

2.3.88

T O W N S Q U A R E P A R K

The design of a Town Square Park began in 1984. At that time a citizens design advisory committee was formed representing a broad spectrum of community interests as well a representation from key municipal design review bodies. Community participation was both enthusiastic and intensive through out the design development process of the earlier Town Square Park design. Community input consisted of a three day workshop opened to all in the community having interests in the development of a downtown park. Through the Town Square Citizen's advisory committee design guidelines formulated during the workshop we further refined and became the guiding criteria in developing alternate design concepts. These same design criteria were used in the later refinement of the ultimate design concept selected.

Town Square Park design criteria established during this earlier process are summarized below. These criteria represent fundamental design principles, basic to sound park planning in urban conditions such exist in Anchorage's downtown.

Town Square - A

1. Importance of Maintaining the Park's Identity

Town Square Park has been identified as the downtown's premiere public open. The central prominence of Park can both compliment and enhance the PAC as well as function in its own right. In order to obtain the most open space impact of the Park it will be important for the Park to adopt a clear, visual identity of its own.

2. Importance of Park's Relation to the PAC

Paving patterns and paved open areas adjacent to the Performing Arts Center will be integrated to enhance access and visual continuity between the two projects. A plaza area adjoining the two projects will serve as an outdoor performing and informal gathering area as an extension of lobby activities as well as serving park related functions.

3. Importance of Sunlight

The importance of sunlight to the Alaska experience is a particularly important consideration in meeting user requirements and user satisfaction in an outdoor, northern climate setting. Orientation of sitting places, grassy slopes should be facing towards the south expressed in physical shapes that serve to capture to some extent the light and warmth of the sun particularly important during the winter months. The concept of a "sun bowl" best describes a design theme towards achieving maximum access to the sun. The sun bowl could also be designed to provide protection from winds that will pass across the open space.

4. Importance of Color - seasonal and summer

An event all in the community think of and look forward to as summer approaches are the wonderful displays of flowers and hanging baskets. These delightful splashes of color occur all over town and are particularly in evidence in the downtown.

One of the program elements in designing the Town Square Park will be adequate areas for the planting of flowers. Equally important will be the selection of trees and shrubs whose flowers, leaves, and berries might provide seasonal color variation.

5. Importance of Day and Night Time Activities

The importance of developing day as well as night time activities in the Park was a concept repeatedly brought out during public discussion and identified in the community workshop. The concept has its corollary for providing park facility uses throughout the year including both the summer and winter seasons

6. Importance of Relief From Rigid Urban Grid

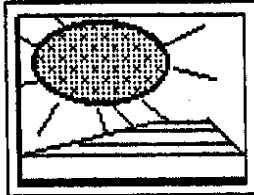
The request that the forms and spaces of the Park taken on an informal character so as to provide an important relief from the rigid urban grid. Placement and massing of trees together with the shapes and patterns of the soft landforms and paved areas should be designed to establish a balance between the desire for structural relief and goal of instilling a distinct park and open space character

7. Importance of Safety

the safety of Park visitors was another consideration identified in the process. Visibility into the Park from the street and the provision of lighting would together provide for the safety requirements considered an important design criteria.

Figure 1 Town Square Design Considerations

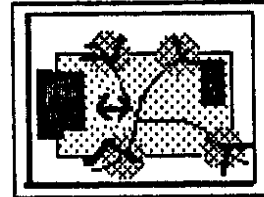
Town Square Park Key Design Considerations



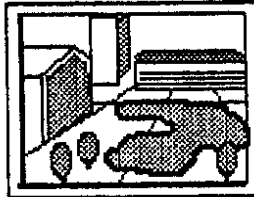
IMPORTANCE OF SUN
Maximize access to sun for both winter and summer. Lots of sunny places to warm up.



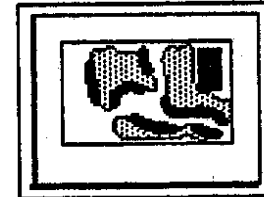
PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES
Provide pedestrian scale design continuity to downtown wide-ranging architecture.



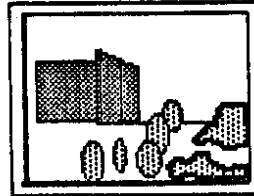
PROVIDE SENSE OF ENTRY
Maximize access to Town Square block with flowing paths and distinct entry points.



GREEN OASIS IN URBAN GRID
Provide a welcoming relief from surrounding harsh, urban grid



LOTS OF PLACES TO SIT
Provide a variety of seating opportunities for eating lunch, people watching, etc.



TOWN SQUARE OWN IDENTITY
The Town Square not to be subservient but rather equal partner with PAC.



DESIGN TO BUDGET
Design that will come in budget and minimize long term maintenance costs.