

TOWN SQUARE PARK

Summary of Issues and Guiding Principles



This document provides a summary of the general themes that the Town Square Park Master Plan seeks to address. These themes are grouped into “issues to be addressed” and “guiding principles” and are based on thousands of comments received. These “guiding principles” will be used to guide future programmatic and design recommendations for the park.

Issues to be Addressed

1. **Safety and Security:** Public safety is the #1 issue at the Park. Crime, homelessness, open drug use and large intimidating groups hanging out in the park were all cited as major issues and concerns.
2. **Negative Perception of the Park:** Town Square Park has an image problem. There is the perception that the park is unsafe and people are purposefully avoiding downtown.
3. **Visibility and Safety:** Limited visibility into and through the park is a safety concern and is keeping people from using the park.
4. **Identity and Purpose:** Oasis or active space? Town Square Park lacks a strong identity and does not seem to have a clear sense of purpose.
5. **ADA Accessibility:** Town Square Park and the Performing Arts Center (PAC) are not fully ADA accessible.
6. **Relationship to Surroundings:** Town Square Park lacks a cohesive physical relationship with surrounding businesses, streets and institutions.
7. **Programming and Events:** People feel that Town Square Park is underutilized and would benefit from more consistent programming and events.
8. **Amenities:** People want “something to do” in the park. Town Square Park lacks amenities that draw people and encourages positive use.
9. **Long-term Management:** A comprehensive and sustainable approach is needed to ensure the long-term success of Town Square Park.

Guiding Principles

1. **Improve Relationship of the Park to Surroundings “and Surroundings to the Park”:** There are opportunities to improve the physical relationship of the park to surrounding businesses, streets, and institutions to create a more cohesive and comfortable public space.
2. **Activate Town Square Park with Programming and Events:** Town Square Park is home to many of Anchorage resident’s favorite community events and celebrations such as the New Year’s Eve celebration and summer ‘Live after Five” concerts. However, people want to use Town Square Park more. Programming and events help activate the park with positive use, improving safety and reducing undesirable activity in the park.
3. **A Park for All Seasons:** In addition to the summertime events and flower displays, many people described how they enjoy the ice sculptures, tree lights, and former ice skating rink.
4. **Manage the Park as an Important Asset and Provide Sustainable Funding:** Manage Town Square Park as an important asset, provide sustainable funding, and support public-private partnerships that work with local businesses and non-profits to activate the park.
5. **Provide Amenities:** “Provide something to do” and “make it comfortable” were common responses in the survey. Adding amenities such as tables and chairs, food vendors, games, restrooms, arts and live music - would encourage people to visit Town Square Park more often.
6. **Something Iconic:** People recognize Town Square Park as an important public space for our city. Many people have commented throughout the process that the park should have something iconic to draw people, give identity, and celebrate.
7. **Change 5th and 6th Avenue to Improve Connectivity:** 5th and 6th Avenue are Major Arterial roads, each accommodating over 20,000 vehicles per day (ADT). These streets split downtown and disconnect Town Square Park from surrounding businesses and institutions. Suggestions to improve connectivity within downtown and Town Square Park include reverting traffic 5th and 6th Avenue to two-way, reversing traffic, or eliminating the streets and extending the boundaries of the park to adjacent businesses. Such a change would also allow for better ADA access and drop-off.
8. **Address ADA Access in Town Square Park:** Members of the public have placed a high importance on improving ADA access at Town Square Park.
9. **Improve Safety and Security:** Safety and security are one of the main reasons people are not visiting Town Square Park. Improving security with more foot patrols and police presence will help ensure that the park is safe and welcoming for all.
10. **Flowers and Green Space are a Valued Asset:** The flowers at Town Square Park are one of the park’s best features. People enjoy the trees, green spaces and flowers which provide a welcome splash of color after the long winter.
11. **Identity and Purpose:** Town Square Park has the potential to be a catalyst for positive change downtown. Opportunities exist to revitalize the park creating an iconic destination and vibrant public space that celebrates the park’s assets, the City’s history, and diverse community. Be inclusive and think big!