

Frankford Pause Park

Engagement and Observation Report



FRANKFORD PAUSE PARK
PHILADELPHIA, PA | November 2018

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Introduction & Benchmark Data

Introduction

Frankford Pause is the name of the part art environment, part pocket park that has been developed on a former vacant lot in the heart of the Frankford neighborhood of Philadelphia. Located adjacent to the main transportation hub for the community, it is at a pivotal intersection between the commercial corridor and residential neighborhood.

This multi-phased project, under the leadership of Frankford Community Development Corporation (FCDC), is intended to serve as the premier outdoor event venue and community hub. The pilot phase, designed by Hinge Collective, was completed in early 2018. It has been a phased tool for Hinge and FCDC to leverage the involvement of the community to test out ideas of incremental placemaking, event programming, community engagement opportunities, and co-creation and building experimentation with youth. The past year has seen increased community involvement and ownership along with improved perceptions of the neighborhood among those visiting the park for planned events or passive recreation. This report outlines these observations in detail.

Design of the final build-out of the park will be informed by the following post-occupancy Engagement and Observation Report (EOR) completed by Hinge over the spring/summer of 2018. Construction will begin fall 2018/winter 2019.

Benchmark Data:

Location: 4671-73 Paul Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124

Site Area: 8,971 SF

Property Owner: City of Philadelphia, Department of Public Property (DPP)

Property Lease Terms: 29 years

Maintenance Operator: Frankford Community Development Corporation



PHOTO: CHRIS BAKER EVANS PHOTOGRAPHY

Project Overview

THE SITE

The mission of Frankford Pause Park is to provide a space within the heart of Frankford for community members, business owners, and visitors to rest, reflect and come together for gatherings and events. With a shortage of public open space along the commercial corridor, this vacant lot was identified because of its central location, ease of access via public transportation, and proximity to the offices of Frankford Community Development Corporation who manages and maintains the outdoor space.

Design for the park began in 2014 through a Community Design Collaborative Design Grant. Initially intended as a pop-up park, it became clear after conversations with community members and stakeholders that a more permanent improvement was desired. Design modifications and several years of funding followed until resources were available to build a pilot park in the winter of 2017/2018. The park has been operational through the spring/summer of 2018 during the extent of this Engagement and Observation Report (EOR).

The name "Frankford Pause" reflects the local act of pausing a conversation while the loud overhead train passes on the elevated rail along the main commercial corridor. After this brief "pause" the conversation is picked back up once the train has passed. Both the name and the design of the park respond to this specific neighborhood characteristic. The stripes mimic sound waves which are louder at the street adjacent to the elevated rail and get quieter near the back of the space. They are also intended to grab the attention of people moving down Frankford Avenue and encourage them to come and enjoy the space.



Frankford Community Development Corporation

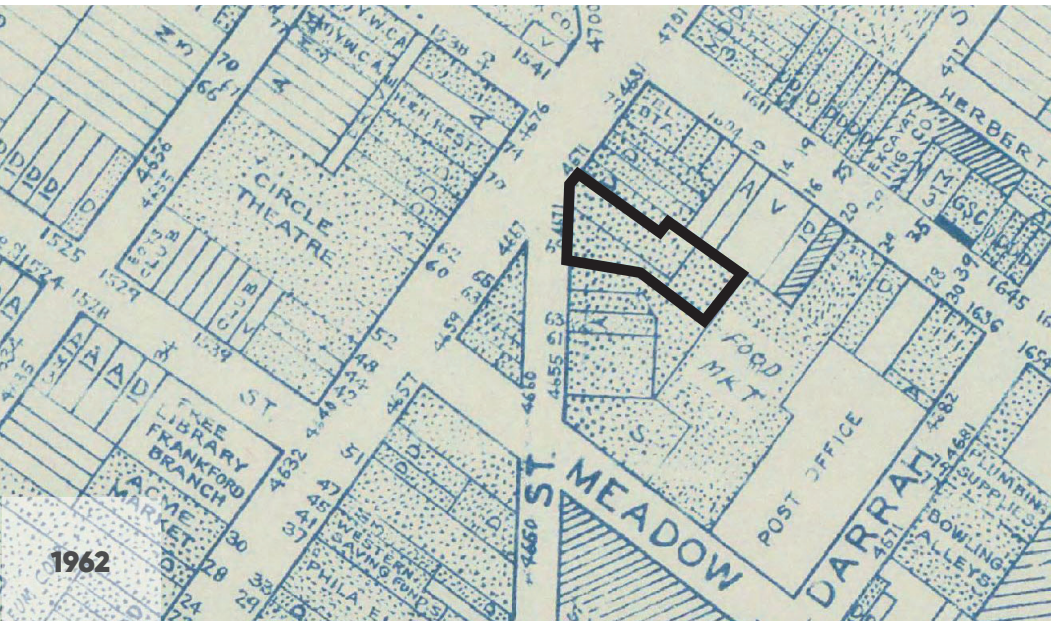
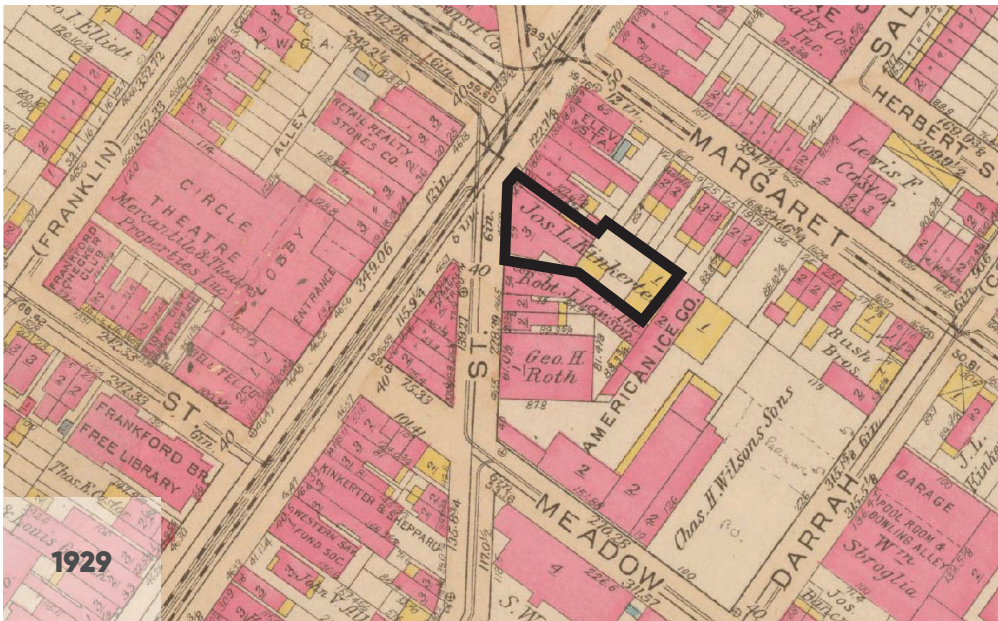
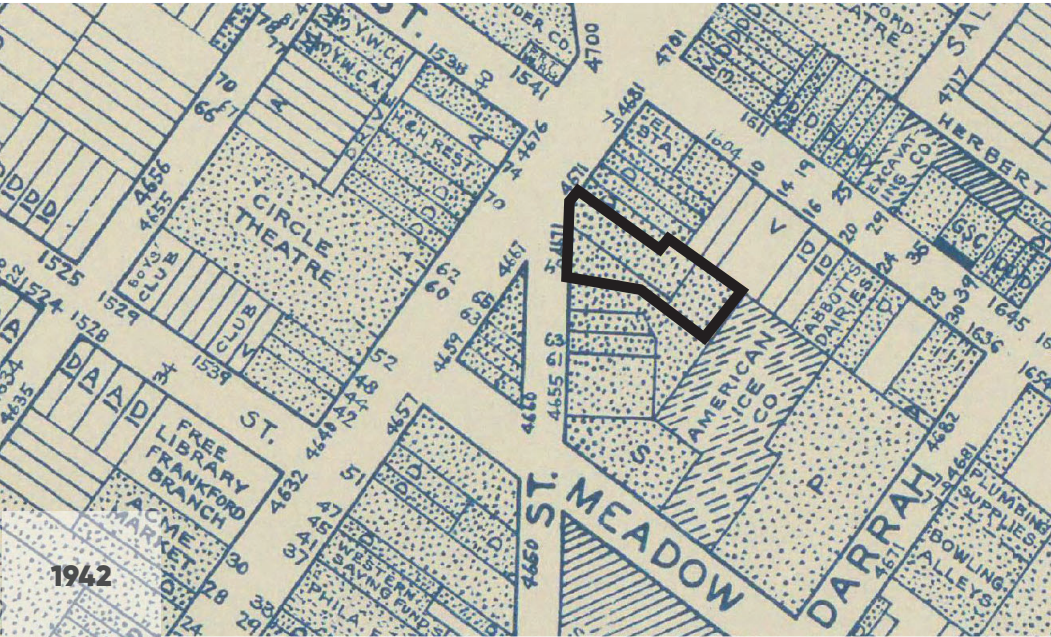
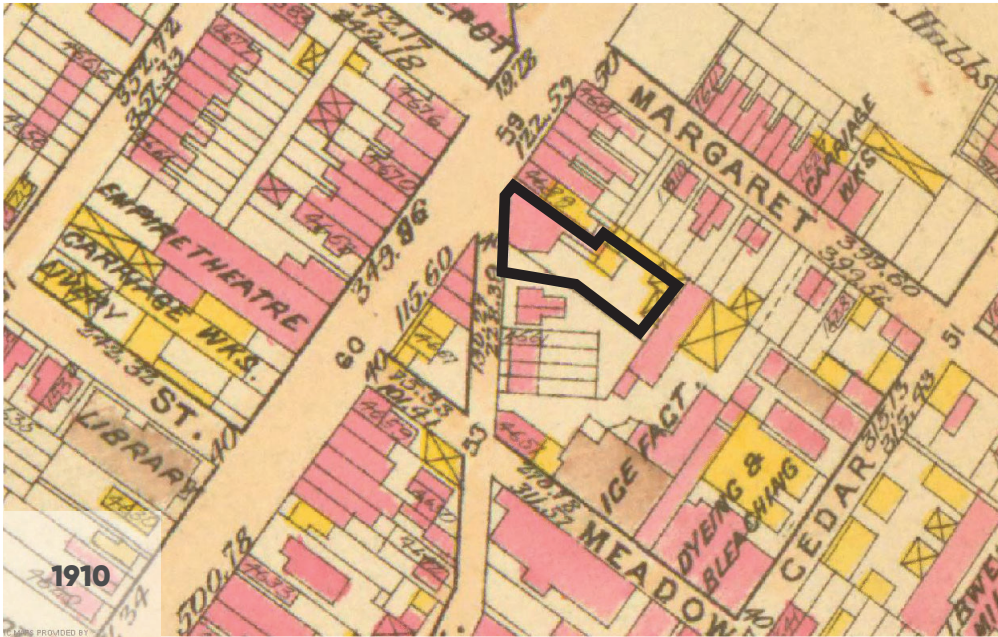
The Frankford CDC is dedicated to the asset-based development of Lower Northeast Philadelphia through job creation, affordable and workforce housing development, improving awareness and outcomes around health and wellness, and the creative and sustainable improvement of public space. www.frankfordcdc.org

Hinge Collective

Hinge is a public interest design firm made up of architects, landscape architects, planners, educators, and community organizers brought together by a mission to support communities in realizing public places that reinforce what make those communities unique and powerful. As designers, they lend their skills sets and expertise to give structure and form to ideas generated by the community. As educators and organizers, they work to make the power of design accessible to those who have traditionally been left out of design discussions and to bring contemporary theory and innovation to expand the benefit of new ideas to all people. www.hinge-collective.com

BRIEF HISTORY

The neighborhood of Frankford has seen much change over the past 150 years. The maps below show a snapshot of some of the development over the past century. The vacant lot itself, which was made up of two parcels, was last known to be a restaurant/bar called "The Riviera" and a pantyhose shop. The exact date of the demolition of those buildings is unknown, but the land has been owned by the City of Philadelphia since 2001 after falling into tax delinquency by the former owner and transferred at Sheriff sale.



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1915

Corner of Oxford and Frankford Ave.



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1919

Frankford elevated under construction



The construction of the elevated rail (which was completed in 1922) drastically transformed the Frankford neighborhood's physical character, while providing high-speed, inexpensive mass transportation to accommodate the growing demands for commuting, shopping, and enjoying parks and other places of recreation.

10



Corner of Oxford and Frankford Ave.

1966

9



Frankford Ave. looking south from Oxford

1978

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2014

Images of the site taken in 2014 during initial phase of Community Design Collaborative design grant.

PROJECT TIMELINE

JULY 2014
 CONCEPTUAL DESIGN COMPLETED | COMMUNITY DESIGN COLLABORATIVE DESIGN GRANT

FUNDRAISING FOR PARK SPEARHEADED BY FRANKFORD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

FEBRUARY 2017
 HINGE COLLECTIVE HIRED TO COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS FOR PHASE ONE

OCTOBER 2017
 GROUNDBREAKING FOR PHASE ONE

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED BY LOCAL CONTRACTORS, FATHER AND SONS CONSTRUCTION

FEBRUARY 2018
 PHASE ONE COMPLETED

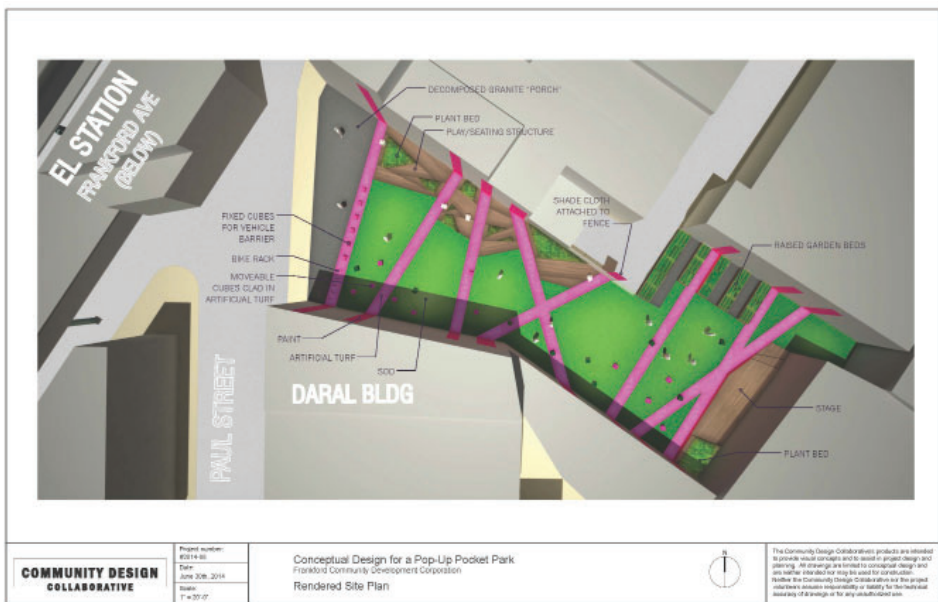
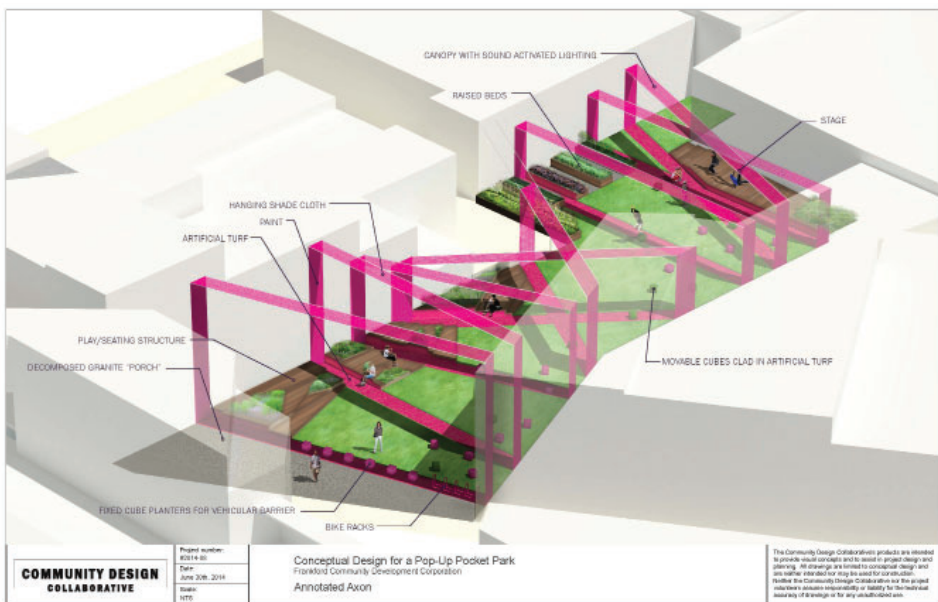
JUNE 2018
 OFFICIAL GRAND OPENING OF FRANKFORD PAUSE PARK

SPRING/SUMMER 2018
 HINGE COLLECTIVE COMPLETED POST OCCUPANCY EVALUATION OF PARK

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019
 BEGIN CONSTRUCTION FOR PHASE TWO

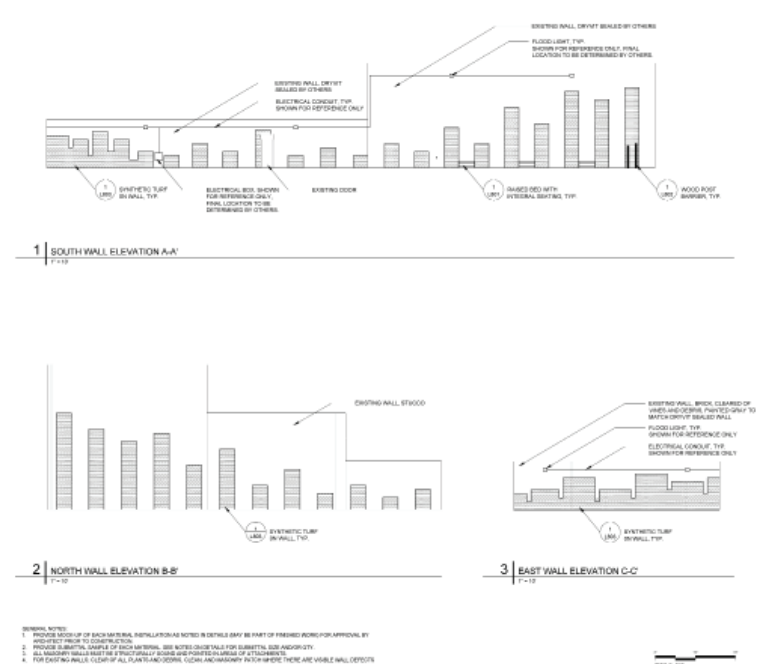
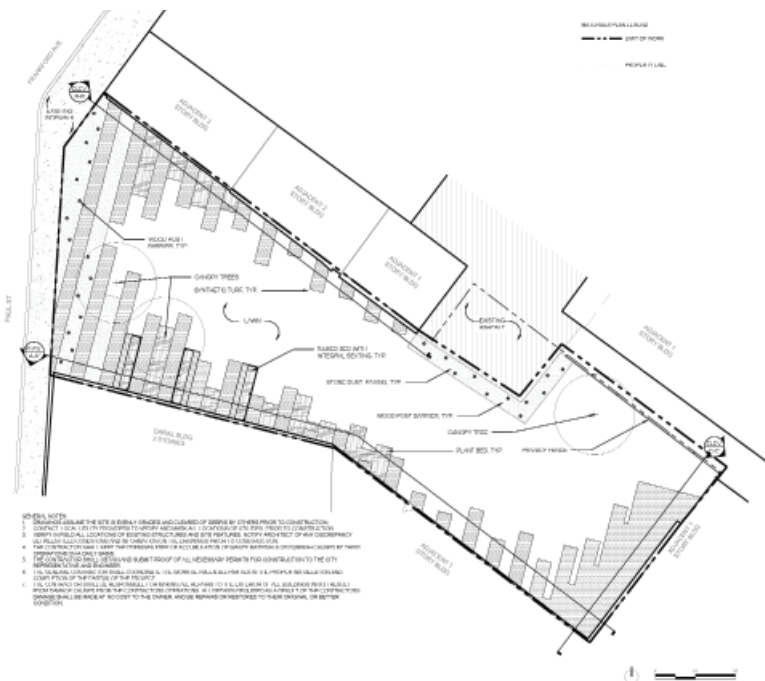
SPRING 2019
 PHASE TWO COMPLETED

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN SITE PLANS - 2014



Original Conceptual Design
 This design was modified to fit the budget constraints available for Phase 1 of the park. The items not realized include the canopy, raised stage, and additional raised planters.

PHASE ONE SITE PLANS - 2017



Construction Documentation – Phase One
 Sheets above are excerpted from complete construction document package.

FRANKFORD PAUSE

4671-75 PAUL STREET
 PHILADELPHIA, PA 19124

FRANKFORD COMMUNITY
 DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

4800 PAUL ST
 PHILADELPHIA, PA 19124
 TEL: 215-743-6500

HINGE COLLECTIVE LLC
 4303 LOCUST STREET
 PHILADELPHIA, PA 19139
 TEL: 267-570-2762



SITE PLAN

Scale: 1" = 30'-0"
 Date: 6/20/14
 Drawing: 01
 Project No: L100

FRANKFORD PAUSE

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WALL ELEVATION MATERIALS

Scale: 1" = 30'-0"
 Date: 6/20/14
 Drawing: 02
 Project No: L201

Project Overview

OBJECTIVES OF THE ENGAGEMENT AND OBSERVATION REPORT

Evaluating the first phase of the Frankford Pause Park represents a special opportunity to investigate how improvements made within the former vacant lot would be used by various community members and groups and stimulate positive social interaction among them. Through this evaluation, we hope to learn about the users of the park; investigate how the design of the park served their needs; and make suggestions about how additional measures can be taken to improve the current uses and expand to reach additional users. The goal of the Engagement and Observation Report (EOR) was two part - to create evidence-based guidelines to identify future improvements that could be made to the park, and to identify the success of low-cost initiatives within vacant lots that can be transferred universally.

This EOR aims to gather and examine key insights about the park's performance, functionality and operations. This information can then be compared against the project's original design intentions to determine how effectively these goals were met.

There is a widely accepted Post Occupancy Evaluation process model that sets three levels of analysis that can be undertaken: indicative, investigative, and diagnostic:

Indicative

This is a cursory analysis that may include a walk-through evaluation and selected interviews with key personnel, group meetings with end users and general inspections.

Investigative

This more in-depth analysis requires more formal data collection techniques such as interviews and questionnaires which are structured and unambiguous.

Diagnostic

This more detailed, sophisticated, and comprehensive methodology tends to have a broad, system wide focus on several comparable research areas.

The following EOR report is based on indicative and some investigative processes and techniques.

A variety of research techniques were used to evaluate how the park as a whole and its component parts supported the needs of the multiple user groups, including children, parents, are givers, visitors, and residents of the neighborhood.

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1
SURVEYS



2
SITE EXPERIMENTS



3
BEHAVIOR MAPPING



4
INTERVIEWS

RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

The research design proposes four levels of analysis. The first is an assessment of site-wide, spontaneous use by the community. The second level is an assessment of how the park is used during events or gatherings hosted by Frankford CDC. Through both of these times data was collected from behavior mapping as well as street and on-site surveys. The third level of analysis was a series of site experiments that addressed specific common themes that were being identified during the interviews. These experiments were determined and build with a group of high school students over the summer of 2018. The fourth level was one-on-one interviews with long time residents of the neighborhood to gather additional contextual data.

DATA GATHERING

1. **Surveys:** questionnaires from people that were using or walking past the park.
2. **Site experiments:** small design interventions built and inserted into the park.
3. **Behavior Mapping:** tracking and setting observation of visitors during spontaneous use and scheduled events.
4. **Resident Interviews:** one-on-one conversations with long time neighborhood residents.

Multi-method research strategy addressed park design through a participatory approach that regards users' knowledge as a highly qualified portion of the body of data for analysis. Behavior maps were compiled manually during events and transcribed into the graphic representation shown in this document.

Surveys

QUESTION: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT FRANKFORD?



Summary of street passerby surveys

154 surveys | 4 days (3 weekdays, 1 weekend)

Summary of event surveys

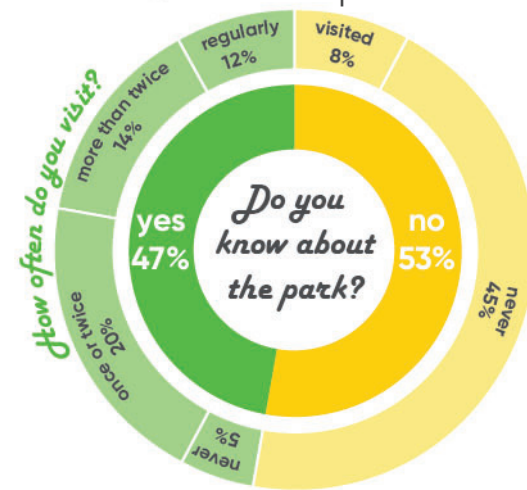
55 surveys | 6 events attended

- 5/04/18 | Food Truck Friday (12)
- 5/12/18 | Mother's Day Music and Plant Sale (6)
- 5/24/18 | Community Planting Day (9)
- 6/16/18 | Frankford ReMix (21)
- 7/28/18 | Beginner's Yoga (1)
- 8/03/18 | First Friday Project Capoeira (6)

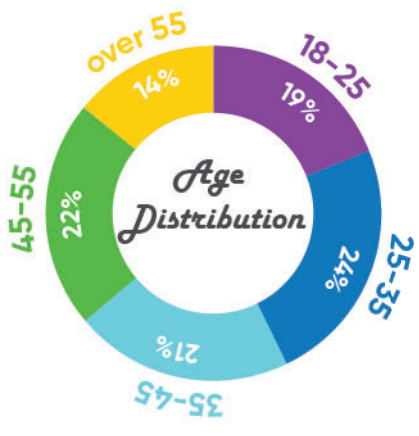
Hinge developed two surveys for the evaluation of Frankford Pause Park - the Street Survey and the Event Survey (both available in the appendix). The intention of these surveys was to start a conversation with people in or near the park to determine how they use the space, how they would like to use the space, and how the space can be improved to encourage them to use it more frequently. We also asked that people rate their perceptions of the neighborhood and the park on a scale from "strongly positive" to "strongly negative" so as to understand if the improvements from vacant lot to public amenity were having impacts in overall shift in perception of the neighborhood. The results from the surveys show that those people who were attending or participating in events held in the park had overwhelmingly more positive feelings about the neighborhood as a whole.

QUESTION: DO YOU KNOW ABOUT FRANKFORD PAUSE PARK? HAVE YOU EVER VISITED?

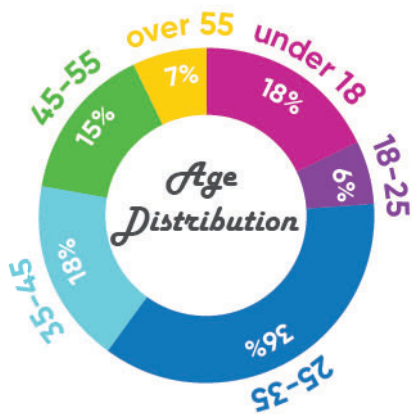
8% of people surveyed were not familiar with the park, but once it was identified they admitted to spending some amount of time there.



STREET SURVEY



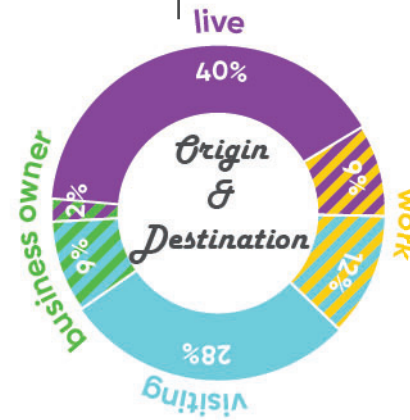
STREET SURVEYS



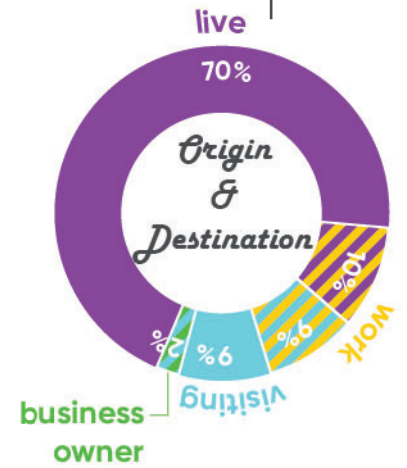
EVENT SURVEYS

QUESTION: DO YOU LIVE IN FRANKFORD OR ARE YOU VISITING? DO YOU WORK IN FRANKFORD, OWN A BUSINESS OR NEITHER?

Distribution between locals and visitors is close to even when surveying randomly on the street, but the events attract primarily local residents



STREET SURVEYS

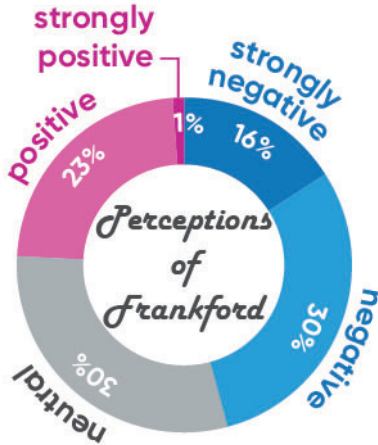


EVENT SURVEYS

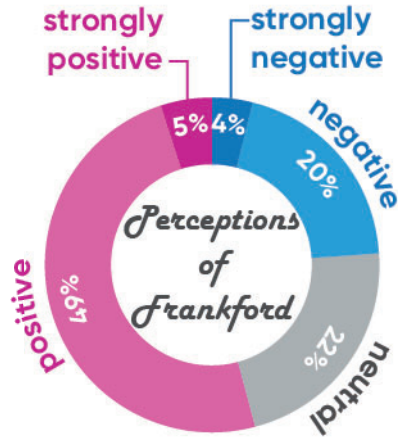


QUESTION: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF FRANKFORD?

STREET SURVEYS



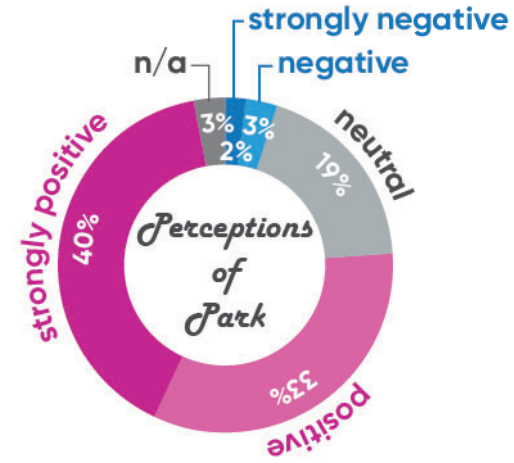
EVENT SURVEYS



People that were spending time in the park felt overwhelmingly more positive about the neighborhood as a whole.

QUESTION: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT FRANKFORD PAUSE PARK?

STREET SURVEYS



EVENT SURVEYS



Perception of the park is overwhelmingly positive across all surveys, but among those enjoying time in the park, there were no negative feelings toward the space.



1

people having lunch in the park on a weekday



2

3

4

no activity during the rain



5

6

7

students sitting in the sun on a cool afternoon



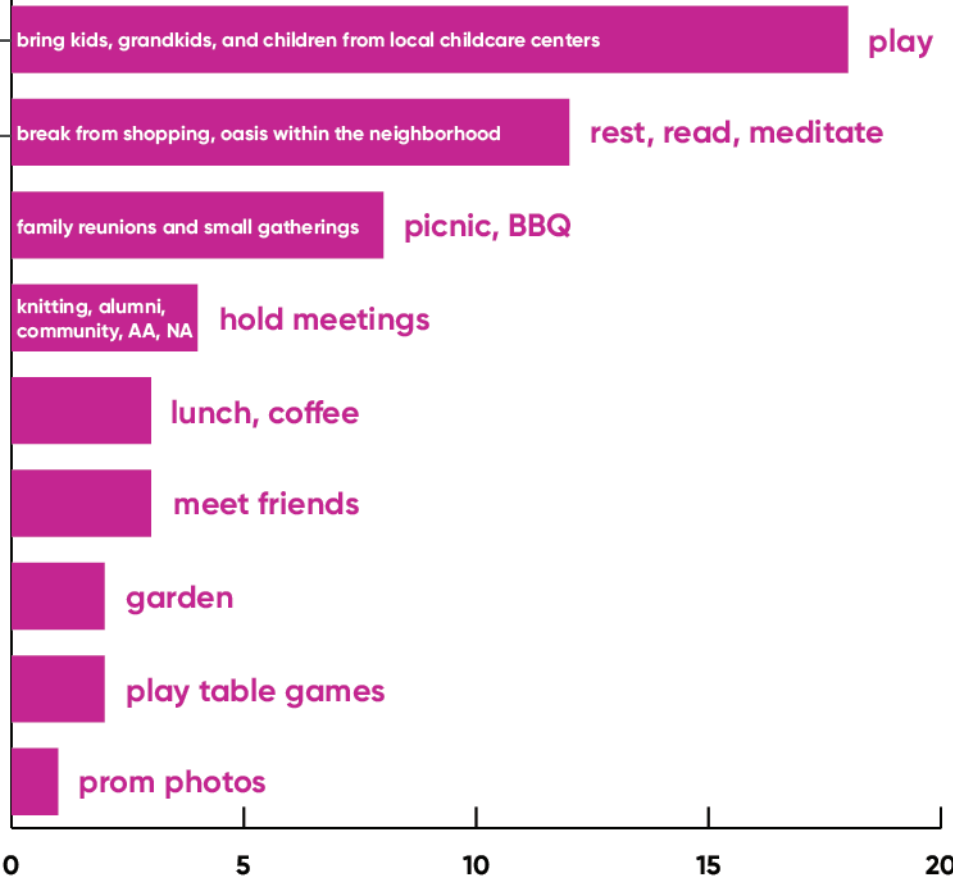
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QUESTION: HOW WOULD YOU USE THE SPACE DURING NON-EVENT TIMES?

Many people identified the lack of available space to find quiet within the city, and would like to use the space to picnic with their families.

Most people identify the park as a place to bring children to play. They appreciate that it is clean and well maintained, but wish for more things that the children can do while there.



24 May 2018: Community Planting Day



PHOTO: CHRIS BAKER EVANS PHOTOGRAPHY

14 July 2018: Fitness Series, Zumba



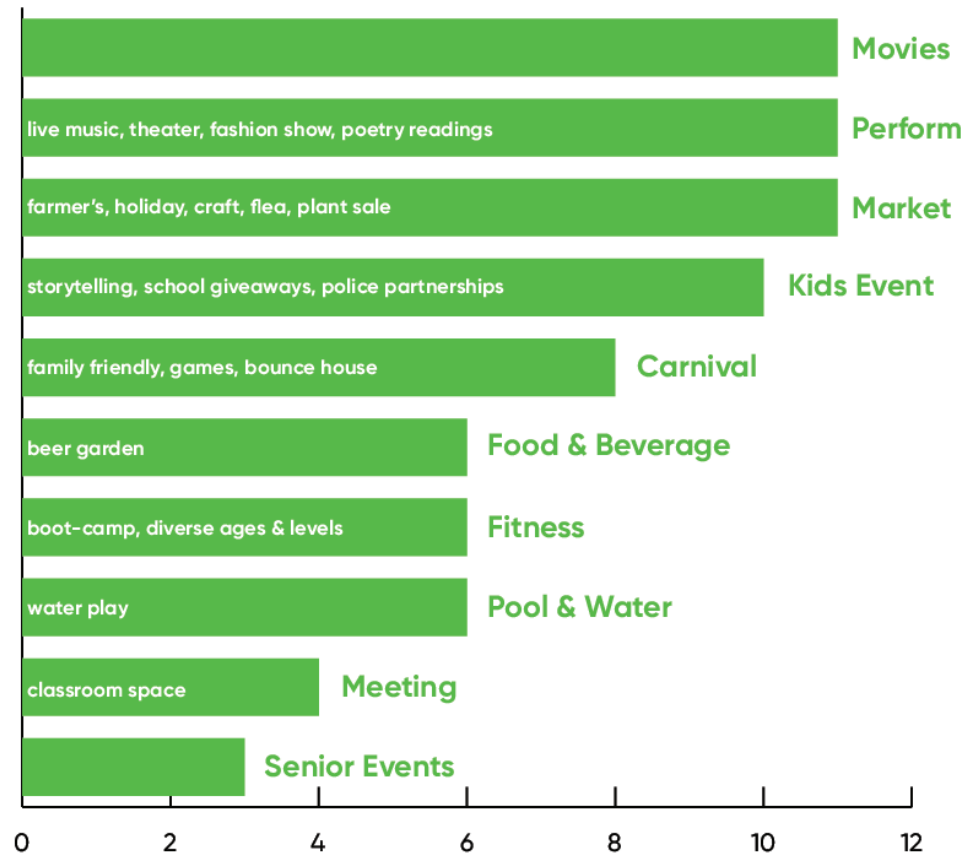
PHOTO: CHRIS BAKER EVANS PHOTOGRAPHY

16 June 2018: Frankford ReMix



QUESTION: WHAT TYPE OF EVENT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE PARK?

The top 4 desired events are the ones FCDC has been hosting throughout the summer. Not knowing about the events was cited as the most frequent reason for not attending.



QUESTION: HOW DO YOU USE THE PARK?

People use the first row of planter seating to rest along the edge of the park. There are no other seating options available within several blocks.

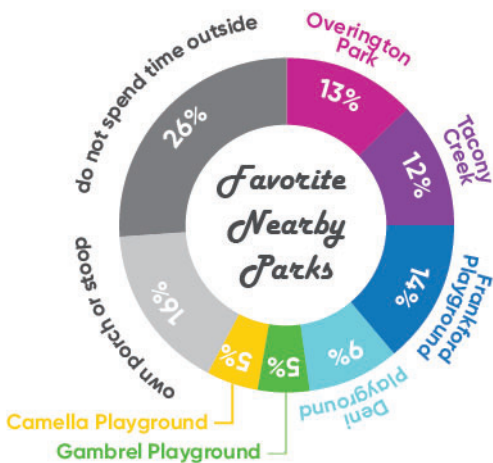


Most people only come to the park during events.

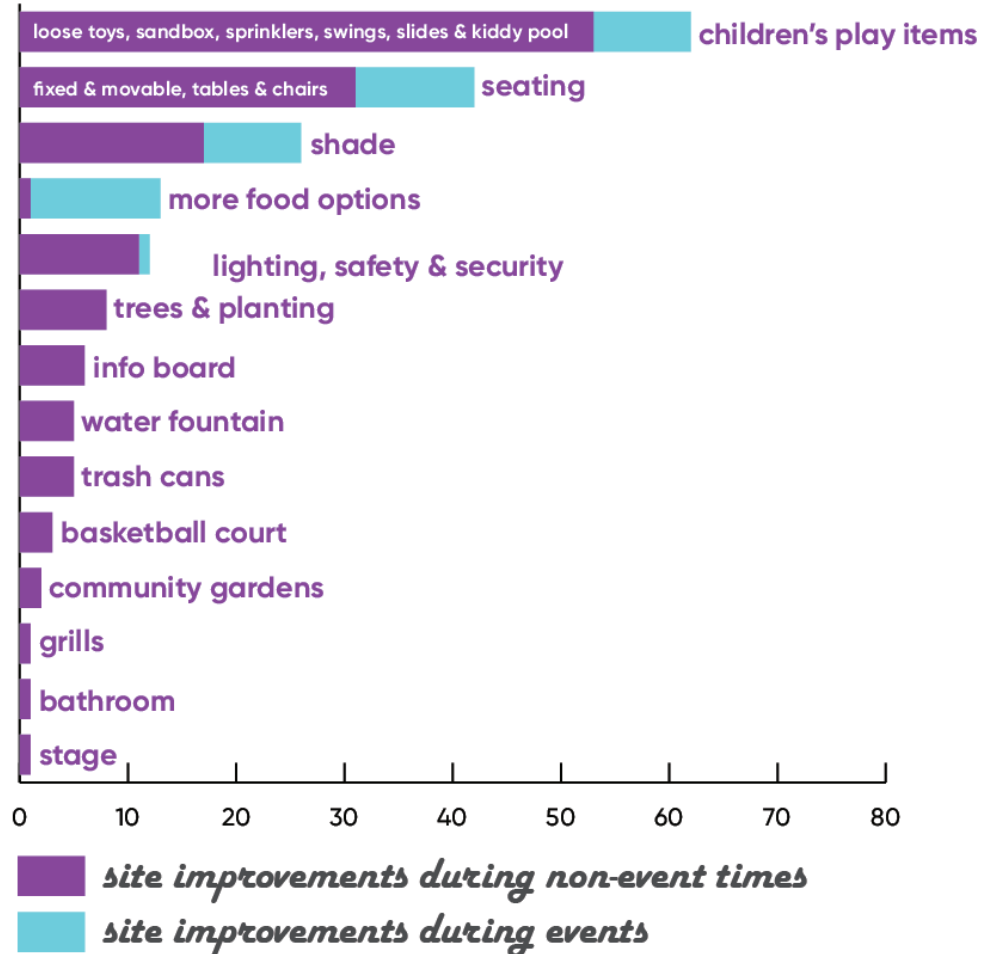
Many child care providers bring their children here during the day because it is the closest outdoor space.

QUESTION: WHAT OTHER PARKS DO YOU VISIT FREQUENTLY?

42% of people surveyed do not spend time outside or only do so at their own house.



QUESTION: HOW CAN THE PARK BE IMPROVED TO FIT YOUR NEEDS?



Site Experiments

In collaboration with FCDC and Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN), Hinge worked with high school students over the summer to co-design and develop engagement techniques for the park. The collaboration began with a discussion of public space and ways that it is used. The youth conducted surveys both on and off the park and attended a meeting with members of the community task force. These initial conversations formed a baseline understanding of the objectives of the park. With these in mind, the youth then answered the below questions about how to improve the site, specifically with teens in mind. Once the questions were answered and they were asked to develop a hypothesis for how to improve the park through the development of small site experiments. These experiments needed to fit within a small budget provided by FCDC and needed to be created by the youth themselves.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

WHAT ARE YOUR INITIAL OBSERVATIONS?

HOW COULD THE SPACE BE MORE APPEALING TO YOUTH?

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU (AND YOUR FRIENDS) TO USE THE SPACE MORE REGULARLY?

PYN RESPONSES:

THERE IS NOT A CLEAR REASON TO BE IN THE PARK IF THERE WAS NOT AN EVENT GOING ON.

THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH FLEXIBLE PLACES TO SIT OR EAT IN THE PARK.

THE PARK IS NOT A KNOWN PUBLIC SPACE, AND NOT EVERYONE KNOWS OR FEELS COMFORTABLE ENTERING THE SPACE UNINVITED.

IT IS CHALLENGING TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT AN UPCOMING EVENT AT THE PARK.



Summary of Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) involvement

Hinge Collective worked with four (4) youth from the Philadelphia region to co-design engagement techniques to gather feedback about the park.

Additional details

Number of Youth Participants: 4

Dates of engagement: July 9 - August 16, 2018 (6 weeks)

Time commitment: 2 days/week, 4 hours/day



Picnic table details
 Cost of Supplies: \$400
 Combined hours spent painting and assembling tables: 83 Total Hours

PICNIC GAME TABLES

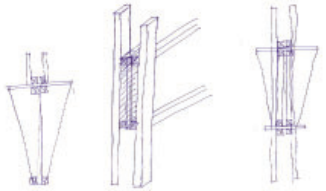
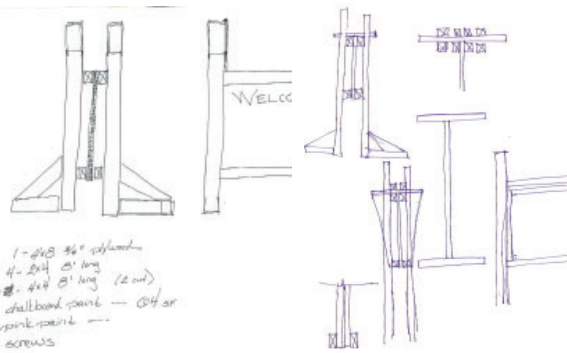
The group examined the first two observations regarding flexible seating along with the need for a clear understandable reason for being in the park. It was determined that a normal and recognizable element, such as a picnic table, should be added to the park to see if it increased user activity during non-event times.

Two picnic table kits were purchased, painted and assembled as a group. It took a full day to paint the wood, and a second day to assemble. Painting a chess/checkers board onto the top was completed the following week.

FINDINGS

The tables, which were not fixed to the ground, moved around every week. People were observed using the tables for eating food as well as perching on top of the table (with their feet on the bench) to talk to friends. No additional trash accumulation was associated with the picnic tables, and they have remained within the park for the entire study period without being stolen. One table was dismantled near the end of the summer.





1 - 2x4 8' x 4" x 4"
 4 - 2x4 8' x 4" x 4" (2 on)
 6 - 2x4 8' x 4" x 4" (2 on)
 chalkboard paint - 64'
 paint paint - 64'
 screws

1

2

3

WELCOME SIGN & INFO BOARD

The third and fourth observations were primarily associated with spreading information about the use of the park and the future events that were to take place at the park to the general public. It was determined that a welcome sign with the park name on it would inform people that it was a public space that they could use. It was also determined that the welcome sign be flexible enough to add and edit events - so chalkboard paint was used for the surface.

The youth, in consultation with Hinge and FCDC, developed a design for a welcome sign and info board that reflected the stripes of the park, protected the chalkboard from the elements, and used whole sizes of lumber to minimize the number of cuts that would have to be performed on site. The PYN students then painted and assembled the components over the course of two work days.

FINDINGS

The sign has been updated by FCDC monthly to keep a listing of current events. The sign was enough to encourage people to walk into the site to read the information, and in multiple occasions while we were on site they would stay and talk to us.

02 August 2018: PYN Build Day



4

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02 August 2018: PYN Build Day



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Welcome sign and info board details

Cost of Supplies: \$210

Hours spent painting and assembling tables: 104 Total Hours

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Observations

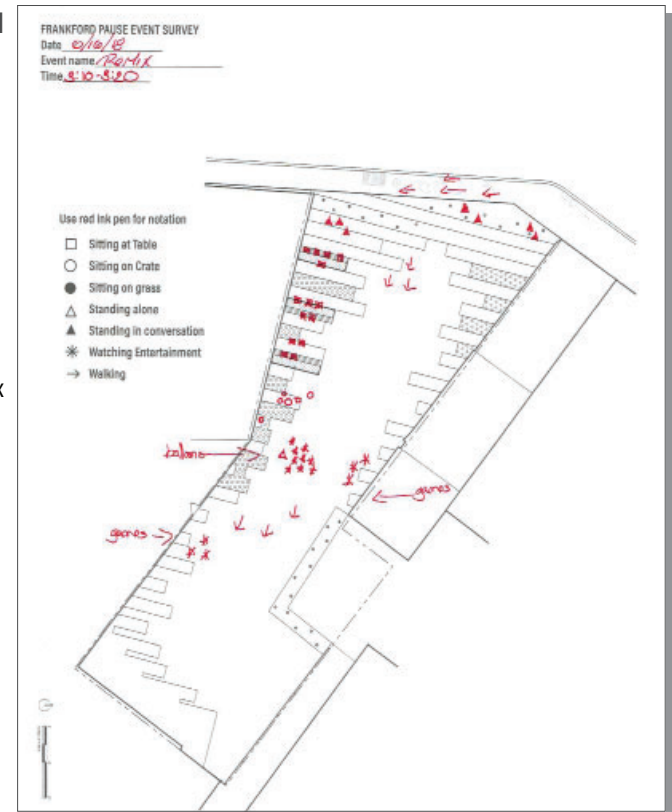
Hinge Collective visited the park on multiple occasions to map how the space was being used during both event and non-event times over various times of day. The mapping unveiled information about which spaces were most frequently used as well as other programmatic elements that may be desired.

METHODOLOGY

Hinge Collective developed observation tools based on open source tools created by the Gehl Institute. A series of symbols indicating different types of activity including sitting, standing, engaging in conversation, walking, and moving are marked on a plan of the park at regular intervals of time. These markings provide a snapshot of how the park is being used at a particular moment in time which, once layered with subsequent reports can give a full picture of use throughout the duration of a day or an

EVENT OBSERVATION

Most of the activity in the park took place during events and the observation reports for these events give great insight in to how people used the park. The following pages show the documentation of activity in the park at two of the most representative events, the Mother's Day Craft Fair on May 12, 2018 and the Frankford Remix Party on June 16, 2018.



Example of completed observation report for a 10 minute span at the Frankford Remix on 6/16/18

Summary of observation reports

6 events Observed

- 5/04/18 | Food Truck Friday
- 5/12/18 | Mother's Day Plant Sale
- 5/24/18 | Community Planting Day
- 6/16/18 | Frankford ReMix
- 7/28/18 | Beginner's Yoga
- 8/03/18 | First Friday Project Capoeira

8 non-event observations
(single observation reports)

- PYN Engagement Period | 12 weekday observations
- Weekend Day | 2 observations
- Weekend Night | 1 observation
- Weekday Night | 2 observations
- Inclement Weather | 1 rainy evening

EVENT OBSERVATION - MOTHER'S DAY CRAFT FAIR MAY 12, 2018

The Mother's Day Craft Fair on May 12, 2018 was organized, in large part, to support the Frankford Garden Club plant sale but also included additional vendors selling crafts and food. Live music was also provided later in the event and the band used the turf area at the back of the park as a stage. Observed behavior was documented roughly every 30 minutes between 11:15 am-12:45pm.

The diagram to the left shows the layered activity with each time frame shown in a different color. This was a mild overcast day and micro-climate was not a factor in influencing where one would linger. The observation documentation shows how the front of the site was most active with visitors primarily engaging with vendors and then activity moves to the back of the park once the music begins. A popular place to sit and socialize at this event was at a location along the north wall near the secondary entrance. This place allowed full view of the park and music but was far enough away to have a conversation without talking loudly. The bench seating at the planter was also still being used even though this was an awkward place to sit behind the vendor tables. Most socializing occurred at the front of the park near the street and at the middle of the park. The back of the park was not occupied until the music started.



- Vendor Table
- Sitting on Bench
- Sitting at Table or on Chair
- Sitting on Crate
- Sitting on grass
- Standing alone
- Standing in conversation
- Watching / Providing Entertain
- Walking
- Shopping / Selling

WATCHING LIVE BAND



OPTIMAL SEATING FOR FULL VIEW OF THE EVENT



CRAFT VENDOR TABLES

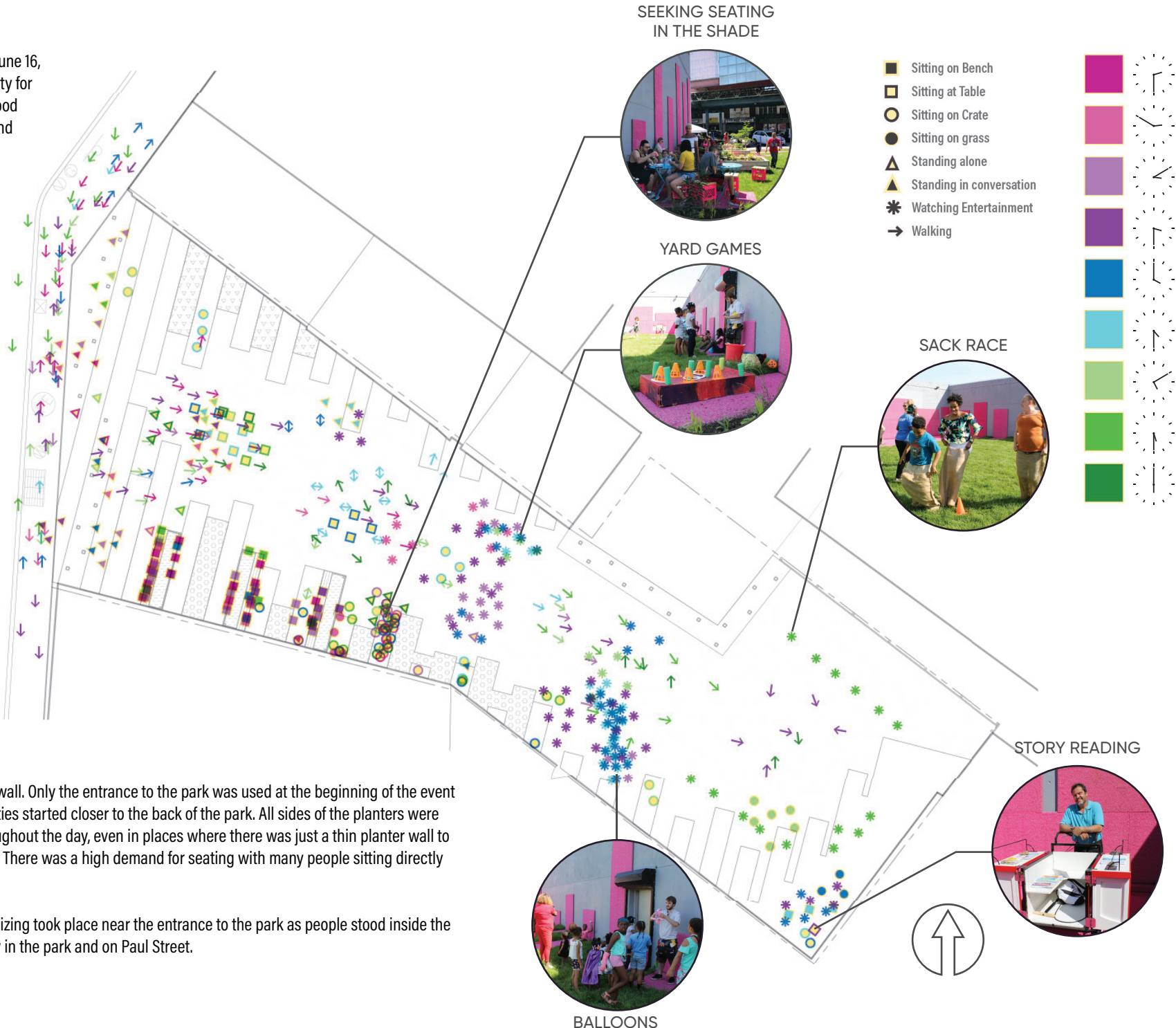


EVENT OBSERVATION - FRANKFORD REMIX JUNE 16, 2018

The Frankford Remix on June 16, 2018 that was a block party for the Frankford neighborhood as well as the official grand opening for the park. The Remix Party included games and activities for children in the park as well as live music and a craft fair that took place on Paul Street adjacent to the park. Observed behavior was documented roughly every 10 minutes throughout the duration of the event (2:00pm-6:00pm).

The diagram to the left shows the layered activity throughout the day with each time frame shown in a different color. The event took place on a hot day and much of the concentration of people sitting occurred in places where the building provided shade against the north facing wall. Only the entrance to the park was used at the beginning of the event before some of the activities started closer to the back of the park. All sides of the planters were occupied by people throughout the day, even in places where there was just a thin planter wall to sit on and no bench seat. There was a high demand for seating with many people sitting directly on the turf stripes.

Much of the casual socializing took place near the entrance to the park as people stood inside the park to watch the activity in the park and on Paul Street.



SEEKING SEATING IN THE SHADE



YARD GAMES



SACK RACE



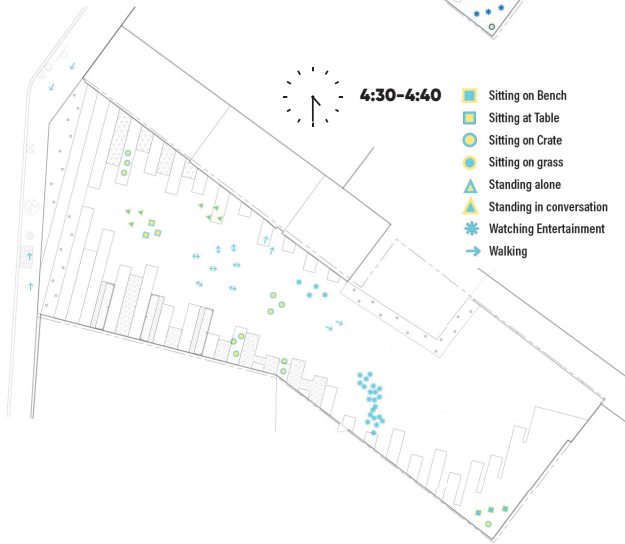
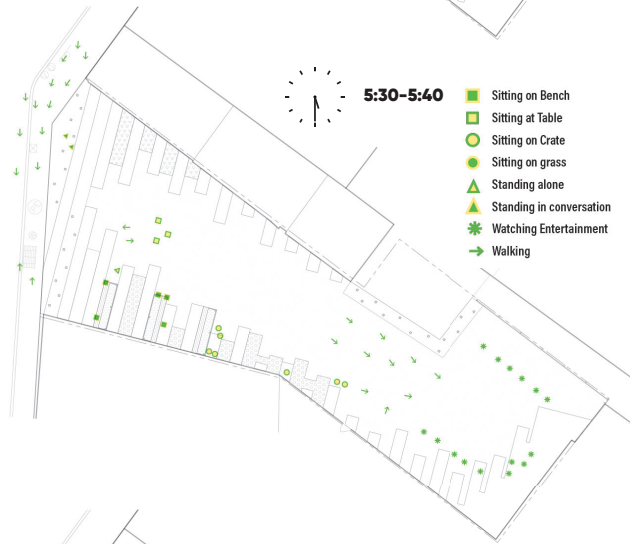
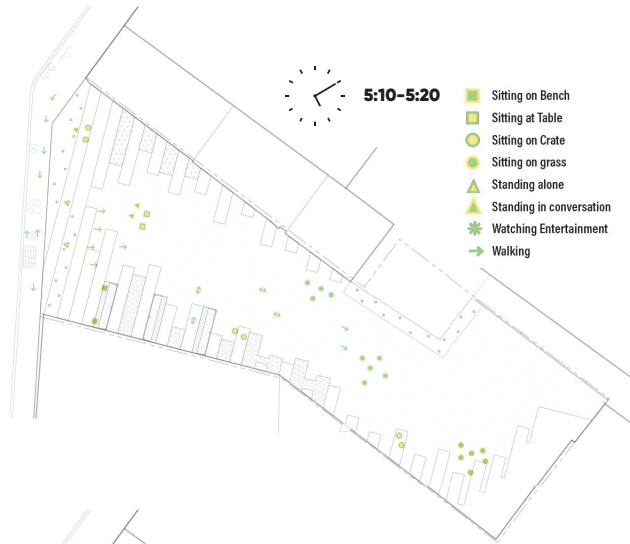
STORY READING



BALLOONS



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EVENT OBSERVATION - DAILY USE

Use of the park during non-event times was relatively infrequent, however, there were several groups of people who would visit the park on a regular basis. The diagram to the left is based on observations made on multiple days and is generally representative of the types of activities and movement of people on a typical day in the spring and summer of 2018 in the park.

The planter bench near the entrance to the park is one of the most heavily used parts of the park and one can frequently see people socializing at the first bench that faces Frankford Ave. Many people also use the park as a shortcut from Frankford Ave. to points east. Several day care businesses use the

back of the park as a place to allow children to run and play outside. The childcare providers tend to keep the children in the back of the park on the artificial turf and the children rarely venture out of this area. On a few occasions when the sprinklers were turned on to irrigate the grass, children and adults were seen running through, and playing in, the sprinklers. The picnic tables built by the PYN youth traveled around the park as people moved them. The tables would be continually moved to the area near the north wall adjacent to the secondary entrance, the same location that was a popular seating area at the Mother's Day event and other events. One of the picnic tables was eventually turned upside down and used as play equipment until it broke with this misuse. This is an indication that proper play infrastructure is needed for children of all ages, including middle school and high school children.

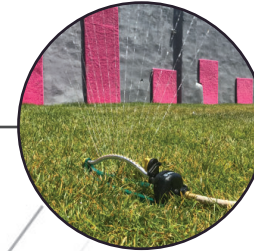
PLANTER BENCHES
ARE POPULAR



PICNIC TABLE IN LOCATION
PREFERRED BY VISITORS



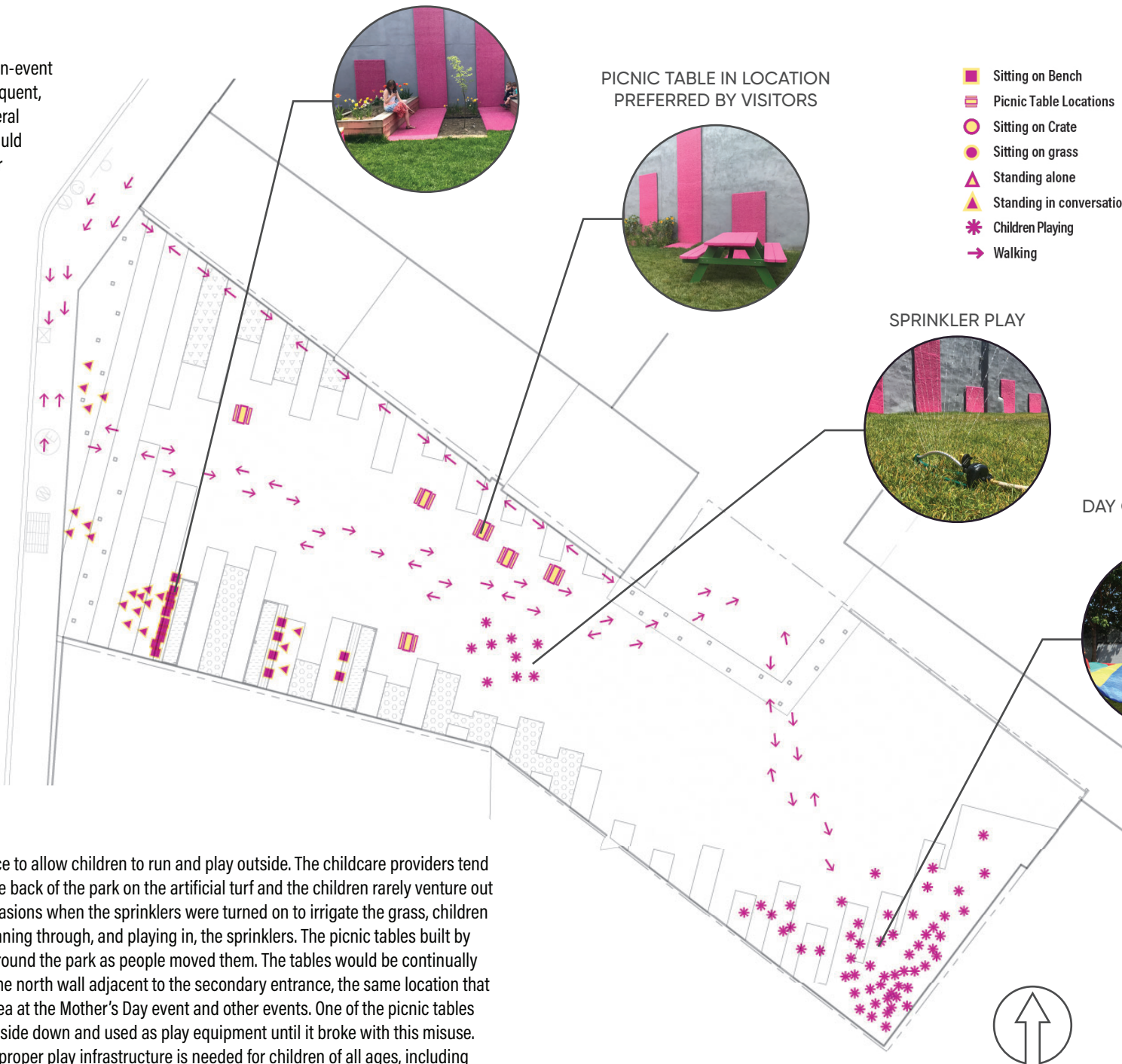
SPRINKLER PLAY



DAY CARE PREFERRED
PLAY AREA



- Sitting on Bench
- Picnic Table Locations
- Sitting on Crate
- Sitting on grass
- Standing alone
- Standing in conversation
- Children Playing
- Walking



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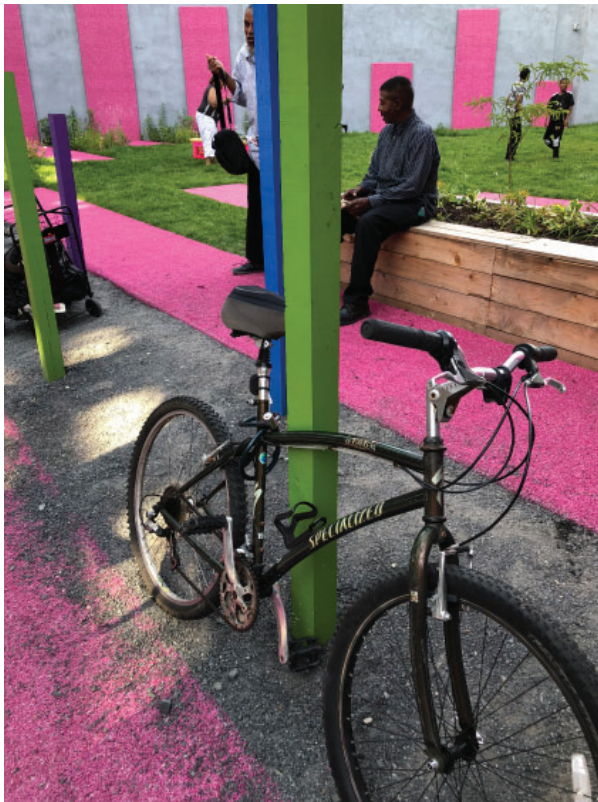
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ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

SHADE

In the heat of the summer the movement of people immediately follows the shade.

TRASH

More trash was observed along the edge of the street than in the park itself. This is a combination of debris blowing into the park from the street and food items left behind from those using the planter bench for resting.

DOGS

Many dog owners regularly use the park without picking up after their animals. The frequent discovery of feces on the site is a significant deterrent to caregivers bringing children to the park to play.

BIKES

There are not enough locations for bikes to park, so they often end up on the bollards blocking entrance into the site.

BOLLARDS

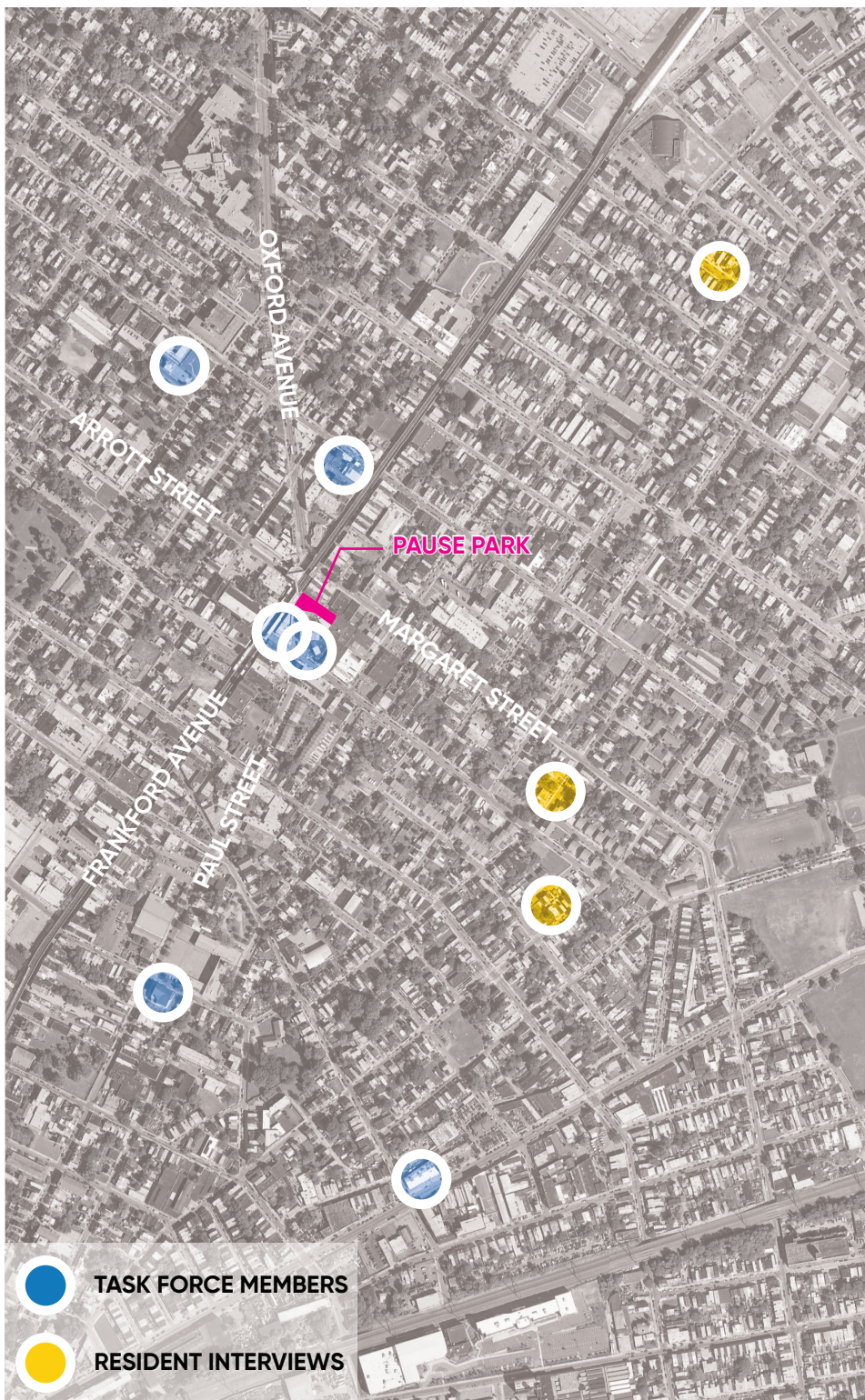
During events in the park there will often be a group of neighbors that hover around the bollards at the entrance without coming fully into the park.

VANDALISM

The following undesirable events occurred during the pilot phase:

- A trash can was stolen from the site.
- A few plants were both uprooted and left in place or stolen from the site.
- A single occurrence of graffiti was on the wall of the Dural building.
- One picnic table was dismantled.
- Dog owners repeatedly did not pick up after their dogs
- A single occurrence of a homeless resident was discovered sleeping on the site (and helped clean up after).

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Interviews

This final data set is meant to supplement the survey data through direct engagement with community leaders. Through a combination of one-on-one interviews conducted with longtime residents and small round table discussions with an assembled "task force group" we had intimate discussions about the park and the neighborhood. The interviewees were selected because they were block captains, who serve an important role as advocates for the hyper-local community. They were able to provide valuable data on the changing perceptions of the neighborhood over the past several decades. The round-table task force discussions contained individuals representing local businesses, service providers, faith organizations, and city agencies. We facilitated a conversation amongst them and engaged them as outreach partners for community engagement efforts and phase two design.

BLOCK CAPTAIN RESIDENT INTERVIEWS

Discussion with Ms. Johnnie Mae:

Miss Johnnie Mae is a long-time resident of Frankford, moving here with her five children in 1970. She is an active member of the community holding the block captain position as well as involvement in the Frankford Garden Club, Frankford Coalition of Neighbors, PHS Green Committee, and being active in her local church events. Even with all the changes that she has seen over the years, she ranked her perceptions about the neighborhood and the park as "strongly positive" for both. Below is an excerpt from our conversation that we had in the park:

How far away do you live from the park?

It's about a 10-minute walk. I'm down along Frankford Avenue regularly for shopping and errands.



Discussion with Ms. Johnnie Mae Continued

Have you attended any events at Frankford Pause Park?

Yes, when I can. I helped buy plants for the planting day and came to the ReMix grand opening of the park. My son attended the Revival while the tent was set up on site and enjoyed it.

How would you describe your involvement within the community?

Our block received a block improvement grant over 20 years ago which gave me a reason to get out and talk to the kids about messing with stuff (i.e. trees, flowers, lamps). We had a single tree that was sick and cut down and I wanted to plant more trees. I encouraged the local kids to get involved in cleaning up the block and then invited them to volunteer at the MLK breakfast hosted annually by the Frankford Coalition of Neighbors. We planted trees, and with the leftover money were able to create some front yard gardens. I even made a few of them Jr. Block Captains because they were so helpful in bringing the block together. PHS asked me to be on the PHS Green committee after that and I have been participating ever since.

How would you describe your neighborhood?

My block is not as tight knit as it used to be. It has less home owners and more renters, and the children that live there are very young. It takes more effort to get folks to come out and help with block cleanup these days.

What types of events would you like to see and attend at the Park?

Garden Club meetings happen inside once a month, and I would like to take them outside. My church has an annual dinner & wine event that would be great to host at the park. It would also be great to have birthday parties and reunions at the park.

Do you have any stories to share about Frankford?

The site of this park used to be a restaurant called "The Riviera". It was open until 4 am and we would on occasion come here after a Saturday night of dancing into the early hours at the cabaret. We would have breakfast, go home to get some sleep and then get ready for church.

Discussion with Mr. Doug Bryant:

Mr. Doug has lived in Frankford all his life. He has 2 kids and 3 grandkids that all live in Frankford as well. He has been the block captain for the past 4 years as well as a baseball coach at the Recreation Center and participating on the local Zoning Committee. He ranked the neighborhood of Frankford as "positive" and the Frankford Pause Park as "strongly positive". Below is an excerpt from our conversation that we had at his home.

How far away do you live from the park?

It's about a 5-minute walk, but I don't want it that often. I spend most of my time here at the house.

How would you describe your neighborhood?

I have lived in this house for 45 years. It's mostly homeowners with a few apartments on the corners and down the street. I know almost everyone, but people don't come out of their houses as much as they used to. But we all look out for each other. There is a large open space across the street where 4 houses came down years ago. A neighbor owns one of the lots, but the other 3 are open. We use it for block cookouts and birthday parties.

The neighborhood has changed a lot over the years. There are more drugs visible and people don't all know each other anymore. Frankford Avenue has changed the most, but this happened mostly in the 1960s. It used to have great men's stores and I never had to go downtown to shop.

Have you attended any events at Frankford Pause Park?

No, but I have heard about them. It would be nice to see more music events with local neighborhood musicians. Something that you can dance to. I would go for that.

What types of events would you like to see and attend at the Park?

Live music events, food trucks and more food options.

How can the park be improved to make it more appealing for you to use?

The avenue is disappointing, if that came back the park would be more used.

Do you have any memories to share about Frankford?

I remember with the Riviera burned down on the park site. I had breakfast there many late nights and/or early mornings.

Discussion with Mr. Tommy and Mrs. Gladys Garland

1 Mr. Tommy has lived on his street for 68 years. Even though he has changed houses, he says that not much else has changed about his block in those many years. His wife, Mrs. Gladys grew up a few blocks away, but they have both called Frankford home most of their lives. They have raised 2 children in their home and now have 3 grandkids that live nearby. They ranked their perceptions of the neighborhood as “positive” citing their extended family that still lives in the area, and the park as “highly positive”. Below is an excerpt from our conversations that we had in the living room of their home.

2 *How far away do you live from the park?*

It’s about a 10-minute walk.

3 *How would you describe your involvement within the community?*

Mr. Tommy has been the block captain for over 20 years (although he keeps trying to hand off the responsibility to someone else). He used to have a lot more help keeping the block clean, but most people don’t come out of their houses as much as they used to.

4 *Have you attended any events at Frankford Pause Park?*

Yes, we went to the ReMix block party event.

5 *How can the park be improved to make it more appealing for you to use?*

We would like to see more benches, more shade, lots of flowers, and a good place to buy lunch close by. I would like to see more events and music taking place up on the stage.

6 *Do you have any memories to share about Frankford?*

Mr. Tommy’s grandmother had 9 kids, and 7 lived in Frankford. He remembers being able to go from block to block and having an aunt or uncle on each one of them. The neighborhood was made up of a few families and everyone knew everyone else. This changed a lot in the 1950s when they built the projects and that brought a lot of new people to the area. This neighborhood would be much better if everyone was interested in knowing each other and being part of the community again.



COMMUNITY TASK FORCE



Rafael Alvarez | Philadelphia City Council
Adrian Boone | PYN worker
Harriet Clinton | Frankford CDC Cleaning Staff
Raquan Collins | PYN worker
Doryán DeAngel | TTF Watershed Partnership
Christine DeJesus | Frankford CDC
Tammy Leigh DeMent | Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Ellie Devyatkin | Frankford CDC
Blair Jordan | Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center
Larissa Klevan | PCPC
Lori LaPorte | Joy of Living
Donald McKinnie | Mizpah SDA Church
Paulette Miller | State Representative Jason Dawkins
Lindsay Reul | Philadelphia Water Department
Stephanie Scully | Joy of Living/Scully Properties
Hailey Stern | Philadelphia Water Department
Ellie Vamos | Frankford CDC
Kim Washington | Frankford CDC

COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

1 July 10, 2018 at 1:00 pm

2 Hinge Collective gave a brief overview of the Frankford Pause Park creation. The park as built is phase 1 of 2, with the next phase beginning in the fall of this year. This task force has been formed to help inform what measures will be taken to improve the park in the next phase as well as to help spread the word about the park.

3 All task force members in attendance were asked to introduce themselves and share what their hopes or aspirations for the space are. Some of the comments included:

That the park will begin to change mindset about the Frankford neighborhood for both locals and outsiders. The park can begin the trickle effect.

“Your home is as beautiful as you think it can be.” – Blaire Jordan

Hope that the park can begin to revitalize the avenue shopping district

Hope that the park will offer a venue to bring the community together

Desire for the park to be maintainable and have a long-lasting impact

The ability to foster relationships within the community through meeting at common ground

4 Make connections with schools and youth organizations to use as outdoor space

List of things people would like to see happen at the park:

hula hoop competition, farmer’s market, movie night, outdoor children’s theater, community gardens, event bulletin board, and recovery related events (loop into existing programming).

5 Hinge has been actively engaging people at events at the park to solicit feedback on their experience of the park. The feedback that we have received has been overwhelmingly positive, with suggestions of how the park may be improved, but primarily joy and excitement about the addition of this in the neighborhood. Most people feel relatively safe and relaxed due to the cleanliness, color, and greenness of the park. It has also become a regular destination for local childcare businesses close by.

6 Hinge will be engaging more community members over the summer outside of events held at the park.

The task force was asked the following questions:

Who else should we be talking to in the community?

Are there other forms of outreach or engagement that the group thinks we should include in the process?

7 Are there aspects of the outreach that anyone in the task force group is interested in being more involved with or co-facilitating?

The task force agreed to talk to more community members to spread the word about how Frankford Pause Park can benefit them as well as future events that are happening at Frankford Pause.

November 19, 2018 at 2:30 pm

Hinge Collective gave a brief overview of the Frankford Pause Park Engagement and Observation Report (EOR) - the DRAFT of this document. Based on the findings from the EOR, the following items were highlighted as optional additions to the park. Because the preliminary cost estimate has come in over budget, we discussed priorities of these elements as a group.

- Welcome Sign: permanent sign to brand the park with the ability to announce upcoming events.
- Stormwater Garden: working with PWD the site will manage stormwater from adjacent EL station through a combination of exposed raingarden and underground storage.
- The Grove sitting area: based on the most frequent location of the movable picnic tables during the observation period, this space will have permanent seating under the dappled shade of trees.
- Community Garden Plots: based on feedback from the garden club, there is a desire to have additional spaces for gardening on the site. These raised beds, which could be located in the rear of the site, would bring additional eyes to the park to help maintain a safe environment.
- Storage Container: providing a space for toys, tables, and other items that could be accessed by community members when using the space.
- Stage: Updating the current stage to be slightly elevated to provide better viewing.
- Traverse Wall: in response to the lack of physical activities for teens/tween to do, we suggested a climbing wall along the Dural building where participants would climb horizontally (just a few inches from the ground).
- Sand box: in response to lack of play areas for young children, a sand box with built in storage and a cover was suggested.
- Play Benches: a playful take on the pink artificial turf stripes by creating elevated and modulated surfaces that could be used for sitting or climbing over.
- Shade Canopies: a continuation of the stripes with overhead shade structures would provide additional shade near the front of the park.
- Lighting: string lights between the front shade canopies will allow more human scaled lighting to encourage evening use.

The following comments and priorities were discussed by the group

- Shade canopies, which were a part of the initial conceptual design should be a priority.
- Suggested adding stepping stones through the rain garden to prevent children jumping into the plant beds and damaging the stormwater infrastructure.
- Concern about making the site less open feeling and making it difficult to see through the space.
- ALL: The sandbox was perceived as an overall maintenance challenge. Both the play benches and traverse wall were seen as providing more opportunities for child engagement.
- Concerns over the traverse wall allowing access to the rooftop.
- A desire to have more opportunities for small group discussions
- An opportunity to store items on site rather than inside Dural building was viewed as positive, allowing additional community members to use the space.
- Recommended FCDC review event types and require additional insurance of all park users hosting events to protect themselves as owners of the site.
- Expressed concern for the garden plots and the ability to safely grow food because of the various items that had been found in the other raised beds during the pilot phase.



Findings

The following items are the key take-aways obtained with the combination of data gathering techniques described throughout this report. The findings are given as general statements with general actions/solutions following each. Because many of the specific design and operational recommendations encompass multiple findings - they are detailed in the following section.

THE PARK AS A WHOLE

People are aware of the brightly colored and activated open space but are not aware that it is public space and available for them to use.

- The invitation for public use needs to be more explicit with signage and familiar site furnishings that will invite additional use.
- An organized "Friends of Frankford Pause" group could encourage community involvement and participation.

The park is a place that is activated by FCDC hosted events, but not during non-event times (except for a few dedicated regular users).

- Enhance amenities for spaces that will target the desired non-event uses identified in the report: play space, seating, and shade.

The park is not only a place for events and passive recreation, but also as a pass through along the northern edge to access the alley near the rear of the site.

- At grade planting along the desire lines that pass through the site are not sustainable. The plant beds should be raised or clearly protected to ensure their longevity.
- The park design can be updated to either accommodate those desire lines or take measures to minimize damage done by foot traffic.

PARK AS EVENT SPACE

Surveys show a large appetite for the types of hosted events that FCDC has organized during this study, but the same appetite is not reflected in actual event turnout numbers.

- Enact a more comprehensive way to spread the word about events through social media, word of mouth, flyers, and announcements within the park.
- Allow community groups and/or individuals to organize their own events to encourage new people to use and discover the park.
- Allow time for the regular events to become part of the Frankford culture/tradition.

A more functional and recognizable stage area will make it easier to use and recognize.

- The stage can be raised for added visibility of performers
- Create infrastructure for storage, power, sound, and lighting equipment.
- Provide shelter for inclement weather to protect equipment.



PARK AS PASSIVE RECREATIONAL SPACE

The spaces most frequently occupied are locations where there is a combination of seating, shade and clear sight lines.

- Enhance the amenities offered at the two locations most frequently occupied during non-event times: the planter bench at the sidewalk edge
- Provide permanent seating at the community determined picnic table location at the center of the site.

Childcare providers within walking distance of the park use the space on a regular basis providing access to nature to many children within the neighborhood. However, they only use a small portion of the site along the rear stage.

- Provide amenities for young children to engage in creative play at a comfortable distance from the street.
- Provide comfortable areas for caregivers to rest with full visibility of the site and children to encourage longer visits.

The first phase of the park does not offer many amenities for older children and teens.

- Provide opportunities for physical activity to reduce boredom and destruction.
- Provide "hang out" spaces with seating to promote social gatherings.

FEATURES THAT MAKE THE PARK ATTRACTIVE

The colorful flowers and lush green grass were the most common themes for what people liked about the park.

Conversations among event attendees demonstrated that the main reason that they were attending an event was to see people that they knew.

- The potential that the space has as an incubator for human connection is extremely valuable. The physical attractiveness of the space is secondary.
- Continue promoting events that provide opportunities for social cohesion.

SAFETY, SECURITY AND TRASH

Some vandalism within the park occurred but was within a manageable margin expected due to the park's urban condition.

- Maintain current level of maintenance of the park to quickly address issues of vandalism and repair as needed.

More trash was observed along the sidewalk edge than within the park. This presumably blew in from the sidewalk or was left along planter benches after lunch time.

- The addition of fixed trash cans would provide more opportunities to discard of personal trash.

Dog owners not picking up after their pets is an obstacle that still needs to be managed.

- Park rules should be posted and enforced that either prohibit pets or provide bags and trash cans to encourage more responsible dog owner behavior.

Safety concerns, specifically at night, were cited repeatedly during surveys and conversations with community members. However, observational and security footage showed little to no activity on the site at night.

- Including additional lighting in the evening could improve the community perceptions of it being unsafe.

CONCLUSION

The pilot phase of Frankford Pause Park has been overwhelmingly positively perceived within the community. Pre-project outreach suggested the need for a fence in order to have a safe space while encouraging zero benches to minimize loitering within the park. However, with the pilot completed there is a significant desire for more seating and the removal of all barriers that define a park edge. By demonstrating incremental improvement to the site, the community is ready and excited about more permanent infrastructure that they previously thought would fail.

Also, of note, surveys demonstrated that people that were within the park have a more positive perception about the neighborhood of Frankford than those that were surveyed outside the park. This small shift in neighborhood perception demonstrates the positive impact of improvements that are made within the public space of communities.

The long-time resident interviews all discussed a time when Frankford was different – highlighted primarily by a greater sense of community cohesion. Is it possible that this small public space can begin to rebuild those community connections?

Recommendations

The following recommendations are divided into design elements and site operations. Phase two of the design should consider the design elements while FCDC should consider how to incorporate the operation recommendations into their existing infrastructure.

RECOMMENDED DESIGN RESPONSE

- Playable Design Elements: The most popular request for improvements to the existing park were related to making the space usable by children.
- Create playable features that are multi-purpose to provide opportunities for physical and imaginative play when children are present, and seating or resting for other park visitors.
- The spaces adjacent to playable areas should be comfortable for caregivers to rest while offering clear views to areas where children are playing.
- Loose parts can be added to site for flexible use of space.
- Opportunities for active physical movement should be incorporated to provide opportunities for tweens and teens.

Seating: As a place to rest and relax, additional seating is the second most requested site amenity.

- Provide a variety of seating including benches, lounges, and places to perch or lean.
- Provide seating that provides a table for playing games or eating.
- Provide seating that promotes social interaction among small groups.
- Enlarge the bench seating along sidewalk to provide an easy place to stop and rest while walking along the avenue.
- Create permanent seating near the center of the park to draw people in and develop a central area to occupy.

Shade: Hot summer days demonstrated that shade is a necessary element for a successful park space.

- Add additional trees or a larger caliper to provide more immediate shade.
- Provide overhead retractable shade elements to evenly distribute shade over large parts of the park.

Planting: Maximize planting opportunities to increase opportunities for community members to interact with natural elements.

- Create additional raised beds for community gardening efforts
- Develop strategies to increase planting opportunities with stormwater collection

Lighting: A comprehensive lighting plan should be created for the site.

- Security lighting should be provided for evening hours that the park is not in use.
- Mood lighting can be incorporated to provide a welcoming environment during events.

Park Edge: The perceived barrier at the edge of the park discourages entrance into the park.

- Remove the bollards along Paul St.
- Use seating elements to hold edge of park while also creating an inviting atmosphere.



24 May 2018: Planting Day

Additional Site Furnishings: Additional amenities that provide comfort or functionality will add flexibility to the park.

- Create more formalized signage to brand and identify the park.
- Locate fixed trash cans throughout to allow places to deposit trash.
- Provide on-site storage for community and FCDC use – with separate locks to allow controlled access to various items.
- Provide water fountain for community use.
- Provide sufficient power source for use near the stage.
- Provide water source for maintenance of the raised flower beds and community garden plots.
- Provide bike racks near entrances to the park.

SITE PROGRAMMING AND OPERATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Event Management: Designed with the intention of hosting events, the coordination of FCDC and community organized events should be formalized.

- A single event announcement method was not determined as most successful. All events should include a multi-pronged dissemination strategy including on site announcements, social media, paper flyers, and emails.
- FCDC should determine schedule for reoccurring events and create a visible calendar of events.
- Create method for community members to sign up to use the space to host their own events within certain guidelines and regulations to be determined.
- Determine elements that can be stored on site to promote ease of space to host various event types.
- Community Participation: Community wide participation in the maintenance and operations of the park space will increase its success as a community park.
- Create a committee or “friends of” group to assist with operations and decision making for the park.
- Encourage additional community participation through planting/maintaining park
- Create partnerships with regular users to promote shared ownership and maintenance.

Maintenance: The regular cleaning and maintenance that FCDC performs on the site is critical to its success.

- Continue regular maintenance and trash pick-up on site.
- Develop schedule of routine upkeep of park elements.

STREET SURVEY

FRANKFORD PAUSE PARK SURVEY

Date _____
 Location _____

Hi my name is _____. I am part of a team working with the Frankford Community Development Corp. to survey Frankford residents and business owners on how to make improvements to a local park to better serve the community. Would it be ok if I ask you a few questions that will help us better understand how this park can be made better for you?

- 1) Do you know about Frankford Pause Park at the intersection of Frankford and Paul Streets?
 No Yes
- 2) Have you ever visited the park? If yes, how often?
 No Once or twice More than Twice Regularly
- 3) What did you do when you visited the park?
 Attended an event Ate lunch Brought kids to play Stopped to rest
 Other _____
- 4) Do you have a favorite park or outdoor place in Frankford?
 Overington Park Tacony Creek Frankford Playground Deni Playground Gambrel Playground
 Carmella Playground Your own yard or porch or stoop I don't spend time outside in Frankford
 Other _____
- 5) Do you have a favorite park or outdoor place in Philadelphia? What do you like about it? What do you do when enjoying time outside?

- 6) How do you feel about the neighborhood of Frankford?
 Strongly Negative Negative Neutral Positive Strongly Positive
- 7) How do you feel about Frankford Pause Park?
 Strongly Negative Negative Neutral Positive Strongly Positive Not Applicable
- 8) What is your age?
 <18 18-25 25-35 35-45 45-55 >55
- 9) Do you have children in your household? If so what ages (please indicate number of children in the boxes provided)?
 No 0-5 5-10 10-15 15-18
- 10) Do you do you live in Frankford? Do you work in Frankford?
 Live here No, visting from _____ Work Business owner

What types of events would you like to see in the park?

What types of things would you like to do in the park during non-event times? How can the park be improved to fit your needs?

EVENT SURVEY

FRANKFORD PAUSE EVENT SURVEY

Date _____
 Event name _____

- 1) What is your age?
 <18 18-25 25-35 35-45 45-55 >55
- 2) Do you have children in your household? If so what ages (please indicate number of children in the boxes provided)?
 No 0-5 5-10 10-15 15-18
- 3) Do you do you live in Frankford? Do you work in Frankford?
 Live here No, visting from _____ Work Business owner

4) How did you hear about this event? OR how did you hear about the park?

5) Does the park work for what you are using it for today?
 What do you like about it?
 How could it be improved to better fit the needs of this event?

6) What other types of events would you like to see in the park?

7) Would you use the park when there is not an event happening?
 If so, how?
 What changes or additions would encourage you to use the park during non-event times?

8) When you leave your neighborhood what do you miss?

9) This park is for the current residents of Frankford. How can this park better serve current residents?

- 10) How do you feel about the neighborhood of Frankford?
 Strongly Negative Negative Neutral Positive Strongly Positive
- 11) How do you feel about Frankford Pause Park?
 Strongly Negative Negative Neutral Positive Strongly Positive Not Applicable

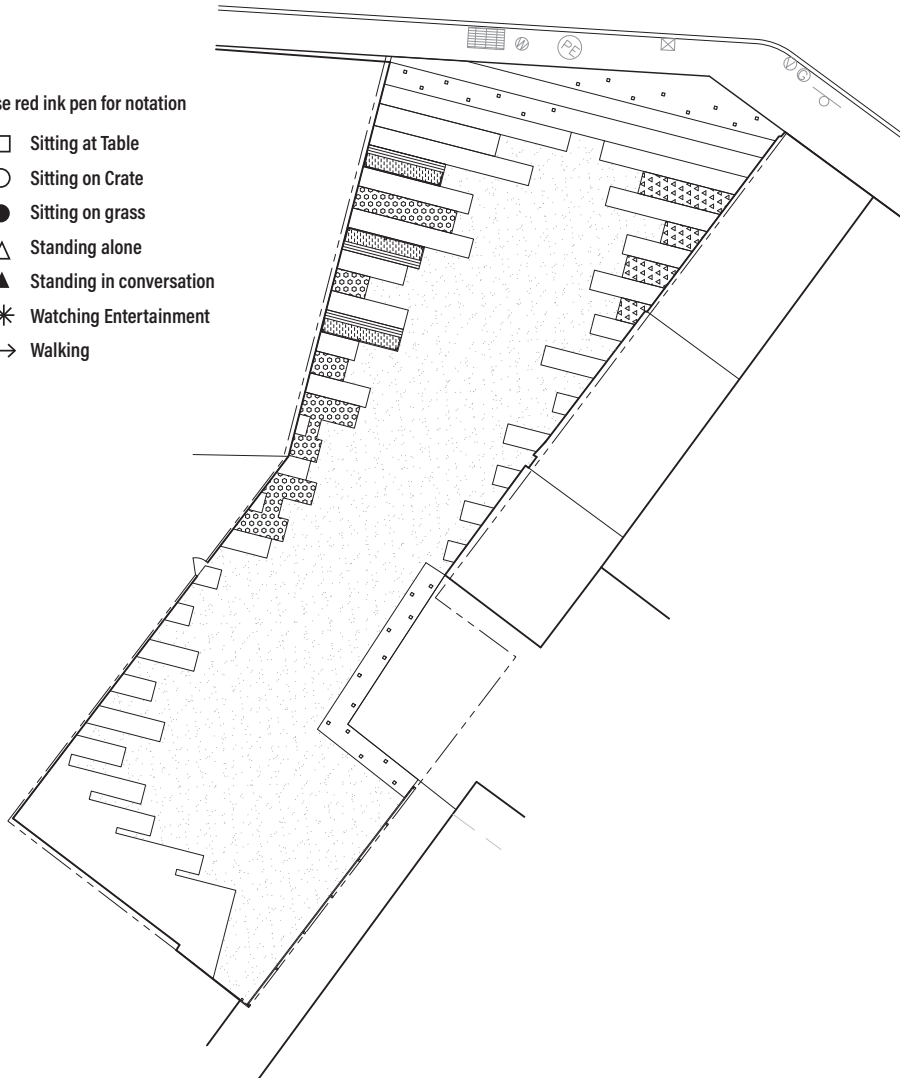
OBSERVATION WORKSHEET

FRANKFORD PAUSE EVENT SURVEY

Date _____
 Event name _____
 Time _____

Use red ink pen for notation

- Sitting at Table
- Sitting on Crate
- Sitting on grass
- △ Standing alone
- ▲ Standing in conversation
- * Watching Entertainment
- Walking



The research team gratefully acknowledges the willingness of the many volunteers that participated in both long and short format interviews, as well as the many community members that assisted in activating the space with their bodies. It is for you that this park is created, and for you that the recommendations focus on to create a space that is for and of the people of the Frankford neighborhood.

POE Team:

- Alexa Bosse | Architect | Hinge Collective
- Ari Miller | Landscape Architect | Hinge Collective
- Ellie Devyatkin | Community Liaison | Frankford CDC

Philadelphia Youth Network Summer Work Students:

- Raquan Collins | PYN worker
- Adrian Boone | PYN worker
- Aaron Boone | PYN worker
- Malakai Taylor | PYN worker

Frankford Pause Task Force:

- Kim Washington | Frankford CDC
- Ellie Devyatkin | Frankford CDC
- Ellie Vamos | Frankford CDC
- Christine DeJesus | Frankford CDC
- Harriet Clinton | Frankford CDC Cleaning Staff
- Rafael Alvarez | Philadelphia City Council
- Tammy Leigh DeMent | Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
- Stephanie Scully | Joy of Living/Scully Properties
- Lori LaPorte | Joy of Living
- Blair Jordan | Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center
- Doryán De Angel | TTF Watershed Partnership
- Larissa Klevan | PCPC
- Lindsay Reul | Philadelphia Water Department
- Hailey Stern | Philadelphia Water Department
- Donald McKinnie | Mizpah SDA Church
- Paulette Miller | State Representative Jason Dawkins



Prepared by: Hinge Collective, LLC 2018
Support from: Frankford Community Development Corporation

