

Silver Medal Winner
Civic Space Park
Phoenix, Arizona



Craig Smith

This is an excerpt from:

Partnering Strategies for the Urban Edge

2011 RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE



BRUNER FOUNDATION, INC.

Robert Shibley, AIA, AICP

Brandy H. M. Brooks, Jay Farbstein, FAIA, PhD, and Richard Wener, PhD

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012942321
ISBN: 1-890286-09-5

© Copyright 2011 by the Bruner Foundation
130 Prospect Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without the written permission from the publisher.

Cover photo credits clockwise from top left: Simeon Bruner, Charles Davis Smith, Don Unser, Steve Hall, Julienne Schaer

DESIGN: Alexandra Trinanes/T2Design, trinanes@comcast.net



View of Park looking toward downtown

Project At-A-Glance

WHAT IS CIVIC SPACE PARK?

- Civic Space Park is a newly-created open space of 2.77 acres on the cusp between downtown Phoenix and the new in-town campus of ASU.
- The park is the result of a unique partnership between the City of Phoenix and ASU, with other partners in more minor roles. A city bond election funded not only the public park, but also very substantial construction of ASU academic and support facilities, and there is a formal partnership agreement for ongoing operation and maintenance of the park and buildings.
- The park provides a variety of settings to support varied activities. There are rather extensive lawns, shaded seating areas, an outdoor performance venue, and a renovated historic building with a large meeting/class room, a public café, and other spaces.
- The park is actively used and does, indeed, appear to be a venue for the meeting of town and gown. It is used by a wide variety of people, drawing surrounding residents, students who attend classes and/or live in the area, downtown office workers, and people from other parts of the city as well.
- There is a very prominent and large art installation which hovers above part of the park, suspended from four tall pylons, and visible from a considerable distance.
- Other features include two fountains (one interactive) and a light “sculpture” consisting of computer-controlled LEDs.
- Despite the extensive lawns, many environmentally-sensitive features are included in the design, including photo-voltaic panels on shade structures, permeable paving, underground detention tanks for storm drainage that recharge the ground water, energy-efficient lighting, and extensive planting of trees which, together with the shade structures will result in the site being about 70% shaded within 10 years when the trees grow in.

PROJECT GOALS

- To provide a “place for the community to come together”
- To become a “true ‘civic space’ that would bring together the intersecting and overlapping needs of various users” including students, low-income seniors, downtown residents and workers, and visitors to Phoenix
- To create a civic amenity – not just a recreational amenity
- To be very “green” – environmentally friendly and to incorporate many ecological and energy-efficient features
- To energize and enliven a substantial (and underdeveloped, if not blighted) area at the edge of the downtown Phoenix urban core (this is a goal of the overall development, including ASU, not just the park).

Project Chronology

Park and City Project Schedule

2006 Successful bond election for \$600 million, including \$232 million for ASU downtown facilities and about \$32 million for the park (of the latter about \$3 million was designated for art).

Spring 2007 Public and stakeholder meetings to discuss design and function

Dec. 2008 Phase 1 of the light rail system completed (runs on both sides of Civic Space Park).

Spring 2009 Civic Space Park opens.

Fall 2011 Anticipated Civic Space Park completion with expansion at north (toward the post office).

ASU Project Schedule

Spring 2004 Begin conceptualization, location, programs, schematic design, partnership formation

Fall 2005 Open PURL (Phoenix Urban Research Lab)

March 2006 Passage of bond election (\$232 million for ASU)

Fall 2006 Open campus with Public Programs and Nursing in a variety of buildings (2,750 students; 300 beds)

Fall 2008 Open new School of Journalism and Taylor Place student housing (7,850 students; 1,800 beds)

Fall 2009 Post Office Union (not completed on this schedule) and 424 Building (unclear)

Spring 2010 Open Nursing expansion

Other Related Projects – Projected Dates:

June 2011 Transit Center completion

April 2012 Post Office renovation for ASU campus student union/center (RFQ issued at time of site visit)

2012-13 YMCA expansion for ASU campus recreation (planned but not firmly scheduled)

KEY PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

DAVID CAVAZOS *City of Phoenix, City Manager*
 RICK NAIMARK *City of Phoenix, Deputy City Manager*
 JASON HARRIS *City of Phoenix, Deputy Director,*
Community & Economic Development Department
 TOM BYRNE *City of Phoenix, Parks & Recreation*
(project manager for design and construction)
 TJ PENKOFF *City of Phoenix, Parks & Recreation*
(manages daily operations of park)
 BARBARA STOCKLIN *City of Phoenix, Historic Preservation Officer*
 ED LEBOW *City of Phoenix, Public Art Program Director*
 RAPHAEL NGOTIE *City of Phoenix, Senior Public Art Project Manager*
 SAM FELDMAN *City of Phoenix, Management Intern (RBA liaison and*
ASU student during park construction and opening)
 DEBRA FRIEDMAN *University Vice President and Dean,*
ASU College of Public Programs (key ASU administration
liaison to the city and this project)
 WELLINGTON (DUKE) REITER *FAIA, former Dean*
ASU College of Architecture and special advisor to the
President for the downtown campus.
 MALISSA GEER *Engagement Liaison (and student),*
ASU College of Public Programs (events coordinator)
 JAY HICKS *ASLA, Vice President, AECOM (formerly EDAAW),*
principal in charge of park design

JEFF SWANN *architect for historic preservation*
of AE England building
 SUSAN COPELAND *Downtown Voices Coalition*
 STEVE WEISS *Downtown Voices Coalition*
 JEFF MYERS *Executive Director,*
Lincoln Family Downtown YMCA (not interviewed)
 PUBLIC ALLIES AND ASU DOWNTOWN REPRESENTATIVES



Project Description

VISION AND PLANNING

Civic Space Park is the result of the intersecting visions of the City of Phoenix and Arizona State University. ASU's vision included expansion from its main campus to three satellites, including one downtown.

In 2004, when the economy was still strong, the city concluded a strategic visioning exercise. It had a number of components, but several of them directly affected the area around the park. These included:

- “Knowledge anchors” – which entailed support for the health and biosciences and a new ASU campus
- An “arts and entertainment hub” – to which the park contributes as an activity venue and locus of a major work



- Creating or preserving “great places/great spaces” – with an emphasis on historic preservation and creation of open space
- “The connected oasis” – fostering public transportation, shade, and the like (including the light rail system).

To move toward realizing its vision, the city began planning a large public bond measure. It was an omnibus approach, with “something for everyone”, structured to appeal to the maximum number of constituencies and, therefore, voters. The \$600 million bond included money for parks, education, transportation, street improvements and utilities. Included in this bond was an unprecedented \$232 million for construction of a new ASU campus in downtown. Obvious benefits of having a downtown campus include enlivening the area and providing customers for bars, moderately-priced restaurants, shops and rental housing. While every city may want a new university downtown, few (if any) are willing or able to pay for it.

Meanwhile ASU, under the direction of its visionary president, Michael Crow, was elaborating its plan to expand to a downtown campus to complement its main campus in Tempe as well as other satellites. ASU targeted programs and schools that would derive benefit from (and provide value to) the city center. These include nursing (close to hospitals and fostering a community health emphasis), journalism (around the corner from the main local newspaper and television news channels), and public programs (including social work, criminology, and public affairs). At this new downtown



campus, ASU “remains committed to serving as an urban crucible for education and research-intensive social and economic change”.

The bond also included \$32 million for the park, including renovation of the one remaining historic building and the commissioning of a major public art installation. It passed comfortably, with over 70% of the vote.

Aerial View of Park



URBAN CONTEXT

Civic Space Park is immediately north of Phoenix’s downtown civic and business center. It is directly adjacent to Arizona State University’s (ASU) new downtown campus, a YMCA, a transit center, and a historic post office building. It is very close to a subsidized senior housing project that occupies a converted historic hotel.

Downtown

Development in the downtown Phoenix area has been substantial, but spotty – with surface parking lots and under-developed buildings mixed with high rise offices, hotels, and some residential towers. Recent improvements include a convention center with related hotels, civic buildings (including a courthouse currently under construction) and light rail that runs through downtown and serves the surrounding

ASU Student Center



suburbs and cities, including Scottsdale to the east, the location of the main ASU campus. Recently, like everywhere in the US, development has stalled, with only a few projects going forward, though many are planned (*see the section on Future Plans*).

ASU Campus

Three academic components are complete. These include the schools of journalism, nursing and public programs – the former in new facilities, the latter in a re-purposed office building. In addition, a large, privately-funded and operated dormitory is complete. These facilities are immediately to the east of the park and two of them front directly on it. Current operations support about 8,200 students and 1,250 faculty as well as 1,050 beds in dorms or apart-

ASU building with shade canopy in foreground

“Importantly, when the inclusion of the sculpture was threatened for budgetary and political reasons, arts groups rallied to support its retention and prevailed at a public city council meeting.”

ments. The planned build-out of the campus is projected to include 15,000 students, 1,800 faculty and 4,000 beds. The city already owns an adjacent, vacant city block (former site of a Ramada Hotel) immediately to the east of the campus which is dedicated for ASU use (its purchase utilized the last of the bond monies). ASU plans to construct a law school on this block, once funding is secured. Additional university programs including exercise, wellness and nutrition are slated to open downtown by August 2012.

YMCA

The YMCA is immediately across the street to the west of the park. Its entrance more or less aligns with the main circulation spine of the campus (which connect across the park) providing a destination that draws students into and through the park. Since the Y also serves local residents and downtown office workers, it is part of the vision of connecting town and gown. The Y plans a major expansion which will, in effect, become the recreation center for the ASU campus. The timing of this expansion is not yet certain.

Intermodal Transit Hub

Under construction immediately south of the park, this will be the interchange between buses and the light rail system.



Top: Janet Eichelman sculpture
Bottom: transit stop at park

Light Rail

The light rail lines flank the park on its east and west sides, with a stop in each direction. The system is planned to expand, but already connects the ASU downtown and main campuses; thus, it is heavily used by students and faculty. Theoretically, the rails form a barrier to pedestrian traffic. However, the tracks are embedded in the street, so they represent only a limited impediment to crossing and could not be said to limit access to the park (certainly not for jay-walkers). In addition, there is a crosswalk on the east side at the main east-west pedestrian axis of the campus, so the rails pose little or no constraints on crossing on that side. While there is no corresponding crosswalk at the west (toward the YMCA), this fact seems to be generally ignored by crossing students, since the rails are at grade – and we were told that a crosswalk was planned.

Between the transit hub and the light rail stations, the park is very well served with public transportation.

US Post Office Building

The historic post office building will be integrated into the park – which will extend all the way to the former loading platform where mail was shipped in and out. At the request of locals, a retail postal function (clerk windows and post office boxes) will be retained while the balance of the space will be converted to ASU student union functions. ASU has issued a request for qualifications for a \$3 million program of upgrades (in addition to the park expansion costs). The reason this part of the project was not already completed is due to complications with the property transfer from federal GSA,



View from shade canopy looking toward historic Post Office

which reportedly has been finalized. Demolition of paving and other elements was already initiated at the time of the site visit.

Westward Ho Senior Housing

This historic high-rise hotel, across the street and to the north of the post office, has been converted to subsidized senior housing. Many residents were observed passing through or using the park for passive activities.

PROJECT HISTORY AND PROCESS

While the site had been occupied by a variety of uses for many years, the park project has a surprisingly short history. Design and construction were compressed into an accelerated schedule, which was particularly short for a public project. Following the 2006 bond election, planning and design took place during 2007; construction began and the site was cleared by January 2008 and the project opened in spring 2009.

As a public project, park planning was subject to the usual hearings and public meetings. It also followed very close on the heels of the taking of another city park, Patriot Square, for a redevelopment project immediately south of downtown. While Patriot Square did not have a lot of general public support (it was rundown and had attracted a homeless population), there was considerable public in-

terest in urban open space and in the replacement of Patriot Square with something more attractive and more broadly useful.

Despite the short duration for planning and design, the formal process for gaining input and review included at least twelve meetings spanning from March to May 2007. Meetings were held with two types of groups: identified stakeholders, who were invited, and members of the public who could attend Parks and Recreation board meetings or general public meetings devoted to the project. Some of the meetings made use of ASU's Phoenix Urban Research Lab (PURL) near the site, which has a large scale model of downtown and the site area.

Among the identified stakeholders were the arts and business communities, neighborhood groups, and ASU. At the meetings, program and design concepts were presented and comments received. The meeting organizers prepared a very detailed list of the programmatic and design objectives expressed by participants and ranked them by level of support ("shade" ranked number one). Initially, there were five quite distinct design concepts; by the time of the final public meeting, plans had been refined to two main alternatives – and the one preferred by the public was selected as best responding to the programmatic objectives. It was referred to as "the urban weave" (*see the section on Design*).

It is apparent that the project leaders and designers, as well as elected representatives, did indeed take into account what they

heard from participants. Site visitors got a clear sense from meeting with community representatives that their input and concerns were sought after, listened to and, at least to an important extent, incorporated into park design and management. For example, residents wanted the post office to retain services, and that is happening. There were also requests that the design support a wide variety of simultaneous activities, and it does, in fact, appear to do that. Importantly, when the inclusion of the sculpture was threatened for budgetary and political reasons, arts groups rallied to support its retention and prevailed at a public city council meeting (*this is discussed in more detail in the section on the Art Pieces*).

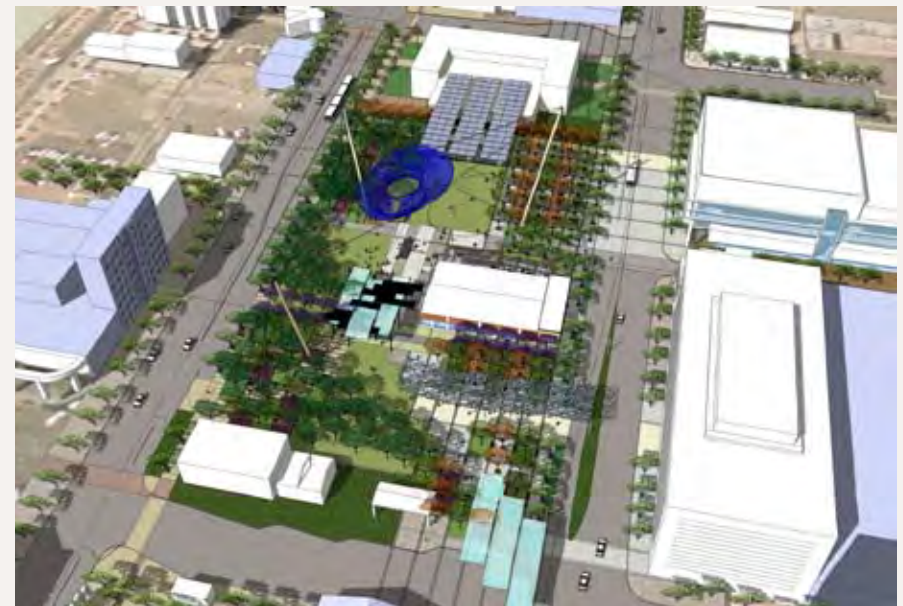
Beyond the formal process of public hearings and scheduled meetings, it is clear that the park has attracted a very broad base of support. Site visitors met with a diverse group of “public allies”, some of whom were affiliated with ASU, but many of whom were not. They ranged from volunteers who assisted with programming, to individuals or representatives of groups who use the park – either on a regular basis or for special events or performances. The

OVERVIEW OF THE PARK FROM THE SOUTHEAST CORNER.

Note that the shade structure in that corner, which appears to project over the street, is not included in the final design. The canopy soon to be constructed at the post office is visible at the top of the illustration and the art piece can be seen hovering just below it. Also visible are the YMCA across the street to the left, ASU University Center across the other street to the lower right and the ASU School of Journalism just above it.

group’s diversity could be measured along a number of axes – from young to old, establishment to upstart; and they were culturally and ethnically varied. What unified the group was their enthusiastic endorsement of both the park facilities and the programming and management; all felt welcome and supported in the scheduling and logistics of their events.

The park opened in the spring of 2009 and the final piece of the park was starting implementation at the time of the RBA site visit. It entails landscaping and hardscape that will extend the park to the



Sketch by AECOM

Civic Space Park site plan

north across a currently paved area and connect to the post office building. A shade structure, like the other ones in the park, will be added to extend the postal canopy. The park is expected to be 100% complete by the winter of 2012.

PARK DESIGN

Site Design

According to the designers, AECOM (formerly EDAA), the integrating “big concept” for the park is that of an “urban weave” tying the park into the fabric of downtown. The “weave” is somewhat hypothetical, being visible only in the shaping of certain landforms and the design of the shade structure canopies. Perhaps the most successful example of “weaving” is extending the axis of the ASU campus main circulation into and through the park at its approximate midpoint and the fortuitous location of the open side of the historic building just along that axis, providing an excellent connection to its facilities (meeting room, gallery, terraces and café). Otherwise, circulation seems to meander (in a not unpleasant way) through the park on diagonals that take the visitor through or past shade structures, art installations, lawns, and the performance space – and which will connect to the transit station upon its completion at the southeast corner.

Perhaps in an attempt to keep most edges and corners of the park open and permeable, there is little special or of interest that occurs

at them. One design critique of the park finds the corners to be a bit weak and lacking in definition, especially compared to other designs that have been recognized by the RBA (*see the Park at Post Office Square in Boston, 1993 or Millennium Park in Chicago, 2009*).

Hardscape

Hardscape and paving consist of concrete, cement pavers (mostly in seating and activity areas), and permeable paving (mostly on walkways).

Landscape/Plantings

There is a very substantial amount of lawn (the variety of grass was selected to thrive in the hot months; the permanent turf is seeded with rye grass to fill in during the winter). The grass is planted over what was referred to as “structural soil” (incorporating a polymer as well as dirt), designed to retain moisture and resist further compaction under heavy use.

Much thought was given to the selection of the site’s trees. All are said to be drought-tolerant shade trees. While not native species (which were reported not to thrive in downtown), they are a mix of evergreen and deciduous, selected to provide seasonal variations. They are live oaks, ash, pistachios, and flowering pears (which were in bloom at the time of the visit). Other plantings, including lantana, had been badly hit by an unusual frost and had not yet revived at the time of the site visit. There are also areas with deciduous trees that were bare during the visit and the combined affect was that of a still not mature landscape.



Tom Byrne



Top: seating under shade canopy
Bottom: ASU class in Park

Seating

There are a number of types and locations for seating, offering options for levels of tranquility and of sun or shade. Moveable benches are located under most of the shade structures. Concrete benches, unshaded at the moment, are located at planters whose trees will, within a few years, provide shade for them. In addition, there are undulating concrete retaining walls that sculpt the lawns on the west side into various levels. The retaining walls that front on paved areas have been fitted with anti-skateboarding rails, while those in the lawn generally have not; where installed, they clearly discourage sitting as well as skateboarding.

We observed all types of seating being used at one time or another during the site visit. The moveable benches were generally used by solitary individuals or couples. The undulating walls provided seating during the performances and for an ASU class on park management – as did the concrete benches for another class.

Energy and Environment

Among the environmentally-sensitive features of the park are over 15,000 square feet of permeable paving and a “StormTech” retention and percolation system that captures rain and spare irrigation water, and recharges the ground water basin. Lighting is energy-efficient and the canopies provide an ideal location for photovoltaic panels, which currently cover about half of them. These generate up to 75,000 KW and will likely be expanded in the future.

Canopies and Shade Structures

Shade is a very important consideration in the desert and it permeates design standards, both for the park and for Phoenix in general. Here, shade will eventually be provided over more than 70% of the park – by the trees, canopies and shade structures. The latter are designed as warped planes, made up of colored tubes or rods which are suspended below the supporting structure, in part to allow photovoltaic panels to be mounted above them. Where panels are in place, they are staggered to allow dappled light to reach the ground.

Performance Spaces

The canopy to the west of the A.E. England building provides a raised stage and space for about 500 spectators, including the hard-scape and adjacent lawns (with undulating raised seating elements). During the site visit, there was an all-day series of performances and speeches related to Black History month. We also saw groups

of musicians and dancers rehearsing at other times. As part of the final phase of park development, the planned canopy will extend the old post office loading dock's covering while the raised dock will function as a stage. Facing the north lawn, we were told that it would accommodate up to 2,000 spectators.

Fountains

There are two fountains in the park. One is a kind of water wall that runs on two sides of the café's lower-level terrace. It ripples over stainless steel mesh and runs into a base of blue glass. The second is an interactive fountain, mostly intended for children to play in. It has jets that rise out of the ground. Pavers are interspersed with glass tiles which are illuminated at night and are programmed to provide a variety of colors and patterns.



*Left: Looking through shade canopy into Park
Middle: Fountain detail in café
Right: Plaza fountain*

Safety & Security

Security is achieved through both design and enforcement. ASU's chief of security reported that he was highly engaged during design and brought his knowledge of CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) to the table. Among the principles that applied were keeping the park animated and active, eliminating places where threatening individuals could lurk unseen, and providing at least minimal levels of lighting to all areas, brighter along the main walkways. In addition, ASU initiated the placement of several security "kiosks" at strategic locations with call buttons to summon assistance; they are reported to be "rarely if ever used". In the event of need, a park visitor would likely dial 911. In the chief's words, the challenge has not been to fight crime, but to fight the perception of crime. His goal, which he claims has been achieved, was that all populations, ranging from students to the homeless, feel comfortable and safe in the park and have the opportunity to interact. This results in a sense of ownership and territoriality which prevents the park from being taken over by unsavory elements (e.g., for drug dealing).

In addition to potential response from ASU, city and transit police, the park has private security patrols. We interviewed one officer who reported very few incidents. He views his role more as "customer service" than enforcement. There are also "downtown ambassadors" employed by the local business improvement district, who visit the park periodically and are available to answer questions or give directions.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION/RENOVATION – AND RESULTING FACILITIES

The decision to retain and renovate the historic AE England building was a key element of the park plan, but it was not a foregone conclusion. The building, (half of the original structure), was built in 1926. It was a car dealership, with showroom, service bay and ramp to the basement where vehicles were stored. The exterior is made of brick – blond at the front and common (red) around the sides and rear. The structure consists of bowstring trusses which span the entire width, leaving the interior column-free. The trusses, in particular, were in very poor condition and needed substantial reinforcing.

*Left: Emergency phone and kiosk
Right: Historic Post Office entry*



The renovation retained and refurbished the elements of historic value (brick, cast concrete decorations, trusses, window openings). The yellow brick and its mortar joints were repainted by hand to appear like the originals, which were found to be a more cost-effective means of restoring them.

The historic building was imaginatively integrated into the park. The north wall of the structure had been a common wall with the half of the building that could not be retained because it was in too poor condition. This wall was of no historic value and its removal opened up the entire north façade at both ground and basement levels. Fortuitously, this side of the building faces directly onto the park's main cross-axis, connecting ASU and the YMCA. Thus, it made an excellent location for the café – which is on the lower level and opens to a newly-created terrace. Also on the lower level are meeting rooms and utility spaces.

ASU Student Center with Fair Trade Café in foreground

The main floor is given over to a large meeting room, which was inserted into the space as an apparently floating volume (solid walls below and glazing above where it meets the trusses and ceiling). The design intent was to “show restraint” and leave the original structure exposed so that it could be seen and appreciated. The circulation space between the meeting room and the exterior wall on the north and east sides is dedicated to an art gallery, with paintings displayed on the solid interior walls. The gallery space is jointly operated by ASU and a community arts group (Art Link) and features rotating exhibitions, mostly of local artists. Outside on the north is a balcony with tables (that was little-used during our visit); it overlooks the café terrace, below.

ASU, by agreement, has priority use of the meeting room on weekdays, where it schedules a variety of activities including academic and recreation classes such as yoga. When not reserved by ASU, the room is available for civic and community functions. A review of the meeting room schedule shows it to be intensively used. There is another smaller set of meeting or conference rooms in the basement.

At the lower level is the Fair Trade Café which opens onto a sunken terrace to the north (and is thus shaded by the building and its overhangs). The café is operated under a contract and offers coffee and sandwiches. It was observed to get moderate use, mostly students (many of whom were using their laptops which were connected to the free wifi).

THE ART PIECE(S)

Phoenix has a very extensive public art program with a 20-year history of success. Some of the art is free-standing and recognizable as such, but there are also many projects woven into the fabric of public works projects such as highway bridges, retaining walls, and light rail stations (including the ones flanking the park).

The park includes two more minor art pieces: an illuminated, interactive fountain and a computer-driven installation of lighted columns, but the focal object is the monumental “Her Secret is Patience” – a net sculpture suspended about 100 feet above the park. This was the subject of an invited, national competition (which included the designer of the Crowne Fountain in Chicago’s Millennium Park; an RBA Silver Medalist in 2009). The selection committee was most impressed by Janet Echelman’s submission and referred to a prior installation of hers in Portugal which somewhat resembled the Phoenix proposal.

One advantage of Echelman’s proposal was a very light footprint, saving ground space for other activities. The huge net is suspended by cables from four very tall masts which rest on concrete piers sunk deep into the ground. The project posed many engineering and construction challenges, which are probably not germane to the success of the park (so are not described here). The sculpture is very different during the day and at night, when it is illuminated by a number of ground and building-mounted colored flood lights.



These are programmed to change slowly (and the color gels are also changed seasonally).

The city art program’s brochure describes the sculpture in these terms: “monumental yet soft, fixed in place but constantly in motion. Responding to the desert winds.... The artist says she was ‘mesmerized by the broad open sky’... and the distinctive monsoon cloud formations... ‘the shock of desert winds, whirls of dust, the crash of lightening, and that luminous blue turning to violet and orange, then velvety blue-black.’” She was also inspired by desert cactus blooms.

The sculpture is placed strategically at the intersection of the main circulation paths to maximize it’s visibility and impact. It is, indeed, prominent as one approaches the park from the main ASU pedestrian way, as well as from many other vantage points.

Civic Space Park looking toward Echelman sculpture

One interesting aspect of the park's implementation process is that at one point the inclusion of the sculpture was threatened. This hesitation was based on political perceptions that the citizens might not appreciate the expenditure of \$2.5 million when the economy was tanking in 2008. A resolution recommending its removal was scheduled to be heard by the city council; but the local arts community mobilized support and packed the meeting – and the council decided to go forward with the sculpture.

PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES AND PATTERNS OF USE

There are two types of program activities at the park: informal activities and scheduled events.

Informal activities include active pursuits, such as strolling or playing games on the lawn (we observed Frisbee, children playing in the fountain, and the blowing of giant bubbles) as well as more quiet or passive activities, such as reading, sitting in the sun or shade, quiet conversation, picnicking, and studying with or without the use of a laptop. The site visit occurred on Valentine's Day and at least one couple was having a picnic dinner on the lawn with candles and wine. The security officer saw them from a distance and ignored the violation of park rules (the alcohol) since they were not causing any trouble. Site visitors also saw classes being held in at least two



Tom Byrne

Echelman sculpture at night

locations. The park offers benches, tables, and of course substantial lawn areas to support these activities.

Clearly, part of the park's function is to serve as a quad for the ASU campus; but it is a quad that is fully connected and accessible to the city. By observation, and also as reported by Commander Wilson of the ASU police, a wide range of people use the park. Apparently, diversity is effectively encouraged.

In February the weather was mild and the park was used at moderate levels during the day and in the evening. We were told, however, that during hot weather, temporal utilization patterns shift such that there is much less daytime use, and much more in the evening. Even during hot weather, the shade structures (and, in the future, the trees) provide opportunities to sit outside.



Impromptu music group in the Park

The park is the location of numerous scheduled events and activities sponsored by the city Parks and Recreation Department and ASU. This appears to be a joint effort with contributions by city staff and ASU paid interns who function as event coordinators. Some events are recurring; these include:

- Yoga classes every Saturday morning – sponsored by the YMCA and held indoors or outdoors depending on the weather.
- First Friday – arts and music performances – 7 to 10 pm.
- Second Saturday – community cinema – at sundown.
- Sundays (1 per month, generally 3rd or 4th) – Civic Space Jam

The park also provides a venue for unique events. During the site visit, there was an afternoon celebration of Black history with speakers and a wide variety of performances (spoken word, poetry slam, music, theatrical). It drew a moderate-sized crowd which was diverse while being substantially African-American. Another event in February was a showing of a film sponsored by the local Slow Food chapter.

According to the ASU event coordinators, during 2010 their work leveraged approximately \$24,000 in donations and sponsorships (including in-kind and cash). An additional like amount is represented by the value of the time of the interns. Finally, the city spent about \$15,000 on its events.

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION: THE CITY-ASU PARTNERSHIP

Every city wants a new university campus downtown, but few are willing and able to pay for one. And while not every university may want to be downtown, more than a few recognize the synergy that can be gained for their urban-oriented programs. As described above, in the case of Phoenix, bringing the ASU campus to downtown strongly complemented many of its strategic goals – and, in a time of strong economic growth, its citizens were willing to support a bond election to pay for the majority of the new campus.

For ASU, the downtown campus fit into the “imperatives” articulated by President Crow for the “new American university.” As expressed by Wellington Reiter, former dean of architecture and advisor to the president on design matters (including the downtown campus), the plan leverages the following of Crow’s imperatives:

- Leveraging place
- Societal transformation
- Knowledge entrepreneurship
- Use-inspired research
- A focus on the individual
- Intellectual fusion
- Social embeddedness

Given the strength of mutual self-interest and the clear benefits to be gained by both the city and the university, perhaps the fact of the partnership is not surprising. But the cost and scale of the joint projects were said to be “unique in the world”, according to Debra Friedman, ASU’s university vice president and dean of one of the downtown colleges.

The partnership also appears to have evolved and matured from the initial vision through the realization phase and now into operations. In formalizing the legal basis of the relationship, a master lease agreement was entered into between the city (as landlord) and ASU (as tenant) in 2006. It identified the parcels that were to be developed for ASU, the fact that ASU would be responsible for operating costs, and the eventual transfer of ownership to ASU of their facilities. Prior to the lease, there was a more conceptual inter-governmental agreement setting out intentions. In 2009, a second inter-governmental operating agreement was entered into specifically for Civic Space Park and the England Building. This establishes ASU as the “priority tenant” for the building, specifies an annual rental payment for its proportional use of the park and facilities (\$125,000 per year), and establishes responsibilities for operations and maintenance (city) and programming (ASU) among many other factors.

While it is always important to have sound contractual arrangements, it is also clear that there is abundant good will and a strong spirit of cooperation between the two parties. And the relationship appears to be capable of evolving and responding to emerging



circumstances. This may be due in part to the high level of representation both entities contribute to the partnership. For the city, it falls to the deputy city manager, Rick Naimark, and for ASU to the high-ranking Debra Friedman. She described the partnership as representing an outstanding working relationship, characterized by a “collective, collaborative” spirit of shared values and interdependence. In addition to the frequent meetings during the planning and design phase, coordination meetings continue on a monthly basis with this high-level representation. Another measure of the success of the town-gown collaboration is the fact that ASU won the 2009 C. Peter McGrath University Community Engagement Award from the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (not for Civic Space Park, but for another community engagement project).

FUTURE PLANS

The plans for completion of the park were described above and they were, in fact, underway at the time of writing. Projects around the park were also described, including the post office, YMCA, and transit center.

Beyond the immediate edges of the park, there are also a number of other initiatives that are likely, eventually, to transform that part of the city. There is an undeveloped block of land still reserved for ASU just to the east and south of its current facilities. This will allow them to add one more major component to their campus, a law school, which ASU predicts is likely within three to four years and would also benefit from proximity to the downtown law firms, courthouses, and the like.

Another vision, which has been partially realized, is substantial expansion of the city’s bio-medical complex (the Arizona Biomedical Collaborative), with the addition of a genetic engineering component. Some of this is already in place, including a bio-science high school and the Translational Genomics Institute. The recently-constructed convention center is also only a few blocks away to the south and this has generated development closer to the park, including the large, soon-to-be-completed mixed-use project just to the south and east of the campus.

FINANCES

Capital Program

The park was almost entirely funded through the city's bond program, passed in 2006, providing approximately \$30 million. Additional funds were provided from historic preservation bonds (for the England Building) and from Parks and Recreation. Of the total, about

CIVIC SPACE CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION COST BUDGET

Sources	
2006 Parks Bonds	\$ 29,869,520
Historic Preservation Bonds	\$ 588,427
Phoenix Parks and Preserves	\$ 3,550,000
2006 Economic Development Bonds	\$ 100,000
Total funds available	\$ 34,107,947
Uses (Expenditures and Encumbrances)	
Contractual Engineering	\$ 2,391,269
City Engineering	\$ 819,670
Construction	\$ 14,283,630
FFE, Equipment, Security, Other	\$ 589,200
Land, Relocation, Property Management	\$ 16,275,901
& Legal Interest on Assessments (revenue)	(815,305)
Total expenditures	\$ 33,544,365

\$3 million was designated for art projects; the bulk of this, \$2.5 million, was spent for the single major installation.

Operating Costs

It costs about \$400,000 per year to operate the park. ASU contributes \$125,000 toward these expenses as well as the cooling for the England Building which comes from the ASU central downtown cooling plant (the value of that contribution is not included below). of the balance of the operating budget is provided by the city.

PARKS AND RECREATION CIVIC SPACE 2010/11 OPERATING BUDGET

Recreation Budget	
Personal Services	\$ 106,163
Contractual Services	\$ 4,541
Total Recreation Budget	\$ 110,704
Maintenance Budget	
Personal Services	\$ 191,272
Contractual Services	\$ 101,253
Commodities	\$ 11,500
Total Maintenance Budget	\$ 304,025
Total Civic Space Operating Budget	\$ 414,729

PROJECT IMPACTS

Town & Gown Relationships and Interactions

Perhaps the most important question about project impact and level of success is whether town and gown actually find “common ground” in the park. By observation and report, it would appear that they do. At a minimum, the park has attracted a variety of users from its immediate surroundings (students, residents, the elderly, downtown workers) and from farther afield (for more substantial events, both as performers and as audience members). While some events and activities serve a particular group, many have a broader appeal.



Our meeting with the so-called “public allies” and ASU representatives demonstrated this very clearly. One after another, people from the community praised the park as a unique venue in the city and the region where meaningful events and interactions are fostered. These people had either sponsored, organized or taken part in performances, exhibitions, classes, or other events. They were very positive about the roles of ASU in organizing activities and events and of the city in fostering a welcoming and supportive attitude. Having such a venue clearly contributes to making Phoenix a more urbane urban center.

Economic Impacts

It is not realistic to try to measure the economic impact of the park itself on the city. Certainly, some construction jobs were created and some on-going employment results from its presence. But the real impact would have to be measured in the context of the insertion of the new ASU downtown campus together with the park. We were provided with an assessment of the predicted impacts of the ASU campus by Wellington Reiter (the original source is not identified).

The estimated tax revenues of over \$21 million in ten years could be weighed against the capital costs of \$223 million or the costs to repay the bonds but this represents a small portion of the potential returns if the secondary benefits of the new university occupancy are fully analyzed.

**ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO PHOENIX
10-YEAR CUMULATIVE GROSS IMPACT**

University Operations	
Wages	\$ 106,700,000
Economic Output	\$ 215,600,000
Tax Collections:	
State	\$ 4,000,000
County	\$ 1,400,000
Phoenix	\$ 900,000
Private Retail	
Jobs	1,762
Wages	\$ 54,000,000
Tax Collections:	
State	\$ 5,400,000
County	\$ 1,900,000
Phoenix	\$ 2,300,000
Private Office	
Jobs	2,100
Wages	\$ 78,600,000
Tax Collections:	
State	\$ 4,200,000
County	\$ 2,300,000
Phoenix	\$ 600,000

Other quantifiable impacts were listed earlier in this report in terms of number of students, faculty and staff positions.

The estimated tax revenues of over \$21 million in ten years could be weighed against the capital costs of \$223 million or the costs to repay the bonds but this represents a small portion of the potential returns if the secondary benefits of the new university occupancy are fully analyzed.

Other quantifiable impacts were listed earlier in this report in terms of number of students, faculty and staff positions.

Stimulus for Other Development

There is considerable development taking place, and more planned or likely, in the vicinity of the park and the campus. The YMCA plans a major addition and the post office will be renovated. These projects are directly related to the campus as is the planned law school. Other development (as described above) may have been encouraged by the perceived benefits of the ASU campus, including bringing thousands of students and staff to the area, as potential customers (as well as their contribution to making a more lively and safer neighborhood), but it is impossible to measure this impact. Having mostly filled in a substantial sector just north of the downtown core, ASU may set the stage for additional development further to the north.

Other, intangible impacts include the contribution ASU and the park will make to light rail (and other public transit) ridership, helping to make or keep them viable. Finally, there is the improvement in perception of Phoenix as a sophisticated sponsor of public arts by virtue of the major, iconic sculpture showcased in the park (notwithstanding the city's long history as a sponsor of public art).

Assessing Project Success

SUCCESS IN MEETING PROJECT GOALS

- *Provide a “place for the community to come together”.*

The park does indeed succeed in providing such a venue.

- *To become a “true ‘civic space’ that would bring together the intersecting and overlapping needs of various users”. These groups include students, low-income seniors, downtown residents and workers, and visitors to Phoenix.*

The park is a civic space. It not only serves a variety of needs (and supports a wide variety of activities and events), it appears to foster the interaction of town and gown – and of an ethnically, economically, culturally, and age-diverse set of people.

- *To create a civic amenity – not just a recreation amenity.*

Recreational opportunities are available for unstructured activities on the lawns (such as Frisbee) and more organized activities in the England building (e.g., yoga classes). However, the park is used more for passive recreation and community events than for active recreation. Thus, it meets this goal.

- *To be very “green” – environmentally friendly and incorporate many ecological and energy-efficient features.*

The park does incorporate many green and energy-efficient features (e.g., PV solar panels, ground water recharging system, energy efficient lighting, etc.). It is unclear whether the extensive use of turf grass (and the water required to maintain it) is consistent with this goal.

- *To energize and enliven a substantial (and underdeveloped, if not blighted) area at the edge of the downtown Phoenix urban core (note: this is a goal of the overall development, including ASU, not just the park).*

The park, together with the ASU campus, the YMCA and other developments, has without a doubt energized and enlivened this area, which was at least in part close to derelict.

SELECTION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The selection committee found much to praise about Civic Space Park. In initially selecting it as a finalist, the committee expressed great interest in this major and very successful collaboration between the city and the university. Located immediately adjacent to the heart of downtown, the committee noted that the university campus and park contribute greatly to the quality of urban life in Phoenix, providing an excellent forum for town and gown to meet.

They found the project to be innovative in terms of sustainability in the desert climate, education and transportation. In terms of design, the committee felt that the park demonstrates an excellent relationship between open space and built environment, including historic preservation and adaptive reuse. It also has a very impressive artwork with great visual impact at night. The park (especially together with the university campus) represents a huge transformation compared to the underutilization and dereliction it replaced. The committee also praised the strong community engagement process, with lots of input that is reflected in the design and, on an on-going basis, the programming of activities.

With all these positives, the committee was still left with some questions and concerns. They felt that the plantings and some of the detailing (e.g., of the shade structure supports) could have been more sensitively designed. While plant selections were climatically appropriate, they did not reinforce the image of the desert environment. In addition, planting larger, more mature trees, that would have provided shade initially rather than in some years, would have been appreciated. While some committee members liked the differentiation of the park into sub-areas, others found it to be somewhat disjointed. Finally, there was also a sense that the sculpture was so successful and such a powerful attraction that it may overwhelm the park itself.



Craig Smith

REFERENCES

City of Phoenix, *Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future*, December 14, 2004

Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture, *Infusion: 20 Years of Public Art in Phoenix*; 2005

“Intergovernmental Operating Agreement (IGA) & Operating and Maintenance Operating Agreement,” contract between City of Phoenix and ASU for Civic Space Park and the England Building – dated 7/06/09

“Master Lease and Operating Agreement,” contract between City of Phoenix as landlord and ASU as tenant for the park and campus facilities and sites – dated 6/22/06

WELLINGTON REITER, Dean, College of Design, ASU: University as Civic Partner; The Arizona State University Downtown Phoenix Campus; PowerPoint presentation, 2006

