10 MINUTE WALK CAMPAIGN & URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

NATIONAL STUDY VISIT: MEMPHIS

JANUARY 29-31, 2020
Urban Land Institute

MISSION
Provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide

MEMBERSHIP
Over 46,000 members globally, comprised of land use professionals (developers, designers, financial services, public sector)
10 Minute Walk

A partnership with ULI, The Trust for Public Land, and the National Recreation and Park Association

Promotes the bold idea that all people in urban America should live within a 10-minute walk to a high-quality park

Endorsed by nearly 300 U.S. mayors
Benefits of Parks

- Community Connection
- Health
- Equity and Inclusion
- Community Engagement
- Environmental Sustainability
- Equitable Economic Development
Study Area & Vicinity

- Downtown
- Robert Church Park
- South City
- Crump
- Walker
- McLemore
- LeMoyne-Owen
- Stax
- S Third
- South Parkway
- Martin Luther King Park
Study Questions

DEFINE THE ROLE OF PARKS IN SOUTH MEMPHIS

What is the role of parks in fostering health, community development, and economic opportunity?

How might a connected network of parks benefit the South Memphis community?

What are relevant strategies to maintain, operate, and program neighborhood parks that are cost-effective and community-serving?
National Study Visit Process

- Briefing materials
- Tour of the study area
- Stakeholder interviews
- Develop actionable recommendations
- Public presentation
- Written report to city of Memphis
Expert Panelists

James Lima - Chair
President, James Lima Planning + Development
New York, New York

Marcel C. Acosta
Executive Director, National Capital Planning Commission
Washington, D.C.

Daniel Betts
Director of Recreation, Cincinnati Recreation Commission
Cincinnati, Ohio

Ray Brown
President, Ray Brown Urban Design
Memphis, Tennessee

Ryan Cambridge
Planning Practice Leader, Browning Day
Indianapolis, Indiana

Nan Rohrer
President, Midtown Community Benefits District
Baltimore, Maryland

Brian Smith
Senior Economic Development Coordinator, City of Durham
Durham, North Carolina

Beth White
President and CEO, Houston Parks Board
Houston, Texas
First Impressions

STRENGTHS

- Good “bones”
- Largely intact street grid
- Adjacency of neighborhood to the River, MLK Park, Stacksville, and Downtown core
- Multiple parks in a small area
- Closely-knit community who want to help
- Lots of “community assets” (schools, places of worship, etc)
- Generally good level of maintenance of existing, activated park sites
First Impressions

CHALLENGES

- Loss of population (high-levels of vacancy)
- Limited visibility into some of the existing parks
- Lack of tangible community “brand” or identity
- High rates of crime and poverty
- Health disparities; lack of access to healthy food
- Widespread private property disinvestment affects parks
- Neighborhood parks not seen as economic development priority
City Policies and Priorities

- Memphis 3.0 Guiding Values
  - Memphis is a city that VALUES LAND AS AN ASSET
  - Memphis is a city of CONNECTED COMMUNITIES
  - Memphis is a city of EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY
- Memphis 3.0: “Build Up, Not Out”
- Public safety is a policy priority for city administration
- Parks master plan should leverage Memphis 3.0
- Equitable economic development
What We Heard

- Memphis has momentum
- Frustrations with lack of park policing and lighting
- Opportunities for volunteerism and park ambassadors/youth programs
- Equality vs. equity in priorities/budget
- Change culture to prioritize community engagement
- Best parks are not city-operated parks
- Residents don’t feel heard by the city
Select Findings

- Hold on to public parks
- Parks should be networked through connective green streets
- Peer cities place greater emphasis on parks in economic strategy
- Many opportunities exist to strengthen community, even during weak market
- Opportunity to tell the story of the value of parks
- Parks division and community development colleagues can amplify impact through partnerships
Recommendations:
Community Development
Community Development

Continue neighborhood stabilization efforts

- During down market period, continue to dedicate city resources for stabilizing municipal service delivery:
  - Public safety, sanitation, code enforcement, and parks maintenance
Community Development

Create “shovel-ready” parcels

- Encourage redevelopment by eliminating barriers caused by:
  - Policy
  - Lack of information/data
  - Finance
  - Title issues
Embrace comprehensive community development planning

- Cross-agency community planning and neighborhood conversations regarding parks and open space
- Inform development of a small area plan for District 6
- Identify convener of Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and other institutions to drive positive change
Community Development

Catalyze reinvestment

- Identify opportunities to match available redevelopment properties with developer/investor partners and available incentives
- Provide gap financing to incentivize a critical mass of new housing development at high-impact locations such as near Southside Park (and perhaps Gaston)
- Replicate successes for low-rise new construction and rehabilitation in emerging neighborhoods elsewhere in Memphis
Community Development

Link existing parks and cultural assets together via a network of pedestrian-friendly, “complete streets”

- A network of connected green streets and parks
- “1+1=3” Prioritize streetscape enhancements to form public realm connections including:
  - S. Parkway
  - Third Street
  - Walker Avenue
- Transportation access to-from jobs
- Alignment with the Transit Master Plan and The Big Jump Project
Connect to existing regional assets

- Strengthen South Memphis neighborhood connections with other economic, social, cultural assets including:
  - Riverfront
  - Downtown
  - MLK Park
  - LeMoyne-Owen College
  - Stax Academy – Soulsville Neighborhood
Community Development

Build from strength

- Proximity to parks generates real estate value premiums; prioritize development opportunities surrounding neighborhood parks
- Recognize business development opportunities:
  - Non-residential uses near parks, including potential for urban agricultural
- New neighborhood job creation
- Need champion to advance job growth/training
Community Development

Key Findings

In 2015 alone, America's local public park and recreation agencies generated more than $154 billion in economic activity and their operations and capital spending supported more than 1.1 million jobs.

National Recreation & Park Association

Parks Matter

Benefits of Urban Parks

City parks provide access to recreational opportunities, increase property values, spur local economies, combat crime, and protect cities from environmental impact.

The City Parks Alliance

Spending time in nature—days, hours, or just a few minutes—enriches our lives. It makes us feel rejuvenated. Healthier. Happier.

The Trust for Public Land
Community Development

Make parks integral to the City’s economic development strategy

- Plan and fund parks as critical infrastructure
- Align parks needs/priorities with other priority agency initiatives
- Quantify the multiple benefits of your parks system to determine Return On Investment (ROI)
Community Development
Creating equitable opportunities to support small business development in South Memphis

- **Access to Real Estate Opportunities**
  - Work closer together with land banks for delinquent tax properties
  - Increase micro retail opportunities adjacent to parks

- **Access to Financing**
  - Increase microlending opportunities through Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)
Community Development
Creating equitable opportunities to support small business development in South Memphis

- Inclusive Procurement Opportunities
  - Leverage Memphis Medical District and others to support minority and women owned businesses (MWBEs)

- Technical Assistance
  - Encourage cohort-based trainings

- Area Workforce Development
  - Encourage public/private youth employment programs
  - Partner with Epicenter to focus on South Memphis district
Recommendations: Making It Work
Making it Work

- Community Engagement
- Strategic Partnerships
- Facilities & Maintenance
- Finance & Resources
Community Engagement

• Build on Memphis 3.0 success
• Leverage Park Master Plan process to reframe parks as an economic driver
• Redesign recreation facilities to accommodate programs for multigenerational and multifunctional purposes
• Explore how other cities have established “Friends of Parks” groups and local parks advisory councils
• Reestablish partnerships with police, police presence in community centers, police athletic leagues

*Case study: Denver Park*
Community Engagement

- Develop program for Park Ambassadors and potential employment as Park Stewards
- Conduct intensive and collaborative social service program outreach to those in need that spend time at the park.
- Engage area faith-based community for both programmatic and maintenance activities at the parks.
Strategic Partnerships

- Equitable parks stewardship
- Encourage citywide arts and cultural community in parks programming.
  - Engage community in creating art in parks
    - installations/events
  - Playful/joyful Installations in partnership
    - Underpass
Strategic Partnerships

- Establish a formalized volunteer program in partnership with area businesses and institutions to address maintenance and programming of area parks and civic spaces.
- Encourage Corporate/Org Partnerships/Fundraising
  - Sports Franchises
  - Universities
- Serve senior community
  - AARP
- Explore partnership opportunities with medical institutions
Strategic Partnerships

When you invest in parks, you WIN in HEALTH!

In June, all donations to Houston Parks Board will be MATCHED, dollar for dollar, up to $15,000 thanks to our partners in health.

MEMORIAL HERMANN
Facilities and Maintenance

- Push your partners (e.g. Knowledge Quest) to do more programming at your facilities and expand number of partners
- Develop and improve maintenance/cleaning standards
- Redesign recreation facilities to accommodate programs for multigenerational and multifunctional purposes
- Remove and/or replace things that are no longer being used in parks (e.g., cage in Gaston Park without a ball diamond)
Facilities and Maintenance

- Consider modifying the dawn to dusk policy; incorporate lighting as part of overall neighborhood public safety
- Incorporate small parks as part of a regional network. Develop loop trails within parks and connect to regional trails
- “Broken Windows” – remove real and perceived barriers to entry into parks and community center
- Assess current park assets to meet needs of the community (need better data, etc.)
- Consider “right sizing” the assets and conduct an audit of the full parks inventory
Finances and Resources

- Equality of resource distribution does not equal equitable distribution
- Better document capital needs, what would it take to bring things to a good state of repair and how would you prioritize?
- Develop formal, strategic partnerships (agreements with libraries, schools, police) and smaller neighborhood groups to leverage your limited resources
- Review fee matrix/cost recovery for the entire system (rec center, fields, permits, etc)
Consider purchasing or land banking vacant properties

Consider dedicated funding source (reduce reliance on general funds…shared parking, tower location)

Explore impact fees/development fees/transfer of title fees or other dedicated sources

Tax levy referendum
Getting To Yes

• Focus on place-based improvements to foster community (short-term “wins”)
• Incorporate public art
• Pop-up art and events
• Painted sidewalks and crosswalks
• Music/movies in the park
• Food trucks
• Youth and community engagement
• Fund via corporate/civic partnerships
• Friendly competition with peer cities
Thank you

Questions and Comments

"Spiral Rising"
Stainless Steel
2015
Yvonne Bobo
yvonnebobostudio.com

The wind animates this sculpture, dramatically changing the composition as it glides around its center. This spiral appears to be climbing upward toward an unspoken goal—never tiring. "Spiral Rising" captures the spirit of a community rebuilding and growing, rising and recreating itself. The foundation of the sculpture is enveloped in a map of this neighborhood reminding us that it the people who have inspired and made this work of art possible.