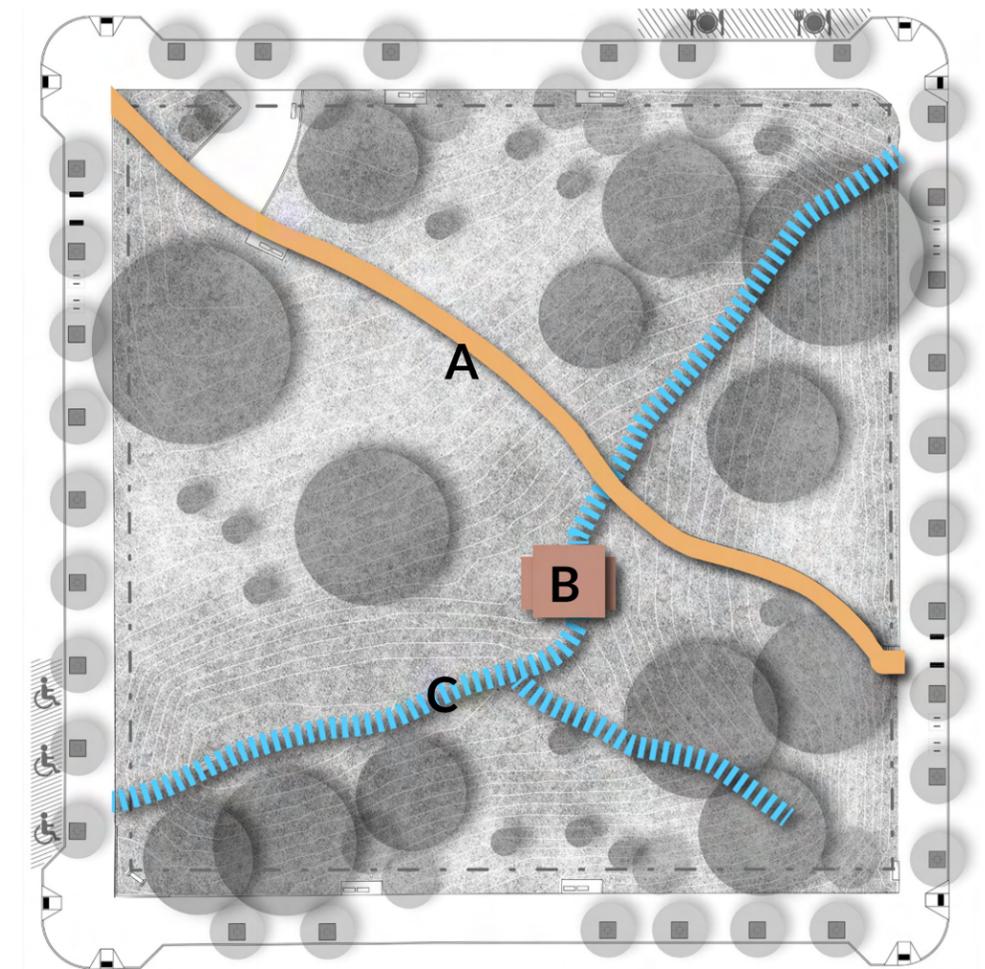
Wooldridge Square is a historically significant place. These findings tell us how to preserve and celebrate that history as we improve other aspects of the Square.

AREAS OF CONSENSUS

- Because of its historical significance, Wooldridge Square needs to be preserved and maintained.
- The existing walk (A) and bandstand (B) must retain their historical alignment and character.

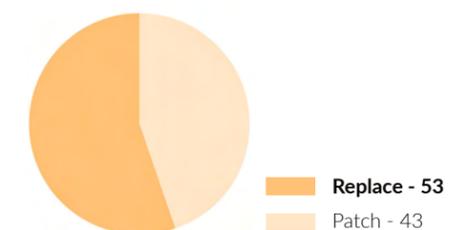
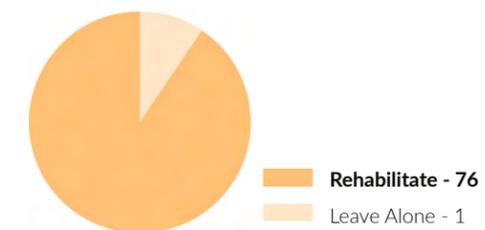
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- There is an opportunity to reveal the historical location of Little Shoal Creek (C).
- The existing historic walk needs repairs and rehabilitation.
- Historical interpretive signage should be added.

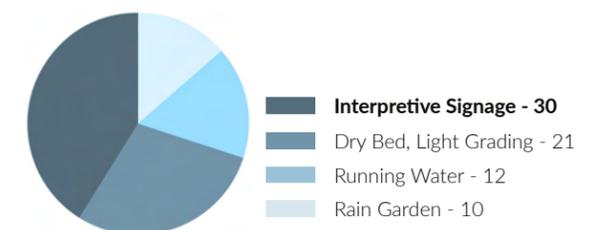
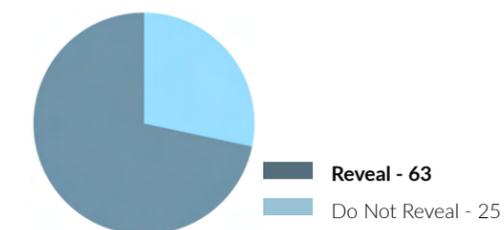


SURVEY RESPONSES

HISTORIC WALK



LITTLE SHOAL CREEK



Accessibility

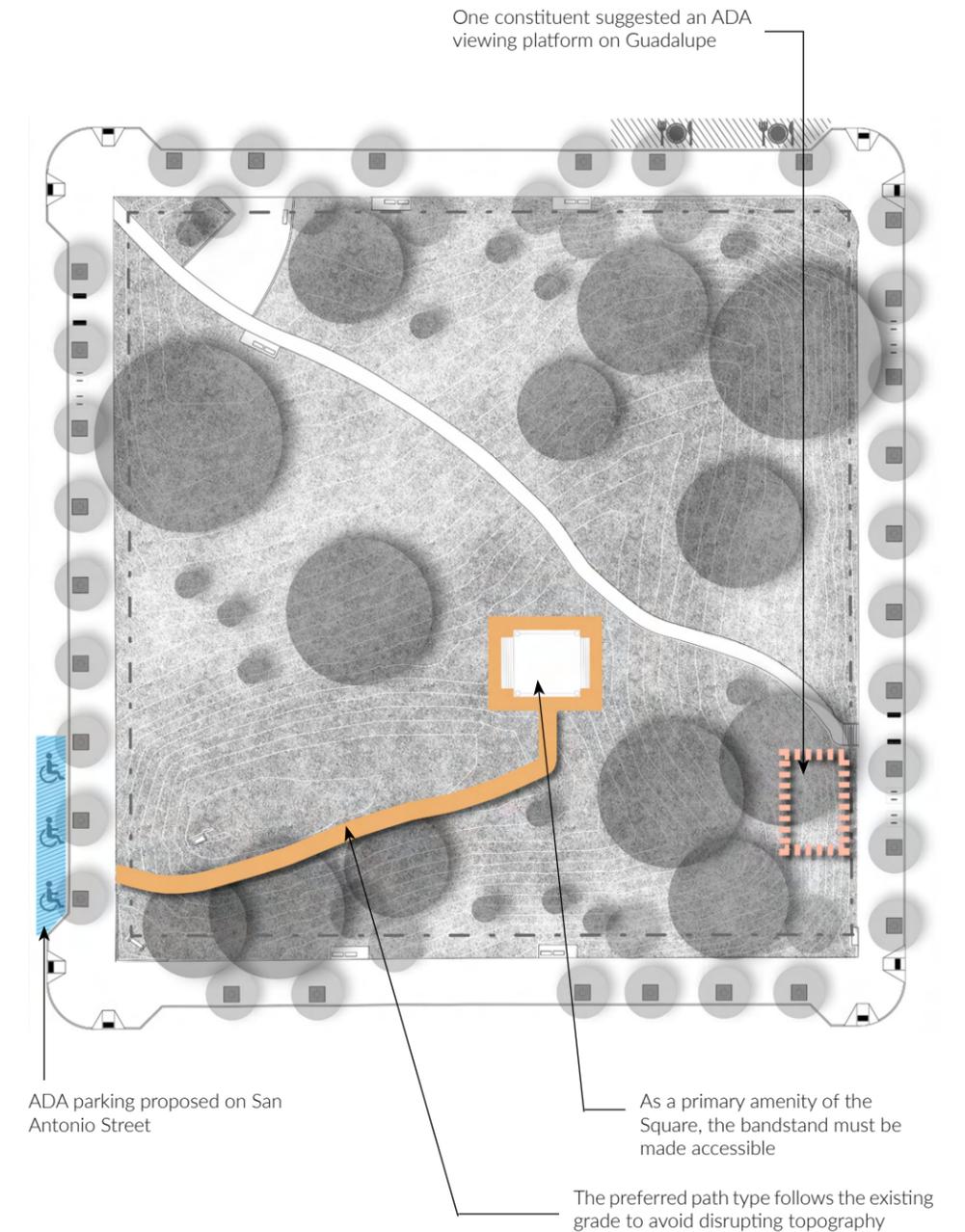
State and Federal law requires accessibility, but Wooldridge Square does not currently provide it. These findings confirm that better access must be considered and reveal ways to make accessibility changes that are sensitive to the existing Square.

AREAS OF CONSENSUS

- Surveyed stakeholders do not want accessibility improvements to dominate historic features.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The park currently lacks ADA compliant access to and onto the bandstand - this was voted by surveyed stakeholders as one of the top five desired infrastructure upgrades.
- The proposed accessible path type shown on the diagram to the right was preferred by surveyed stakeholders.
- Surveyed stakeholders also voiced a desire for ADA compliant parking.



Great Streets

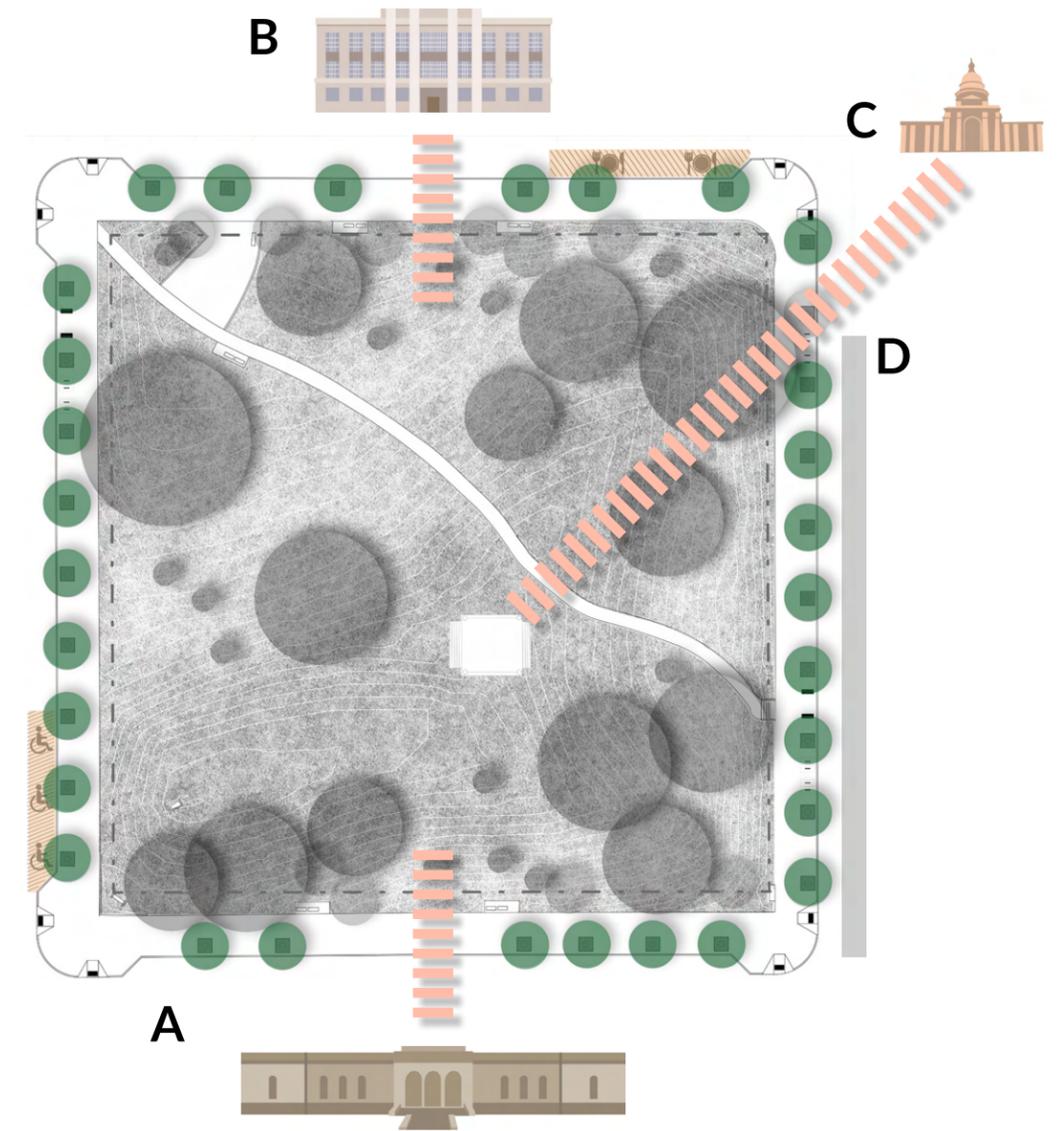
The Great Streets Program serves to improve the quality of downtown streetscapes. These findings tell us which unique aspects of the block to acknowledge as we consider Great Streets.

AREAS OF CONSENSUS

- Landmark view sheds in and out of the park must be preserved.
- Changes to the streetscape should not encroach on the Square's current boundary.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Surveyed constituents preferred the hybrid version of Great Streets (plan shown right) over a "one size fits all" implementation.
- Current limitations include narrow sidewalks and not enough street trees.
- Great Streets enables the right-of-way to be rehabilitated to the Period of Historical Significance by Mayor Wooldridge with tree lined streets.



Landmark view sheds include The Austin History Center (A) and the Travis County Courthouse (B), and the Texas State Capitol (C).



Many people want to retain the bike lane on Guadalupe (D)



Surveyed stakeholders agreed to the merits of a wider, 18' sidewalk



Stakeholder feedback tells us how people want to use the Square and how they think it should function. These findings inform the Preliminary Plan as to desired functions that should be supported when introducing changes to the Square.

AREAS OF CONSENSUS

- Wooldridge Square should play a stronger role among downtown Austin’s open spaces and city park system.
- In a survey of programming elements of Civic Programming, Infrastructure Upgrades, and Environmental Performance, stakeholders chose these as their Top 5 in each category.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Wooldridge Square must be able to support stakeholders’ desired uses of the open space - if it is not used, it will not be deemed successful.

INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

1. Increase Shade
2. Lighting Upgrades
3. Drinking Fountain
4. Increase Seating
5. ADA Bandstand access

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

1. Enhanced Tree Planting
2. Heritage Trees
3. Reclaimed Water to sustain Planting
4. Native Meadows
5. Reduced Maintenance

CIVIC PROGRAMMING

1. Movies in the Park
2. Night Events
3. Day Events
4. Symphony Night
5. Art Market

Strategic Design Principles

The public survey process, along with other visioning exercises, informed dev. of four strategic principles to use during the design process to create a preliminary plan.

Working closely with stakeholders and members of the community, a landscape vision and the following strategic design principles were developed to guide the conceptual design process.

LANDSCAPE VISION

- Wooldridge Square will be a place of civic tradition and an urban open space for all in the Austin community.

STRATEGIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Invest in our Past: Utilize the Square's historic character-defining features to guide low impact design solutions.
- Elevate the Pedestrian: Activate the perimeter to create a safe and inviting experience for the pedestrian.
- Achieve Access: Achieve universal access to give everyone in the community the opportunity to experience the historic Bandstand.
- Reinforce Connections: Visually reinforce the Square's relationship with leading civic institutions including the Austin History Center, Travis County Courthouse and the State Capitol.

100+
survey participants

7
meetings with civic
leadership

5
public meetings +
stakeholder workshops

4
online +
print surveys





PRELIMINARY PLAN

Wooldridge Square Preliminary Plan

The Wooldridge Square Preliminary Plan was tasked with addressing the recommendations of the 2010 Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan and other improvements including universal access, Great Streets and event space. Community participation was a critical component in this process. With the help of the community, a landscape vision and framework for strategic design principles were developed. The strategic design principles helped inform the following design concepts to address the goals of the project scope while respecting the historic integrity of the Square.

1. Invest in Our Past: Utilize the Square's historic character defining features to guide low impact design solutions.
2. Elevate the Pedestrian: Activate the perimeter to create a safe and inviting experience for the pedestrian.
3. Achieve Access: Achieve universal access to give everyone in the community the opportunity to experience the historic Bandstand.
4. Reinforce Connections: Visually reinforce the Square's relationship with leading civic institutions including the Austin History Center.

The Wooldridge Square Preliminary Plan presents a series of site analyses and design studies intended to understand the needs and challenges of the Square. The recommendations included in this document are non-binding conceptual design solutions that will require further development from a team of licensed consultants.



Concept A

An extended sidewalk with upgraded paving promotes 10th Street as a key axis for pedestrians visiting Wooldridge Square. Along with street side space for food trucks and other vendors, a modest wall and plaque facing the square provides space for visitors to overlook the entire Square.

The implementation of Great Streets principles activates the edges of Wooldridge Square. Better conditions, which include wider walks, more street trees, and new street furniture, frame the Square and welcome pedestrians traveling through downtown.

The existing vendor pad area in Wooldridge Square's northwest corner is expanded to make the most of the flat, shaded area in that part of the site. These improvements will welcome more visitors to one of the most regularly used areas of the Square. Minimal stone steps help accommodate for grade, and a planted buffer softens the edge of the space.

A new path provides all potential visitors a route to the Square with ADA compliant access to the historic bandstand. A modest walk around the bandstand grounds the structure, while also providing connection to the existing historic walk.

Based upon careful grading analysis of the potential impact Great Streets sidewalks would have on the physical and historical character of the Square and potential impact to the critical root zone of existing significant and heritage trees, the new sidewalk alignment "pushes-out" into the right-of-way rather than pushing into the park.

The resulting alignment minimizes park impact but implies modifications to the curbs, gutters, parking arrangement and drive lane striping of 9th Street, 10th Street and San Antonio Street. Guadalupe is modified to create a bike / bus sharrow lane.

Tree plantings around the Square recall Mayor Wooldridge's tree plantings. However, tree spacing and alignment is modified and widened on 9th Street and 10th Street to promote and enhance views of the Square from the courthouse and history center.

- A** Civic Promenade- 18' sidewalk with upgraded paving, vendor/ concession parking zone, parallel parking w/ upgraded paving & modified street tree spacing
- B** Community Space- flat seating area with gravel terrace and shade trees that connects to San Antonio and 10th Street
- C** Perimeter planting with native planting and a stepping stone path
- D** Viewing Wall- 18" stone wall with interpretive signage or way-finding
- E** Corner Walls- 18-24" stone wall with lighting and park naming signage
- F** ADA minimum walk and parking zone with bench and illuminated resting area
- G** ADA perimeter concrete walk with wheelchair lift & interpretive signage at bandstand
- H** Mid block pedestrian crossing with upgraded paving
- I** 18' great street sidewalks with standard great streets tree, furnishings & lighting
- J** ADA accessible parking
- K** Public paid on-street parking
- L** Bike/ bus "sharrow" lane
- M** Rehabilitate the historic walk
- N** Drainage enhancements

-  Street Light
-  Bike Rack
-  Bench
-  Trash Can
-  Cafe Table + Chairs
-  Sharrow Lane
-  Existing Tree
-  Proposed Tree
-  Interpretive Signage
-  Native Planting Bed



Concept B

Concept B builds upon the framework of Concept A.

10th Street is upgraded to a festival street that enables temporary street closure for events and public gatherings. Being the flattest part of the site, this concept promotes events to be adjacent rather than inside the park, hence minimizing event wear and tear in the park. The festival street reinforces connectivity to the courthouse and would be defined by a street section that has a flush condition between the street and the sidewalk that is separated by bollards and planting beds. The street and sidewalk are upgraded with pavers.

A restroom and moon tower complement the space. The restroom is proposed to be located on the courthouse property. The moontower would be reconditioned and repaired from one that is currently in City of Austin storage. Located in the northwest corner of the square, the new moontower would compliment the existing tower on the southeast corner of the park and would ensure a soft, even lighting of the entire square.

Enhanced Great Streets occur on San Antonio, Guadalupe and 9th Streets.

The community gathering layout space at the northwest corner is enhanced and custom wood decks are introduced to preserve and enhance the critical root zone of the significant existing trees. The walk around the base of the bandstand is enhanced, widened and stone introduced, further celebrating the cultural significance of the civic bandstand.

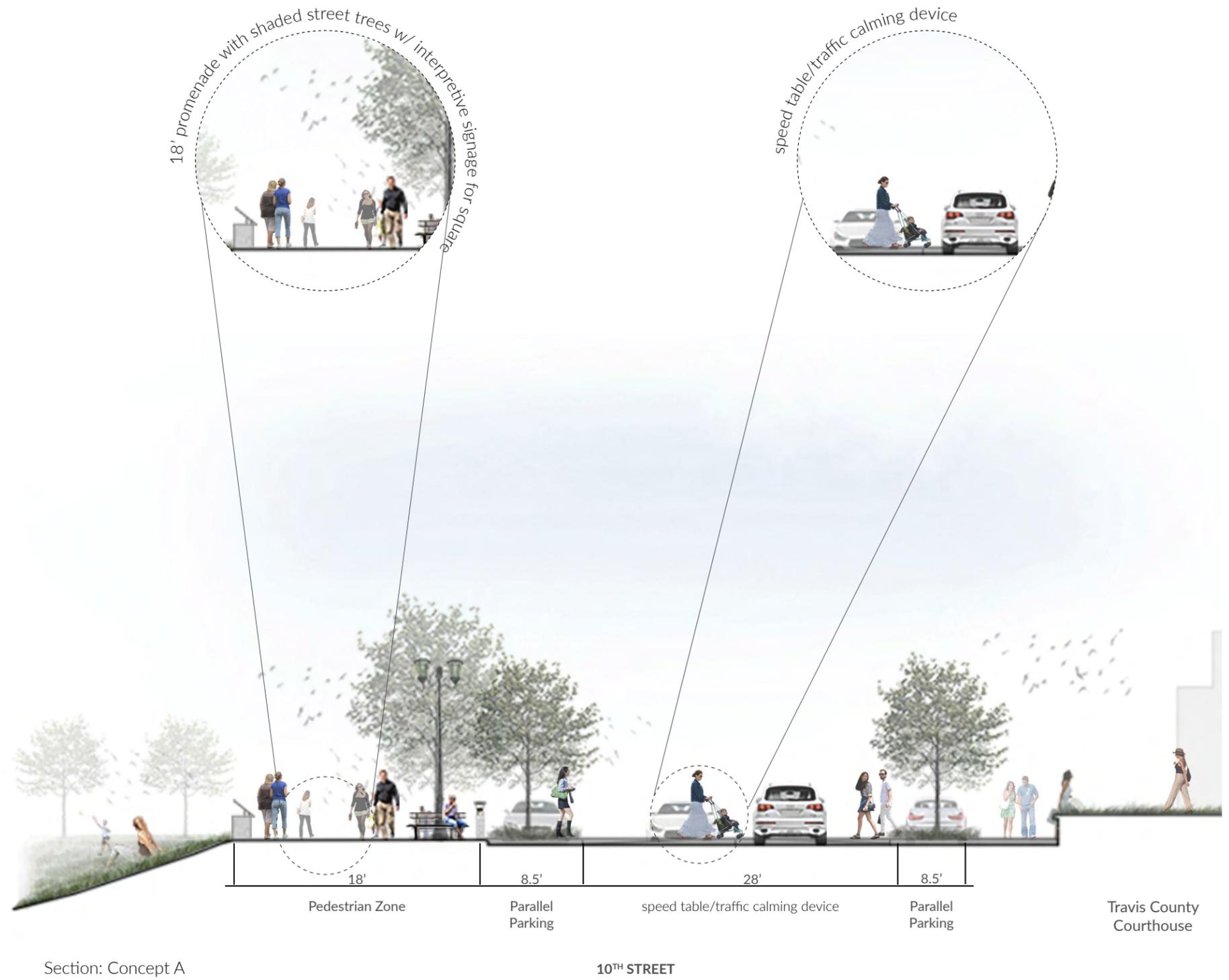
Tree plantings around the Square recall Mayor Wooldridge's tree plantings. However, tree spacing and alignment is modified and widened on 9th Street and 10th Street to promote and enhance views of the Square from the courthouse and history center.

- A** "Festival street typology"- curbless street section with upgraded paving & bollards modified great street sidewalk with upgraded furnishings, plantings & trees
- B** Community Space- flat seating area with gravel terrace and shade trees that connects to San Antonio and 10th Street
- C** Perimeter planting with native planting and a stepping stone path
- D** Viewing wall- 18" stone wall with interpretive signage or way-finding
- E** ADA walk and parking zone with bench and illuminated resting area
- F** Wide perimeter stone walk with wheelchair lift, planting, interactive signage & lighting at the base of the bandstand
- G** Mid block pedestrian crossing with upgraded paving
- H** 18' Great Street sidewalks with standard great streets tree, furnishings & lighting
- I** ADA accessible parking
- J** Public paid on-street parking
- K** Bike / bus "sharrow" lane
- L** Rehabilitate the historic walk
- M** Drainage enhancements
- N** Relocate historic moon tower (from COA storage)
- O** Public restroom
- P** Hydraulic bollards (for event related street desires)
- Q** Custom furnishings
- R** Custom wood decks to preserve & enhance the critical root zones of existing, significant trees within the community event space
- S** Enhanced pedestrian connectivity to Herman Marion Sweatt Courthouse
- T** Enhanced landscape upgrades at the Herman Marion Sweatt Courthouse
- U** Enhanced landscape plantings on festival street

-  Street Light
-  Bike Rack
-  Bench
-  Trash Can
-  Cafe Table + Chairs
-  Sharrow Lane
-  Existing Tree
-  Proposed Tree
-  Interpretive Signage
-  Native Planting Bed

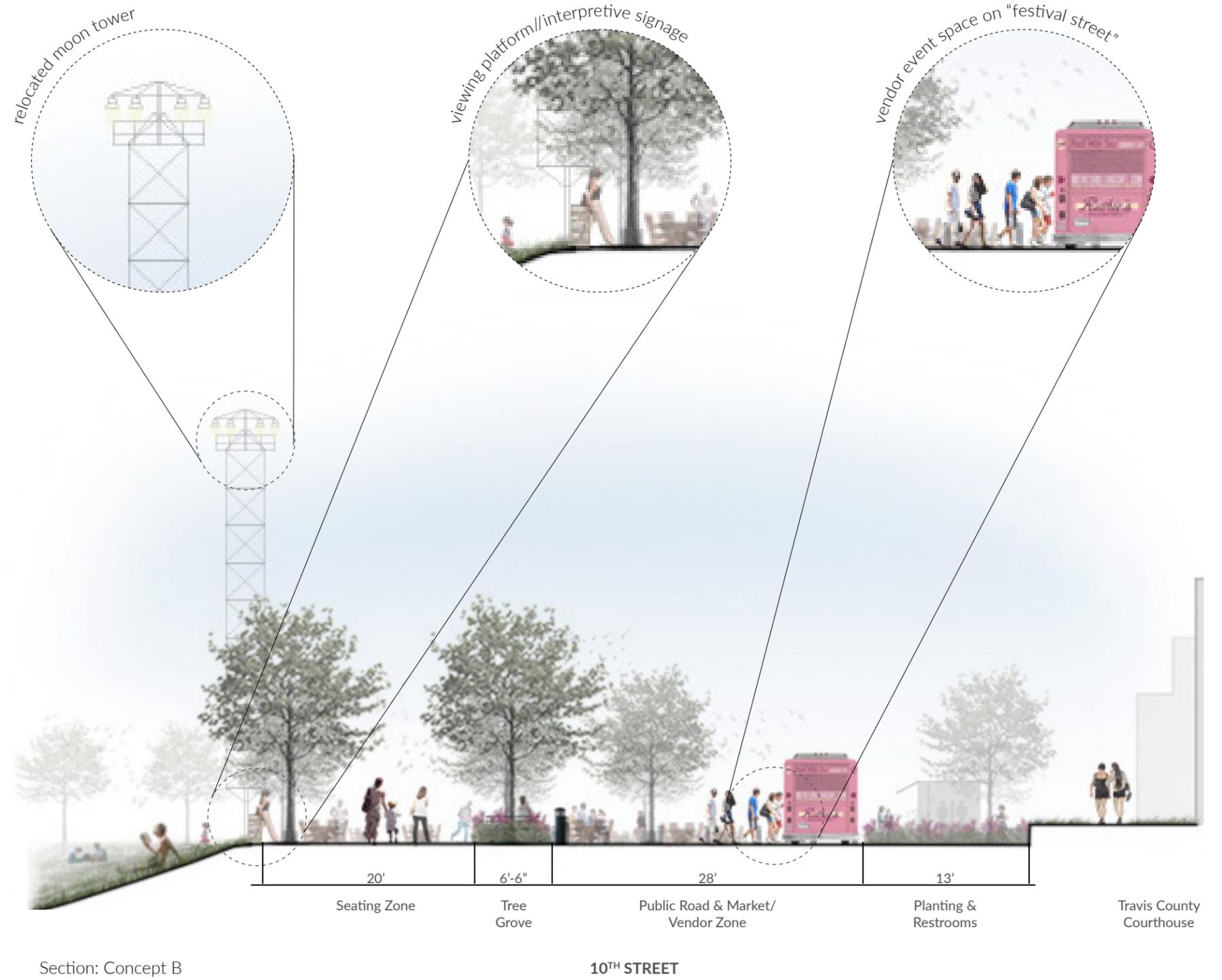


Concept A | 10th Street



Section: Concept A

Concept B | 10th Street

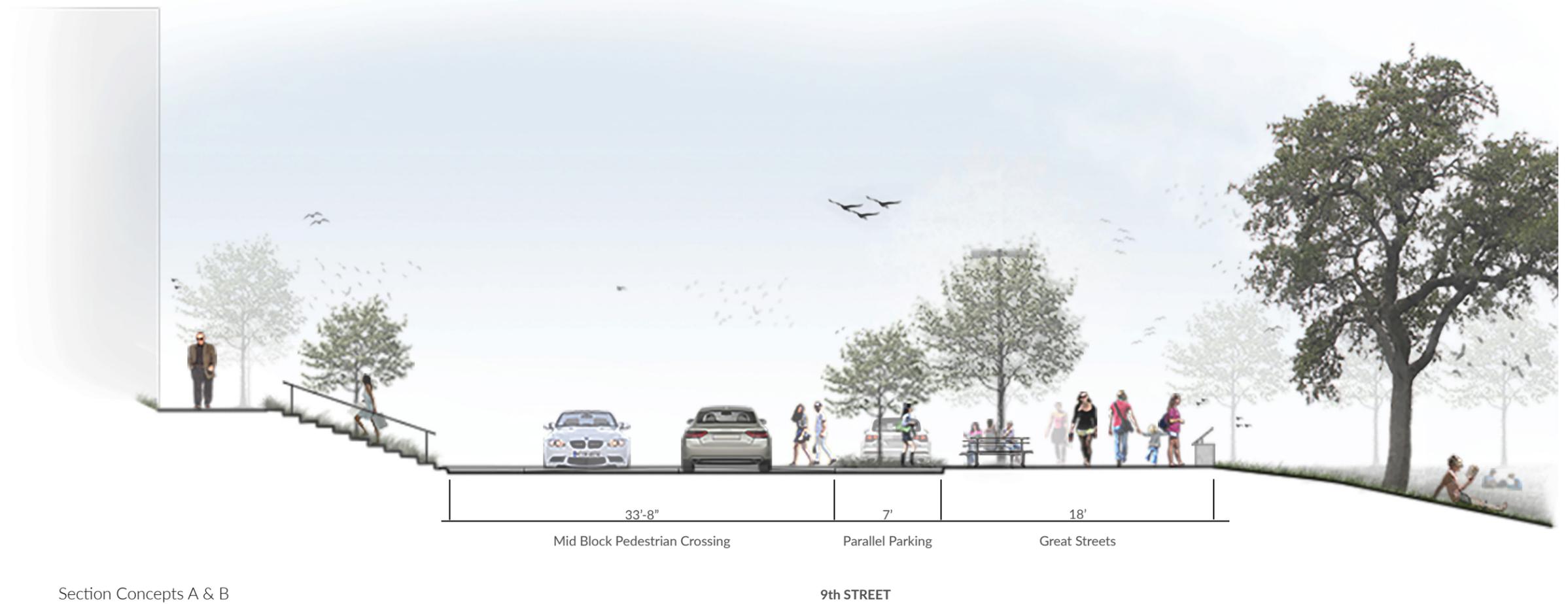


Guadalupe Street



Section Concepts A & B

9th Street



Final Preliminary Plan Concept

The preliminary plan recommends “pushing” Great Streets section out into the right-of-way in lieu of pushing into the Square. This methodology preserves the historic integrity and character of the Square’s grading and avoids significant impact to 6 - 8 heritage trees in the Square. The result of this recommendation impacts the existing curbs, gutters and parking and lane striping around the Square. Overhead utilities along San Antonio would need to be relocated and buried underground. One lane of parallel parking on 9th Street would be lost, however, this plan recommends capturing the parking along San Antonio for public use that is currently reserved for police and Travis County Courthouse vehicles only. The bus and bike lanes on Guadalupe would be converted to a common sharing lane; a procedure common in other parts of the city.

A modified variety of tree-lined Great Streets around the Square are recommended to provide shaded, walkable streets and recall the Period of Historical Significance. The tree plantings should follow recommendations of utilizing continuous trenches with structural soil systems such as proprietary Silva Cells. The preliminary plan recommends the Great Street standard tree, furnishings and lighting configuration on San Antonio and Guadalupe Streets. 9th Street and 10th Street are recommended to follow a modified Great Street typology where material finishes, furnishings, lighting and planters and trees are developed with a custom spacing and hierarchy to acknowledge and enhance the visual and physical connectivity and importance of the courthouse to the north and the history center to the south.

Placing greater emphasis on pedestrian traffic, bicycles and transit seeks to create more interactive streets that provide a safer environment that promotes civic pride for the right-of-way and Wooldridge Square. Lighting should be carefully articulated. This preliminary plan recommends removing excessive post-top lighting throughout the park in lieu of select tree and down-lighting and the addition of a second moon tower in the northwest corner of the park, pulled from City of Austin storage.

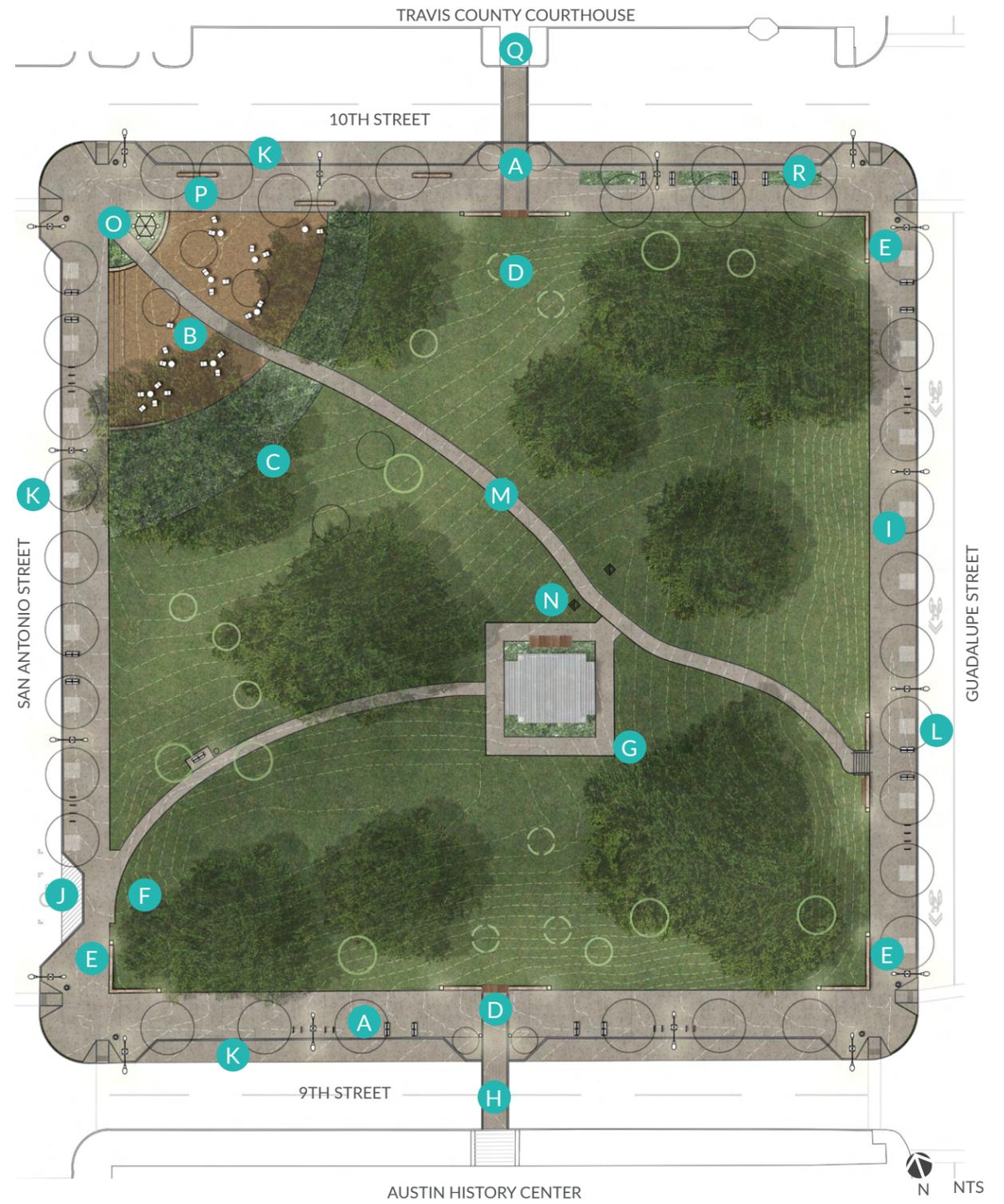
Food vendor parking is recommended to be assigned to the northeast parallel parking spaces on 10th Street. Increasing vendor usability from Guadalupe Street traffic and ensuring flexibility of vendor numbers and frequency of in and out policies during day and night ensures maximum concession flexibility. The community event and gathering space in the northwest corner of the park is recommended to be enlarged, graded flat and appropriate utility infrastructure added (wireless, power, water and more flexible tables and chairs.)

Accessibility to the bandstand is provided. A new van accessible parking space is recommended on the southwest corner that, in combination with a slender walk on the north side of the natural bowl of the square, connects to the historic bandstand.

The Bandstand landing is scaled to appropriately provide circulation around the bandstand in compilation with foundation plantings and an interpretive signage plaque. The materials of the walk and signage should reflect and reference the Period of Historical Significance. Interpretive signage and storytelling is an integral and critical feature of revealing the history and significance of the Square, the surrounding buildings and context within the city, physically and socially.

Grading and drainage is necessary to the rehabilitation of the park, but this plan recommends only performing fine grading and drainage in lieu of major earthworks. Access up to the bandstand should be provided by means of a custom exterior lift. The preliminary plan recommends ongoing tree care, replanting and monitoring of the urban forest canopy in the Square.

PRELIMINARY PLAN



- A** 18' sidewalk with upgraded paving, vendor/ concession parking zone, parallel parking w/ upgraded paving & modified street tree spacing
- B** Community Space- flat seating area with gravel terrace and shade trees that connects to San Antonio and 10th Street
- C** Perimeter planting with native planting and a stepping stone path
- D** Viewing Wall- 18" stone wall with interpretive signage or way-finding
- E** Corner Walls- 18-24" stone wall with lighting and park naming signage
- F** ADA walk and parking zone with bench and illuminated resting area
- G** ADA perimeter concrete walk with wheelchair lift & interpretive signage at bandstand
- H** Mid block pedestrian crossing with upgraded paving
- I** 18' great street sidewalks with standard great streets tree, furnishings & lighting
- J** ADA accessible parking
- K** Public paid on-street parking
- L** Bike/ bus "sharrow" lane
- M** Rehabilitate the historic walk
- N** Drainage enhancements
- O** Relocate historic moon tower (from coa storage)
- P** Custom furnishings
- Q** Enhanced pedestrian connectivity to HMS Courthouse
- R** Enhanced landscape plantings on festival street

-  Street Light
-  Bike Rack
-  Bench
- Trash Can
-  Cafe Table + Chairs
-  Sharrow Lane
-  Existing Tree
-  Proposed Tree
-  Interpretive Signage
-  Native Planting Bed





IMPLEMENTATION

Future Planning Recommendations

It is recognized that the landscape vision for Wooldridge Square cannot be achieved through a preliminary plan alone. The following planning strategies are recommended in addition to the Preliminary Plan to provide the necessary funding, and infrastructure for Wooldridge Square.

FUTURE PLANNING STRATEGIES

This plan recommends:

- Fully fund the design and documentation of the preliminary plan recommendations
- Fully fund and adopt the final plans and designs as the Wooldridge Square Master Plan

Preservation

Future planning and design studies must recognize and respect the historical importance of Wooldridge Square. A light touch is the most appropriate approach to preserving and enhancing Wooldridge Square.

Key Partnerships

Strengthen partnerships with the Friends of Wooldridge Square, Downtown Austin Alliance, Austin Parks Foundation and other key organizations to support event programming and enhanced operations and maintenance. Utilize these strategic partnerships to fully fund the design, documentation and successful construction and rehabilitation of the Square and the surrounding green streets environments.

Sustainable Infrastructure

Continue to invest in infrastructure such as restrooms, interpretive signage, a streamlined permitting process and other infrastructure outlined in the 2014 Ann Graham Report. Invest in infrastructure that exemplifies design excellence. For example, ensure the ADA lift access to the bandstand is a custom solution that does not distract from the visual integrity and historical significance of the structure. When replacing the meandering walk, ensure that the design, color and detailing matches the original design further promoting a successful rehabilitation. Within the right-of-way, invest in tree soil volumetrics and structural soils that promote viable future heritage trees in combination with trees-first utility alignments and relocations.

FOWS Wooldridge Square Cultural District

Expand the proposed district to include other civic and cultural landmarks such as the State Capitol, Old Bakery Park, Brush Square Republic Square and the Buford Tower. Collaborate with the Department of Planning and Zoning, PARD and Urban Forestry to explore ways to incorporate Wooldridge Square and the Downtown Cultural District into the Downtown Austin Way-finding Master Plan, including, for example, the connectivity of Wooldridge Square to Duncan Park and Shoal Creek. This approach should highlight the prioritization of pedestrian and bicycle community, a contiguous urban street tree framework and a program of interpretive way-finding and signage. Collaborate with the Austin Transportation Department and BCycle program to incorporate Wooldridge Square and the Downtown Cultural District into the Austin Bicycle Master Plan.

Programming

Urban parks and squares only thrive and remain viable with regular activity and programming. Through the extensive stakeholder input, this preliminary plan acknowledges how carefully programming in Wooldridge Square must be undertaken. The square should promote the civic gathering nature of the bandstand together with functions such as the symphony and movies that take advantage of the natural amphitheater topography. Consideration of 10th Street for events such as art markets and other public functions should also be evaluated due to its flat topography and also as a way to minimize higher intensity events from being in the Square.

Operations and Maintenance

The Preliminary Plan recommends establishment of an enhanced operations and maintenance plan. Based upon the recent report by ETM Associates, a public space management firm, for Republic Square, Wooldridge Square should have its own custom report that addresses the agronomy, arboriculture, horticulture and park structure's sustainable operations and maintenance. The report should also address the health, safety and welfare of park uses and should be carefully coordinated with adjacent properties such as the history center and courthouse.



Heritage Tree Health

HERITAGE TREE MAINTENANCE

A large percentage of the existing heritage or significant trees in Wooldridge Square are in fair or declining condition. In the last three years, two large trees were removed due to storm damage. Without a very detailed physical and physiological assessment of all of the large trees in the Square, future preservation, enhancement or replacement strategies have no basis or timeline.

A Level 3 Advanced Assessment is recommended for all mature heritage trees in the Square and right-of-way prior to the execution of any landscape improvements. A Level 3 is for advanced risk and includes aerial inspections of branches, a detailed site and target analysis, decay testing, health evaluations, root inspections, storm / wind load analysis, trunk lean measuring, and load testing.

It is recommended that PARD engage a certified arborist, with proven experience, to customize a heritage tree maintenance report. Due to natural decline of species such as pecan and recent history of environmental stress such as the drought, a periodic conditions assessment and heritage tree maintenance program is recommended to identify and treat at-risk trees.

FUTURE FOREST STRATEGY

This preliminary plan recommends the following to ensure long-term tree health at Wooldridge Square. Seeds are collected and grown from existing heritage trees in the Square, this preserving the genetic uniqueness.

- Ongoing integrated pest management (IPM) strategy to reduce the dependency on noxious herbicide and pesticide chemicals in the Square.
- Enhanced root care to increase soil structure, less compaction, fibrous root growth and increased soil-biologic function.
- An annual program of mulching and tree watering - particularly in periods of extended drought.
- Tree replacement and planting.

CARA ILLINOINESIS PECAN



QUERCUS STELLATA POST OAK



ULMUS CRASSIFOLIA CEDAR ELM



Key Partnerships

Without additional allocation of operations and maintenance revenue, Wooldridge Square is not sustainable. By using Republic Square as a model, Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) should diversify the ongoing revenue stream for Wooldridge Square.

In order to continue the long-term success and stewardship of Wooldridge Square, this Preliminary Plan recommends a public, public partnership to be formed. This PPP should leverage the trust, leadership and knowledge of the Friends of Wooldridge Square (FOWS) together with the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) and the Austin Parks Foundation (APF) to be a true partner with the City of Austin and PARD.

A conservancy model of stewardship will ensure appropriate access to capital through grants, bonds applications, fundraising, philanthropy and concessions revenue generation.

A conservancy model can increase operations and maintenance, enhance strategic enhancements, target programming at a higher level than PARD can offer.



- Organizations
- PARD
 - FOWS
 - THC/HLC
 - Austin History Center
 - DAA
 - APF
 - Travis County
 - Department of Public Works





APPENDIX

ITEM 1	Preliminary Plan Cost Estimate
ITEM 2	Preliminary Plan Accessibility Review
ITEM 3	Stakeholder Feedback
ITEM 4	Downtown Austin Alliance Program Report
ITEM 5	National Registry Summary
ITEM 6	Wooldridge Tree Assessment