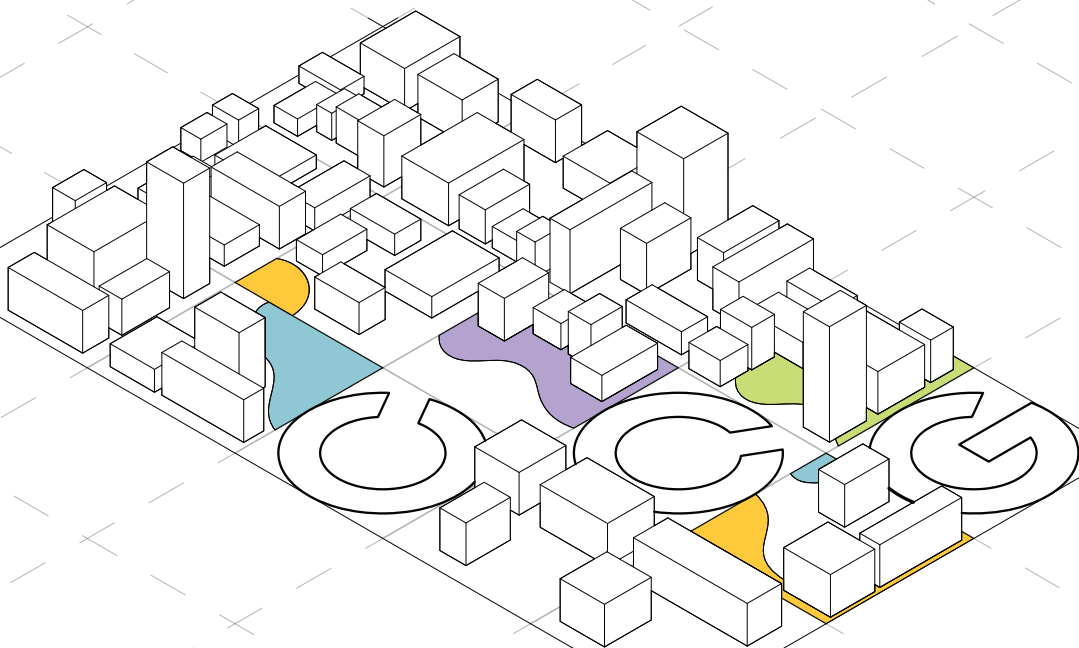# Creating Common Ground

Opportunities for Intergenerational Use of Public Spaces in Disinvested Communities

UCLA Lewis Center
for Regional Policy Studies

cityLab
UCLA

ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Dr. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning, Luskin School of Public Affairs, Department of Urban Planning

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS
Dr. Dana Cuff, Professor of Architecture, School of Arts and Architecture, Department of Architecture and Urban Design

Dr. Gustavo Leclerc, Associate Director of cityLAB, School of Arts and Architecture, Department of Architecture and Urban Design

Dr. Maite Zubiaurre, European Languages and Transcultural Studies (ELTS) and Spanish and Portuguese, Division of Humanities

RESEARCH TEAM
Gus Wendel, Project Manager, PhD student, Department of Urban Planning

Claire Nelischer, Research Assistant, PhD student, Department of Urban Planning

Gibson Bastar, Research Assistant, M.Arch.I student, Department of Architecture and Urban Design

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this study, we examine public space use and experiences of low-income older adults and youth in the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. The primary goal is to understand the public space needs and values of these two groups and explore the similarities and differences in their use of neighborhood public spaces, both before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results yield insights into the potential for intergenerational uses of public space in inner-city neighborhoods.

Using a transdisciplinary methodological approach that blends urban planning, architecture, and spatial ethnography, we assess local stakeholders' relationships to and experiences with three different outdoor public space settings: MacArthur Park, Lafayette Park, and Golden Age Park. Spanning 12 months, our research group undertook site observations at each park to observe how users of different ages interact with public spaces, focus groups and thick mapping exercises to ask residents about their use of public spaces, one-on-one interviews to acquire a more in-depth understanding of the research participants' historic and ongoing relationships to the neighborhood, and a participatory design exercise with both older adults and youth to listen to the suggestions for better public spaces from the part of older adults and youth, who collectively imagined what intergenerational public spaces might look like in their neighborhood.

We recorded and analyzed data from all research activities following an analytical framework that focused on objective and perceptual variables relating to individual characteristics, neighborhood characteristics, and public space characteristics, and how these inform and influence user experiences in public spaces. User experiences include perceptions, behaviors/activities, relationships, and ideas/desires that are constantly reshaped and renegotiated by park users. Understanding the relationship between the objective and perceptual variables on the one hand, and user experiences in public spaces on the other, can yield important insights for planners and designers seeking to improve existing parks or create new parks and public spaces to support intergenerational use.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND DESIGN AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of public space in disinvested neighborhoods
Lafayette and MacArthur Park, two large historic parks in Los Angeles, continue to serve as primary spaces of outdoor recreation and social connectivity for residents in the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood. Golden Age Park, a newly built small park, is an increasingly important, albeit lesser-known, public space due to its newness, hidden location, and small size. The findings of this research reinforce the idea that public

spaces provide essential outdoor recreation and social outlets for residents. This finding is supported by research participants' responses to questions about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their use of public space. The inherent risk of entering public spaces during COVID-19 led many participants to avoid them, particularly during the pre-vaccine days. Older adults, in particular, expressed their reluctance to visit parks, citing a lack of social distancing and mask wearing by other park users. Both older adults and youth indicated a desire to return to fully utilizing outdoor public spaces, as well as other venues that facilitate social activities like those provided by the youth organization Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA) and the senior services center St. Barnabas Senior Services (SBSS).

Safety and inclusivity emerged as key themes in participants' relationships to public spaces in their neighborhood Safety, a typical concern for many residents of disinvested neighborhoods, emerged as a key determining factor influencing participants' relationships to the public spaces in Westlake/MacArthur Park. Feelings of safety are affected by both the physical conditions as well as the social characteristics of public spaces. In terms of physical conditions, participants cited a lack of cleanliness and, in some areas, a lack of infrastructural upkeep as reasons for feeling unsafe in public spaces. The pandemic has added new worries (e.g. disease transmission) and perceptions of insecurity in public spaces. In terms of social characteristics that contributed to feelings of safety, many participants cited the presence of unhoused individuals in public spaces as reasons for feeling unsafe visiting public spaces. Additionally, many participants expressed feeling unwelcome in public spaces because of their race, gender, or age. To describe these social concerns, we use the term inclusivity, which captures the expressed need by multiple users of different social, economic, racial, and gender identities to feel welcome in public space.

DESIGN & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Pursue public space improvements which work in tandem with anti-eviction and anti-displacement efforts and advocacy for affordable housing.

- Pursue physical improvements and maintenance to ensure public spaces remain clean and cared for over the long-term.

- Ensure easy access to public space: privilege the accessibility needs of older adults, youngsters, and people with disabilities.

- Leverage relationships with community organizations in facilitating safe interactions in public space.

Designing for intergenerational public spaces: complementarity and choice
The fact that nearly all participants in this research, both young and old, expressed enthusiasm about the idea of designing public spaces not only for intergenerational use but also for intergenerational interaction is a key finding of this research. Even if a few participants expressed some skepticism that creating such intergenerational space was possible, both older adults and youth not only shared a desire for intergenerational public space, but also discussed ideas and suggestions on how to create such spaces. Thus, rather than designing public spaces with restrictive, age-related assumptions that have characterized many past public space projects, designers and policymakers should think about how activities in public spaces can complement, rather than impede one another. A related idea to that of complementarity is the provision of choices and options. It is not only age, but also personal tastes and cultural traits that may influence people's needs and desires for particular environmental settings. Thus, providing different options and settings at the park, for example both quiet corners for reading but also more active and social spaces, would allow a diverse array of users to enjoy it.

DESIGN & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Designers should emphasize flexibility -- how park settings can be easily adapted to serve different needs and present different choices and options -- and complementarity -- how park settings can serve needs of both the young and the old -- in public spaces, especially in settings with spatial constraints and limited resources.

- Public space design should respond to the cultural context of the neighborhood and the history of the community.

The role of community organizations in creating and sustaining public spaces

Organizations like SBSS and HOLA play an outsized role in facilitating residents' social interactions, several of which occur in the neighborhood's public spaces. Participants frequently referenced their participation in activities run by SBSS and HOLA as essential to their daily routines and relationships to their neighborhood and community at-large. Nonprofit, community-based organizations such as these may take on a more active role in creating programs with the specific intent to bring together youth and older adults in public space settings. The research findings suggest that any new policy or design for improving public spaces or creating new ones should consider the ongoing role that nonprofit community-based organizations have in creating a sense of purpose and community among residents in their neighborhood. A close partnership with such organizations is a key ingredient to not only successfully designing intergenerational public spaces, but also making sure they work in the long run.

DESIGN & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Pursue social programming to enhance intergenerational uses of public space, leveraging relationships and partnerships with community-based organizations.

- Engage partnerships with local stakeholders to foster community ownership over local public space resources.

Exercise machines in a public plaza

PARK-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations specific to MacArthur Park

Improve park cleanliness and maintenance: MacArthur Park is arguably the park most in need of addressing safety concerns because of the presence of trash, unclean water in the lake, and generally unsanitary conditions. . The park needs investment in regular maintenance and cleaning services.

Improve park inclusivity: The presence of unhoused individuals, which makes some participants feel unsafe, in addition to the participants' reported concerns about discrimination due their age, gender, or race, suggest that the park is in need of certain security features that promote inclusivity rather than exclusion. A possible step in this direction would be to hire "park ambassadors" or "trust agents" to help orient park users and provide resources to unhoused folks. In addition, efforts to improve the perceived safety of MacArthur Park should be pursued in tandem with city-wide efforts to increase services and find housing options for unhoused folks, and decriminalize their presence in public spaces.

Support existing recreation infrastructure: MacArthur Park is endowed with significant recreation infrastructure in its northwestern corner, including a bandshell, workout facilities, playground, and a soccer field. The upkeep of these facilities should also support intergenerational uses.

Recommendations specific to Lafayette Park

Redesign the center of the park: Site observations and participant interviews confirm that the center of Lafayette Park would benefit from investment and redesign to make it feel both safe and amenable to youth and older adults. Given that Lafayette is already rich with recreation infrastructure, such as a skate park, a soccer field, and basketball courts, it is recommended that the center of the park be designed with more passive landscaping including greenery, winding paths, and benches.

Recommendations specific to Golden Age Park

Raise awareness that the park exists: It will be important to find ways to raise awareness of this park. One possibility is to place flyers around the neighborhood and work with community based organizations like SBSS and HOLA to spread the word among their constituents. The establishment of regular programs and activities by HOLA and SBSS, as well as other community institutions (churches, schools at the park will also help build awareness and attract users over time.

Ensure that on-site wayfinding and signage clearly indicate that the park is open and accessible to the public.

Add public restrooms to the park: As noted by the older adults who participated in the study, the provision of public restrooms in the park is considered critical for them.

01
INTRODUCTION

We hope that our findings can provide guidance to planners, designers, and policy makers seeking to create more inclusive public spaces, as well as yield important implications for enhancing intergenerational connectivity in high-poverty, disinvested urban neighborhoods.

STUDY PURPOSE

This study examines public space experiences of low-income older adults and youth in the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. Using a transdisciplinary methodological approach that blends urban planning, architecture, and spatial ethnography, we assess local stakeholders' relationships to and experiences with three different outdoor public space settings in this neighborhood. We conduct this work in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic. If we accept that we are now living a new version of "normal," it is incumbent upon us to think through what public spaces can mean for our communities, especially low-income and underprivileged communities. Indeed, researchers,scholars, and policy makers should address the existing and well-documented disparities in public space access, which only became more accentuated during the pandemic, but also consider how such spaces can be adapted and reinvented to better serve these communities.

The needs of older adults and youth are often overlooked in planning and policymaking, as their voices are not heard or represented in decision-making about the city. This study engaged both older adults and youth in a series of site observations, focus group discussions, thick mapping, and participatory design interventions, to understand their needs and the similarities and differences between the two age groups' experiences, and make clearer where their interests may intersect or diverge. We hope that our findings can provide guidance to planners, designers, and policy makers seeking to create more inclusive public spaces, as well as yield important implications for enhancing intergenerational connectivity in high-poverty, disinvested urban neighborhoods.

REPORT STRUCTURE

This report begins with a review of literature regarding intergenerational public space, followed by an overview of the context of our study: the Westlake-MacArthur Park neighborhood. We then outline our methodological approach, research design and methods, and conceptual model for analysis. We then present our findings, followed by a discussion of key themes emerging from them. We conclude with a discussion on the implications of our findings for design and policy, and a set of recommendations for creating intergenerational parks.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary aim of this research is to understand the needs and values regarding public space amongst low-income, older adults and youth living in the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood, and explore the similarities and differences of public space use, both before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our research questions are as follows:

Which are the primary spaces of outdoor recreation for low-income children and older adults in the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood? Have these primary spaces changed since the advent of the pandemic?

How are these spaces accessed and used? What are the similarities and differences between age groups in terms of public space access and use? How has access and use changed since the advent of the pandemic? Given the circumstances brought by the pandemic, what conditions would be necessary to feel comfortable accessing these public spaces?

Are there opportunities for creating common grounds through these public spaces? What are the successful ingredients and promising strategies for creating settings that can foster intergenerational exchanges at different types of public spaces?

What are the lessons for urban planners and designers wishing to design and program public spaces for intergenerational use in disinvested neighborhoods?

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LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In the context of growing and aging urban populations (World Health Organization, 2007), there is an urgent need to create urban environments that support residents of diverse life stages and abilities. Thus, in the past two decades, a number of governments have adopted age-friendly and child-friendly approaches to urban policy and planning, with the goal to offer spaces and services responsive to the needs of city dwellers at both ends of the age spectrum (Biggs & Carr, 2016). Approaches for child- and age-friendly cities focus on the risk, vulnerability, and invisibility of children and older adults respectively, and both emphasize the role of the built environment in ameliorating such challenges (Biggs & Carr, 2015, 2016; Manchester & Facer, 2017). However, scholars have argued that much of the research to date has prioritized a single generational focus, namely the needs and desires of either youth or older adults, rather than an intergenerational approach that explores how urban environments could appeal to the needs and interests of diverse age groups, while also fostering social interaction and understanding across generations (Biggs & Carr, 2016; Cortellesi & Kernan, 2016; Noon & Ayalon, 2018).

The term "intergenerational" relates to "intergenerational practice," a multidisciplinary policy and planning approach often led by governments or the nonprofit sector with the goal to promote social inclusion and cohesion, health and well-being, and understanding across generations (Pain, 2005). Intergenerational practice, defined broadly, typically involves removing physical and social barriers to the participation of individuals from different generations in mutually-beneficial activities, with a focus on building relationships based on learning and sharing (Buffel et al., 2014; Cushing & van Vliet, 2016; Kaplan et al., 2016). As a relatively new approach that has gained momentum since the 1990s, intergenerational practice is distinct from multi-generational practice, which typically focuses on addressing the needs of particular age groups rather than on fostering meaningful relationships among different generations (Cushing & van Vliet, 2016; Kaplan et al., 2007; Washington et al., 2019).

Despite acknowledgement that the spatial segregation of different generations into same-age environments hinders their ability to interact, understand, and learn from one another (Cortellesi & Kernan, 2016; Puhakka et al., 2015), some scholars have argued that, within intergenerational practice, the built environment has generally not been the focus of scholarly attention (Kaplan, Thang, et al., 2020). When research has focused on the built environment from an intergenerational perspective, this has been primarily related to institutional settings and formal, indoor environments and activities, rather than shared, outdoor public environments (Cushing & van Vliet, 2016; Kaplan, Thang, et al., 2020; Kaplan & Haider, 2015; Washington et al., 2019). Given the potential benefits of intergenerational

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public space, there is a need to better understand how to develop, design, and program outdoor public spaces for intergenerational interaction (Washington et al., 2019) and to support more sustainable communities overall (Buffel et al., 2014).

In response, in the past two decades more research has emerged from scholars in diverse disciplines on the subject of intergenerational public space that seeks to add a public space dimension to intergenerational practice, and better understand how urban public environments could meet the unique needs of both youth and older adults while also serving as the context for interaction and understanding across generations (Biggs & Carr, 2015, 2016; Bosia et al., 2017; Fu et al., 2019; Haider & Kaplan, 2004; Kaplan et al., 2007; Kaplan & Haider, 2015; Larkin et al., 2010; Layne, 2009; Thang, 2015; Thang & Kaplan, 2012; Washington et al., 2019).

This literature review focuses on intergenerational public space, an approach that incorporates design and policy to create public spaces that meet the age-based needs of different generations and support interaction and engagement. What follows synthesizes academic and professional or "grey" literature on intergenerational public space with the goal to understand the current state of research and practice and to inform future inquiry.

We begin by discussing the distinction between monogenerational, multigenerational, and universal design approaches versus intergenerational approaches. We then examine the goals, need for, and benefits of intergenerational space. We follow this with a discussion of the strategies and interventions - in terms of design, programming, policy, and process of development - that might support intergenerational interaction in public space. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of this research for urban planners, designers, policymakers, and those in cognate fields seeking to develop, enhance, or expand intergenerational public space in urban environments.

DEFINITIONS: INTERGENERATIONAL, MONOGENERATIONAL, AND MULTIGENERATIONAL SPACES

It is important here to note the distinction between intergenerational, monogenerational, and multigenerational approaches, as reflected in scholarship and practice. A monogenerational focus in planning, policy, and environmental design attends to the needs of one particular age group, often either children or older adults. Such approaches have been the subject of considerable critique for prioritizing, and in some cases misunderstanding, the needs of a single age group, and for failing to recognize the considerable overlap and synergies between the age-specific needs of various groups (Cushing & van Vliet, 2016; Thang, 2015; Thang & Kaplan, 2012). A case study analysis of how "age-appropriate" urban environments in Switzerland are being developed and experienced found that imprecise age-related stereotypes of older adults not only shape the individual attitudes of planning and design practitioners, but are woven into public space planning and design processes, resulting in spatial solutions that may not accurately reflect the diverse needs of this population group (Fabian et al., 2019). The influence of age-related stereotypes is also evident in spaces created for children and youth, which is often framed as a conflict between older and younger public space users that considers youth as a source of fear and annoyance to older adults (Pain, 2005). A 2019 ethnographic study of playground spaces in Athens, Greece, found playgrounds to feature prescriptive, age-specific play structures and spaces, separate and distinct from "normal" public space, reinforcing the ongoing surveillance and control of children, limiting children's agency in public space, and diminishing opportunities for intergenerational play (Pitsikali & Parnell, 2019).

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Emerging in response to monogenerational approaches that create age-segregated environments, multigenerational planning and design seeks to accommodate the needs of both children and older adults while extending benefits to other users in the process. A 2018 guide produced by the AARP and 8 80 Cities titled "Creating Parks and Public Spaces for People of All Ages" succinctly expresses this rationale in its forward, with the statement, "If everything we do in our public spaces is great for an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old, then it will be great for people of all ages" (AARP & 8 80 Cities, 2018, p. 3). Such multigenerational approaches have been criticized for assuming that, when taken together, the needs of those on both ends of the age spectrum can encompass the needs of all public space users (Biggs & Carr, 2016; Cortellesi & Kernan, 2016). Others argue that "age-friendly" approaches emerged largely in response to the needs of older adults, and tend to overlook the needs of other generations in practice (Cortellesi & Kernan, 2016). Planners, whose professional activities and tools have been identified as key to enabling age-friendly built environments (Warner & Zhang, 2019), have been criticized for focusing primarily on the needs of older adults in policies and environments designed to be age-friendly (Biggs & Carr, 2016; Thang, 2015). By focusing on only one end of the life course, these approaches may fail to confer meaningful benefits to other age groups, and also risk constructing a new "universal urbanite" (Biggs & Carr, 2016, p. 264). Bosia et. al. (2017) argue that "design for all" approaches to urban space may collapse differences and fail to attend to the unique demographic composition of different users, including children and older adults but also other users of diverse ages and abilities.

This tension between the universal and the particular is reflected in the literature on universal design. Universal design, defined broadly as the design of environments to facilitate access and use by those of any age and ability (Lynch et al., 2018), is similar to child- and age-friendly cities approaches in that it is focused on achieving better social, physical, and health outcomes by producing better built environments. However, universal design aims to accommodate the greatest range of users of all ages and abilities, rather than a defined age group (L. Stafford & Baldwin, 2015). Several studies have explored the potential of universal design to complement intergenerational approaches, suggesting that, if accompanied by participatory, context-sensitive design and planning processes, universal and age-friendly design agendas can be successfully integrated to incorporate the needs and desires of people of diverse ages and abilities in the design of public space (Lynch et al., 2018; L. Stafford & Baldwin, 2015). However, others argue that public space must not only accommodate diverse age groups, but actively create spaces that promote engagement, interaction, and community, suggesting that universal design be positioned as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, intergenerational approaches (Thang, 2015; Thang & Kaplan, 2012).

Intergenerational public space is concerned with the material environment as well as the social and emotional lives of different age groups. Whereas multigenerational public spaces accommodate the individual physical and psychological needs of various age groups and abilities, intergenerational public spaces respond to age-based needs and also actively foster meaningful interaction, communication, engagement, and connection among generations (Thang & Kaplan, 2012). Such "generationally intelligent spaces" enable different generations to meet, interact, and understand one another through their shared use of the built environment (Biggs & Carr, 2015, 2016). By supporting interaction and mutual benefit (Brown & Henkin, 2018), intergenerational public space may also enhance empathy and harmony between people of different age groups (Biggs & Carr, 2016). Broadly, the goal is to extend such intergenerational engagement and understanding beyond the particular public spaces in which it takes place to contribute to wellbeing, social cohesion, and social capital throughout the community (Cortellesi & Kernan, 2016).

NEED FOR INTERGENERATIONAL PUBLIC SPACE

In order to position public space as a key context for intergenerational wellbeing and connection, research on intergenerational public space has identified the need to connect within and across two sets of parallel research and policy approaches: 1 age-friendly cities (AFC with child-friendly cities (CFC, and 2 the built environment with the social environment. Each of these approaches is explored in the sections that follow.

As the age demographics of many cities have shifted, both age-friendly cities (AFC) and child-friendly cities (CFC) approaches have emerged over the past two decades as key urban policy objectives (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2004; World Health Organization, 2007) seeking to improve social and material conditions for youth and older adults by reorienting policies and plans to reflect their interests and aspirations (Manchester & Facer, 2017). On a global scale, the World Health Organization's (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities initiatives and UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities initiatives have been instrumental in the broad dissemination and adoption of these policy agendas by local governments (Manchester & Facer, 2017). WHO's Age-Friendly Cities (AFC) initiative focuses on promoting active aging to enhance the health and social and political participation of older adults by providing services and spaces that meet their needs (World Health Organization, 2007). UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities initiative emphasizes the rights of children as a means to improve their immediate and future conditions, services for them, and civic participation (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2004). Both aim to shift away from the historical propensity of urban planning, policy, and design decisions that privilege or focus only on the needs of working-age adults, towards supporting the interests of diverse age groups throughout their life course in cities (Warner, 2018).

Despite the many shared elements and objectives of the age- and child-friendly cities approaches, scholars argue that too often these agendas have not converged in practice (Biggs & Carr, 2015; Cushing & van Vliet, 2016; Thang, 2015). As already mentioned, some argue that the interests of older adults and children are advanced separately, ignoring shared goals and potential while further inscribing stereotypes about youth and aging

Intergenerational community activities

Dancing in the park.

(Fabian et al., 2019; Manchester & Facer, 2017; Pain, 2005). Others argue that planners and policymakers have tended to prioritize the needs and interests of older adults while claiming universal benefit, bolstered by the assumption that making cities livable for elders will make cities livable for all (Biggs & Carr, 2016; Brown & Henkin, 2018; Warner, 2018). The continued production of age-segregated spaces in cities, in part due to the lack of integration between age-friendly and child-friendly cities agendas, has been recognized as one part of a complex web of social and material factors that limit opportunities for intergenerational interaction, learning, and solidarity in the city (Manchester & Facer, 2017). To address this stubborn separation of age- and child-friendly approaches, and to leverage their many complementary and mutually-reinforcing elements, scholars have pointed to the need for a realignment and rethinking of age-related divisions toward more intergenerational approaches that bridge across the aims and elements of CFC and AFC agendas (Biggs & Carr, 2015, 2016; Cortellesi & Kernan, 2016; Cushing & van Vliet, 2016; Kaplan et al., 2007; Manchester & Facer, 2017; Thang, 2015; Thang & Kaplan, 2012; van Vliet, 2011).

Need to connect physical and social approaches
In addition to bridging AFC and CFC approaches, scholarship on intergenerational public space emphasizes the need to connect the built and social environments in research and practice. To address the social and physical separation of generations, both social and physical approaches are necessary to create time and space for youth and older adults to interact (Cortellesi & Kernan, 2016; Fu et al., 2019). Many scholars have thus emphasized the importance of connecting physical and social infrastructures to support community health and well-being as a whole, particularly when seeking to address age-related needs (Brown & Henkin, 2018; Cortellesi & Kernan, 2016; Warner, 2018). Bosia et. al. (2017) consider the physical spaces, infrastructures, and buildings of the city as the tangible "hardware" of age-friendliness, and the social and civic networks and communications as the intangible "software." They argue that both elements are necessary and must work in tandem in order to meet the needs of different age groups.

While interest in intergenerational practice has grown, research on the role of the physical environment in promoting or inhibiting intergenerational interaction has been lacking (Kaplan et al., 2007. Where studies have focused on physical environments, they tend to prioritize meeting various age-related needs rather than fostering engagement across age groups (Kaplan et al., 2007; Kaplan, Thang, et al., 2020, suggesting that the role of the

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built environment in fostering interaction between different generations (and not simply their co-existence) has been relatively under-studied (Cushing & van Vliet, 2016). This is also reflected in practice, as professional pursuits often remain siloed: intergenerational practitioners tend not to be design professionals, while design professionals tend not to focus on intergenerational interaction (Kaplan et al., 2007).

More recently, scholars have positioned urban public space as a key site of potential for intergenerational contact, relationships, and understanding (Cortellesi & Kernan, 2016; Lang, 1998; Thang, 2015; Thang & Kaplan, 2012), arguing that designing and sustaining public settings for intergenerational interaction is necessary to counteract the social and spatial segregation of generations into "islands of activity" (Tham et al., 2020, p. 229) that limit possibilities for interaction and community cohesion. But developing intergenerational public space requires strengthening connections between the physical and social environment in both research and practice. For planners and policy-makers, an intergenerational approach involves integrating the physical and social elements of community wellbeing while working towards age- and child-friendly cities objectives (Warner, 2018). Indeed, while public environments are increasingly understood as promising sites in which to build trust and community among generations (Almeida, 2019; Manchester & Facer, 2017), physical interventions alone are not sufficient to create "fully enabled environments" (Warner, 2018, p. 19). Given that persistent age segregation of youth and older adults is observable even in supposedly age-integrated spaces like town centers (Peace, 2013), there is a recognized need to consider the complexity of physical, social, and psychological factors that shape intergenerational public space. Planners and designers are called upon to incorporate social supports and services, public participation, and community care into planning and design practice (Peace, 2013; Warner, 2018), as well as to connect the work of intergenerational practitioners and environmental designers (arki_lab, 2017; Kaplan et al., 2007; Kaplan & Haider, 2015).

The degree to which public spaces designed to accommodate intergenerational use are able to foster meaningful intergenerational interaction has been the focus of a number of studies. A longitudinal study of the spatial preferences and practices of different age groups in Finland suggested that, while people still perceive their urban environments through a "generational gaze" (Puhakka et al., 2015, p. 80), creating age-friendly environments that support intergenerational engagement is still possible, emphasizing that spatial proximity is essential and requires physical public spaces where all generations can meet and engage. However, other studies emphasize that spatial proximity, while necessary, may not be sufficient to support intergenerational engagement in public space. A 2017 case study of a neighborhood in Singapore with a high proportion of older residents found that, although certain built environment features, including visibility and orientability, increased the accessibility and awareness of public space to a degree, the space alone had limited capacity to affect intergenerational interaction amongst strangers, and that programming, such as activities and events, was necessary to promote engagement (Chen, 2017). A 2018 study of open spaces in Israel similarly found that the mere presence of multiple generations in public space may not lead to intergenerational interaction, with site observations revealing that the majority of older adult park users remained alone and when interaction did occur, it was primarily homogenous by age and gender (Noon & Ayalon, 2018). Similar findings emerged from Thang's 2015 case study of co-located playgrounds and fitness areas in Singapore's housing estates; the study observed a lack of communication and engagement amongst non-familial users, despite shared use by people of different ages, ethnicities, and cultures. This "parallel co-existence" (Thang, 2015, p. 28) suggests that public spaces designed to attract users of various ages may support incidental meetings but fail to foster intergenerational interaction. Thang emphasizes that, in order to produce genuinely interactive and engaging environments that capitalize on the potential of community encounter, there is a need to conceptualize intergenerational public space design as more than just co-location.

BENEFITS OF INTERGENERATIONAL PUBLIC SPACE

Some studies have explored the benefits - actually realized or speculatively considered - of intergenerational public space. Cushing and van Vliet (2016 argue that interaction between youth and older adults in public space confers not only direct benefits to participants, but also indirect benefits to the broader community, illustrating that, when it comes to intergenerational communities, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The authors categorize the benefits of intergenerational communities into individual psychological benefits (such as prosocial behavior, positive attitudes, and life satisfaction, individual physical benefits (such as active and healthy lifestyles, and community benefits (such as collective empowerment and increased volunteerism. Building upon these categories, below we summarize literature on the benefits of intergenerational public space in relation to individual health and wellbeing, social cohesion and solidarity, and community development.

Individual health and wellbeing
While intergenerational public space is distinguished by its emphasis on collective benefits achieved through interaction and engagement among different generations, a number of studies have demonstrated the potential of such spaces and programs to also offer individual benefits in terms of personal health, happiness, and well-being. Dawson (2017 examined the experiences of older adults participating in intergenerational exercise programming in a park in Charlotte, North Carolina. Using pre- and post-test surveys to evaluate outcomes in health, physical activity and wellbeing, the study found that those participating in intergenerational programming reported increased happiness and feelings of accomplishment as well as increased rates of exercise when compared to a control group, highlighting the capacity of intergenerational programs in public space to improve individual physical and mental health and, more broadly, to support active aging and community wellness.

Focusing on the other end of the age spectrum, Haider (2007 emphasizes how public spaces that facilitate children's freedom, play, and intergenerational interaction can also support children's independent spatial mobility and individual social, physical, and creative skills. In their resource guide for practitioners working to create intergenerational environments, Kaplan et al. (2017) position intergenerational engagement as supporting individual health and wellbeing - contributing to healthy eating and active living for all ages - as well as sustainable, inclusive, and cohesive communities.

People relaxing in MacArthur Park

Given that youth and older adults share many complementary needs and interests when it comes to neighborhood planning and design, engaging these populations in regeneration efforts and prioritizing inclusive and intergenerational outcomes may result in community improvements for all.
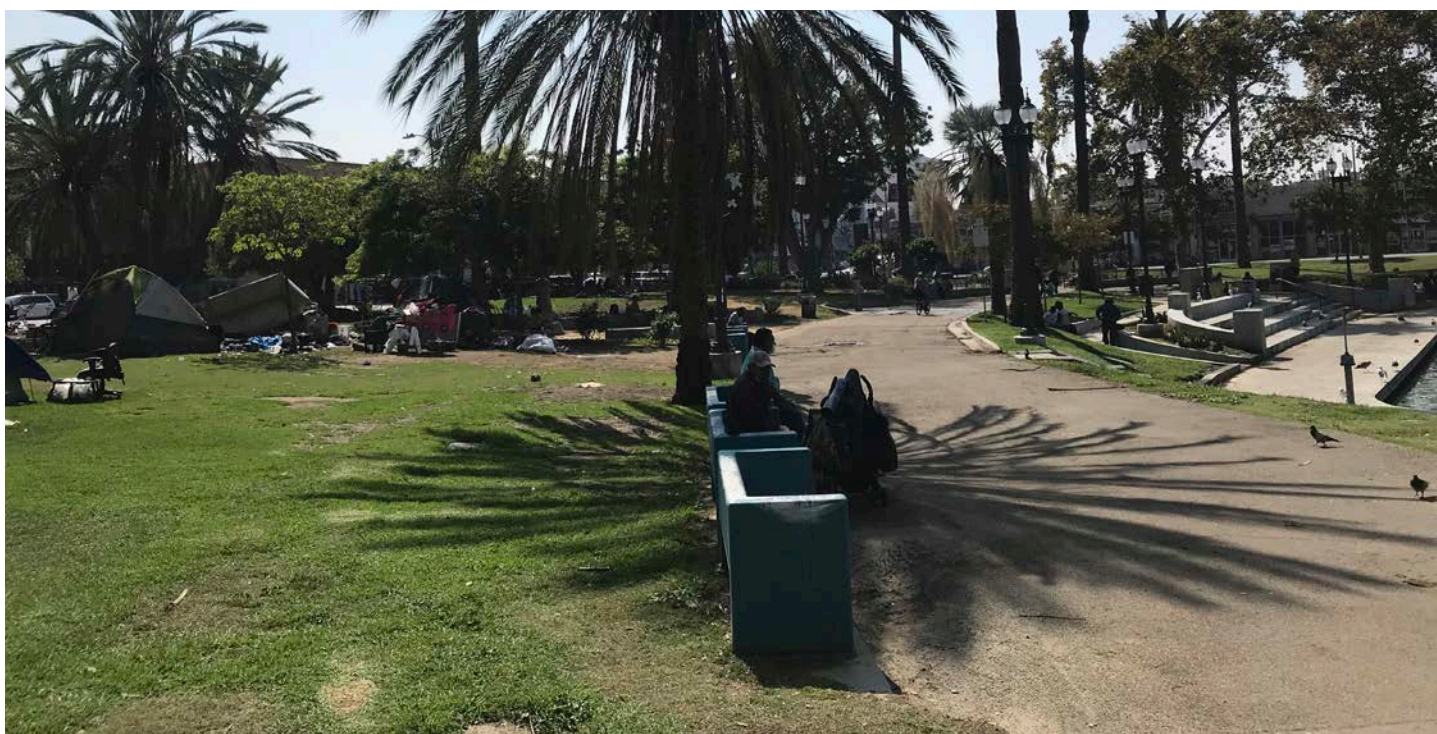
Social inclusion and solidarity

The broader social benefits of intergenerational public space have been a key focus of scholarly exploration, with several studies illustrating the potential of public spaces to enhance the social inclusion and participation of both youth and older adults (Kweon et al., 1998; Lang, 1998; Scharlach & Lehning, 2013; Wu, 2020). In their review of literature on age-friendly communities in the United States, Scharlach and Lehning (2013) demonstrate how physical interventions to enhance accessibility and increase activity space for older adults - for example, creating walkable, mixed-use communities - can promote social inclusion, support bonding, and enhance social capital by increasing opportunities for intergenerational interaction and engagement in these spaces. A study of green, common outdoor spaces in a public housing development in Chicago by Kweon et al. (1998) found these spaces to be connected to modest increases in neighborhood social ties and a sense of community amongst urban older adults. However, the study emphasized that the mere presence of common outdoor space alone is not enough to confer these benefits, and that certain key design features, such as trees, lighting, shade, and seating, were important to the success of these spaces in fostering social integration.

Other studies have explored the observed and potential benefits of intergenerational environments in promoting understanding between younger and older generations. Through contact and interaction with older adults in public spaces, Lang (1998) highlights how children may develop more positive beliefs about older people and strengthen their understanding about aging. Such extrafamilial intergenerational interactions can only occur in settings where there are opportunities for spontaneous contact among generations, and thus urban public environments outside the home, such as playgrounds and city streets, are crucial. Others have examined how this intergenerational understanding may be extended into positive attitudes and behaviors. Cortellesi and Kernan (2016) highlight the concept of "intergenerational solidarity" as a potential outcome of shared experiences between youth and older adults, defined as those processes or interactions that lead to stronger communication and a sense of shared connection, commitment, and reciprocity (Cortellesi & Kernan, 2016; Fu et al., 2019). Through case study research of 21 intergenerational learning projects implemented across Europe, they find that multi-sensory, intergenerational experiences can aid multiple generations in questioning assumptions about generational otherness, overcoming negative views about different age groups, and enhancing social cohesion and support. Fu et al. (2019) link this concept of intergenerational solidarity more closely to the built environment by proposing a conceptual framework that accounts for the influence of neighborhood physical, social, and personal factors on intergenerational solidarity-related behaviors. Using this framework, the authors surveyed residents of Harbin, China on their preferences for intergenerational interactions and found that respondents not only displayed a strong willingness to participate in reciprocal efforts between generations, but that many of the preferred solidarity-related activities took place in public spaces, suggesting the importance of public environments in facilitating such intergenerational sharing and reciprocity.

Community Development

Other scholarship suggests that intergenerational interaction in public space may also offer broader benefits in the form of community improvement, by helping to identify shared interests and mobilize the capacities of both youth and older adults towards broader community benefits (Kaplan et al., 2004). The relationship between intergenerational practice and community development is bidirectional: scholars have explored both the potential of intergenerational practice to contribute to the development of sustainable communities and public

A man finds some shade in MacArthur Park

spaces (Pain, 2005; van Vliet, 2011), as well as the potential of public space and neighborhood regeneration to support intergenerational interaction (Bronfin et al., 2017; Buffel et al., 2014). In a 2005 literature review and policy guide on intergenerational practice for social cohesion and neighborhood renewal in the UK, Pain (2005) concluded that, by addressing exclusion, encouraging contact, and facilitating cooperation, intergenerational practice can meaningfully address the generational difference, segregation, and socially constructed age-related stereotypes. In doing so, intergenerational practice can contribute to the development of more sustainable communities and inclusive neighborhoods and public spaces.

While the potential of intergenerational practice to contribute to the development of sustainable communities has not been explored extensively, there appears to be growing recognition that the participation of both youth and older adults in intergenerational activities at the community, public space, and neighborhood levels may positively influence neighborhood renewal and regeneration efforts (Buffel et al., 2014). Brown and Henkin's (2018) case study of a "Communities for All Ages" initiative in Arizona that used an intergenerational approach toward community building found that the initiative resulted in increased community engagement and leadership opportunities for older adults, increased social capital across all generations, and increased involvement of individuals and organizations in community visioning and change efforts. These findings suggest the capacity of intergenerational environments to translate social cohesion into social capital in a manner that supports broader community building.

Given that youth and older adults share many complementary needs and interests when it comes to neighborhood planning and design, engaging these populations in regeneration efforts and prioritizing inclusive and intergenerational outcomes may result in community improvements for all (Bronfin et al., 2017). Furthermore, existing networks of intergenerational solidarity can further support neighborhood improvement projects by supporting residents as they adjust to future neighborhood changes (Fu et al., 2019). Finally, integrating the needs of older adults and youth into community policy and planning initiatives may yield further policy and governance benefits in terms of physical and fiscal resource efficiencies, mutually reinforcing policy formation, political mobilization and political awareness, and broader community support for neighborhood development (van Vliet, 2011). Thus the potential of a positive relationship between intergenerational public space and broader neighborhood and community development carries important implications for policy and planning practice.

BENEFITS OF INTERGENERATIONAL PUBLIC SPACE

Some studies have explored the benefits - actually realized or speculatively considered - of intergenerational public space. Cushing and van Vliet (2016) argue that interaction between youth and older adults in public space confers not only direct benefits to participants, but also indirect benefits to the broader community, illustrating that, when it comes to intergenerational communities, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The authors categorize the benefits of intergenerational communities into individual psychological benefits (such as prosocial behavior, positive attitudes, and life satisfaction), individual physical benefits (such as active and healthy lifestyles), and community benefits (such as collective empowerment and increased volunteerism). Building upon these categories, below we summarize literature on the benefits of intergenerational public space in relation to individual health and wellbeing, social cohesion and solidarity, and community development.

Individual health and wellbeing

While intergenerational public space is distinguished by its emphasis on collective benefits achieved through interaction and engagement among different generations, a number of studies have demonstrated the potential of such spaces and programs to also offer individual benefits in terms of personal health, happiness, and well-being. Dawson (2017 examined the experiences of older adults participating in intergenerational exercise programming in a park in Charlotte, North Carolina. Using pre- and post-test surveys to evaluate outcomes in health, physical activity and well-being, the study found that those participating in intergenerational programming reported increased happiness and feelings of accomplishment as well as increased rates of exercise when compared to a control group, highlighting the capacity of intergenerational programs in public space to improve individual physical and mental health and, more broadly, to support active aging and community wellness.

Focusing on the other end of the age spectrum, Haider (2007 emphasizes how public spaces that facilitate children's freedom, play, and intergenerational interaction can also support children's independent spatial mobility and individual social, physical, and creative skills. In their resource guide for practitioners working to create intergenerational environments, Kaplan et al. (2017) position intergenerational engagement as supporting individual health and wellbeing - contributing to healthy eating and active living for all ages - as well as sustainable, inclusive, and cohesive communities.

Social inclusion and solidarity

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regeneration efforts and prioritizing inclusive and intergenerational outcomes may result in community improvements for all (Bronfin et al., 2017). Furthermore, existing networks of intergenerational solidarity can further support neighborhood improvement projects by supporting residents as they adjust to future neighborhood changes (Fu et al., 2019). Finally, integrating the needs of older adults and youth into community policy and planning initiatives may yield further policy and governance benefits in terms of physical and fiscal resource efficiencies, mutually reinforcing policy formation, political mobilization and political awareness, and broader community support for neighborhood development (van Vliet, 2011). Thus the potential of a positive relationship between intergenerational public space and broader neighborhood and community development carries important implications for policy and planning practice.

An afternoon in MacArthur Park

STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS TO SUPPORT INTERGENERATIONAL PUBLIC SPACE

Intergenerational public space is generally understood as a means to address the social and spatial segregation of age groups in contemporary cities. However, many communities lack the physical contexts, infrastructures, and resources in public space that meet the needs of different generations while also enabling meaningful engagement across generations (Cushing & van Vliet, 2016). Intergenerational public space strategies have thus sought to develop spaces that create opportunities for engagement, moving from accommodation to integration (Kaplan et al., 2017). While Pain (2005) cautions against normative prescriptions for intergenerational practice, given the diversity of places and cultural settings in which it may be undertaken, literature on intergenerational public space has identified a number of key goals. Scholars agree that intergenerational public space strategies should link both physical and social factors, integrating policy, planning, design, programming, and service provision to respond to the unique needs of particular age groups while also supporting shared experiences and interaction between users of different generations (Thang & Kaplan, 2012).

The concept of "intergenerational contact zones" has emerged as a framework for conceptualizing the characteristics and goals of intergenerational public space and translating them into practice. The concept first appeared in a 2015 book chapter by Thang, which positioned intergenerational contact zones as more than co-located facilities, but rather as genuinely interactive environments that facilitate contact between youth and older adults. (Thang, 2015). Building upon this work, Kaplan et. al. offer a definition of intergenerational contact zones as "spatial focal points for different generations to meet, interact, build relationships (e.g., trust and friendships), and, if desired, work together to address issues of local concern" (Kaplan et al., 2016, p. 5; Kaplan, Thang, et al., 2020, p. 3). The authors clarify that such intergenerational contact zones are not deterministic environments, but that users play an active role in producing these spaces and shaping their capacity to support intergenerational engagement (Kaplan et al., 2016; Kaplan, Thang, et al., 2020). Others emphasize this idea that intergenerational contact zones are not simply the product of environmental design, but of the social processes and practices of different users that embed these spaces with meaning (Sanchez & Stafford, 2020; Tham et al., 2020). Kaplan et. al. present intergenerational contact zones as simultaneously a conceptual tool for studying environments, a programming tool for developing activities, and a design tool for shaping spaces. As such, intergenerational contact zones can be used as a framework for fostering intergenerational interaction that can be adapted and applied in different ways by scholars and professionals of different fields (Kaplan et al., 2016; Kaplan, Sánchez, et al., 2020).

In the sections that follow, we present strategies and interventions for intergenerational public space emerging from the literature, grouped broadly into design and programming, process, and policy recommendations. It is important to acknowledge the mutually reinforcing nature of many of the individual strategies as well as the considerable overlap between these categories.

Environmental Design Strategies

The physical co-location of different generations in a shared space is understood as a necessary but not a sufficient precondition for intergenerational interaction (Cushing & van Vliet, 2016; Kaplan, Thang, et al., 2020; Puhakka et al., 2015; Thang, 2015). As such, design approaches for intergenerational public space focus on translating physical proximity into human connection, relationship building, and social inclusion between generations - described by Kaplan et. al. (2020) as moving from an individual to a shared generational position.

Kaplan et. al. offer a framework for planners and designers seeking to design spaces that support intergenerational engagement by analyzing a range of "intergenerationally responsive environmental applications" (Kaplan et al., 2007, p. 86) and translating these findings into needs, principles, concepts, and applications for the design of both indoor and outdoor environments. The framework begins with person-centered needs, including social contact, privacy, awareness and orientation, autonomy and personal control, individuality and continuity of self, functional ability, and quality of stimulation, and translates these into design principles, concepts, and real-life applications. Related design principles include opportunities for informal interaction

and spontaneous events, retreat and exit routes, facilitating views, opportunities for making choices, culture-based programs, prompting degrees of challenge, and providing an appropriate intensity and diversity of stimulation. Subsequent literature on intergenerational public space design strategies reflects and builds upon many of the elements of Kaplan et. al's (2007) framework, and is presented in summary here, grouped by theme.
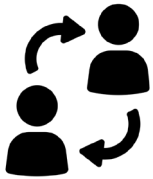
Opportunities for interaction

A number of studies emphasize the importance of structured spaces as settings for unstructured interaction amongst individuals of different generations (Fu et al., 2019; Kaplan & Haider, 2015; Larkin et al., 2010; Thang, 2015; Thang & Kaplan, 2012). Such spontaneous meetings between youth and older adults in public space are seen as the starting point for building meaningful relationships (Thang, 2015) and trust (Manchester & Facer, 2017). Social interaction is positioned as a central attribute of intergenerational space in a number of studies, emphasizing the need for environments that are comfortable for users to experience and navigate and which can motivate interaction between generations (Haider, 2007). A 2010 study connecting environmental design with neuroscience perspectives offered design recommendations for "brain healthy environments" that are welcoming and engaging for all age groups and support positive intergenerational interaction (Larkin et al., 2010). Spaces designed to support social interaction, create opportunities for shared tasks and experiences, and remain flexible and adaptable are identified as key to supporting intergenerational engagement (Larkin et al., 2010).

Spaces of retreat

In addition to opportunities for interaction, the need for spaces of retreat, where particular park users can enjoy a sense of privacy and calm, is also emphasized in the literature (Kaplan et al., 2007; Larkin et al., 2010; Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2014; Thang & Kaplan, 2012). Several studies emphasize the importance of offering both more private and more public areas in public spaces, responding to the need for privacy from "too much" intergenerational engagement, alongside spaces that invite interaction (Larkin et al., 2010; Rigolon et al., 2015; Tham et al., 2020). Linking these more private and more public spaces with in-between spaces may invite exploration, interaction, and socialization (Rigolon et al., 2015; Tham et al., 2020). The relationship between the size of a community and the size of the space in which intergenerational solidarity activities take place has also been explored, with some studies suggesting that smaller shared spaces may support contact, communication, and interaction amongst smaller groups by maintaining an element of privacy while encouraging contact between neighbors (Bosia et al., 2017; Fu et al., 2019; Larkin et al., 2010).

Activities and features

A variety of public space features, furnishings, and activity spaces that respond to the needs and interests of multigenerational park and public space users is another key focus in the literature (Bosia et al., 2017; Layne, 2009). Several scholars argue that intergenerational public spaces should offer both formal spaces and programming that actively facilitates participation and interaction, as well as informal, proximate spaces that create unstructured opportunities for engagement (Cushing & van Vliet, 2016; Kaplan, Sánchez, et al., 2020; Larkin et al., 2010). In a case study of public parks in Queensland, Australia Washington et. al. (2019) explored the park features that were most effective in enabling not just multi-generational use, but intergenerational interaction in public space. The study identified teaching, playing, and observing activities as central to engagement between adults and children. Considered in this way, playgrounds, open fields, and well-maintained walking paths can be understood as key park areas with the potential to afford intergenerational interaction through shared, reciprocal experiences of teaching, playing, and observing. Another study explored the capacity of information and communication technologies in mediating intergenerational space, and argued

that digital technologies may be a supportive tool, though not a replacement, for physical open space and outdoor programming that connects youth and older adults in public space (Almeida, 2019).

Creating comfortable spaces for individuals of different generations to enjoy requires balancing different and sometimes contradictory uses and activities (Biggs and Carr, 2016; Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2014). Biggs and Carr (2016) argue that designs for intergenerational public space must incorporate both the individual and shared needs of different generations, a balancing act that recognizes and accommodates distinctive requirements for public space while pursuing shared use and activity. Research on the park preferences of older adults in Los Angeles found that the majority of respondents preferred parks created for their specific use, suggesting that intergenerational parks can work well for older adults if they privilege their use of certain infrastructure, equipment, and spaces, to facilitate parallel use alongside other populations (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2014).

Other studies have explored the age-related park preferences of youth and older adults. A case study of a schoolyard and adjacent public park in Boulder, Colorado redesigned for intergenerational use found that, while children prioritized certain design features like water features, natural areas, and play structures, and older adults prioritized paved paths through nature and well-maintained landscapes, there was considerable compatibility between the needs and desires of both groups (Rigolon et al., 2015). Others emphasize the need to include "age-neutral" amenities that enable users to pursue their own interests without limiting engagement to a particular age group (Kaplan et al., 2017; O'Neill, 2020).
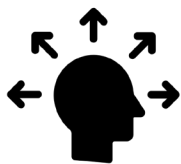
Multi-sensory experiences

Several studies emphasize the importance of environmental stimuli of different types and intensities in providing an appropriate range of interest and challenge for users of public space (Haider, 2007; Haider & Kaplan, 2004; Kaplan et al., 2007; Larkin et al., 2010). Creating spaces that engage multiple senses and offer interesting activities for visitors of all ages to see, feel, and explore them can be achieved through a combination of aesthetic and functional elements that incorporate different colors, textures, and shapes to create an interesting atmosphere (Haider, 2007; Larkin et al., 2010). Other studies focus on the capacity of natural elements to offer multi-sensory experiences and stimulation, and to connect diverse users with local ecologies and with one another. (Kaplan & Haider, 2015; Layne, 2009; O'Neill, 2020; Rigolon et al., 2015)

Safety and accessibility

A shared sense of safety amongst multigenerational users in public space was also emphasized in the literature. A age-comparative environmental assessment of urban public spaces found that both youth and older adults prioritized safety in terms of public space preferences, and that a sense of belonging was closely related to perceived environmental safety (Layne, 2009). Some studies emphasize the importance of awareness, orientation, and visual connections between spaces in supporting a sense of safety (Kaplan et al., 2007; Rigolon et al., 2015), as well as opportunities for interaction (Fu et al., 2019). Other studies highlight the need for adequate separation between uses that pose a risk to the physical safety of some park users, like ball playing and skateboarding which may be dangerous for older adults (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2014).

Physical accessibility is often noted as a requirement for intergenerational public space. Several studies emphasize the importance of safe, well-maintained, non-slippery paved walkways, as spaces that are highly desired by users of all ages and with high potential to support intergenerational interaction (Azevedo, 2020; Fu et al., 2019; Rigolon et al., 2015;

Washington et al., 2019). Thang and Kaplan (Thang & Kaplan, 2012) encourage the use of universal design principles to enhance accessibility for diverse users. Others argue for a broader concept of accessibility that extends beyond safely accommodating users of a range of abilities. Azavedo's study analyzing how to transition parks in Portugal designed for multigenerational use into intergenerational contact zones notes that avoiding fencing and supporting barrier-free, easy access between spaces, as well as avoiding age-restrictive signage can promote accessibility (Azevedo, 2020).
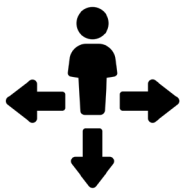
Independence, autonomy, and control
Independence, autonomy, and personal control in public space are identified as important design considerations for all age groups. This includes design elements that offer "clues" to youth and older adults about how they can use the space and interact within it (Haider & Kaplan, 2004; Thang & Kaplan, 2012), as well as elements that allow for a degree of autonomy (Haider & Kaplan, 2004). Haider's study of design and planning strategies to encourage children's mobility notes that inclusive public spaces for children must emphasize independence and personal freedom, and territorial claims that allow for the exercise of control over public space (Haider, 2007). Several studies identify flexibility and adaptability as important elements of intergenerational space (Haider, 2007; Haider & Kaplan, 2004; Kaplan et al., 2007; Larkin et al., 2010; Thang & Kaplan, 2012). The capacity for transformation enables users to shape and restructure their environments, both independently and collaboratively, for new uses and activities, and opens opportunities for play and imagination (Haider & Kaplan, 2004). Furthermore, the element of choice - which programs, activities, and individuals to engage with, and how, is an important feature of intergenerational space. Some studies emphasize the importance of spaces that enable users to follow their own interests and choose how to engage with other users (Kaplan et al., 2017; Larkin et al., 2010). Others emphasize a "less is more" approach (O'Neill, 2020) that offers a range of spaces that can accommodate various uses, as determined by users based on their shared interests.

Shared meaning
The shared meaning, values, and memories embedded in public space is another element of intergenerational public space, which is important for both individual and community development (Biggs & Carr, 2015; Tham et al., 2020). Environments should be designed to be welcoming for all ages and promote a sense of shared space, experience, and identity (Haider & Kaplan, 2004), which can be supported through culturally-specific design and programming (Kaplan et al., 2007). A case study of three Chinese urban parks identified cultural relevance as the important feature supporting the parks' use as intergenerational contact zones (O'Neill, 2020). The integration of architectural styles, landscapes, and programming responsive to the cultural needs of intended users was considered central to the success of these parks as welcoming spaces encouraging interaction among diverse age groups. Another study explored recreational water spaces in Australia as "naturally occurring" intergenerational contact zones, and emphasized that design principles and strategies to support intergenerational interaction should be informed by the culturally-specific meanings and uses of existing places, emphasizing local context, history, and community (Tham et al., 2020)

Process of development and participatory strategies
While the literature offers a range of environmental design strategies to support intergenerational public space, there is acknowledgment that planners and designers must also consider the processes by which these spaces are created, not only their physical and programmatic outcomes (Buffel et al., 2014; Francis, 1988; Kaplan & Haider, 2015). Buffel et al. (2014, p. 5) argue that this requires a "shift from producing environments for people to developing neighborhoods with and by different age groups," drawing upon the

knowledge and expertise of youth and older adults who spend a great deal of time in the city but are often the least engaged in decision-making processes (Manchester & Facer, 2017). Reflecting a broader shift towards strengthening resident involvement in urban planning and policy-making, the participation of youth and older adults in planning and design processes is viewed by some scholars as a necessary condition for creating sustainable and inclusive intergenerational public space (Azevedo, 2020; Buffel et al., 2014; Kaplan & Haider, 2015; Manchester & Facer, 2017; Sanchez & Stafford, 2020). Without the participation of residents of diverse age groups, planning and design practitioners may rely on age-related stereotypes that do not accurately account for the diverse needs of users (Fabian et al., 2019).

Producing new ideas and possibilities

Literature suggests that participation can advance new ideas and outcomes for intergenerational public space that would not otherwise be possible. Given the noted differences in the needs and desires for public space expressed by youth and older adults (Francis, 1988; Layne, 2009; Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2014; Rigolon et al., 2015), participatory processes may offer tools to successfully mediate between the preferences of different age groups (Francis, 1988) and to overcome generational binaries to produce shared, intergenerational ideas for the city (Manchester & Facer, 2017). In addition to capturing and negotiating multigenerational perspectives, the use of participatory mechanisms during the planning process may also foster public enthusiasm for the spaces and a willingness to continue to care for them after completion (Azevedo, 2020).
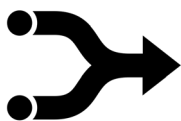
Engagement strategies

Several empirical studies have examined participatory processes that engage youth and older adults in the development of intergenerational public space, highlighting a number of effective engagement strategies. A case study by Rigolon et. al. (2015) of a joint-use park and schoolyard project in Boulder, CO emphasized the importance of participatory design processes in creating successful intergenerational spaces. Engaging various groups throughout all steps of the process, making space in the design process for "dreaming", sharing in successes, and translating and communicating how community ideas are reflected in final plans were identified as key elements in the success of the project (Rigolon et al., 2015). An account of the design and development of an intergenerational park in Western Australia in 2016 illustrates how workshops that engaged multiple generations in design development, along with opportunities to participate in planting and landscape management, offered both real and metaphorical space for shared intergenerational experiences (Williamson, 2016). An account of child-led neighborhood storytelling walks in Chiang Mai, Thailand demonstrates the potential of such civic engagement practices to not only support children's independent mobility and engagement in public space, but also enable children and adults to work collaboratively, foster intergenerational cooperation, and a sense of shared responsibility for local public spaces (Phillips & Tossa, 2017). The need to extend community participation beyond the planning and design process and continue to engage with users after a public space is completed and opened is highlighted in an analysis of intergenerational parks in Portugal (Azevedo, 2020). Post-occupancy interviews with park users were useful tools in identifying park elements in need of improvement and supporting continued community participation and volunteerism in the parks (Azevedo, 2020). Seeking feedback and supporting engagement amongst community members well beyond the planning process is, thus, deemed as critical to the success of intergenerational public space.

Designing participatory processes

Facilitating meaningful participation by youth and older adults in developing intergenerational public space involves mitigating structural barriers to participation as well as supporting active engagement. Several studies offer "toolkits" of recommended strategies to guide

participatory processes for intergenerational public space (arki_lab, 2017; Sanchez & Stafford, 2020). A guide produced for the Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing offers participatory process recommendations along with design recommendations to foster intergenerational interaction in urban public space, improve community cohesion, and address loneliness, positioning the planning process itself as a tool to facilitate age integration before a public space project is realized (arki_lab, 2017). The guide recommends participation methods tailored to the needs of various age groups, arguing that youth and older adults must not be simply invited into design processes, but offered special treatment to ensure their voices are not overshadowed by more powerful stakeholders. This includes offering more age-isolated and age-integrated engagement opportunities. The guide recommends an institutional approach that builds connections with institutions that cater to youth or older adults, such as schools and nursing homes, to recruit participants.

Sanchez and Stafford (2020) offer another toolkit with concrete participation strategies to support effective intergenerational contact zones. The toolkit recommends beginning any process by "raising generational awareness" (Sanchez & Stafford, 2020, p. 261), or fostering understanding amongst participants of their own generational position as well as that of other age groups, through mapping environments, priorities, and issues using an intergenerational lens. A range of participation tools are proposed, each of which can be adapted and applied to individual projects, based on needs and goals, to strategically support meaningful engagement in the process of planning and designing intergenerational public space. Participation tools include design charrettes, "city as play" activities that use toys and object to model space, drawings, murals, and graffiti, future scenarios to visualize opportunities, generation-led tours to discuss and assess space, behavior and perceptual mapping, oral histories, photos voice, and creation of virtual toolkits to express ideas and feelings. The authors argue that the application of conventional participation strategies is not sufficient to counter age segregation and foster intergenerational interaction, and thus more specialized tools and strategies are required.
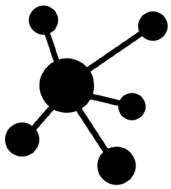
Embedding in Broader Policy Frameworks
In addition to environmental design and participatory strategies for individual public spaces, literature on intergenerational public space also points to the need to incorporate intergenerational approaches into broader policy efforts as well as professional practice. Despite shared objectives, scholars have noted that the activities of intergenerational practitioners and design professionals continue to be separated (Kaplan et al., 2007), while services and funding for youth and older adults continue to be siloed within public agencies (Thang & Kaplan, 2012), presenting persistent professional and bureaucratic obstacles to advancing intergenerational public space. In response, some have called for a more integrated, process-based approach to urban environments that incorporates the needs of multigenerational users into planning, design, and policymaking efforts undertaken by various public agencies (L. Stafford & Baldwin, 2015; van Vliet, 2011). Others emphasize the importance of timing, suggesting that incorporating intergenerational public spaces into the initial stages of city planning and urban design processes can support better integration with surrounding uses and support intergenerational contact (Thang, 2015).

Policy development
There is a noted lack of existing guidance for planners, policymakers, and designers seeking to create more age-integrated environments (L. Stafford & Baldwin, 2015). In response, some have called for policies and design regulations to aid practitioners (arki_lab, 2017; Cushing & van Vliet, 2016; Lynch et al., 2018; Pain, 2005; van Vliet, 2011). Policy recommendations include removing regulatory barriers like zoning codes that prevent the development of shared, multi-use sites,

as well as encouraging good design that fosters social interaction, safety, and accessibility in public spaces including streets, sidewalks, and parks (Cushing & van Vliet, 2016; van Vliet, 2011). Other recommendations focus on the need to embed intergenerational approaches into the work of various government departments by establishing national and local policies (Pain, 2005; van Vliet, 2011), articulating clear visions, and setting out practical guidelines for designing intergenerational public spaces (arki_lab, 2017; Lynch et al., 2018). The introduction of intergenerational objectives into public policies, along with increased research and funding for intergenerational practice, has been positioned as a promising strategy to foster awareness of the need for and benefit from intergenerational approaches to public space as a means to address social exclusion and support sustainability, and to provide the resources to put these strategies into practice (Pain, 2005). Several scholars note the need to ensure that any policy efforts to support intergenerational public space connect to and reinforce broader social, economic, and environmental goals to create more livable cities (L. Stafford & Baldwin, 2015; van Vliet, 2011).

Professional Practice

Recommendations regarding professional practice offer ideas for how practitioners can successfully translate such intergenerational policies into realized public spaces and programs. Given the interdisciplinary nature of intergenerational approaches, conventional professional practice and public bureaucracies have been criticized for failing to support the collaboration necessary to realize intergenerational public space (Kaplan et al., 2007; L. Stafford & Baldwin, 2015; Thang & Kaplan, 2012; van Vliet, 2011). Accordingly, some literature has focused on fostering interdisciplinarity, including developing cross-departmental working groups and task forces in order to embed intergenerational approaches into a range of projects and services of various types and scales (arki_lab, 2017; Kaplan & Haider, 2015; Lynch et al., 2018).

Other practice recommendations focus on enhancing understanding amongst architecture, policy, planning, and design practitioners of the needs for, benefits of, and strategies to achieve intergenerational public space. Some studies have explored the roles, motivations, and impacts of professional actors, including planners and policymakers, in shaping intergenerational communities (Fabian et al., 2019; Warner, 2018; Warner & Zhang, 2019). A study of how age-appropriate urban environments are developed in Switzerland found that planning and design practitioners rely on imprecise age-related stereotypes that often homogenize and misrepresent the diverse needs of different age groups, and that these stereotypes are woven into resulting policies and designs (Fabian et al., 2019). Another study in the US found certain professional attributes, such as resident engagement and a high degree of professionalism within public planning agencies, to be key factors in influencing age-friendly planning practices (Warner & Zhang, 2019). These findings and others suggest that improving education and professional capacity regarding intergenerational public space amongst practitioners may support the development of more effective interventions (arki_lab, 2017; Lynch et al., 2018; Pain, 2005; Warner & Zhang, 2019). Some have argued that age-related perspectives should be addressed in all urban design projects, and that such an approach would build awareness and skills amongst architecture and urban design practitioners (arki_lab, 2017). Others suggest that "how we talk about age-friendly communities matters" (Brown & Henkin, 2018, p. 161), arguing that careful attention to vocabulary and messages is needed when framing intergenerational efforts to resonate with different age groups, including phrases like interdependence, reciprocity, individual worth, inclusion, equity, and social connectedness.

CONCLUSION

The need for intergenerational approaches to planning and designing public environments is clearly represented in the literature. While age- and child-friendly cities approaches have been the subject of considerable research and have been adopted into planning and policy practices across the globe, they often remain siloed, and may fail to leverage the considerable overlap between their goals into a mutually reinforcing potential. At the same time, there has been a lack of integration between built environment and social policy considerations. Thus, intergenerational public space approaches emerge in response to the identified need to bridge across both age- and child-friendly cities and social and spatial approaches. The literature indicates that there are multiple benefits, whether realized or hypothesized, to intergenerational public spaces, including individual health and well-being, social cohesion and solidarity, and community development. Many of these benefits are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

A number of emerging attributes and goals for intergenerational public space are proposed in the literature. These characteristics contribute to a concept of intergenerational spaces as a combination of physical settings, programs, and resources, connecting social and spatial considerations, and supporting meaningful interaction and engagement among people of different generations.

The literature offers a range of strategies and interventions for practitioners and community members seeking to create or expand intergenerational public spaces. Strategies include environmental design interventions that create the physical environments in which intergenerational interaction can take place, participatory strategies that shape inclusive and engaging development processes, and policy and practice strategies that embed intergenerational understandings and resources within policy frameworks and professional activities.

Together, these strategies enhance our understanding of intergenerational public space amongst planning and design practitioners as well as policy makers, advocates, and communities; support the implementation of related design and programming efforts; and advance individual health and wellbeing as well as community cohesion and development, to the benefit of urban residents of diverse ages.

03
WESTLAKE-MACARTHUR PARK

Of the 120,000 residents in Westlake, **95%** *are renters.*

76.4% *of the community is made up of non-white residents.*

58% *of the residents in Westlake are Latino and* **29%** *are Asian, a majority of which are Korean.*

*About* **11,500** *residents are older than 65, and about* **27,000** *are younger than 18 years old.*

NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

Westlake is a dense residential and commercial neighborhood located just to the west of downtown Los Angeles. The neighborhood was developed in the early 20th century, when the city of Los Angeles was growing rapidly, as an upscale residential area of elegant homes and apartment dwellings (History of the Parks District | Los Angeles Conservancy, n.d.; Westlake Community Plan, 2016). Centered around a popular park and gardens today known as MacArthur Park, the neighborhood was considered fashionable and home to many wealthy Angelenos (Westlake (MacArthur) Park, 2013). Many of the stately homes, hotels, and commercial buildings built during this time still remain today (Westlake Community Plan, 2016). As the city of Los Angeles continued to grow and transportation routes facilitated the development of new residential suburbs further away from downtown, many wealthy residents left Westlake, and the neighborhood eventually became a destination for new immigrants, particularly from Central America.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHICS

Today, the Westlake-MacArthur Park (Westlake) neighborhood is one of the most multiethnic, low-income, and densely populated areas of Los Angeles, with high concentrations of both children and older adults. This is a very high-density neighborhood in great need of open space, as it features only 0.84 acres of park per 1000 residents (the average for the city of LA is 6.2 acres per 1000 residents). According to the US Census (American Community Survey 2015-2019), there are about 120,000 people living in Westlake. Similar to other Los Angeles inner-city neighborhoods, the residents are quite diverse, and overwhelmingly renters (95%) and non-White (76.4%), and mostly low-income (31.8% under the poverty line). Ten percent of the residents (over 11,500 people) are older than 65, and 23 percent of residents (over 27,000 people) are younger than 18. Latinos constitute the largest racial/ethnic group in the neighborhood (58%), but there are also significant numbers of Asian (primarily Korean) residents (29%).

Westlake is a high-density neighborhood that features only 0.84 acres of park per 1,000 residents, while the average for the city of LA is 6.2 acres per 1,000 residents.

WESTLAKE

LOS ANGELES AVERAGE

LAFAYETTE PARK

GOLDEN AGE PARK
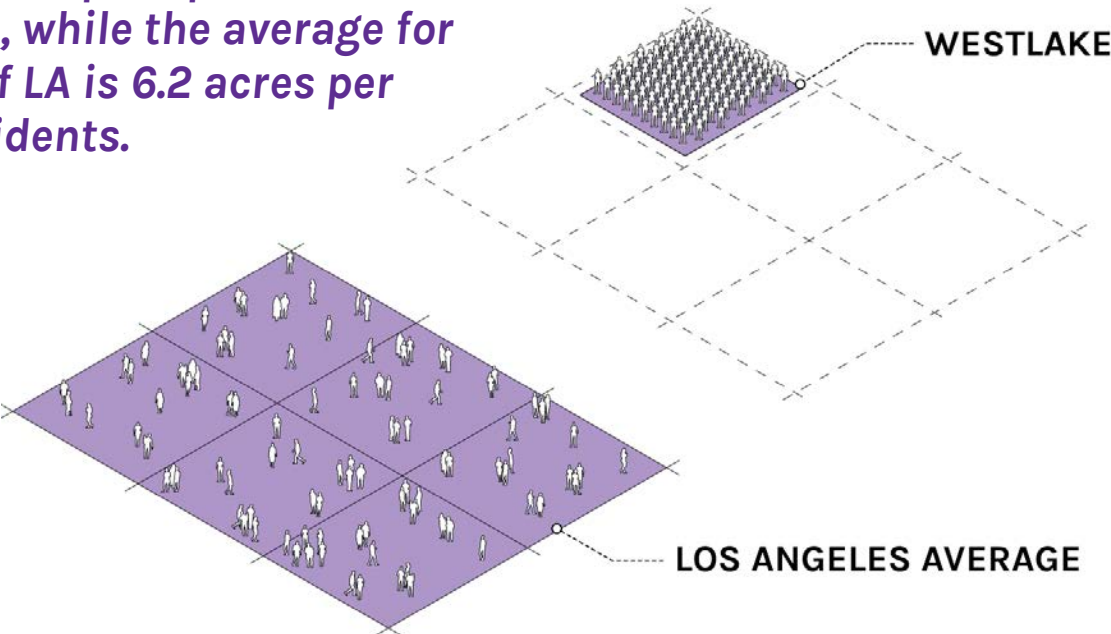
MACARTHUR PARK

MacArthur Park or Skid Row West?
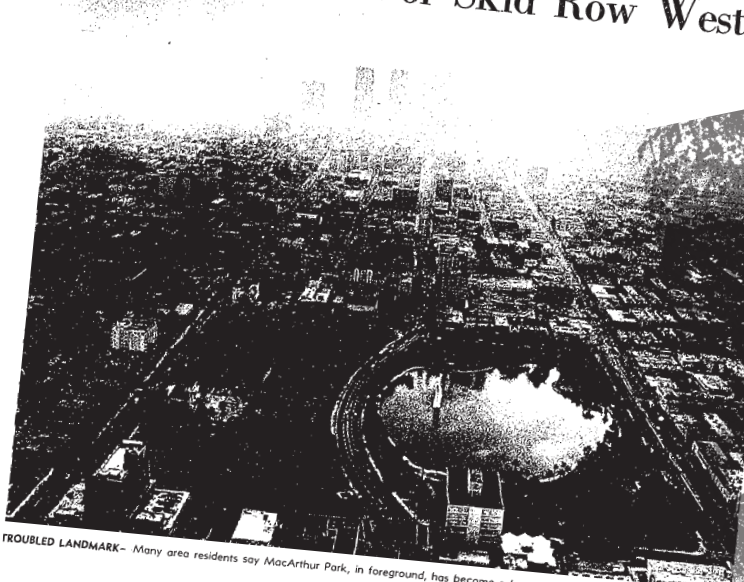
TROUBLED LANDMARK– Many area residents say MacArthur Park, in foreground, has become a haven for indigents, drug addicts, muggers.

Times photos by John Malmin

MacArthur Park

Cultures, Crime, Life Styles
Clash in Crowded Community
to Turn Idyll Into Volatile Mix

By AUSTIN SCOTT, *Times Staff Writer*

In all of Los Angeles, there may be no other gathering place quite like MacArthur Park, centerpiece of the city's most crowded neighborhood, one of its most bustling and varied, and one of its poorest.

Forty years ago it was the genteel hub of a classy neighborhood. Back then, shortly after it was renamed from Westlake Park to honor the commander of Allied forces in the Pacific, it was a place for daytime strolling, evening dances, playa and other activities befitting the affluent surroundings.

Since then the neighborhood has changed considerably. From 1970 to 1980, for example, Westlake's population jumped 37%, swollen largely by Central and South American immigrants. At the same time, virtually no new housing was being built. Census data shows the area now contains nearly twice as many people per acre as the most crowded area of the city, the Wilshire district.

About 70% of Westlake's residents call themselves "Hispanic," and the mean household income of $11,158 is below that of Boyle Heights and South-Central Los Angeles. More than 60% speak some language other than English at home. Twenty-seven percent of the residents under age 55 live in poverty.

Mixture of Cultures

More than a dozen very different cultures now mix, sometimes none too peacefully, on the broad streets around the park each day. And the cultural collision has transformed MacArthur Park into three parks, all coexisting in the same six square blocks.

On weekends, especially if it's warm, the park is a family place. Lovers tuned only to each other stroll the curving paths. Seniors relax on circles of benches. Mothers sit cuddling their babies, and toddlers wander off on their own to explore pieces of trash, the friendliness of strangers and the limits of their own freedom with equal intensity.

During weekdays, however, the park becomes a haven for the unemployed, winos and other homeless wanderers, many of whom are tired of being hassled downtown. Their presence frightens away area residents, many of whom have stopped using the park because they feel intimidated or defenseless.

And at night, the park belongs to the dope dealers and those who prey on the weak. Every night, fear and violence close the park to all but the bravest souls. Most acutely affected are the residents of nearby homes for seniors, who remember the old days in the park but now avoid it as if it were a swamp.

The transformation has made MacArthur Park a stage for Westlake's frustrations and frictions as well as its joys.

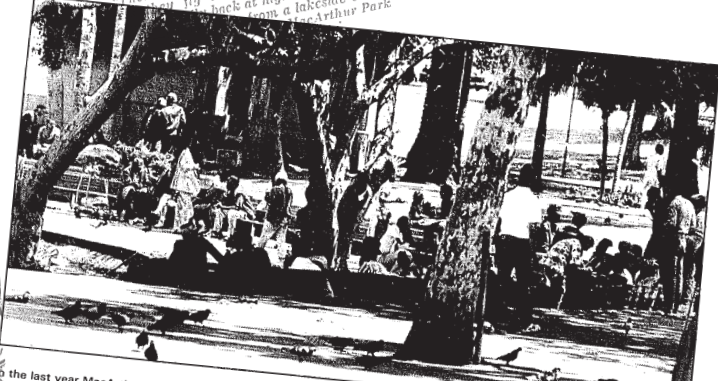### Organized Activities Lacking

MacArthur Park has none of the

making a trip to the park a tense experience.

The family atmosphere is enhanced on Saturdays and Sundays by immaculately tailored Pentecostal preachers with backup singers who shout of sin and repentance and salvation and Jesus in Spanish under the trees just inside the park's busiest entrance at 7th and Alvarado streets.

In the park's southeast corner, under their mothers' watchful eyes, children play happily on monkey bars and push-type merry-go-rounds in a giant sandbox. Vendors peddle balloons and cotton candy, and, when the lake is full, there are colorful pedal boats.

In the park's northwest corner, the chess players for which the park is noted, mostly men, concentrate hard on their games, laid out on concrete picnic tables. They seem oblivious to the kibitzers who sometimes line up three or more deep.

Similar idyllic scenes can be encountered on weekdays.

Richard Frazier visits the park to find beauty. Most days he stands for a couple of hours in one of the tunnels that carry Wilshire Boulevard over the park walkways, practicing his homemade flute. Strangers sit down on nearby benches just to listen, and some of them thank him for giving their day a little lift.

Unemployed blacks and a few unemployed whites have staked out the benches at the 6th and Alvarado entrance. What they have in common is joblessness, poverty and a desire to, in the words of Ulyta Wade, who is one of them, "drink wine, get high and talk."

The talking, a traditional way of passing time in black communities, can sometimes rise to an art form.

Carrell L. Madison Jr., a 50-year-old man who said he had been in and out of prisons since 1952, managed in a few minutes to transform a debate on how many dots there are in a box of dominoes into a shouted, cane-waving dissertation on the moral superiority of people from Wichita Falls, Tex., where he was born.

But the park's dangers are more apparent on weekdays.

The chess players have had to make concessions to changed realities in order to stay. They no longer use the concrete chess tables

Edward Haber, who has been going to the park for 25 years, feeds the pige

While some, such as Simon Pedro Molina, come to preach, others gather in west end for

MacArthur Park Like It Is

An old man sits on a bench by the water, his jaws working, his eyes dancing, and he gives no hint of passing gently into that good night.

The wives are at home or dead or otherwise happily, if temporarily, forgotten, and the men

"There are lots of seagulls around here. I ... fly in from the ocean every ... back at night."
— from a lakeside bench ... at MacArthur Park

In the last year MacArthur Park, above, has become a haven for men and women to boldly swap wads of cash for cocaine.

ROBERT GABRIEL / Los Angeles Times

Drug Users Overrun MacArthur Park

Residents Seek to Win Back Area

By LOUIS SAHAGUN,
Times Staff Writer

In a scene repeated daily at MacArthur Park, dozens of men and women boldly swap wads of cash for rocks of cocaine at the corner of 7th and Alvarado streets.

On Friday morning, they huddled together in tight knots near the park's General Douglas MacArthur Memorial, openly smoking crack in three-inch lengths of glass tubing loaded with pellets of the drug.
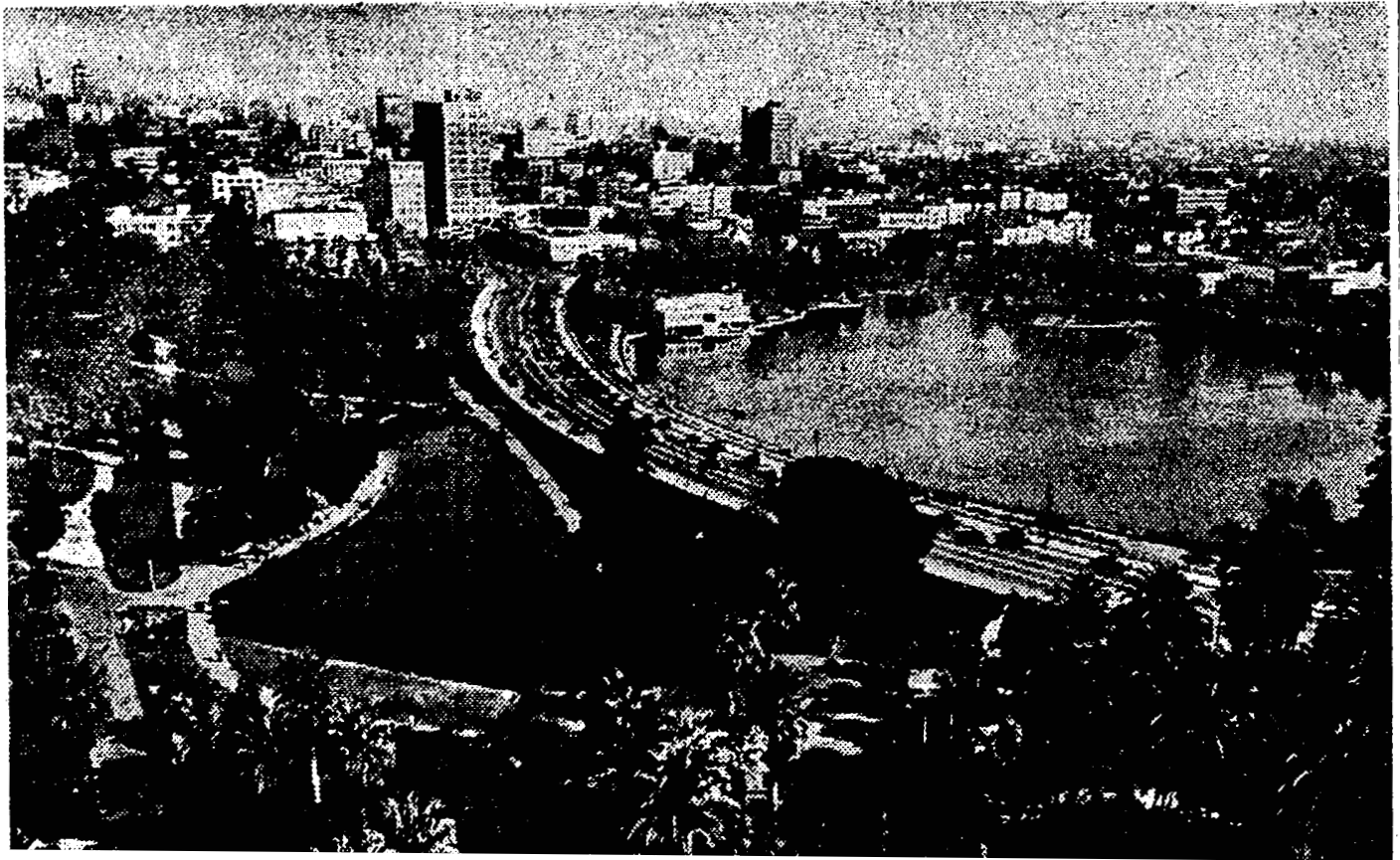
"This is my family," said one wild-eyed woman, referring to the shabbily dressed people milling about.

As many as eight LAPD mounted patrol officers, such as those above, are assigned to park.

Newspaper clippings featuring MacArthur Park

From 'Westlake' to 'MacArthur'

NEIGHBORHOOD PUBLIC SPACES

The neighborhood is endowed with two large historic parks, as well as one much newer "pocket park." However, previous research has indicated that older adults in the neighborhood avoid these parks because of fear for their safety or because they do not fulfill their recreational and social needs. At the same time, drug exchange and the fear of other crime make parents quite apprehensive to allow their youngsters to visit the parks on their own (Loukaitou-Sideris, Levy-Storms, Brozen, 2014; Loukaitou-Sideris and Sideris, 2010).

MacArthur Park
MacArthur Park is a 32-acre historic park at the center of the Westlake neighborhood. Opened in 1890 at what was then the western edge of Los Angeles, the park transformed a city-owned site, which had previously been used as a dump, into one of the city's first public parks (Westlake (MacArthur) Park, 2013). Built as a pleasure ground (see Cranz, 1989), the park features a large central pond, landscaped flower beds, and walking paths. Originally called Westlake Park, it quickly became a celebrated civic asset, tourist destination, and a focal point for the developing neighborhood. In 1934, a viaduct was constructed to continue Wilshire Boulevard across the park, connecting the roadway and splitting the park into two sections (MacArthur Park, n.d.; Westlake (MacArthur) Park, 2013). The park was renamed MacArthur Park in 1942, in honor of General Douglas MacArthur. As Westlake grew, MacArthur Park became a critical recreation space for residents of this densely populated neighborhood, intensely used for diverse activities including boating, walking, table games, celebrations and gatherings, and sports (Pastier, 1970). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the neighborhood continued to grow and welcome many new immigrants, while at the same time, public spending on parks and public services decreased and crime increased. Despite declining conditions during this time, including gang activity, crime, and drug use

PLENTY OF ACTION--Basketball courts at Lafayette Park are busy early in the morning, while youngsters signed up for Junior Pee Wee football go through limbering up exercises at Yosemite Playground in Eagle Rock.
Times photos by Cal Montney and Fitzgerald Whitney

Newspaper clipping featuring Lafayette Park

reported in and around MacArthur Park, the park remained a vibrant center of activity for the diverse Westlake community (Braun, 1989; Scott, 1984). Today, MacArthur Park is still a hub of activity in the neighborhood, home to community festivals, soccer games, family outings, and all-day activity. The park features a community recreation center, a bandshell and stage, and settings for both passive recreation, including the lake, walking paths, and seating areas, as well as active recreation, including a baseball diamond, soccer fields, children's play area, and exercise equipment (MacArthur Park Recreation Center, 2014).

Lafayette Park
Lafayette Park is an 11-acre historic park located on the western side of the Westlake neighborhood. The land, originally comprised of oil wells and tar seeps, was donated to the city of Los Angeles in 1895 and was transformed into Sunset Park in 1899 (A Walk Along L.A.'s Original Borders Reveals Surprising Remnants from the City's Past, 2021), quickly becoming an important recreation destination in the rapidly developing Westlake district. In 1918, following World War I, the park was renamed Lafayette Park, after war hero Marquis de Lafayette (Lafayette Park, n.d.). Lafayette Park remained a popular recreation destination, as the Westlake neighborhood grew and became more dense over the next several decades. Conditions in Lafayette Park declined in the early 1990s, amidst reduced public spending on park maintenance and increased neighborhood crime; yet the park continued to be well-used by local residents (Cabrera, 1994). Today, Lafayette Park is home to the Felipe de Neve branch library, a designated historic monument, a multi-purpose community center, basketball courts, playground, picnic and seating areas, a soccer field, tennis courts, a walking path, and a skate park (Lafayette Multipurpose Community Center, 2014). In early 2021, two new spaces opened in Lafayette Park: the Lafayette Bridge Housing complex in the southwest corner that will provide housing and support services for unhoused populations, and a new HOLA arts and recreation center in the northeast corner, the result of a public-private partnership with the City of Los Angeles.

Pocket Park Takes Shape in Westlake

Golden Age Park is located at 739 S. Coronado Street.

AUGUST 21, 2019, 3:00PM   STEVEN SHARP   ↓ 7 COMMENTS

GALLERY 3

Online news article featuring Golden Age Park

Golden Age Park
Golden Age Park is a pocket park, less than a third of an acre in size, that opened in the Westlake neighborhood in November 2019. Located on a formerly vacant lot, the park was developed through a partnership between a research team from the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, St. Barnabas Senior Services which serves low-income older adults in the Westlake neighborhood, the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust which works to expand access to parks and public space in LA's communities. With funding support from foundations (including the Arthur and Rosalinde Gilbert Foundation) and public agencies, the park was designed to appeal to the needs and interests of older adults (Braswell, 2019). Its design was informed by research undertaken by an interdisciplinary team of UCLA planners, urban designers, and gerontologists that culminated in a toolkit called "Placemaking for an Aging Population" (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2014). Golden Age Park is a quiet space that features planted flower beds, shade trees, and lawns, accessible pathways and seating areas, low-impact exercise machines, raised community garden beds, and a children's play area.

04
RESEARCH APPROACH + METHODS

This project brings together a group of researchers from the diverse disciplines of urban planning, architecture, and the humanities, to assess local stakeholders' relationships and experiences of accessing and using the three parks in Westlake.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The theoretical and methodological inspiration for this project is guided by the auspices of the Transdisciplinary Research Acceleration Grant (TRAG). The purpose of TRAG is to "catalyze transdisciplinary research and creative activities by supporting early stage projects with the specific goal of facilitating investigators' chances for attaining extramural funding." To that end, we sought to leverage our team members' respective areas of expertise in order to creatively study public space and residents' concerns about it in the Westlake-MacArthur Park neighborhood.

This project brings together a group of researchers from the diverse disciplines of urban planning, architecture, and the humanities, to assess local stakeholders' relationships and experiences of accessing and using the three parks in Westlake. There are two key components of this study that call for two distinct disciplinary approaches: the first is the assessment of public space conditions and user experiences, and user perceptions of public settings. The methodological tasks of site visits (which involve structured observations) and focus groups lend themselves to more traditional social science methods employed by urban planning researchers.

The second methodological component of this study lends itself to the projective exercises involved in thick mapping and participatory design intervention. Thick mapping is a group participatory method that invites participants to add their own narratives, experiences, and empirical data to a single, flat map of a given geographic area. Once "thickened," the collective map becomes the starting point for community dialogue around different experiences of, and relationships to, a given place. Similarly, the participatory design intervention is a group exercise intended to guide participants in collectively imagining what might exist in a given space, and actually make the space in-situ.

This research was conducted with approval from the UCLA Institutional Review Board (IRB). Oral consent to participate was obtained from each research participant or Legally Authorized Representative (LAR) in advance of participating in research activities. For each research activity they participated in, participants were given a $25 gift card as appreciation for their time and participation in the study.

DATA SOURCES + COMMUNITY PARTNERS

This research project involved a partnership with two community-based organizations with long histories and strong connections to the Westlake-MacArthur Park neighborhood: St. Barnabas Senior Services (SBSS) and Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA). Through partnerships with these community-based organizations, the research team was able to recruit and connect with youth and older adult residents of the Westlake-MacArthur Park neighborhood who participated in research activities and shared their experiences and ideas about the neighborhood's public spaces.

ST BARNABAS SENIOR SERVICES (SBSS) SBSS is one of the largest and oldest senior serving centers in Los Angeles and is located in Westlake/MacArthur Park. Since 1908, SBSS has provided nutrition, social, and health services to low-income and multiethnic Los Angeles elders. Their typical members are in their mid-70s, live alone, are at or below the federal poverty level, depend on Social Security payments of about $800 monthly, and have limited support networks (SBSS, 2016).

Established 1908
Address 675 S Carondelet St, Los Angeles, CA 90057

HEART OF LOS ANGELES (HOLA) Also based in Westlake/MacArthur Park, HOLA was founded in 1989. HOLA provides more than 2,200 underserved youth (aged 6-19) with free after-school programming in academics, visual and performing arts, and athletics within a nurturing environment, empowering them to develop their educational potential and strengthen their communities (HOLA, 2020). HOLA has partnered with the LA Department of Recreation and Parks to offer youth programs at Lafayette Park.

Established 1989
Address 2701 Wilshire Blvd #100, Los Angeles, CA 90057

RESEARCH METHODS

We evaluate each of the three parks based on the experiences of older adults and youth who spend time there and in the surrounding neighborhood. Through our two partners (see description above), St. Barnabas Senior Services (SBSS) and Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA), we worked with groups of both older adults and middle- and high school youth to better understand their current patterns of open space use, needs, and aspirations in regards to neighborhood public space. Employing structured site observations, a social media scan, site visits, focus group discussions, thick-mapping, and participatory design workshops, we uncovered some of the similarities and differences between the two age groups' experiences and where their interests intersect. This information provided the basis for design and policy proposals about public space in inner-city neighborhoods. Original observation and workshop protocols are included in the Appendices.

REMOTE RESEARCH

Other than site observations and a portion of the participatory design workshop, the research was carried out via remote platforms such as Zoom, Uber Conference, and Miro.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Nov 2020 - May 2021

STRUCTURED SITE OBSERVATIONS
Sept - Nov 2020

SOCIAL MEDIA SCAN
Oct - Nov 2020

PARTICIPANTS

5 FOCUS GROUP WORKSHOPS
Dec 2020 - Jun 2021

14	17
Youth	Older Adults

4 THICK MAPPING WORKSHOPS
Jan 2021 - May 2021

16	11
Youth	Older Adults

12 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS
April 2021 - June 2021

6	6
Youth	Older Adults

1 PARTICIPATORY DESIGN EXERCISE
August 2021

6	4
Youth	Older Adults

STRUCTURED SITE OBSERVATIONS

We undertook structured site observations at all three parks to better understand if and to what extent youth and older adults utilize the three parks, what types of facilities they use, and if and how they interact with users of different generations. Members of the research team conducted these visits during the month of October 2020, visiting each of the three parks to record observations of public space use. We visited each park at three different times of the day (morning, afternoon, evening), in 30-minute increments, and on both weekdays and weekends. In total, we visited each park six times. Given the large size of MacArthur Park, we divided the park into four quadrants to make our observations more manageable. As a result, the total number of site visits was 36. We also added additional site visits to Golden Age Park in March 2021, to conduct informal interviews with participants. The reason for this was that many study participants (from SBSS and HOLA) were not familiar with this park because of its newness. For each site observation session, we gathered information responding to the following questions:

- How many people are present in the park?
- What are their discernable ages, gender, and race/ethnicity characteristics?
- What kinds of activities are they engaged in while using the park? (walking, resting, exercising, socializing, etc)
- Are park users alone, in small groups, or in large groups?
- How have responses to the above questions changed depending on the day of the week and time of day?

Site observation protocols are included in Appendix A.
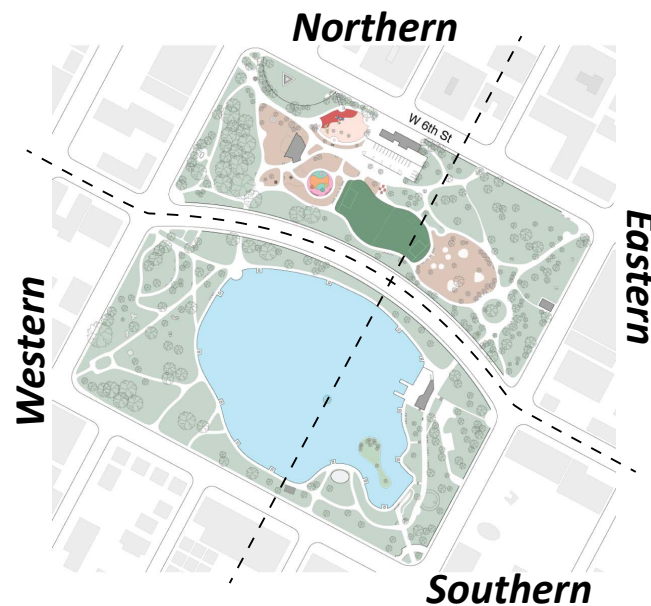
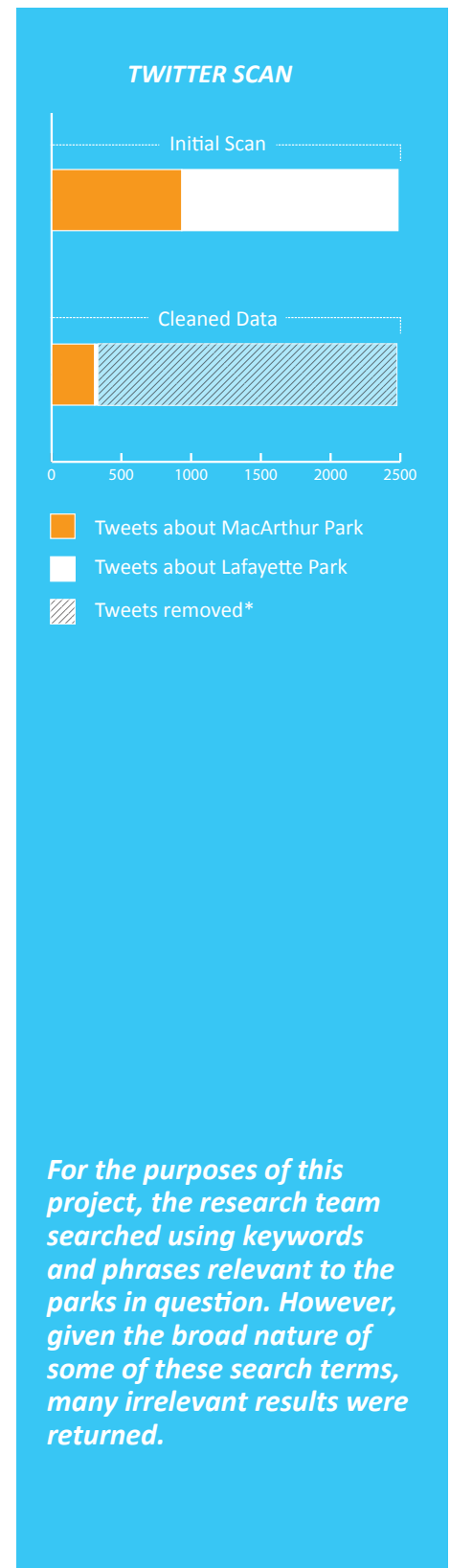*MacArthur Park map divided into quadrants.*

SOCIAL MEDIA SCAN

Given the constraints presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, we undertook a social media scan to remotely collect and analyze data regarding user attitudes, experiences, and engagement with the three parks, thus supplementing the in-person site observations. To understand the possibilities of social media data and to determine which strategies and approaches to social media research would be the most appropriate for this project, the research team reviewed academic and grey literature on social media research, ethics, and practical considerations, as well as other academic literature that employed social media methodologies to investigate issues relating to public space.

We identified Twitter as a preferred source for social media data for a number of reasons. First, Twitter is primarily a public-facing social media platform, on which most users post content publicly (in the form of Tweets), which can be accessed in an open online space, rather than a private or closed online space. Posts are tied to usernames and Twitter handles, which are not necessarily identifiable and can easily be anonymized (ie. by removing the username and Twitter handle). Second, Tweets primarily contain text-based content, which allows for simple searching, coding, and analysis. Text-based Tweets can be analyzed as both individual data points and also as aggregated data, enabling the research team to illustrate themes through individual posts as well as broader patterns like commonly used keywords. Lastly, not having coding or development skills, we were reliant upon readily available third-party applications to search and retrieve social media data. Unlike some other social media platforms, Twitter allows third-party applications to integrate and access data through its API (application programming interface), and there are many online tools that facilitate Twitter data collection and extraction.

Through a further scan of available online tools for social media data collection and analysis, the research team identified Netlytic as a preferred tool to capture Twitter data (Gruzd, 2017). Netlytic is a free, web-based social media analysis tool maintained by the Social Media Lab at Ryerson University. Using Twitter's API, Netlytic allows users to import data from Twitter based on specified search terms. Data extraction takes place during specific time frames, allowing the researcher to capture Tweets on an ongoing basis and build a database over time. In addition to data retrieval, Netlytic allows users to perform basic analysis on datasets, including extracting keywords, mapping network connections, and sentiment analysis. We selectected to use Netlytic in this research project due to its cost (free), its ability to monitor and build a Twitter dataset over time, its ease of use, and its demonstrated use in a variety of scholarly publications.

The research team engaged in a process of social media "listening," a framework for observing online engagement that may involve analyzing the content of posts, hashtags, and trends to gain understanding about an issue or conversation (Crawford, 2009; Flores, 2016). The process began with an initial exploration of Twitter conversations, systematic collection of publicly-available Twitter data, organization and textual and keyword analysis of the data, and the identification of key themes. Before beginning data collection using Netlytic, the research team began passive observation on Twitter in order to understand the nature of the conversations taking place regarding the three parks included in this study and to develop search terms. Search terms were tested and refined over this period.

TWITTER SCAN

Initial Scan

Cleaned Data

0   500   1000   1500   2000   2500

■ Tweets about MacArthur Park

□ Tweets about Lafayette Park

▨ Tweets removed*

For the purposes of this project, the research team searched using keywords and phrases relevant to the parks in question. However, given the broad nature of some of these search terms, many irrelevant results were returned.

The research team engaged in a process of social media "listening", a framework for observing online engagement that may involve analyzing the content of posts, hashtags, and trends to gain understanding about an issue or conversation.

The scan found:

**313** *tweets about MacArthur Park*

16 *tweets about Lafayette Park*

No *tweets about Golden Age Park.*

The social media data collection took place over a three-week period from October 16th to November 5th, 2020, concurrently with the site observations. Initially, 2,489 Tweets were retrieved (936 Tweets related to MacArthur Park, 1,553 Tweets related to Lafayette Park, and no Tweets related to Golden Age Park). Datasets were cleaned to remove irrelevant results, resulting in a final total of 329 Tweets (313 Tweets relating to MacArthur Park, 16 Tweets relating to Lafayette Park, and no Tweets relating to Golden Age Park).

The sharp reduction in the number of Tweets remaining after cleaning, when compared to the number of Tweets initially retrieved, is the result of a number of factors related to the search capabilities of Twitter. The search function on Twitter allows users to search for keywords or phrases that appear in publicly-posted Tweets. It is possible to delimit the search results by location, but given that many Tweets are not geotagged, searching by location may exclude relevant Tweets. For the purposes of this project, the research team searched using keywords and phrases relevant to the parks in question, not delimited by location. However, given the broad nature of some of these search terms, many irrelevant results were returned. For example, the search term "Lafayette Park" returned many results pertaining to parks of this same name in other communities, including a prominent park in Washington, D.C. that was the subject of considerable media attention during the data collection period. Similarly, the search term "MacArthur Park" returned a number of results referencing the lyrics of a popular song of the same name. These two examples illustrate that, despite the potential of social media analysis as a supplement to more traditional interview and observation methods for understanding user attitudes and experiences within public space, there remain significant challenges in retrieving and analyzing textual data from social media sites (for more on the subject of social media as an evaluative tool for public space, see (Kim et al., 2018)).

Following the retrieval and inclusion process, we analyzed the text of individual Tweets as a unique form of communication, specific to the Twitter platform, in which users communicate their experiences of and feelings towards public spaces to the outside world. We also analyzed keywords to uncover trends within the Tweet datasets. Given the limited number of data points relevant to Lafayette Park and the absence of data points relevant to Golden Age Park, for the purposes of this research, we undertook analysis only for Tweets related to MacArthur Park (313 Tweets total).
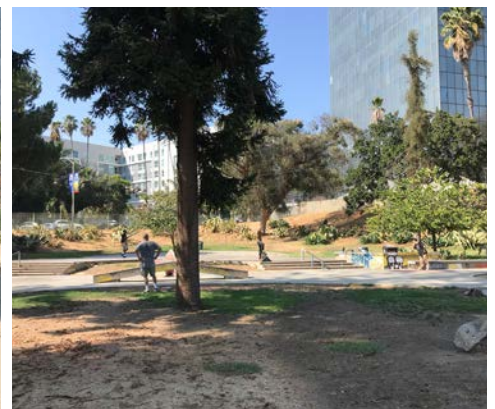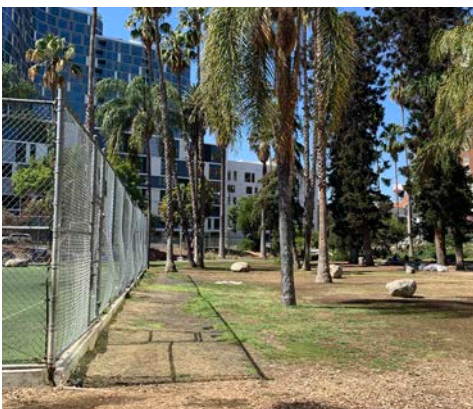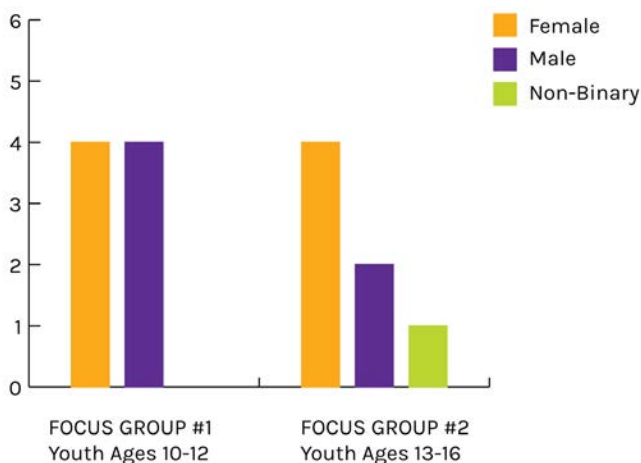

Scenes from Lafayette Park

FOCUS GROUPS

We conducted five focus groups, two with youth from HOLA and three with older adults from SBSS, to identify the extent and patterns of public space utilization as well as challenges faced in access and use. Focus groups were held remotely between November 2020 and June 2021. Specifically, with HOLA we conducted one session with seven middle school age-youth, ages 10-12, including three boys and four girls, and one session with eight high school age-youth, ages 13-16, including three boys, four girls, and one gender nonbinary participant. Both HOLA focus group discussions were conducted in English. With SBSS, we conducted three sessions: one with nine English-speaking older adults, seven women and two men one with five Spanish-speaking older adults, four women and one man; and one with three Korean-speaking older adults, one woman and two men. The focus group sessions were between 90 and 120 minutes in length. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we conducted all focus groups remotely via Zoom (a video conferencing service) or UberConference (a telephone conferencing service). We recorded and later transcribed all focus group discussions.
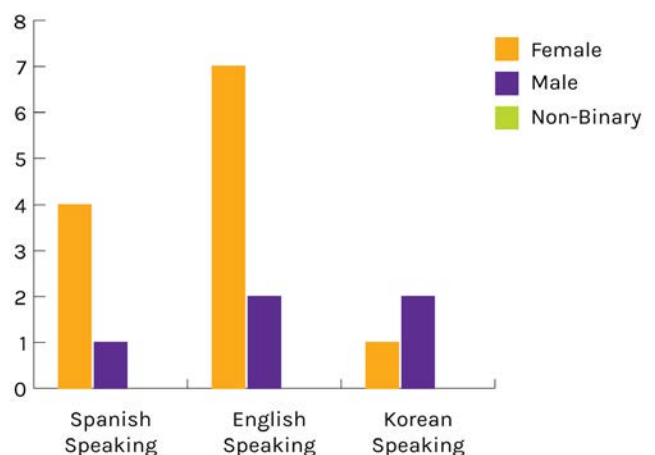
During the focus groups, we asked participants a combination of open-ended and more structured questions about their use of, experiences in, and attitudes towards the parks and public spaces in their neighborhood. The focus groups concluded with a discussion of intergenerational parks, after which participants were asked to identify their preferred public space activities and features. The full focus group guidelines are included in Appendix B.

5 *Focus Groups:*

2 *Spanish language*

2 *English language*

1 *Korean language*

HOLA FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Legend: Female, Male, Non-Binary

FOCUS GROUP #1 Youth Ages 10-12
FOCUS GROUP #2 Youth Ages 13-16

SBSS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Legend: Female, Male, Non-Binary

Spanish Speaking, English Speaking, Korean Speaking

THICK MAPPING

We conducted four thick mapping workshops, two with youth from HOLA and two with older adults from SBSS, between January and May 2021. This group exercise invited participants to bring in their own histories and emotional relationships to the public spaces, thus deepening our collective understanding of the significance of these spaces and opportunities for enhancement. Specifically, with youth from HOLA we conducted one workshop with eight middle school age-youth, ages 10-12, four boys and four girls, and one workshop with eight high school-age youth , ages 13-16, three boys four girls, and one gender nonbinary participant. With SBSS, we conducted one workshop with four Spanish-speaking older adults, all women, and another workshop with four English-speaking older adults, all women. The thick mapping workshops were between 90 and 120 minutes, and similar to the focus groups, were conducted using Zoom and UberConference. We recorded and later transcribed thick mapping workshops, and retained and later analyzed the thick maps resulting from these workshops.

During the workshops, we asked participants to share information about their daily routines, neighborhood landmarks, and positive and negative memories of neighborhood spaces. We also asked participants about their relationships to the three neighborhood parks, their preferred activities and characteristics, and suggestions for general and intergenerational improvements in these parks. Using the digital platform Miro, we mapped and assembled information from participants' responses onto a basemap in real-time. For those thick mapping workshops held on Zoom, the screen sharing feature created a collaborative environment in which participants could see their ideas being mapped as the conversation progressed and could also add context or clarifications, where necessary. The full thick mapping exercise guidelines are included in Appendix C.
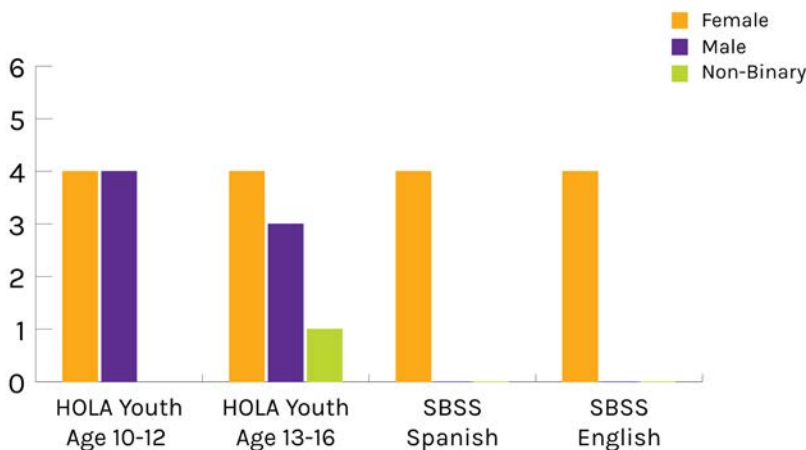
4
Thick Mapping Workshops

2
Youth Participant Sessions

2
Older Adult Sessions

THICK MAPPING PARTICIPANTS

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

We conducted a series of twelve in-depth interviews with youth and older adults to provide a forum where research participants could share their experiences in the neighborhood and its public spaces in a more intimate environment. Participants not only shared their own experiences of public spaces, but provided an historical archive of stories created by and for the community.

In-depth interviews involved one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with participants, conducted between April and August 2021. Interviews began with more general questions about life in Los Angeles, including questions about how long the participant had lived in Los Angeles, daily life and routines before and during the pandemic, and issues facing the neighborhood and the city at large. In the second part of the interview, participants were asked more specifically about their relationship to the Westlake-MacArthur Park neighborhood and its parks and public spaces. The conversation concluded with a discussion about the interviewee's hopes for the future of the neighborhood.

Each interview took approximately one hour. We conducted six interviews with older adults from SBSS, and six with youth from HOLA. All interviews with youth were conducted in English. Two of the interviews with older adults were conducted in English, and four were conducted in Spanish. Interviews were conducted on Zoom or by UberConference and were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts of the four Spanish-language interviews were later translated into English. The full in-depth interview guidelines are included in Appendix D.

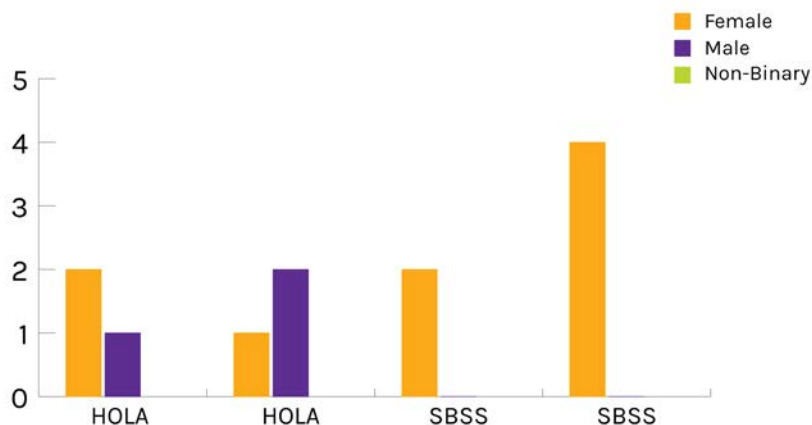*INTERVIEW BREAKDOWN*

-HOLA interviews
> *3 students age 10-12*
> *3 students age 13-16*

-SBSS interviews
> *2 English language*
> *4 Spanish language*

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN EXERCISE

Following the previous tasks, we invited participants to a final participatory design exercise intended to collectively imagine desirable public spaces and public space improvements for the future. This exercise involved participation from both older adults and youth, which sought to engender an intergenerational dialogue and projective public space design discussion. The findings from this exercise were intended to yield both policy and design recommendations for what a "Common Ground" inter-generational public space might look like in Westlake/ MacArthur Park.
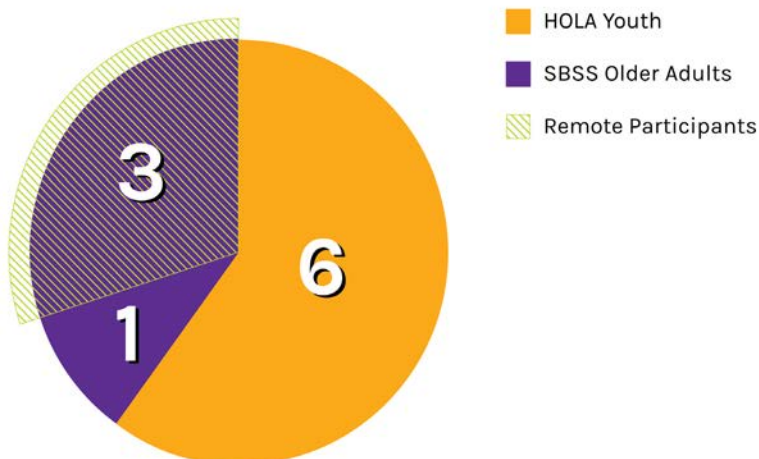
The participatory design exercise took place in August 2021, and lasted two hours. For this exercise, we set up "hybrid" in-person and remote participation options, which allowed for some dialogue between those attending the event in person and those on Zoom. Six youth from HOLA participated in person, including two boys, three girls, and one gender nonbinary participant, as well as one female older adult from SBSS. Three additional older adults from SBSS, all female, participated remotely through Zoom. After an initial ice breaker, the first part of the exercise asked participants to identify their preferred park qualities on a series of eight continua, each using phrases and accompanying images to represent various environmental dichotomies, for example, "tranquil" or "energizing" setting, "natural" or "human-built" setting, etc. By pairing images and descriptive phrases, participants were not only able to indicate their park preferences but were also equipped with a collective vocabulary to communicate their ideas and desires about the parks in the later portions of the workshop.

PARTIPATORY DESIGN BREAKDOWN
-HOLA program
   6 youth participants, all in-person

-SBSS program
   4 older adults, 3 remote, 1 in-person

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PARTICIPANTS

- HOLA Youth
- SBSS Older Adults
- Remote Participants

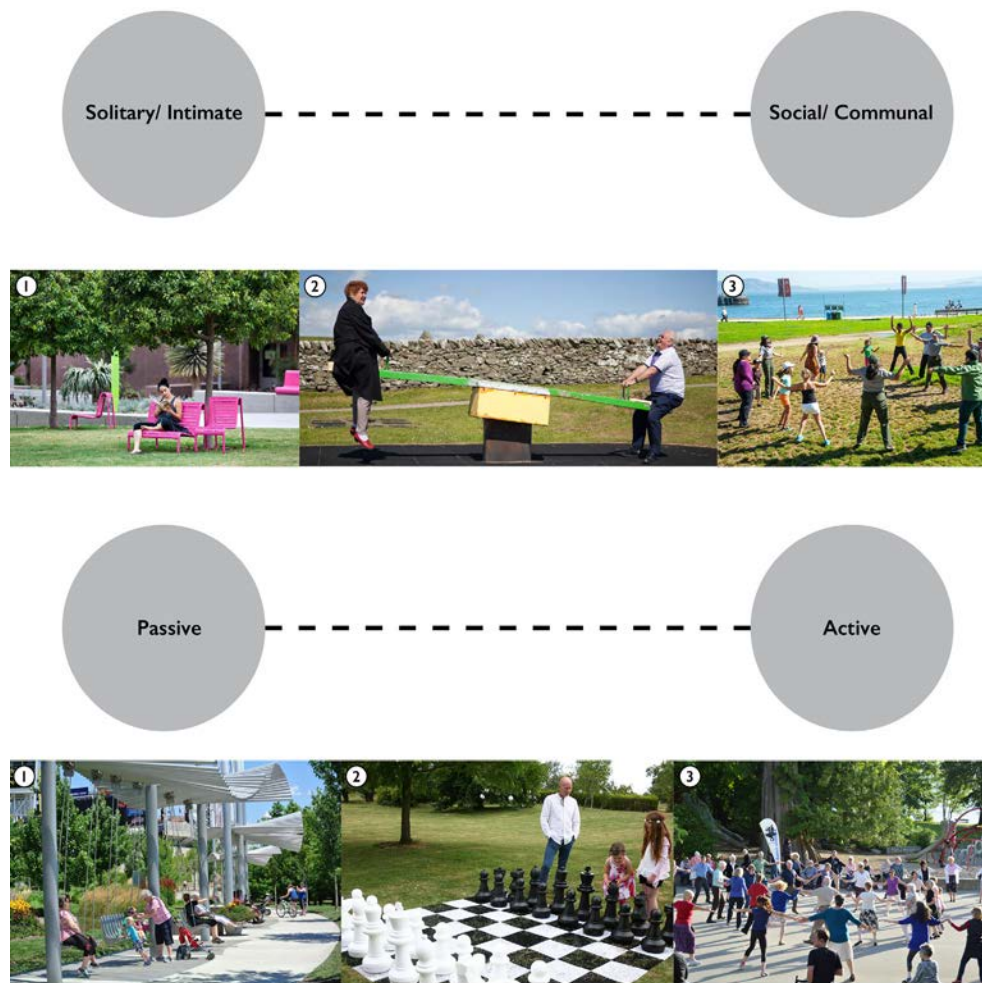*Participatory Design Exercise Details:*

Meeting Format:
   Hybrid

Presentation Platform:
   Miro

Exercise Duration:
   120 Minutes

By pairing images and descriptive phrases, participants were not only able to indicate their park preferences but were also equipped with a collective vocabulary to communicate their ideas and desires about the parks.

The second part of the workshop sought to develop a shared vision for how to improve and enhance the neighborhood's two largest parks - Lafayette and MacArthur - for intergenerational use. After reviewing maps summarizing areas of aggravation and ambiguity identified in earlier research phases, participants split into three groups: two in-person and one online. We provided participants with a toolkit of design and programming elements for intergenerational public space use and asked them to apply these elements to maps of the parks to address existing challenges and imagine improved park spaces.

After working in smaller groups to address challenges and aspirations for Lafayette and MacArthur parks, participants were invited to rejoin the larger group for a discussion about a smaller and lesser-known park in the neighborhood: Golden Age Park. Participants were shown a short video with a 'virtual walking tour' of Golden Age Park and then were invited into a semi-structured group discussion about likes, dislikes, and desires for Golden Age Park. The full participatory design exercise guidelines are included in the Appendix E.

Examples of continua presented in the participatory design exercise.

RESEARCH CHALLENGES + LIMITATIONS
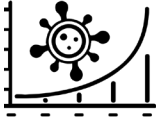
COVID-19 pandemic impacts
This research encountered a number of significant challenges, because data collection and analysis took place entirely during the COVID-19 pandemic. While some research activities, like in-person site observations, continued as planned with appropriate precautions, other activities, particularly those involving older adults and youth participants, had to be quickly adapted to remote arrangements. These activities took place thanks to the participation of our two community partner organizations (HOLA and SBSS), who not only enabled us to recruit the requisite number of research participants but also set up remote communication capabilities, like Zoom and UberConference, so that conversations could occur safely. This preparedness stems in large part from the fact that both SBSS and HOLA have been forced to adapt much, if not all, of their programming to online, digital formats. In this vein, our research also adapted to the new digital social sphere in which older adults and youth in Westlake/MacArthur park have been forced to operate during the pandemic.

Digital divide
While the transition to remote research made it easier to schedule conversations (since travel in most cases was not necessary for participation in research activities), the remote format presented some issues, including uneven Internet access and a lack of familiarity with digital interfaces amongst some participants. Not surprisingly, youth participants were more comfortable and capable using video conferencing tools like Zoom, and thus more easily able to adapt to online research activities; whereas some older adult participants did not have access to Zoom or struggled to use the application. This generational "digital divide" prompted us to adapt our activities to respond to the needs and preferences of participants from different age groups, including hosting some conversations with older adults by phone conferencing rather than Zoom.
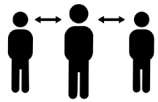
Limited interactivity
Given that most research activities took place in remote formats, which generally hinder free-flowing, spontaneous conversation and require a higher degree of structure and formality, some interactivity between participants was lost. Furthermore, the participatory design workshop, which was intended to bring together both youth and older adults for a collaborative workshop, took place in a hybrid format, with a larger group of mostly youth participating in person (following health protocols) and a smaller group of older adults participating online. As a result, opportunities for engagement between participants of different generations were limited.
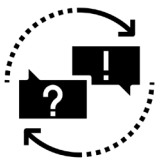
Language
Another challenge presented by this research was that of language. Westlake-MacArthur Park's population is highly diverse, as reflected by the research participants for this project. English was not the primary language of many of the older adult participants, in particular. In response, we held focus group and thick mapping sessions in English, Spanish, and Korean, and in-depth interviews in both English and Spanish, in an effort to capture the voices and experiences of diverse respondents.

Lack of familiarity
A final notable challenge was the general lack of familiarity amongst research participants with one of the three study sites, Golden Age Park. Golden Age Park is a pocket park that is much smaller than Lafayette and MacArthur parks, and which opened in November 2019, just a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in LA. As a result, most youth or older adult research participants were not familiar with Golden Age Park, which made it difficult to assess their experiences and attitudes towards the park. In response, we adapted some research activities to include more descriptive information, maps, photos, and videos of Golden Age Park to help introduce participants to the park and its features. After learning about Golden Age Park in an early focus group activity, one older adult participant visited the park and later reported back on her experience during subsequent research activities.
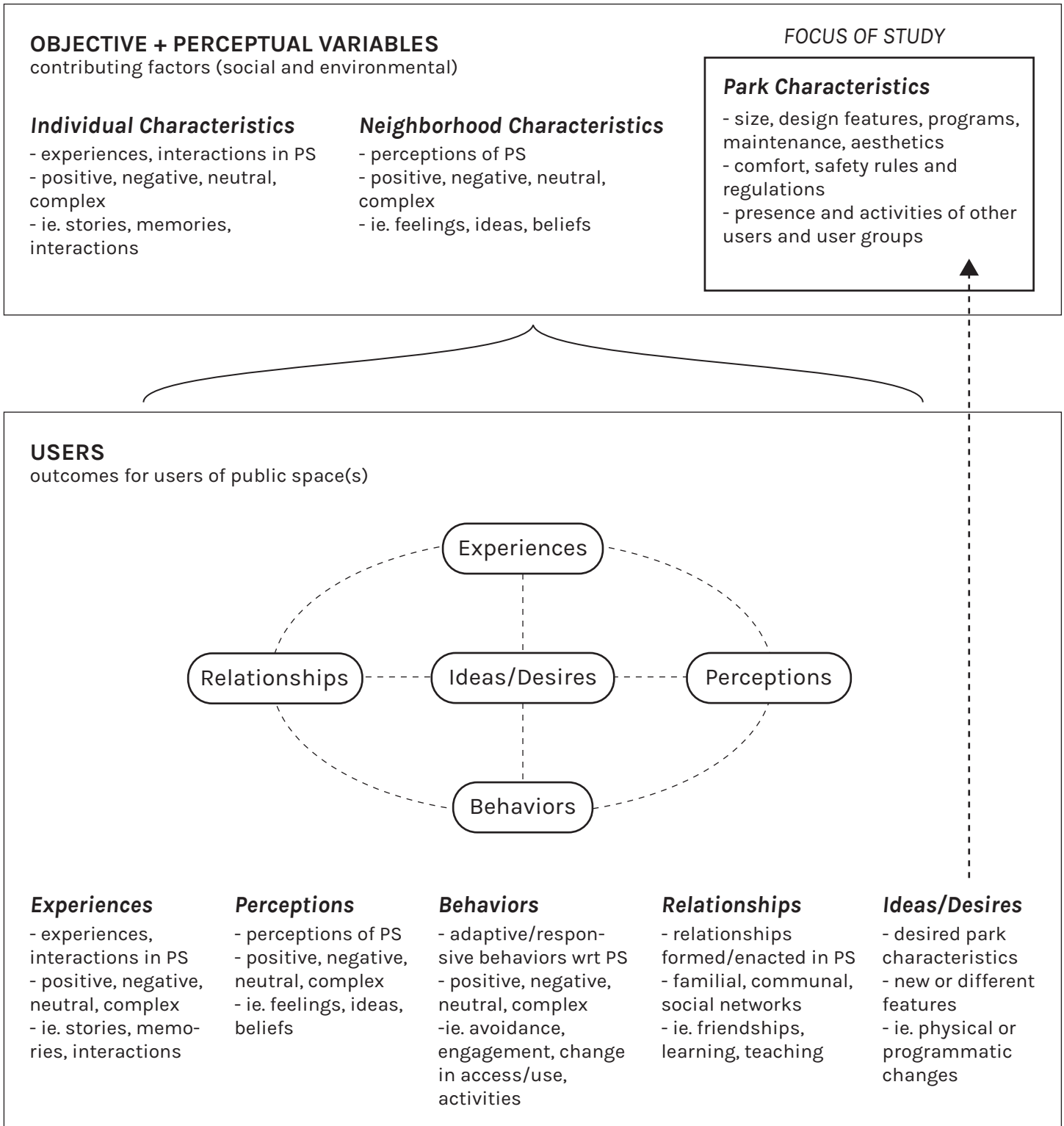
05
EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

With this framework, we posit that a combination of objective and perceptual variables, including indiviual characteristics, neighborhood characteristics, and park characteristics inform user experiences within parks and public spaces.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research employed a conceptual framework which guided our analysis. Building on concepts discussed in previous studies by the Principal Investigator on park use by children (Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009) and older adults (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2016), the framework accounts for the contributing variables, both social and environmental, that shape outcomes for users of public spaces (see figure below). With this framework, we posit that a combination of objective and perceptual variables, which include how users view and understand individual characteristics (like age, gender, race/ethnicity, place of residence of public space users), neighborhood characteristics (e.g. street layout and connectivity, crime rates, neighborhood change), and public space characteristics (size, design features, programming, rules and regulations) inform and influence user experiences in parks and public spaces. User experiences include a connected network of experiences, perceptions, behaviors/activities, relationships, and ideas/desires that are constantly reshaped and renegotiated by park users. The conceptual framework is iterative in that ideas/desires, as one particular aspect of user experiences, relate to and may inform future interventions regarding park characteristics. Viewed in this way, understanding the relationship between the objective and perceptual variables on the one hand, and user experiences in public spaces on the other, can yield important insights for planners and designers seeking to improve existing parks or create new parks and public spaces to support intergenerational use.

ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

OBJECTIVE + PERCEPTUAL VARIABLES
contributing factors (social and environmental)

FOCUS OF STUDY

Individual Characteristics
- experiences, interactions in PS
- positive, negative, neutral, complex
- ie. stories, memories, interactions

Neighborhood Characteristics
- perceptions of PS
- positive, negative, neutral, complex
- ie. feelings, ideas, beliefs

Park Characteristics
- size, design features, programs, maintenance, aesthetics
- comfort, safety rules and regulations
- presence and activities of other users and user groups

USERS
outcomes for users of public space(s)

```
                    Experiences

    Relationships    Ideas/Desires    Perceptions

                    Behaviors
```

Experiences
- experiences, interactions in PS
- positive, negative, neutral, complex
- ie. stories, memories, interactions

Perceptions
- perceptions of PS
- positive, negative, neutral, complex
- ie. feelings, ideas, beliefs

Behaviors
- adaptive/responsive behaviors wrt PS
- positive, negative, neutral, complex
-ie. avoidance, engagement, change in access/use, activities

Relationships
- relationships formed/enacted in PS
- familial, communal, social networks
- ie. friendships, learning, teaching

Ideas/Desires
- desired park characteristics
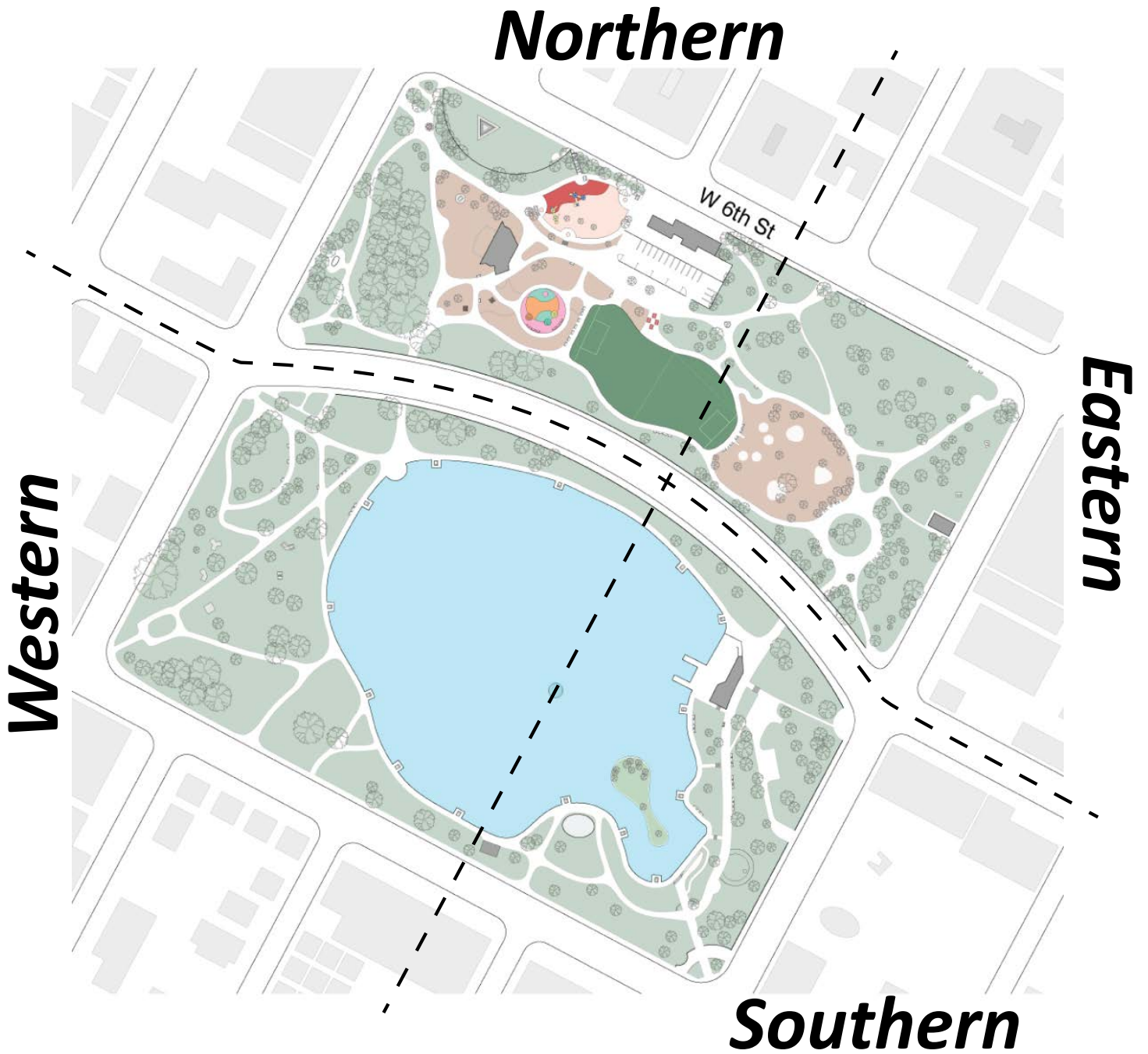- new or different features
- ie. physical or programmatic changes

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

The following section presents findings observed from site observations and is composed of spatial analysis followed by a section on user analysis.

MACARTHUR PARK

Northern

Western

Eastern

Southern

W 6th St

Eastern Quadrant

This quadrant is in the northeast corner of MacArthur Park, at the corner of Alvarado and 6th. There are not as many park users here as in the Southern Quadrant. There are ample benches in the center circle and sloping hills on the northeast edge, where a lot of mostly Latino men are resting. The hill has a tree canopy cover, which creates shade as well as a sense of privacy, compared to the more exposed areas of the park. The hill also creates a sense of isolation from both the busy street intersection as well as the busy soccer fields located towards the center of the park. This section of the park has less trash than the Southern Quadrant, even though some trash is still visible. There are also restrooms located at the eastern edge of the park.

Southern Quadrant

This quadrant of MacArthur Park presents itself as one of the main entrances to the park and is replete with benches, an archway entrance, and esplanade and dock that appears out of use. There are many paths, green open spaces, and encampments for unhoused folks. The trees are mostly palms which do not provide much shade from the hot sun in this quadrant. This section of the park is not very clean and much trash is lining its edges. There is also quite a bit of noise from both park users and pedestrian traffic from the street. There is a pretty expansive view of the lake from this corner of the park, though the esplanade is not very clean, in part due to loads of duck and goose excrement.


Northern Quadrant

This quadrant has more recreational infrastructure than the other quadrants, and many more amenities such as shade provided by tree canopies, two playgrounds (the central one acting as an exercise gym as well), one exercise gym, a soccer field, a bandshell, and many benches and picnic tables. The soccer field has less shade, which might explain why fewer people were observed to use it when temperatures were high. Relative to the other areas of MacArthur Park, this quadrant feels clean and well-maintained.

Western Quadrant

This section of the park most closely resembles a peaceful grassy park with significant tree coverage. The grassy area wraps around the lake, which is lined with a walking path and seating areas, where people can fish or simply sit and watch the lake. On the park side adjacent to the street, there is some landscaping and a sidewalk connecting the street to the park. Closer to the lake, there are a lot of geese and ducks, which are pleasant but also contribute to the large amount of bird feces and attendant foul smell. Overall, there is a calm, peaceful atmosphere in this area of the park, and its openness seems to provide a sense of security.

LAFAYETTE PARK

Lafayette Park is bordered by 6th Street to the north, Wilshire Blvd. to the south, Lafayette Park Place to the east, and Commonwealth Ave. to the west. The park possesses significant recreational infrastructure which includes a playground, basketball courts, soccer turf field, a skate park, and many tree-covered benches and picnic tables. Most of the park that is accessible to the general public is located on the southern half and is easily navigable using pedestrian paths. The park can be entered from multiple points, though an iron fence separates the street sidewalk from the park and has no entrances. The northern half of the park is home to the LAUSD library and HOLA's new Arts and Recreation Center. The southeast end of the park is home to the Lafayette Recreation Center.
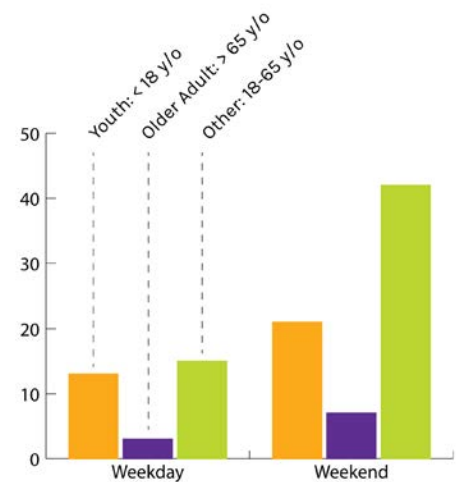

LAFAYETTE PARK USAGE

GOLDEN AGE PARK

The newest park in Westlake, Golden Age Park, is a pocket park occupying a parcel (less than ⅓ of an acre) on 739 S. Coronado St. Since the park is so new, it is in a much better physical condition than the other two parks (MacArthur and Lafayette). This park was built with the needs of older adults in mind. Its terrain is flat, and it is relatively easy to access its various corners using a wide path winding through it. There is abundant plant life, part of which is open to the public for gardening (at the back of the park there is a small community garden). There are also ample places to sit in large groups or alone, made possible by the picnic tables, benches, and circular seating surrounding a rotunda. There are two play/recreation structures and low-impact exercise equipment in this park, providing recreation opportunities for both adults (including older adults) and youth.
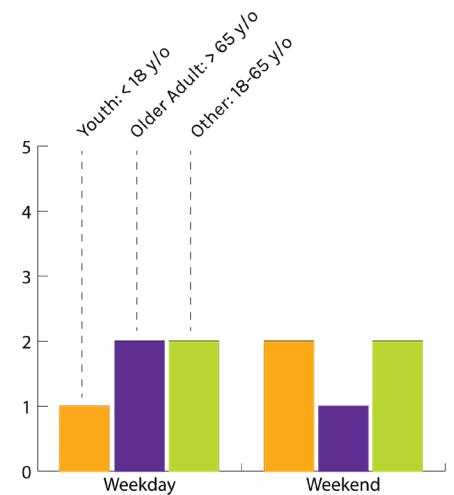
GOLDEN AGE PARK USAGE

USER ANALYSIS

MACARTHUR PARK

Southern Quadrant
This is by far the busiest quadrant in terms of numbers of observed users, even during the hot October afternoons, when our observations took place. There were many folks in this corner of the park who appeared to be unhoused and have made MacArthur Park their home. There was a seemingly equal number of individuals who seemed to be taking a break from work or were waiting for something. Most users appeared to be Latino men, with some African American and White individuals present as well. There were very few women and no youth. There appeared to be a large number of older adults, mostly Latino, in the park, who were using the plentiful benches at this Quadrant. Also observed were three older Asian women at one of the bus stops on this corner of Alvarado.

Other user activities included street vending, preaching, and a volunteer food bank with at least 20 people congregating to receive free food. On a Sunday visit at 4pm in October 2020, there were more older men than usual. There were folks resting or hanging around encampments, benches, and along the lake and on the grass, as well as some occasional cyclists and runners through this section of the park.

In sum, this Southern Quadrant of the park did not exhibit much, if any, intergenerational activity. The overwhelming number of people using the park and the presence of encampments for folks experiencing homelessness speak to the need to prioritize other issues (i.e. housing insecurity and homeless services) over intergenerational park use. There are clearly essential services and networks operating in this Quadrant, and any effort to enhance its functionality should consider the depth of interactions, relations, and lived experiences that are taking place here.

The northern quadrant of the park is the most diverse in terms of user activities, but also in terms of the race, age, and gender of park users, and appears to be the most promising in terms of serving intergenerational users.

Northern Quadrant
This quadrant tended to be very busy with people of all ages engaging in a wide range of activities, including playing soccer, jogging, bicycling, talking, picnicking, and using both playgrounds. Users represented a mix of youth, adults, and older adults. During soccer games, there were at least 20 folks watching and at least 20 other individuals playing soccer, most of whom seemed to be Latino. One day there were at least 70 users either playing soccer or observing a game.

Additional observed uses included groups of youth and young adults sitting on the bandshell (since music performances were not occurring), and street vendors selling food along the walking paths. There were also people preaching in front of the bandshell on more than one occasion.

This park quadrant is the most diverse in terms of user activities, but also in terms of the race, age, and gender of park users; it appears to be the most promising in serving intergenerational users. The combination of ample, shaded seating areas, bandshell, soccer field, exercise equipment, and playgrounds, provide something for everyone regardless of age. While successful compared to the rest of MacArthur Park, this quadrant is not quite as successful as Lafayette Park in attracting diverse users.

Eastern Quadrant

There were few folks who appeared to be unhoused but not as many as in the Southern Quadrant. A couple of families with children were walking through but not staying in this section of the park. Noticeable was a large group of Latino older and middle-aged men playing some kind of gambling game at the south/central part of the park, next to the soccer field. There also appeared to be slightly more females in this section of the park.

It should be noted that not many people were wearing masks. There were scarcely any women. Some folks were out early for exercise. A man was sleeping on the grass and was about to get wet from the sprinklers. A few other park users included two individuals waiting for the bus, and a Latina woman using a scooter. The circular benches were always popular especially among older adults.

On a Sunday afternoon (around 4:30pm) in October 2020, this quadrant felt busy but calm, with a lot of families. One noticeable difference was the apparent presense of queer people. There were also the usual group of gamers in the south central area of this quadrant adjacent to the soccer field.

Overall this quadrant possesses many attributes that lend themselves to intergenerational uses, one being the presence of benches and shaded tree areas. What is lacking is areas specifically designed for youth, though some families bring their children to this quadrant. The long winding paths allow scootering, biking and jogging. Similar to the Southern Quadrant, this quadrant possesses several networks and services that require more investigation to fully understand.

The western quadrant was more peaceful than the other three quadrants, not because there were no users but rather because users there tended to be more dispersed and engaged in leisure activities such as strolling, fishing, or laying in the grass.

Western Quadrant

Users in this area of the park tended to be mostly engaged in passive recreation, such as strolling or lying down on the grass and under the trees; some of them were also fishing. On more active weekend days, some users were observed performing music, including a mariachi band, painting, and fishing. Quite a few Latino families with their children were walking through the park.

This quadrant was more peaceful than the other three quadrants, not because there were no users but rather because users here tended to be more dispersed and engaged in leisure activities such as strolling, fishing, or laying in the grass. There was a significant number of youth in this quadrant, most of whom appeared younger and were accompanied by older adults. The peacefulness of this quadrant is something to keep in mind when thinking about designing public spaces for multiple states of mind, which includes those seeking quietness over rambunctiousness, which often accompanies active recreation.

There were folks who appeared unhoused on the perimeter of Lafayette park, just outside the iron fence, and along the street sidewalks. During a site visit an encampment caught on fire along with an adjacent tree, which caused many people, both in the park and along the street, to scatter.

LAFAYETTE PARK

The users of Lafayette Park during our observation sessions appeared to be diverse in terms of age, with over 90 users observed to be youth, and at least 30 who were older adults. The user demographic leaned younger and more diverse, during our observations. Many young people used the skate park, while children were using the playground under adult supervision. There were some older adults who were either walking, eating, and watching the skateboarders and children in the playground. Most of the users appeared to be Latinx but there were also a sizable number of African Americans and, to a lesser degree, Asians and Whites. There tended to be more men than women, including among youth. This may be in part due to the presence of the skate park, which was almost always in use by a great number of mostly male youth.

There were folks who appeared unhoused on the perimeter of the park, just outside the iron fence, and along the street sidewalks. During a site visit an encampment caught on fire along with an adjacent tree, which caused many people, both in the park and along the street, to scatter.

On a Sunday at 12:30PM, there was a large group (around 20) of Latino males playing basketball. Interestingly, only one of the six basketball courts had hoops. According to a couple of youth, this was due to COVID-19 preventive measures. The skate park was also busy, and seemed very popular amongst youth of multiple races/ethnicities (Black, White, Latino, Asian youth and young adults). The playground was not used as much, however. There was also some vending going on at the park. Two young park users indicated that more people visit the park as the evening progresses, and that in the mornings there are more Korean users, while in the evenings more Latino users. The female interviewees remarked feeling less safe at night. There was a cooling center (an air conditioned space, open and available to the public during high heat) inside the Rec building, possibly quite useful during the hot summer months. The interviewees also indicated that Lafayette is their favorite park and prefer it to MacArthur Park since they perceived it as safer. They added that the weekend prior to our interviews a transgender woman of color had been murdered in MacArthur Park during the night.

Lafayette Park is a busy park especially on weekends. It is allegedly less busy as the sun goes down, though our observations did not include visits after dark. Given the number of recreational facilities and their generally well-maintained condition, there are many opportunities for users of all ages to recreate in the park. For older adults, the abundance of picnic tables, benches, large pathways, and shaded areas create a welcome environment for socializing, relaxing, and observing other users. This spatial arrangement lends itself to intergenerational uses given that many parents, guardians, or other older adults can observe younger park users on the playground, playing soccer or basketball, or skateboarding.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have deterred users, particularly older adults, from frequenting Golden Age park. While there is a lot of vegetation, much of it is still newly planted and therefore does not produce as much shade as might be necessary to shield users from the sun.

GOLDEN AGE PARK

During the times that we observed this park, there were generally very few users who frequented it. We assume that this underutilization was in part due to the fact that the park is brand new and not many people know about it, given that it opened just before the start of the pandemic. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic may have deterred users, particularly older adults, from frequenting the park. It is also possible that the park was too hot in early October 2020, during our observation sessions, when Los Angeles experienced a prolonged heat wave. While there is a lot of vegetation, much of it is still newly planted and therefore does not produce as much shade as might be necessary to shield users from the sun.

On the three weekdays when we visited the park, there were only 1-3 users there. This number increased during the weekends to 2-6 users (and up to 10 users on a Sunday at 3pm). Generally, more users were observed during the late morning to early afternoon period (between 11am-4pm), than earlier or later in the day. The park closes at sundown, which was approximately 7pm during our observation sessions.

Of the total 22 users observed, the perceived gender breakdown was split. This was also true for all age groups, though there were slightly more users belonging to "other ages" and slightly fewer young users. There were more Latinos than any other race/ethnicity category, followed by African Americans. We observed only a few Asian and White users.

Even though we observed relatively few users at Golden Age Park during our six visits, it should be taken as an encouraging sign that there was a high degree of diversity in terms of demographics and user activity. The fact that the most intense use of the park occurred over the weekend and in the afternoon might suggest that it is more a matter of people's work week schedules that is keeping them from the park during the week, indicating that users do in fact associate the park with leisure. It should also be noted that, in comparison to the other two parks, there were not any park users who appeared unhoused at Golden Age Park. A young man who hopped the fence to enter the park might have been looking for food, but otherwise this park did not appear to be a refuge for folks seeking shelter in the same way that parts of Lafayette and MacArthur parks are.

In terms of intergenerational use, since both youth and older adults were observed at the park in nearly equal numbers as users belonging to other age groups, and since those users were observed taking advantage of the park's various recreation infrastructures (garden, playground, exercise machine), it can be said that Golden Age Park is indeed functioning as an "intergenerational park." The question is what might account for the lack of park users overall, which can be answered at least partially through interviews.

STUDY PARTICIPANT
DEMOGRAPHICS + CHARACTERISTICS

The following sections present key findings observed across the different research tasks. We grouped findings following the categories of our conceptual framework (see pp. 48-49), beginning with objective and perceptual variables and ending with user experiences.

Amongst older youth, age was a factor influencing their use of neighborhood parks, with several indicating that they visited the parks less often as they got older, suggesting that some have grown out of the parks or of certain park spaces such as the playground.
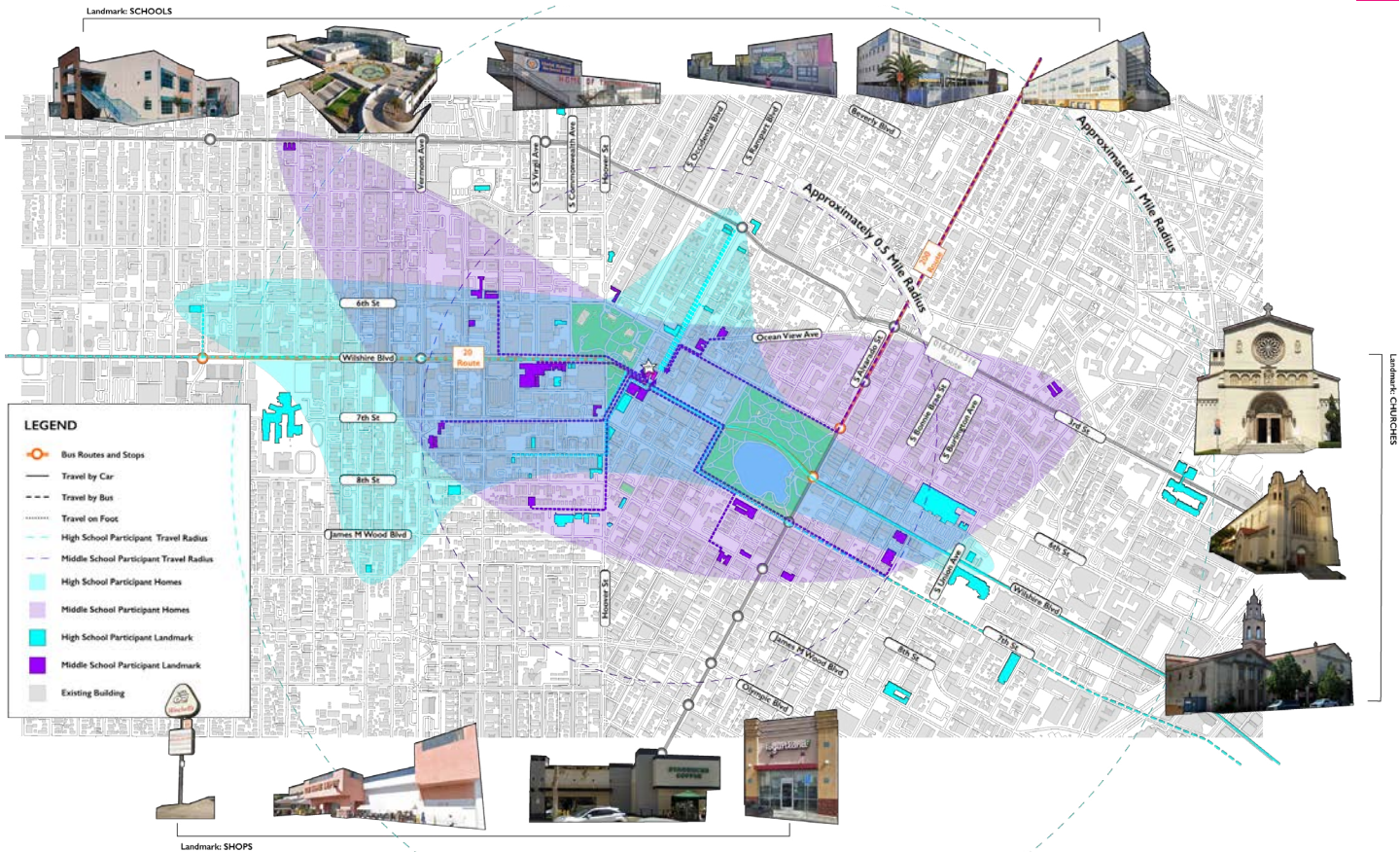
Study participants

For this research, we recruited both youth and older adult participants who were engaged in HOLA or SBSS programming. Given the diversity of the Westlake-MacArthur Park neighborhood, many participants, in particular older adults, spoke Spanish or Korean as a primary language. Despite their age and ethnic diversity, all participants lived in or near the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood and all participated in community programs hosted by either HOLA (for youth) or SBSS (for older adults). Both youth and older adult participants primarily traveled around the neighborhood by walking or by public transit, or a combination of these modes. When asked where they live, most participants identified the neighborhood by its name (Westlake), but some framed their answer around proximity to a local park, like two youth participants who said "I live...near Lafayette park", and "I live by Lafayette".

Both the youth and older adults had lived over many years in the Westlake-MacArthur Park neighborhood and had a deep knowledge of how the neighborhood and its public spaces had changed over time. In-depth interviews revealed that many youth had lived in the neighborhood for most if not all of their lives, and therefore felt a strong sense of "home" here. During interviews, older adults shared stories of growing up in Westlake or immigrating more recently. Several older adults shared common experiences of immigrating to Los Angeles, some from Central America in the 1970s and 1980s, others from Korea. The participants' collective biographies speak to the diasporic quality of the community that comprises much of the neighborhood, but also to some shared experiences and memories.

Age

For both youth and older adults, age was a strong factor influencing their daily lives as well as their relationships to neighborhood public spaces. Several older adults reflected on issues of mobility, independence, and autonomy, some indicating that their ability to visit parks had been restricted due to injuries, health issues, and disabilities, while others asserted their continued mobility and independence. One older adult participant shared: "I have an ankle injury that led to a foot injury, so I'm extremely immobile. But prior to that I did a lot of time at the parks, Echo Park, Silverlake Park, and the recreation centers....Normally, I am a very outdoorsy person, but I had an accident on my ankle falling off of a curb while running in Silver Lake Park." Amongst older youth, age was similarly a factor influencing their use of neighborhood parks, with several indicating that they visited the parks less often as they got older, suggesting that some have "grown out" of the parks or of certain park spaces such as the playground.

NEIGHBORHOOD THICK MAP

RELATIONSHIP TO
THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Participants' in-depth neighborhood knowledge was particularly apparent in the thick mapping exercises. Those who had lived in the area longer appeared to have more extensive relationships in the community and tended to share more memories. As one older adult participant said, "I really like that you include us because when we are at the age we are at, we have experience with the things that have happened in the past as time passed, the way the parks were before, and how the situation has changed."

Landmarks

Certain aspects of the built environment emerged as common factors in participants' experiences and relationships to the neighborhood. Both youth and older adults identified schools, religious institutions, and food or restaurant locations as key neighborhood landmarks, while older adults also referenced grocery stores. Places to buy food such as restaurants, corner stores, and street vendors were some of the most frequently cited community landmarks by both youth and older adults, highlighting the importance of food in the participants' relationship to the neighborhood.

Participants' biographies speak to the history of diaspora in the neighborhood and the role of landmarks in supporting diasporic identities. For instance, one participant originally from El Salvador spoke about how he and others used to visit the statue of Monsenor Romero in the south east corner of Westlake/MacArthur Park: "The little square that is there for Monsenor Romero, we would go there to clean it. So when people came, they would bring some food and enjoy it there that the place was clean, and we told them 'please, when you finish eating take the garbage to the trash, to the container'...But later the people came to drink there, and fights happened, so we had to leave that place."

SBSS and HOLA were strong factors in the participants' relationships to the parks. In addition to noting the location of SBSS and HOLA facilities, youth and older adults frequently mentioned visiting the parks because of SBSS and HOLA programs taking place there. HOLA opened a new facility at Lafayette Park during the study period, a fact noted by many youth during the thick mapping exercises and interviews.

Poor maintenance and concerns over safety
There was a general perception amongst participants that public spaces in the neighborhood were poorly maintained and less clean in comparison to other neighborhoods. Participants, particularly older adults, largely attributed this to the presence of unhoused individuals. The association of homelessness with setting aggravation was a consistent theme whenever homelessness was mentioned or alluded to.

The lake at MacArthur Park was a notable feature that participants described as poorly maintained.

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES

Activities

Walking and public transit were the primary modes of transportation for most older adult participants, and the general act of walking in the neighborhood was a shared experience amongst many older adults. While few older adults mentioned spending time or lingering in the parks, many reported enjoying walking around or through the parks. One older adult reported using the park "as a walkway" when running errands, and said, "I love to walk through the park. It's beautiful."

For youth, experiences in public spaces were often centered around activities or events such as soccer games or birthday parties. Participation in sports and other forms of active recreation in parks was a shared experience amongst a number of youth. Participants recalled experiences both playing sports, including soccer, skateboarding, and tennis, as well as watching friends and family members play sports. These activities were seen as a welcome respite from the indoors, particularly in the context of COVID-19 restrictions. As one male participant put it, "I stay literally all day on my laptop because I need to do homework. And sometimes I go outside or I just run...and my favorite thing to do is play soccer with my friends outside." Participation in HOLA programming was mentioned by a number of youth as a factor shaping their positive experiences in Lafayette Park, with one participant sharing, "I still miss HOLA because...for me art is like home." Another participant mentioned that, when participating in HOLA photography classes in MacArthur Park, she no longer felt uncomfortable or unsafe in that particular park.

Harassment and assault

Despite these more positive experiences, harassment and assault were common occurrences in the parks. Several older adults recounted experiencing harassment, unwanted attention, and assault in the parks, fostering a perception that the parks are dangerous and require enhanced security and surveillance. Several youth also shared personal experiences of harassment, assault, and unwanted attention from strangers in parks, and in MacArthur Park, in particular. One young participant shared her experience of gender-based harassment and unwanted touching at MacArthur Park: "I would always go to the 99 cent store by there, and I would have to pass by MacArthur Park. And there were always guys catcalling or whistling at me. And it made me feel very unsafe. There was even a time when a guy was drunk and he put his arm over me and I just got like, super scared." Another youth participant recalled a past experience in which another park user began shouting and behaving erratically, while another recalled being offered drugs and being followed out of the park. These negative experiences tended to occur at night, and induced a fearful reaction to certain public spaces.

Memories

Older adult participants shared many personal memories and experiences in parks, often associated with their early arrival in Los Angeles. One older adult shared, "I have good memories from MacArthur when I just came here forty years ago. I think MacArthur Park was a very nice place to go. Everybody loved to go on Sundays over there. We would take some food or go close to any place that was open for food, and we would buy. We would see children playing all over and going here and there, and it was so exciting to cross the tunnel." Another older adult said, "I came to this country in 1987, and the first thing I visited was MacArthur and Lafayette Park." Such memories speak to the important role that both parks held and still hold for recently arrived immigrants. Youth similarly shared fond memories of the parks, based on personal experiences visiting when younger or based on stories shared by family and friends of what the parks were like in the past. Most participants had not visited Golden Age Park. However, those youth and older adult participants who had visited it were eager to share their experiences with those who were unfamiliar with this park.

PARTICIPANT RELATIONSHIPS
WITH THE PARKS

PERCEPTIONS

Generally, participants expressed more positive perceptions of Lafayette Park and more negative perceptions of MacArthur Park. Of those participants who had visited Golden Age Park, many shared positive perceptions of the park and appreciated that it was a quiet, calm space, particularly well-suited to solitary activities for people of all generations, such as walking, exercising, or doing homework. However, due to its small size and enclosed nature, Golden Age Park was perceived by some participants as a private space rather than a public park. One older adult participant who had heard of Golden Age Park avoided it because it looked to him like a "private park."

Other park users

The presence of other users in the parks was perceived by youth and older adults as either positive or negative, depending on the user group and activity. A diversity of people coming together in public space was often framed positively by older adults, and associated with feelings of excitement and curiosity, and opportunities to learn from others. One older adult participant shared that she preferred Lafayette Park overall, "because of the quality of the people walking over there," and the presence of both older and younger park users. Amongst some youth, the presence of children and people playing sports in Lafayette Park contributed to feelings of safety and a fondness for the park. One youth participant associated positive memories with Lafayette Park and,"very good feelings, very good vibes." Some youth participants connected their preference for Lafayette Park with their experiences and relationships at HOLA. The presence of HOLA students, staff, and community members was noted as a positive attribute that made Lafayette Park safer. One youth participant said, "at Lafayette, I feel really safe. I don't know if it's because I know all the staff members there. And I also just went there a lot. Because I play sports there. Or if it's because it's just a small park. But I feel like those factors really contribute to the safety I feel there." On the other hand, a number of participants expressed fear or discomfort by the presence of unhoused individuals, especially at MacArthur Park.

"I would always go to the 99 cent store by there, and I would have to pass by MacArthur Park. And there were always guys catcalling or whistling at me. And it made me feel very unsafe. There was even a time when a guy was drunk and he put his arm over me and I just got like, super scared."

-Youth Participant, Female

Fear and discomfort

Indeed, fear was a common sentiment amongst older adult participants in relation to a number of perceived risks in the parks, including the presence of unhoused people, drug use, and drinking. One female older adult shared, "First and foremost, if there are homeless people I can't help but be scared. But there's nowhere that doesn't have homeless people. They are all over the park. That's scary. That's scary." For some older adults, these fears were related to age. As one participant shared, "in MacArthur there are always, it pains me to say, but there are gang members, there are drug addicts there, homeless, people whom you do not want to meet. As an older person, [I feel that] with a little push you could knock me down and take away what I have. So, mostly for safety reasons, I don't visit that park now." Other older adults shared fears about COVID-19, and pandemic-related apprehension about visiting parks. Amongst participants in the Korean-language focus group, fear of anti-Asian sentiment and violence hindered their use of public sace. One older adult said, "Asians are in danger these days. Hearing that it's dangerous makes me nervous. I want to go to the park, there's a park near here. But I'm fearful, I can't go in peace. I don't feel good. Exercise works when your mind is at peace; but I'm always on guard, so it doesn't feel good." Participants in this same focus group expressed fear of racialized others in the neighborhood. For some older adults, fear of injury diminished their confidence walking and visiting certain neighborhood areas and parks. One female older adult shared, "Yeah, I am afraid because of my age. I know that if they push me a little bit, they can send me like ten feet away. So that's why I'm scared of walking."

"In MacArthur there are always, it pains me to say, but there are gang members, there are drug addicts there, homeless, people whom you do not want to meet. As an older person, [I feel that] with a little push you could knock me down and take away what I have. So, mostly for safety reasons, I don't visit that park now."

-Older Adult, Female

Youth also expressed fear and discomfort in response to certain park conditions (trash, low lighting, restrooms, presence of unhoused individuals) as well as user behaviors (crowding, unwanted attention, erratic behavior), particularly in MacArthur Park. Past personal experiences of harassment and assault contributed to anticipatory fears. Other youth experienced gender-based fears, noting how the experience of the parks was different and more threatening for women. One female youth participant shared, "It's a little different living as a woman than as a man, just because we run the risk of certain things more than men do. So it is a little scarier for women."

Perceptions of safety were strongly influenced by the time of the day. Amongst both youth and older adults, daytime was associated with feelings of safety and comfort; they noted increased visibility and the presence of others as contributing factors. An older adult participant shared, "I only go [to the park] during the daytime... I don't feel safe at night," and a youth participant shared, "Especially at MacArthur, if I go there in the dark, it feels unsafe, because in the dark, it's like for people who do drugs, like they go out there more at dark times rather than in day time." Another youth participant noted that MacArthur Park is improved and feels safer during the daylight hours, when more women and children are present.
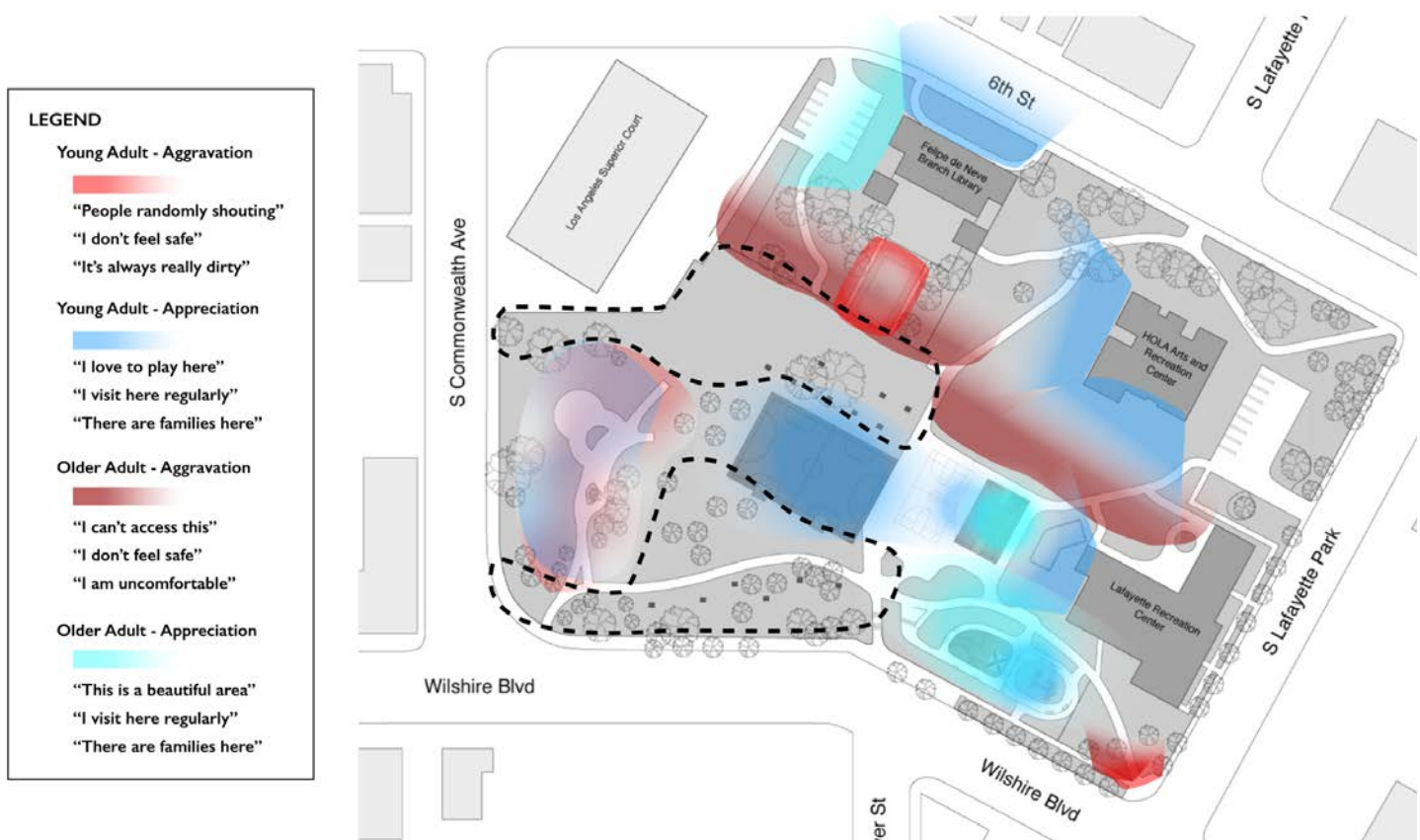
Decline
There was a sense among many participants that things were better in earlier days, in terms of the social and physical quality of the parks. Several older adult participants who had lived in the neighborhood for several decades felt that the parks used to be more pleasant. Speaking about MacArthur Park several decades ago, one older woman said: "at that time, it was a very nice experience because I would go with my grandchildren to the park, we played, this was like, a little quieter and cleaner...Unfortunately, now it is no longer– it's different, there is no longer so much tranquility, because it has been contaminated...But before, the truth is that MacArthur Park– it is very beautiful with that fountain that it has, it is beautiful, really, it is beautiful." Even youth, who had shorter memories of the neighborhood, recalled hearing from family members about a time when the parks were better, and often shared the perception that conditions in the parks had declined over time.

Scenes from MacArthur Park

LAFAYETTE PARK BEHAVIOR MAP

LEGEND

Young Adult - Aggravation

"People randomly shouting"
"I don't feel safe"
"It's always really dirty"

Young Adult - Appreciation

"I love to play here"
"I visit here regularly"
"There are families here"

Older Adult - Aggravation

"I can't access this"
"I don't feel safe"
"I am uncomfortable"

Older Adult - Appreciation

"This is a beautiful area"
"I visit here regularly"
"There are families here"

"After the pandemic started I didn't go to parks and such because of the environment. I like exercising but I couldn't go to the YMCA. So I just walked in the streets."

-Youth Participant, Female

BEHAVIORS

Preferred activities

Focus groups, thick mapping, and interviews revealed that many participants gravitate towards public spaces with a level of familiarity, predictability, and with features that accommodate their needs and interests. Youth participants were more likely to share an interest in sports and active recreation, and often preferred programmed spaces in the parks, such as the soccer field, playground, and basketball courts, over unprogrammed spaces. Lafayette Park was where one youth participant scored their first goal in soccer, another went to play basketball, and another enjoyed riding his scooter or simply walking around. Amongst older adults, exercising, walking, and people watching were popular activities in the parks. One older adult shared, "I always go to the park that is on the corner of Wilshire [MacArthur Park]. On Wilshire, there are some stairs, many stairs that go up and down and I like to go down and up on the stairs to do exercise." Another older adult participant visited Lafayette Park on the weekends, "To go watch the people…There is a kiosk, and people would go in their traditional clothing to dance. Things like that. It is very pretty."
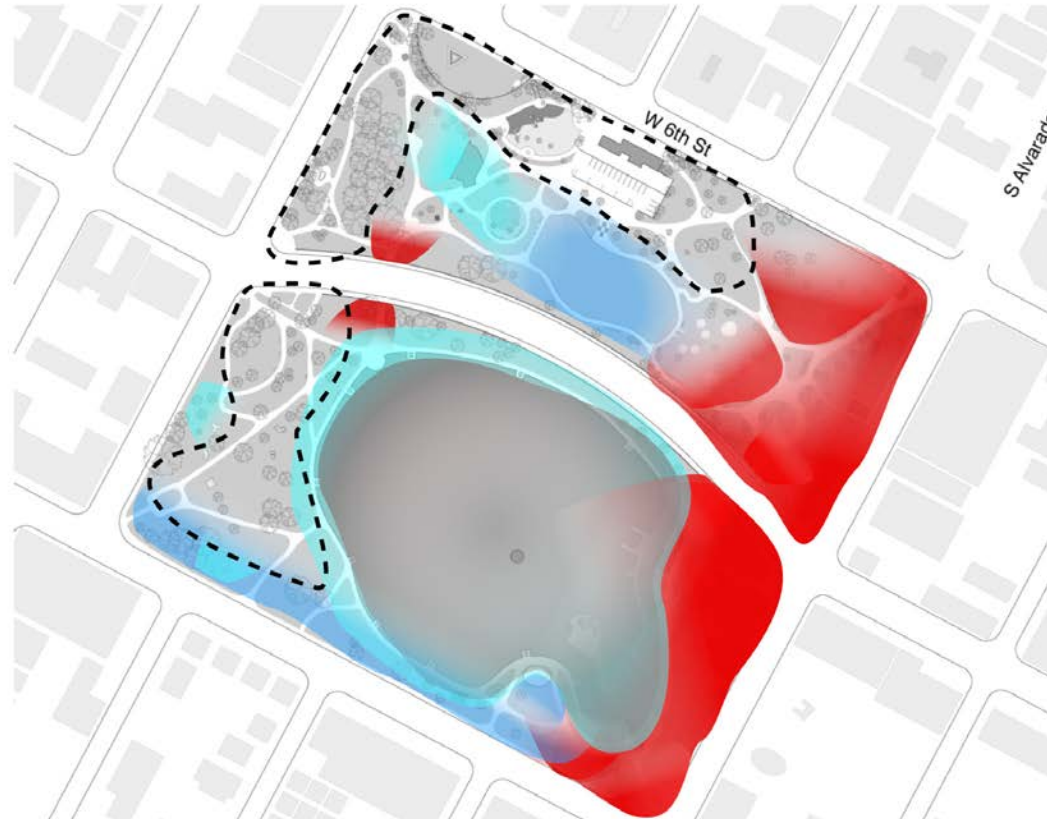
Pandemic-related changes

The pandemic was a significant factor influencing behaviors and activities in parks and public spaces for both youth and older adults. While some older adults incorporated mask wearing and physical distancing and continued

LEGEND

Young Adult - Aggravation

"People randomly shouting"
"I don't feel safe"
"It's always really dirty"

Young Adult - Appreciation

"I love to play here"
"I visit here regularly"
"There are families here"

Older Adult - Aggravation

"I can't access this"
"I don't feel safe"
"I am uncomfortable"

Older Adult - Appreciation

"This is a beautiful area"
"I visit here regularly"
"There are families here"

"I like going to the second half of MacArthur Park. Not where the lagoon is, but where the soccer field is. I try to avoid that other half."

-Youth Participant, Male

to visit the parks, most expressed that the pandemic had prevented them from visiting parks they enjoyed. One older adult participant who hiked Griffith Park every Saturday said, "After the pandemic started I didn't go to parks and such because of the environment. I like exercising but I couldn't go to the YMCA. So I just walked in the streets." For many older adults, the experience of the pandemic changed not only their relationship to public spaces, but life in general, becoming less active and more isolated. Given the challenges presented by the pandemic, simply being outdoors was noteworthy and often sparked strong positive feelings amongst older adults. Participants appreciated the excitement of observing activity in the neighborhood and in the parks, as well as experiencing nature, "feel[ing] the warmth of the sun," and "breathing fresh air," along with the possibility of "see[ing] people you recognize, and say 'hello.' I like it!"

Many youth reported spending more time at home as a result of the pandemic. Some visited parks less frequently, while others adjusted their activities to visit different parks or at different times to avoid crowding. One male youth participant shared, "I sometimes also go with my dad and sister to the park, and my mom. We go to Elysian Park. We go there, because it's very big, it's very spacious. And that's pretty good. Especially right now." Some youth expressed disappointment with their inability to visit parks and participate in extracurricular activities during the pandemic, as well as concern about

increased time spent indoors and behind screens. As one participant said, "We used to always walk, we always went outside [to play] but now we're inside -- online school, more computers, more devices, which is unhealthy. But I mean, that's the truth now, so that's my life."

Aging out of use
Despite fond memories of playing in parks as young children, for many youth, their relationship to the parks had changed over time, visiting less frequently as they grew older. This "aging out of use" was attributed to changing activity preferences, other life priorities, and park features that were tailored to the needs of younger children and no longer appealed to the interests of older youth. As one male participant stated, "When I was way younger, I used to go to the park frequently. But I was busy with school and I had to return home." Another agreed: "I used to play in a soccer team. Not anymore. It was a lot of time, like two years ago. I used to go, but then I didn't go anymore because I had more stuff and a lot of things to do." Another youth shared how the playground in Lafayette Park no longer held his interest: "When quarantine wasn't there, I'd go on the playground. But I'm not that interested in the playground anymore."

Caution and avoidance
Concerns over cleanliness, odors, graffiti, the presence of homeless people, past negative experiences in the parks and interactions with other park users, or a perceived lack of safety influenced how and when youth visited the parks. Some youth reported a lack of desire to visit the parks, while others adopted more cautious behaviors or actively avoided certain spaces, conditions, and times, including after dark. Several youth shared how past negative experiences in the parks shaped their behavior, adopting more caution and keeping a safe distance from other park users and crowds for fear of harassment. Other youth reported avoiding particular spaces within the parks, including the south portion of MacArthur Park, which features less programmed space, allowing for people to linger and relax around the periphery. This has served as a deterrent for one participant who said, "I like going to the second half of MacArthur Park. Not where the lagoon is, but where the soccer field is. I try to avoid that other half."

Similar caution and avoidance behaviors were present in the discussions amongst older adults. Several of them reported avoiding certain parks and spaces in response to a number of concerns, including a lack of cleanliness, fear of harassment and assault (particularly for Korean older adults) and fear of unhoused people. One Korean older adult stated: "I was reading the paper the other day, and it said to walk a certain amount each day. I walk, I do want to walk, but it's dangerous, that's why I walk in the parking lot." Speaking of the tunnel in MacArthur Park, one older adult shared, "This tunnel. I loved to go there. But now, not anymore. I don't do it even if they pay me. I don't go there because it's too dangerous. People that stay there, they are selling drugs; it's dangerous. to go there." One older adult participant noted her gender playing a role in the precautions she took, sharing that she was not comfortable going out without another person, and simply would not go to the park because of this. Another participant noted that she avoided travelling too far from her home alone because of safety concerns.

RELATIONSHIPS

Participants' relationships to the parks were influenced by their social networks and relationships with family and friends, institutions such as school, places of worship, and community organizations. The importance of these networked relationships cannot be understated.

Family and friends
Memories of time spent with family and friends featured prominently in youth participants' reflections about the parks. Speaking of Lafayette park, one youth participant shared, "...my uncles always rented out the soccer field... and then I just sit there in the shade. Just watch them play. So it's my favorite memory. Just spending time with my uncles." Having grown up near MacArthur Park, another youth participant had many memories of visiting the park as a young child, and as a result, felt deeply connected to the park today: "I guess, the parks are like a home; just because I have so many memories there. And like, the area and the neighborhood, it's basically where I grew up, and I'm growing up. So yeah, I guess it's all part of me and my identity." A sense of nostalgia was also shared by other youth when reflecting on their relationships to the parks. In response to the question What role do parks play in your life and in the lives of your family?, one male youth participant said: "I would definitely say memories. I feel like that's very important. Because I remember...when I was little, I went to the park with my family...I vaguely remember going to the park with my mom and dad, you know, just chilling by myself sometimes, or meeting some random other kids."

"I would go with children so I was constantly watching out for the kids more than enjoying the park. When you go alone or with adult friends, you can have a little bit more leisure to enjoy the park. But when you're taking someone else's child, your eyes are on the children"

-Older Adult, Female

Many older adults recalled visiting the parks with family, particularly children and grandchildren, to play or walk or for events such as birthdays, picnics, and religious celebrations. For some, caregiving relationships were central to their experiences in parks. One participant, who had spent 45 years working as a nanny, recalled how this role shaped how she understood and experienced the parks. "I was a nanny to celebrities for 45 years. So I was always very active with children and in all the local parks of the neighborhoods that I worked in and lived in." The same participant shared, "I would go with children so I was constantly watching out for the kids more than enjoying the park. When you go alone or with adult friends, you can have a little bit more leisure to enjoy the park. But when you're taking someone else's child, your eyes are on the children." Another participant recalled accompanying her daughter and friends to the park: "When my daughter was tiny, I would take all of her friends. I would take care of the children in the building so that they were not running in the building, and so I would take them to the park. I would take like eight or nine kids to the park to play."

Group vs. individual use
Youth participants were more likely to frame visiting the park as "a group thing," suggesting that visiting parks and public spaces alone was not a preferred experience. Several youth suggested that visiting the park with others was more comfortable and safe than visiting alone. Conversely, many older adults visited the parks primarily alone. For some, this lack of company was portrayed negatively: "I used to walk with my friend for about 20 years. But that friend moved to Palos Verdes so now I go alone. It's boring walking alone. It's nice to walk with others." The opportunity to visit the park with friends was a motivating factor for some older adults. One older adult participant who had not been to Golden Age Park suggested that she might visit the park, if she had "somebody to go with me."
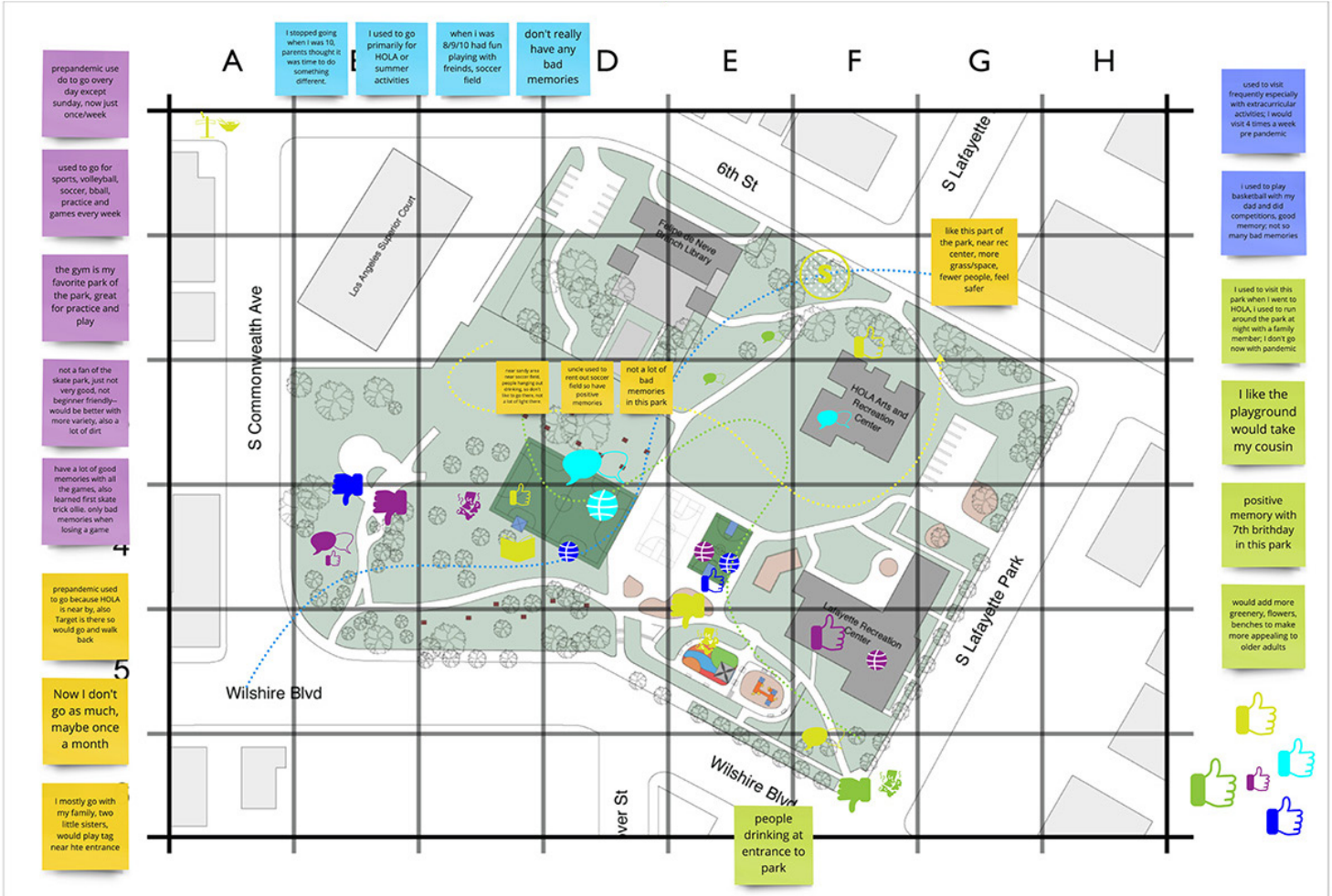
In-process thick map of Lafayette Park via Miro

Community organizations

Connections to community organizations were a major factor influencing how youth and older adults connected to the neighborhood parks. Given the proximity to Lafayette Park, HOLA was frequently mentioned by youth participants in relation to their park use. When asked about how often she went to the park, one participant offered, "I go to the park every time I go to HOLA." Relationships with HOLA staff and students supported the formation of positive relationships to some public spaces, particularly Lafayette Park, amongst youth. Connecting HOLA with familiarity to the park and a sense of home, one participant shared, "I just really like [Lafayette Park] now. And every time I go there, I actually want to look at it more, because I've had so many experiences since the beginning of HOLA. And it just feels more like home." Similarly, St. Barnabas Senior Services (SBSS) was frequently referenced by older adults in relation to their experiences and interactions in neighborhood parks.

Some participants had been introduced to Golden Age Park through community programs facilitated by SBSS and HOLA. A youth participant recounted how a HOLA photography exercise offered her an opportunity to visit the park. One older adult participant recounted her experience visiting the park for the first time after seeking out directions from staff at SBSS. This participant had great appreciation for the park, and felt that others should know about it.

IDEAS + DESIRES
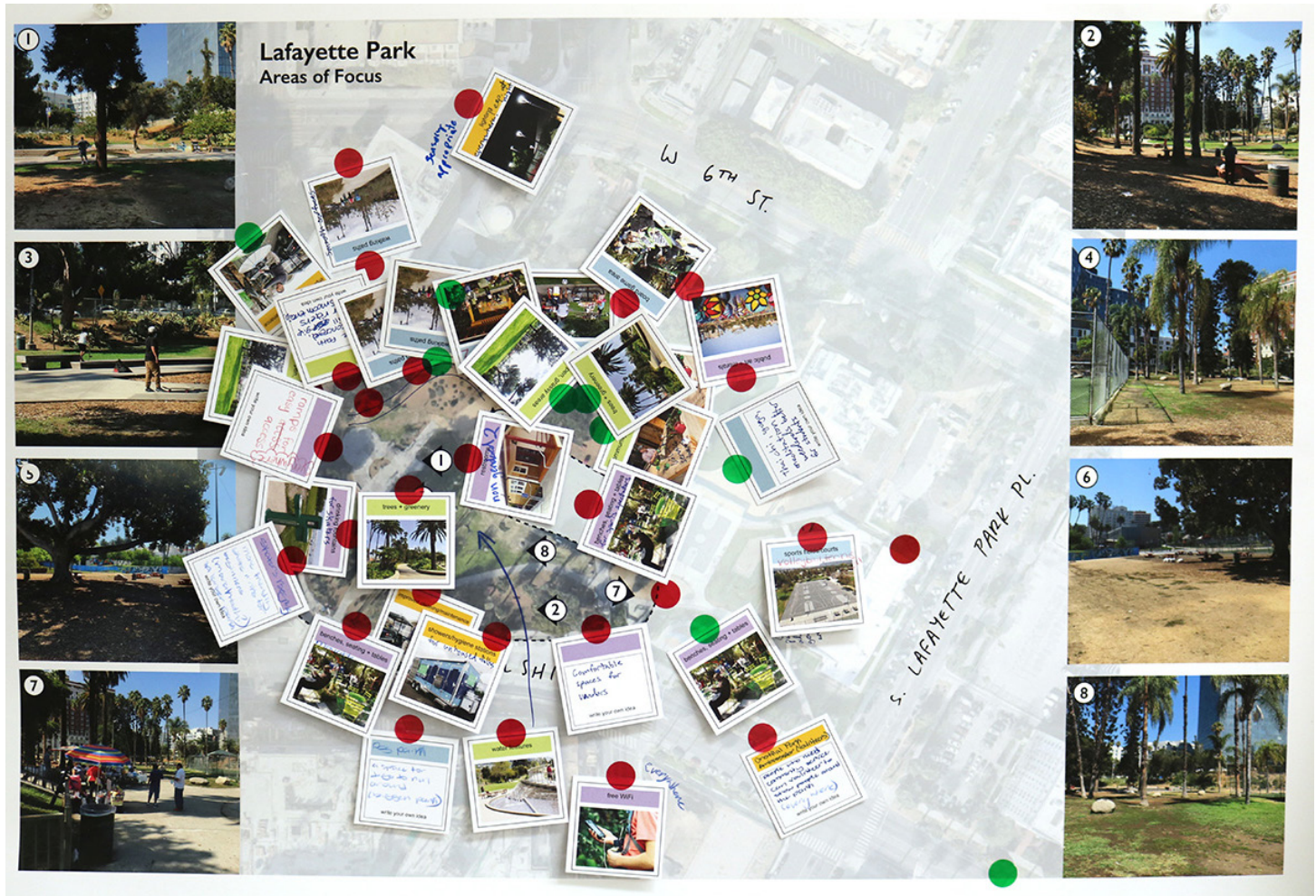
Final map of Lafayette Park produced by participants in person at the participatory design workshop.

Preferred activities and features

During the focus group activities, we polled participants on the activities they would like to see in parks. Youth expressed a preference for walking and running around the park, spending time with other youth, and playing sports and exercising. Art classes, outdoor music, reading a book, and gardening were also ranked highly by youth. Older adults' preferred activities that ranged from leisurely to more active, and included painting, reading, playing cards, as well as yoga and dance classes. The idea of simply having these activities occurring in the park was appealing to older adults, regardless of whether or not they were specifically interested in participating.

When participants were asked to rank their favorite public space features and amenities, youth ranked proximity of public transportation, shaded areas, walking paths, being surrounded by greenery (trees, plants, flowers) and nature (e.g. birds, squirrels), as well as BBQ areas, nearby food facilities, restrooms, and playgrounds highly. In addition to restrooms and drinking fountains, ample seating areas and public grilling areas were popular among most older adult participants. The inclusion of free WiFi to the park's infrastructure was one area of inconsistency amongst older adults, as some were in favor of keeping up with the advances in technology, while others preferred to maintain a respite from screens in the outdoor public environment. Interestingly, WiFi did not appear to be an item of strong preference amongst youth.

"Cleanliness is something that inspires people and motivates people to actually be more inclusive in the parks, because they know it's safe for the family, if they're a family, or it's more safe for them."

- Youth Participant, Male

Cleanliness and safety

Participants emphasized the need for cleaner and better maintained parks. Youth suggested a number of strategies to improve cleanliness, including new park features (e.g. more waste receptacles), park programs (e,g., educational campaigns), and park maintenance activities (e.g., increased cleaning, particularly in restrooms). One youth participant suggested that park cleanliness may have broader benefits such as inclusion: "cleanliness is something that inspires people and motivates people to actually be more inclusive in the parks, because they know it's safe for the family, if they're a family, or it's more safe for them." Another youth participant suggested in an interview that, ""I feel we can start by tackling the minor issues such as, maybe garbage, and then start working out to the bigger issues like homelessness and poverty."

Youth also emphasized a desire for enhanced safety and security in the parks, with the goal to make spaces that are comfortable for all users and "family-friendly". Suggestions included improving lighting at night, improving the perimeter conditions of the park by adding fencing, and enhancing security measures overall. As one male participant stated, "MacArthur Park I don't think has gates, so it's more free. That's why there are a lot of more shady things. And there are a lot more people....so maybe if they put more security towards the park, it could be a little more family-friendly for everyone." Safety and security was not a point of consensus amongst youth, however, with some suggesting that less police activity is needed: "you see helicopters just flying around. Yeah. blinking lights. Sirens."

"I feel we can start by tackling the minor issues such as, maybe garbage, and then start working out to the bigger issues like homelessness and poverty."

- Youth Participant, Male

Other more general improvements suggested by youth included improved lighting, greenery, benches, walking trails, and gardens. One youth suggested enhanced services and outreach in the parks: "I feel like every park should have a central hub or something like that, where staff would be there always trying to help these people who are new to the park or offer some programs."

In terms of general park improvements, older adults emphasized a need for improved safety measures to allay their fears of danger and uncertainty, including physical interventions like gates, lights, and security guards, as well as intangible changes such as set park hours. To address security issues in the parks, one older woman suggested more maintenance and erecting a fence around the park: "I would say, [improve] maintenance in that park. And if that park were taken care of, it would be beautiful. Like putting up an area for children, an area for young people and designing that park...I would put up a fence. I do not know how you could secure that park." The idea that more "surveillance" is needed to improve conditions in the parks was shared by several participants. "So, there should be a little more surveillance so that people feel shame and educate those people so that they do not make the same mistake again. Because there are children there." "Shame," according to this participant, should be felt by those park users observed to be drinking and loitering in the park, behaviors this participant perceived to be deviant.
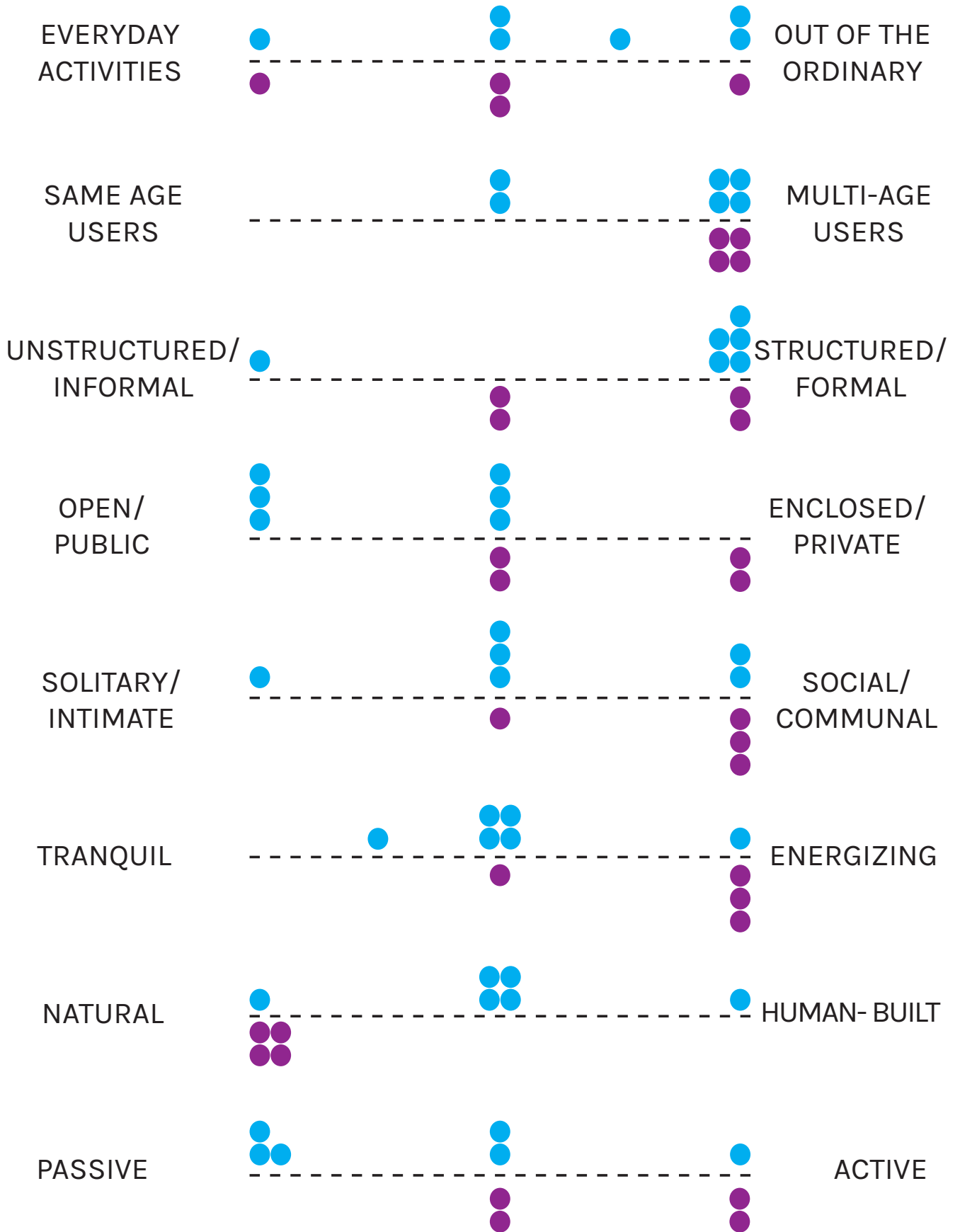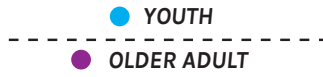
Trash and water damage at MacArthur Park

"I would say, [improve] maintenance in that park. And if that park were taken care of, it would be beautiful. Like putting up an area for children, an area for young people and designing that park...I would put up a fence. I do not know how you could secure that park."

-Older Adult, Female

It is notable that, during the participatory design exercise, homelessness in the neighbourhood remained an absolutely central concern for participants in the online group, which consisted only of older adult participants, whereas within the in-person group, which included both youth and older adult participants, homelessness emerged as an issue but was not the primary focus of the conversation. The in-person group was more eager to discuss aesthetic and programming changes that could improve the parks and, in turn, the neighborhood. This suggests the possibility of intergenerational conversations between youth and older adults in framing discussions about homelessness differently than conversations amongst older adults only.

Improved mobility and accessibility was a key desire expressed by several older adult participants, and a particular issue for people in wheelchairs. Improved amenities like safe and clean restrooms, drinking fountains, seating areas, and walking paths were also highlighted as features that would enable older adults to stay at the park for as long as they would like. More seating, park rangers, park programming, and additional parking were all seen as actionable tasks that would attract older adults to the parks. Other older adults suggested adding culturally specific amenities: "I would make some very beautiful pathways with flowers. Then, a coffee shop. Why not? To go have a coffee or an agua fresca."

PARTICIPANT PARK PREFERENCES

- YOUTH
- OLDER ADULT

EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES — OUT OF THE ORDINARY

SAME AGE USERS — MULTI-AGE USERS

UNSTRUCTURED/ INFORMAL — STRUCTURED/ FORMAL

OPEN/ PUBLIC — ENCLOSED/ PRIVATE

SOLITARY/ INTIMATE — SOCIAL/ COMMUNAL

TRANQUIL — ENERGIZING

NATURAL — HUMAN-BUILT

PASSIVE — ACTIVE

By pairing images and descriptive phrases, participants were not only able to indicate their park preferences but were equipped with a collective vocabulary to communicate their ideas and desires about the parks in the later portions of the workshop.

Intergenerational parks

After learning about Golden Age Park and about intergenerational parks in general through the research activities, youth participants were overwhelmingly in favor of parks being available to all user groups, and expressed enthusiasm for the idea of intergenerational parks as shared spaces for youth of all ages and older adults. As one female youth participant put it, "It's nice to have a whole diversity of age groups. I think that would be interesting to see. You don't see that every day." Overall, participants supported the concept of providing spaces that account for the needs of diverse age groups, as exemplified by this statement from a male youth participant: "It's a very thoughtful idea. Because, you know... a standard park only has the playground." Another male participant emphasized how intergenerational parks could contribute to a sense of community: "more people can feel more welcome to the park, motivated to go to the park and feel welcome in their community, because they know that they're thinking of them. Kids are important, too. But we're all a community. And I guess we should all feel welcome into a park. "

Older adults were also excited with the idea that park space might be designed to be more inclusive of diverse age groups. When asked about the prospect of intergenerational park use, one older adult participant shared, "I don't have any grandchildren or anything, so I would really love the interaction." Several participants felt that intergenerational spaces could offer opportunities for people watching, with one participant stating, "I think positively about that concept...It's just nice to watch children." Another older adult shared, "It is great happiness. And I so much enjoy to see the children play. Because one used to play like that and wants to see the children, the youth of today, to see them play like that." However, one older adult participant was more skeptical about the potential for non-familial intergenerational interaction in parks: "I don't think I like that stuff, with my personality. I don't like to do that kind of thing...I think it would be difficult to mix seniors and children. The thought is nice, but to actually do it, I think it'll be difficult...Do children like old people? They may like their own grandmas and grandpas, but they can't like other grandmas and grandpas. Given their psychology. I think that'd be difficult...Kids these days are so sensitive."

Preferred park qualities

During the participatory design workshop, youth and older adult participants were asked to identify their preferred park qualities on a series of continua, shown in slides. Each continuum included phrases and accompanying images to represent various environmental dichotomies. By pairing images and descriptive phrases, participants were not only able to indicate their park preferences but were equipped with a collective vocabulary to communicate their ideas and desires about the parks in the later portions of the workshop. Participants were given a voting sheet consisting of eight continua, each featuring a scale of contrasting park qualities, and were asked to indicate their preferences ranging from 1-3. The full results, color-coded by age group, are shown in the figure in the previous page.

Overall, both younger and older participants shared a preference for parks that encouraged everyday visits, rather than out of the ordinary visits. In terms of intergenerational attributes, all but two participants preferred parks suitable for users of multiple ages, rather than single-age users. In fact, this attribute garnered the greatest consensus among participants. The majority of participants in both age groups preferred formal parks, or spaces with specific programmatic and design features to informal park spaces. More older participants preferred enclosed spaces, while more younger participants preferred open spaces. This continuum yielded the most even division of preferences among participants, distinguished by age. More participants voted for social spaces than solitary spaces in the park, with older adults showing a stronger preference for social spaces than youth. Similarly, and somewhat surprisingly, more older participants than younger participants preferred active park spaces, over tranquil park spaces. All older participants preferred natural park spaces, while more youth preferred something in between natural and built spaces in the parks. Surprisingly, the only votes for passive park spaces were by younger participants.

Final map of Lafayette Park produced by participants in person at the participatory design workshop.

In some cases, the preferences of one age group on a particular continuum appeared to be in conflict with the preferences of the same group on another, related continuum. For example, older adults expressed a preference for enclosed/private park spaces over open/public spaces, but later expressed preference for social/communal spaces over solitary/intimate spaces. Again, older adults preferred structured/formal spaces to unstructured/ informal spaces but also preferred natural spaces to human-built spaces. These seemingly contradictory preferences raise a number of questions relevant to the design of public spaces to meet user needs. For example, how can spaces be both social and enclosed? Additionally, what does both a structured and formal natural environment look like? The results from this exercise also indicate that though participants fall within a similar age range, their preferences may vary. In order to design for intergenerational use, public spaces must meet various needs and satisfy different choices. For example, a park should have both more private and enclosed settings, as well as settings that can accommodate more social and communal uses.

Intergenerational activities and features
Participants had many ideas for intergenerational activities that could involve both younger and older adults. Youth suggested table games and playgrounds with play features that appeal to users of all ages. Gardens were mentioned by several youth participants as a possible feature to appeal to older adults and tap into their memories and sense of nostalgia. A participant stated, "With all the green space they have in the park, we could utilize it for flowers because older generations, I've heard they just always talk about how there were a lot of trees where they used to live, and now it's a city and they might miss it a lot."

"I would like a park with areas for children, for seniors, and for young people. I would like a park that is for the family and enjoy having a cafeteria. Older adults can play dominoes. They can play shuffleboard. Teens can play basketball. Young children can be slippery on swings, playgrounds...And [older people can] sit and watch the children play."

-Older Adult, Female

Older adults suggested physical improvements, including more age-appropriate exercise machines and recreation activities for youth, such as soccer fields, as well as vegetable gardens and BBQ pits for older adults. Ideas for social programming included yoga, music, and dance classes, concerts, games (though not illicit games that involve gambling), art activities and intergenerational language learning programs: "Children also speak English very well. So I can learn English from them. I think this is a good idea." One older adult expressed her desires as follows: "I would like a park with areas for children, for seniors and for young people. I would like a park that is for the family and enjoy having a cafeteria. Older adults can play dominoes. They can play shuffleboard. Teens can play basketball. Young children can be slippery on swings, playgrounds...And [older people can] sit and watch the children play."

During the participatory design exercise, participants were eager to engage and had quite a lot to say about the kinds of tools that would be most useful in creating desirable park spaces. Much of the conversation about MacArthur Park centered on the issue of homelessness and what to do about it, including perceived impacts on the safety, cleanliness, and maintenance of the park. Participants were encouraged to think about solutions and tools that simultaneously accommodated the needs of unhoused folks as well as other park users. However, some participants were less eager to discuss particular physical or programmatic enhancements in the parks, and expressed doubt that such efforts could make meaningful improvements to the parks, in the absence of efforts to address homelessness. The conversation about Lafayette Park broadly discussed physical and programmatic changes that could improve the park for all users. There was some consensus around the desire for safer, well-maintained park spaces with trees and greenery and open grassy areas, as well as for the addition of restroom facilities and drinking fountains to make the parks more comfortable for all users and older adults, in particular.

After learning about Golden Age Park, both youth and older adults appreciated the range of activities that this park can accommodate, and some of the park's quieter, more solitary activities for both youth and older adults. The park's small size was appreciated by some as contributing to its cleanliness and maintenance, while others, in particular the youth participants, wished the park were larger. The lack of restroom facilities was a key concern for older adults, who felt this absence of facilities, in combination with Golden Age Park's location away from their home, would prevent them from using the park comfortably. These participants suggested adding restrooms, including hand wash stations, and voiced continued concern about the maintenance and cleanliness of any restroom facilities added.

Improved lighting to enable use of the park after dark and at dusk was one desire expressed by a youth participant: "I also wish there was a lot of lighting, because we weren't able to go [to the park] at some point. Like we were supposed to go at a certain time but it really got dark, so we couldn't go, as there's not a lot of lighting there. And there are a lot of trees so at night it's a bit too dark. So I wish there had been lights." A better maintained community garden was another desire expressed by participants, with one youth suggesting that community garden maintenance could provide a meaningful volunteer opportunity for youth to earn required community service hours. An older adult participant expressed a desire for more people to use the park, particularly older adults. "I want to see the "golden age" people visit the park."

06
DISCUSSION

CREATING INTERGENERATIONAL PUBLIC SPACES IN DISINVESTED NEIGHBORHOODS

In this section, we discuss the implications of our research findings for creating and sustaining intergenerational public spaces in disinvested neighborhoods. The discussion is organized into four themes: 1) the importance of public space in disinvested neighborhoods; 2) safety and inclusivity; 3) complementarity and choice; and 4) the role of community organizations. Collectively, the findings broadly suggest that there is a need for both new intergenerational public spaces, as well as a need to better maintain and enhance existing spaces that already possess intergenerational qualities in the Westlake/MacArthur Park Neighborhood.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SPACE IN DISINVESTED NEIGHBORHOODS

The findings of this research reinforce the idea that public spaces provide essential outdoor recreation and social outlets for residents, especially children and older adults living in small apartments in dense inner city neighborhoods (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2016; Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009).

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on the use of public spaces. As mentioned earlier, the inherent risk of encountering others in public spaces during COVID-19 led many participants to avoid them, particularly before vaccines were widely available. Older adults in particular expressed their reluctance to visit parks, citing a lack of social distancing and mask wearing by other park users. Both older adults and youth indicated a desire to return to fully utilizing outdoor public spaces, as well as other venues that facilitate social activities like those provided by HOLA and SBSS.

As a coping strategy, several participants shared that they would visit other, larger parks that exist outside of their neighborhood like Griffith Park and Elysian Park, where it is easier to maintain social distance, and where the parks tend to be cleaner and better maintained. Another coping strategy was to use online platforms to engage with friends, family, and others

Collectively, the findings broadly suggest that there is a need for new intergenerational public spaces, as well as a need to better maintain and enhance existing spaces that already possess intergenerational qualities in the Westlake/MacArthur Park Neighborhood.

outside of their immediate household. Both HOLA and SBSS have adapted some of their own programming to online formats, allowing participants to participate virtually via Zoom or UberConference.

Participants' creative coping strategies support the idea that "public space" in Westlake/MacArthur Park is more than the physical parks themselves. Residents of the neighborhood rely on their extended social networks constructed by family members, friends, and community-based organizations like HOLA and SBSS to create a sense of belonging, mutual support, and active, recreation-filled lifestyle. The parks serve as platforms to support these relationships and are in turn shaped by them, but during the pandemic many participants turned towards indoor activities and sought creative, online ways to sustain community and remain physically and socially active.

Yet it is not always easy for participants to find alternative outlets to outdoor public spaces. In terms of online engagement, some participants, particularly older adults, often struggled to either access online technologies or learn how to use them consistently. Some older adult participants seemed to suggest that they would simply wait until spaces like SBSS fully re-opened. In terms of visiting other, larger parks like Griffith Park and Elysian Parks, some participants do not have access to private transportation that can take them the longer distance to these parks, nor is it always convenient given the extra time needed to make the trip and coordinate work and school schedules. These findings reinforce the importance of a neighborhood network of safe, accessible public spaces for the health, wellbeing, and social engagement of residents of all ages in densely populated, low-income neighbourhoods, particularly in the context of a global pandemic.

Scenes from Golden Age Park

SAFETY + INCLUSIVITY

Safety, a typical concern for many residents of disinvested neighborhoods, emerged as a key determining factor in conditioning participants' relationships to the public spaces in Westlake/MacArthur Park. Feelings of safety are influenced by both the physical conditions of public spaces as well as their social characteristics. Inclusivity emerged as a related theme given that many participants expressed feeling unwelcome in public spaces due to their race, gender, or age.

In nearly every conversation with participants, both youth and older adults expressed the perception that lack of safety was a challenge in the neighborhood at large and in particular public space settings, most prominently on the southeastern section of MacArthur Park and at night in all the parks. This strong perception of lack of safety affects participants' behaviors in public spaces, often leading them to avoid their use, or only visit them under certain conditions (with family, going to programmed classes or activities) or times (only during daytime). This was paired with a strong desire to address issues of safety through a combination of policies, programming, and design. Only Golden Age Park was exempt from participants' concerns over cleanliness, maintenance, and the presence of unhoused individuals, which can largely be explained by the park's newness, but also its small size, more enclosed nature, better maintenance, and the fact that only a few people know about and use this park.

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The perceived lack of safety in Lafayette Park, and to a greater degree in MacArthur Park, can be attributed to both the social and physical elements of the parks. The presence of unhoused individuals and gangs contributes most prominently to participants' feeling unsafe in these parks. The issue of homelessness was the most frequently mentioned and emphasized during our discussions, particularly with older adults. Their responses reflect, on the one hand, a wider social stigma around houselessness that associates the experience of being unhoused with deviant behaviors such as laziness, drug use, crime, and lack of cleanliness. On the other hand, some participants expressed genuine concern for those who are unhoused, and wished that the city would find a permanent shelter for them.

We emphasize here that the findings of this research do not support the idea that unhoused individuals should be forcibly removed from public spaces, an idea that is currently en vogue at many municipalities across the United States and is also shaping policies at the City of Los Angeles. The issue of homelessness is not one that can be reduced to the question of how to design intergenerational public spaces (the focus of this research), but is rather a larger social issue facing the wider Los Angeles region and tied to more structural issues such as a widespread shortage of affordable housing. Rather, our findings merely suggest that the presence of unhoused individuals in public spaces creates discomfort for several research participants, and therefore leads to avoidance of public settings where unhoused individuals are present, such as the corner of Alvarado and 7th street at MacArthur Park.

The issue of safety was also related to gender and race. Participants who identified as women referenced their gender as a reason why they felt unsafe visiting parks and leaving their homes in general. Similarly, a participant who identified as Asian American cited the surge of anti-Asian sentiment due to the pandemic as a reason why she feared going out in public. While not specific to any of the three parks in question, these sentiments speak to the larger issues of racialized and gendered risk and discrimination in public spaces, and the need to incorporate these concerns in the design and management of public spaces.

In terms of the physical environment, the lack of cleanliness and maintenance of park infrastructure was cited as a reason why many participants avoided visiting Lafayette Park and MacArthur Park, while the lack of restrooms was mentioned by some older adults as the reason why it was difficult for them to visit Golden Age Park. Participant responses indicated that the issue of cleanliness is one that implicates both the social environment marked by the presence of unhoused individuals, and the physical environment marked by the presence of trash and a lack of facility upkeep and, in the case of MacArthur Park, foul smelling water in the lake and excrement from geese and other birds.These concerns speak to the need for investment in park cleaning and upkeep.

COMPLEMENTARITY + CHOICE

The fact that nearly all participants in this research, both young and old, expressed enthusiasm about the idea of designing public spaces not only for intergenerational use but also for intergenerational interaction is a key finding of this research. Even if a few participants expressed some skepticism that creating such intergenerational space was possible, both older adults and youth not only shared a desire for intergenerational public space, but also a shared list of approaches or "tools" for how to create such spaces. Such a wide-ranging toolkit should embolden designers and policy makers to render public spaces without the restrictive age-related assumptions that have characterized many public space projects.

For example, a park design driven by the stereotype that older adults prefer quieter, less active public spaces would ignore the desires of older adult participants in this research who also enjoy spaces of more active engagement. There are many kinds of design elements and programs that require active engagement and would appeal to both older adults and youth, such as community gardens, various kinds of recreation equipment, and walking or jogging paths. As mentioned by a couple of both older and younger participants, a coffee cart or coffee shop on the park grounds, or a hub where park staff could meet and provide services with park users, would be features that would attract intergenerational preferences.

In short, a "successful" intergenerational public space will acknowledge that older adults and youth may have some complementary needs, may enjoy similar things, even if the moment at which they desire to partake in a given activity may not be consistent.

Similarly, the stereotype that assumes that youth only want to be socially and physically engaged while in public space was proven incorrect in our discussions. We found that also youth can seek quiet spaces to read, create art, or simply be by themselves, and there are also older adults who wish to be involved in active recreation. In short, a "successful" intergenerational public space will acknowledge that older adults and youth may have some complementary needs, may enjoy similar things, even if the moment at which they desire to partake in a given activity may not be consistent. At a particular time during the day, a youth may not feel in the mood to play soccer or to get involved in gardening, and might instead wish to play card games, just as an older adult might feel inclined to do the opposite. Public spaces should strive to give different options to their younger and older users, and be able to accommodate simultaneous desires. Thus, park designers and managers should think about how activities in public spaces can complement, rather than impede one another.

This is not to suggest that age-specific park features do not exist: playgrounds for example are an important feature for children's development and allow younger children to feel engaged in public space; the provision of benches with back support and other comfortable seating opportunities are especially important for older

adults who need supportive physical infrastructure. However, one can also consider playground equipment (such as low-impact exercise machines, or electronic games and puzzles) that may be appealing to both older adults and youth. Indeed, the findings of this research counter the idea that age-specific programming and design are mutually exclusive, and support the idea that they can be complementary. For example, given that many participants enjoyed "people watching" in public space, a designer should consider how passive activities like sitting on a bench or grass are far enough away from a sports field so that two people can carry on a conversation, but are close enough so that they can observe the people playing soccer. Obviously such harmonious public space configurations are not always possible, but the idea of complementarity should imbue design approaches.

A related idea to that of complementarity is the provision of choices and options. It is not only age, but also personal tastes and cultural traits that may influence people's needs and desires for particular environmental settings. Thus, providing different options and settings at the park, for example both quiet corners for reading but also more active and social spaces, would allow a diverse array of users to enjoy it.

An afternoon in Golden Age Park

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

While participants overwhelmingly favored the idea of intergenerational public space in their neighborhood and shared similar visions for how to achieve such space, an implied barrier is the lack of programs or outlets that can foster intergenerational interaction. In the case of Golden Age Park, a barrier is that most participants did not even know the park existed. In the process of undertaking this research, staff at HOLA voluntarily led a group of participating youth to visit the park so that they could see what it was like.

SBSS and HOLA already play an outsized role in facilitating residents' social interactions, several of which occur in the neighborhood's public spaces. Participants frequently referenced their participation in activities run by SBSS and HOLA as essential to their daily routines and relationships to their neighborhood and community at-large. Nonprofit, community-based organizations such as these may be the best options for taking on a more active role in creating programs with the specific intent to bring together youth and older adults in public space settings.

HOLA's newly created Intergenerational Orchestra (IO) is an inspiring example of what this type of programming can look like. The IO brings together all age groups into a full size orchestra of varying skill levels on a weekly basis, and is set to hold its first public performance this fall. The rehearsals take place in the evenings at the newly constructed HOLA performance center, which is situated in the northeast corner of Lafayette Park, which the stage overlooks. Here, design, policy, and programming come together to create an intergenerational "stage" right in the heart of the park.

One could consider the development of MOUs and agreements between park districts and nonprofit community-based organizations, such as SBSS and HOLA, that may offer public funds to these nonprofits to organize outings and events for their underprivileged clients at the park and compensate their staff to take on such activities.

Of course, tasking organizations like HOLA and SBSS with creating additional programs to foster intergenerational activities in public spaces necessarily means added responsibilities, time, and energy for their organizations' staff, as well as an expanded mandate. But one could consider the development of MOUs and agreements between park districts and nonprofit community-based organizations, such as SBSS and HOLA, that may offer public funds to these nonprofits to organize outings and events for their underprivileged clients at the park and compensate their staff to take on such activities.

Certain types of park programming would require more active collaboration between residents, nonprofits, and city officials. The idea of a "park ambassador" as a figure who would facilitate user experiences and provide park information and a sense of security to park users was popular among participants, and would require some kind of volunteer program facilitated by the city, which could be coordinated by local organizations.

At the same time, "showers and hygiene stations" at the park to serve the needs of unhoused individuals would require the city to provide the necessary funds and personnel, perhaps through a contract with a nonprofit organization like Homeless Health Care Los Angeles.

In sum, our findings suggest that any new policy or design for improving public spaces or creating new ones should seriously consider the important and ongoing role that nonprofit organizations like SBSS and HOLA have in creating a sense of purpose and community among residents in the neighborhood. Close partnerships with such organizations is a key ingredient to not only successfully designing intergenerational public spaces, but making sure they are well kept and operational for years to come.

THE THREE PARKS AS INTERGENERATIONAL SPACES

The creation of a new park or the retrofitting of an existing park is subject to multiple financial, social, and spatial contingencies, particularly when situated in an already underinvested urban context. The results of this research help shape a vision that can foster intergenerational exchanges at different types of public spaces, and highlights some of the essential "ingredients" and promising strategies for reaching that vision. In this section, we lay out our design and policy recommendations for creating intergenerational parks, and respond to the question: How can we do better as planners, designers, architects to create more intergenerational space in neighborhoods like Westlake/MacArthur Park? We begin with general recommendations that can be applied to all three parks and to other public spaces in neighborhoods with similar social, spatial, and economic contexts that desire intergenerational public spaces. We then share recommendations specific to each of the three parks.
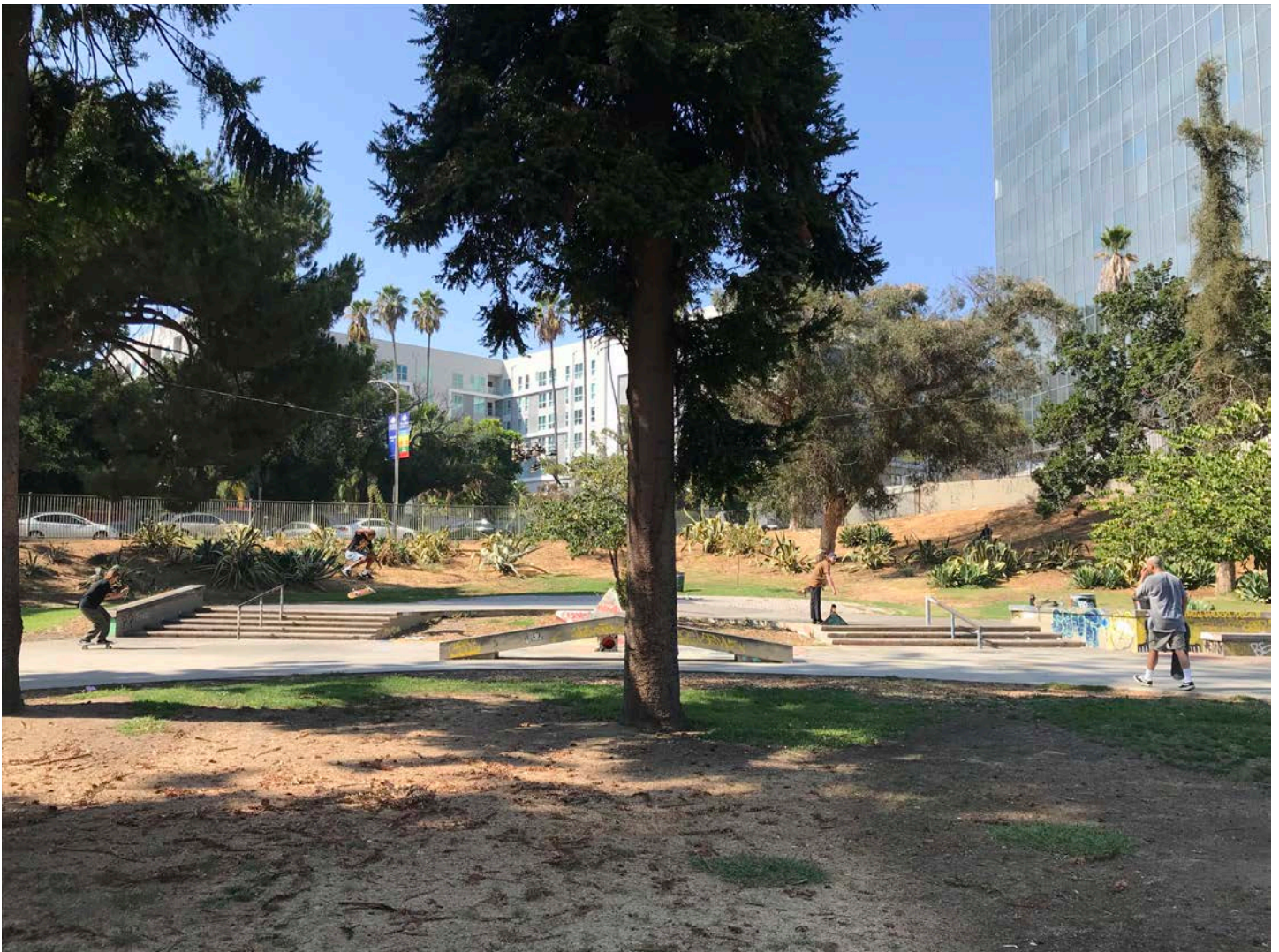

The skatepark in Lafayette Park evoked both positive and negative memories from participants.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Physical space

Improve park cleanliness: Lafayette and MacArthur Park are most in need of increased cleanliness and safety. While Golden Age Park is already regarded as 'clean' by users, maintaining park cleanliness over the long-run will be key to ensuring that users feel safe visiting the parks and have a pleasant, aesthetic experience. Adding better lighting at night would help residents feel safer in public spaces and in the neighborhood in general.
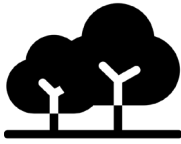
Increase shaded areas: This is key to ensuring that users, especially youth and older adults, can visit public spaces and not become uncomfortable due to the heat, especially during the summer. All three parks have some shaded areas, but would benefit from more tree coverage and other types of natural or artificial canopies.

Improve access: The sidewalks connecting all three parks with their surrounding streetscape need maintenance to ensure youth and older adults alike, particularly those with disabilities, can safely access the parks. Golden Age Park would benefit from the addition of another entrance at the back of the park connecting it to the alley.

Add new or improve existing public restrooms: Lafayette and MacArthur Park already have public restrooms but they need to be more regularly cleaned and in some cases upgraded. Golden Age Park has no restroom. Several participants suggested this would make using the park more convenient, especially for longer time periods. The provision of restrooms is especially important for older adults who often face added barriers to accessing public spaces.
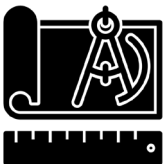
Emphasize aesthetics in public space design: Practical improvements to physical public spaces should always be pursued in tandem with aesthetic concerns over how spaces will look, feel, and smell. Design should consider the cultural context of the neighborhood and the history of the community. Finally, aesthetic choices should not be imposed from the outside but should be determined in conversation with local community members, based on their needs and desires.

Programming

Enhance programmed social activities, especially those that attract intergenerational use. Both youth and older adults expressed very positive attitudes towards the possibility of more intergenerational features and activities in neighborhood parks. These include activities like art classes, gardening, and table games. At the same time, activities that are more age specific (e.g. low-impact exercise machines versus children's play equipment) are important to ensure there is something for everyone, so that different age groups can visit and 'do their own thing' while in each others' company. Programmed activities can also help establish a sense of community and shared ownership of the park. The community garden in Golden Age Park is already one positive step in this direction.
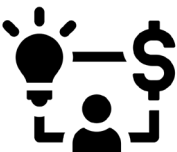
Invest in community-based organizations and services: Nonprofit organizations like SBSS and HOLA provide essential services to residents both young and old. Investments in public space should be pursued in collaboration with and alongside investments in SBSS, HOLA, and others.

MACARTHUR PARK

A vendor walks through MacArthur Park.

Improve park cleanliness and maintenance:
MacArthur Park is arguably the park most in need of addressing safety concerns due to lack of sanitation. The park needs investment in regular maintenance and cleaning services, particularly around the southwestern edge of the lake where the persistent presence of goose poop creates foul odors. The tunnels on both ends of the park are also in need of cleaning and better lighting so that users can feel safe walking in and out. The tunnels may present opportunities for the installation of public art or for programming to help connect residents to the park.
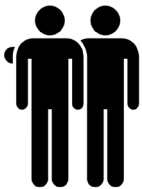
Improve park inclusivity:
The presence of unhoused individuals, combined with the fact that some participants feel unsafe due to the possibility of discrimination, suggest that the park is in need of security features designed for inclusivity. A possible step in this direction would be providing a "park ambassador" or "trust agent" to help orient park users and provide resources to unhoused folks. In addition, efforts to improve the perceived safety of MacArthur Park should be pursued in tandem with citywide efforts to increase services for unhoused folks, decriminalize thei presence in public spaces, and increase the provision of affordable housing.

Upkeep existing recreation infrastructures:
MacArthur Park is endowed with multiple recreation infrastructures in its northwestern corner, including a bandshell, workout facilities, playground, and a soccer field. Upkeeping these facilities will also support intergenerational park use.

LAFAYETTE PARK

Redesign the center of the park:
Site observations and participant interviews confirm that the center of Lafayette Park would benefit from investment and redesign to make it feel at once safer and amenable to youth and older adults. Given that Lafayette is already rich with recreation infrastructure like a skate park, a soccer field, and basketball courts, it is recommended that the center of the park is designed with more passive landscaping, including greenery, winding paths, and benches, which could attract more youth and older adults.

GOLDEN AGE PARK
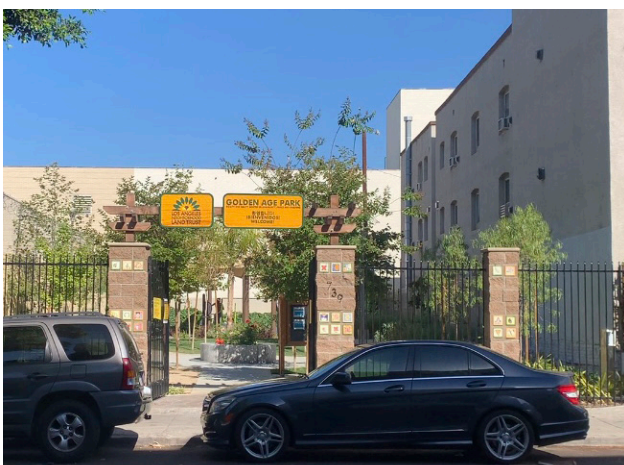
Raise awareness that the park exists:
It is important to find ways to raise awareness of this park. One possibility is to give flyers about the park to neighborhood institutions (e.g. schools, churches) and work with community based organizations like SBSS and HOLA to spread the word about the park among their constituents. Additionally, the establishment of regularly programmed activities will help to build awareness and attract more users over time.

Add wayfinding signage:
In addition to community outreach to build awareness, ensuring that on-site and off-site wayfinding signage clearly indicates that the park is open to the public and accessible may help to attract users.

07
CONCLUSION

REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERGENERATIONAL PUBLIC SPACE IN DISINVESTED NEIGHBORHOODS

The research reaffirms the importance of public space in urban areas as a site for exercise, socializing, community building, outdoor recreation, and relaxation. The amenities provided by public spaces that are well-maintained and intentionally designed carry additional importance for inner-city communities, which are predominantly lower income and lack private outdoor spaces, such as the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood. Additionally, the pandemic has reinforced the necessity of having easy access to outdoor public spaces for public health.

In response to our first research question: Which are the primary spaces of outdoor recreation for youth and older adults in the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood? We find that Lafayette and MacArthur Park, two large historic parks in Los Angeles, continue to serve as primary spaces for outdoor recreation and social connectivity for residents of the neighborhood. Golden Age Park, a newly built small park, has also the potential to become an important public space for the community; however, it is at present lesser-known due to its relatively new existence, hidden location, and small size.

In response to our second research question: How are public spaces accessed and used? What are the similarities and differences between age groups in terms of public space access and use? We find that the youth's and older adults' perceptions and use of public space are inflected by their long-term relationships to the different spaces, and are mediated through personal and family histories and their involvement with community organizations (schools, nonprofits, places of worship).

Safety emerged as a primary issue for both youth and older adults. The perception of safety is influenced by both social and physical characteristics of the public space, and has been impacted by the pandemic, which has added new worries and perceptions of insecurity.

The research also shows that there are ample opportunities for creating common grounds through these public spaces. Both youth and older adults share an appreciation and desire for both the active and passive qualities of public spaces, undermining the idea that public spaces should be age-specific and supporting the notion of an inter-

We find that Lafayette and MacArthur Park, two large historic parks in Los Angeles, continue to serve as primary spaces of outdoor recreation and social connectivity for residents of the neighborhood.

generational public space design. Both youth and older adults share an interest in designing and programming public spaces to be more intergenerationally friendly.

In response to the question: What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on the youth's and older adults' perceptions and use of public spaces in the neighborhood? Our research shows that the pandemic has impacted both age groups' use of parks and public spaces, though older adults appeared more reticent to venture outdoors than the youth. The finding that several participants sought to visit larger parks outside of their neighborhood, so as to recreate outside more safely, suggests that parks in Westlake/MacArthur Park are inadequately protected against COVID-19 transmission. Both groups have found online alternatives to the social outlets provided by outdoor spaces, yet these alternatives are not always present or even desirable.

The pandemic has exacerbated other issues, including an increase in anti-Asian hate, leading many residents of Asian heritage to further avoid public spaces for fear of discrimination and violence. The pandemic has also exacerbated homelessness, with more unhoused individuals trying to find shelters in public spaces. Some of the interviewees expressed discomfort and fear with encountering homelessness in public spaces.

Lastly, in response to the question: What are the lessons for planners and designers wishing to locate, program, and design public spaces for intergenerational use in disinvested neighborhoods, we offer the following suggestions:

- *Realize the importance of flexible public space for inner-city neighborhoods; the pandemic has brought this issue even more strongly to the fore.*

- *Pursue both physical improvements and social programming which are desirable by a community's youth and older adults so as to enhance intergenerational use of public space.*

- *Engage in partnerships with local stakeholders to foster community ownership over local public space resources, and feelings of safety. For example, HOLA's location in Lafayette Park seems to help the youth feel safe at this park.*

- *Advocate for public space improvements in tandem with anti-eviction and anti-displacement efforts and advocacy for affordable housing.*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Further research should continue the lines of investigation initiated by this study. As the pandemic winds down, additional studies should employ methods that are in-person, including onsite and in-person interaction with research participants in public spaces. While we were able to undertake site observations, we were unable to directly interact, other than remotely, with most study participants or directly observe how they use public spaces. Doing so would help verify statements collected in interviews that indicate if participants engage in intergenerational and other activities in public space. The pandemic made it challenging to conduct on-site interviews with public space users, but hopefully there will be opportunities to conduct safe, on-site and in-person research in the coming years.

By the same token, researchers should be prepared for circumstances that inhibit traditional research activities. This is more true than ever in a world that will continue to face pandemics and other crises wrought by a changing climate, political instability, and community insecurity. The "digital divide" described earlier in this report should be anticipated and responded to by ensuring that participants have access to reliable Internet and a safe space to participate in remote research activities. Relatedly, ensuring that participants are adequately compensated for their time, either through gift cards or cash cards, or other agreed upon compensation, is important for conducting ethical research in communities. In the same vein, future research should find ways to meaningfully involve community partners and their stakeholders, for whom the implications of the research are most important. These should not be "one-off" partnerships that begin and end with the grant timeline. Rather, these should be long-standing relationships with commitments by all parties involved to the terms and impacts of the project.

Additional research should continue to employ collaborative, interdisciplinary, and community-based approaches to understanding intergenerational uses of public spaces. Doing so provides a more robust analysis by situating the findings in the social, historical, and political context in which they occur. Interdisciplinary approaches also help move the research from the level of analysis to the level of action, where findings can be more readily interpreted and applied towards solutions to urban design, planning, and policy issues. At the same time community-based approaches allow researchers to hear from communities, who are the real experts "on the ground." Thus, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and community-based approaches create more opportunities to ensure researcher familiarity with the social and cultural context of the research site, and hold the potential for positive change.
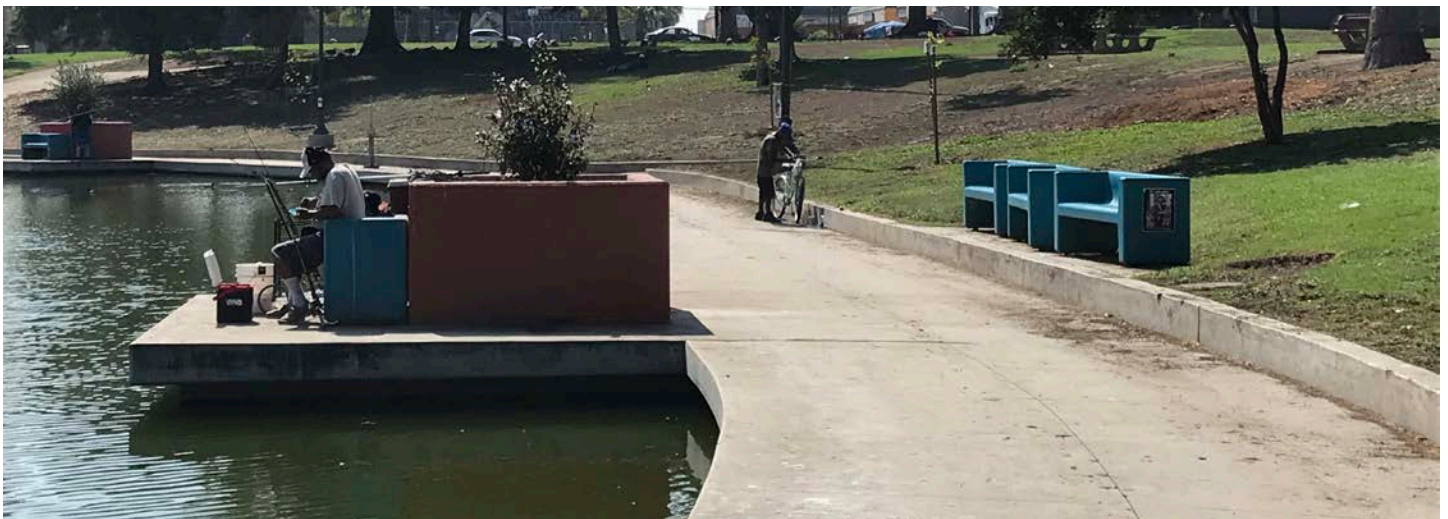
Fishing in the lake at MacArthur Park

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APPENDIX A

SITE OBSERVATION SHEET

PARK USER CHARACTERISTICS FIELDWORK SHEET

Golden Age ☐   Lafayette ☐   MacArthur ☐

Park Section #: _____

Date of Observation: _____   Time _____ Weather (temp) _____

SESSION 1

# female youth								#male youth								Total
Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		
S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	
# female >65								#male >65								
#female other ages								#male other ages								

A2: Site Observation Tally

GOLDEN AGE PARK_USER CHARACTERISTIC SHEET_SUMMARY

# female youth								# male youth								TOTAL
Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		
S	S	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	
2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	6

# female >65								# male >65								TOTAL
Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		
S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	
0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	7

# female other ages								# male other ages								TOTAL
Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		
S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	
1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	9

LAFAYETTE PARK_USER CHARACTERISTIC SHEET_SUMMARY

# female youth								# male youth								TOTAL
Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		
S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	
7	16		6		3			12	21		5	1	18	1	3	93

# female >65								# male >65								TOTAL
Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		
S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	
5	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	12	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	30

# female other ages								# male other ages								TOTAL
Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		Latino		Asian		Af-Am		White		
S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	
20	14	0	2	2	1	0	3	50	51	0	4	2	12	1	8	170

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINES

Creating Common Ground
[Youth/Older Adults] Focus Group - Exercise #
Date:
Time:
Zoom link: https://ucla.zoom.us/j/99694843139

ATTENDEES
Focus Group Facilitators:
Note taker/Zoom facilitator:
HOLA/SBSS collaborators:
Additional guests:
Participants: [age group]

Participants in attendance:

AGENDA

INTRODUCTIONS & ICE BREAKER (10-15 min)

CONVERSATION (1.5 hrs)

CONCLUSION (5-10 min)

INTRODUCTIONS & ICE BREAKER

1. Research team introduces themselves; provides overview of the study

2. Review consent and terms of participation
   a. Remind that we've spoken to parents for consent and we will be recording and then review terms
      i. record focus group [hit record]
      ii. participant rights
      iii. gift cards for your participation
3. Participants introduce themselves
   a. Tell us your name (pronouns if you'd like)
   b. How is your life different during the pandemic? Can you tell us how much you're able to go outside and enjoy parks and other public spaces?
   c. Tell us your favorite/most fun activity you like to do outside of home

CONVERSATION

Open Space Access/Use

1. Prior to the pandemic did you visit outdoor spaces such as parks? Did you often walk outdoors, around the neighborhood?
   a. How often?
   b. What kind of spaces did you visit?
2. How do you *feel* when you visit public spaces in your neighborhood? Are they mostly positive or negative feelings? Do you feel safe when you visit these spaces?
   a. Potential Positives: (may feel more empowered in space with fewer rules, like in classroom or at home)
   b. Potential Negatives: (may feel less safe/more likely to be harassed. Or perhaps there is not much for you to do in terms of activities?)
      i. [Verbal prompts: are you afraid of harassment, name-calling, gangs, police, or is it because you don't have time due to homework/other responsibilities? Or you simply don't like these spaces?]
3. What about now? Do you go to parks or other open spaces in your neighborhood? How often? More often? Less often? Why? (if they do not often visit parks, ask what prevents them from visiting them)
4. What open spaces/parks exist near your home? Do you visit them? How often?
      i. [Image prompt: show map with three parks and indicate HOLA/SBSS location]
   b. What do you like about these parks? What would you change if you could?
   c. What activities do you like to pursue in these parks/open spaces? What design features or activities/programs would make you visit them more often?
5. Do you go to the park most often alone? With your parents? Other family members (grandparents)? Friends?
6. Do you visit Golden Age Park (explain which park this is)? Lafayette Park? MacArthur Park?
      i. [Image prompt: go through plan view of each park, repeat question for each and ask participants to raise hands]
   b. If yes, how often?
   c. If no, why not?

7. Some countries are experimenting with "**intergenerational parks**" that try to offer activities for children and older adults to enjoy together. Do you like this idea? Why?
    i. [Image prompt: show image of "intergenerational use" of park]
8. If an intergenerational park was to be created at your neighborhood, will you visit it?
    a. [physical space] What types of features should such a park have to draw both you and say your grandparents together?
       i. [Image prompt: show image of each example on one slide]
    b. Can you imagine some activities at the park that help you interact with people from older ages?
       i. [three Image prompts: 1. getting on exercise machine; 2. reads a story, gives outdoor music lesson; 3. assisting with gardening, art classes, games]
9. I will name a list of outdoor activities. Please tell me which activities you enjoy or would like to see at the park *[if we run out of time, resort to voting] [create a poll]*
    a. Walking/running around the park
    b. Playing sports, exercising
    c. Watching athletic games
    d. Spending time/talking with people your age
    e. Spending time/talking with people of different ages
    f. People watching
    g. Gardening
    h. Reading a book outdoors
    i. Playing cards or other games
    j. Art/art classes outdoors
10. I will name a list of open space features. Please tell me which features you enjoy or would like to see at the park. [PICK YOUR TOP 5 activities from those listed in a slide]. *[go around and have each kid indicate the top-5 activities]*
    a. Privacy/solitude (not having other people around)
    b. Having other people around
    c. Being surrounded by greenery (trees, plants, flowers) and nature (e.g. birds, squirrels)
    d. Walking paths
    e. Shaded areas
    f. BBQ areas
    g. More secluded seating areas
    h. Seating areas allowing you to watch park activity and park visitors
    i. Sports fields
    j. Skateboard park
    k. Playground (exercise structures, rock climbing, etc)
    l. Drinking fountains
    m. Nearby food facilities
    n. Park safety features (lighting, gates, police patrolling)
    o. Restrooms
    p. Proximity of public transportation
    q. Free Wi-Fi
    r. Other [if you have something else you want to include in top 5 list you can add it

11. What elements, programs, activities would you like to see in the parks/open spaces of your neighborhood?

CONCLUSION

- Thank you for your participation, we welcome you to participate in the next set of research activities including mapping and designing your own park

APPENDIX C

THICK MAPPING GUIDELINES

Creating Common Ground
[Youth/Older Adults] Thick Mapping - Exercise #
Date:
Time:
Zoom info:

ATTENDEES
Focus Group Facilitators:
Zoom facilitator/timekeeper:
HOLA/SBSS collaborators:
Additional Guests:
Participants: [age group]

Participants in attendance:

Name	Program	Grade/Age

Project Overview
->Introduce project and team members

Review consent and terms of participation
      i.   consent to record
     ii.   participant rights
    iii.   information about gift cards for participants

What is thick mapping?
->All maps tell a story about information or people in relation to a space. We want this map to help tell your story - about the problems and opportunities you see here, and your experiences in the neighborhood. Specifically, we want to hear about your experiences using and interacting

with three public parks in the neighborhood: **Golden Age Park, Lafayette Park, and MacArthur Park.**

[reminder to students to take out their physical maps that were mailed to them]

Map #1 (neighborhood scale) Questions:
1. Introduce yourself.
2. Based on your address, can you tell us how you get to HOLA? What is your route? What is your mode of transport (walking, bus, driving, biking, other)
3. What are the **landmarks** in your neighborhood? (schools, religious centers, after school activity centers, favorite stores, community spaces)
    -
4. Which parts of your neighborhood do you **like to go to**? Why?
5. Which parts of your neighborhood do you **avoid**? Why?
    -
6. Can you point to one space/feature in this neighborhood that you have **positive memories** of or you particularly like?
7. Can you point to one space/feature in this neighborhood that you have **negative memories** of or you particularly do not like?

Map #2 (park scale) Questions:
1. Which of the **three parks** [Golden Age Park, Lafayette Park, and MacArthur Park] do you visit most frequently? Why? When? How often?
2. Do you visit this park now as frequently as **before the pandemic**? Why?
3. For **how long** do you stay in the park(s)? For **how long** do you stay in the park(s)? What **activities** do you do at the park/how do you spend your time there?
    -
4. What are some of your **favorite characteristics** of the park? Can you indicate this on the map?
5. What are some of your **least favorite characterics** of the park? Can you indicate this on the map?
6. What are some of your **favorite memories** of visiting these parks?
7. What are some of your **least favorite memories** of visiting these parks?
    -
8. What do you think can be **improved** about these parks?
9. Would you like to see more **intergenerational use** (more people of different ages) at these parks? Why or why not?

Creating Common Ground
Thick Mapping Instructions [Mailed to participants]

<u>What is thick mapping?</u>
All maps tell a story about information or people in relation to a space. We want this map to help tell your story - about the problems and opportunities you see here, and your experiences in the neighborhood. Specifically, we want to hear about your experiences using and interacting with three public parks in the neighborhood: **Golden Age Park**, **Lafayette Park**, and **MacArthur Park**.

<u>Instructions:</u>
In this packet we provide you with two maps: Map #1 is a zoomed out map of the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood. Map #2 is a zoomed in map of the three parks--Golden Age, Lafayette, and MacArthur. We ask you to mark up both maps in advance of the thick mapping workshops held on Zoom. You can use colored pencils, pens, stickers, or any other creative markers of your choice! Here are the prompts:

Map 1: Westlake/MacArthur Park

The purpose of this map is to illustrate your relationship to the park in the context of the larger Westlake/MacArthur Park Neighborhood. On Map 1, illustrate the following:

1. Where do you **live** in relation to the parks? Can you find the nearest road intersection?

2. What is your **route to the SBSS**?

3. What is your **route to the parks**? Which parks do you go to (Lafayette Park? MacArthur Park? Golden Age Park)?

4. What are the **major landmarks** in your neighborhood? (schools, religious centers, after school activity centers)


Map 2, 3, 4: Lafayette, MacArthur Park, Golden Age

The purpose of this map is to illustrate your specific experiences related to the three parks: Lafayette, MacArthur, and Golden Age. On Map 2, illustrate the following:

1. Can you indicate what **kinds of activities** you do in the park on the map? (walking, reading, skateboarding, playing, lounging, or something else?)

2. Which **segment** of the parks do you visit? For example, do you go to the corner of MacArthur Park (quadrant F, 3). Or do you visit Lafayette Park? (quadrant 2, C).

3. What are some of your favorite characteristics of these parks? Can you indicate this on the map?

4. What are some of your *least* favorite characterics of these parks? Can you indicate this on the map?

5. What are some of your favorite memories of visiting these parks?

6. What are some of your *least* favorite memories of visiting these parks?

Feel free to create a "key" or "legend" to help the reader know what your annotations on the map mean. Here is a sample key/legend (feel free to create your own!):

Map 1: Westlake/MacArthur Park
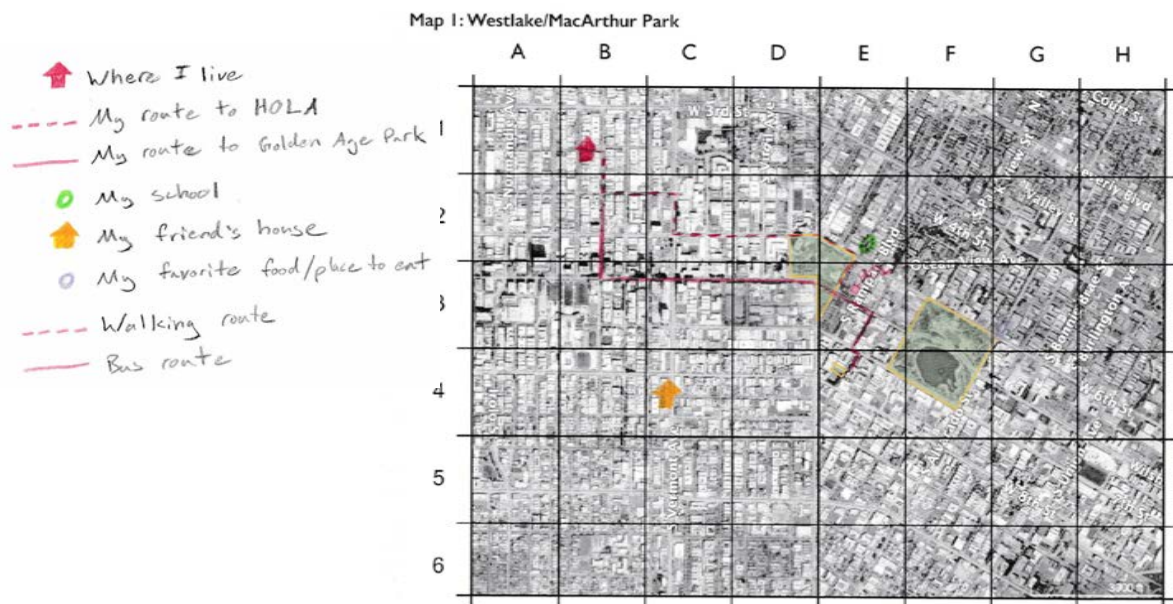
APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Creating Common Ground
In-Depth Interview Guidelines
Date:
Time:
Interviewer(s):
Participant:
Age Group:

Summary of Research Activity

In Phase 4 we will invite participants to join in an in-depth interview exercise. One-on-one, in-depth interviewing is an effective way for research participants to share their experiences vis a vis storytelling. Participants' stories will be layered into the digital maps created in the prior thick mapping exercises, which not only tells us about user experiences of public spaces, but provides an historical archive created by and for the community.

In-depth interviews involve one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with participants that are recorded. We anticipate each storytelling activity to take approximately 1 hour. We plan to conduct at least twelve storytelling interviews, six with older adult participants from SBSS, and six with youth participants from HOLA.

Questionnaire

1. I'd like to start us off by asking about you and your life in Los Angeles generally:
    a. How long have you lived in LA?
    b. Is LA "home" for you? How would you describe the meaning of "home"?
    c. Do you have family or friends in LA? Can you describe their lives for me?
    d. What is your day-to-day life in the city like?
    e. What do you do for fun, recreation, or to simply relax?
    f. How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected your life in the city?
    g. What do you think are some of the most pressing issues facing the city at-large?
    h. What do you hope for the future of LA?
    i. How do you think we can arrive at this future?

2. Now I'd like to more specifically ask about your relationship to the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood:
    a. How would you describe your relationship to the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood?
    b. Is this neighborhood important to you? Why or why not?
    c. Do you have any memories you'd like to share about your experience in the neighborhood?
    d. How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected your relationship to the neighborhood?

e. What do you think are some of the most pressing issues facing the neighborhood generally?
f. What do you think about the role of public space in the neighborhood?
g. What do you hope for the future of this neighborhood?
h. How do you think we can arrive at this future?

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN GUIDELINES

Creating Common Ground
Participatory Design Activity
Wednesday, August 11th, 11am-1pm

Summary of Research Activity:

This final exercise will invite participation from both seniors and youth into a cross-generational dialogue and public space design discussion. The findings from this workshop exercise will lead to policy recommendations as well as schematic designs for a "Common Ground" cross-generational public space in Westlake/MacArthur Park. We aim to hold at least one participatory design session with at least 12 participants, 6 of whom are older adults and 6 of whom are youth. The design exercise will last approximately 120 minutes (2 hours) and can be partly conducted remotely via Zoom. The method can be described as a map-based conversation, documented in real-time by researchers who can then consult with participants to consider further additions or changes to the map-based documentation.

Participants:

Faculty lead:
Faculty support:
GSR support:
SBSS staff:
HOLA staff:
Older adult participants (6)
Youth participants (6)

Links:

Slide deck:
Zoom:

Agenda:

11:05 AM - Part I: Introduction - 10 min
11:15 AM - Part II: Park Preferences - 30 min
11:45 PM - Part III: Hopes for the Park - 65 min
12:50 PM - Part IV: Wrap Up - 5 min
1:00 PM - END

Run-of-Show:

Part I: Introduction
11:05 AM (10 min)

Objective: The goal of the Intro is to set the stage for discussion by introducing the agenda and the participants. By the end of the Intro all participants should be familiar with the project team and other participants, feel a sense of purpose of the activity, and understand the workshop agenda.

[required materials: screen/monitor; presentation slides showing introductory prompts and ice breaker]

Part I Agenda:
1. *Research team welcome:* reiterate the purpose of why we are here
   a. Preview agenda
   b. Terms of participation (anonymity, gift cards)
2. *Introductions* (orally or in online "chat")
   a. Say your name (and if staff share affiliation) and your favorite park or public space in this neighborhood?

Part II: Park Preferences
11:15 AM (30 min)

Objective: This activity will uncover preferred park *qualities* and *atmospheres* identified by users. Once park qualities and atmospheres are identified, the research team will synthesize common and diverging preferences among the group, particularly as they relate to generational preferences, which will then set the stage for the aspirational exercise in Part III.

[required materials: screen/monitor; presentation slides on Miro showing continuums of preferences]

Part II Agenda:
1. *Instructions - 2 min:* introduce the activity and continua - explain that images on the bottom represent park environments that reflect the phrases above - participants asked to look at the images and think of the concepts, and think about where the preference lies for an ideal park) - "hypothetical ideal park"
   a. Explain how the voting will work: each participant will get one vote per continuum, voting will take place by raised hands (including those online), and votes will be recorded. Each participant will be asked to vote on their sheet of paper first.
2. *Participant Engagement - 23 min:* team to briefly describe the nature of each continuum and ask participants to indicate their preference along each continuum by voting with raised hands (this includes the online participants)

      a. Votes take place together, for all participants - Ie. "how many of you would vote for 1? How many for 2?"

      b. Each vote recorded in Miro with a dot on the continuum, color coded for SBSS/HOLA, logged on slides

      c. Move through all continuum slides sequence

3. *Discussion/Summary - 5 min:* team to keep track of interesting outcomes arising from votes and bring those forward for discussion after all continua have been voted on

Part III: Hopes for the Park
11:45 AM (65 min)

Objective: The goal of the exercise is to understand the relationship between age-group preferences and challenges and to develop and organize a shared vision of how to improve neighborhood parks in Westlake/MacArthur Park for intergenerational use. The first part of this exercise will be to review park *challenges* identified from prior research activities. The second part of this exercise will involve participants selecting "tools" to address existing park challenges and imagine future park spaces. The research team will synthesize commonly used tools to assemble a "tool kit" for intergenerational public space.

[required materials: screen/monitor; two large printed maps of focus areas within each of the two parks (one for Lafayette, one for MacArthur); two printed and cut sets of toolkit cars for each in-person participant (16 sets total); two colours of dots for each group (one for SBSS, one for HOLA - consistent between groups); Miro version of map and toolkit for those joining remotely]

Part III Agenda:
1. *Introduce Activity and Review park challenges - 7 min:*
    a. Share a series of two maps that summarize the perceptions of youth and older adults in MacArthur and Lafayette Parks as gathered from previous activities, highlighting areas of appreciation, ambiguity, and aggravation
2. *Instructions - 3 min*:
    a. Introduce toolkit exercise in more detail
        i. Each group is assigned one park, either Lafayette or MacArthur Park, and provided a large paper map which highlights areas of aggravation and ambiguity in that park. Groups will begin on one map, then trade.
        ii. Each group is provided with a "Toolkit" (a set of printed cards). Participants will each be asked to review the toolkit cards and each will select 5 cards to apply to the map, to address and improve identified focus areas in their assigned park.
            1. Participants tape their cards to the map using color-coded dots (one color for SBSS, one color for HOLA)
        iii. Group facilitators talk through these decisions with group participants as the activity progresses.
        iv. Once participants have addressed their park, they will move on to the next park.

3. *Participant Engagement in Small Groups - 40 min:* Facilitated by each group lead (below)
   a. **Round 1: 11:55-12:15**
      i. Divide into three groups, two in person, one online
         1. Group 1 - Lafayette Park:
            a. Older adults (1)
            b. Youth (3)
         2. Group 2 - MacArthur Park:
            a. Older adults (1)
            b. Youth (3)
         3. Online group - start with MacArthur Park:
            a. Older adults (3-4)
            b. Youth (0)
      ii. In groups, facilitators will encourage participants to familiarize themselves with the map, review their toolkits, and select five tools to apply to improve the park
      iii. Facilitators will lead discussion about individual selections with the goal to foster dialog and engagement between group members
   b. **Round 2: 12:15-12:35**
      i. Groups begin working on the second map. In-person groups trade maps, building on the content of the previous group. Online group simply moves on to the next map.
4. *Participant Engagement in Large Group - 15 min:*
   a. Groups reconvene as a whole to discuss Golden Age Park
   b. Introductory film is shown to the whole group
   c. With slide set on map of Golden Age Park, team to lead the group (both in-person and online participants) in an informal discussion about the park:
      i. From what you have seen or know about the park, what elements did you like? What elements do you think you would use?
      ii. What elements did you not like? How do you think these areas could be improved for all ages?
      iii. Based on our conversation today, are there any elements you think are particularly important or missing in this discussion or in the parks?

END
12:55 PM (5 min)

Thank you and wrap up!