

First Hill, Seattle University Street Activation

Summer 2015

FIRST HILL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
CITY OF SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS
FRAMEWORK





UNION ARMS

FIRST HILL
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

framework

Seattle Department of
Neighborhoods

UNIVERSITY ST
— First Hill, Seattle —

MANY THANKS.

WE APPRECIATE AND THANK YOU

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Barbara Scharman, First Hill Resident
Bonnie Miller, First Hill Resident
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Coffee Tree
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Frye Art Museum
George Winn, University of Washington
Hanna Brooks Olsen, First Hill Resident
Historic Seattle
Horizon House
Joel Godston, First Hill Resident
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Many Thanks for their ongoing support of our community.**



ACTIVATING PUBLIC SPACE

It's no secret that First Hill has a shortage of park space. Rising land values and development pressures have made acquiring traditional space for a new park difficult. So, in 2014, the First Hill Improvement Association partnered with three city agencies - SDOT, DPD, and Parks- to explore a concept sweeping the country: repurposing land in the public right of way from just pavement (especially awkward public intersections or overly broad streets) into new uses as community gathering areas - pavement parks!

Through the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan, two pilot pavement parks were created on First Hill: one at University Street and 9th Avenue, the other at the intersection of University, Union, and Boylston. Between these two lies First Hill Park, one of the very few parks on First Hill. FHIA knew that for these spaces to flourish they needed activation. First Hill Park was already in a state of neglect and decline, so FHIA sought funding from the Department of Neighborhoods to make these three spaces come alive.

In partnership with Framework Cultural Placemaking, the City of Seattle, and community members we spent the summer having fun with our neighbors: creating events, building relationships, and talking about how to make these places community assets for the long-term. What you see in the pages that follow are the results which prove that with attention, dedication, and resources our community can create safe and vibrant places for all to enjoy.

The effort to activate and improve these amenities is ongoing, including generous offers of volunteer engagement from neighbors and more work to come to explore how to strengthen these parks. In 2016 we foresee a bounteous harvest from the seeds sown along University Street. We thank all who were involved in creating new and maintaining old open space on First Hill and hope the community will join us in the future.

Thanks for being our neighbor!

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University Street and 9th Ave

2 FIRST HILL PARK
University Street and Minor Ave

3 UUB Pavement Park
University Street, Union Street and
Boylston Ave



2



3



University Street

FIRST HILL FIDOS

First Hill Fidos kicked off the summer events along University Street. Located in the under-utilized First Hill Park (Minor & University), the at-capacity event was an opportunity for neighbors to show off their dogs. Pups and people mingled in the park, and then walked the dog-walk to the cheers of the other participants and numerous spectators! All dogs were eligible to win the Cutest Dog, Best Trick, Best Dressed, and Best In Show contest, which were selected by community vote of everybody in the park. The event featured hot dogs from local food truck Dirty Dogs, dog-themed music, and prizes from local businesses. This immensely successful event brought together neighbors and dogs from all walks of life. A series of photographers were on hand to take "family" photos at a photobooth, and spectators uploaded numerous photos to instagram. By the end of the day, community members were eagerly asking if this would become an annual event.



When

THURSDAY JULY 30TH 2015, 5:30pm - 8:30pm

Where

FIRST HILL PARK at University and Minor

Attendance

~150 people watched
30 dogs registered as constants

What Contestants like about First Hill!

"It's walkable."
"My Neighbors are great!"
"Vitos!"
"Close proximity to waterfront and downtown."
"View of downtown."
"Running into someone you know."
"Diversity, and mom lives here."
"The old, big trees!"
"Nice neighbors, friendly and quite neighborhood."
"Historic buildings, cafes and parks."
"The old mansions and the people."
"Its quiet and dog friendly."
"I love everything!"



University Street
FIRST HILL FIDOS





University Street

TRIVIA NIGHT

On Tuesday August 25th [from] 6-8pm the First Hill Improvement Association hosted First Hill Trivia at the pavement park at University St and 9th Ave. Neighbors gathered up teams of up to 6 of their smartest friends and neighbors. No team? No problem! There were lots of opportunities to join up with fellow stags to create a trivia super group. Prizes from local businesses, such as the Sorrento Hotel, Frye Museum and the First Hill Historic Society were donated to the winning teams. Trivia was team-based and included questions on a variety of themes, including Seattle and First Hill history!

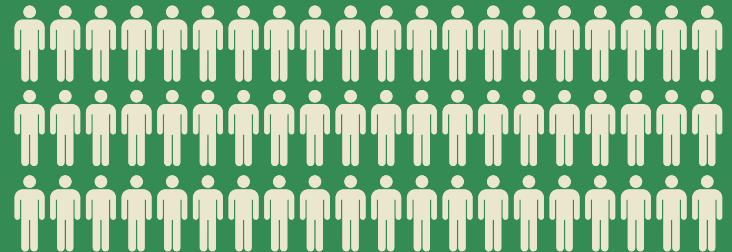
BEFORE PARKLET



AFTER PARKLET



TRIVIA NIGHT



When

AUGUST 25 2015, 6pm - 8pm

Where

UNIVERSITY STREET AND 9TH AVE

Attendance

~ 60 People in attendance

7 teams played

What were the Team Names?

YAAAS QUEEN

HH (Horizon House)

I'M NOT GOOD WITH TEAM NAMES

FIRST HILL PLAZA PLAYERS

OLDIES BUT GOODIES

YOUNG AND RESTLESS



University Street
TRIVIA NIGHT





University Street

VINTAGE STREET GAMES

First Hill Vintage Street Games was the final event for the Summer 2015 University Street activation project. The games took place Sunday September 20th 12-5pm at the pavement park located at intersection of University St, Union St, and Boylston Ave. The entire afternoon was a festival of vintage street games, music, food and fun with neighbors. Games included Kick the Can, Hopscotch, Double Dutch, Jacks, Four Square, Bingo, Skelly, and More! Motown music played between live musical performances. Food included cotton candy and popcorn, with hot dogs and ice cream from local favorite Dirty Dogs. The event was a come-and-go as you please street festival to celebrate the new pavement park and to build community. It included a little something for everyone and many people spent Sunday Funday with friends and neighbors.



When

SEPTEMBER 20TH 2015, 12pm - 5:00pm

Where

UNIVERSITY / UNION / BOYLSTON PAVEMENT PARK

Attendance

5 hours of continuous game play with a steady stream of players

35 cotton candy cones given away

7 bags of popcorn eaten single handedly by one player

What were the games played?

Pick up Sticks

Hula Hoops

Four Square

Double Dutch

Kick the Can

Jacks

Mad Libs

Skully

Yahtzee

Dominoes



University Street VINTAGE STREET GAMES





University Street

PUBLIC OUTREACH & COMMUNITY BUILDING

To encourage participation and community outreach throughout the project, First Hill Improvement Association and Framework provided a number of different outlets for engagement in events as well as providing feedback and ideas for the future.

These included:

- **Branding and Identity for University Street**
- Marketing of Events
- Focus Groups throughout the project
- University Street Website and Social Media
- Online Survey
- Observational Research Study

UNIVERSITY STREET PAVEMENT PARK QUOTES

“Spectacular! Thank you First Hill Improvement Association for your efforts. Perfect use of that weird intersection.”

“I must say, I like it. I could see going there in the evening and playing cards or backgammon with friends.”

“This is great! So many, especially in that area don’t have yards or balconies. They can get out, enjoy fresh air and bond with their neighbors.”

“I’ve seen people from the neighborhood now sitting and enjoying it, reading, playing a game and having a couple of beers. It’s great for the community.”

BRANDING & IDENTITY



Critical to the activation strategies was the creation of a visual brand and identity for University Street. The selected design scheme drew thematically from a **palette of 1940s colors, motifs, and fonts**. The logo and graphic design sought to be playful and to create a sense of nostalgia for First Hill residents.

The final logo was selected for its simple and easily reproducible design. The logo and branding will continue to be used for future University Street projects and activation.

MARKETING OF EVENTS



The intent of marketing was to engage and activate the local population using a variety of media.

1. Fun flyers were created for each event and canvassed on sign posts and bulletin boards around the neighborhood. Additional flyers were left with local businesses and apartment buildings.
2. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter were utilized to advertise the events to a broader community audience. Participants were able to share their memories via #UNIVERSITYSTREET.
3. The University Street website was utilized as an online resource for all of the events. Events were also advertised in the FHIA community newsletter.



FOCUS GROUPS

As part of the project, a series of focus groups with community members helped to advise regarding activation ideas, marketing strategies, outreach coordination, future goals and next steps. The meetings engaged 38 individuals representing 27 residences and organizations. Focus group volunteers provided 53 hours of volunteer time towards this project. The focus groups were led by University of Washington students Doug Holton, Devin Reynolds, and George Winn.

The meeting occurred once a month with the following topics:

Meeting 1: Project Introductions and Goal Setting

Meeting 2: University Street Walk and Observations

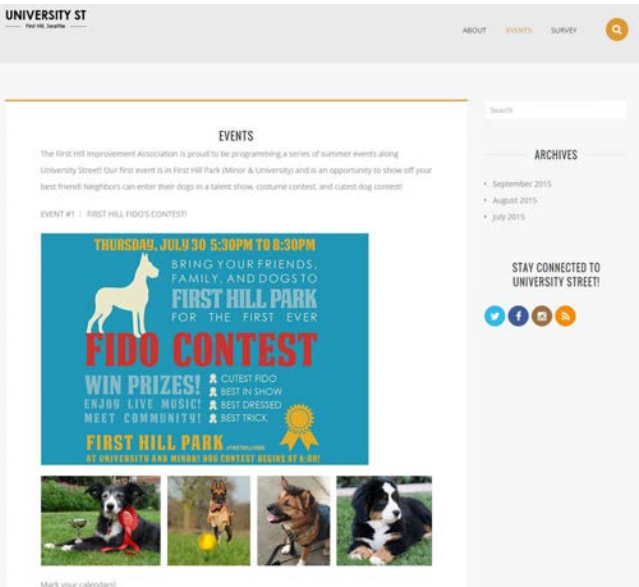
**Meeting 3: Friends of First Hill Park with Parks
Department**

Meeting 4: Maintenance and Operations

Meeting 5: Next Steps



UNIVERSITY STREET WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

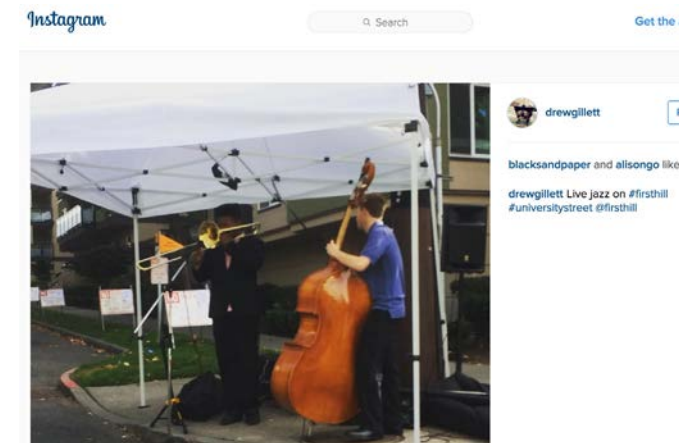


PHOTOS FROM THE FIRST HILL FIDOS EVENT

AUGUST 5, 2015

The First Annual First Hill Fidos was held July 30th at First Hill Park, and it was a great success! From tiny Chihuahuas to huge Great Danes we had a packed roster of dogs strutting their stuff for well over [...]

CONTINUE READING



Quotes on Social Media

@itsreallymyname "Best neighborhood event ever!! #universitystreet #firsthillfido #firsthillfidos"

@Markmss6 "Too late to enter the Fido cutest dog contest at #UniversityStreet . The other contestants got lucky."

@kellyknick13 "Too much cuteness to behold at the #firsthillfidos event tonight! #universitystreet #seattlewa"

@Julie H "This event looks fun fun fun Woof!"

The website was designed as the central online location for information regarding University Street events. It featured a simple, user-friendly layout with sections for neighborhood information, events, and an ongoing survey. Hotlinks to facebook, instagram, twitter, and flickr encouraged participants to easily engage in a variety of ways. The site also provided a central location to share photographs and news articles of the events.

Media Coverage of Pavement Parks and Activation

<http://www.theurbanist.org/2015/01/02/the-first-hill-public-realm-action-plan/>

<http://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2015/01/3000-new-residents-and-the-need-for-open-green-space-on-first-hill/>

<http://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2015/07/a-little-tactical-urbanism-puts-parks-in-streets-of-first-hill-test-pedestrian-zone-on-e-pike/>

<http://www.capitolhilltimes.com/2015/01/first-hills-public-spaces-plan-met-community-approval/>

<https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/parklets-stop-build-pavement-parks>

ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was disseminated in order to attract community input beyond the three events. The survey was hosted on the universitystreet.org website and was advertised at events and via community newsletters. **Respondents were asked about personal preferences, concerns, and improvements regarding public space in First Hill and along University Street.** They were also asked to brainstorm ideas for future activation strategies.

The survey ran from July to October 2015 and had a total of 38 respondents.

The First Hill Improvement Association is working to activate these upcoming public spaces and to improve the condition of the existing First Hill Park by building a coalition of stakeholders along University Street! Together we can activate the public parks and places to become true community assets.

This survey will help to collect feedback and ideas to help the First Hill Improvement Association as these spaces develop.

Complete as many, or as few of the questions as you want. If you choose to complete the entire survey it takes an average of 5 minutes.

What is your connection to First Hill? *(Check all that apply)*

- ☐ I live in First Hill
- ☐ I work in First Hill
- ☐ I'm visiting First Hill
- ☐ Other - Write In

If you answered visit to Question 1 - why do you visit First Hill?

Please describe yourself *(check all that apply)*

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Working
- ☐ Retired

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

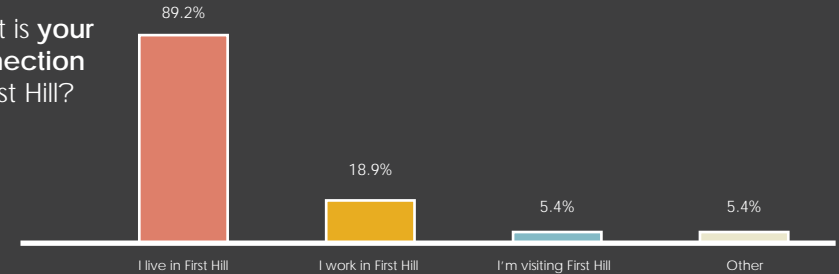
Most survey respondents lived in the neighborhood while a small percentage work in First Hill but live outside the community.

Freeway Park was the favorite public space in First Hill, while the courtyard at the Frye Museum and First Hill Park were also well liked. Harborview Park, Boylston Place, and Horiuchi Park were significantly less popular.

The most critical population to consider in the community was identified as seniors & the elderly. Families, individuals with health conditions/disabilities, and young professionals were also considered a high priority.

The most common activities over the past six months were leisurely walking and community events. The farmers market, reading, dog walking, and outdoor eating were also mentioned as popular activities.

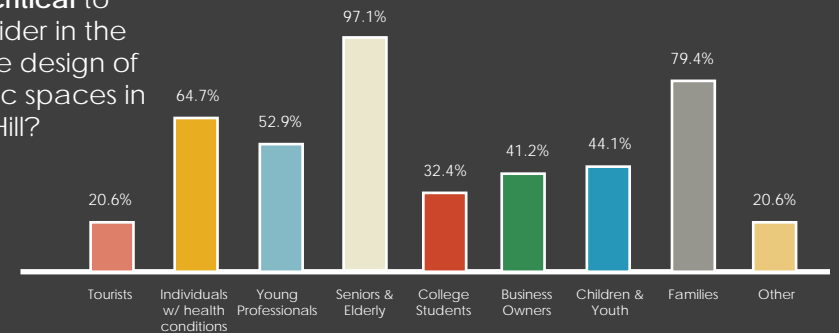
What is **your connection** to First Hill?



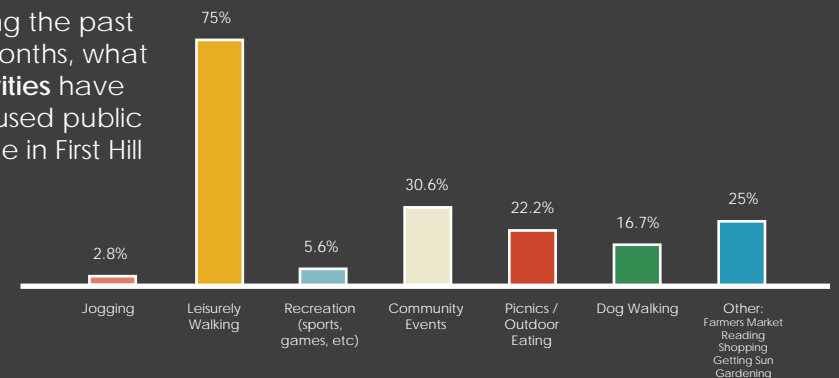
Rank your **favorite public spaces** in First Hill.

	SCORE	RANK
FREEWAY PARK	126	1
COURTYARD AT FRYE MUSEUM	89	2
FIRST HILL PARK	85	3
HARBORVIEW PARK	47	4
BOYLSTON PLACE	33	5
HORIUCHI PARK	32	6

Which **populations** are **critical** to consider in the future design of public spaces in First Hill?



During the past six months, what **activities** have you used public space in First Hill for?



ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

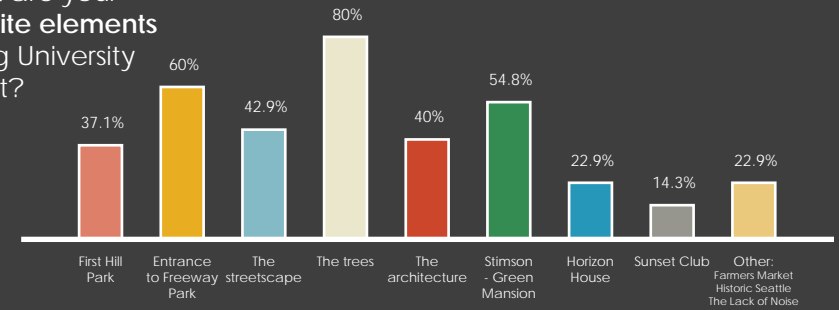
Survey respondents noted the trees, the entrance to Freeway Park, and the Stimson-Green Mansion as their favorite elements along University Street.

The biggest issues were vagrancy and pedestrian safety. Significantly lower concerns were crime, noise, and a lack of sitting opportunities.

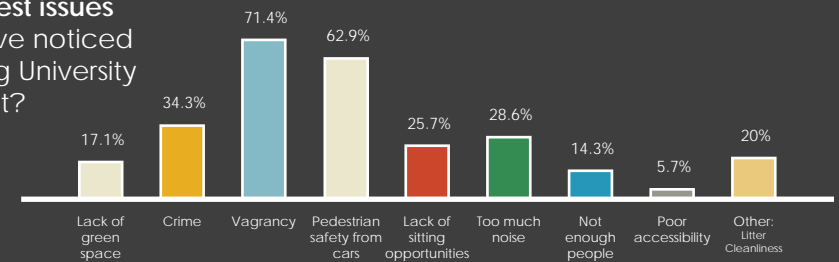
The top long-term priorities for improving University Streets were safety, better green space, and more public art.

There was generally positive support for future events, with highest marks for concerts, neighborhood picnics, art walks, outdoor exercise classes, and film screenings.

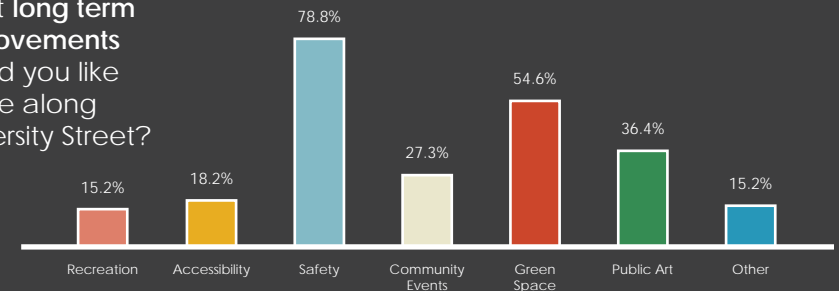
What are your favorite elements along University Street?



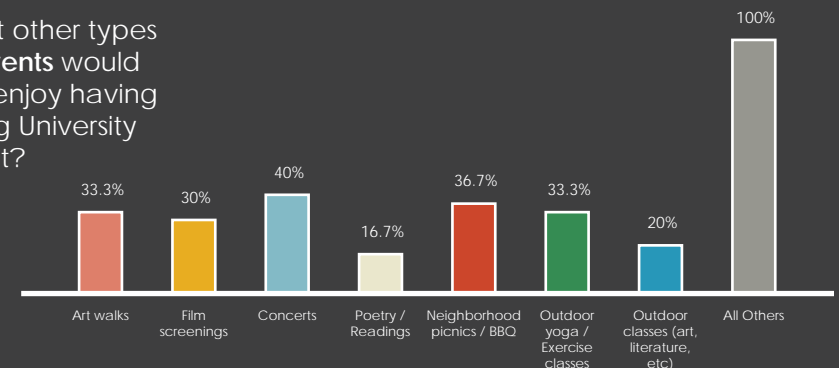
What are the biggest issues you've noticed along University Street?



What long term improvements would you like to see along University Street?



What other types of events would you enjoy having along University Street?



UNIVERSITY STREET OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH

THIS RESEARCH WAS COMPLETED BY DOUG HOLTON, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON STUDENT AND FIRST HILL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION SUMMER INTERN

In the summer of 2015 the First Hill Improvement Association, in conjunction with the Seattle Department of Transportation, conducted observation research of three public spaces along University Street on Seattle's First Hill neighborhood.

The goal of the observational research of these public spaces was to better understand usage, envision informed future designs and activation strategies. Observations were collected at three locations: First Hill Park, 9th Avenue at the intersection of University Street, and University Street, Union Street, and Boylston Avenue. First Hill Park is an existing public park. 9th and University, as well as University, Union, and Boylston are recently created open-spaces through the Seattle Department of Transportation's Pavement to Parks program and were a recommended improvement to pedestrian safety identified in the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan. The two pavement parks officially opened on August 8, 2015.

THE METHOD

Working in collaboration with the Seattle Department of Transportation, an on-site observation rubric was produced for information collection. The First Hill Improvement Association will share information with SDOT to assist with their ongoing performance metric analysis and to provide

understanding of usage. FHIA will use those data, as well as information collected about First Hill Park, to understand current conditions and to advocate for public safety and infrastructural improvements.

Observations collected by the First Hill Improvement Association were done manually by neighborhood volunteers. The observation rubric for all three sites consisted of prearranged columns to specify users, activities, and additional considerations. The group size of people using the spaces was noted. Each observation by volunteers took place during one-hour time periods throughout various days of the week, times, and weather conditions.

THE DATA

As of the month of September, neighborhood volunteers have conducted 12 hours of observational research. The Seattle Department of Transportation is performing similar observational research on University Street, with the exception of First Hill Park. Each activity and behavior occurring within the open-spaces was tallied and analyzed to determine how the spaces are being utilized and by whom. It must be noted that the total amount of observations did not occur evenly for each space. First Hill Park and 9th and University were observed at a higher frequency than University, Union and Boylston.

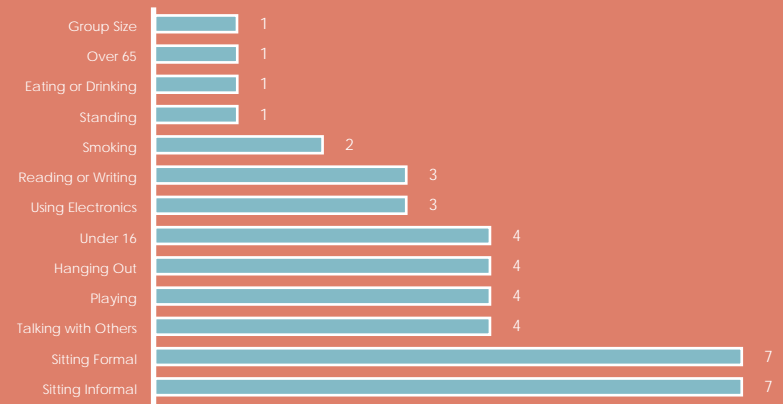
THE FINDINGS - 9TH AND UNIVERSITY

Located directly east of Freeway Park and west of Virginia Mason Medical Center, this open-space is 1,064 square feet. The 9th and University open-space was previously **used as street parking**. The space can be characterized as a pedestrian connection to Freeway Park and the University Street Station located downtown. It has turquoise blue paint on the pavement, which is carved out as a public seating area with bollards and self-watering planters. It features **dedicated trash bins, and approximately six round bistro tables with chairs**. Direct sunlight hits the space during the morning and early afternoon hours, but it is shaded in the late afternoon and evening by the Benaroya Research Institution building directly to the west.

According to the research, 9th and University is the least used of the three spaces. During the workweek, the majority of users are Virginia Mason employees. Usage during the weekend is considerably lower. On three separate occasion, observers recorded that zero people used the space. Because of this, the average amount of people using the space at any given time was 0.945. The most common activities that occur in the space are (in order): sitting, talking with others, reading, using electronics, and eating. Because this space is the least utilized space of the three, it also sees less nuisance behaviors.

During the summer months on Friday afternoons, Virginia Mason hosted a Farmer's Market along 9th Avenue in between Seneca and University Streets. The First Hill Improvement Association hosted a Trivia competition on Tuesday August 25th as an activation strategy and community building opportunity. This event drew attendance of over 50 people.

OBSERVATION DATA FOR 9TH AND UNIVERSITY



FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Including a pedestrian curb cut along the western edge of the park to allow for better accessibility.
- Including a mural on the blank, brick wall directly east of the space on Virginia Mason property.
- Closing down the street between University Street and Seneca Street to make a full pedestrian plaza.
- Offering more variety for seating options. The cable locks can be a safety hazard.
- Installing a permanent and transparent overhang for year-round usage.
- Improving maintenance and garbage collection.
- Integrating the painted squares on the sidewalk to the north of the park to fully connect with the park.
- Continuing First Hill farmer's market at the space.

THE FINDINGS - FIRST HILL PARK

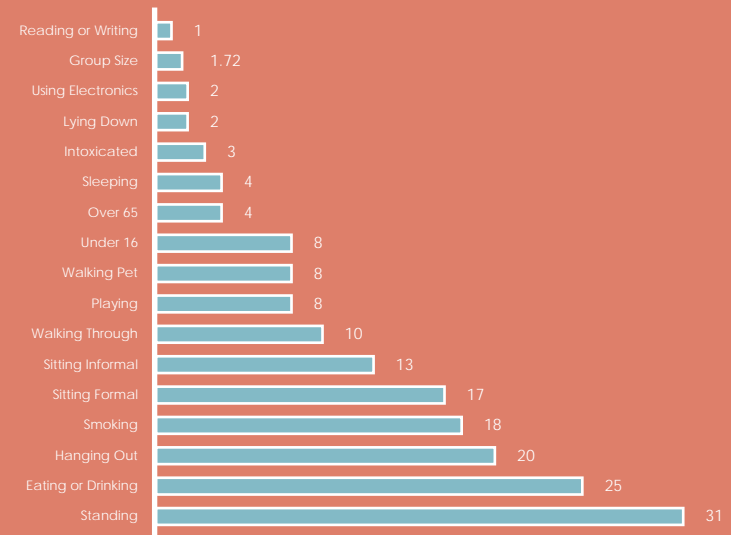
First Hill Park is located at the intersections of University Street and Minor Avenue. It is adjacent to the Stimson Green Mansion, and was originally a part of the mansion's property. In 1978, the 0.2-acre space was gifted to the City and transformed into First Hill Park. The space features: picnic tables, mature trees, benches, grass, brick pathways, and landscaping. First Hill Park is edged by mid and high-rise residential buildings. Direct sunlight comes into the space during the late afternoon and evening.

Of all three spaces, First Hill Park is the most used and has the widest array of activities. The space sees most usage during the late morning and afternoon. The most common types of activities that occur in First Hill Park are (in order): talking with others, standing around, eating, hanging out or relaxing, and smoking. The average group size, based on observation, is 1.7 people. From these observations, First Hill Park can be considered a gathering place for residents. Children also use this space much more than the other parks in First Hill.

Although First Hill Park is the most heavily used public space in the neighborhood, it also has the most nuisance behaviors: overnight camping, smoking, and intoxication. This site is also significant in the fact that is largely male dominated, while the other two sites are evenly split between genders. The presence of females is considered a sign of a healthy space.

Despite being located in a densely populated area with a scarcity of open space, First Hill Park is underutilized. However, there is evidence that the space works well with programmed activity. The First Hill Improvement Association hosted First Hill Fidos on July 30th. This well attended event featured community members and their four-legged friends. Attendance was nearly 150 people.

OBSERVATION DATA FOR FIRST HILL PARK



FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Removing shrubs along the outer edges for safety and accessibility reasons.
- Including a playground for children in the area.
- Encouraging a small P-Patch along the southern edge of the park.
- Implementing First Hill's active zone loop, beginning in First Hill Park.
- Increasing nighttime lighting for safety reasons.
- Including greater variety of seating options.
- Pursuing a re-visioning strategy and concept plan for the park.

THE FINDINGS

UNIVERSITY/UNION/BOYLSTON (UUB)

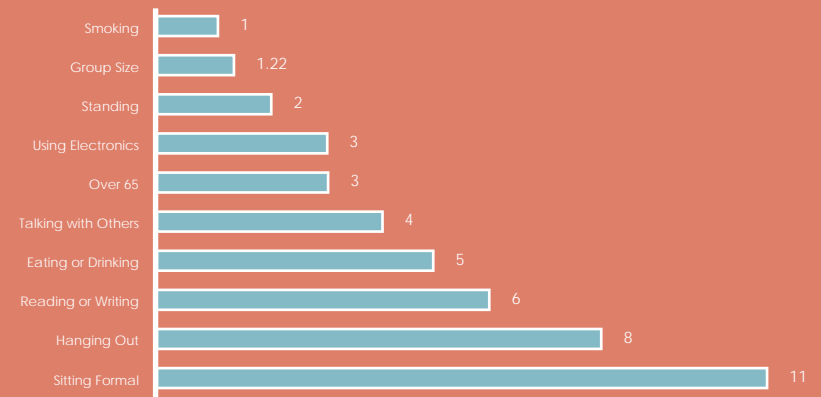
On the northeastern edge of the First Hill neighborhood, the University Street, Union Street, and Boylston Ave intersection features a recently completed open-space with tables with chairs, umbrellas, and garbage bins. UUB Park is 4,390 square feet of turquoise pavement protected from traffic by bollards and large planters. Previously, the site was an oversized intersection where the downtown street grid intersects the Capitol Hill street grid. The five-legged intersection was identified as unsafe for cars and pedestrians. The installation of UUB rechannels the street so that cars can only travel east-west on Union Street, and make turns between Boylston Avenue and University Street.

The UUB open-space experiences a higher volume of pedestrian traffic than the other open-spaces on First Hill. Of all the open-spaces on First Hill, this space receives the most direct sunlight throughout most of the day.

The UUB Park is the second largest and second most utilized open-space in First Hill. In contrast with 9th and University and First Hill Park, this space sees more consistent utilization throughout the day. The average group size at the UUB Park is 1.22 people. Based on observations UUB open-space attracts older people. The most common types of activities that occur in UUB are (in order): sitting, hanging-out, eating, and talking with others. There are many apartment buildings adjacent to the site, and this space serves as a front yard for apartment residents. Smoking is a common nuisance behavior.

The First Hill Improvement Association hosted a Vintage Street Games festival at the site on September 20th. This event featured street games, live music, food, snacks, and drew attendance of nearly 200 people over five hours.

OBSERVATION DATA FOR UUB



FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- Encouraging a higher frequency of garbage collection.
- Providing a variety of seating options. The cable locks can present a safety hazard.
- Installing crosswalks on the surrounding streets.
- Installing a transparent overhang for year-round use.
- Encouraging commercial activities in the vicinity.

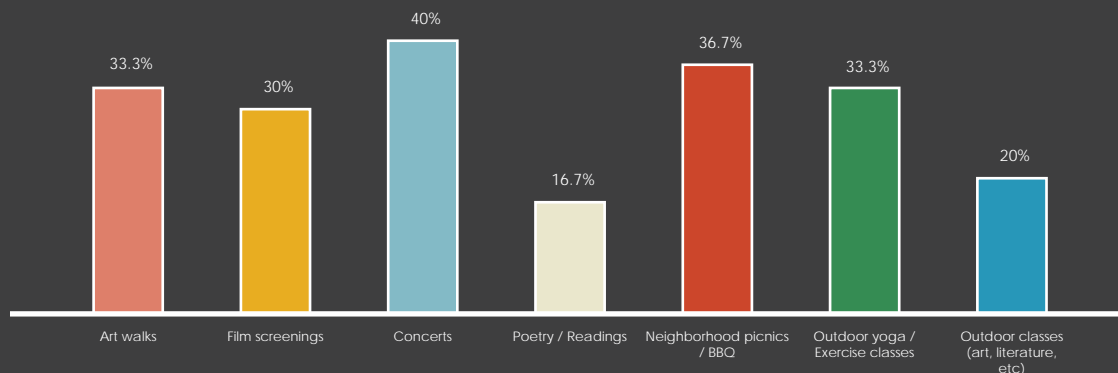
University Street

FUTURE ACTIVATION IDEA LIST

The goals of activating these public spaces along University Street still stand as an important part of improving the community. Future activation and engagement with the community will encourage more positive usage for the parks. Through the on-line survey, we asked “what other events, activities etc.. would you want to see along University Street?”

This list will be important for the First Hill Improvement Association to continue the activation work for the neighborhood and also encourage other community groups, residents and businesses to host activation activities on their own.

What other types of events would you enjoy having outside along University Street?



List of Activation Ideas from Community

Art day for kids of all ages
Bike safety with services from experts
Bingo
Block party refuge
Bookmobile
Bubble blowing with large wands
Regular buskers
Checkers/chess competition
Chess and checkers park, with people size board on street, and various game boards on tables for backgammon, chess/checkers
Community Garden
Dancing
Dog park/ challenge course
Flower pressing class
Food Truck venue
Foreign language conversation group
Health fair
Karaoke time
Knitting club
Live music performances
Meet and greet with local elected officials
Movie nights
Neighborhood barbecue location
Night Out party
Open mic poetry
Pre-paid buskers
Playground for very young children
Root beer float social
Scrabble Tournament
Shakespeare in the mini park
Sidewalk chalk events
Silent reading party in the park
Skate board tricks contest
Urban sketching meetups

NEXT STEPS

- 1 Pursue a Friends of First Hill Park Group to lead future efforts in Park visioning and support
- 2 Further engage with Parks Department and community to re-envision and enhance First Hill Park
- 3 Continue to build community and promote the First Hill Neighborhood along University Street



THANK YOU FOR HELPING
TO BUILD COMMUNITY!

