

# KLYDE WARREN PARK

## IDENTITY & LOCATION

Klyde Warren Park is a 5.2-acre deck park that caps the recessed Woodall Rodgers Freeway between Pearl and St. Paul streets in downtown Dallas.

## PURPOSE & DESCRIPTION

Klyde Warren Park is Dallas's new town square that has literally and figuratively bridged the city's downtown cultural district with the burgeoning mixed-use neighborhoods to the north, reshaping the city and catalyzing economic development. The park brings Dallasites together in new ways, with dozens of free activities and amenities to offer every week, from concerts and lectures to games and fitness classes, all within a beautiful five-acre jewel. The park decks over the sunken Woodall Rodgers Freeway, which had been an imposing barrier between downtown and the densely populated Uptown neighborhood.

Built with a combination of public and private funds, the park features a flexible, pedestrian-oriented design that arranges a children's park, reading room, great lawn, restaurant, performance pavilion, fountain plaza, games area, dog park and botanical garden around a sweeping pedestrian promenade. After ten years of planning, design fundraising, and construction, Klyde Warren Park opened in the fall of 2012 and was immediately embraced by the community, cementing its place as a world-class urban park.

## ROLE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Although the prime consultant was the engineer in charge of the tunnel and structure design, the landscape architect was the lead designer for the project and set the tone for all site design decisions in collaboration with the architect, lighting designer, fountain designer and other specialty subconsultants. The owner and their Construction Manager were key players throughout the process and the work also included community workshops that determined programming during the early conceptual stages of design.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The park has been **enthusiastically embraced by the citizens** of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Opening weekend attracted approximately 40,000 visitors to the park, with an estimated 1,000,000 visitors in the park's first year. While the project team expected the park to attract residents and workers from the adjacent downtown and uptown districts, the sheer volume of visitors from the far reaches of the DFW metroplex – some over an hour away from the park site – has been overwhelming. Food trucks – which were originally temporary food options while the restaurant was under construction – have become so popular that they have become a permanent feature, resulting in

a slight redesign of the perimeter paving to accommodate their crowds. The pavilion at the park has become the destination for outdoor concerts and events downtown. Dogs of all sizes abound in the dog park around the clock, and the success of the children's park, which is regularly full to capacity, is now being studied for expansion.

The park has contributed significantly to the **economic development** of the surrounding urban core. An early economic study from 2004 predicted an economic impact of \$312.7M along with \$12.7M in new tax revenue; actual figures are much higher. Perhaps the best example is Museum Tower, a \$300M residential building abutting the park; the luxury project wouldn't have been built next to a submerged freeway, but once the park was definite, construction on the tower began. Other projects close by that have been completed since the park began construction include 1900 McKinney (\$40M), the house by Starck (\$80M), the Perot Museum of Nature and Science (\$185M) and the renovation of the Plaza of the Americas (\$10M).

The project contributes to the **sense of place** that is lacking from the City's core. The park incorporates most of the metroplex's most recognizable museums and universities in its programming, and places them in an environment featuring a palette of regionally-appropriate trees, shrubs and ornamental plantings – of which 50% are native to the North Texas area. Dallasites get to connect with each other and the institutions they care about in novel ways, all organized under one "roof." In its first 15 months, the park has hosted approximately 1,055 programs and 46 large-scale special events. The park has created a number of social benefits, including a regular schedule of community events, increased physical activity and reduced stress for park users. The park has also dramatically increased attendance to the adjacent cultural institutions in the Arts District, and has boosted ridership by 61% on the trolley line that stops at the park.

Construction of the park over an existing freeway has numerous **environmental benefits**, including the sequestration of an estimated 18,500 pounds of carbon annually, interception of 64,000 gallons of stormwater runoff and a marked reduction in temperature, air pollution and noise.

## SPECIAL FACTORS (CHALLENGES/ SOLUTION)

Engineering and designing a deck structure park that could bear the load of a 5.2 acre park was a significant challenge. The depth and width required for a healthy tree root-ball had to be considered early in the design process, and resulted in a trough system built into the support truss system which allowed for sub-grade utilities, water feature systems, planting soil and other appurtenances. By dictating the spaces of trees, the grid became the guiding organization force and determined the layout and appeal of the park.