San Antonio remains unique among Texas cities, both in its culture and character. San Antonio is a city that has kept its authentic traditions alive, and remains known for its unusual beauty.

it is the green space within the historic downtown that invigorates its core.

The historic opportunity of recapturing Hemisfair Park as the City’s civic green space will accentuate the unique character of the city, and elevate the city’s civic lifestyle to that of other great world cities and further the reputation of San Antonio as a true Green Texas city.
Great urban parks have great urban edges.

1. Frame the Park with attractive mix-use development, in a way that enhances the urban nature of the public and open space

2. Maximize the number "eyes-on-the-park" by providing multi-story projects along the perimeter with views of the park space

3. Generate park activity by creating edge conditions that welcome and attract the public

4. Enhance edge "porosity," inviting pedestrians into the park from every direction, enhancing the sense of discovery.

5. Optimize and activate revenue generating opportunities to fund park improvements, maintenance, operation and programming of the park.
PURPOSE OF STUDY

The study considers:
- potential massing
- densities
- ground plane
- ease of parking structures use

The study includes:
- multiple defined entrances and gates
- keep the perimeter porous
- flexible programmed open space and edge
- Understanding of qualities of successful parks
- Development of an urban park in Hemisfair that is uniquely San Antonio

Hemisfair civic park edges have the potential to bring San Antonio’s “front porch” to a level of quality and community enrichment equal to other great urban parks of the world.
SITE ANALYSIS
San Antonio’s downtown built environment is a fabric woven of history, architecture and greenscape. Its famous waterways and numerous green spaces made up of paths, plazas, courtyards, riverside cafes and tree-lined walkways invite visitors and citizens alike to enjoy a lifestyle unique to San Antonio as one of the country’s most livable urban centers. These greenspaces, both public and private, provide important pedestrian linkages that make most of downtown accessible by a pleasant walk. Hemisfair will provide an essential green “hub” further connecting sections of the city, and be a central outdoor gathering space for personal and civic activities.
GREEN SPACE
INFLUENTIAL GREEN SPACE

Alamo Plaza 1
Riverwalk 2
La Villita 3
Alamo Street 4
Tower Park 5
King William District 6
Providing a built edge to the park spaces weaves park space into the built environment, and activates open space, inviting people to watch, mingle, play, and often just relax within a bustling urban center. Equally central to the success of a built edge is the ability to access public greenspace through it, while using the built environment to invite from city streets and walkways into the open space. This edge must be “perforated” at regular intervals creating easy access to all areas of the park. These openings should be carefully aligned with existing landmarks, pathways and vistas. Equally, interior spaces of the park should be linked visually and physically to the city.
VISTAS

INWARD VISTAS

OUTWARD VISTAS
Easy and direct access to all areas of the park is important. The access points should be experiential, creating unique environments at different points of entries. These access points should create ease of flow for large crowds as well as intimate experiences for individuals, and can be used to activate the park with the interaction between pedestrians and shops, markets, restaurants, sidewalk cafes and other venues. Additionally, these access points may be used for crowd control during large events.
Final plan may vary from this initial study. Footprints limited to Public Facility Corporation land – not Parkland.
Bryant Park is a 6.25 acre privately funded and managed public park located in New York City, providing an oasis of green nestled behind the grand Beaux-Arts landmark New York Public Library amid a surrounding canyon of skyscrapers. It is located between Fifth and Sixth Avenues and between 40th and 42nd streets in Midtown Manhattan. The principal area of the park is 6.25 acres encompassing border gardens to the north and south, tree-lined promenades, plazas and paved gathering spaces that surround the great lawn (300’ x 215’). Each space is filled with varied uses from simple seating areas within the gardens or under allees of trees to gravel petanque courts, areas for ping pong, chess, backgammon and game tables set along the promenades, a putting green, lawn bowling, and a carrousel. It also includes three different eating establishments from a more formal restaurant grill with rooftop dining to an outdoor café to sandwich kiosks. Events change through the seasons, with specific large scale events like Fashion Week taking over the space to the simple every day experience of hundreds sitting on the sun-filled lawn.
GLOBAL COMPARABLES
BRYANT PARK, NEW YORK CITY
Millennium Park is a public park that has repurposed the former Grant Park and adjoining Illinois Central Railyards to become a magnificent modern park with a variety of facilities, unique public artwork and beautiful gardens. Now a prominent civic center near the city’s Lake Michigan shoreline, this park covers a total area of 24.5 acres. The park, which is bounded by Michigan Avenue, Randolph Street, Columbus Drive, and East Monroe Drive, features the Pritzker Pavilion with seating for 4,000 and lawn for another 7,000; the Crown fountain play area; the Lurie Garden with its native flowers and grasses; the iconic Cloud Gate sculpture and its terrace and gardens; and the Millennium Monument and fountain as well as a seasonal ice rink. The park also contains restaurants and food concession carts that can be found along the promenade. All of this is built over a series of parking structures providing thousands of spaces.
Russell Square is a large 8.25 acre garden square in Bloomsbury, in the London Borough of Camden overlooked by the Victorian architectural landmark - the Russell Hotel, and the University of London Senate House. As a true neighborhood park, this urban garden square is characterized by majestic tress, meandering paths containing the café in the square, an ornamental play fountain, a historic cabman’s shelter, a children’s playground, and historic sculpture. Its corner entry gates provide welcome to a green space used by local residents, working persons, students and tourists. The park plays host to several seasonal events including the annual Bloomsbury Festival.
Discovery Green is a public park in Downtown Houston, Texas. Opened in 2008, Discovery Green, 11.78-acre in size (5.10 acres in the comparable area), is located on Avenida de las Americas across from the George R. Brown Convention Center and the Hilton Americas Hotel, adjacent to Toyota Center. The park includes a lake, bandstands and venues for public performances, two dog runs, a children’s area, gateway fountain, covered verandas and open groves, multiple recreational areas, two restaurants and several food kiosks. It hosts a variety of year round events from symphony performances on the green, to seasonal festivals, daily exercise programs, and monthly market place events. It is also partly built over a 720-space underground parking garage.
The Plaza Mayor was built during the Habsburg period and is a grand arcaded plaza in the center of Madrid, Spain. Rectangular in shape, it measures 423 ft × 308 ft, (3.20 AC) and is surrounded by multi-story residential buildings with taller turrets, having 237 balconies above a wrapping arcade facing the Plaza. It has a total of nine entranceways connecting the plaza to the surrounding city in all directions. The ground level of the surrounding arcade holds cafés, bars, shops and restaurants and in the summer the square is full of tables, providing gathering spaces for conversation, dining, outdoor vendors, markets and evening concerts.
Originally known as the Place Royale, the Place des Vosges was built by Henri IV from 1605 to 1612. A true square, 460 ft x 460 ft (4.90 AC.) it embodied the first European program of royal city planning. It was built on the site of the Hôtel des Tournelles and its gardens and today it stands as one of the great public spaces of Paris, with shops, galleries and restaurants lining its arcade below apartments facing the central green. The small park in the center of the square is one of the few places in Paris where you can sit on the grass and listen to classical musicians who set up shop and attract large crowds.
Plaça Reial is a 1.15 AC. square in the Barri Gòtic of Barcelona, Spain. It is fed by numerous pedestrian avenues and has a major short passage to La Rambla Boulevard. The palm tree-filled plaza, with its central fountain and sculptures, is lined by a tall arcade containing a large number of restaurants, shops, and galleries with outdoor seating within the arches or under umbrellas. Completely pedestrian, it is also known for its many outdoor venues - dining, street artists and vendors, weekend markets, and open-air concerts. It is a popular meeting place during the summer and the important annual Catalan multi-day celebration - La Mercè – is held in September.
The Plaza Grande in Merida, Mexico is 2.76 AC. and has witnessed much of life on the Yucatan Peninsula, as it has been the city’s primary gathering place since colonial times. This 350’ x 350’ square is lined with two rows of stout laurels and palms giving the passerby its welcoming shade during the day and, when lighted in the evenings, an atmosphere of freshness and delight. The park is shaped by a series of paths, pocket gardens, historic sculptures and courts. It serves as the host for a wide range of people where local events are celebrated - from the weekly musical and dancing performances to the Fiesta de Carnaval. The buildings on the surrounding streets are arcade lined with shops, restaurants, civic buildings and the main cathedral and its plaza.
LOCAL PRECEDENT

ARCADES

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LOCAL PRECEDENT
COURTYARDS
LOCAL PRECEDENT
STREETSCAPE

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LOCAL PRECEDENT
STREETSACE
LOCAL PRECEDENT
MATERIALITY
PLACEMAKING COMPONENTS
BUILDING/PUBLIC SPACE

Vision Based Code Principles
RULES: Building form as important as land use regulation
EMPHASIS: Mixed use and mixed housing types
PUBLIC REALM: Greater attention to street scape, walkways, design, role of building interaction with park
STANDARDS: Intentionally based on context and designed context
PROCESS: Design focused/informed by existing condition analysis

Elements of Place Making
- Vertical development in support of public realm and activity
- Intersecting spaces, walkable block dimensions
- Development of public realm/street scape/walkway amenities and their integration with landscape, hardscape, right of ways, and street furniture
- Define buildings by form using type, placement, height & profile, frontage, mass & volume
PLACE MAKING COMPONENTS
BUILDING / PUBLIC SPACE

ARCADE/ ELEVATED TERRACE SECTION
AT PUBLIC GREEN

Place Making Components into Standards
- Define street scape / public realm
- Define frontage standards for urban types
  - Gallery, shop front, arcade, landscaped walks
- Allow for flexibility

Define Building Types
- What type of building is allowed
- Define height limitations
- Determine allowed frontage types
- Determine parking allowance and location of shared parking

Define Land Use
- Determine location of building, setbacks, etc.
- Determine allowance encroachments
- Define allowable signage types
Success of the park for both small and large events must rely on ease of vehicular access and parking. Adequate parking for both private and public use must be provided and vehicular traffic integrated in existing downtown street circulation with minimal interruption to pedestrian access. The park should be easily accessible to downtown visitors and residents, as well as an easy destination for outlying areas.