

MANAGING HIGH-QUALITY PARK ENVIRONMENTS

Models and Lessons from
Selected Parks in New York City,
Chicago and Cincinnati



University at Buffalo
School of Architecture
and Planning

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

In the summer of 2018, Imagine LaSalle was launched as a community-driven initiative to explore the future of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park (formerly LaSalle Park). A key part of that visioning exercise was a community focus group made up of 22 community ambassadors representing the diversity of voices and cultures of people who regularly use the park. In addition to providing their unique perspectives on the former LaSalle Park, focus group members participated in group trips to tour parks in Chicago, Cincinnati, and New York City. Exploring 21 precedent parks in total, focus group members brought back insights about what they liked, what they did not like, and what they thought would work at the former LaSalle Park.

This report is a companion piece to the vision document, Imagine LaSalle, created by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute (UBRI) with input and support of the 22 community ambassadors and other community stakeholders. It examines the management features of the 21 precedent parks visited during the Imagine LaSalle focus group tours. The ultimate goal of this exercise is to identify lessons for how a re-imagined Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park can be managed and maintained to meet the community's vision for this premier waterfront gathering place. To this end, an experiment was conducted by delineating four park management models that can be used to examine some of the management features of the 21 precedent parks. These models include a "park board" model, "park district" model, "park-corporation" model, and "park-conservancy" model. The models were defined based on three factors: who owns the resource, where major funding comes from, and the structure of park management. The parks were categorized in one of the four park management models, which provided an opportunity to identify (1) some key management features of parks in each model, (2) whether these management features supported unique park visitors' experiences, and (3) some lessons about park management to be learned from these precedent parks.

The report makes three related conclusions. First, few of the 21 precedent parks fit comfortably in any of the four park management models. Rather, it is more accurate to think of 21 unique management designs that have evolved to serve the physical, financial, and cultural circumstances of each park. Second, conversations about park management should focus on envisioning a management model that leverages the unique physical, ecological, political, and social conditions of the park. In reality, there is no one-size-

fit-all park management model. Finally, it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish direct association between park management models and park visitors' experiences. Rather, the analysis of the 21 precedent parks reveals that parks are able to deliver high-quality experiences for visitors if appropriate investments (resource and time), programming, strategic partnerships, community support are in place. This report is not intended to prescribe how a re-imagined Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park can be managed and maintained. Rather, it is offered as a resource to help stakeholders begin conversations toward envisioning a unique management model for this premier waterfront gathering place.

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Brooklyn Bridge Park, New York City

MANAGING HIGH-QUALITY PARK ENVIRONMENTS

About park management

Park management involves choices about resource allocation and the distribution of responsibility, authority, and accountability among stakeholders.^a There are tradeoffs in these choices, which can affect the overall experiences of park users. Thus, managing park resources, especially in urban settings, must confront the challenge of providing diverse and quality experiences for users while also generating the needed resources to operate, maintain, and program the parks. There is also an equity challenge. Park management must ensure that all residents, regardless of background (e.g., income, class, disability, age, race), have access to, at least, basic park amenities and facilities. The management of park resources, therefore, requires thoughtful conversations among stakeholders. Such discussions must revolve around the diverse needs of park users vis-à-vis the resource constraints facing park management entities (e.g., municipalities, corporations, conservancies). An in-depth interrogation of and learning from existing park management models can be used to initiate conversations among stakeholders on park management.



^a Park management and park governance are synonymous, but only park management is used throughout this report.

Community engagement and data collection

Community engagement for the re-visioning of LaSalle Park included field visits to 21 precedent parks in three cities relevant to the future of Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Centennial Park. These visits were intended, in part, to inform learning on park management as well as design and operations.¹ Results of the field visits suggested the need to move past anecdotes to broader lessons on park management by recording clearly and analyzing the effectiveness of various management models for the precedent parks. There was also the need to ask how park management models can support diverse and high-quality experiences for park users. Such park user-management analysis will help to place the observed maintenance, capital development, and programming for each of the precedent parks in the context of the organizations that manage the parks. Towards that end, three main questions guided the analysis conducted in this report:

- How are the 21 precedent parks managed and financed?
- How do observations of focus group members (i.e., park visitors' observations) differ across these park management models?^b
- What specific park management features (i.e., ownership, funding, and management structure) provide further insights into the observations made by focus group members across the different park management models?

Various forms of primary and secondary data were used to answer these questions. Primary data included field notes: semi-structured interviews with park leadership on management and financing relevant to park planning, operations, maintenance, and programming; and observations and comments made by focus group members who toured the 21 precedent parks. Secondary data on

^b Visitor observations is used as a surrogate for park user experiences in this report. While LaSalle Park focus group members are not the same as the actual users of the parks visited, the intent here is to compare how the observations of focus group members (i.e., visitors' observations) differed across the parks visited, and what specific park management features provide further insights into some of the observations made by focus group members.

park management and funding sources were also collected through park websites, annual reports and budgets for the parks, tax returns for some of the nonprofits managing these parks, master and strategic plans developed for the parks, and newspaper articles. Analysis of data was situated within a broader look at the literature on park management.



Purpose and structure of the report

To answer these three questions, an experiment was conducted on park management models to extract possible lessons on how to manage and maintain the re-imagined Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Centennial Park. In this experiment, the 21 precedent parks were categorized under four park management models, as informed by a review of the literature. It is important to note that these four models, discussed later in the report, constitute imperfect categories because features that are ostensibly characteristic of one model can be found in the other three models. In addition, ownership, identified in the literature as a distinguishing factor among the models, does not apply to the 21 parks visited by the 22 focus group members. With one exception, all are publicly owned.

Given the imperfections of these four park management models, the purpose of this experimental analysis was to (1) elicit general lessons from how these 21 parks are managed, and (2) explore whether there is a relationship between

how parks are managed and the quality of experiences of park visitors. Highlighted in other sections of this report, a key lesson from this analysis is that there is no one-size-fits-all park management model. That is, the four models, although serving as a useful starting point for conversations, do not sufficiently describe the particularities of each park. It is more accurate to say that there are 21 unique park management models, each shaped by their unique history, physical, political-economic, and social conditions. Finally, it is difficult to establish a direct relationship between the four management models and the experiences of park visitors. Rather, analysis conducted herein suggests that any of the park management models, well-resourced and well-run, can produce parks that provide satisfying experiences for visitors.

Findings and key lessons are presented in this five-section report. The introduction provides the background and questions guiding this report. The next section gives a brief overview of the literature on park management to help develop an analytical framework to examine how the 21 precedent parks are managed. In the third section, an experiment is conducted by sorting the 21 precedent parks into four park management models to illustrate how the parks are managed and financed in the three cities visited: Chicago, Cincinnati, and New York City. The experiment is continued in the fourth section by asking whether specific park management models can be connected to the observations made by focus group members when they visited these parks. The report concludes by reflecting on the limitations of the experiment conducted in this report, and what they say about the design of park management structures. In short, such structures should be custom-designed, made-to-order, and not “off-the-rack.” Finally, some lessons are offered to serve as a useful guide for the next steps and future conversations among stakeholders about creating an effective park management model for the re-imagined Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park. This report is intended to serve as a public education tool to foster discussion of park management models relevant to the creation of high-quality park environments. Specifically, it is meant to serve as a decision assistance tool to support policy and planning for Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Centennial Park.



Governors Island, New York City



The Riverwalk, Cincinnati

THIS REPORT IS INTENDED TO SERVE AS A PUBLIC EDUCATION TOOL TO FOSTER DISCUSSION OF PARK MANAGEMENT MODELS RELEVANT TO THE CREATION OF HIGH-QUALITY PARK ENVIRONMENTS. SPECIFICALLY, IT IS MEANT TO SERVE AS A DECISION ASSISTANCE TOOL TO SUPPORT POLICY AND PLANNING FOR RALPH C. WILSON JR. CENTENNIAL PARK.

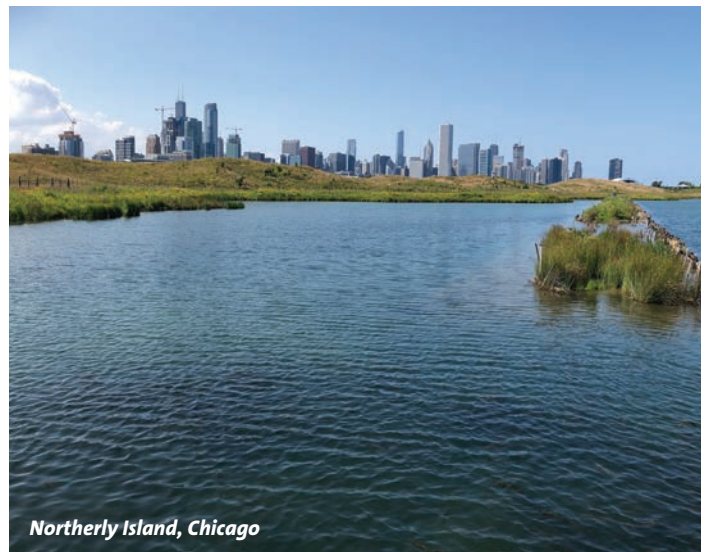


Smale Riverfront Park, Cincinnati

PARK MANAGEMENT MODELS: STATE OF THE ART AND FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Park management models in the literature

There is an extensive literature on the management of park resources. Specifically, and more relevant to our discussion, various studies have identified models or typologies to describe the key management features of a park. For instance, some scholars propose four typologies: *governmental arrangement* (provision of a park by a public agency alone); *cross-sector alliance* (partnerships and contracts between a public agency and a private for-profit or nonprofit agency to provide a park); *regulated monopoly* (a private entity granted a monopoly to provide park services); and *divestiture* (leasing or selling public lands or park facilities to private entities).² Others have put forward five models: *fully public model* (public agency operates all park services); *public utility model* (public agency operates a private corporation that manages a park); *outsourcing model* (contracting out park services to private entities); *private, nonprofit ownership* (park is owned and operated by a nonprofit entity); and *private, for-profit* (park is owned and operated by a for-profit entity).³ Others suggest the addition of other models that center on community ownership of parks, such as the traditional community management model.⁴





Three important features of park management

Analysis of park management focuses on three key features: (1) ownership of the land and other resources associated with the park (e.g., government-owned, nonprofit-owned, for-profit owned, or community-owned); (2) funding source(s) for the park (e.g., taxes, user fees, or donations); and (3) the management body (e.g., government agency, parastatal/state-owned corporation, nonprofit corporation, for-profit corporation, or community).^{5,6} While different combinations of ownership, funding, and management bodies can lead to numerous typologies and hybrid models for park management, eight of these models are widely used: national park model, parastatal model, nonprofit organization model, eco-lodge model, public and for-profit combination model, public and nonprofit combination model, aboriginal and government model, and traditional-community mode.⁵⁻⁷

Two of the management features, resource ownership and funding source, are straightforward to analyze; the third feature, management body, is not. Oakerson and Parks used Adirondack Park in New York and Yellowstone National Park (mostly in Wyoming with parts in Montana and Idaho) to illustrate the importance of paying particular attention to what constitutes the management body of a park.⁸ The management of parks or public goods, in general, is structured by two important functions: **PROVISION** and **PRODUCTION**.⁸⁻¹¹ Provision functions involve public decisions that determine *what* types of goods and services are to be made available,

including funding decisions, quality standards, and monitoring. Production functions refer to *how* to provide those goods and services – the technical process of converting resource inputs into outputs.^{8,11} For example, a city may decide to provide its residents with two parks (i.e., provision decision), but it can arrange for the parks to be produced through multiple ways, such as creating a department of parks and recreation or contracting with a private entity (nonprofit or for-profit) to own, manage and fund these parks. In other words, provision and production are not the same: a city can provide a park, but it does not have to necessarily produce it, especially if it is not economically or politically feasible for the city to do so.

Analysis of park management structures

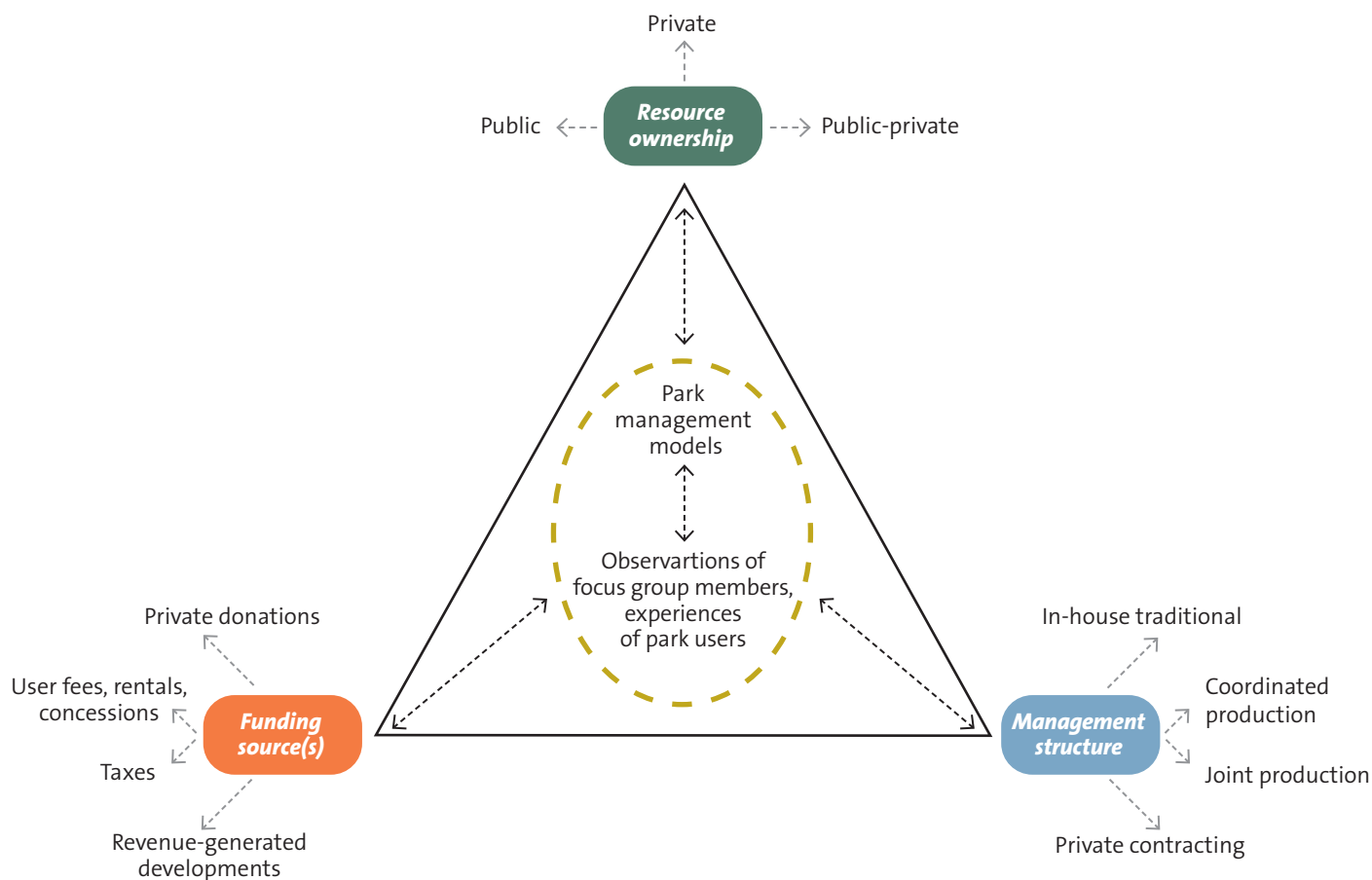
The point here is for us to analyze the **management structure** of a park. The management structure allows us to analyze instances where a city provides and produces its park or resorts to other alternatives. **THESE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES** include *in-house or traditional model, coordinated production, joint production, intergovernmental contracting, private or not-for-profit contracting, franchising, or vouchering*.^{8,11,12} Four of these management structures, which are more applicable to the analysis in this report, will be briefly explained here. **In-house production** is when a municipality creates departments to produce (manage, operate, and program) a park or series of parks. **Coordinated production** is when multiple public-agency departments (city, state, or federal agencies) and private-entity departments (nonprofit or for-profit entities) work together to produce different aspects of a park or series of parks (e.g., maintenance, operation, programming). A **joint production** is when multiple public and private agencies invest in creating an organization or corporation that will be responsible for producing (managing, maintaining, operating, and programming) a park or series of parks. **Private contracting** is when all or any individual aspect of producing a park (e.g., maintenance, operation, programming) is contracted out to a private vendor. For most urban parks, the design and construction of the parks are contracted out to private firms. Similarly, the sale of certain goods such as food and drinks are often contracted out to private vendors in what is often known as **park concessions**.^{7,13,14}

Framework for analysis

In summary, a framework to analyze park management models or typologies should consider three key management features: (1) resource ownership; (2) funding source, and (3) management structure (see Figure 1 below). In resource ownership, there should be a focus on who owns the park (i.e., the land and other resources). Funding source(s) must describe how park resources are paid for, including public and private financing mechanisms. The management structure must specify how park provision and production functions (management, operations, and programming) are distributed among agencies through in-house production, coordinated production, joint production, and private contracting. More

relevant to this report, such an analytical framework for park management must focus on how the interaction among these three management features can shape the experiences and observations of park users and visitors. Stakeholders (residents, policymakers, park managers) should be aware that there are multiple options and combinations of options that can be chosen to design a management model for high-quality park environments. The main challenge is for stakeholders to understand the choices available to them and combine these choices in ways that fulfill their needs, including making sure that the parks offer diverse, quality, and long-lasting user experiences, and generate needed funds to maintain and operate the parks.

Figure 1: Framework for Analyzing Park Management Models





The High Line, New York City

PARK MANAGEMENT MODELS FOR THE 21 PRECEDENT PARKS

To operationalize the framework in Figure 1, the precedent parks are classified under two main park management approaches with each offering two models.^c These include the **PUBLIC APPROACH** (Park District model and Park Board model) and the **PUBLIC-PRIVATE APPROACH** (Public-Corporation model and Public-Conservancy model). These park management models (summarized in Appendix 2) were developed based on three key parameters: *resource ownership*; *funding source(s)*; and *management structure*.

Some caveats are in order. First, and as discussed in the previous literature review section, it is impossible to develop park management models or typologies that perfectly capture all of the variables involved. As such, in this experimental analysis, it was necessary to simplify the details in the four park management models relative to the specifics of the precedent parks to extract broad lessons, if any, about what each model can teach us about managing high-quality park environments.

Second, it is useful to remind readers that the four park management models are similar in very important areas. For instance, one might rightly argue that the difference between the Park Board and Park District models is not significant. Chicago’s Park District (Park District model) has taxing authority while the Cincinnati Park Board (Park Board model)

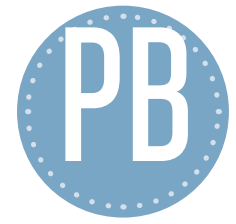
does not. Yet the Chicago Park District’s taxing authority is both statutorily and politically constrained and public support for park funding in Cincinnati is strong. Likewise, there are similarities between the Park-Corporation and the Park-Conservancy models as both are managed mainly by not-for-profit entities although their supporting constituencies are different. It is also worth noting that the management of the precedent parks has evolved over time as park stakeholders adopted and incorporated different park management features. Notwithstanding these similarities, the goal for the experiment conducted herein is to offer broad and general lessons to kick-start conversations among stakeholders about the need to develop a custom-made management model for the re-imagined Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Centennial Park.

^cThe Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati can be classified as a private (nonprofit) model, where the resource (i.e., land) is owned by the Civic Garden Center, fundraising (private donations) is the dominant funding source with occasional city/state/federal grants, and the management structure is mostly **IN-HOUSE**: that is, day-to-day operation, maintenance, and programming tasks are performed by the staff of the Civic Garden Center. Since the Civic Garden Center is the only park (out of the 21 parks) that fits the private (nonprofit) model, this model was excluded from the report.

PUBLIC APPROACH		PUBLIC-PRIVATE APPROACH	
Parks Using Park District (PD) Model	Parks Using Park Board (PB) Model	Parks Using Public-Corporation (P-Corp) Model	Parks Using Public-Conservancy (P-Con) Model
CHICAGO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maggie Daley Park • Northerly Island • Ping Tom Park • Clark Boathouse 	CINCINNATI: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smale Riverfront Park • Serpentine Wall • Yeatman’s Cove • Sawyer Point Park • International Friendship Park • Eden Park • Burnet Woods 	NEW YORK: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brooklyn Bridge Park • Battery Park City • Governor’s Island CHICAGO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicago Riverwalk CINCINNATI: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington Park 	NEW YORK: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Battery • High Line CHICAGO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Millennium Park • The 606 • The Bloomingdale Line



Park District (PD) Model



Park Board (PB) Model

Resource ownership:

Parks are owned by the Park District (ownership is often transferred from the City to the Park District)



Resource ownership:

Parks are owned by the Park Board (ownership is often transferred from the City to the Park Board)



Major revenue source(s):

Park District uses its taxing powers to generate majority or revenue under this model.



Major revenue source(s):

City subsidies



Dominant management structure:

In-house production (Park District's staff perform most day-to-day operations, maintenance, and programming)



Dominant management structure:

In-house production (Board's staff perform most day-to-day operations, maintenance, and programming)



Private contracting (some operations, maintenance, and programming tasks are contracted to private entities)

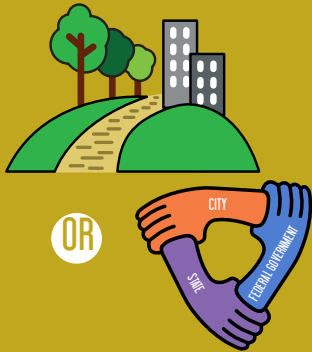




Public-Corporation (P-Corp) Model



Public-Conservancy (P-Con) Model



Resource ownership:
Parks are owned by the city, state, or federal government
OR
through a partnership among city, state, and federal governments



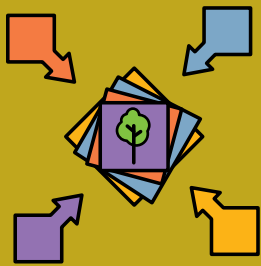
Resource ownership:
Park is owned directly by the City or by a Park District



Major revenue source(s):
Revenue-generating developments (i.e., rents and fees from residential and commercial, such as parking garage in Washington Park)



Major revenue source(s):
Fundraising
+
City subsidies



Dominant management structure:
Joint production (multiple public and private agencies collaborate to create an entity to manage the park)



Dominant management structure:
Coordinated production
+
Private contracting



OR
Coordinated production (multiple public and private agencies perform different tasks in managing the park)





PUBLIC APPROACH

Park District (PD) Model

Among the case study cities, some of the parks in Chicago were categorized under the PD model. These parks were managed by the Chicago Park District (CPD), which is supervised by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the mayor with the approval of the city council. Four out of the seven parks visited in Chicago fall under this model, namely: Maggie Daley Park; Northerly Island; Ping Tom Park; and Clark Boathouse. In this PD model, the **park resource** is owned and managed by a designated park district. The City of Chicago transferred ownership and management authority and responsibilities to the CPD. Clark Boathouse involves a slight anomaly : the CPD leases the land from the City of Chicago because the city has not formally transferred ownership to the park district; the CPD also leases the land along the east bank of the Chicago River from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District.

The PD model is **financed** through a variety of sources, but the park district's **taxing powers** distinguishes the PD from the other three models. The CPD is one of the seven taxing jurisdictions Chicago residents see on their tax bills. The CPD share of that levy amounts to an average of about \$200 per annum paid by a resident to support the parks.¹⁵ In 2018, property taxes and personal property replacement tax levied

Ping Tom Park, Chicago





by the CPD accounted for about 60% of the CPD's operating budget (this property tax levy can only increase from year to year by no more than the rate of inflation). Other funding sources include concessions, city/state/federal grants/subsidies, private grants and donations, fees, and rentals/permits.

A combination of private contracting and in-house production characterizes the **management structure** for the PD model. While there are in-house departments (e.g., Department of Cultural and Natural Resources, Park Services-Security, and Community Recreation) responsible for performing some of the day-to-day operations, maintenance, and programming tasks, most of these tasks are performed by private vendors contracted by the CPD. The in-house departments often work with and manages these private vendors in performing these tasks. For example, the CPD contracts with a vendor to manage and book concerts for the Huntington Bank Pavilion at Northerly Island for concerts. The CPD also contracts with a vendor to install, maintain and collect revenue from the district's parking system. The Park Concession Management, LLC, is also contracted by the CPD to manage park concessions. There are also instances of coordinated production, where the CPD works with city departments, such as the Chicago Police Department, to produce policing services and federal agencies, such as United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to restore habitats and species in Northerly Island.

Management of the Maggie Daley Park under the PD Model

A world-class park, Maggie Daley Park was opened in 2014, and it is *owned and managed* by the Chicago Parks District. It is a 27-acre downtown park built over a 4,000 car-parking garage. The Park was expected to generate gross revenue of \$1.8 million in 2019, which was \$2.6 million less than the expected gross expenses. The Park is expected to generate more revenue after its amenities, including concession spaces, are completely constructed. Like other parks under the PD Model, *property taxes* are the main source of revenue for the CPD. In terms of *management structure*, the CPD contracts with a third-party, MB Real Estate (MBRE), to manage the park and its amenities. There are also instances of *co-production*, where CPD departments, MBRE, and City departments (e.g., Department of Cultural and Special Event or DCASE) collaborate to mount different events and programs in Maggie Daley Park.





PUBLIC APPROACH Park Board (PB) Model

Seven out of the nine parks visited in Cincinnati were categorized under this model, namely: Smale Riverfront Park, Serpentine Wall, Yeatman’s Cove, Sawyer Point Park, International Friendship Park, Eden Park, and Burnet Woods. The Cincinnati Park Board of Commissioners (CPBC), the members of which are appointed by the mayor, manages these parks. Similar to the PD model, the City of Cincinnati transferred ownership and management authority and responsibilities to the CPBC.¹⁶ However, and unlike the PD model, the CPBC under the PB model does not have taxing powers. The majority of funding under this model comes from **city subsidies** (i.e., City of Cincinnati’s general and infrastructure funds). In 2018, around 56% of the CPBC’s \$19.1million revenue was from the city’s general and infrastructure funds; 10% came from a citywide tree assessment; 28% from grants, donations, endowments and sponsorships; and around 2% was generated from concessions, fees, rents and permits.¹⁷

The management structure for the PB model is mostly characterized by **in-house production** by CPBC departments. The CPBC has several departments supervised by the Parks Director, who works with the appointed members of the CPBC to manage and maintain the parks under their control.



SMALE RIVERFRONT PARK,
CINCINNATI



YEATMAN'S COVE, CINCINNATI

Management of the Smale Riverfront Park under the PB Model

In addition to providing recreation space near the city center, Smale Riverfront Park was designed to accommodate seasonal flooding along the river edge. Planning for this 18-acre park started in 1997, the first phase was opened in 2012, and additional features were constructed and opened through 2015. The park is owned and managed by the Cincinnati Park Board of Commissioners (CPBC). So far, Smale Park has benefited from investments from city, federal and state funds (over \$50million), and private funding (over \$42million). Like other parks under the PB Model, Smale Park mainly relies on city subsidies, which accounted for about 98% of the park's annual revenue in 2018. The remaining 2% constitutes revenue from other sources such as concessions, fees/permits, and private donations, such as funds raised by the Cincinnati Parks Foundation. CPBC's in-house departments mostly perform management, day-to-day operations, maintenance, and programming. Some of these in-house departments also work with nonprofits to raise funds, develop programming events, and provide feedback on decisions made about the CPBC.

These in-house departments perform all the day-to-day operations, maintenance, and programming tasks related to the seven parks under this PB model. Sometimes, these in-house departments also coordinate with city or state departments or nonprofits to provide certain park-related services. For instance, the CPBC's Division of Operations, Land Management, and Urban Forestry works with the Ohio Department of Transportation to plant and maintain about 1,000 miles of street trees within the city. Similarly, various in-house departments work with nonprofits (e.g., Cincinnati Parks Foundation and Cincinnati Parks Advisory Councils) to raise money and produce events for the parks under the PB model.



SMALE RIVERFRONT PARK, CINCINNATI



PUBLIC – PRIVATE APPROACH **Public-Corporation (P-Corp) Model**

The parks categorized under this model are owned by the city, state, or a city-state-federal partnership. A distinguishing feature of this model is that they are planned and managed by a nonprofit corporation designated by the park owner (i.e., city, state, or city-state-federal partners) or by a designated in-house department that works with multiple departments, agencies and organizations. In New York City, Brooklyn Bridge Park (BBP), Battery Park City parks (BPC), and Governor's Island were categorized under this P-Corp Model. The BBP is owned by the City of New York (under the Department of Parks and Recreation), and it is managed by the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation (BBPC) made up of a 17-member board of directors chosen by the Mayor of New York City, the Governor of New York State and local elected officials. The BPC is owned by the State of New York, and its parks are managed by the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA), which is as a New York State public benefit corporation. A significant land area of Governors Island (150 acres) is owned by the City of New York, after Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Paterson reached an agreement in 2010. This portion is managed by the Trust for Governors Island, which is a nonprofit corporation created by the City of New York and managed by a 13-member board



Washington Park, Cincinnati



appointed by the Mayor of New York City (four of whom are nominated by local officials).¹⁸ The remaining 22 acres of Governors Island is owned and managed by the National Parks Service (NPS). The Chicago Riverwalk in Chicago and Washington Park in Cincinnati were also categorized under this P-Corp Model. The Chicago Riverwalk is owned by the City of Chicago, and it is managed by the city's Department of Fleet and Facility Management. Washington Park is owned by the City of Cincinnati, and it is managed by the Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC), a nonprofit entity made up of more than 30 corporate sponsors which provide annual investments in 3CDC's operating budget.¹⁹

The main distinguishing feature of parks categorized under the P-Corp Model is **financing**. The corporations managing these parks fund operations through **revenue-generating developments** such as residential and commercial land uses related to the parks. For instance, the BBPC generates most of its operations and maintenance funds from revenue-generating development sites related to residential units (e.g., One Brooklyn Bridge Park and John Street), hotels and residential units (e.g., Piers 1 and 6), and retail, office and commercial developments (e.g., Empire Stores). In 2018, more than 96% of the BBP's \$57million annual revenue was generated from payments and ground lease rents, while the remaining was from park permits and fees.²⁰ The remaining parks in this P-Corp model (i.e., Battery Park City parks, Governors Island, Chicago Riverwalk, and Washington Park) are similarly structured to generate revenue through developments tied to the parks.

The unique ownership and financing structure of the P-Corp Model allows for multiple management structures. Two main management structures feature prominently with the P-Corp model: **joint production management** and **coordinated production**. With the joint-production management model, multiple public and private agencies come together to invest in creating a nonprofit corporation that oversees the day-to-day operation, maintenance, and programming of the parks. Brooklyn Bridge Park, Battery Park City parks, and Governors Island in New York City and Washington Park in Cincinnati all have this joint production management structure. As earlier noted, BBP is managed by BBPC; BPC is managed by BPCA; Governors Island (150 acres) is managed by Trust for Governors Island; and Washington Park is managed by 3CDC. Sometimes, some of these corporations also create their

Management of Washington Park under the P-Corp Model

Washington Park was constructed in 1860 by the City of Cincinnati. In 2012 about \$48 million was invested to redesign, renovate and expand the park through a collaboration among the City of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Park Board of Commissioners, and a nonprofit entity, Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC). The park is owned by the city, but managed and programmed by 3CDC.

Like other parks under the P-Corp model, Washington Park was redesigned to include revenue generating features. For instance, as part of renovating the park, 3CDC constructed a 450-space two-deck parking garage underground. In 2019, gross revenue from parking garages operated by 3CDC, including the one under the park, is expected to exceed \$15.3 million. 3CDC transforms these renovated and expanded parking garages and other real estate assets into operating assets to pay back debt service and cover operating costs. 3CDC has invested more than \$32 million to buy vacant buildings and lots surrounding the park to remove blight and create residential and commercial areas around Washington Park. Park management and community development are mutually reinforcing. While Washington Park is currently not financially self-sustaining, this is expected to change in the future as the park continues to attract new residents and businesses to the area.

in-house departments to help perform specific tasks such as fundraising and programming. For instance, Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy and Friends of Governor's Island were created to help with fundraising and programming for BBP and Governors Island, respectively. Finally, one can also see instances of a coordinated production management structure, specifically in the case of Chicago Riverwalk, where city, state, federal agencies (e.g., Department of Fleet and Facility Management, DCASE, USACE, Coast Guard) jointly perform tasks related to managing the park.



PUBLIC – PRIVATE APPROACH

Public-Conservancy (P-Con) Model

Parks categorized under the P-Con Model are located in New York City (The Battery and High Line) and Chicago (Millennium Park and The 606, also known as the Bloomingdale Line). Conservancies, as referred to in this model, are private, nonprofit organizations that work with government to manage and maintain parks mostly through raising money (outside of the government) and also supporting park programming. These conservancies sometimes go by different names such as foundation, trust, friends, forever, or alliance.²¹ In the P-Con Model, the city or park district owns the park but a conservancy manages it. For instance, the City of New York owns the High Line, which is managed by Friends of the High Line, and The Battery, which is managed by the Battery Conservancy. Millennium Park in Chicago is also owned by the City of Chicago and managed by the Millennium Park Foundation, which is established as a conservancy. The 606 (Bloomingdale Line) is owned by the Chicago Park District and managed by the Trust for Public Land.

In theory, the annual operating budget under the P-Con Model is generated mainly through **FUNDRAISING** (private and corporate donations) but, in practice, city governments often subsidize



The Battery, New York City



some of these parks. For instance, despite the Millennium Foundation's \$25 million endowment commitment for park maintenance, the City of Chicago, through its Department of Cultural and Special Events (DCASE), contributed more than 60% of the park's \$12.8million annual revenue in 2009. In 2014, the DCASE contributed \$6.1 million to cover park operations,²² and the cost of maintaining Millennium Park and other facilities (e.g., Chicago Cultural Center, Gallery 37 Center for the Arts, and Water Works) amounted to \$10.3million in the DCASE's budget in 2018.²³ The High Line in New York and The Battery are exceptions: the Friends of the High Line and The Battery Conservancy raise almost 100% of their annual operating budget.^{24,25}

In terms of **MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**, the P-Con Model is mostly characterized by **COORDINATED PRODUCTION** and **PRIVATE CONTRACTING**. Although the Millennium Foundation is officially responsible for that park's management, the responsibility is shared with DCASE. The staff of DCASE, Millennium Foundation, Lurie Garden and other city departments and agencies (e.g., The Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), City of Chicago Public Art Program, Nathan Manlow Sculpture Park) collaborate on programming and curation of exhibitions. Similar to Maggie Daley Park (under the PD Model), DCASE contracts with a third-party, MB Real Estate (MBRE), to manage the park and its amenities. Even though the Trust for Public Land manages The 606, day-to-day operations, maintenance, & programming tasks are performed mainly through coordinated production: partnership between staff of the Trust for Public Land and other public and private agencies such as Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, Chicago Department of Transportation, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Department of Housing and Economic Development, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, and the Chicago Police Department. The Friends of the High Line and the Battery Conservancy in New York City, also manage their parks through coordinated production, where the staff of the Battery Conservancy and Friends of the High Line work with the staff of New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and other organizations (e.g., schools) to perform day-to-day operations, maintenance, and programming tasks.

Management of The Battery under the P-Con Model

The Battery, a 25-acre park constructed in 1860 at the southernmost tip of Manhattan, was the first waterfront park in New York City. The park is owned by the City of New York, but The Battery Conservancy was founded in 1994 to rebuild the run-down park and its amenities, including the landmark Castle Clinton National Monument. The Conservancy, in partnership with the New York Department of Parks and Recreation and the National Parks Service, raised the needed capital to invest in revitalizing The Battery. The Battery Conservancy raises the entire annual operating budget for the park through private and corporate donations. In terms of management structure, day-to-day operations, maintenance, and programming tasks are performed through coordinated production involving staff of The Battery Conservancy and New York Department of Parks and Recreation. The Battery Conservancy also relies on volunteers, who work alongside the conservancy's professional staff to serve as tour guides or assist with maintaining the park's facilities and amenities (e.g., horticultural landscape, urban farm, and SeaGlass Carousel). The Battery Conservancy also works with the National Parks Service, which manages and maintains Castle Clinton at The Battery.

COMPARING VISITORS' OBSERVATIONS AND THE PARK MANAGEMENT MODELS



Summary of observations

The observations of focus group members (i.e., visitors' observations) about the precedent parks differ for each of the four park management models (summarized in appendix 3). Parks within each of the four models have their unique attributes, which may produce unique user and visitor observations and experiences. In this section, visitors' or focus group members' liked or favorable observations (i.e., what they liked about the parks) were grouped under nine thematic areas: security and lighting; recreational facilities; parking; public art, history and culture; horticulture/urban farm; diverse and quality programming/learning; well-maintained convenience facilities; attractive architecture; and accessibility. These thematically grouped visitors' observations were compared across the four park management models to see some emerging patterns. This analysis was guided by two questions: (1) How do visitors' observations (under the nine themes) differ across the four management models? (2) Are there specific management features (i.e., resource ownership, funding, and management structure) that can help explain patterns of visitors' observations across the four management models?

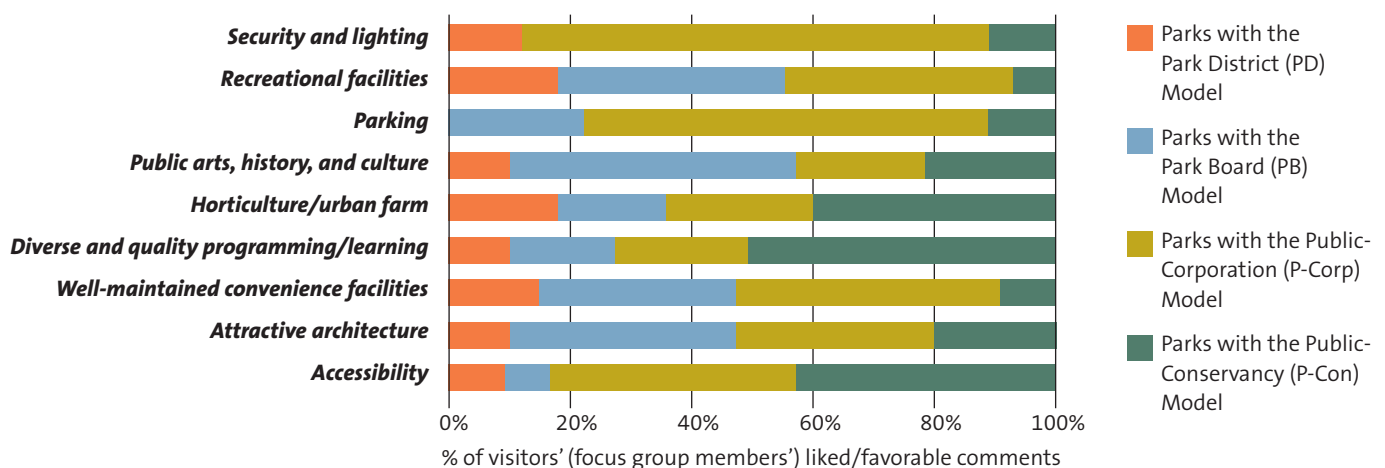
Two important caveats are warranted here. There is no straight line between park management models and visitors' observations or the experiences of daily park users. The way parks are managed can partly inform us about what is and can be available in the parks, as well as what users and visitors can observe and experience in the parks. A more comprehensive analysis of users' and visitors' experiences and observations for each park must also consider other variables, such as the specific characteristics and histories of the parks. Finally, given the limitations of the data used in this report, the analysis here should only inform initial conversations into more detailed analysis of each model, drawing on other relevant data,

including survey of park users for some of the parks visited as well as text mining of google ratings and comments provided by users for each of the parks.

The observations of focus group members across the nine thematic areas differed considerably across the four park management models (see Figure 2). For each thematic area, the number of favorable or liked comments for the parks within each model was expressed as a percentage of the total number of liked comments for that thematic area (Appendix 1). For each thematic area, parks with specific park management models had a relatively higher number of visitors' liked comments (shown in Figure 2). For instance, for parks with the P-Corp Model, focus group members expressed relatively more favorable comments with respect to security and lighting, parking, well-maintained convenience facilities, and accessibility. Focus group members expressed relatively more favorable comments on parks with the P-Con Model with respect to diverse and quality programming/learning, horticulture/urban farm, and accessibility. For parks with the PB Model, focus group members expressed relatively more favorable comments on issues related to public arts, history and culture, attractive architecture, recreational facilities, and well-maintained convenience facilities. Focus group members expressed relatively fewer favorable comments about the parks with the PD Model.

Ultimately, a key lesson from this section's analysis suggests that it is difficult to establish direct or causal relationship between park management models and the observed differences in visitors' experiences (i.e., what focus group members liked and not about the parks). Rather, the analysis herein suggests that all the precedent parks, regardless of the model they are categorized under, are able to deliver high-quality experiences for park visitors when the needed resources, programming, and strategic partnerships are made available.

Figure 2: Focus group members' liked/favorable comments (grouped by themes) about the precedent parks



Visitors' (focus group members) observations about parks having the PD Model

Parks categorized under the PD Model of management had relatively fewer favorable comments across all the nine thematic areas. This is not surprising partly because the management structure for the PD Model privileges the spread of tax dollars more broadly to provide basic park amenities across its taxing jurisdiction. In other words, the Chicago Park District, which manages parks with the PD Model, seems to have less room to concentrate tax dollars in creating grand and resource-intensive recreational facilities and high-style architecture in one or two parks. The Chicago Park District must efficiently allocate resources to provide and manage basic park amenities across multiple, geographically dispersed parks within a jurisdiction (i.e., city, county or region). Thus, focus group members' favorable comments about the parks with this model focused more on the basic recreational facilities and horticultural areas (see the next facing page).

Two overlapping issues are worth noting here. First, parks with the PD Model can have resource-intensive facilities/amenities, such as Maggie Daley, if the park district

builds strong collaboration with corporations and groups for management support (e.g., funding, maintenance, operations, and programming). For instance, focus group members expressed favorable comments about the Cancer Survivors Garden in Maggie Daley Park. This impressive and resource-intensive garden facility was provided through the Chicago Park District's collaboration with the Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Foundation, which funded the garden. However, and second, building funding collaboration within the PD Model is necessary but not sufficient. There is also the need to cultivate strong community support and involvement in park maintenance, day-to-day operations, and programming. For instance, over the years, the Chicago Park District has struggled to maintain this resource-intensive Cancer Survivors Garden due to dwindling funding support to maintain the park. However, the active involvement of community groups in some parks within this PD Model, such as the Ping Tom Park Advisory Council, has helped provide and maintain some of Ping Tom Park's impressive and resource-intensive facilities (e.g., Pagoda, walkway bridge, wall art).





Top-liked Features (Themes) of PD Model Parks

- Recreational facilities
- Horticulture/urban farm

Management Features That Potentially Support or Make These Top-Liked Features Possible

- Tax dollars make it possible to provide basic amenities across multiple, geographically dispersed parks.
- Building funding collaborations with corporations supports provision of spectacular park facilities/amenities in some of the parks.
- Maintaining spectacular park facilities requires building strong community support to help with maintenance, day-to-day operations, and programming.

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Comments for PD Model Parks

Maggie Daley Park

“Recreation – creative, open, free year-round”

“The age-appropriate play spaces are great”

“Love the log benches”

“A formal garden like the Cancer Survivors Garden is a good thing”

Ping Tom Park

“Nice table and benches”

“Nice playground area for children”

“Embraces a culture and serves a purpose. Even the plants do this”

“Nice pagoda”

Visitors' (focus group members) observations about parks having the PB Model

Parks categorized under the PB Model of management were commented on favorably by focus group members especially in the areas of public arts, history and culture, attractive architecture, recreational facilities, and well-maintained convenience facilities. While this model is similar to the PD Model in terms how it spreads resources across multiple parks, it differs slightly from the PD Model because it seems that the management authority (Parks Board) has some flexibility to concentrate investment into building impressive architecture, landscape and recreational facilities in some specific parks. Specifically, the creation of the Cincinnati Parks Foundation, affiliated with the Cincinnati Park Board of Commissioners (CPBC), allows for the generation of extra funds to invest in specific parks. Focus group members' favorable comments about the parks were focused on specific issues in certain parks, some of which are presented on the next facing page.

In addition to the Park Board's flexibility to concentrate park investments in specific parks, two other important management features can potentially offer insights into some of the favorable comments made by focus group members about the parks in this PB Model. First, the management authority, CPBC, and the Cincinnati community in general seem to agree on one thing: their parks illustrate their city's rich history and culture, in which they take great pride. Thus, it was less surprising that focus group members focused on how history and culture were embedded in the parks' public art. Second, strategic collaboration with federal and state agencies is vital to the PB Model. For instance, through building strategic partnership and engagement with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the CPBC, through the Smale Riverfront Park, was able to explore creative ways of solving their chronic flood problem while also building attractive park architecture and improving park amenities for its residents. The CPBC's partnership with the Ohio Department of Transportation also provides opportunity to increase shared resources to plant and maintain trees and other horticultural areas in the parks and along the streets.

Top-liked Features (Themes) of PB Model Parks

- Public arts, history and culture
- Attractive architecture
- Recreational facilities
- Well-maintained convenience facilities

Management Features That Potentially Support or Make These Top-Liked Features Possible

- The management authority (Park Board) seems to have a bit more flexibility than the PD Model, to concentrate investment in building resource-park facilities in some specific parks.
- Management authority and residents agree on one thing: use the parks to project the city's rich history and culture.
- Building more vertical collaboration with federal agencies (e.g., USACE) allows for creative ways to solve problems (e.g., flooding) while also increasing park amenities.
- Building more vertical collaboration with state agencies (e.g., Cincinnati Highway) provide opportunities to gain access to additional support resources to maintain the parks. with maintenance, day-to-day operations, and programming.



FOCUS GROUP

Comments for PB Model Parks

Smale Riverfront Park

“Water works/geothermal wells, everything is connected”

“Interactive art/sculptures”

“Art incorporates water and banks”

“They’ve integrated the river into the park”

“Unique features: water attractions, flying pig, outdoor chime piano”

“A place that was flooded has lots of water features, lots of use of water”

“Smale flowed organically. It felt like you were part of that”

“Art and monuments, Black Brigade, some history in the right place”

Sawyer Point Park

“There are a lot of tennis courts and volleyball courts and other recreation areas that are located away from the riverfront, leaving that park scape and view unaffected”

“It pays homage to the river from the design to the park...”

“The splash was great”

Serpentine Wall

“Open amphitheater space”

“The serpentine wall is a beautiful water/shoreline feature. I think this simple design has great utility for us. It is simple, offers a variety of uses, helps define the space, and adequately protects people from the shoreline”

Burnet Woods

“Woods and natural setting”

“It is my personal favorite to have a secluded park with trails located in an urban area. Was wonderful”

“Clean restrooms”

“Natural trails”

“Picnic shelter, \$1,000 per day rental includes tables and chairs”

“The care and attention to natural assets”

“This park works for its intended purpose – it’s nestled into a natural landscape that is very different from LaSalle Park”

“Perfect place!”



Visitors' (focus group members) observations about parks having the P-Corp Model

Focus group members commented favorably on parks categorized under the P-Corp Model of management especially in the areas of parking, security and lighting, well-maintained convenience facilities, and accessibility. Recall that the P-Corp Model is tied to revenue-generation developments (e.g., commercial and residential developments). The corporations managing these parks consider it an imperative to provide park amenities and facilities (e.g., parking, security and lighting, convenience facilities) to support these revenue-generation developments. Compared to the other three park management models, one suspects that parks categorized under the P-Corp Model can afford to provide these park facilities and amenities due to the high-revenue generating capacities of development sites tied to these parks. Some of the favorable comments made by focus group members about some of these parks are presented on the next facing page.

A number of management features can possibly offer insights into some of the favorable comments made by focus group members about the parks in the P-Corp Model. First, and with some few exceptions, the management authority for the P-Corp Model is often created to focus on a single park (e.g., Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation or Friends of the Governors Island in New York City) or a few related parks (e.g., Battery Park City Authority in New York City or 3CDC in Cincinnati). Second, and unlike the PB and PD Models, the more independent and privatized management structure of the P-Corp Model seems to allow for more targeted and concentrated investment decisions about the parks. It is possible that the single-park focused, independent and privatized nature of the P-Corp Model makes it relatively easier to focus on park decisions and investments that cater to the needs of targeted park users.

Third, because the P-Corp Model is tied to specific revenue-generating developments, some of the parks categorized under this model seems able to produce more revenue than the parks in the other three models. More importantly, parks categorized under the P-Corp Model seems to have greater incentive to deliver impressive and high quality user experiences because such experiences are tied to the bottom line of these park corporations: residents and businesses must be convinced to lease spaces in these revenue-generation apartments and commercial spaces that are tied to these parks. For instance, parking garages, which received favorable comments by focus group members, serves a dual purpose in the P-Corp Model: while parking spaces provide convenient parking for park users and the developments tied to these parks, they also serve as a major revenue source for the parks.

Top-liked Features (Themes) of P-Corp Model Parks

- Parking
- Security and lighting
- Well-maintained convenience facilities
- Accessibility

Management Features That Potentially Support or Make These Top-Liked Features Possible

- With some few exceptions, the management authorities for parks with the P-Corp Model are often created to focus on a single park (e.g., Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation) or few-related parks (e.g., Battery Park City Authority).
- The more decentralized and privatized management structure of the parks allows for more targeted and concentrated investment decisions about the parks.
- The funding mechanism (coupling the parks with revenue-generating developments) provides opportunities to generate relatively more revenue than the other three park management models.





FOCUS GROUP

Comments for P-Corp Model Parks

Brooklyn Bridge Park

“The view”

“Pier 2 – The Basketball court – hand ball, ping pong games”

“The covered basketball courts”

“Incredible maintenance”

“Concessions: \$5 lemonade, \$18 lobster roll”

“I think it is interesting that their park consists of six piers, each with their own sets of activities”

“Financial arrangements”

“Financing/revenue”

“City/state/nonprofit partnerships”

“Security, lighting”

“Security – although not an overwhelming amount of personnel, the visibility of security acts as a deterrent to possible criminal activity and makes people feel safer”

“Bathrooms”

“Great lighting. Makes park usable for longer hours”

“Very well-maintained”

“Active security cameras on park space”

Battery Park City

“32 acres – \$12 million budget”

“Financing”

“Horticulture maintenance is 100 percent organic. No pesticides”

“Ground rent (pays the budget)”

“The allee of trees with under-lighting”

“The park has many shops and hotels along the park”

“Full dedicated maintenance”

Washington Park

“Park owns park surface. 3CDC owns parking = revenue”

“Dedicated family bathroom”

“Concession pavilion”

“Integration with surrounding street grids”

“Housing, market rate and affordable”

“Garage parking underground”

“A revenue source from garage”

“There is zero reason we should not at least incorporate a feature like this light projection show. The water-light symphony show is an amazing feature”

“Restrooms that are easy to access, safe, and clean”

“Underground Parking – Parking is such a huge problem at LaSalle Park that this could really benefit LaSalle Park and even Front Park. Might even be a way to have monthly parking for residents of Lower West Side and Waterfront Village who need extra parking but for cars not used daily”

Visitors' (focus group members) observations about parks having the P-Con Model

Focus group members' observations about parks categorized under the P-Con Model were more favorable especially towards issues on diverse and quality programming and learning opportunities, horticultural/urban areas, and accessibility to these parks. Similar to the P-Corp Model, the management authorities for parks under this P-Con Model are responsible for a single park. This narrows down the scope of operations and responsibilities for these management authorities, allowing them to concentrate their efforts and investments on meeting the needs of their targeted users. Some of the favorable comments made by focus group members about some of these parks are presented on the following page.

Two other important management features could possibly offer insights into some of the favorable comments made by focus group members about the parks in the P-Con Model. Resource ownership under the P-Con Model is more communal than the other three park management models. In fact, except for Millennium Park, all the parks categorized under this P-Con Model (The High Line, The 606/Bloomingdale Trail, The Battery) were built or revitalized through the initiative and collective action of residents, who helped raise funds and brought together the needed public and private partners. As a result, and compared to the parks categorized under the other three management models, one can observe a more horizontal collaboration among the management authorities for these parks, residents and community groups. This seems to have translated into greater private donations and volunteer support for maintenance and programming for these parks. Thus, it is less surprising that, compared to the other three management models, focus group members provided more favorable comments about the diverse and quality programming and learning opportunities available in these parks.

Top-liked Features (Themes) of P-Con Model Parks

- Diverse and quality programming and learning opportunities
- Horticultural/urban areas
- Accessibility to these parks

Management Features That Potentially Support or Make These Top-Liked Features Possible

- The management authorities for parks with this P-Con Model (Conservancy/foundation/friends) are responsible for a single park.
- Resource ownership structure allows for stronger sense of community ownership and support in terms of park maintenance, developing diverse programming, and generating funding support.
- Building relationships that are more horizontal with community groups and volunteers allows for stronger partnerships.



The Battery, New York City

FOCUS GROUP

**Comments for
P-Con Model Parks**

Millennium Park

- “Interactive at – Cloudgate and ‘The Bean’”
- “Sense of ownership”
- “One of a kind world class art and architecture”
- “Multi-functional spaces w/ facilities and free and lots of programming”
- “Put on more events”
- “Movie nights”

The Battery

- “Access and connection is crucial”
- “Central location”
- “Fund-raise for their money”
- “The agriculture”
- “Bosque Gardens, designed for year-round enjoyment”
- “I enjoyed the landscaping”
- “Gardens”
- “Urban farm”
- “Access from trains, walkers”



The High Line

- “The entire concept is unique in nature”
- “Great city vistas”
- “Access points for several locations”
- “More like a nature trail”
- “Different types of gardens (micro-climates)”

The 606 (Bloomingdale Trail)

- “Delivers robust programming”
- “...Presence of organized programs to make use of the trail”
- “...natural/native plants, bee hives...”
- “Different types of trees and flowers on bike and jogging path”
- “Everything!”
- “Connecting neighborhoods”
- “Connects art to science and nature”
- “This space is functional for all ages, residents, tourists, all abilities, and encourages activity”

CONCLUSION



Final thoughts

The management of parks is central to efficient, equitable, inclusive, and high-quality park environments. The experimental analysis conducted in this report suggests that none of the four park management models can fully capture or explain the histories, geo-physical conditions, and political-economic systems that have influenced how each park has come to be managed, maintained, and programmed. The analysis also fails to establish any necessary relationship between the park management models and the experiences of park visitors.

THERE IS NO BETTER OR WORSE PARK MANAGEMENT MODELS, IF THE RESOURCES ARE SUFFICIENT AND THE MANAGEMENT IS GOOD. Smartly designed, any park management model can link user preferences, management decisions, and funding sources to achieve a desirable park environment. Appropriately resourced, any management model can ensure a balance between resource efficiency and equitable access to park amenities by all users. Carefully thought through, any management model can engender collaboration and conversation among stakeholders in ways that can help leverage park resources to achieve socio-economic and health outcomes in communities. How you put all the pieces together depends on the park, its revenue-generating capacity, its operation and maintenance needs, its partnerships inside and outside of municipal government, the strength of its constituencies, and more. **EVERY PARK IS UNIQUE, EVEN INDIVIDUAL PARKS WITHIN A MULTI-PARK SYSTEM.** Hence, the design of a park's management model should also be unique to the park.

Finally, the analysis conducted in this report provides useful lessons to inform conversations among stakeholders about creating a custom-made management model for the re-imagined Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park. For instance, focus group members made specific comments about management features they liked in some of the 21 precedent parks (see Appendix 4). Ultimately, and regardless of the management model designed by stakeholders, **AN IMPORTANT LESSON IS TO DESIGN A FLEXIBLE PARK MANAGEMENT MODEL CAPABLE OF ADAPTING TO CHANGING EXPECTATIONS AND VISIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS AS WELL AS RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS AND AVAILABILITY.** Specifically, the following three lessons can inform stakeholders on how to proceed with conversations about re-imagining a custom-made management structure for the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park.

1. THERE IS NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL PARK MANAGEMENT MODEL:

The management of parks evolve as economic, political, and social conditions change. Hence, a perfect park management model today can be worse tomorrow as conditions change (e.g., shifts in funding, demographics, and stakeholders' preferences). For the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park, the goal should not be to design a

perfect, once-and-for-all management model for the park. Rather, conversations should focus on designing a resilient management model—one capable of responding appropriately to unforeseen changes. This will require learning from past successes and limitations of managing existing parks in Buffalo, leveraging existing knowledge and resources of local stakeholders, and embracing the wisdom that managing resources, including parks, involves an evolutionary trial-and-error learning process.

2. CONTEXT MATTERS IN DESIGNING A PARK MANAGEMENT

MODEL: All the 21 precedent parks visited and considered in this analysis have their unique histories and contextual factors. Although municipal governments own most of the parks, many of the parks have special arrangements with the municipal government in terms of management, maintenance, programming, and funding. For the re-imagined Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park, stakeholders may want to decide whether it is fiscally and politically feasible to vest management, maintenance, and funding responsibilities in an existing organization, a newly created organization, or multiple organizations. Such a decision should be discussed in a transparent manner, and must involve consideration of multiple contextual factors such as the legacy of existing organizations in managing parks, and the desire to distribute or concentrate authorities and responsibilities among multiple organizations.

3. BUILD IN COLLABORATIVE AND REDUNDANT PARTNERSHIPS FOR A RESILIENT PARK MANAGEMENT MODEL:

Building diverse and varying degrees of collaborative partnerships were vital to managing the 21 precedent parks. Some parks are able to provide whatever they need within the boundaries of their organization. Many of the parks included in this report, however, rely on important partnerships that help them maintain parks or provide services. For example, City of Chicago parks depend on a range of different agencies to help in maintaining, programming, and funding the parks. In other instances, special circumstances necessitated building external collaborative partnerships. Cincinnati and Chicago both needed help from the Army Corps and other federal, state, and local organizations. An important aspect to building collaborative partnerships is to design for redundancy, such as developing multiple sources of funding partnerships for the park. The goal here is not necessarily to increase the quantity of funding, but to increase the diversity of funding sources so that when one source declines, another can be drawn upon. The goal of redundancy is to increase resilience and decrease risks of future uncertainty. The ultimate decision for stakeholders is to decide the nature and level of collaborative partnerships capable of sustaining the re-imagined Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Centennial Park.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

Percentage of liked/favorable visitors' (focus group members') comments across themes and park management models

$$X_i = \frac{\sum X_{ni}}{\sum N_i} \quad \text{Equation 1}$$

Where: X_i represents the percentage of liked comments for "i" thematic area for all parks within "X" park management model, which is expressed as a proportion of $\sum X_i$ (sum of liked comments for "i" thematic area for all parks within "X" park management model) and $\sum N_i$ (sum of all liked comments for "i" thematic area).

Appendix 2: Park Management Models/Typologies/ for the 20 Precedent Parks (Note: One park was excluded)

Typology & Sub-typology	Resource Ownership		Main Funding Source		Management structure		Parks within this management typology
	Dominant	Minor	Dominant	Minor	Dominant	Minor	
Public Approach	Park District (PD) Model	Park is owned by the Park District (ownership is transferred from the City)	Taxing powers (property taxes and personal property replacement tax)	Concessions, city/state/ federal grants, private grants and donations, fees, and rentals/permits	Private contracting & In-house: Private vendors and the park district's staff perform most day-to-day operations, maintenance, & programming.	Coordinated production: Working with other city departments, e.g., Park Concession Management LLC or federal agencies such as USACE)	CHICAGO: Maggie Daley Park; Northerly Island; Ping Tom Park; and Clark Boathouse
	Park Board (PB) Model	Park is owned by the Park Board (ownership is transferred from the City)	City subsidies	Citywide tree assessments; concessions, fees/charges, fundraising (private donations)	In-house production by Park Board: Most day-to-day operations, maintenance, & programming are performed by the Park Board's staff	Private contracting: Mostly on construction-related tasks. Coordinated production: Working with city and state departments or nonprofits to provide some services related to the parks	CINCINNATI: Smale Riverfront Park; Serpentine Wall; Yeatman's Cove; Sawyer Point Park; International Friendship Park; Eden Park; and Burnet Woods
Public-Private Approach	Public-Corporation (P-Corp) Model	Park is owned by: • CITY (BBP, Riverwalk, & Washington) • STATE (BPC) • CITY-STATE/FEDERAL (Governor's Island)	Revenue-generating developments (i.e., residential and commercial, such as parking garage in Washington Park)	Concessions, Fees/charges, Fundraising (private donations)	Joint production: Day-to-day operation, maintenance, and programming are performed through multiple city, state, federal (e.g., National Park Service), and private agencies investing to create a corporation (e.g., Battery Park City Authority, Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, and Trust for Governor's Island) Coordinated production (e.g., Chicago Riverwalk): Multiple city, state, federal agencies jointly performing different tasks (e.g., Chicago Riverwalk have tasks performed by agencies such as Department of Fleet and Facility Management, DCASE, USACE, Coast Guard)	In-house production: Some corporations establish or work with in-house organizations to help with fundraising and programming (e.g., Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy and Friends of Governor's Island) Private contracting: Mostly on construction-related and public-safety tasks (e.g., 3CDC hired "play Ambassadors" to address children's safety in Washington Park)	NEW YORK: Brooklyn Bridge Park; Battery Park City; and Governor's Island CHICAGO: Chicago Riverwalk CINCINNATI: Washington Park
	Public-Conservancy (P-Con) Model	Park is owned by the City or Park District	Fundraising + City subsidies	Concessions, Fees/charges	Coordinated Production: the staff of the conservancies work with other city departments, nonprofits, and volunteers on programming, day-to-day operations, and maintenance Private contracting: Apart from engaging private vendors for construction-related tasks, some conservancies (e.g., Millennium Park Foundation) also contracts with these third-party vendors to perform certain park-related tasks (e.g., day-to-day operations and maintenance).	N/A	NEW YORK: The Battery; and High Line CHICAGO: Millennium Park; and The 606 — The Bloomingdale Line

Appendix 3:

Summary of top-liked features (themes) of parks and management features supporting these liked features

Park Management Model	Top-liked features (themes) of parks in these models	Management features that support or make these features possible
Park District (PD) Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational facilities • Horticulture/urban farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax dollars make it possible to provide basic park amenities across multiple, geographically dispersed parks. • Building funding collaborations with corporations supports provision of spectacular park facilities/amenities in some of the parks. • Maintaining spectacular park facilities requires building strong community support to help with maintenance, day-to-day operations, and programming.
Park Board (PB) Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public arts, history and culture • Attractive architecture • Well-maintained convenience facilities • Recreational facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management authority (Park Board) seems to have a bit more flexibility than the PD Model, to concentrate investment in building resource-intensive facilities in some specific parks. • Management authority and residents seem to agree on one thing: use the parks to project the city's rich history and culture. • Building more vertical collaboration with federal agencies (e.g., USACE) allows for creative ways to solve problems (e.g., flooding) while also increasing park amenities. • Building vertical collaboration with state agencies (e.g., Cincinnati Highway) provides opportunities to gain access to additional resources to maintain the parks.
Public-Corporation (P-Corp) Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Security and lighting • Well-maintained convenience facilities • Accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With some few exceptions, the management authorities for parks with the P-Corp Model are often created to focus on a single park (e.g., Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation) or a few related parks (e.g., Battery Park City Authority). • The more decentralized and privatized management structure of the parks allows for more targeted and concentrated investment decisions about the parks. • The funding mechanism (coupling the parks with revenue-generating developments) provides opportunities to generate relatively more revenue than the other three park management models.
Public-Conservancy (P-Con) Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse and quality programming and learning opportunities; • Horticultural/urban areas • Accessibility to these parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management authorities for parks with this P-Con Model (Conservancy/foundation/friends) are responsible for a single park. • Resource ownership structure allows for stronger sense of community ownership and support in terms of park maintenance, developing diverse programming, and generating funding support. • Building relationships that are more horizontal with community groups and volunteers allows for stronger partnerships.

Appendix 4: Liked and aspirational management features commented on by focus group members

Summary of aspirational comments made on park management by focus group members during their tour of the 21 parks	Park management model having these management features	
	Most-fitting park management model	Close-second
Build community partnerships to increase sense of ownership	● Public-Conservancy	● Public-Corporation
Build collaboration with federal agencies	● ● Park Board or Park District	● Public-Conservancy
Corporate sponsorships and foundation endowments	● Public-Conservancy	● Public-Corporation
4. Incorporate revenue-generation developments (e.g., parking garages)	● Public-Corporation	● Park District
5. Cultivate partnerships to enhance quality and quantity of programming	● Public-Conservancy	● Public-Corporation
6. Create permanent spaces for concessions	● Public-Corporation	● ● Park Board or Park District
7. Sometimes it is better to involve nonprofits in management tasks	● Public-Corporation	● Public-Conservancy
8. Ensure better alignment between what park users want and park programming options	● Public-Conservancy	● Public-Corporation

