Seaport Public Green:
An Analysis of Use & Redesign

Lara Seltzer
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Abstract

The quality of public open space in Boston's Seaport District is not great, as evidenced by the oversaturation of empty, underutilized lawns and residents' feelings that there is still a lack of public open space in the District, despite all the lawns. This Master's Project asked how the quality of public open space could be improved in the District, and specifically focused on one lawn in particular that possesses great potential to be an active space and contribute to the District overall. I used interviews with practitioners, and conducted a site analysis of Seaport Public Green to understand the shortcomings of the existing design.

Through this process, I found that Seaport Public Green is underutilized because of its lack of true connection to the Boston Harbor, its presentation as uninviting and as a foreground to the surrounding architecture, and its inability to provide a unique and exciting experience for users. My proposed redesign of Seaport Public Green addresses these shortcomings by enhancing the sightline of the Boston Harbor, adding stormwater management components to the park, taking measures, including leveling the lawn to meet the sidewalk at ground level, to connect the park to its surroundings, and by creating a marshy wet pond and kiosk that provides a unique experience to engage with nature and the history of the District.

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Introduction & Background

Boston's approach to revitalizing the Seaport District has been a-typical and is characterized by a market driven development focus and a lack of comprehensive plans. This approach has had significant implications for both the process and the product of the built environment in the Seaport. There are 16 public open spaces in the Seaport District, 14 of which are lawns with some hardscaping (Boston Planning & Development Agency). The Seaport is oversaturated with parks and yet residents still feel like there is a lack of public open space in the District. This is likely a result of the design of these spaces.

The Seaport Public Green is located in the heart of the Seaport, directly next to some of the most utilized spaces in the District. Seaport Public Green will ultimately be connected to a major development called Seaport Square, a development which has the potential to ultimately give the District a true community feel. Given these conditions, Seaport Public Green should be a well activated, highly utilized space, but in reality, it is the exact opposite. This Master's Project will analyze why that is the case. What makes a public open space, specifically in Boston where weather places limitations on outdoor spaces, well activated and highly utilized? What do good design practices look like for public open spaces? Why is the Seaport Public Green an underutilized space? This project will examine what makes public open spaces well utilized, highly activated, beloved spaces that provide an identity to surrounding areas. The findings of this examination guided me in creating a redesign of the Seaport Public Green.

Images:

Top: Figure 1 - Seaport Public Green

Middle (Left to Right): Figure 2 - View of Seaport Public Green and surrounding buildings from waterfront; Figure 3 - View from Seaport Public Green towards waterfront.

Bottom (Left to Right): Figure 4 - Public art in the neighboring, well-utilized Seaport Common; Figure 5 - People walking through Seaport Common.

Background on Boston's Seaport District

Boston's Seaport District, located near South Boston along the Boston Harbor, has become a booming neighborhood directly adjacent to the downtown. In January of 2015, Entrepreneur magazine stated that Boston was the top destination for venture capital investments in the U.S. after San Francisco (Rodriguez). This, in addition to Boston's concentration of higher education institutions and research facilities, has contributed to Boston's ability to promote the robust economic growth in the Seaport. The Seaport's reputation as a thriving neighborhood, however, is a recent development.

The Seaport District is 1,000 acres of land located directly on the Boston Harbor, adjacent to South Boston and the Financial District (Figure 6) (Hoban, 2018). The rough bounds of the Seaport, as can be seen in Figure 7, are the Fort Point Channel, West First Street, East First Street, and the Boston Harbor. In addition, the Seaport District is close to Logan Airport, is convenient to reach via public transit, and has good access to Interstate 93 and the Massachusetts Turnpike (Hoban, 2018).

Like much of Boston's current land mass, the Seaport District was originally a muddy wetlands adjacent to Boston Harbor. The region was not a usable land mass until 1869, when the state legislature voted to spend $5 million (today about $97 million) in government bonds to subsidize railroad companies to fill the clam flats and build wharves in the area (The Spotlight Team, 2017). The result of the infill was a sprawling railroad yard that passed mostly coal between ocean liners and freight trains to Hartford, New Haven, New York, and Philadelphia (The Spotlight Team, 2017).

By the early 20th Century, the Seaport was a thriving shipping area. It had become a hub of industrial development as it was home to rail yards and manufacturing companies for the working ports (Rodriguez). Boston's entire local economy truly revolved around the wharves and its shipping, manufacturing, and fish industries (Figure 8).

Similar to many harborfront districts in cities across the country, the Seaport District began to decline in the 1950s, with the construction of the Central Artery effectively cutting the District off from the rest of Boston, and the economy's general shift away from shipping (Figures 9 & 10). By the 1960s, the area was characterized by vast surface parking lots, abandoned warehouses, and rotting wharfs (Figure 11). Beginning in the 1990s, efforts were made by the City of Boston and private entities to revitalize the Seaport; however, the District remained largely devoid of activity. The revitalization effort that was launched in 2010 has set out to change the Seaport. As an Urban Designer at a local Boston firm said, "Everyone had been looking at the Seaport for the last 30, 40

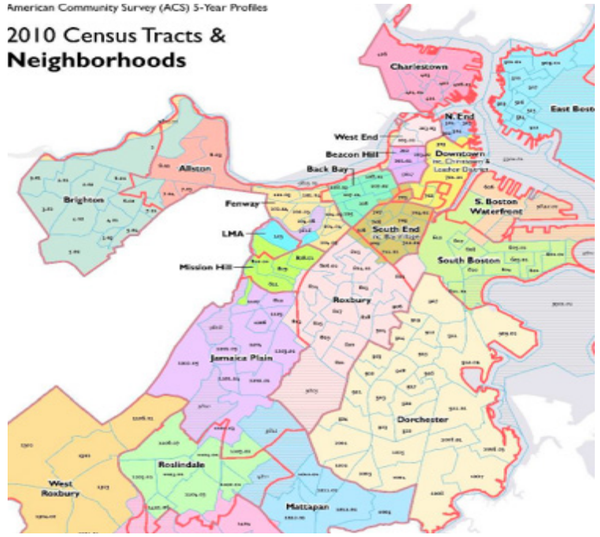


Figure 6: Map of Boston Districts - Seaport as S. Boston Waterfront.

Figure 7: Map of the Seaport District.

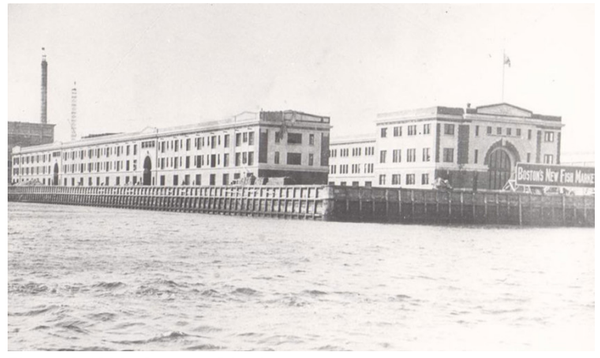


Figure 8: 1920s Seaport District.

Figure 9: Boston's Central Artery.

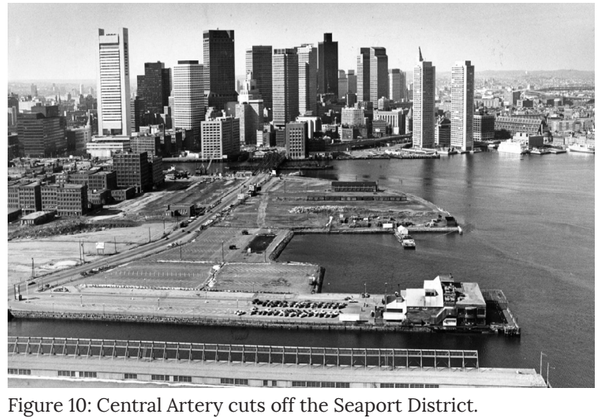


Figure 10: Central Artery cuts off the Seaport District.

Figure 11: Parking lots in the Seaport District.

years waiting for it to finally happen."[1]

Boston now has the largest clustering of biotech firms in America and in the world, and the Seaport has become an epicenter for this clustering. No one ever imagined that the Seaport could be revitalized into a district that has had such an impact on the City of Boston. Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) Director Brian Golden reflected that the development has had "a profound effect so quickly…[It] has yielded so much in so short a period of time…We're the oldest significant city in America… [and] for us to sort of harmonize the old and traditional with contemporary economic activity is really profound."[2] As a result of the revitalization effort, the Seaport has become an incredibly vibrant neighborhood, that is only continuing to grow. According to Yanni Tsipis of WS Development, new players are coming to the Seaport that "would never have come to Boston were it not for that kind of lifestyle and context and amenities… that the Seaport offers. They're all flocking to the Seaport because of what's going on and wouldn't have otherwise. This is all good for the city as far as its economic base."[3] A major component of the revitalization effort and the new developments that have drawn people to the Seaport have been the public open spaces (Figure 12).

The Seaport's Public Open Space

The majority of the parcels in the Seaport District were historically, and are currently, privately owned. A lot of the parcel lots and buildings in the Seaport have been flipped, meaning one developer sells the lot to a developer who builds and then flips to somebody else to manage and run. This has not necessarily been great for the community because the developer has little investment in the area. Many developers, according to Yanni Tsipis, the Senior Vice President of Seaport Development at WS Development:

> "would rather build a large lawn that satisfies their open space requirement and then sell the property, as in the case of Fan Pier. That does not necessarily lead to the same level of focus on the quality of the public realm. This is especially so when public art, programming, and active edges, which are absent in this case, are the amenities that actually make public open spaces work really well for people and add value to the community."[4]

This behavior has led to a lack of a neighborhood feel in the Seaport, with buildings that have very little relationship to the space and to each other (Figure 13). Street level amenities on many of these buildings are also lacking because of developer's disinterest in creating a community and their larger focus on creating a personal economic profit.

Much of the criticism about the revitalization of the Seaport District has also been about the lack of public space, which directly relates to the developer mentality just discussed. What has further complicated the issue, is that Boston

Figure 12: Vibrancy in the Seaport District and its public open spaces.


Figure 13: Lack of relationships between spaces in the Seaport and around Seaport Public Green.

has not been clear about what they want out of the public spaces in the Seaport (Ramos, 2017). The informal nature of the relationship between the City, the BPDA, the developers, and community members has likely led to this lack of clarity.

The situation in the Seaport, though, is not dire. Seaport Public Green, Fan Pier Park, Seaport Common, the Fallen Heroes Memorial, the Harborwalk, and when completed, the Harbor Way and Harbor Square Park are large public open spaces. The question ultimately becomes who the public space is for and how is it balancing out the office towers (Ramos, 2017). This is where the existing public spaces have come under fire for being overly hardscaped and not always feeling like they are the public domain. For example, Fan Pier Park and the other green spaces along Fan Pier do not feel very inviting to the public. Even though these spaces have been designated by Boston to be public space in perpetuity, they do not feel welcoming (Figure 14) and open to the public (Leung, 2017, A last chance). When walking beside these green spaces it is unclear if they belong to the residents of Fan Pier or to the public.

Larry DiCara, a retired Real Estate Attorney and longtime expert and resident of Boston, also pointed out that there are no basketball courts or fields in the Seaport. DiCara believes this says to the public "'don't come here if you have kids' and we are a 'nation of yuppys with puppies'."[5] There was some hope that WS Development would incorporate such an amenity into their new design for Seaport Square and when they did not, it became a point of contention for the project. WS Development, though, never had the intention of incorporating a basketball court or a soccer field into their design of Harbor Square Park (in Seaport Square) because, as the anonymous Urban Designer says, "this isn't the right place for community rec, it's not an active sports area. This is more of a pedestrian area because it's going to be surrounded by shops."[6] WS Development did recognize that their initial proposal was not meeting the needs or wants of the community and redesigned the Harbor Way and Harbor Square Park. The Urban Designer further explains that:

> "people wanted it to be more green, so then it turned into more of a lawn. They wanted it to be more kid friendly... [It's] much more natural soft green in that area [now], so that was a big change. It was originally going to be like super chique, flat, like for fashion shows and people just wanted it to be much more kid friendly." [7]

These qualities, rather than sports fields and courts, make for a public open space that is likely to be highly utilized and a better reflection of the growing resident population in the Seaport.

Figure 14: Welcoming park on the public Fan Pier? With no pets allowed.

Another major component of public open space in the Seaport District is the public's access to the water's edge. Chapter 91 of the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act is the primary tool for the protection and promotion of the public use of Massachusetts' tidelands and waterways (Chapter 91). Jill Horwood, the Director of Policy at Boston Harbor Now, described Chapter 91 as "the teeth that we have to push back on private development."[8] The key components to Chapter 91 are that it:

1. Regulates activities on coastal and inland waterways, including construction
2. Preserves pedestrian access along the water's edge for fishing, fowling, and navigation
3. In return for permission to develop non-water dependent projects on Commonwealth tidelands, developers must provide facilities to enhance public use and enjoyment of the water
4. Seeks to protect and extend public strolling rights, as well as public navigation rights (Chapter 91)

"The core principle that the tidelands are a public trust and that private interest must be subordinate to the public interest" has ensured that private developers along the waterfront are only given a limited license and required, by law, to designate at least 50% of their building footprint for the public realm (Chapter 91). The result is an ultimate insurance that people will have access to the water's edge.

The revitalization of the Seaport has been conducted entirely within the purview of Chapter 91, but the actual implementation of Chapter 91's requirements in the Seaport have not always been smooth. A mismatch of parks, plazas, and piers that are disconnected from one another, and often don't feel very welcoming to the public are what Chapter 91 has manifested into in the District (Figure 15) (Logan, 2019). Deanna Moran, the Director of Environmental Planning at the Conservation Law Foundation, said "developers see Chapter 91 as an obligation, instead of an opportunity. They just fit it to meet their predeveloped plan" (Logan, 2019). This echoes what Tsipis acknowledged as developers' interest in their own personal gains over creating a District that belongs to the community.

Chapter 91's requirement that buildings are to be set back from the waterfront, 10 to 12 feet, has also resulted in Boston's Harborwalk.[9] The Harborwalk is a 43-mile-long linear park that runs along the Boston Harbor. According to Jill Horwood:

> "it was through the partnership with the City of Boston, through the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection... and community advocates and organizations and nonprofits, like Boston Harbor Now, that through our advocacy we've been able to push the notion and brand the Harborwalk as a public access way."[10]

The BPDA owns the Harborwalk brand, but it is the responsibility of the property owner to maintain, care for, and ensure that there is public access as a requirement of Chapter 91, as the public legally has rights to the waterfront.[11] The Seaport is the newest addition to the Harborwalk and has been a critical part of the revitalization of the District. The Harborwalk has ensured that, in accordance with the Seaport Public Realm Plan, revitalization promotes access to the Boston Harbor. Jill Horwood reflected on how the revitalization of the Seaport provided "an opportunity to have a second chance at creating a waterfront that was inviting, because Boston is such an old city and already had neighborhoods that were pretty well established along the waterfront."[12] While the result has not been perfect and there is much to improve upon, the Seaport's Harborwalk has become a shining beacon of the success of the Harborwalk overall. (See Figures 16,17, 18).

Figure 15: Disconnected and unwelcoming parks as a result of Chapter 91.


Figures 16: Harborwalk beside Legal Harborside restaurant in the Seaport District.


Figures 17: Harborwalk beside the Moakley United States Federal Courthouse and Fan Pier Parks in the Seaport District.


Figures 18: Harborwalk along the Fort Point Channel beside the Children's Museum in the Seaport District.

Background & Description of Existing Seaport Public Green

Seaport Public Green is a 1.5 acre park in the heart of the Seaport District. The park is located on Fan Pier, an area known for its incredible views of the Boston Harbor and downtown Boston (Figure 19). Additionally, Seaport Public Green is on the corner of Northern Avenue and Marina Park Drive, and directly adjacent to neighboring, popular park Seaport Common and popular innovation center District Hall. The park's main "entrance" is located along Northern Avenue, and the road parallel and directly over is Seaport Boulevard, the main thoroughfare in the District. There is also great variety of restaurants along Northern Avenue and Seaport Boulevard, all within a short walking distance of Seaport Public Green. Wide sidewalks, and painted and signalized crosswalks along both roads, as well as bike lanes on Seaport Boulevard, make accessing the park not in a vehicle an easy and safe task. Additionally, two public bus stops and the "Courthouse" stop on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) Silver Line are all less than a five minute walk from the park (Figure 20). The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), which attracts a great number of visitors, is also an immediate neighbor of the park (Figure 21). Maybe most importantly, the northern edge of Seaport Public Green abuts the Harborwalk and an active marina in the Boston Harbor (Figure 22). MBTA ferry service between the Seaport District and major Boston train hub, North Station, docks at this marina, providing a whole variety of transit riders and Greater Boston area residents with access to the park. Given all of these factors, Seaport Public Green is in an ideal location and should be highly activated.

Seaport Public Green was designed by Richard Burck Associates (RBA), a local landscape architecture firm, on behalf of the Fallon Company as part of their Fan Pier development project. The Fan Pier project was a 3 million square foot mixed-use development directly along the Boston Harbor in the Seaport District, and was one of the first developments in the Seaport since the revitalization effort of the District began in the early 2000s. Fallon Company was required to comply with their Planned Development Area agreement and Chapter 91, which included the allocation of public open space with direct access to the water's edge for the public. The result of this was Seaport Public Green. When RBA was brought in, the plot was an empty parking lot that poorly dealt with stormwater and was assailed by the sun and wind (Holmes, 2014). Thus the intention of the project became to "transform Fan Pier into a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly destination" (Holmes, 2014).

Figure 19: Seaport Public Green location in Fan Pier.

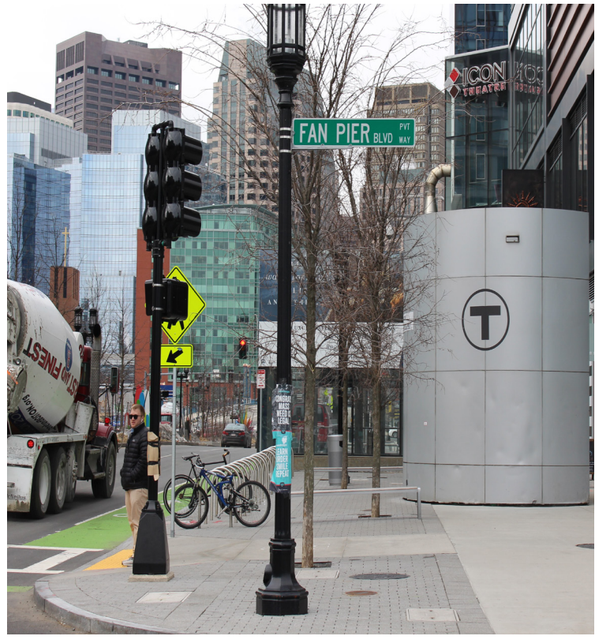


Figure 20: Bike lanes and MBTA Silver Line stop near Seaport Public Green.

Figure 21: ICA beside Seaport Public Green.

Figure 22: Marina and Harborwalk at Seaport Public Green.

RBA envisioned Seaport Public Green as a "democratic" open space (Figure 23) (Richard Burck Associates). The park design was influenced by research into the site's natural components, such as views and wind and sun exposures, as well as surrounding social conditions (Richard Burck Associates). To take advantage of each of those components, RBA designed the park to have multiple elements. These include a sloped lawn, a bordering elevated hardscaped area, and a variety of plantings. Richard Burck, the Founder & Principal at Richard Burck Associates, said that their thought process was mostly about "just working with those very simple basic components and figuring out how to organize them and grade them correctly so they'd be most effective."[13]

In their official brochure for Seaport Public Green, RBA describes the lawn as "elevated to create seat-walls at its northern edge" for ample seating and viewing space (Richard Burck Associates). Richard Burck said they also wanted the lawn to be accessible, but wanted "to make it bothersome enough to step up and down, so that you go around it and not cross it like a quad."[14] The elevation and subtle terracing were also done to provide views of the Boston Harbor. RBA intended their design to allow for the lawn to function on a variety of scales, structured or unstructured uses, and host a multiplicity of events during both day and night (Richard Burck Associates). According to the Holmes article, there is a 100-amp power connection behind a concealing panel, so that the lawn can accommodate programming, like concerts, movie nights, exhibitions, etc. (Holmes, 2014). RBA also looked at the surrounding parks and what their programing was so they could understand what was being offered in the vicinity of Seaport Public Green and create a park they felt was not repetitive of existing spaces.[15] When speaking with Richard Burck, he said "there isn't a whole lot of just simple open space in that area at all," so they wanted to incorporate a simple lawn with space for people to lie in the grass and play recreational sports into their design.[16]

An interesting component of the lawn is the inclusion of five steps that stretch the width of the lawn at the southern edge along Northern Avenue (Figures 24 & 25). These five steps were the result of RBA playing with different ideas of how the park should meet the sidewalk. Richard Burck said they thought it might be an interesting way to meet the sidewalk and "might be an inviting gesture to think of it as a grand terrace approach."[17] These steps rise up to about a 30 inch height and are illuminated at night.

Figure 23: Seaport Public Green existing conditions - a "democratic" space.

Figure 24: Seaport Public Green, existing conditions with steps meeting the sidewalk.

Figure 25: Seaport Public Green, existing conditions with five steps.

The elevated hardscaped portion of the park is described by RBA as:

> "the main pedestrian walk, an expansive wooden deck, leads park users to the water's edge and continues onto the Harborwalk. Moveable chairs and tables under a canopy of deciduous trees provide a casual gathering location, with sculptural elements sharing a portion of the deck space. This deck can also act as a stage for smaller events with informal seating on the lawn." (Richard Burck Associates). (See Figure 26)

This elevated hardscaped area also borders the sloped lawn and establishes connections between the park and the adjacent buildings and uses (Holmes, 2014). "The wooden deck…brings you up to the elevation of the lawn, and is sort of an extension of Harborwalk, and delivers you back down again at the northern edge," said Burck.[18] The elevation of the hardscaped area was done purely to afford visitors with exceptional views of the Boston Harbor, including being able to see the still operating marina, the public transportation dock, and the commercial and recreational harbor activity (Holmes, 2014). Richard Burck said that in his work any time he is working on a project at the water's edge, he has to consider how he might bring that harborfront experience deeper into that built community.[19] RBA's major goal with Seaport Public Green was to bring that visual connectivity to Boston Harbor further in to the Seaport to engage with the community.[20] Richard Burck said, "in that sense, [Seaport Public Green] is a big picture window. It brings [the Harbor] a block south because its open the entire way" (See Figure 27).[21]

Seaport Public Green's vegetation was intentional. RBA specially selected trees, shrubs and perennials that maximize comfort and visual interest during all four seasons (Figure 28) (Holmes, 2014). The planters are located in certain positions to channel pedestrian routes throughout the site and the uplit Swamp White Oaks are meant to provide a canopy ceiling for the space (Holmes, 2014). Much of the vegetation are in dark granite planters that also serve as seat walls (Figure 29). These planters absorb solar radiation, while also allowing for seating to be comfortable in the cooler fall and spring months (Holmes, 2014). The planters have a water-jet finish and were built on top of custom-designed retaining walls that will prevent shifting over time (Holmes, 2014).

A major element that RBA wanted for Seaport Public Green, was for the park to extend from building-front to building-front. Using paving, RBA created a sidewalk that felt like an extension of both the park and Marina Park Drive, giving equal priority to pedestrian and vehicular movement (Figure 30) (Holmes, 2014). The vibrant paving pattern was also intended to embrace the abutting skyscraper on Marina Park Drive (Holmes, 2014). With this blurring of distinctions between the sidewalk and road, RBA felt they were able to incorporate a much larger zone into

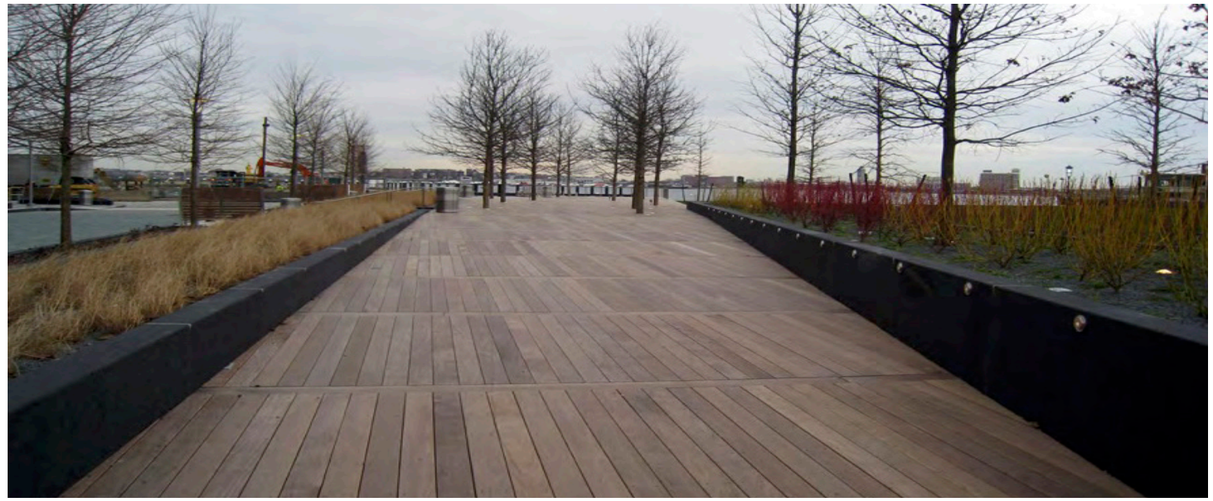


Figure 26: Seaport Public Green, existing conditions hardscaped area.

Figure 27: Seaport Public Green, existing conditions, as a "big picture window" of the Boston Harbor.

Figure 28: Seaport Public Green, existing conditions, trees in the park.

Figure 29: Seaport Public Green, existing conditions, vegetation in planter.

Figure 30: Seaport Public Green, existing conditions, sidewalk blending into Marina Park Drive.

the park.[22] Along the western edge of the park, right along Marina Park Drive, there are also high-back benches designed to deal with the wind and provide "ideal people-watching opportunities" as an extension of the park (Figure 31) (Holmes, 2014).

Given Seaport Public Green's proximity to the Boston Harbor, RBA intended its design to be responsive to the physical environment. Richard Burck said their design was meant to be responsive to higher coastal winds, microclimate issues, and sun angle issues. With that in mind, RBA conducted a site analysis that lead to them putting more active seating on the west side of the park because of the angle of the sun and winds (Figures 32 & 33).[23] Another major component of the design was thinking about how climate change and the park's location in a flood zone would factor into the park. There is a historic sea wall at the location, so the design had to be done within the parameters of the sea wall. According to Burck, there is a tidal flux of 9.5 feet and the whole area is susceptible to flooding from all angles.[24] That makes Seaport Public Green in a particularly vulnerable area and RBA had to be as "mindful as we can given the territory we have to work with," especially since "it's a very difficult thing to try and alleviate on a project basis, because it's really a district problem."[25] Richard Burck said they planted plants that were as salt tolerant as possible, used stainless steel for the chairs and tables in the park since the material is very tolerant and resistant to the salt environment, and elevated the planting areas as much as possible to give them additional protection for survivability.[26] Furthermore, RBA designed an integration system so that the salt water can be washed out. The integration system allows for water to go straight down, including in the hardscaped area where the decking is open jointed. The open planters also help with the infiltration of water, and together with the lawn the infiltration system is able to take in a lot of water and not compact the grass.[27]

As I came to find while conducting my research, RBA's design intentions for Seaport Public Green have not been represented in the actual use of the park. It is also unclear who is responsible for activating the site, as Fallon Company has offloaded portions of Fan Pier and the events the park was designed to host do not occur. The factors of the existing public open spaces in the Seaport just described helped to inform me in my redesign effort of the Seaport Public Green. By acknowledging what exists, what is absent, and the historical characteristics of the District, I hope the redesign of the Seaport Public Green will be a better reflection of the character and needs for the space.

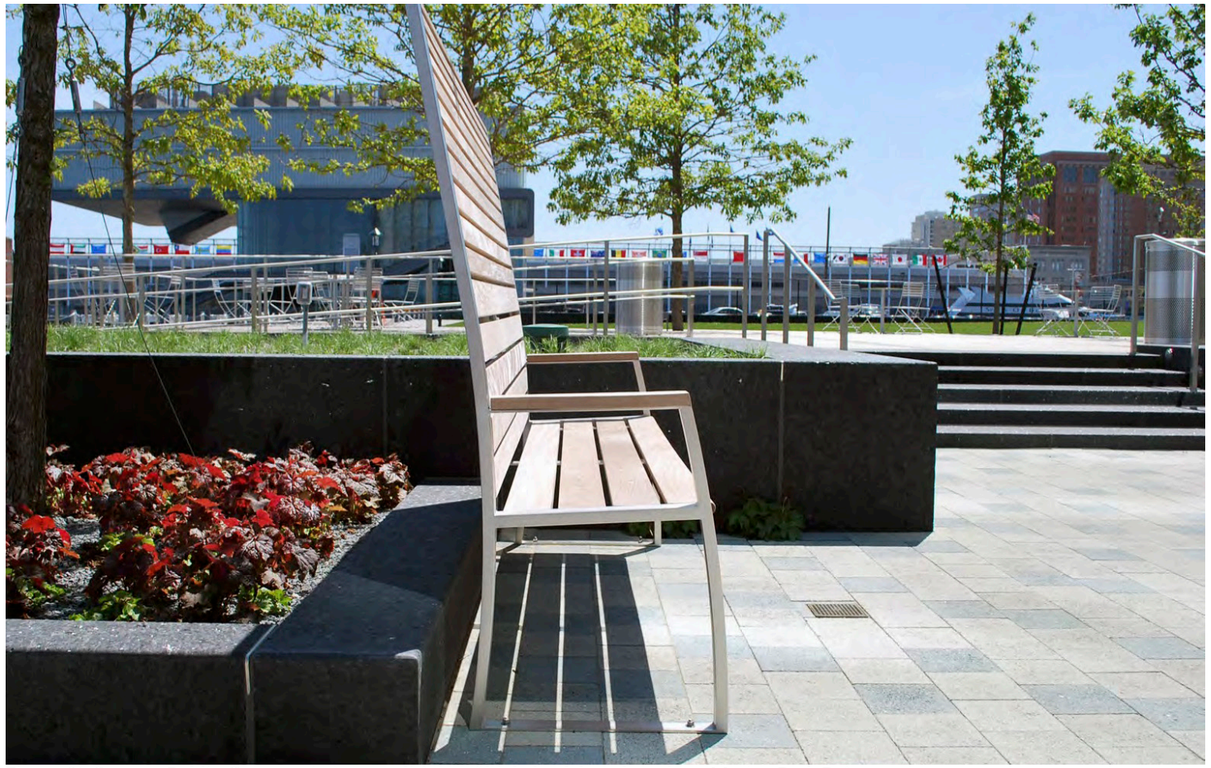


Figure 31: Seaport Public Green, existing conditions of high-back benches along Marina Park Drive

Figure 32: RBA analysis on winds at Seaport Public Green

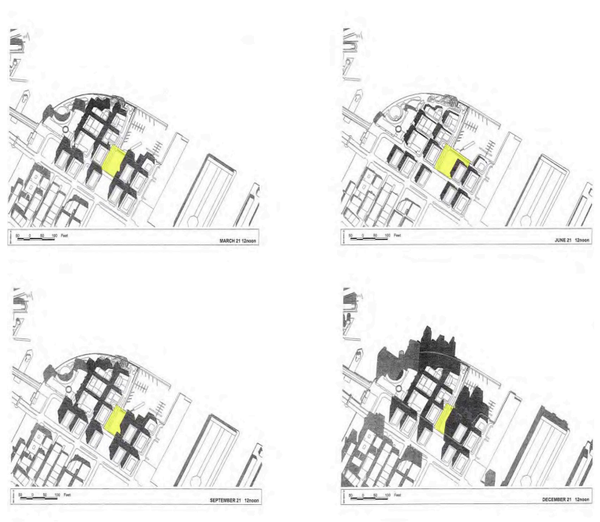


Figure 33: RBA analysis on sun at Seaport Public Green

Literature Review

The literature review incorporates both the challenges of, the theories of, and the present day perspectives of urban design. A review of the literature will help build the background for this Master's Project. As the literature provides a more broad understanding and context of urban design, the interviews I conducted provide the project with a more specific understanding of open space design in Boston. The literature review will also serve as a way to ground the responses of the interviewees in theory and help me to see clearly where the perspectives of the interviewees and the literature overlap. Areas of overlap will strongly guide me in making the redesign of the Seaport Public Green. Further research from news articles and reports will provide additional background information on the history of the Seaport and the Seaport Public Green, as well as on how the Seaport Public Green functions today as a public open space.

Scholars define urban design as "the process of making better places for people than would otherwise be produced" (Carmona et al, 2003). In creating places, urban designers need to be acutely aware of the relationship of the parts to the whole, and vice versa, as well as the scale of the surrounding areas that relate to the place. The social usage tradition of urban design places importance on how people use the space and focuses on issues of perception and sense of place (Carmona, 2003). Urban environments are a commonplace experience, therefore suggesting that the purpose of parks and sidewalks are to be places of social interaction, containers of human activity, and transitions between public and private domains (Carmona, 2003; Jacobs, 1961; Lynch, 1960; Trancik, 1986). The making places tradition of urban design is the more modern approach and emphasizes creating places for people that are aesthetically pleasing, provide diversity and activity in a space, and support the activities taking place there (Carmona, 2003). In this approach, public space is related to the buildings it surrounds, while also being structured in time and space by its users to ultimately serve as places of unprogrammed public enjoyment and congregation (Carmona, 2003; Colquhoun, 1989). These concepts present what an ideal public open space should be and pushed me to redesign the Seaport Public Green to achieve a space that functions in this manner.

Challenges in Urban Design

The project focuses on the challenges the Seaport Public Green faces as a public open space due to the nature of its design. How scholars define urban design and the challenges urban design faces is therefore particularly poignant for this project.

A major challenge to open space is how it interacts with its surroundings. Open space needs to provide a definition for the buildings at its borders, essentially creating walls for the outdoor area. Land uses therefore indicate the nature of activity in an area and constitute as meaningful clues for urban design. Numerous scholars suggest that if a type of space is absent or unused it is because that type of space is either not very important to the people in the area, access to the space is hindered in some capacity, the density of the area does not warrant intense use of the space, or the reaction to the space is not the designed objective because of how the space is enclosed (Jacobs, 1985; Trancik, 1986).

When a space is unused it can become a lost space. As defined by Trancik, a lost space, or anti-space, makes no positive contribution to the surroundings or users, and fails to connect elements in a coherent way (Trancik, 1986). When the spaces between buildings are not designed, or poorly designed, spaces are unable to effectively engage the public. As emphasis is placed on the individual buildings at the expense of the space around it, as is seen in the Seaport District, the open spaces become lost, anti-spaces. Trancik highlights that these challenges were born out of technology improvements which allowed for taller buildings and prioritized the demands of the car (Trancik, 1986). Good design should therefore create public spaces that are continuations of lower floors of buildings, so that the entire network of streets, buildings, and parks has a human scale to it (Trancik, 1986). Seaport Public Green has become an anti-space and does not engage the public that are utilizing all of the surrounding buildings and waterfront. These concepts guided me when making observations and creating a redesign of Seaport Public Green.

Theories of Urban Design

There are numerous theories of urban design. Figure-ground theory emphasizes the relationship between urban solids and voids. The spatial network works best when the relationship between solids and voids is perceivable and direct (Trancik, 1986). Parks and linear open space systems serve as voids in urban settings to contrast with the solids of cities and provide relief from the hard environment, be a place of accessible recreation, and create links between urban spaces (Trancik, 1986). Linkage theory is about the organization of lines to connect the parts of the city (Trancik, 1986). In this theory, public space is established before individual spaces or buildings are planned, thus connecting all spaces together through the public realm. This theory, though, does overemphasize the use of the public realm for transit, meaning there is no basis in linkage theory for the public realm to provide more than just links, like a road. Place theory

focuses on understanding the cultural and human characteristics of the physical space (Trancik, 1986). Within this theory, Kevin Lynch says that successful urban spaces meet the requirements of legibility, structure and identity, and imageability (Lynch, 1960). Paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks should be designed around those requirements with the result being places that create an environment rich enough to accommodate everyone (Lynch, 1960; Trancik, 1986). These theories informed me when assessing the quality of Seaport Public Green and in determining what factors would contribute to a better design of the space. In particular, Kevin Lynch's requirements helped guide the redesign as I looked to make the waterfront a proper edge that would help in defining the Seaport Public Green. Lynch's requirements also helped me to look at how the Seaport Public Green forms a path to the waterfront with the other nearby parks.

Furthermore, numerous scholars suggest that organically heterogenous districts are better activated urban spaces (Jacobs, 1961; Lynch, 1960; Trancik, 1986). Within a heterogenous district the urban spaces can remain alive at all times of the day as they serve the different needs of users. Seaport Public Green is only used sporadically and as Jane Jacobs finds, parks need people to be in the immediate vicinity for different purposes in order for the park to be used throughout the day (Jacobs, 1961). I was guided by these principals when making the redesign of Seaport Public Green.

Present Day Perspectives on Parks

There are numerous specific definitions of open space in the literature that guide the perception of Seaport Public Green and informed the redesign. Seaport Public Green, according to the theories presented in the literature, would be defined as an open space that is "available for unstructured recreation, circumscribed by building facades, its landscape consisting of grassy areas and trees, naturalistically disposed, and requiring substantial maintenance" (Kokola, 2008). If properly outfitted with amenities, greens can serve as intergenerational third places, allow recurring casual social encounters, and build social capital (Kokola, 2008). Parks can also serve as great places to filter stormwater, which is particularly applicable to Seaport Public Green, which is located in a flood zone directly next to the Boston Harbor. I used this definition of parks to guide the redesign and assess the failures of the Seaport Public Green.

Methodology

The research portion of this project was conducted using a qualitative approach. Qualitative sources of data included interviews with practitioners, observations of Seaport Public Green, and readings of local newspaper articles and reports. The creation of the physical redesign involved using a mix of design softwares.

Interviews

The interviews were done with those who have been involved with the design of public open space in the Seaport District and/or Boston in general. A full list of interviewees is included in Appendix A. Interviewees were identified based on their direct connection to work related to the Seaport. I looked at who was involved with related public open space projects in the Seaport, and Boston in general, to determine who to reach out to. Connections were made via email and most interviews occurred over the phone. The interviews focused on what qualities make good public open spaces, in both Boston and in general, and why the Seaport Public Green is not a highly utilized space, despite its potential to be one.

The interviews were unstructured, but were guided by a set of pre-approved questions. Three categories of questions were created to specifically tailor to the type of work the practitioner does and to the relationship to the Seaport that the practitioner had. Table 1 includes the categories and the guiding questions that I used during the interviews.

Table 1: Guiding Questions Used for Interviews

Category	**Questions**
Practitioners with Work in the Seaport District	• How would you describe the use of the Seaport Public Green? • What factors explain the level/type of use you see at the Green currently? • What is the role of public open space in the Seaport? What, if anything, would you change to see that open space better fulfills this role? • Are there any unique neighborhood (the Seaport) or regional (Boston Area/Southern New England) factors that designers have to take into consideration in designing public open spaces here? • What is the role of flood zone status and climate change more broadly, in informing design of public open space? • What are good examples of public open spaces in Boston and what makes them good?
Practitioners with Work in Boston, but not in the Seaport	• What would you consider to be good design practices for public open space in your professional experience? • What makes public open spaces in Boston work? What doesn't? • What are the best examples of public open spaces in Boston and why would you consider them to be so? • How would you describe the use of the Seaport Public Green and what factors explain the level/type of use you see there? • What is the role of public open space in the Seaport? What, if anything, would you change to see that open space better fulfills this role? • What is the role of flood zone status and climate change more broadly, in informing design of public open space?
Practitioner for Seaport Public Green – From Richard Burck Associates	• What was your thought process behind the design of Seaport Public Green? • What were your main goals for the space? • How does your design relate to its surroundings? • How does your design relate to the space being in a flood zone directly next to the water? What about future climate change research? • How does water flow on the site? • What is the circulation of the site? • When designing the park, what were the implications of creating a pervious site from an impervious site? • Seeing what public spaces exist in the Seaport today and how people engage with these spaces, would you change anything about the design? What would you change?

Analysis of the interviewees' responses was done in a multi-step process. Initially, I reread the notes taken and listened to the recording of the interview to identify key points. After all the interviews were conducted, I combined the key points from each interview to identify what factors were repeated and what points most resonated with what I saw while conducting observations. These key points guided me to conduct additional research and influenced the redesign of Seaport Public Green.

Observations

I conducted observations of Seaport Public Green on October 16, 2019. Observations were done with the intention of helping me to understand, personally, how the space is and is not used. I used the Public Life Tools from the Gehl Institute to conduct the observations. Gehl Institute's Public Life Tools "draw on decades of applied research demonstrating how a walkable human scale is part of what makes cities interesting" and help observers to "measure how people use public spaces and better understand the relationship between those spaces and the public life that takes place in them" (Gehl Institute). I used the Stationary Activity Mapping tool, the Place Inventory tool, the Twelve Quality Criteria tool, and the Social Space Survey tool to conduct observations. Each of these tools helped me to better understand the relationship between the Seaport Public Green and the public life taking place there. The tools brought attention to the physical qualities of the space, how those qualities impacted the behaviors and experiences of users, who was using the space and how, and how did the space fit into the overall environment of the area. Table 2 shows a detailed description, from the Gehl Institute, of what each tool serves to do.

After conducting the observations, I went through each tool and pulled out the key findings. While pulling out the key findings, I kept in mind the theories of urban design presented in the literature. After identifying the key findings, I was able to compare the findings with the analysis of the interviews to inform the design. Scanned copies of the tools used during my observations are included in Appendix B.

Table 2: Description of Gehl Institute Observation Tools

Tool	**Description**
Stationary Activity Mapping	• Map what people are doing in the space, with note of posture • Snapshot of the activity in the area • Helps to identify potential enhancements to public life
Place Inventory	• Study physical features of space • Study how physical features shape experience of users • Mapping exercise & qualitative survey
Twelve Quality Criteria	• Research how public spaces are experienced by users • Evaluate whether different features of a public space make it an enjoyable, protective, & comfortable space
Social Space Survey	• Address how public spaces can better serve more people • Address what role can design play in the process of bringing different people together • Critique who is spending time in the space, what is happening in the space, and whether the design can be improved to foster more inclusion and openness

Sources: Gehl Institute, Place Inventory; Gehl Institute, Social Space Survey; Gehl Institute, Stationary Activity Mapping; Gehl Institute, Twelve Quality Criteria

Additional Research

I conducted additional research about public space in the Seaport District, the Seaport Public Green, other examples of successful public open spaces, and more by reading newspaper articles, blog postings, and reports. This provided me with a greater depth of knowledge on the background of the park and the overall environment in the Seaport, as well as giving me more ideas for the redesign of Seaport Public Green.

Creating the Redesign

I created the physical redesign of the Seaport Public Green using a variety of design softwares. First, I imported shapefiles of topography, buildings, and property lines for the Seaport District into AutoCAD. The building and property line shapefiles were imported from the BPDA's public 3D Data & Maps webpage. Topography was pulled directly from GIS and converted to an AutoCAD file. In AutoCAD, I was able to physically alter the design of the existing site. This included drawing new slope contour lines and eliminating existing unwanted slopes, drawing new sidewalks and crosswalks, drawing new abutting edges of the park, eliminating and altering the hardscape areas and the softscape areas to include new walking paths and a wet pond stormwater pool, creating an archway, creating overlook spots, and creating a kiosk.

After creating the linework in AutoCAD, the file was imported into Sketchup. In Sketchup, I created contours of the topography, so that a 3D image of the park could be rendered. I then manually elevated the heights of the surrounding buildings, the kiosk, and the archway to get the complete 3D image of the new Seaport Public Green. From the Sketchup file, I was able to render the design using Adobe Creative Cloud softwares.

To create the site plan, I imported the AutoCAD file as a pdf into Photoshop. Using Photoshop, I was able to create a bird's eye view of the redesign of Seaport Public Green. By importing jpgs of seamless textures and using colors and layers, I was able to use Photoshop tools to create a realistic image and feeling of the park. Labeling of the diagram was done in Illustrator.

To create the site diagrams, various section planes, with contours and surrounding building heights, were taken of the finalized Sketchup file and imported into Illustrator. In Illustrator, I completed the diagrams with labels and descriptive arrows.

To create the two perspectives, I had to first further manipulate the Sketchup file. I set for each perspective a scene, meaning the angle and view within the park that would be seen in the rendered file. From there, I created separate "shadows" and "linework" Sketchup files for each perspective. These files were then saved as jpgs and joined into one file, per perspective, in Photoshop. Each file became a separate layer in Photoshop, which allowed me to begin manipulating the image. I imported photos of the surrounding areas, people, vegetation, textures, etc. to create the redesign. Each imported aspect was manipulated, edited, and altered to give the impression that the viewer is physically in the park, as well as to show how the park would be utilized given the new elements and changes.

Lastly, I compiled the designs and written work into InDesign to create the final product. The three fonts used in this text are the fonts utilized by the official Boston.gov website. These fonts were recently upgraded for Boston.gov to represent both the history of Boston and its progressive, forward-looking nature of its citizens today (Clauss, 2016). To supplement these fonts, I used a color pallet for the document that was also representative of the City of Boston. Based on a color pallet published by Erin Gates Design on the *Elements of Style* blog, I used colors that are representative of the natural and physical environments found in Boston. These colors include a brick red for the old brick buildings, a light tan for the interior of important landmark buildings, a blue for the ocean skies, a dark green for the Boston Harbor, a light green for the Boston Public Gardens, a green for Fenway Park, a grey for the works of art in Boston's museums, and a yellow for the Boston Marathon (Gates, n.d.). I chose to use the fonts and colors of Boston in this document to symbolize how the Seaport District is an integral part of our modern day city, even if it does not feel completely connected to the rest of the city. Public open spaces are an integral part of what makes Boston unique and provides a great sense of belonging and culture for both residents and visitors. By bringing that sense of place, represented through the text and colors, to this report on Seaport Public Green I hoped to continue that sense of connection.

Findings from Interviews & Observations

Findings from Interviews

After conducting interviews, it became overwhelmingly clear that Seaport Public Green is poorly activated and underutilized as the result of its design and relationship to its surroundings. Each practitioner I spoke with has an intimate knowledge of the Seaport District, other parks in Boston, or both, and yet not every single one of them knew where and what Seaport Public Green was. I would inform each interviewee of Seaport Public Green's location, inform them that it was the park next to Seaport Common closest to the water's edge, and that it was the lawn with the five steps. After providing that information, then all the interviewees understood where and what Seaport Public Green was. The interviewees overall lack of intimate knowledge and experience with Seaport Public Green, despite their overall knowledge of parks like Seaport Common, indicates the lack of use of Seaport Public Green and its design failures to promote use.

Interviewees described the use of Seaport Public Green as one that is usually not fully occupied and relatively underutilized. They described the park as one that is not a place where a lot of organic activity happens and is only somewhat active during lunch time when people use the chairs on the hardscaped area.[28] Bob Uhlig, the president and a principal at Halvorson Design, said he "hasn't ever seen [Seaport Public Green] really used."[29] Seaport Public Green being almost all grass prevented, in the minds of the interviewees, a variety of activities from occurring in the park.[30] Interviewees observed that what you do see is mostly people sitting down, eating lunch, and looking at the water.[31] Matthew Soule, an Associate & Landscape Architect at Reed+Hilderbrand, said the elevation of the park "helps to capture the views" of the water and ensures that when you are on the lawn you can "still have a view of the water and not feel like there's a curb that's sort of blocking your sight."[32] Given that Seaport Public Green's most important purpose is providing a connection to the water's edge, the elevation of the park seems to be an important design factor.

That elevation, though, is partially the result of the five steps at the southern edge of the lawn, where the park meets Northern Avenue. Joshua Seyfried, a Landscape & Urban Designer at James Corner Field Operations, noted that

> "there's a perception, when you're walking along Northern Avenue, the stepping, terracing of that lawn kind of feels a bit standoffish. It almost doesn't feel public…Sometimes these lawns in these sorts of contexts don't have a kind of inclusive feeling to them, they start to kind of feel like they belong to whatever sort of adjacent building of use is around them."[33]

The anonymous local Urban Designer noted that the steps themselves may also "limit its use in a way. It gives you a good view of the water and it gets you up a little bit in terms of the elevation. But again, it makes it hard to set up tents for a farmers market or something like that because of the steps…And a wheelchair couldn't get up there." [34] These comments suggest that RBA's intention for the steps to serve as an inviting and interesting way to meet the sidewalk, ultimately did not come to fruition and have hurt the park's function.

Interviewees also noted how the buildings directly adjacent to the Seaport Public Green do not help to activate the park.[35] Elaborating, the local Urban Designer said:

> "I think if you were to look at the building edges and the way in which they can or can't spill out into that park, they've got some real challenges. I wish that the ground floors really had much more cafes and things like that where you could have more active uses that think about that waterfront edge."[36]

Instead the adjacent buildings are mostly office uses with only one ground floor restaurant that does not spill out onto the sidewalk or the park itself (Figure 34). The undeveloped parcel to the left of Seaport Public Green (Figure 35) is

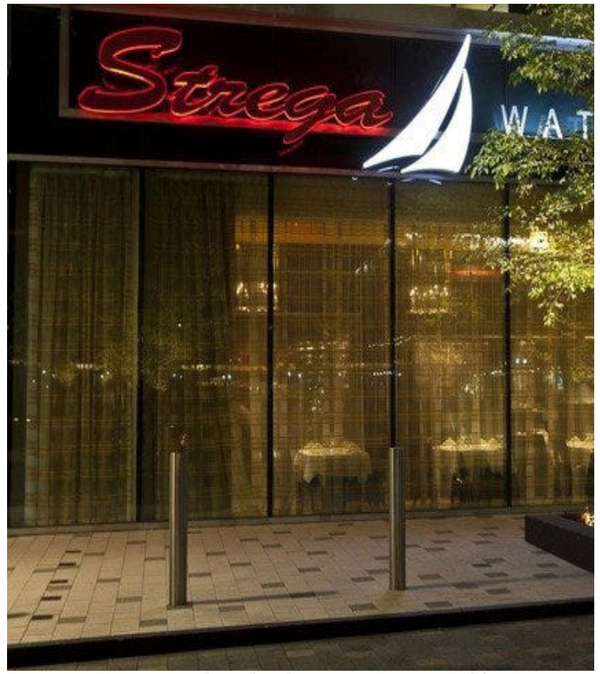


Figure 34: Restaurant directly adjacent to Seaport Public Green, along Marina Park Drive, with blinds drawn.

Figure 35: Undeveloped parcel directly adjacent to Seaport Public Green, set to be developed as a residential tower.

set to be a residential tower, which as the Urban Designer noted serves as a great potential to activate Seaport Public Green.[37] Further to the point of Seaport Public Green's location relating to its utilization, Nupoor Monani, an Urban Planner & Designer at Utile, noted that the park was not a destination. Monani said a park either has to "be a destination where it has enough programming and public facing activities that people are drawn to it...That's sort of special enough that people would go to it for that experience. Or in the case of more urban and smaller open spaces it would need to be along a thoroughfare."[38] Seaport Public Green, in Monani's professional opinion, is neither a destination park that draws people to it for a special experience nor is it along a major thoroughfare, as it is on Northern Avenue, not Seaport Boulevard. Given the fact that the location cannot be changed, Seaport Public Green needs to offer an experience that is special and draws people to the park for it to become a well utilized space.

When describing the use of Seaport Public Green, interviewees also highlighted how the park differs in use from neighboring Seaport Common. Seaport Common serves as a spill out park for District Hall users, with both a hardscaped area and an activity zone that is highly programmed (See Figures 36-42).[39] The two spaces are not entirely different in scale says Bob Uhlig, but he notes that, conversely Seaport Public Green is about 75% softscaped and Seaport Common is about 60% hardscaped.[40] Therefore, despite the different compositions of soft to hard, the level of use between the two parks should not be so different. Interviewees noted that at Seaport Common, though, WS Development is very diligent with programing, whereas with Seaport Public Green no developer is diligent about programming.[41] It is likely the space would be a lot more successful if there was higher programing in the space, like what is seen in Seaport Common.

I asked the interviewees to further elaborate on the design elements that explain the use they were seeing, or not seeing, at Seaport Public Green. Based on their responses, it is evident that the design factors of Seaport Public Green greatly explain the level and type of use one sees at the park. Dogs are not allowed at Seaport Public Green, but are allowed in another park nearby that is not close to the water (Figure 43). Interviewees suggested this was likely because there was concern about people not picking up after their dogs, but limits the use of the park since dog culture is a large part of the District.[42] Seaport Public Green's location beside buildings that are mostly labs, offices, and commercial spaces also potentially decreases its use.[43] Now that there are more and more residential buildings popping up around the park, there is a good opportunity for the park to bring more people into the space.[44] The hardscaped area would continue to be used during the work week, with residential buildings bringing other uses at other times of day and the lawn could

Figure 36: Seaport Common, a mix of soft and hardscape.

Figure 37: Seaport Common is highly activated by a variety of hosted programs.

Figure 38: Seaport Common is activated by temporary installations.

Figure 39: Seaport Common is activated by community gatherings.

Figure 40: Seaport Common is activated by changing public art.

Figure 41: Seaport Common is activated by "The Current" - a strip of rotating pop-up boutique shops that bring hundreds of people to the area.

Figure 42: District Hall, and its restaurant, spill directly out onto Seaport Common. No blinds are drawn in the restaurant.

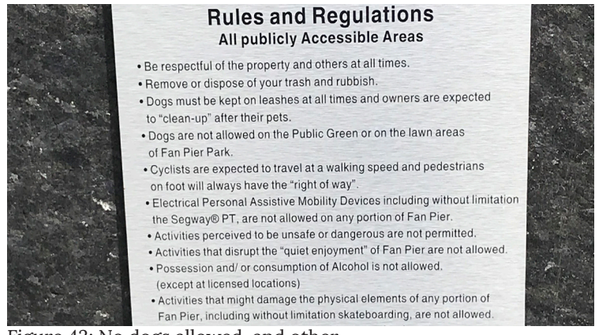


Figure 43: No dogs allowed, and other rules at the existing Seaport Public Green.

be changed depending on the dynamic of the residential building.[45] Bob Uhlig noted that the lawn would be "nice to have as a front door for those buildings, like a green carpet out front, but I haven't seen it as a place that is open and inviting."[46] The lawn would also need to be diversified because there are a lot of lawns, many of which seem underutilized, in both the Seaport District, and Boston as a whole. While Thomas Nally noted that the lawn does provide some relief and connection to nature that doesn't exist in other places,[47] Jeff Sauser, an Associate Planner at Stantec, said "it's a little plain…it's a lot of grass" (Figure 44).[48] Bob Uhlig said "I think if you were out there in the middle of the open space, you would feel a little self-consciences because it doesn't have as much context."[49] Furthermore, Uhlig, as well as the local Urban Designer, noted that "the places [in Seaport Public Green] that definitely have appeal are more the edges than the center,"[50] suggesting that the lawn is failing to be activated in its current state. Overall, interviewees said the design of Seaport Public Green did not make it a destination people want to go to.

When asked what the role of public open space in the Seaport District is, the interviewees all responded with similar opinions. In the Seaport, the idea of connection to the water is very important and it is a valuable connection for residents and developers/real estate owners.[51] Joshua Seyfried said that as a harborfront city, public open spaces in the Seaport need to celebrate the water's edge and suggested that the Seaport Public Green needs to better help with that celebration.[52] Public parks, especially Seaport Public Green, also have a huge opportunity to help with resiliency efforts in the District. Lastly, interviewees noted that developers, specifically WS Development, are trying to build a much stronger network of connected spaces in the Seaport.[53] "Right now the open spaces, they are kind of a little park and parcel here and there. There's not really a strong framework," they are all operating in isolation, according to Joshua Seyfried.[54] WS Development, with Seaport Square and the Harbor Way, are trying to create a much stronger framework for the District's open spaces, and thus enhance the community feel.

Other developers, including Fallon Company, are seeing the act of building public open spaces as a community requirement, though, so the result is spaces without great designs and strong purposes.[55] Thomas Nally said that in reality the public open spaces are not going to end up being connected, because of such an attitude, so the question then becomes "how do you then relate it to the spaces around it and make it an attractive vital space."[56] Furthermore, because the District is in various phasing stages of development, so are the open spaces. Nupoor Monani said "because the neighborhood has been built up over the course of many years and the scaling of these open spaces has also followed in a similar fashion, it hasn't

Figure 44: Seaport Public Green, existing conditions are "a little plain" and a "lot of grass". The grass and vegetation also look very unpleasant in the winter months.

been developed all together" and there is a sense of isolation at each public open space.[57] Seaport Public Green sits at the end of this big broad terminus of parks and Monani noted that what needs to happen is for the open spaces between the parks to be connected, so that the parks themselves actually feel connected.[58] Interviewees emphasized the lack of a crosswalk between Seaport Common and Seaport Public Green furthers that sense of isolation and lack of relationship to each other (Figures 45 & 46).[59] Matthew Soule also cited that how open space relates to the sidewalks is crucial to ensuring this sense of connection. Soule noted that the roads in the District are very wide and the sidewalks are possibly too narrow and suggested that the "public realm portion [of the roads] could have been more generous."[60] With a stronger public realm along the roads, the connection between the public open spaces could be stronger. Furthermore, the interviewees stressed thinking about the role of all the different types of places in the Seaport and how they complement each other.[61] Ultimately, the interviewees all concluded that the role of public open space in the Seaport District is a lot about providing the District with an overall sense of connectivity and a neighborhood quality.

I asked what the interviewees would consider good design practices for public open space in general, to further contextualize the role of Seaport Public Green. Cities in general consider the role of public open spaces as having many different purposes that they should fulfill. According to the Urban Designer at a local firm, at a basic level public open spaces provide release from density and hardscape.[62] The Urban Designer elaborated saying, "In the Seaport... because it's also getting developed so quickly, and there is massive building going in, taking up a lot of space, that open space really is to give a relief to that density,"[63] so Seaport Public Green can serve that purpose. Secondly, open spaces provide the opportunity for people to interact with nature in an urban setting. A city that is well integrated with natural spaces is really important for peoples' wellbeing, as there are proven human health benefits from interacting with nature.[64] Thirdly, there is also a real need for open space as social space as "those are the places where people come together" and are a setting for communities to take shape.[65] Jeff Sauser said a good variety of public open spaces is necessary for that reason and so that they can foster a 24/7, seven days a week lifestyle environment, not just be a foreground for architecture.[66] Public open spaces really serve as a third space, beyond work and home.[67] Jeff Sauser said public spaces "are the setting[s] for community to take shape. And it can't be too privatized... Public space should feel like it belongs to the neighborhood, not the development that maybe was forced to pay for it, so that the community can take shape."[68] Without that sense of ownership, places like Seaport Public Green don't feel like an active and vital part of the community and go underutilized. There is also this idea that people should be able to

Figure 45: Parking and no crosswalk between Seaport Public Green and Seaport Common.

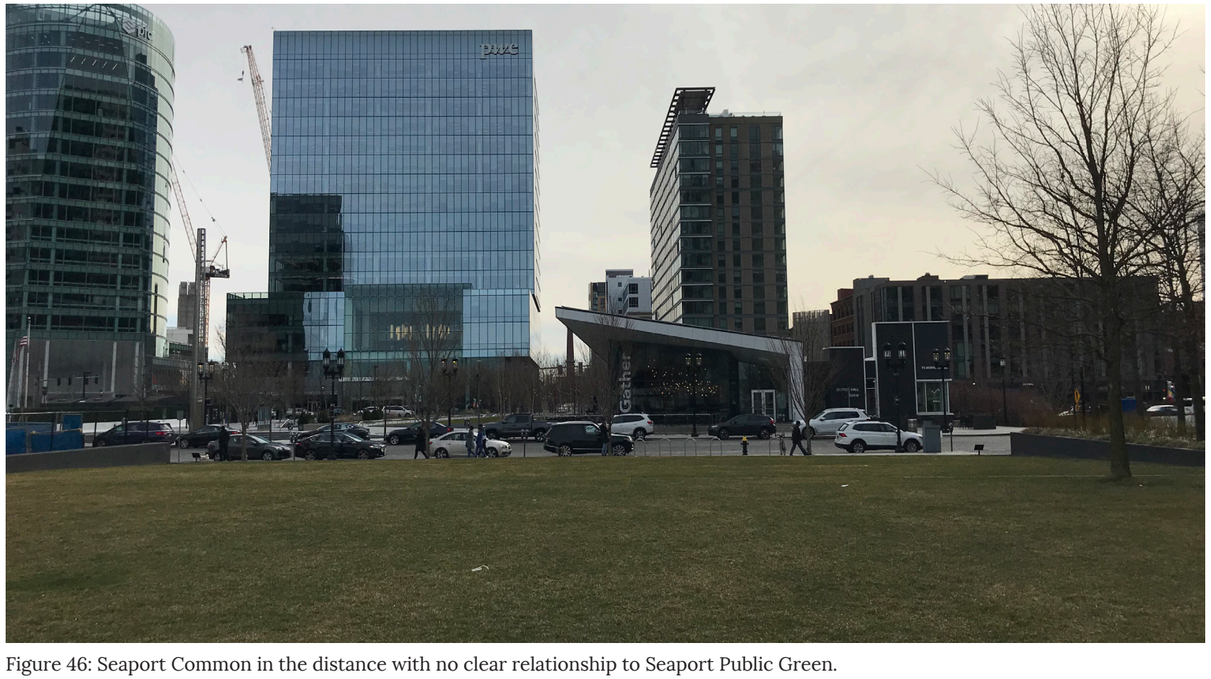


Figure 46: Seaport Common in the distance with no clear relationship to Seaport Public Green.

meet and occupy space and do so without spending money, which is why public open space becomes so valuable.[69]

The interviewees also emphasized that diversity in park type, having an appropriate concept for the space, and the idea of being adaptive were important elements for good public open spaces. Interviewees noted that not every site has to be the same type of park and have the same level of programming. Bob Uhlig said what was key to creating a variety of good public open spaces was:

> "creating a transformative experience in which the space, as a public open space, can be utilized…something that is comfortable on a day-to-day basis to be in and doesn't feel like when you're there that it's vacuous and unused. And so it has intimacy to it or it has places of intimacy."[70]

If these concepts are kept in mind, a place can be successful whether or not it is highly or lightly programmed. Thomas Nally, the Planning Director at A Better City, said it is also important for there to be an "appropriate concept for open space, because you could come up with wild ideas that are not appropriate or ideas that are too simple and could be more challenging."[71] Appropriate concepts create spaces that are rooted in the realities of the spaces and in the community's needs. The emphasis on having an appropriate concept for the open space was also rooted, according to Nally, in the idea that if the park can't be easily maintained and operated, it loses its ability to function well.[72]

Since public open space means so many things to so many people, Jeff Sauser said that phasing in different ideas, creating parks that are adaptive and flexible can be a great way to create a park that evolves with its community.[73] Bob Uhlig warned, though, that:

> "Ultimate flexibility leads to general, boring place making because one needs to keep it at a relatively clean slate to allow for maximum programming…So in that day-to-day, unless you have a lot of resources to be able to move stuff and move stuff out all the time, it presents a challenge to designers to create those dynamics…where it has intimacy, smaller scale components in them as well as larger scale components."[74]

Having a balance of flexibility then, especially in regards to balancing levels of programming to ensure a space remains activated day-to-day, is key to a public open space's success.

Beyond the general principles of good design, the interviewees provided me with their opinions on unique neighborhood and regional factors that need to be considered when designing public open spaces in this area. The four main factors were the climate, resiliency, the Harborwalk, and the role of the public. First, interviewees noted how the weather in Boston makes designing parks difficult. There are beautiful summers, in which green spaces function really well, but the winter makes outdoors unpleasant, so it is hard to make public open space seasonably usable unless it is enclosed.[75] In the Seaport the winds are even more extreme than the rest of Boston, which the interviewees said needs to be taken into consideration when designing public open spaces in the District.[76] Seaport Public Green in particular is exposed to very strong winds[77] and Matthew Soule said "every couple months the wind gets worse because more buildings go up and this wind tunnel effect gets heightened."[78] The interviewees advised me to design something that could withstand and shield people from the wind. Secondly, despite what Richard Burck told me, the local Urban Designer felt that Seaport Public Green "was not originally designed to function relative to resiliency or to help prevent storm surges coming into the District"[79] and that any redesign should address such an issue. Given that sea level rise will be a major issue for Boston in the years to come, public open spaces in the City need to address the issue head on. They also believed that the heat island effect will be increasingly important in the future and parks should seek to mitigate the issue.[80]

Thirdly, the interviewees said that the Harborwalk is a really important concept for Boston and a lot of work and legislation through Chapter 91 has ensured public access to the water is secured. The local Urban Designer felt:

> "That proximity to the water [needs to be] as generous as it can be. I think right now, it's not so fantastic [at Seaport Public Green] (Figure 47). So I would think that that edge is actually really important as a public space to think about how the lawn could actually support that better or how the redesign of that space could actually better make sure you're getting people right there to the water's edge."[81]

Strengthening this connection to the

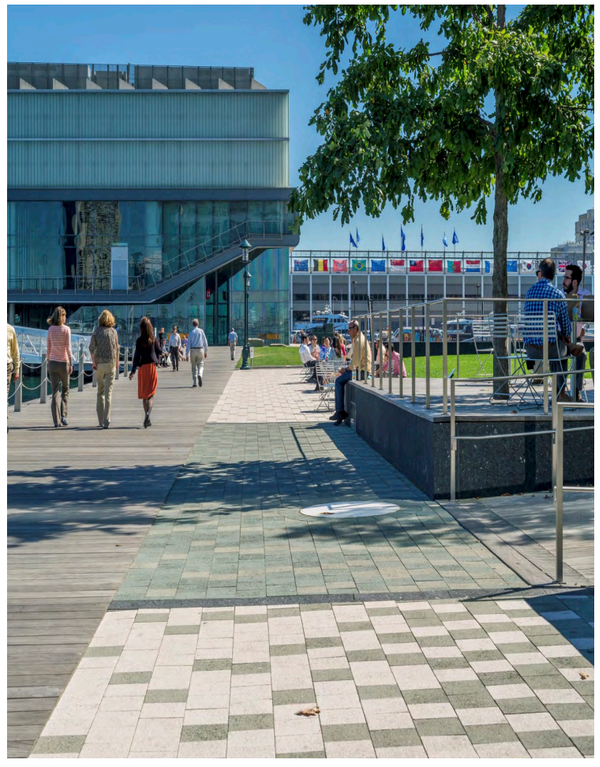


Figure 47: Seaport Public Green, in existing conditions, does not have such a "fantastic" relationship to the water. Note lawns deep setback from the Harborwalk and the water's edge and how all the people are sitting on hardscaped portions of the park, and not the lawn.

Harborwalk and the water's edge, thus, became a main focus in the redesign. Lastly, the interviewees said the role of the public and the audiences in the District were changing and the park should be able to serve those new needs. The Seaport District is tech centric, with a lot of need for places to eat lunch, making Seaport Public Green a great spot.[82] There is an increasing residential demographic with more and more young families and people who can afford it, starting to move in, which changes the needs of the park.[83] Given the changing dynamic of who is present in the Seaport District requires public open spaces to be more flexible spaces that offer different things for different groups of people.

As just mentioned, public parks, especially Seaport Public Green, have a huge opportunity to help with resiliency efforts in the Seaport District. Given the Seaport Public Green's location in a flood zone, I asked the interviewees how such a status should inform design. The interviewees all spoke of how, given the size of Seaport Public Green, it cannot be left up to the park alone. At this scale, Seaport Public Green can be a part of the resiliency effort, but it's just too small to be dealing with climate change at such a large scale.[84] Open space can play an integral role in resiliency, but not in isolation, said Nupoor Monani.[85] Bob Uhlig pointed to Boston's *Coastal Resilience Solutions for South Boston* report and how people are recognizing that the climate change response needs to be done at regional level because the plan is only as good as its weakest link.[86] Uhlig pointed further to how the Boston Harbor's edge is essentially a continuous line, especially in the Seaport, and if there is a gap in response to flooding, that is where the protections will break.[87] What the Seaport Public Green can do is look at all its edges and see how the Harborwalk can be used to protect the park and the District. Thomas Nally emphasized that "open space can be inundated every once in a while, not on a regular basis, but, storm surge could be handled,"[88] so designing a park to handle such inundation is a responsible approach to mitigation. Flood protection is also a prime opportunity to create more public spaces along the edge, like Seaport Public Green, said Matthew Soule.[89] The interviewees emphasized that I should think about the space in terms of stormwater capacity and can the park contribute to how the neighborhood is storing and releasing storm and rainwater.

A goal of mine in my redesign of the Seaport Public Green was to design a space that built off of the good examples of public open spaces in other areas of Boston. The intention behind this was to further foster the relationship between the Seaport District and the rest of Boston, as this is a relationship that needs to be stronger. The interviewees provided a variety of responses in regards to what they thought were examples of good public open spaces in Boston. All interviewees spoke of how there are different types of open spaces in and around Boston and all perform in very different ways and provide relief in the street grid. The most popular spaces amongst the interviewees where Martin's Park in the Seaport District, Lawn on D in the Seaport, the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the Boston Public Gardens and the Boston Common, Post Office Square, and Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park (Figures 48-55). Table 3 provides a list of each park mentioned by the interviewees and some of the main points made about why it is a good space. The commonalities in each of the examples were that the spaces were well utilized, had edges that engaged and responded to their surroundings, had areas of intimacy and appropriate scales for the area, and provided a variety of experiences within each park.

Figure 48: Martin's Park, a unique fun new playground in the Seaport District.

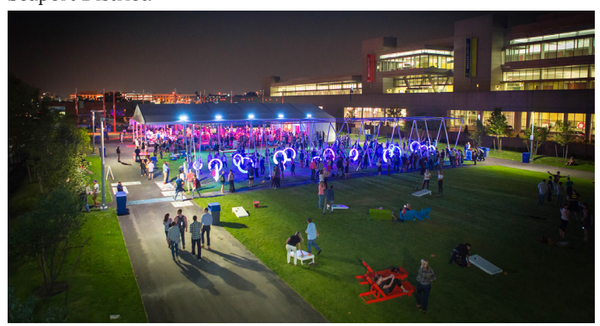


Figure 49: Lawn on D, an intensely programmed, hip open space in the Seaport District.

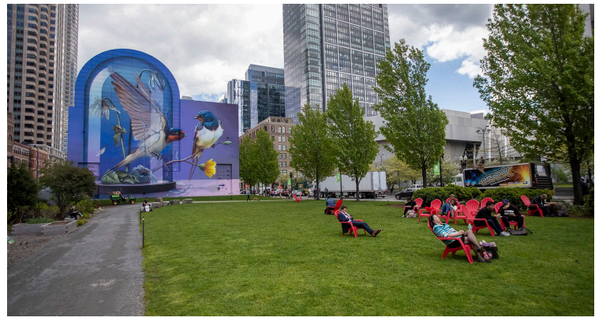


Figure 50: One of many well utilized spaces in the Rose Kennedy Greenway.

Figure 51: A variety of activities can take place in the different spaces in the Rose Kennedy Greenway.

Figure 52: Boston Common offering spaces for activity and socializing

Figure 53: Boston Public Gardens offer quiet and peaceful spaces

Table 3: Interviewees' Examples of Good Public Open Spaces & Why

Park Name	Park Location	Why Good Example
Martin's Park[90]	Seaport District	• Well utilized • Intensely programmed • Engaging • Fun & different – no other playground like it in the area
Lawn on D[91]	Seaport District	• Well utilized • Intensely programmed • Operated by the Convention Center • Hip and modern space • Forward looking
South Boston Maritime Park[92]	Seaport District	• Intimate scale • Well programmed • Tree canopy makes the park feel comfortable
Harvard Science Center Plaza[93]	Cambridge, MA	• Great hardscape & modern plaza • Highly activated • Well programmed • Spaces for food trucks
Time Out Market Green Space[94]	Fenway	• Natural spill over outdoor space • Well programmed with games & kid space • Food & drinks deeply related to use
Emerald Necklace[95]	Brookline, Boston Area	• Landmark project with a multiplicity of uses • Network of parks • Ties communities together • Connects both longitudinally and laterally
Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park[96]	Waterfront District	• Active park that meets the waterfront • Buildings spill out into park • Inviting & engaging • Places to sit and look at water, food trucks, performers – variety of experiences • Site line of Harbor extended with archway • Spaces for food trucks
Rose Kennedy Greenway[97]	Financial District	• Combines all the things that make parks great • Great variety & maintains users' interest • Each section addresses programming, landscape, and pedestrian experience in different way • Business Improvement District and the State provide funds for conservancy that maintains the park • Live edges with flat spaces adjacent to real, public things that are prominent in the public landscape • Designated spaces for food trucks
Boston Public Gardens & Boston Common[98]	Downtown Boston	• Strings together series of public spaces each with own character • Diversity of experiences and functions • Boston Common has the land for activity • Boston Public Gardens are quiet and peaceful • Ying & Yang Park • Spaces for food trucks
Post Office Square[99]	Financial District	• Beautiful detailing • Underground garage generates revenue and pays for the maintenance • Timeless design • Soft, comfortable edges with large center lawn • Highly programmed • Small, intimate niche spaces • Provides different experiences • Cushions for sitting on grass when wet • Great location to have lunch in
Copley Square[100]	Back Bay	• Mix of hardscape and softscape areas • Very active edges that engage the space • Variety of uses • Highly programmed • Spaces for food trucks

Figure 54: Post Office Square has small intimate spaces providing different experiences.

Figure 55: Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park has inviting spaces to sit and look at the water, eat, and have a variety of experiences.

After asking for specific examples of good public open spaces, I asked the interviewees what factors make public open spaces work and not work in Boston specifically. The interviewees had a variety of responses, but at the core each response was about the space's relationship to the community it serves. Thomas Nally and the local Urban Designer said having a good relationship to food,[101] whether that be providing spaces for a food truck or having a take-out restaurant nearby, encourages people "to sit out there at lunch time in the nice weather and that helps to activate the space."[102] Providing sufficient seating is particularly important and can be provided in a variety of ways, such as walls, tables and chairs, cushions, etc. The interviewees noted that people watching is an important use in a park[103] and having sufficient seating encourages this. Too many open spaces separated by adjacent uses, the interviewees said, also prohibits a space from working, citing a strong relationship to the adjacent uses as being vital for a park.[104] Thomas Nally emphasized that good public open spaces needed to be perceived as safe "and that's done by lighting and some of the detailing and by openness."[105] If a park is not perceived as safe, people will not come and the park will go unutilized.

The interviewees also emphasized how environmental factors can contribute to a park's success in Boston. Each interviewee said a park should consider how to protect people from the wind, with Thomas Nally specifically stating that parks should look at how to utilize the natural breezes.[106] Nally also spoke of how good design addresses the question of how to provide a healthy balance between shade and shadow keeping in mind the hot summers and dark winters we have in Boston.[107] Jeff Sauser also said that the flatter a public open space, the better the space was.[108] Sauser pointed to City Hall Plaza, calling it "a notorious public space...which has all these terraces and stairs. And it's just this kind of mess that every once in a while, they can make work" as an example of how levels can hurt the success of a public open space.[109] Additionally, Sauser mentioned how the newer flat design of Copley Square has been successful, while the older design with levels was not.[110]

"Spaces that are the most flexible and located in the most dynamic spaces, or at least designed to take advantage of the dynamism that might be there, seem to be the best" types of public open spaces, said Sauser.[111] Additional interviewees also emphasized that the more dynamic a public open space was, the more successful it would be.[112] The interviewees emphasized the importance of having a variety of parks in an area, so that people can choose which park to go to depending on what type of experience they are seeking to have.[113] While the interviewees noted that it is hard to make a place that is unique and also provides a variety of spaces internally, they also emphasized that each park does not need to do it all especially if there is a level

of connectivity with other neighboring spaces.[114] Ultimately, the interviewees said the worst public open spaces are those that don't reflect the community they are in. Jeff Sauser said he believed the worst public open spaces are "the ones that try to create something unique that some designer came up with that doesn't reflect the community it's in, doesn't provide a platform for the sorts of things the community wants to do."[115] This stuck out to me as one of the most important responses I gathered from the interviews and I strove to design a new Seaport Public Green that was a better reflection of the community.

Richard Burck noted that Seaport Public Green was designed about 10 years ago and was one of the first parks in the District. As a result it might no longer fit in with the newer parks, but it was hard to predict how to engage the park with its surroundings when so much of the District was yet to be developed. When asked if there was anything RBA would change about the design of the park today, Richard Burck said the only thing he would change would be to remove the parallel parking along Northern Avenue between Seaport Public Green and Seaport Common.[116] Burck noted that even those these two parks are adjacent open spaces, "adjacency does not connote relatedness…especially when you have cars parked there because the cars act as walls and they don't allow you to see the ground plain."[117] Despite all seven other interviewees sighting failures in the design of Seaport Public Green as the reason behind its underutilization and perception that it is truly not the public's domain, RBA remained confident in their design of the park. I kept this in mind when making my redesign and tried to build off the elements that presented as the strongest components of the existing design.

Ultimately, the interviews were one of the most valuable aspects of my research. They provided me with a greater understanding of the perception of Seaport Public Green and where the park failed to take advantage of its surroundings. The interviewees responses also helped me to see what parts of Seaport Public Green were successful and how they could be improved upon to better serve the District. Thomas Nally, when speaking of Martin's Park, said that one factor that made that park so successful was that it is "really adapted to the people who they expect will use it. And the difference is some places are just open space and there's no thought to who is actually going to use it."[118] Nally's emphasis on a good public open space being one that is responsive to the people who are actually going to use it ultimately served as one of the main points that guided me in my redesign. Each interview also reinforced the principles of good design stated in the literature and helped me to think about the Seaport Public Green in the larger concept of public open spaces in general. One of Joshua Seyfried's closing remarks to me was that "without a doubt, the evolution of [Seaport Public Green] is going to be very important to the success of the District and the integration of everything that we've been working on."[119] Seyfried's belief and the findings from the interviews have driven me to redesign Seaport Public Green in a way that I hope is reflective of the current and future needs of the Seaport District.

Findings from Observations

After conducting observations, it became evident to me that the site itself at Seaport Public Green has a great deal of potential. It's location, ease of access, relation to the Boston Harbor, and limited nearby vehicular traffic all make Seaport Public Green a great location for a public park. What appears to hold the park back from having a high use is in fact its design. Again, the observation tools used can be seen in Appendix B.

Stationary Active Mapping

The first of the four observation tools I used was the "Stationary Active Mapping" tool. This tool, as discussed previously in the Methodology section of this paper, is intended to help identify potential enhancements to public life. What I observed using the tool, is that even on a nice fall weekday, around noon, less than 10 people were at Seaport Public Green at a time. Every person that was there was either engaged in conversation or consuming a food or beverage while sitting at the tables and chairs on the hardscaped areas of the park. Only a few people walked through on the hardscape, but no one stopped to look or engage with the water or the lawn. Young students who were on a field trip to the ICA and were eating lunch at the park's tables played on the lawn for a few minutes and were the only people who did engage with the lawn. This indicated to me that the lawn did not appear inviting, did not serve the users in the park in the way they wanted, that the park was not effectively engaging with the water's edge or encouraging users through its design to do so, and that nothing about the park was interesting or exciting enough to encourage users to stop and take advantage of its elements. In my redesign I hope to have addressed all of these issues.

Place Inventory

The second tool I used was the "Place Inventory" tool, which is intended to highlight how the physical features of a place shape the experience of users. In the existing conditions the vegetation presence is low with about 15 trees in the whole park, the majority of which are on the hardscaped portion. The few trees that are on the lawn are on the very edges of the lawn and any plantings of bushes are in stone planters on the hardscaped portion (Figure 56). A large stone planter with 6 trees and other small plants sits on the edge of the hardscape and physically separates the lawn and obstructs the view of the lawn from certain areas within the site (Figure 57). All of this means that if people want shade they have to stay on the hardscaped area and if they want sun, on the lawn. People do not have the option to lean up against the trees while sitting on the lawn or to walk through gardens.

Despite the lack of vegetation, the visual environment of the park is overall very attractive, with the view of the Boston Harbor, which can be seen from anywhere within the park, as the main focal point. There are plenty of areas to sit, spend time, and relax in the park whether that be on the lawn or on the benches and chairs on the hardscaped portion. Seaport Public Green, as is, does provide a comfortable place to have a conversation. The surrounding areas are not too loud and vehicular traffic does not disrupt the noise level at the park. This also helps to provide a feeling of safety in the park as the vehicular traffic on both Northern Avenue and Marina Park Drive is very calm. This does, though, have the potential to change once more development has finished in the surrounding lots. Crossing the street on Northern Avenue also does feel very safe despite there not being a signalized crosswalk. Furthermore, Seaport Public Green feels safe because it is a very open area and there are not really places where people could hide. This does have a downside to it though, as you do feel very exposed in the space and the lack of other people in the park does not provide the feeling that there are other eyes to protect you. Seaport Public Green also does not appear to be particularly well lit, with lampposts only along Northern Avenue and Marina Park Drive, but not along the Harborwalk or within the park itself. The five steps built into the lawn do have lights on the elevated portion of the step that light up at night, but it is unlikely those create enough light to provide a strong sense of safety and comfort.

The final aspect of physicality that I observed using the "Place Inventory" tool was that Seaport Public Green, as is, is only somewhat accessible to someone in a wheelchair. The hardscaped area has two ramps, one at each end to meet the Harborwalk and Northern Avenue, but the only access to the hardscape off of Marina Park Drive is two staircases. The series of five steps that go the whole width of the lawn is how the lawn meets the sidewalk, which means that a wheelchair

Figure 56: Trees only on the edges of the lawn of the existing Seaport Public Green.

Figure 57: Trees and planters on the hardscaped portion in the existing conditions of Seaport Public Green.

could not traverse this portion of the lawn. Additionally, the entire lawn is elevated and does not meet directly with the sidewalk, rather it is graded above ground level and has a stone border (Figure 58). This therefore prevents anyone who is handicapped or even a small child from accessing the lawn. I again aimed to address all of these issues in my redesign.

Twelve Quality Criteria

The third tool I used to conduct my observations was the "Twelve Quality Criteria" tool. This tool is meant to help with the evaluation of whether different features of a public space make it an enjoyable, protective, and comfortable space. The findings of this tool built off of the findings of the "Place Inventory" tool and further highlighted that there was an okay sense of protection and comfort in the park, but few elements that bring enjoyment. There is protection against traffic and accidents, but the lack of lighting in the park and the fact that the adjacent buildings are mostly commercial, meaning when businesses close there are no more eyes on the park, make the level of protection in the park feel only okay. The park does provide protection against wind and sun on the hardscaped area and rain and water do not pool in the park.

Seaport Public Green rated poorly for options for mobility since one cannot access the park via a wheelchair because the lawn is not level with the hardscape, where the ramps are located, and all edges of the lawn are elevated up from ground level (Figure 59). The larger planter also prohibits access to the lawn. There are bountiful options, though, for sitting between the tables and chairs, the large stone planters, and the lawn. The option to stand and linger is less viable, as standing and lingering on the lawn would feel a bit awkward since it is so visible and open and there isn't any surrounding vegetation. All spots from the park have a great view of the water, but the east and west edges of the park either have a view of an undeveloped lot or non-activated sidewalks beside commercial buildings.

The park also rated very poorly amongst the enjoyment measures. The empty lawn does provide a place to play, but it is only flat in one portion with the rest of the lawn either stepped or sloped, making it difficult to really program or play on. The scale of the surrounding buildings is very large, dwarfing the very exposed and open park. Boston Harbor, though, puts the park more into the human scale and the congregation of the tables in one area helps to humanize the experience. There are little opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of the climate since the lawn has no trees in it, providing no shade or protection from the wind on the lawn, only on the hardscaped area. It might be pleasant to be on the lawn on a very perfect day with low wind, but given the park's location beside the Boston Harbor, surrounding skyscrapers, and the northern climate, that very rarely happens. In regards to the experience of

Figure 58: Seaport Public Green in its existing state does not meet the sidewalk at ground-level and has a stone border.

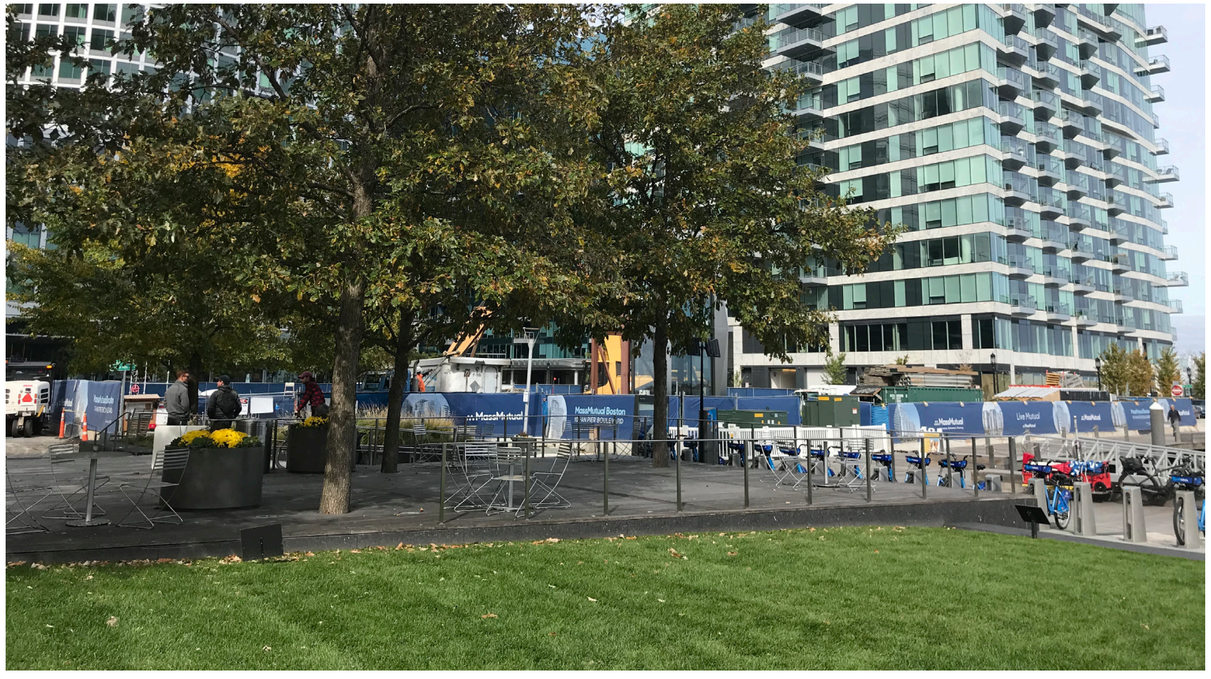


Figure 59: Seaport Public Green's hardscaped area currently meets the Harborwalk at its northern edge with an elevated ramp and metal barrier.

aesthetic qualities and positive sensory experiences, the park rated okay as there is nothing special or particularly beautiful about the park itself. Seaport Public Green is essentially an empty lawn, with a few trees that are somewhat scraggly and not beautiful to look at, vegetation that is not particularly interesting or inviting, and a hardscaped area that just looks like a run of the mill seating area, with nothing special or interesting about it. The best part of the park is the view of the water, which is seen wherever you are in the park, a major component that I strove to reinforce further in my redesign.

Social Space Survey

The final tool I used was the "Social Space Survey". The "Social Space Survey" is intended to show how public space can best serve people, how design can bring different people together, and whether the design can be improved to foster more inclusion and openness. Overall there is a variety of about 20 different places to sit, rest, eat, and socialize in the Seaport Public Green, all with nice views of the water. The park has very defined gateways and entrances, but there is not a variety of active ground floor businesses directly adjacent to the park. This could change depending on what the ground floor functions as in the future abutting residential building. There is one high-end restaurant along Marina Park Drive, but all their blinds are pulled down and people are not spilling out of it. District Hall and its' restaurant does spill over onto the sidewalk on the other side of Northern Avenue, but Seaport Public Green is set back far enough from the road that District Hall feels far away. Additionally, all users of District Hall spill over into Seaport Common, the abutting park to District Hall.

The largest element in Seaport Public Green is the lawn, but this tool indicates that this design again does not best serve people. People could exercise on the lawn, but the sloped quality, the open nature of the lawn, and the built in steps likely discourage people from exercising in the park. For this same reason, is likely why people do not play sports on the lawn. The lawn is big enough though to play frisbee or have a picnic in, but the lack of people behaving in such a manner indicates that the existing design does not encourage such use. There is also no playground or kid-focused play space, a plaza, food vendors, or public restrooms in or near the park, reducing the incentives to come to the park. The power connection for events on the lawn mentioned in articles was nowhere to be seen, nor did anyone I spoke to in interviews bring up this connection. Furthermore, all the nearby food and shopping options are very expensive. For that reason, with the additional understanding of the demographic makeup of the Seaport District, the park is not necessarily a place that invites people of all different backgrounds. There is nothing particular about the park design that prohibits this type of engagement, but rather it's the larger context of the District. The users of Seaport Public Green, currently, are mostly young professionals who are eating lunch in the park. All the people I observed were white, mostly male individuals who likely all work in the tech, innovation, and startup industries in the District. There were no adults on the lawn, further indicating that the existing design does not cater to the interests of the population in the District. People-watching and being social is apparent in the park and likely enabled by the location of the seating areas and the lawn itself. This positive element of the design I built off of in my redesign.

Ultimately, the findings of the observations helped to highlight what elements of the Seaport Public Green were activated and encouraging of use, and what elements were not. These findings were able to guide me in thinking about the new layout, changes to the physical elements, and the scale of the park when redesigning Seaport Public Green.

Findings from Research

Overall Perception of Seaport Public Green

In addition to some of the interviewees' lack of familiarity with Seaport Public Green, news articles also have little to say about the park. Few articles exist that directly talk about the park and those that do talk primarily about the park, date back to six years ago when the park was new and development in the Seaport District was just taking off. This indicates, to some degree, that Seaport Public Green has made very little impact on the public and that it is not in the public conscious as a destination in the District.

More recent articles about public open spaces in the Seaport District only mention Seaport Public Green briefly. When the park is mentioned it is also used as an example of a poor design and public open space. For instance, in one article the author addresses concerns raised about WS Development's plan for Harbor Way during its design and public hearing phase. Some pressure at the time had been placed on WS Development to remove District Hill to make room for Seaport Common to expand its lawn (Ramos, 2017). The article claims that lawns are overrated though and cites that "almost nobody uses the lawn right across the street from District Hall," referring to Seaport Public Green not even by name (Ramos, 2017). Another article, again focusing on Harbor Way and Harbor Square Park, notes how the challenge for that space will be how to make it truly feel like a public space, while it is maintained and programmed by a private entity and is surrounded by private buildings. The author notes how Boston designated Seaport Public Green as an open space in perpetuity, "but the grassy patch can feel so manicured you wondered if anyone wants you to set foot on it" and it does not feel so welcoming (Leung, 2017). The District and its developers ultimately need to decide who the public open

spaces are for and how they are going to best balance out the District's office towers (Ramos, 2017). This poor perception of Seaport Public Green was one I hoped to address and change in my redesign. I hoped to make my design turn the Seaport Public Green into something beyond a park that is seen as just another lawn that is not all that welcoming.

Relation to Other Seaport District Public Open Spaces

A major takeaway from the interviews and from conducting the observations, was the need for Seaport Public Green to have a stronger connection to the nearby parks in the Seaport District. As previously discussed, one component of what makes the Seaport District fail to feel like a true neighborhood is its parcel-by-parcel development and lack of connectivity. These parcels also range in size, with some developments being built on multiple blocks of about 3 acres total, such as One Seaport Boulevard, while others are being built on singular lots of about 1.5 acres, such as 100 Northern Avenue. The range of parcel development size further exacerbates the sensation that there is a lack of connectivity in the District. Seaport Public Green falls prey to the connectivity issue and feels completely separate from the adjacent Seaport Common.

Seaport Common, managed by WS Development, is set to be the last parcel devoted to the public in the Seaport Square development. Seaport Square is a 23 acre site in the heart of the Seaport District and is the last large parcel of undeveloped land in the core of the District (Figure 60). WS Development's vision for Seaport Square is to be about creating a soul for the District.[120] With that vision in mind it is crucial that Seaport Public Green have a connection to Seaport Square if it intends to be an active and viable space that serves the District's people.

Furthermore, a major component of Seaport Square is Harbor Way and Harbor Square Park. Harbor Way is designed to be 1.5 acres of linear open space that will be bordered by commercial, office, and residential buildings, and will end with Seaport Common (Carlock, 2018). Harbor Square Park is in the middle of Harbor Way, which has been "designed like a European piazza that takes its landscape cues from the New England coastline, ringed with multiple levels of retail, cafes and restaurants with hundreds of outdoor seats surrounding a central active gathering place that will play host to numerous seasonal events and activities," and will ensure that there is still a localized green space along Harbor Way (Carlock, 2017). It will include a variety of soft and hardscape spaces with lots of vegetation, a central green with vegetation and rock features, a wooden boardwalk with seating that will extend the length of the park and connect the portions together, porch style swings and other formal and informal seating arrangements (tables & chairs, benches, etc.), a stone play area, and a canopy walk with an incorporated play area for kids (Figures 61-64) (Carlock, 2018).

Figure 60: Sketch plan of Harbor Way and Seaport Square (L-3 parcel block), with Harbor Square Park in the center and Seaport Common at the right end.

Figure 61: Birds eye view of Harbor Square Park.

Figure 62: Ground level view of the linear open spaces in Harbor Way.

Figure 63: Harbor Way's green Space.

Figure 64: Harbor Way's canopy play structure.

The creation of the Harbor Way and Harbor Square Park will help to give the Seaport District a much needed feeling of connection to the space and a soul. Seaport Public Green should be a part of creating that feeling and further help to establish the neighborhood. As is, the lack of connectivity between Seaport Common and Seaport Public Green is poor and Seaport Public Green will not feel like a natural extension of the linear public open spaces. My redesign was therefore heavily informed by trying to make Seaport Public Green feel like a natural continuation of Harbor Way and Seaport Common. Furthermore, another goal of WS Development's with Harbor Way, which goes from one end of the District to the other [121], was to bring the water's edge closer into the District by providing a direct path to the Boston Harbor. As the park that is directly adjacent to the water's edge and the Harborwalk, Seaport Public Green has the potential, and duty, to establish such a relationship with the Boston Harbor. Again my redesign was informed by this idea and vision to have Seaport Public Green be a true connection to the Harbor Way.

Another factor I hoped to address with my redesign was the oversaturation of lawns in the Seaport District. This issue is especially poignant as a new public park at the end of the District's Pier 4 opened in the fall of 2019. Pier 4 is directly east of the ICA, putting this park in very close proximity to Seaport Public Green, and is only a four minute walk, according to Google Maps, away. The new Pier 4 park is an acre of grass, plaza, and boardwalk reaching out over the Boston Harbor (Logan, 2019). It is the first time the pier has ever truly been open to the public, because restaurant Anthony's Pier 4 had previously occupied the space. Despite it opening up the pier to the public, the park is basically just a flat lawn with a surrounding boardwalk (Figure 65), making it and Seaport Public Green almost identical. With this new park, the goal is to draw people in from Seaport Boulevard and Northern Avenue by having a stretch of boardwalk that extends out into the Boston Harbor and stairs that go straight down to the Boston Harbor itself (Logan, 2019). This gives people the opportunity to actually dip their toes in the water and directly engage with the Boston Harbor, and is one of the few spots in the City where you can do that and the only spot in the Seaport (Logan, 2019). Furthermore, the design's intention was to make a space that was apart from the bustle of the City, an oasis of nature amidst the density, and welcoming (Logan, 2019).

In reality though, the grass portion is pretty small and sloped at a slight angle, and there is no signage that actually indicates that the park is public and a part of the Harborwalk, which given the issues of the other parks in the District might not help to convey that this space is in fact welcoming (Logan, 2019). The park also does not really attract children or families. In reality it is going to continue to attract the people that already visit these sites in the Seaport, especially since it really does not offer a different experience to what already exists in the District, including Seaport Public Green (Logan, 2019). Given the addition of this park to the mix of public open spaces in the Seaport District, it is even more vital that Seaport Public Green provide a diverse experience and better foster the relationship with, and connect people to the Harborwalk and the Boston Harbor. I intended my redesign to place a major emphasis on doing such.

Figure 65: New lawn on Pier 4.

An additional component of my redesign was better addressing the issue of resiliency at Seaport Public Green and the role the park can play in the overall resiliency of the Seaport District. When conducting research, I encountered the City of Boston's *Coastal Resilience Solutions for South Boston* report, which specifically develops solutions for addressing sea level rise in the Seaport District by Seaport Public Green. *Coastal Resilience Solutions for South Boston* is Boston's second local climate resilience plan that presents climate adaptation solutions at a district-scale for the Seaport District. Coastal resilience solutions are needed to prevent physical damages and displacement costs that could amount to costs of billions of dollars. Solutions provided in the report generate a variety of benefits including waterfront access, recreation, mobility, and flood protection. (City of Boston, 2018).

Most of the Seaport District is historically

filled tidelands, including where Seaport Public Green is located, that are only about a foot or two above the high tide line. This makes the District particularly vulnerable to sea level rise. According to the report, Boston's sea level could rise, based on 2013 levels, by nine inches by the 2030s and 40 inches by the 2070s. The nine inch increase alone will result in a ten-fold increase in flood risk. Implementing strategies along the shoreline can help with addressing the short-term needs of the District. If no actions are taken District wide, the report noted that there will be widespread flooding across the entire Seaport and the Harborwalk will become unusable. (City of Boston, 2018).

Multiple measures to address resiliency are proposed in the report. They include elevated waterfront parks, an enhanced Harborwalk, natural wetland buffers, site amenities, like seating and steps, and overall improved access to the water's edge. "Such measures can enhance the public realm, social equity, economic opportunity, waterfront access, and natural resources," according to the report. The report also suggests that park designs might include features such as stormwater gardens or nature-based features like wetlands or marshes. These elements can double as flood protection and social spaces, while also functioning as natural buffers from storm damage and increased rainfall. The report found that these proposed measures would protect up to the one percent annual chance flood level with the 40 inch sea level rise, plus an additional one foot of freeboard, that could then all be adapted and elevated at least two feet higher if necessary. Such adaptability could ensure that the District is prepared and protected for about 70 years. (City of Boston, 2018).

The report proposes in depth designs for the different areas of the Seaport District, as each area is surrounded by water in different ways. The location where Seaport Public Green is, dubbed as being part of the South Boston Waterfront,[122] has three flood pathways that originate in the area (Figure 66). The third flood pathway originates at the edge of Seaport Public Green, where the park meets the marina in the Boston Harbor. The pathway flows landward from Pier 4 and reaches all the way to Seaport Boulevard and the surrounding buildings. Given Seaport Public Green's location in this direct pathway, the park's design needs to be a part of the resiliency solutions. (City of Boston, 2018).

There are four proposed design options for the area in the report (Figure 67). Option A would use the existing available space and provide flood protection along the perimeter of the area. Within the existing green spaces, berms and grading can be used to minimally interrupt the landscape, while still increasing its protection. Option B again provides protection along the perimeter of the area, but fills in a portion of the marina beside Seaport Public Green and expands

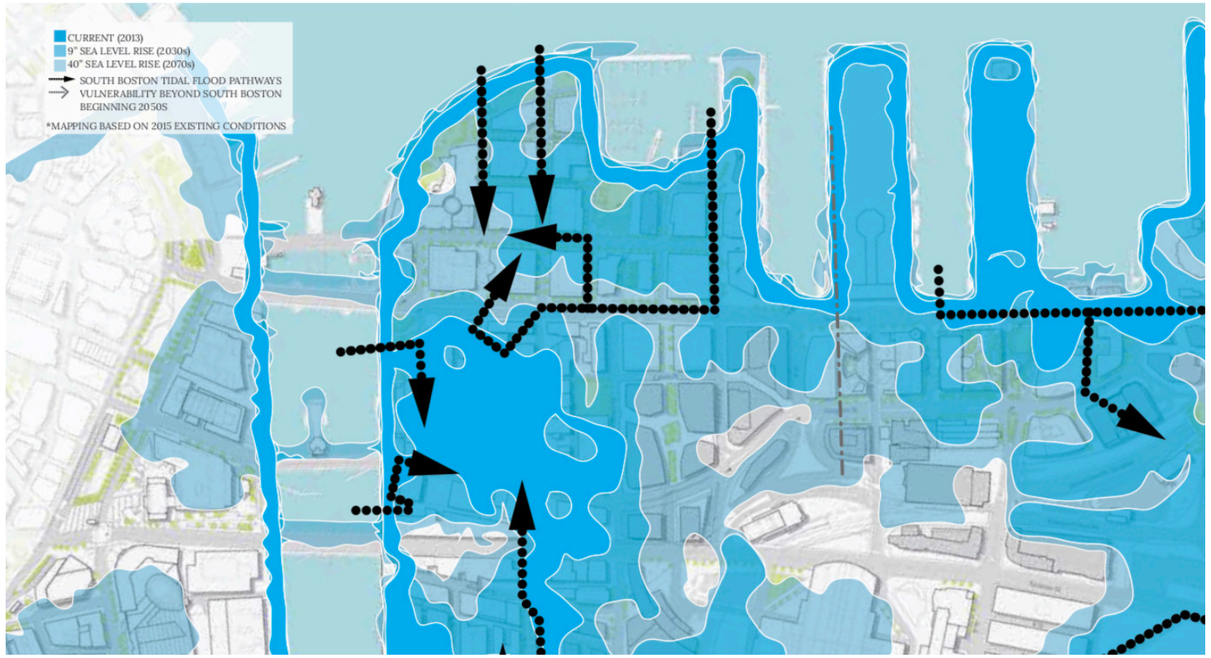


Figure 66: Three flood pathways originate in the area where Seaport Public Green is located.

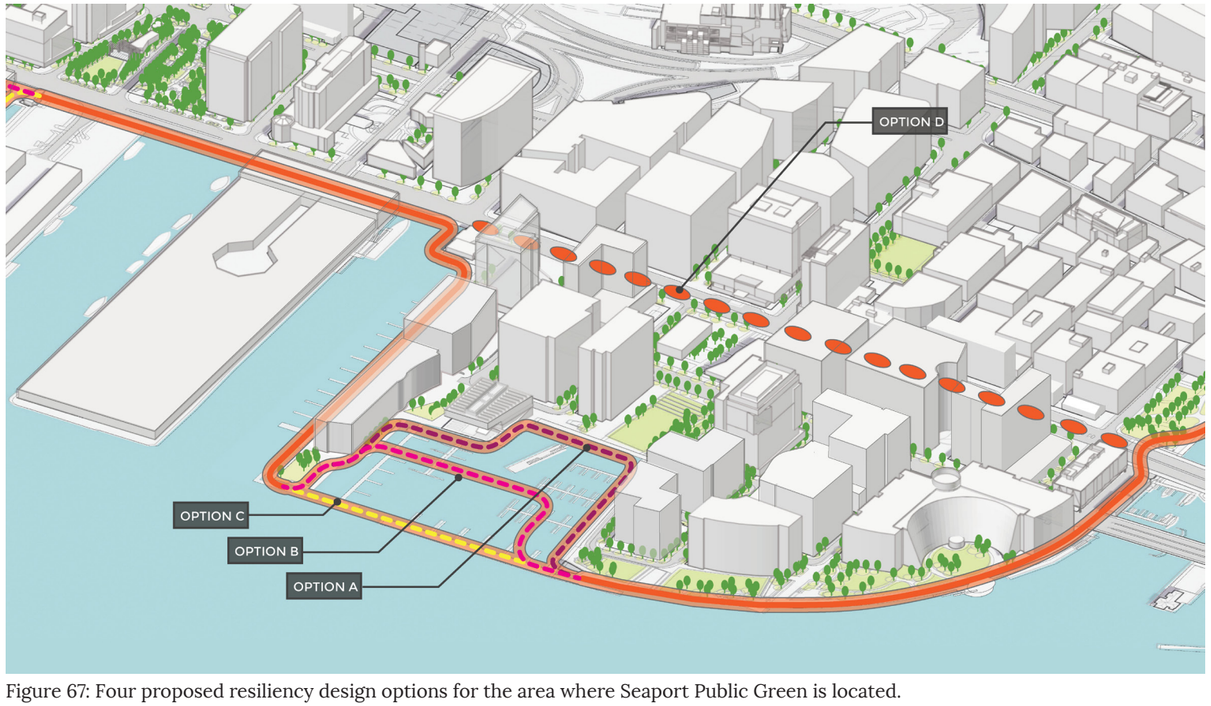


Figure 67: Four proposed resiliency design options for the area where Seaport Public Green is located.

public space and recreation areas. Option C also provides protection along the perimeter of the area, but includes a new Harborwalk or levee across the marina entrance with a floodgate for boat access. Option D uses Seaport Boulevard as a floodwall by raising the road and adding planters, thus requiring floodproofing of all the buildings and infrastructure north of Seaport Boulevard, i.e. where Seaport Public Green is located. (See figures 68-70). Altering the Harborwalk, to varying degrees, is also proposed throughout the report. The alterations range from building an adjacent floodwall to elevating the Harborwalk up to two feet. Elevating the adjacent sidewalks or adding stepped seating would preserve sight lines and avoid disrupting the pedestrian relationship with the water's edge (Figure 71). (City of Boston, 2018).

The report ultimately acknowledges that whatever path is taken forward will require a variety of regulatory actions, the participation of private property owners, and a vast wealth of financial resources (City of Boston, 2018). While the *Coastal Resilience Solutions for South Boston* report takes a much broader look at resiliency than is possible within the scope of this Master's Project, the recommendations and points made in the report did guide my redesign.

Parks of New York City

Beyond the parks in and around Boston mentioned by the interviewees, I conducted some additional research on parks in New York City. The three parks I looked at are all parks that have opened within the last two years, are waterfront parks, and were designed in conjunction with new large-scale developments. These characteristics made the parks particularly well suited to provide input for the redesign of Seaport Public Green. Domino Park, a ¼ mile waterfront park in Brooklyn was part of a massive development related to the revitalization of the Williamsburg neighborhood. The park is a highly activated programmed park with multiple different areas serving different purposes and functions. Domino Park also celebrates its industrial history by using refurnished materials from the industrial factories that once were in the area (Figure 72). Active recreation areas and spaces for children's play, including elaborate playgrounds, water features, and dog parks are part of the park. These features were designed to pay homage to the refinery building that used to be on the site. (Jacobs, 2018).

Hunter's Point South park in Queens is an 11 acre park that was part of the Hunter's Point South development. The surrounding density of the park is not overwhelming and feels more intimate while still at a high volume with more open space. The area's population is primarily families with children and people who use the outdoor facilities, meaning there are a great deal of "eyes on the street." The landscape architect for the park wanted to create a diversity

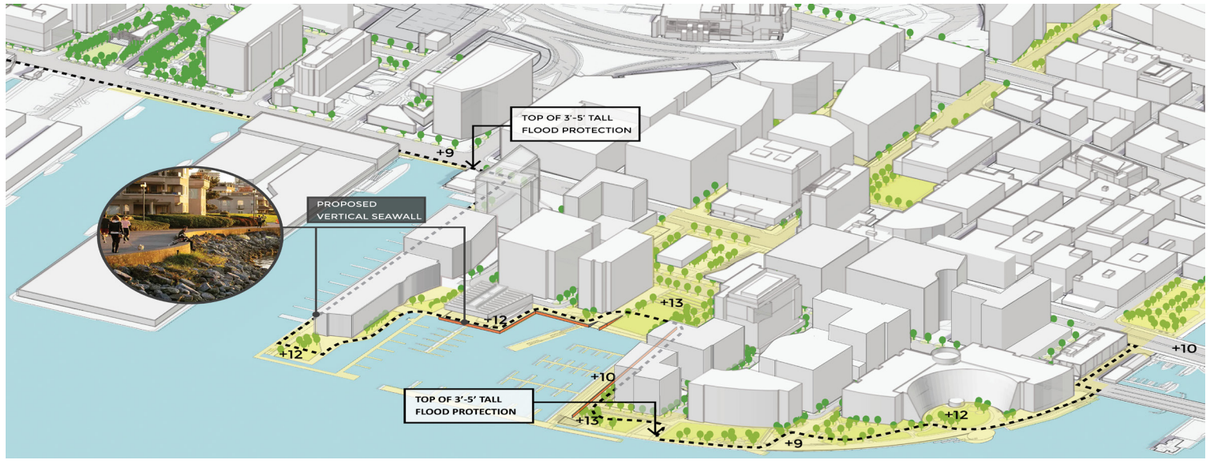


Figure 68: Option A makes use of existing spaces to reduce flood risks.

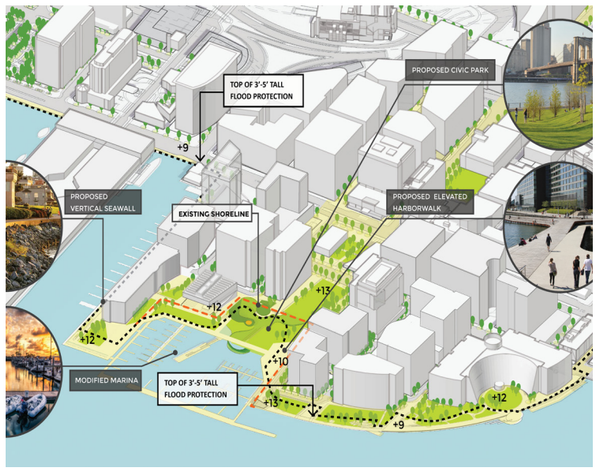


Figure 69: Option B expands existing public spaces.

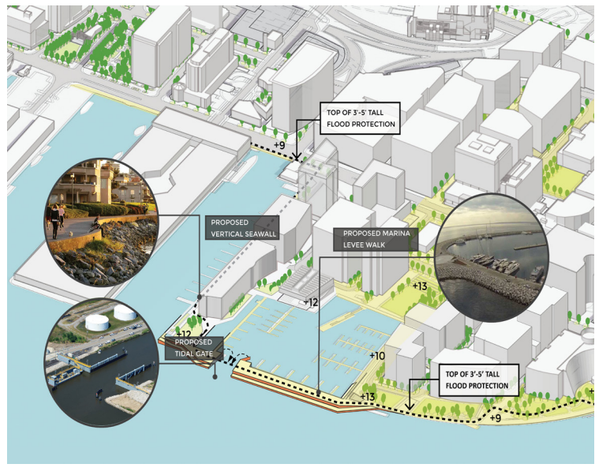


Figure 70: Option C makes use of the Harborwalk and makes infrastructure changes.

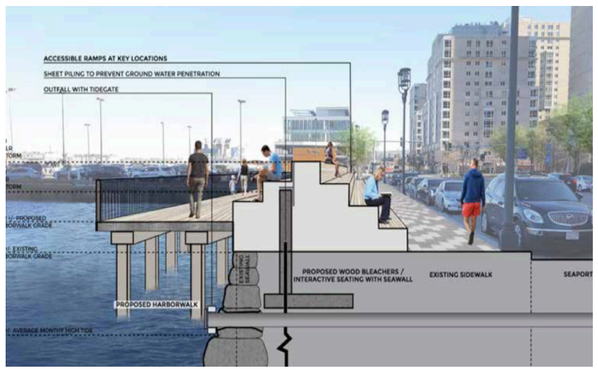


Figure 71: Proposed design for elevating the Harborwalk and adding a stepped sidewalk.

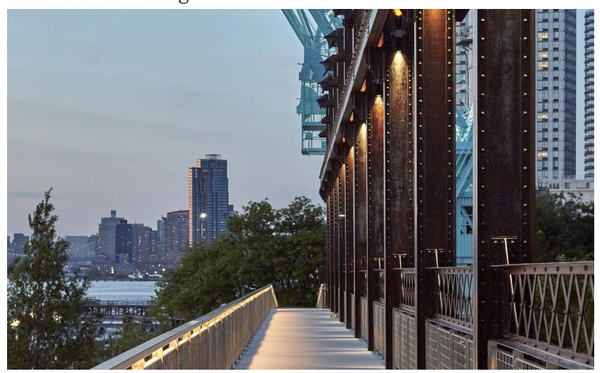


Figure 72: Domino Park uses refurnished materials from the former industrial factories at the site. This inspired the redesign of Seaport Public Green to include materials honoring the area's industrial history.

of experiences along the waterfront and provide a variety of ways to engage with the waterfront. This activates the site, while still permitting a level of flexibility and choice. Additionally, portions of the park are unnatural and abstract with a large oval-shaped field as the central point and a shade pavilion that is abstract in form. This provides for different types of programming at a variety of scales in the park. The other portion of the park is more natural and has a feeling of wildness, with a wet pond along the edge. These elements help to mitigate damage from rising sea levels, harken back to the historic identity of the area, and provide a very distinct experience, unlike those of other parks in NYC. Hunter's Point South park also includes overlooks along the water, which could be incorporated into Seaport Public Green at a smaller scale (Figure 73). (Jacobs, 2018).

The third park is Pier 3 in Brooklyn Bridge Park, the last of the landscaped piers in a 1.3 mile park. Pier 3 provides access to the water and designated space for pedestrians and bikes at a very large scale (Figure 74). Each pier is different, with some having a more passive design and greenery, and others being more active. The designers used recycled wood materials to build the benches, tiered seating, and light posts. The design of the park is more forward thinking, with subtle nods to its industrial past. Furthermore, the aesthetic feels like the park is a direct response to its unique site and the current moment. All together these parks represent the reimagining of NYC's waterfront and a reopening of the water to the people. (Jacobs, 2018). Their emphasis on including historic elements and materials that are a nod to the history of the area inspired my redesign of Seaport Public Green to take a similar approach. The wet ponds, natural landscape, and the idea of incorporating a variety of spaces within a park also inspired my redesign and emphasized to me that people will want to experience the water's edge in different ways and Seaport Public Green can offer those experiences.

Climate Positive Design

Building off of the *Coastal Resilience Solutions for South Boston* report, I conducted additional research related to climate focused design in landscape architecture. What I encountered was a growing emphasis on landscape architects designing and building projects that are climate positive, meaning that over their lifespan, the parks sequester more greenhouse gas emissions than they embody or produce. Pamela Conrad, a Landscape Architect & Principal at CMG Landscape Architecture in San Francisco, created the Climate Positive Design Challenge to motivate and guide landscape architects to reach the goal of climate positive design (Green, 2019). Conrad's challenge to designers is to design "projects to remove more carbon from the atmosphere than they emit" (Climate Positive Design). Climate Positive Design has suggested targets, which

Figure 73: Outlooks in Hunter's Point South park that inspired the outlooks in the redesign.

Figure 74: Brooklyn Bridge Park has a variety of large scale spaces to connect with the water's edge.

include designing and redesigning parks to become positive in five years, meaning they are sequestering more CO_2 than they are emitting within those five years (Climate Positive Design). Conrad found that the quality and/or programming of the spaces does not have to change to meet the targets, rather "the projects merely become greener" (Green, 2019).

Climate Positive Design displays a variety of case studies on their website to show designers and landscape architects what a climate positive park might look like. The case studies also include elements that could be retrofitted into a park and part of a redesign, like in the case of this project. Some of the elements that were the most relevant to the scale of Seaport Public Green and were possible to implement in the space are presented in the following table.

Table 4: Climate Positive Design Case Study Elements

Element	**Benefit**
Add more trees to the park	Sequesters carbon
Use crushed stone/ gravel paths	Reduces the amount of CO_2 emitted
Add cement substitutions to site concrete	Reduces the amount of CO_2 emitted
Use wood decking on overlooks instead of concrete	Reduces the amount of CO_2 emitted
Increase plantings	Sequesters carbon
Remove site walls	Reduces the amount of CO_2 emitted

Source: Climate Positive Design. (n.d.). Case studies - Climate Positive Design: Climate Positive Design Challenge. Retrieved March 29, 2020, from https://climatepositivedesign.com/resources/case-studies/

Beyond parks being positively designed, they also support emissions reductions by improving overall quality of urban life (Wright). Parks can make dense living healthier and more appealing, which plays into a variety of public health benefits. Studies show that access to green space and public parks leads to people being more physically active, living longer lives, and reporting higher levels of overall well-being (Wright). According to an article written by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), "trees are the basis of the critical environmental systems that underpin the health and resilience of a city" (Wright). This statement about trees greatly informed my redesign of Seaport Public Green.

The ASLA also states that landscape architects have the responsibility to integrate elements into the urban landscape that reduce emissions and support resiliency efforts. According to ASLA, "resilient landscape planning design can help communities live with periodic or even constant flooding, adapting to a new way of life" (King). ASLA emphasized, like the interviewees did, that solutions need to be made system-wide and go beyond a single project (King). Keeping the scale of Seaport Public Green in mind, I focused on the ASLA's recommendation that "parks and open spaces that let water flow through safely, or store excess water for later use" can be effective solutions (King). Ultimately, I am not a landscape architect and the redesign of Seaport Public Green was done primarily from the perspective of an Urban Planner and Designer, but I was informed in my redesign by the information from the ASLA.

Description of Redesign of Seaport Public Green

The redesign of Seaport Public Green features multiple new components that are intended to make the park a highly utilized space that reflects both the history and current context of the Seaport District. Each of these components were informed by the literature and my findings from the research, interviews, and observations I conducted. In this section, I will describe and explain the purpose and presumed function of each element. The following section of this paper will include the physical renderings and diagrams of the redesigned Seaport Public Green.

Lawn

The lawn has been redesigned to be about half of the site, compared to covering almost the entirety of the space in its existing form (See Master Site Plan). I have designed the lawn to be only about half the site because I wanted to make the park different from what else exists in the Seaport. Currently so many of the spaces in the District are either 100% lawn or about a 50/50 split of hard and softscape spaces. There is not a lot of diversity of park types, nor a lot of diversity of the internal elements in the parks in the District. The overabundance of lawns in the Seaport District has made Seaport Public Green a repetitive space, despite Richard Burck Associates belief that it was a unique site. This new composition of lawn is intended to make Seaport Public Green distinct by being more than just a lawn with a hardscaped path. It is still a relatively simple open space, but the park's new elements are more interactive and intriguing. This new distinction from other lawns in the District will also encourage people to visit the park. The redesign still recognizes the importance of having a lawn, as a lawn serves as a place to relax, play games, and interact with others in a very casual setting. There is also a political incentive to include a lawn at Seaport Public Green. As the research suggests, people still do not feel like there is enough green space in the Seaport. By continuing to provide a substantial amount of green space in the new Seaport Public Green, it addresses that issue.

In the redesign, I removed the existing stepping pattern so that the lawn is now level with the sidewalk (See Landform Diagram). This helps to make Seaport Public Green feel more inviting and approachable. Richard Burck himself said that the elevation and steps of the lawn was meant to make it bothersome enough that people would walk around to the hardscaped strip. This makes for a very uninviting lawn that feels very separated from the sidewalk. Now that the park is flush with the sidewalk it behaves as a continuation of the sidewalk, which is part of the public realm, effectively acknowledging that this park is the public's domain. I continued the small elevation of the lawn to help in capturing the view of the water, but without the steps, the slight elevation is much more gradual and less off-putting (See Landform Diagram). The elimination of the steps and leveling of the park at ground-level also ensures that Seaport Public Green is accessible to everyone, because the existing steps serve as a way to prevent those who are handicapped, elderly, etc. from taking advantage of the park. It also opens up the lawn to being programmed in a greater variety of ways than could happen with the steps there.

Additionally, I eliminated the "No dogs permitted" rule at Seaport Public Green. Dogs are an active part of the lifestyle of residents in the Seaport and if residents are to use the park the space should reflect their lifestyle. While allowing dogs at the park does open up the issue of owners not picking up after their dogs, the thought is that, with the space becoming activated, people will face the social pressure to do the right thing and pick up after their dogs. The activation of the park and high usage will effectively act like "eyes on the street." There will also be doggy-bag posts and trashcans on site that will also serve as a way to enforce and encourage people to pick up after their dogs (See Perspective Renderings).

The function of the redesigned lawn is to be an open space that is open to a variety of uses (See Perspective Renderings). People can play games, have picnics, read, sit and relax, engage in social conversations, etc. on the lawn. Light active programming on the lawn will be encouraged. Neighboring Seaport Common hosts intensely programmed activities, so Seaport Public Green should not compete with that though. This is especially so because Seaport Common is still owned and run by WS Development, a developer that is heavily involved in the development and operation of buildings in the Seaport, whereas Seaport Public Green does not have that type of ownership. Lack of clarity over who is responsible for programming the park would also no longer be a problem if the park is not designed to primarily host intense programming. The new residential building that is set to be built directly next to the park could hold outdoor events on the lawn. With the lawn directly abutting the right edge of that building site, the redesign hopes to encourage the residents of the future building to come to the park. Having direct access to a lawn can feel very welcoming, safe, and encouraging for both parents and kids. With that in mind, the redesigned lawn is made to feel very inviting and almost like a resident would be stepping into their own backyard. The redesign also adds lampposts within the park itself, as well as along the Harborwalk and Northern Avenue, to increase the sense of safety in Seaport Public Green (See Master Site Plan & Perspective Renderings).

Trees in the redesign remain on the outer edges of the lawn so as to not disrupt having a large open lawn space, but also to maintain the site view of the Boston Harbor from both within and beside the park (See Master Site Plan & Perspective Renderings). Seaport Public Green serves as an important connection to the Harbor and needs to be a place that allows and encourages people to have a connection with the water's edge. Maintaining the sightline was therefore a critical part of the redesign, especially because this is a sightline that can be seen from Seaport Boulevard, the street parallel to Northern Avenue and the main thoroughfare in the District. There are more trees in the redesign than in the existing condition, though, with the intention that they provide additional shade and shield users from the wind, as well as help with the absorption of water (See Sun, Shadow & Wind Diagram). These trees will continue to be trees that can withstand salt water and the microclimate of the area. I also continued the use of deciduous trees in the park to help address both the winds and strong sun in the warmer months, and dark shadows in the colder months (See Sun, Shadow & Wind Diagram). There are more trees on the left hand side of the park, which RBA found to be the area that receives the most direct sunlight and wind, to help shield users of the park from these elements (See Sun, Shadow & Wind Diagram, Master Site Plan, & Perspective Renderings). The planters in the existing design have been removed, with the focus shifting to using the trees to absorb water instead of having them elevated above ground to be protected from flooding events, as they currently are. Additional trees also help to make the space feel more intimate and less vacuous, eliminating that self-conscious feeling one may have when they are out on the existing lawn. There are also now trees for users to lean up against and sit directly under. The new, higher number of vegetation in the park will also help Seaport Public Green to sequester carbon and be more climate positive. Adding more trees was also important to the redesign from the public health perspective, as the findings from the research showed that trees play a critical role in the health and resiliency of a city and its people. The lawn also serves as an area that can help to absorb water and deal with rising sea level and flooding that is frequent in this area using the existing integration system (See Hydrology Diagram).

Possibly the most important purpose of the lawn is that it will now serve as a valuable space in the Seaport linear park system. Currently, the public open spaces in the Seaport feel very disconnected and unrelated. The redesign intends to address this by using the lawn to continue the extension of the neighboring Seaport Common's lawn. Seaport Common will ultimately be connected to the future Harbor Way and Harbor Square Park, which will be a mix of both hard and softscape surfaces. The renderings for Harbor Square Park include an area of lawn that is also circular with vegetation, so Seaport Public Green will further pick up on that. The redesigned lawn will help to connect Seaport Public Green with its surroundings and the other parks into a linear path straight to the water. The lawn is now inviting and a visible next step from Seaport Common. This will help with the feeling of community, help to bridge the gaps between all the distinct buildings, and address the feeling that the Seaport is a very disjointed area. It will also acknowledge other parks through its design, but remain distinct enough to encourage people to still use the space.

As is, the lawn feels very much so like it is just a foreground for the surrounding Fan Pier architecture. With the park now being level with the sidewalk and the lawn having more of a variety of components, the space becomes one that belongs to itself and the community, instead of to the private adjacent buildings.

Permeable Gravel Path

The redesign's gravel paths are curved and shaped in such a way that they provide access points to the path from every side of Seaport Public Green (See Master Site Plan). This is meant to encourage people to come to the park and to help make the park feel more inviting and welcoming. The paths and the way they shape the edges of the lawn help to provide the lawn with context and eliminate that sense of self-consciousness that one gets from sitting in the lawn in the existing conditions. These gravel paths are distinct from the Harborwalk at the northern edge of Seaport Public Green, but have a similar coloring. This helps to fuse the paths and the Harborwalk together, while still helping to make the park feel distinct from the Harborwalk. Furthermore, the gravel paths give a sense to the community that Seaport Public Green is an open space, but that it also has its own identity. In my redesign, I was inspired by how the sidewalks and paths through the Boston Common are able to have people feel connected to the Common while on the sidewalk and also enable people to feel innately connected to the park when on the paths inside the park.

These gravel paths help to connect all the parts of the new Seaport Public Green together. They bridge the distinctions between the various components of the park and make Seaport Public Green feel like one collective, harmonious spot. The paths also provide walkers with their own distinct realm of domain. Therefore people who are just causally walking, pushing strollers, walking dogs, etc. don't have to feel like they are getting in the way of people using the lawn or sitting at the tables on the hardscaped area. The walkers will have their own space that still allows them to engage with the park. By the kiosk, the gravel path is also wider to account for lines and groups of people, and is designed to be wider in such a way that these groups of people will interfere less with the people who are using other parts of the park. The path also helps to make the park feel a bit bigger, giving

the sense that there is more nature and softness in the Seaport District as a whole. This is a visual way of addressing all the hardscaped density in the District within the limited size of the subject site. (See Master Site Plan & Perspective Renderings).

Lastly, the gravel paths are made of a permeable material. The paths will therefore be able to absorb water, helping mitigate the issues of being directly next to the Boston Harbor, and dealing with flooding and sea level rise in the area (See Hydrology Diagram). The gravel paths will also reduce the amount of CO_2 emitted in Seaport Public Green, helping the park to become climate positive.

Bricked Crosswalk & Sidewalk

In the existing conditions at Seaport Public Green, there is no crosswalk directly from the edge of neighboring Seaport Common to the Seaport Public Green. This makes the parks feel very disconnected and isolated from one another, even though they are directly across from each other on either side of Northern Avenue. As previously discussed, part of the issue of the Seaport District overall is that so much of the District feels disconnected from its surroundings and development is done on a parcel-by-parcel basis. By creating a crosswalk directly from edge to edge, the redesign is intended to help create this sense of connection and that the two parks are a continuation of each other (See Master Site Plan). This feeling of continuation is especially important when one considers the fact that Seaport Common will directly connect with the linear Harbor Way, which will extend almost the whole width of the District. Simply having a crosswalk between Seaport Common and Seaport Public Green will help Seaport Public Green to feel like a continuation of this linear park system, and be a key part of the District overall. It will also help with the idea that the Seaport's parks will bring people directly to the water's edge (See Vehicle & Pedestrian Circulation Diagram). Ultimately, my design is meant to feel like a more natural transition between the two parks, with Seaport Public Green being more nature-oriented and Seaport Common more industrialized. It serves as a good transition with the closer you are to the water, the more connected to nature you feel, and the closer you are to the main thoroughfare in the District, the more connected you feel to the established innovation culture. Furthering the sense of continuation between Seaport Common and Seaport Public Green also gets to the theories presented in the literature that the connection between elements is key to ensuring a space does not become an anti-space.

The redesigned sidewalks are bricked and made wider than the existing sidewalks (See Master Site Plan). This was done to reinforce feelings of safety, openness, and seamlessness between the parks. The sidewalk is still distinct from the park and in so doing serves as a barrier between cars and pedestrians. In the existing conditions, RBA designed the sidewalk and road along Marina Park Drive to blend into each other. While these bricking patterns do blend well together, the idea that pedestrians and cars have equal priority is not evident based solely on such a design element. The sidewalks do not actually feel like an extension of the park and the benches along Marina Park Drive go unutilized. The widening of the sidewalks is intended to actually achieve that experience. These new widened sidewalks also make Northern Avenue narrower and force drivers to go slower when driving by the park. This further instills a feeling of safety amongst users of the park. Existing conditions also include parallel parking on both sides of Northern Avenue, directly along the southern edge of Seaport Public Green. The redesign eliminates this on-street parking (See Master Site Plan) as there is not a necessary need for the street parking due to nearby surface and garage parking lots, and it visually cuts Seaport Public Green off from Seaport Common and District Hall. Eliminating the on-street parking therefore opens up the view of Seaport Public Green and the Boston Harbor to more people and enhances the feeling that the park is inviting and safe. (See Vehicle & Pedestrian Circulation Diagram). Additional lampposts on the sidewalk also enhance feelings of safety and illuminate the park.

Kiosk

A major new component of the redesign is the addition of a kiosk (See Master Site Plan). The kiosk is designed to serve two purposes: food and/or educational. It is a large enough facility that it could entertain both uses. Food would encourage people to get outside, have a meal or snack in the park, and engage with others while taking advantage of the Seaport Public Green. This would also help to give a sense of community to the area and enable Seaport Public Green to behave like a little neighborhood park, despite it being in such a large, dense area. As the interviewees noted, establishing a relationship with food, whether that be from the kiosk itself or through providing people with spaces to sit and eat, helps to activate the park.

The educational aspect of the kiosk could be devoted to signage, selling books, having volunteers, etc. that teach users of the park about the history of the area. Signage on the building is designed to be similar to what is seen on parts of the Harborwalk along Fan Pier, directly to the left of the park, and by the Legal Harborside restaurant, which is a bit further down – an 11 min walk via Google Maps (Figure 75). This would further help to build that connection between the park and other areas in the Seaport, again addressing issues of connectivity in the District. Signage in Seaport Public Green would go beyond what is already known and displayed on the other signs, possibly by focusing on the environmental issues the District is facing, such as rising sea

Figure 75: Signage along the Harborwalk by the Legal Harborside restaurant that signage in the redesign is modeled after

levels and stormwater mitigation. The signage could also discuss the history of wetlands in the area, which ties into the wet pond in the park, or discuss the future changes the area will be faced with.

The kiosk is designed to be a wooden structure and shaped like the bow of a boat with its angular features (See Perspective 1 Rendering). This architecture harkens back to the history of the Seaport District, and this area specifically, as a shipping yard. The wood structure also breaks up the surrounding buildings and serves as a contrast to the all glass and steel skyscrapers surrounding the park. It also helps to make the kiosk feel more intimate and approachable. Furthermore, an existing part of Harbor Way includes a sculpture and bench that is meant to look like a sail boat, so this would subtly connect the two parks, which are at opposite ends of the District and the future Harbor Square Park, furthering the goal of connection in the District (Figure 76). In designing the kiosk, I was also inspired by the design of the kiosk in the nearby Rose Kennedy Greenway (Figure 77). By building off that design, I hoped to connect the Seaport to other areas of Boston to instill the sense that the District is not isolated from the rest of the city. The roof of the kiosk is also solar paneled to take advantage of the direct sunlight that comes off the water in that direction (See Perspective 1 Rendering & Sun, Shadow & Wind Diagram).

Located intentionally on the northern half of Seaport Public Green, closer to Marina Park Drive, the kiosk does not cut off the sightline or interfere with the lawn or hardscaped portion of the park (See Master Site Plan & Perspective 1 Rendering). The kiosk can also easily be seen from all borders of the park, which encourages people to come visit and see what the kiosk is. Even though the kiosk is not the main focal point of the park, it remains very much so within the park, because it is meant to be an accessory to the use of Seaport Public Green and serve as a way to invite more people into the park. The kiosk ultimately makes the park more interesting and helps in making Seaport Public Green a destination.

Covered Archway & Hardscaped Section

In the existing Seaport Public Green there is a hardscaped section, in the same area as in the redesign, that is well utilized. The redesign continues this use, but improves upon it. The most notable improvement is the addition of an archway (See Master Plan & Perspective Renderings). The archway is modeled after the archways in the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the Christopher Columbus Park Path in Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park, and Post Office Square (Figures 78-81). All three of those archways help to continue the sightline of the surrounding view and serve as very visually pleasing aspects of the parks. They also help to make the parks feel more intimate with the “ceiling” of the archways much

Figure 76: Sculpture in Harbor Way meant to model a sail boat that the kiosk’s design in the redesign would relate to.

Figure 77: Kiosk in the Rose Kennedy Greenway that inspired the design and function of the kiosk in the redesign.

Figure 78: Archway in the Rose Kennedy Greenway that informed both the shape and texture of the archway in the redesign.

Figure 79: Relationship of the seating and the archway in the Rose Kennedy Greenway that inspired a similar approach in the redesign.

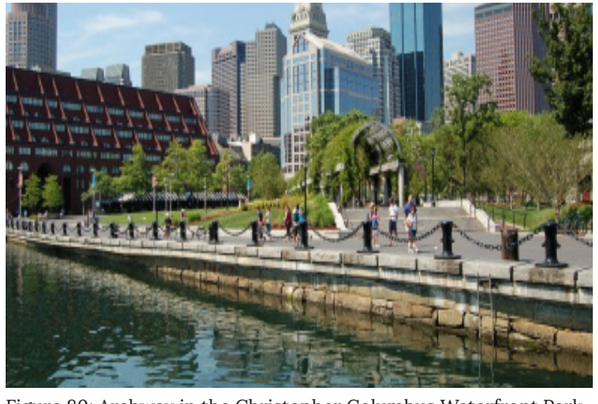


Figure 80: Archway in the Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park that extends the sightline of the water’s edge and inspired using a similar approach to extend the sightline in the redesign.

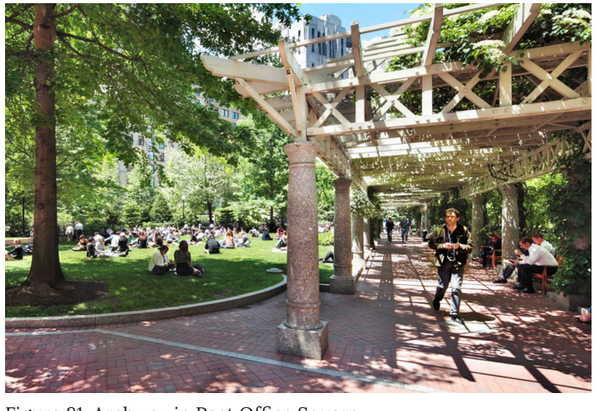


Figure 81: Archway in Post Office Square that also inspired using an archway to extend the sightline in the redesign

closer to people than the roofs of the surrounding buildings. These three parks are great examples of great public open spaces in Boston, so I picked up on their commonalities and incorporated this component into the redesign of Seaport Public Green. All three of these parks are also not too far away from Seaport Public Green, again furthering the connection between the Seaport and the rest of Boston.

The redesign's archway extends the sightline in the park towards the Boston Harbor and the Harborwalk, and encourages people to engage with the water's edge. The archway also continues Richard Burck's notion of bringing the harborfront deeper into the built environment through the emphasized sightline. One of the most important features of Seaport Public Green is its location and connection to the Harbor, so emphasizing the sightline and encouraging people to interact with the water's edge was a critical component of the redesign. The archway is made out of bronzed steel, reminiscent of the industrial history of the District, serving as a contrast to the surrounding modern glass towers surrounding it, while still tying in with the idea of new development (See Perspective Renderings). The height of the archways makes the space feel more intimate, while also playing off of the height of the surrounding buildings.

The boardwalk material used on the Harborwalk is continued under the archway and serves as the material used in the hardscaped section in Seaport Public Green (See Master Plan & Perspective Renderings). This helps to make the Harborwalk feel like a natural extension of the park. Despite RBA's intentions for the hardscaped area to feel like an extension of the Harborwalk in the existing conditions, the Harborwalk instead just feels like a neighbor to the park because the park's hardscaped area is both elevated above the Harborwalk and has metal railings that act like barriers. My redesign eliminates these barriers and physically connects them as one entity (See Master Plan & Perspective Renderings). It also encourages people who are visiting Seaport Public Green or eating lunch at the tables on the hardscaped area to keep walking towards the water and along the Harborwalk into other areas of the District or City and vice versa. This builds on the sense of needed connection amongst components of the Seaport. The boardwalk material used is also meant to not exasperate issues of water absorption, as the open jointed decking allows for better water absorption than standard concrete, continuing on what is done currently at the park.

Beside the archway are tables and trees, building off of the existing conditions (See Perspective Renderings). Tables and trees are purposefully not located underneath the archway so that there is ample walking room. This redesigned hardscaped area continues to provide space for employees of the neighboring office towers and other users of the park to eat lunch outside and enjoy the greenery and nature in the park. Tables and chairs are along the edge of the hardscaped area that directly touches the softscape part of the park, which is meant to encourage people to engage with the other parts of the park. In the existing conditions, the seating area feels very separate and distinct from the lawn. Currently, the hardscaped area is elevated with essentially a step down onto lawn, has a guardrail at the northern end and large stone planter at the southern end that almost barricades it from the lawn. The new redesign eliminates that distinction and helps to make it feel like a natural extension of the lawn and gravel paths (See Master Site Plan & Landform Diagram).

Wet Pond – Stormwater Management

A defining element of the redesign is the inclusion of a wet pond (See Master Plan & Perspective Renderings). This wet pond will serve multiple purposes. Firstly, it provides the park with a historic connection to what it was prior to development: marshy wetlands. Signs educating people on the history of the area back to that era will be at and/or on the kiosk and on the outlook areas along the wet pond. Highlighting the history of the area with a wet pond also gives Seaport Public Green an additional sense of place and purpose within the District.

Secondly, the wet pond helps to mitigate stormwater surge and address the flood plain location of the park (See Hydrology Diagram). Building off of the *Coastal Resilience Solutions for South Boston* report, I incorporated the wet pond in the park to serve as a natural buffer from storm damage and increased rainfall, as well as to be a social space. The park is highly susceptible to rising sea levels and the flooding that inundates the Seaport during bad storms, a result of its location along the Boston Harbor. This stormwater management component of the park will help to absorb water and mitigate the issues that the park and surrounding areas deal with. Given that so much of the surrounding area is hardscaped, the addition of the wet pond will just be a small tool to address stormwater. While it is small, it is still important and given the size of the park plot, there is only so much the park can do to help mitigate the issue. The wet pond is located at the northern edge of the park, closest to the Boston Harbor, to be in a position to best deal with stormwater. Overall, the redesign allows for the park to be able to handle inundation every once in a while, and to serve as a buffer, capturing water before it makes its way further into the District.

Thirdly, the wet pond is a fun, engaging, and interactive aspect of the park that is different from anything else in the Seaport (See Perspective Renderings). It makes the park particularly distinct from other public open spaces, which helps to give the park even more of an identity. Distinction is extremely important in an area that is oversaturated with lawns

and the intention is that the wet pond will help with bringing users to the park. The wet pond serves as an inviting and interesting element for both children and adults, and turns Seaport Public Green into an exciting destination. Wet pond plants and animals are fun to look at and play with, and the stepping stones across the wet pond make it very engaging and inviting for all users. Inspired by Hunter's Point South park in New York City, I designed four outlooks - two on the side towards the lawn, two on the side towards the Boston Harbor (See Master Plan & Perspective Renderings). These outlooks overlooking the wet pond give people the opportunity to engage with the wet pond, to see straight out into the Harbor, and to see straight into the heart of the Seaport and the future Harbor Way. This further encourages people to walk through the park and explore other aspects of the park based on its location. It also encourages people to walk along the Harborwalk and engage with the water's edge. The overlooks are made of wood decking, instead of concrete, to reduce the amount of CO_2 emitted from Seaport Public Green. Together with the lawn, the wet pond provides an escape from density and provides users with the opportunity to interact with nature in an urban setting. That children could play with frogs or other wet pond creatures in the middle of a dense urban area is an incredibly unique and important experience.

Overall, I redesigned Seaport Public Green within the framework of Option A from the *Coastal Resilience Solutions for South Boston* report, since Option A looks at adapting existing conditions without changing the size and scale of parcels. That condition fit best within the scope of this project and allowed me to focus on what elements could be incorporated into Seaport Public Green, instead of District wide changes. Option A suggested grading of existing parcels could help with flood protection, so, as previously mentioned, I left the park's slight grading that brings the center of the park up higher than the ends. While the park now meets the sidewalk and the Harborwalk at ground level, instead of with an elevated wall as in the existing conditions, the slight grading overall of the park can still reduce the amount of water that can get past Seaport Public Green into the District (See Landform Diagram).

Harborwalk

In the redesign, the existing conditions of the Harborwalk remain, other than the addition of two outlooks overlooking the Boston Harbor (See Master Site Plan). These two new outlooks give people a sensation of being even closer and more engaged with the water, building off of the City's goal to increase residents' interaction with our Harbor. In my redesign, the focus was on preserving sightlines, eliminating the sharp border between the park and the Harborwalk, and on the extension of the Harborwalk under the archway. In the existing conditions, a small hardscaped area is between the Harborwalk and the edge of the lawn. In the redesing, the lawn and the gravel paths directly meet the edge of the Harborwalk, further connecting the two spaces. The outcome is a seamless connection between Seaport Public Green and the Harborwalk. My redesign encourages people to explore the Harborwalk because it is such a clear visual sight from wherever you are in the park. The new Seaport Public Green also helps to solidify the connection of the Harbor Square Park and Harbor Way with the Boston Harbor, a major goal of conservationists and planners in Boston (See Master Plan & Perspective Renderings).

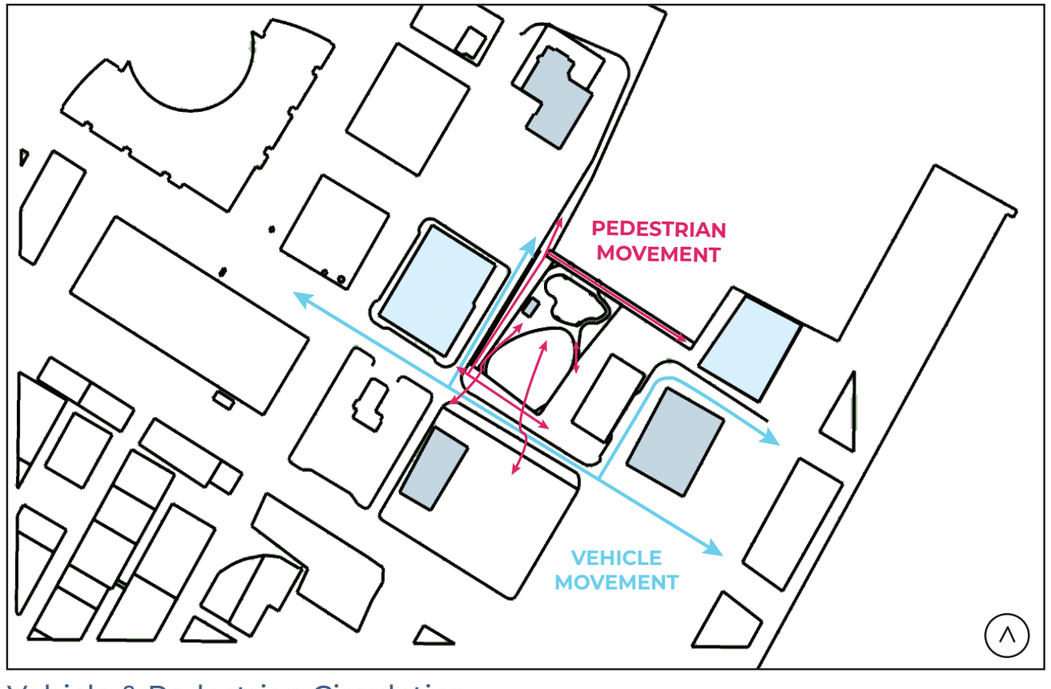
Given that I was focusing just on Seaport Public Green, and not on the Seaport District as a whole, I kept in mind the suggestions from the *Coastal Resilience Solutions for South Boston* report about elevating the Harborwalk. I chose to have the two outlooks along the Harborwalk be elevated up one foot above the Harborwalk, instead of elevating the actual Harborwalk (See Master Site Plan). This decision was based off the understanding that the redesign was focused on the individual Seaport Public Green. I also felt that elevating the outlooks could help begin the process of elevating the actual Harborwalk and could allow for other stormwater management elements to be placed in the marina during the construction process.

My redesign ultimately became one that is more emblematic of the making places tradition of urban design. There is an emphasis on how the park relates to its surroundings and how it can provide a diversity of activities within the space that serve as places of both unprogrammed enjoyment and congregation. The redesign strives to make the Seaport Public Green a place that is also important enough to garner use in a District oversaturated with lawns. Each element of the park also serves to enhance social connections, which is incredibly important for the growing neighborhood. The redesign of Seaport Public Green offers different things to different people, allowing for the space to become one that has a purpose beyond the workday lunch slot and one that is enjoyable to be in for a variety of different groups. The edges of the park remain engaged and respond to its surroundings, while the core of the park has now become activated through the shape of the lawns, the paths, the kiosk, and the wet pond. I incorporated subtle nods to the District's past, which was inspired by the three parks in New York City discussed earlier that took similar approaches, to further establish Seaport Public Green as a vital part of the District. My redesign has also led to areas of intimacy within the park that did not exist before and created a variety of experiences that reflect a humanized scale. Seaport Public Green, through this redesign, becomes a unique space, that is reflective of the community it is in. It is responsive to who is going to use it, keeping in mind the growing residential population with young children, and no longer is just a foreground for architecture. All together these elements, I believe, have created a welcoming Seaport Public Green that is truly public.

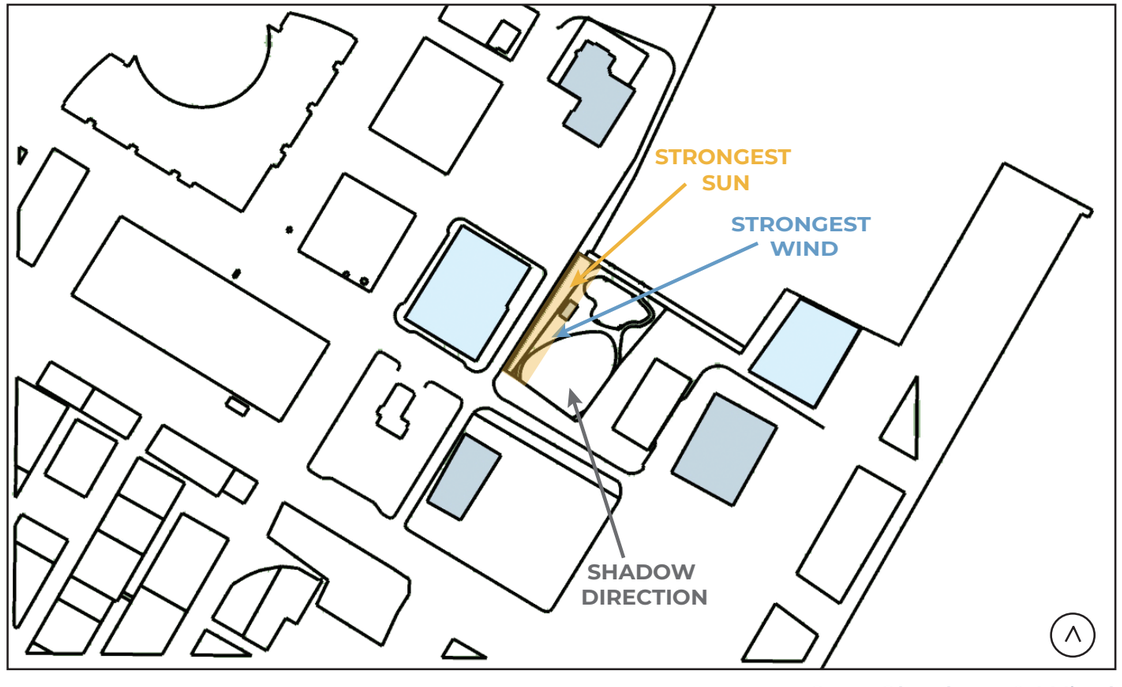
Redesign of Seaport Public Green

This section, beginning on page 44, will show renderings and diagrams of my original work. All the diagrams and figures created represent the redesign of Seaport Public Green, and not existing conditions.

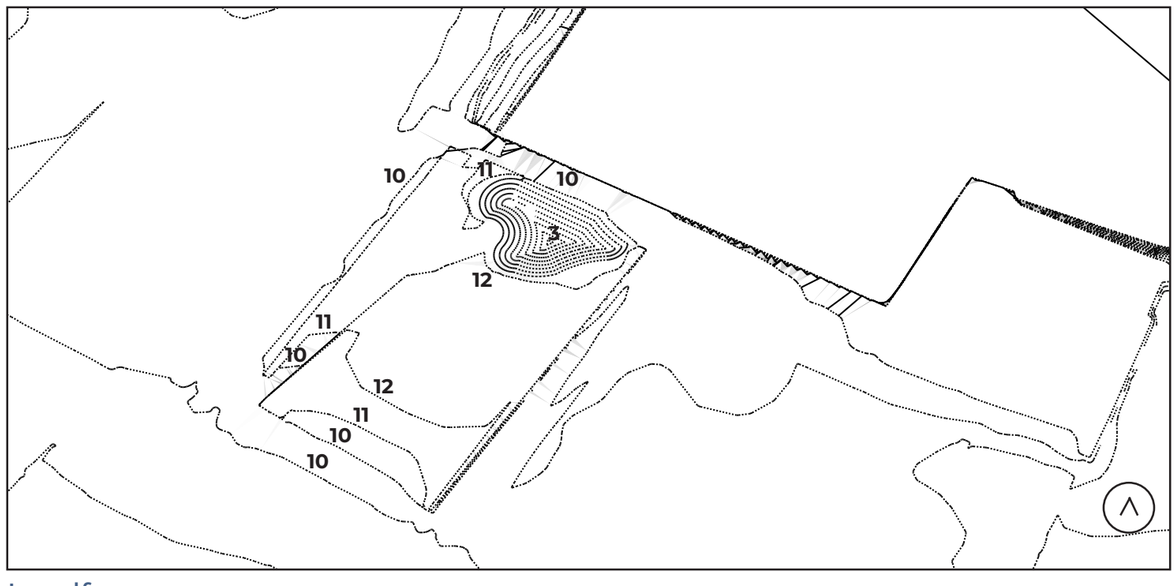
They include:



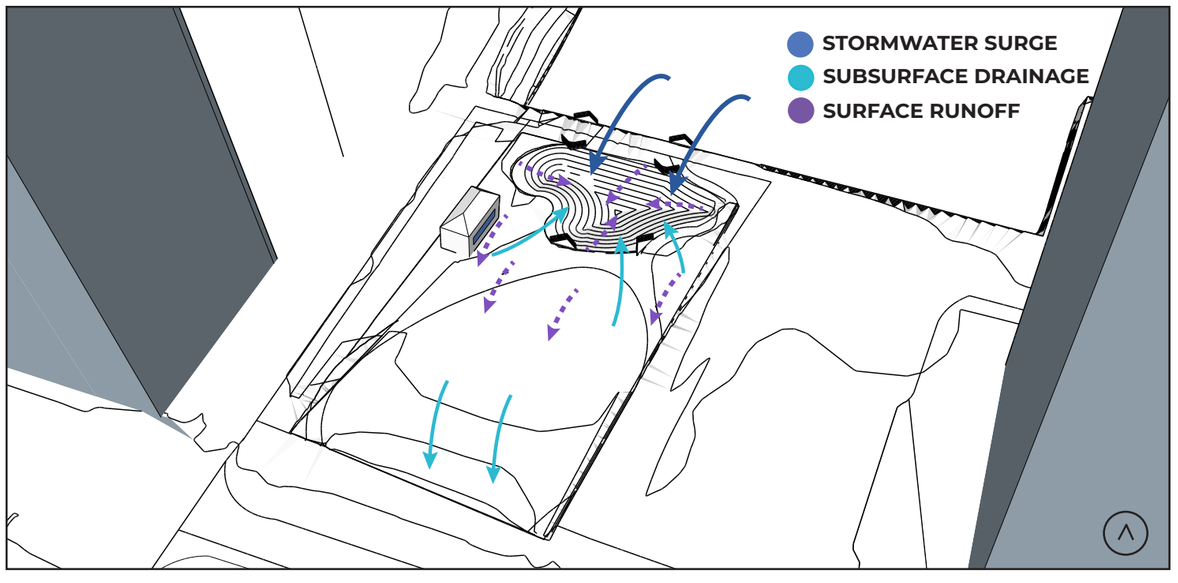
Vehicle & Pedestrian Circulation



Sun, Shadow, & Wind



Landform

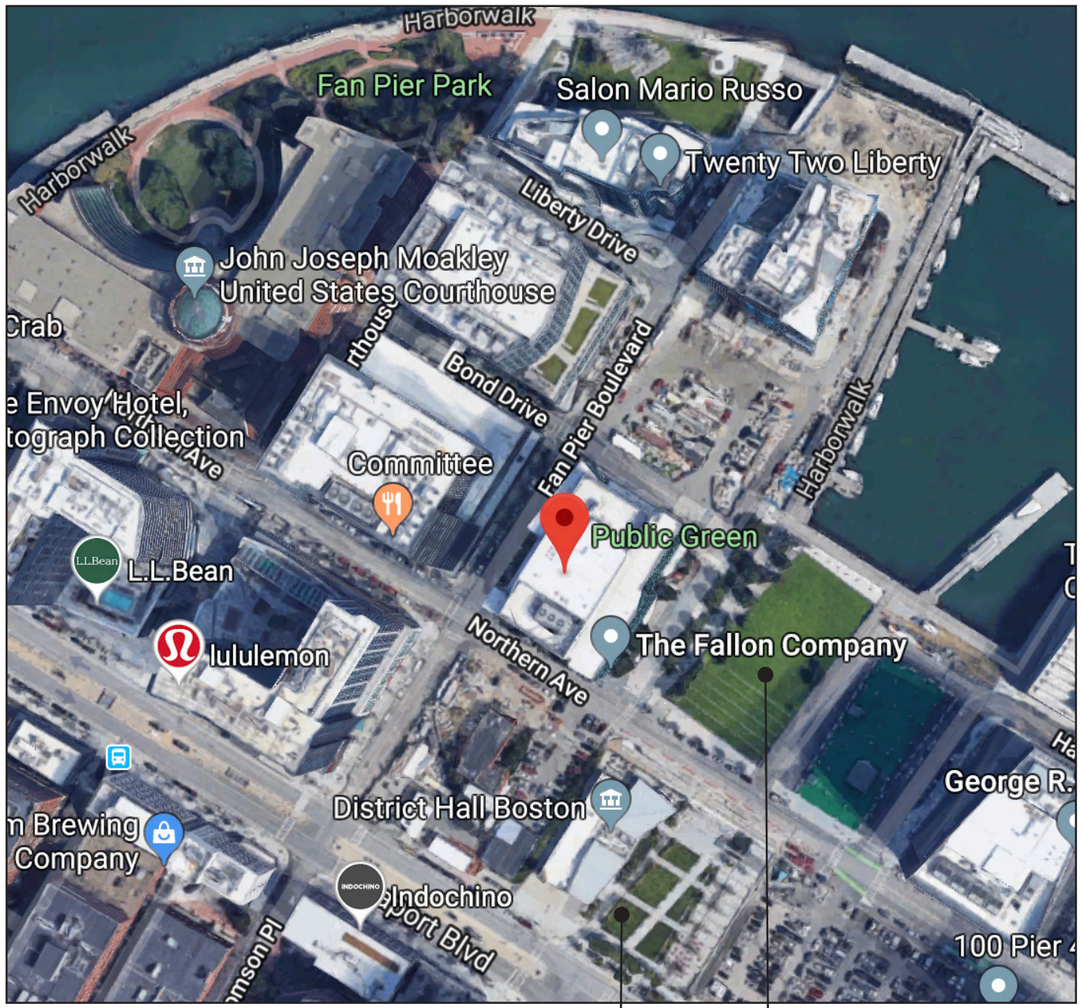


Hydrology

Seaport Public Green

Seaport Public Green

Site Plan



Seaport Public Green

Seaport Common

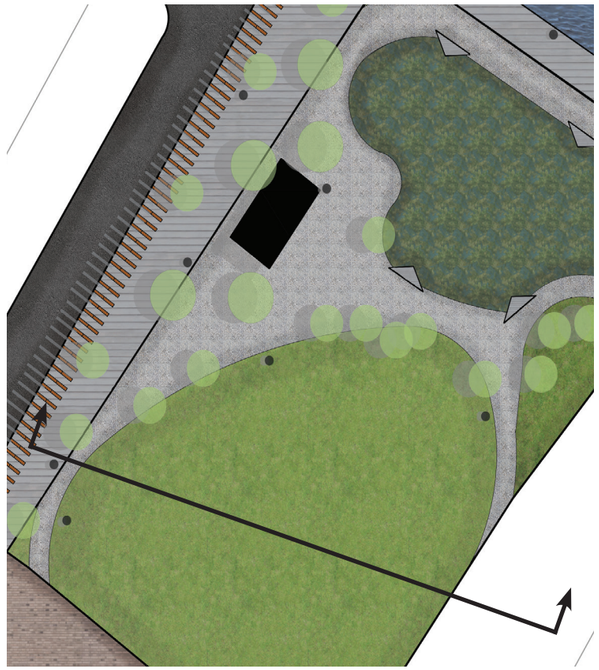
Seaport Public Green

Perspective 1: View from Seaport Public Green Towards the Harbor

- Gravel paths shape the edges of the lawn
- Clear visual of the Boston Harbor
- Intimate spaces
- Spaces for a variety of activities to occur for a multitude of different types of people
- Undeveloped site to the east of the park set to be residential, activating the site
- Wet pond with four outlooks is both a social space and a stormwater management tool
- More trees and lighting within the park enhance feelings of safety within the park

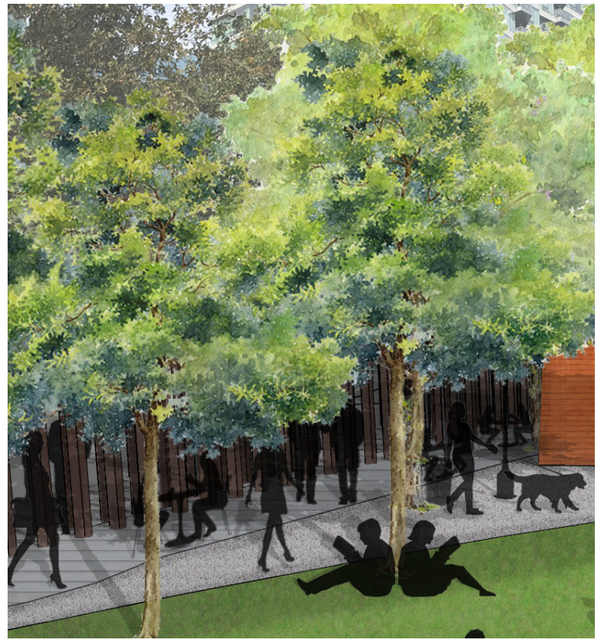
Seaport Public Green

Perspective 1: View from Seaport Public Green Towards the Harbor

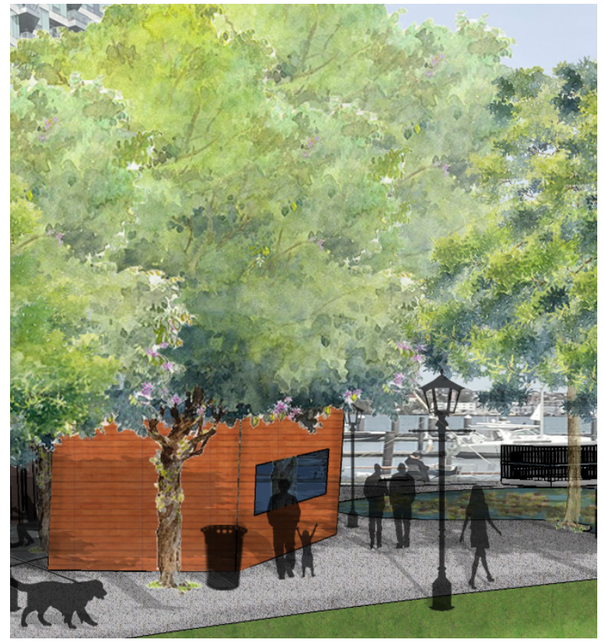


Perspective View for Perspective 1

Wet Pond with four overlooks and stepping stones. Serves as an active social and play space, as well as a stormwater management tool. It harkens back to the history of the area.

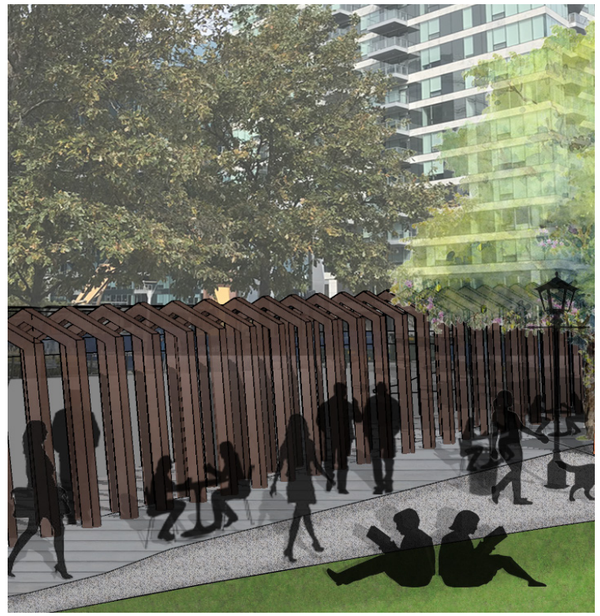


Archway along the hardscaped portion of the park extends the sightline of the water's edge, provides an interesting component of the park, and provides shade and protection from the wind. The archway is made out of bronzed steel, reminiscent of the industrial history of the District.



Kiosk intended to be a space to serve food and/or educational products teaching users of the park the history of the area and the flood risks of the Seaport District. The gravel path is widened in front to allow for the congregation of people in line at the kiosk in such a way that they do not disturb other users of the park.

Lawn with plenty of space for a variety of activities to occur. Active lighting and trees around the edges of the lawn provide protection to users and preserve the sightline of the Harbor. Doggy-bag posts and trashcans on site enforce and encourage people to pick up after their dogs. There is space for all types of users in the park.



The hardscaped area continues to provide places for people to sit and eat food, beside the archway. The boardwalk material used on the Harborwalk is continued in the hardscaped section, making the Harborwalk feel like a natural extension of the park. The open jointed decking also allows for better water absorption. *(Trees removed for visual)*

Kiosk is designed to look like the bow of a boat, harkening to the area's history, as well as its active marina, and relating to the structure in Harbor Way meant to look like a sailboat. The kiosk's roof is solar paneled to take advantage of the direct sunlight that comes off the water in that direction. *(Trees removed for visual)*

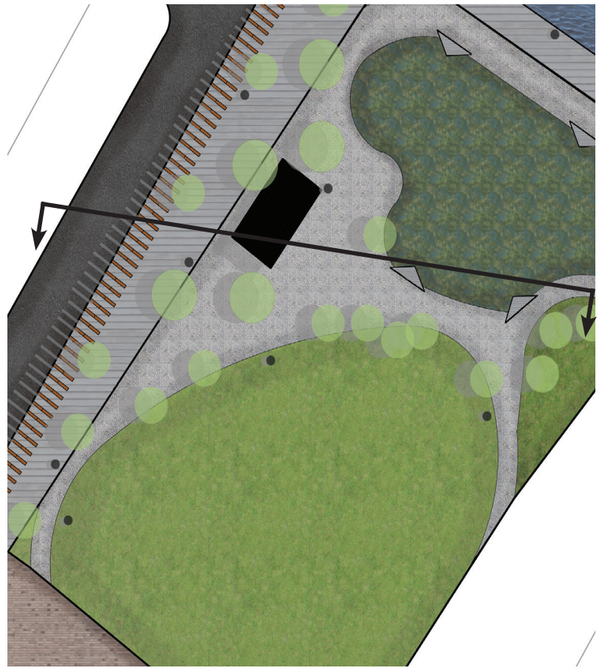
Seaport Public Green

Perspective 2: View from Seaport Public Green Towards Northern Avenue & Seaport Common

- Gravel path connects all the parts of the park together
- Clear visual connection to Seaport Common without parking along Northern Avenue
- Bricked crosswalk extends directly from Seaport Common to Seaport Public Green enhancing the connection between the two
- Wet pond plants with stepping stones provide children an incredibly unique and important experience to play with frogs or other wet pond creatures in the middle of a dense urban area
- Vegetation brings color to the park and the District, while also providing spaces for people to lean up against

Seaport Public Green

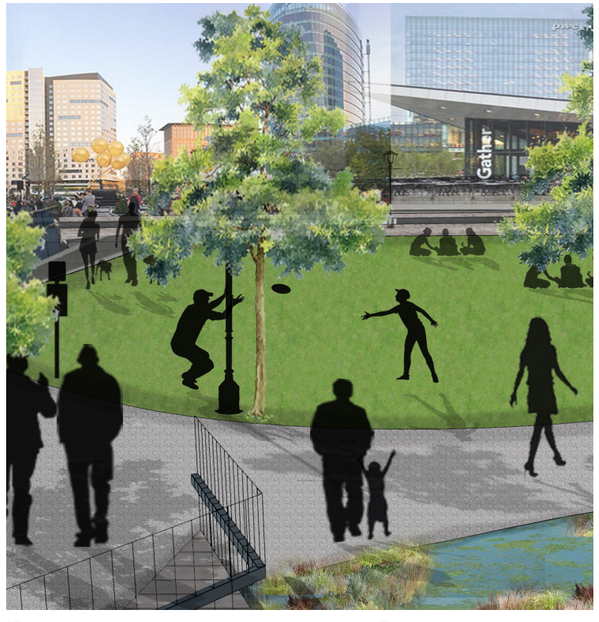
Perspective 2: View from Seaport Public Green Towards Northern Avenue & Seaport Common



Perspective View for Perspective 2

Wet Pond at the northern edge of the park is a unique feature in both the park and the Seaport District as a whole. It brings color and an intimate space to the park.

The permeable gravel paths provide definition to the park and provide walkers with their own distinct realm of domain. The paths will absorb water, helping mitigate the issues of being directly next to the Boston Harbor, and dealing with flooding and sea level rise in the area.



Variety of users can engage with the park. People walking dogs are welcomed and can use the in-park trashcans and doggy-bag posts. The growing residential population with young children can use the space like a backyard with the expansive lawn and wet pond. Users have a clear view of the Boston Harbor and the other major parks in the District from anywhere within the park.

Trees are on the outer edges of the lawn so as to not disrupt having a large open lawn space, and also to maintain the site view of the Boston Harbor from both within and beside the park. The trees help to make the space feel more intimate and less vacuous, as well as helping to sequester carbon and become climate positive.

Bricked sidewalk, with lighting, along Northern Avenue reinforces feelings of safety, openness, and seamlessness between the Seaport Common and Seaport Public Green. The new crosswalk, removal of parking along the street, and narrowing of the road emphasises the pedestrian domain and the linear park connection.

Conclusion

Through this research that I conducted on the Seaport District for the past year and a half, I became particularly invested in the development of the District. Conducting observations, speaking with practitioners with extensive understandings of the Seaport District and public open spaces, and diving into the scholarly research made it particularly evident that the District overall is an ideal place for great public open spaces. The District's diverse history, its close proximity to the central downtown of Boston, its new young population, and its strong connection to the Boston Harbor provide a variety of opportunities for different types of public open spaces. That is why the Seaport Public Green has such the potential to be a wonderful, activated public open space.

As became clear through the research and the interviews, the need for public open spaces is constant, but the needs for certain characteristics of public open spaces changes with time. Seaport Public Green was one of the first public open spaces to be built in the District since the revitalization effort began. As more developments come to fruition and the population in the District changes and grows, Seaport Public Green became one of many lawns in the District. It is no longer a unique place and its poor design elements, that might have gone unnoticed or lacked impact on its use when it was one of the only public open spaces in the District, are now apparent. Seaport Public Green is due for a redesign.

Seaport Public Green is an incredibly important public open space because of its adjacency to the Harborwalk and the Boston Harbor. It is ready to be redesigned and necessary for the health of the District that it be done. Whether the redesign be one that harkens back to the historic nature of the site, as my redesign does, or not, the ultimate goal needs to be a public open space that is activated, invites people to engage with the water's edge, and fosters the community. My proposed redesign of the Seaport Public Green intends to not only active the space, but also create a space that is true to the park's name – a park that is truly public and welcoming to all. I hope that this research and proposed redesign will offer a path forward for Seaport Public Green and for practitioners and developers as they continue to develop public open spaces in the Seaport District and beyond.

References & Appendixes

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Figure Sources

Figure 1: Seaport Public Green
Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

Figure 2: View of Seaport Public Green and surrounding buildings from waterfront
Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

Figure 3: View from Seaport Public Green towards waterfront
Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

Figure 4: Public art in the neighboring, well-utilized Seaport Common
Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

Figure 5: People walking through Seaport Common
Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

Figure 6: Map of Boston Districts
Photo: http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/6f48c617-cf23-4c9f-b54b-35c8a954091c

Figure 7: Map of the Seaport District
Photo: https://convention.asha.org/uploadedFiles/Content/2018-Seaport-Neighborhood-Map.pdf

Figure 8: 1920s Seaport District
Photo: https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2015/07/14/seaport-district-through-the-years

Figure 9: Boston’s Central Artery
Photo: https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:np193944t

Figure 10: Central Artery cuts off the Seaport District
Photo: https://apps.bostonglobe.com/spotlight/boston-racism-image-reality/series/seaport/

Figure 11: Parking lots in the Seaport District
Photo: https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2015/07/14/seaport-district-through-the-years

Figure 12: Vibrancy in the Seaport District and its public open spaces
Photo: https://urbanland.uli.org/development-business/the-creation-of-a-neighborhood-bostons-seaport/

Figure 13: Lack of relationships between spaces in the Seaport and around Seaport Public Green.
Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

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Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

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Photo: https://www.mcsal.com/fan-pier-boston/

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Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

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Photo: Richard Burck Associates

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Photo by Lara Seltzer, October 2019.

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Photo by Lara Seltzer, October 2019.

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Photo by Lara Seltzer, October 2019.

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Photo by Lara Seltzer, October 2019.

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Photo by Lara Seltzer, October 2019.

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Photo: Richard Burck Associates

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Photo: Richard Burck Associates

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Photo: https://www.10best.com/destinations/massachusetts/boston/seaport-district/restaurants/strega-waterfront/

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Photo by Lara Seltzer, March 2020.

Figure 36: Seaport Common, a mix of soft and hardscape
Photo: https://www.bostonseaport.xyz/venue/seaport-common/

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Photo: https://www.bostonseaport.xyz/venue/seaport-common/

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Photo: https://www.bostonseaport.xyz/venue/seaport-common/

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Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

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Photo: https://www.bostonseaport.xyz/she-village/

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Photo: https://gatherboston.com/events/

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Photo by Lara Seltzer, October 2019.

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Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

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Photo by Lara Seltzer, March 2020.

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Photo: http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/29851713-8981-46f1-b2c0-8dfea5a3cd78

Figure 48: Martin's Park, a unique fun new playground in the Seaport District
Photo: https://www.utiledesign.com/news/martins-park-is-now-open/

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Photo: https://www.architectmagazine.com/project-gallery/the-lawn-on-d_1_o

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Photo: https://www.wbur.org/news/2019/10/11/greenway-conservancy-work-inc-contract-severed-disabled-workers-discrimination

Figure 51: A variety of activities can take place in the different spaces in the Rose Kennedy Greenway
Photo: https://www.rosekennedygreenway.org/history/

Figure 52: Boston Common offering spaces for activity and socializing
Photo: https://www.boston-discovery-guide.com/boston-common.html

Figure 53: Boston Public Gardens offer quiet and peaceful spaces
Photo: https://www.trolleytours.com/boston/public-garden

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Photo: http://www.rudybruneraward.org/winners/the-park-at-post-office-square/

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Photo: https://www.pinterest.com/pin/461970874246217821/

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Photo: https://www.flickr.com/photos/leslee/7358129808

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Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

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Photo by Lara Seltzer, October 2019.

Figure 60: Sketch plan of Seaport Square, Harbor Way, and Harbor Square Park in the center
Photo: http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/8005ea79-e8dd-40d8-82b8-ada0d7daa442

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Photo: http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/8005ea79-e8dd-40d8-82b8-ada0d7daa442

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Photo: http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/8005ea79-e8dd-40d8-82b8-ada0d7daa442

Figure 63: Harbor Way's green Space
Photo: https://boston.curbed.com/boston-development/2018/6/5/17427262/seaport-square-park-boston

Figure 64: Harbor Way's canopy play structure
Photo: https://www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2018/06/08/amazon-s-future-seaport-office-harbor-square-park.html#g/436256/10

Figure 65: New lawn on Pier 4
Photo: https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2019/12/13/dishing-friendlier-waterfront-park/v2d8j6rSN5q3U5qPsOltxK/story.html?event=event12

Figure 66: Three flood pathways originate in the area where Seaport Public Green is located
Photo: https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/embed/file/2018-10/climatereadysouthboston_final_report_v11.1s_web.pdf

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Photo: https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/embed/file/2018-10/climatereadysouthboston_final_report_v11.1s_web.pdf

Figure 68: Option A makes use of existing spaces to reduce flood risks
Photo: https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/embed/file/2018-10/climatereadysouthboston_final_report_v11.1s_web.pdf

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Photo: https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/embed/file/2018-10/climatereadysouthboston_final_report_v11.1s_web.pdf

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Photo: https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/embed/file/2018-10/climatereadysouthboston_final_report_v11.1s_web.pdf

Figure 71: Proposed design for elevating the Harborwalk and adding a stepped sidewalk
Photo: https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/embed/file/2018-10/climatereadysouthboston_final_report_v11.1s_web.pdf

Figure 72: Domino Park uses refurnished materials from the former industrial factories at the site. This inspired the redesign of Seaport Public Green to include materials honoring the area's industrial history
Photo: https://ny.curbed.com/2018/8/31/17797174/nyc-parks-waterfront-architecture-design-brooklyn-bridge

Figure 73: Outlooks in Hunter's Point South park that inspired the outlooks in the redesign
Photo: https://ny.curbed.com/2018/8/31/17797174/nyc-parks-waterfront-architecture-design-brooklyn-bridge

Figure 74: Brooklyn Bridge Park has a variety of large scale spaces to connect with the water's edge
Photo: https://ny.curbed.com/2018/8/31/17797174/nyc-parks-waterfront-architecture-design-brooklyn-bridge

Figure 75: Signage along the Harborwalk by the Legal Harborside restaurant that signage in the redesign is modeled after
Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

Figure 76: Sculpture in Harbor Way meant to model a sail boat that the kiosk's design in the redesign would relate to
Photo by Bryn Seltzer, March 2019.

Figure 77: Kiosk in the Rose Kennedy Greenway that inspired the design and function of the kiosk in the redesign
Photo: https://www.utiledesign.com/work/boston-harbor-islands-pavilion/

Figure 78: Archway in the Rose Kennedy Greenway that informed both the shape and texture of the archway in the redesign
Photo: https://www.bostonusa.com/listings/rose-kennedy-greenway/11801/

Figure 79: Relationship of the seating and the archway in the Rose Kennedy Greenway that inspired a similar approach in the redesign
Photo: https://www.boston-discovery-guide.com/greenway-walking-tour.html

Figure 80: Archway in the Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park that extends the sightline of the water's edge and inspired using a similar approach to extend the sightline in the redesign
Photo: https://parksmart.gbci.org/garage-post-office-square

Figure 81: Archway in Post Office Square that also inspired using an archway to extend the sightline in the redesign
Photo: http://kohlshealthyfamilyfun.org/featured-story-3/community-spotlight-christopher-columbus-waterfront-park/

Endnotes

1. Interview with Anonymous in March, 2019
2. Interview with Brian Golden in March, 2019
3. Interview with Yanni Tsipis in March, 2019
4. Interview with Yanni Tsipis in March, 2019
5. Interview with Larry DiCara in April, 2019
6. Interview with Anonymous in March, 2019
7. Interview with Anonymous in March, 2019
8. Interview with Jill Horwood in April, 2019
9. Interview with Jill Horwood in April, 2019
10. Interview with Jill Horwood in April, 2019
11. Interview with Jill Horwood in April, 2019
12. Interview with Jill Horwood in April, 2019
13. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
14. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
15. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
16. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
17. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
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24. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
25. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
26. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
27. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
28. Interview with Nupoor Monani in October, 2019; Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019; Interview with Matthew Soule in October, 2019
29. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
30. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019
31. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019
32. Interview with Matthew Soule in October, 2019
33. Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019
34. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019

35. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019
36. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019
37. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019
38. Interview with Nupoor Monani in October, 2019
39. Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019; Interview with Matthew Soule in October, 2019; Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
40. Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
41. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019; Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
42. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Matthew Soule in October, 2019
43. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019
44. Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019
45. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019
46. Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
47. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019
48. Interview with Jeff Sauser in October, 2019
49. Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
50. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
51. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019
52. Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019
53. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019
54. Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019
55. Interview with Nupoor Monani in October, 2019
56. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019
57. Interview with Nupoor Monani in October, 2019
58. Interview with Nupoor Monani in October, 2019
59. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019; Interview with Nupoor Monani in October, 2019
60. Interview with Matthew Soule in October, 2019
61. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Nupoor Monani in October, 2019; Interview with Matthew Soule in October, 2019
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69. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019
70. Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
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72. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019
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84. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019; Interview with Nupoor Monani in October, 2019; Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
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95. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019; Interview with Matthew Soule in October, 2019
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97. Interview with Nupoor Monani in October, 2019; Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019; Interview with Jeff Sauser in October, 2019; Interview with Matthew Soule in October, 2019; Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
98. Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
99. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019; Interview with Bob Uhlig

in October, 2019

100. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019; Interview with Jeff Sauser in October, 2019
101. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019
102. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019
103. Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
104. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019; Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019
105. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019
106. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019
107. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019
108. Interview with Jeff Sauser in October, 2019
109. Interview with Jeff Sauser in October, 2019
110. Interview with Jeff Sauser in October, 2019
111. Interview with Jeff Sauser in October, 2019
112. Interview with Anonymous in October, 2019; Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019
113. Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
114. Interview with Bob Uhlig in October, 2019
115. Interview with Jeff Sauser in October, 2019
116. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
117. Interview with Richard Burck in October, 2019
118. Interview with Thomas Nally in October, 2019
119. Interview with Joshua Seyfried in November, 2019
120. Interview with Yanni Tsipis in March, 2019
121. Interview with Yanni Tsipis in March, 2019
122. The Seaport District is also referred to as South Boston Waterfront. The two names, which are interchangeable, are used by different players for a variety of reasons.

Appendix A: Interviews

Anonymous, Urban Designer at local firm – March, 2019 & October, 2019

Richard Burck, Founder & Principal at Richard Burck Associates – October, 2019

Larry DiCara, retired Real Estate Attorney at Nixon Peabody LLC & lawyer for lobbying work in front of Boston City Hall, former President of Boston City Council, friend of the late Mayor Menino, and longtime expert and resident of Boston – April, 2019

Brian P. Golden, Director of the Boston Planning and Development Agency – March, 2019

Jill Horwood, Director of Policy at Boston Harbor Now – April, 2019

Nupoor Monani, Urban Planner & Designer at Utile – October, 2019

Thomas Nally, Planning Director at A Better City – October, 2019

Jeff Sauser, Associate Planner at Stantec – October, 2019

Joshua Seyfried, Landscape & Urban Designer at James Corner Field Operations – November, 2019

Matthew Soule, Associate Landscape Architect at Reed+Hilderbrand – November, 2019

Yanni Tsipis, Senior Vice President of Seaport Development at WS Development – March, 2019

Bob Uhlig, President & Principal at Halvorson Design – October, 2019

Appendix B: Observation Tools

Stationary Active Mapping Tool

ROT = table + chairs

MAP

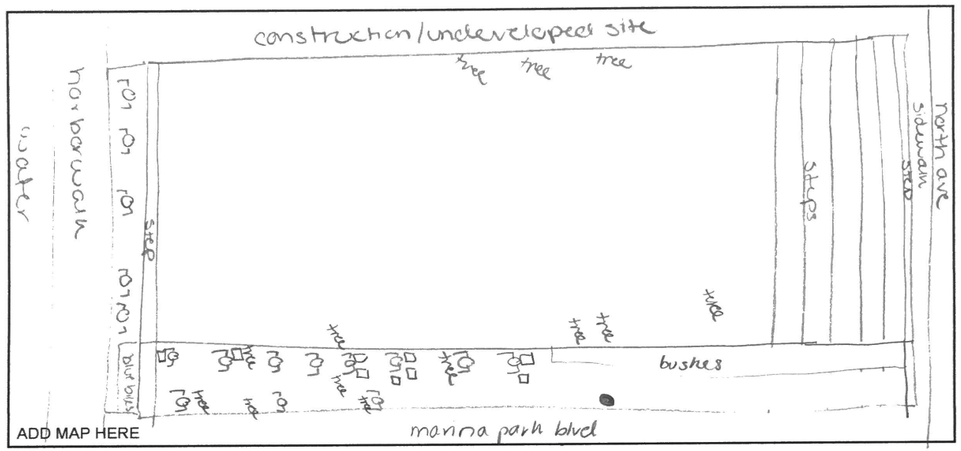
NAME

LOCATION

DATE 10/16

TIME 12

WEATHER low 60s partly cloudy low wind



POSTURE	TALLY choose one per person	ACTIVITIES choose as many as apply				
		WAITING TRANSPORT	CONSUMING FOOD/BEV.	COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY	CULTURAL ACTIVITY	RECREATION PLAY/EXERCISE
STANDING ●						
SITTING PUBLIC □	++++ ||		✓			
SITTING PRIVATE △						
SITTING COMMERCIAL ○						
SITTING INFORMAL ⊠						
LYING DOWN ▬						
MULTIPLE/ MOVEMENT ✕						

conversa ✓

- students on field trip eating lunch at tables on sidewalk next to harborwalk + kids are playing on lawn - bc of field trip
- ~~Landry's bicycles~~ having a commercial booth next to tables next to seaport transportation initiative
- few people walking through on hardscape - no stopping

3

Place Inventory Tool

MAP

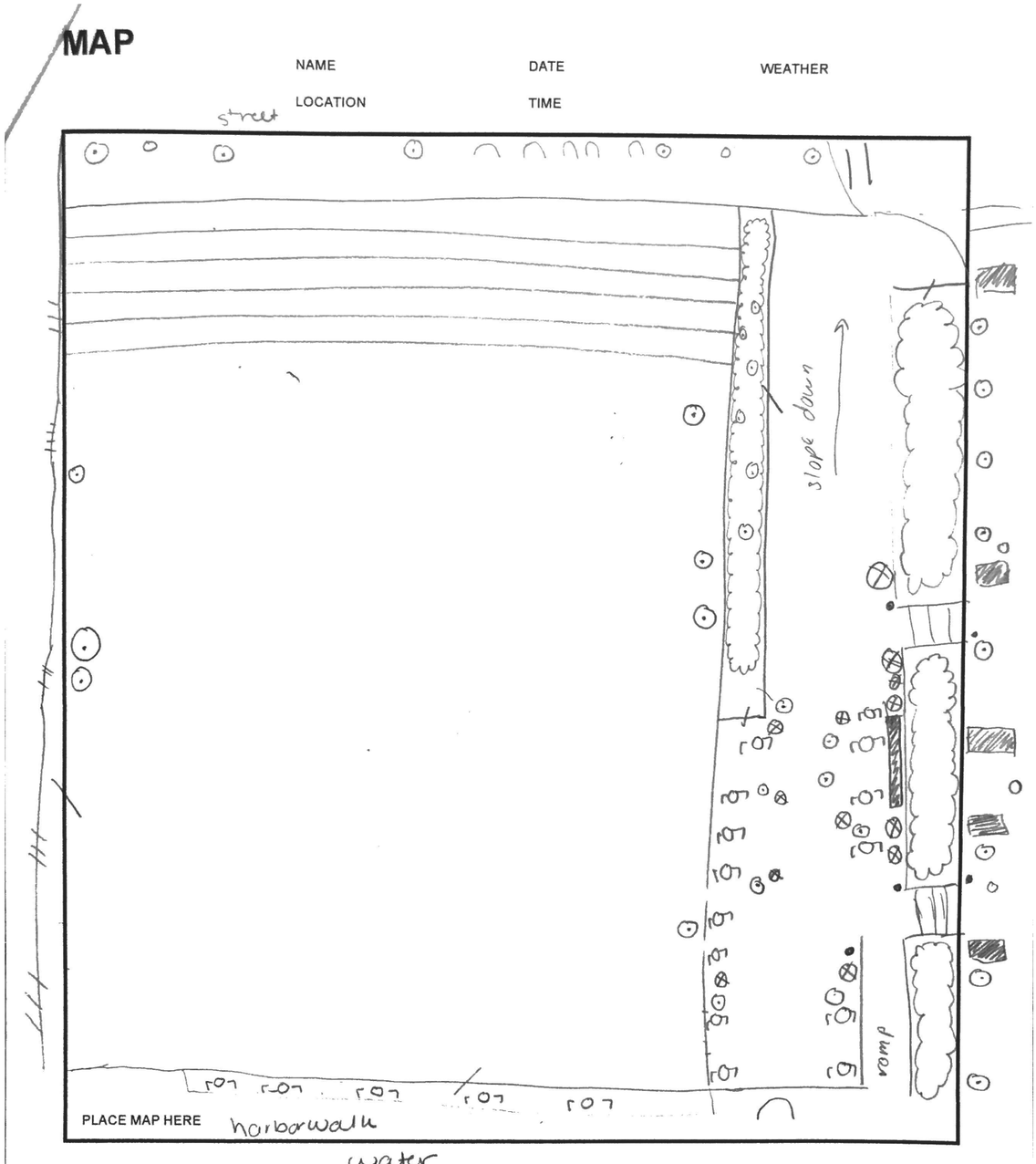
NAME

LOCATION

DATE

TIME

WEATHER



3

EXPERIENCE

Answer the following questions about the place you are studying. Consider your gut reaction, but also how others (such as children) might feel.

1 Does the space have areas that provide shade/shelter?

No — Mostly No ✓ — Mostly Yes — Absolutely

2 Does the space have areas to stay in the sun during cooler weather conditions?

No — Mostly No — Mostly Yes — Absolutely ✓ lawn

3 Does the space have areas to spend time/sit and rest?

No — Mostly No — Mostly Yes — Absolutely ✓

4 Does the space have areas to be active/play?

No — Mostly No — Mostly Yes ✓ — Absolutely

5 Can you comfortably have a conversation with another person in the space?

No — Mostly No — Mostly Yes — Absolutely ✓

6 How strong is the presence of vegetation? (trees, plantings, etc.)

Low ✓ — Medium — High

7 How would you rate the visual environment?

Ugly — Unattractive — Attractive ✓ — Beautiful

COMMENTS:

8 Does the space appear to be well-lit at night?

No — Somewhat ✓ — Yes — Not Sure

9 Do you feel safe in the space, overall?

No — Mostly No — Mostly Yes ✓ — Absolutely

10 If you do not feel safe in the space, why? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Dominated by vehicular traffic → pretty calm b/c both side streets
- ☐ Other people ←
- ☐ Lack of other people ←
- ☐ Lack of lighting ←
- ☐ State of cleanliness
- ☐ Other: _____

11 Could someone access this space using a wheelchair?

No — Some Areas ✓ — Most Areas — Yes

12 If the space has physical boundaries, can you... (check all that apply)

- ☑ See through or over them
- ☑ Sit on them
- ☐ Climb over them
- ☑ Walk around them

13 If there is moving vehicular traffic nearby, please indicate the approximate amount of traffic.

Low ✓ — Medium — High

14 Do you feel safe crossing the street?

No — Mostly No — Mostly Yes ✓ — Absolutely

TWELVE URBAN QUALITY CRITERIA

LOCATION:

☺ = YES
😐 = IN BETWEEN
☹ = NO

Protection

Protection against traffic and accidents.
Do groups across age and ability experience traffic safety in the public space? Can one safely bike and walk without fear of being hit by a driver?

☺

Protection against harm by others.
Is the public space perceived to be safe both day and night? Are there people and activities at all hours of the day because the area has, for example, both residents and offices? Does the lighting provide safety at night as well as a good atmosphere?

☹
- no lighting on park (3 lights on sidewalk on N. Ave.)
- mostly commercial directly adjacent
- perceived to be safe

Protection against unpleasant sensory experience.
Are there noises, dust, smells, or other pollution? Does the public space function well when it's windy? Is there shelter from strong sun, rain, or minor flooding?

☹ Flooding only b/c elevated
- noises, dust, + smells from nearby construction but not disruptive (can still easily talk)
- functions well when windy
- trees on hardscape provide good shelter from sun, no rain in photo

Comfort

Options for mobility.
Is this space accessible? Are there physical elements that might limit or enhance personal mobility in the forms of walking, using a wheelchair, or pushing a stroller? Is it evident how to move through the space without having to take an illogical detour?

☹
- cannot access via wheelchair no ramps, all steps up
- ramp up to hardscape but step down into park + then bushes wall in way

Options to stand and linger.
Does the place have features you can stay and lean on, like a façade that invites one to spend time next to it, a bus stop, a bench, a tree, or a small ledge or niche?

☹
- trees are on hardscape w/ edges hard to sit around / stand around
- bush ledge could only sit on small part of
- can sit on big steps at either end of park

Options for sitting.
Are there good primary seating options such as benches or chairs? Or is there only secondary seating such as a stair, seat wall, or the edge of a fountain? Are there adequate non-commercial seating options so that sitting does not require spending money?

☺
- lots of chairs + tables all public

Options for seeing.
Are seating options placed so there are interesting things to look at?

☹
- all spots from park have great view of water
- but edges parallel view is either undeveloped or non activated commercial buildings

Options for talking and listening/ hearing.
Is it possible to have a conversation here? Is it evident that you have the option to sit together and have a conversation?

☺
- easy to talk + plenty of chairs + tables to have convo at

Options for play, exercise, and activities.
Are there options to be active at multiple times of the day and year?

☹
- empty lawn could play on + flat terrain but steps prohibit it even

Enjoyment

Scale.
Is the public space and the building that surrounds it at a human scale? If people are at the edges of the space, can we still relate to them as people or are they lost in their surroundings?

☹
- scale is pretty large around (all tall skyscrapers)
- water puts it more in human scale + congregation at tables in 1 spot humanizes experience
- looking at lawn from water edge end blends into the horizon

Opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of climate.
Are local climatic aspects such as wind and sun taken into account? Are there varied conditions for spending time in public spaces at different times of year? With this in mind, where are the seating options placed? Are they located entirely in the shadows or the sun? And how are they oriented/placed in relation to wind? Are they protected?

☹
- lawn has no trees in middle so no shade, shade on hardscape
- no protection from wind
- most trees in seating area so might provide some wind protection + shade

Experience of aesthetic qualities and positive sensory experiences.
Is the public space beautiful? Is it evident that there is good design both in terms of how things are shaped, as well as their durability?

☹
- nothing special or particularly beautiful, just empty lawn
- best part is view of water

INVENTORY THE SITE

Investigate whether the space has design elements or program elements that are likely to invite diverse publics and foster social interaction. These features may not be obvious during your first visit. Use your best judgment or ask someone who uses the space frequently. Also note any spatial elements that might hinder interaction.

PHYSICAL FEATURES OR PROGRAMMING THAT INVITE INTERACTION + DIFFERENT TYPES OF USERS

1 Does the place offer a variety of places to sit and rest?
○ No ✓ Yes approx. 20 How many?

2 Does the place offer things to look at / nice views?
○ No ✓ Yes water!

3 Does the place have a slope or steps that are nice for sitting?
○ No ✓ Yes

4 Does the place have gateways or well-defined entrances?
○ No ✓ Yes

5 Does the place offer areas for exercise?
✓ No ○ Yes could exercise on lawn but likely no

12 Does the place offer areas for team sports?
✓ No ○ Yes could play on lawn but not afield

6 Does the place have a playground or kid-friendly play space?
✓ No ○ Yes

7 Does the place have a multipurpose lawn? (i.e., a lawn big enough for frisbee or picnics)
○ No ✓ Yes

8 Does the place have a multipurpose plaza? (i.e., a plaza big enough for markets or demonstrations)
✓ No ○ Yes _____ How many?

9 Are there fixed food and drink vendors in the place? (Including food carts.)
✓ No ○ Yes

10 Are there a variety of active ground floor businesses adjacent to the place — including food and drink vendors?
✓ No ○ Yes _____ How many? 1 restaurant on marina pier but blinds all the way down

11 Does the place have tables for eating and socializing?
○ No ✓ Yes

13 Does the place have public restrooms?
✓ No ○ Yes

14 Does the place have good lighting at night?
✓ No ○ Yes ○ Not sure

PHYSICAL FEATURES THAT HINDER INTERACTION

15 Are there any unnecessary permanent fences / barriers?
✓ No ○ Yes

16 Are there any off-limits areas?
✓ No ○ Yes

17 Are there any extreme grade changes, uneven paving, or other barriers for people with limited mobility?
○ No ✓ Yes steps!

18 Are the only food or shopping options very expensive or only accessible to high-income people?
○ No ✓ Yes

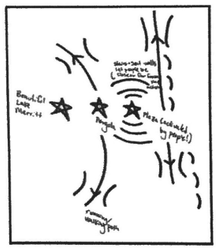
SKETCH THE "PATTERNS" OF THE SITE

This tool focuses on three patterns which, when working together, usually facilitate social interaction. Use the three symbols provided and diagram the key elements of the site and their relationships to one another. In architecture, this type of drawing is called a parti. Use your thick pen for symbols and your thin pen for labels and notes. You can make up your own diagrams if you feel they are necessary. The diagram does not have to be to scale.

MAGNET
Attraction / magnet (can be people). Increase size of symbol for stronger magnets. Label each magnet.

- Active storefront
- Event
- Great view
- Water feature
- Art
- Food / drink vendor
- Play area

USE THE SYMBOLS ABOVE TO MAP THE PHYSICAL ELEMENTS THAT ARE IMPORTANT FOR THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THIS SPACE. Pay attention to overlapping patterns. Add entries and exits, and a general boundary line.



Example: Lake Merritt, Oakland, CA

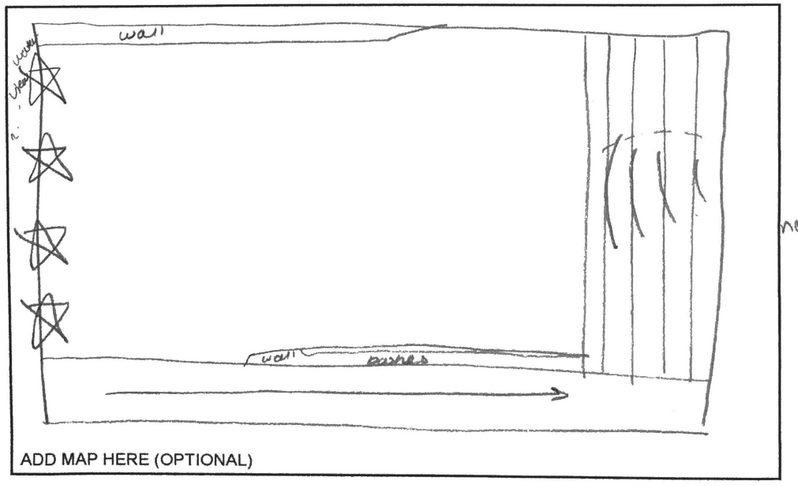
water

RANGE OF PARTICIPATION
Ability to be at different levels of remove from magnet. Draw actual physical features like benches, seatwalls, or other 'occupiable edges.'

- Slope
- Prospect / refuge
- Nice things to lean against
- Places to stay
- Places to people watch

COMPRESSION
Design feature that brings people closer together. A feature that allows casual closeness to a stranger without being perceived as rude.

- Gateway
- Path
- Alley



ADD MAP HERE (OPTIONAL)

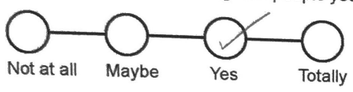
marina

neither

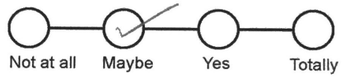
THOUGHTS + NOTES

Is this place good for...

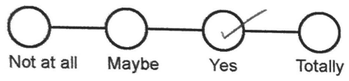
People-watching / coexisting with people you don't know?



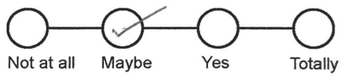
Doing different types of activities?



Being social / being with friends / family?



Inviting people with different interests / backgrounds?



1 **Observe who is here. In what ways are the people here diverse? In what ways are they homogeneous?** Identity is complex. It is not always visible to others. Nevertheless, think about age, race, gender, physical ability, profession, perceived income, education, diversity, etc.

- mostly young professionals having lunch - all white, more males
  - likely all in tech/innovation/startups
- field trip of middle school aged kids (ICA) - those kids are playing on lawn,
- no adults on lawn

2 **Describe the big design and program elements that help or hinder this place to be diverse and foster interaction:**

- Seaport as a whole issue (demographics, development ongoing)
- unengaged neighboring ground level activities

3 **Look at where people are and what they are doing. Is social activity happening where you thought it might happen? Why or why not?** (Reference Stationary Activity Mapping tool if you can)

- yes ok all sitting at tables conversing/eating lunch
  + not engaging w/ the lawn