

FAB Park: A New Landscape for Living

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

a competition proposal for a 2-acre urban park at 1st and Broadway in Downtown Los Angeles

KEY QUESTION

What is the future of leisure in Southern California?

In 1951, the LA Times asked 'What Makes the California Look?' The characteristics identified—a casual elegance, use of new materials, blurring of inside and outside—are quite familiar today because this California dream, popularized in media outlets like Sunset Magazine, went on to become an American dream in countless living rooms and backyards across the country. Sprawling post-war development offered unprecedented opportunities for leisure in the landscape, but these were largely private pursuits and not available to everyone, especially people of color.

So how about today, in a time when economically and environmentally we can no longer afford for everyone to take their leisure in private, how can we update this California dream in an urban context? How can California once again redefine outdoor leisure in America? With all the challenges we face—drought, climate change, homelessness, intolerance—leisure may seem a low priority or a luxury, but it is in fact absolutely critical if we hope to create a vibrant and sustainable urban future. Sam Lubell, co-curator of the A+D Museum's Shelter exhibition, said of the future Los Angeles, "You won't get your own outdoor space anymore." FAB Park could be that outdoor space where downtown families and friends can enjoy iconic Southern California leisure experiences. Garrett Eckbo, author of Landscape for Living, called this work the art of social design and this vision inspired us as we imagined FAB Park as A New Landscape for Living...a boldly public and shared space for leisure in Downtown Los Angeles.

Key park elements include:

- The **Open Center** is a flexible lawn in the middle of the park.
- **Coves & Lobes** describe the sinuous edges of the park which provide a variety of shaded and inviting spaces for families and friends to gather.
- The **Paper Plane** is a restaurant in the higher northern corner of the park. Its treated graywater would provide irrigation for the lush park vegetation below.
- The **Wingnut** is an iconic landform that peels up at the southern corner of the park. The landform is a dramatic gateway and houses a gallery and park outfitter.
- **Circuits** refer to the primary circulation pathways of the park. The main route is a continuous accessible loop that links all of the park program areas.

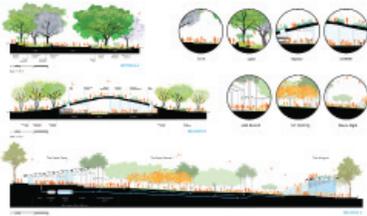
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01. In 1946, Garrett Eckbo wrote *Landscape for Living*, the first book on modern landscape architecture in the English language. In this book, he argued for an inhabited, performative landscape over the scenic ideals of the Beaux Arts period which preceded him. Imagining ourselves at a similar inflection point, we asked **"What Would Garrett Do?"**



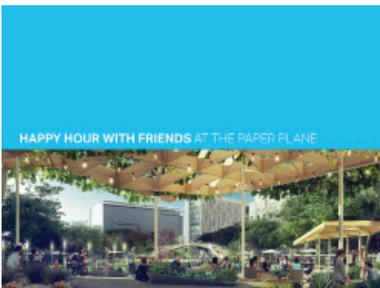
02. The park design is made up of **five simple elements**. A flexible **Open Center** lawn is surrounded by shady **Coves and Lobes** that shape gathering spaces and inviting access ways. The **Paper Plane** restaurant is in the north corner and the **Wingnut** landform in the south. The **Circuits**, a pair of universally accessible loops without stairs, link all park features.



03. **Topography** was a key consideration. The site dropped almost 20 feet from the north corner to the south. This allowed the Paper Plane restaurant to have a dramatic view and to irrigate the lower park with its graywater. The Wingnut landform was peeled up from the south to enclose a gallery and park outfitter. Lobes of lush vegetation were depressed to receive stormwater and shade the adjacent gathering coves.

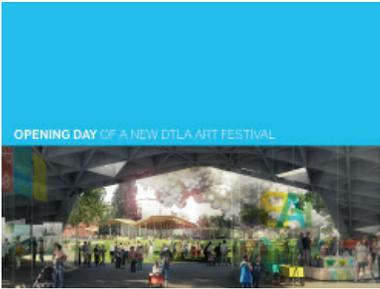


04. This is a view looking out from under one of the cabanas in the shade of the **Coves and Lobes**. We want to make it really easy for people to make the most of their time off... just get to the park and whatever you need, from cabanas to picnic blankets, the park has you covered.



05. The terraced seating under the trellised roof of the **Paper Plane** restaurant creates a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere overlooking the rest of FAB park. The Paper Plane isn't stuffy. It is downtown's new democratic patio.

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06. Imagine coming through an iconic gateway into a brand new art festival in the **Open Center**. The gallery at left could support outdoor events and host community meetings. The park outfitter at right could lend lawn chairs, umbrellas, picnic blankets and other implements of leisure to park visitors.



07. The **programming model** for the park embodies FAB Park's role as a lush backyard retreat for downtown residents and visitors. Anticipated activities include art openings, casual gatherings of families and friends, jazz brunch at the Paper Plane, a pop-up crafts fair along the Circuit and movie night at the Wingnut.



08. **By day**, the park serves as a flexible extension of the adjacent Grand Park...offering complementary amenities and intimate shady spaces to contrast with the adjacent park's large plazas and citywide event lawn.



09. **By night**, the park's activities and attractions, as well as its open sightlines across the entire space, encourage downtown residents to spend more time outside in the cooler evening hours.



10. Novelty fades, but **comfort and accommodation** endure. Eckbo's "art of social design" was our touchstone in imagining a timeless place that could become a part of the daily life of future generations in Downtown Los Angeles.