

# Revitalizing Public Spaces Through the Power of Technology



CONFERENCE TRACK



# Inclusive Parks and Public Spaces



# Support for this session is provided by:



**KNIGHT  
FOUNDATION**

# PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

## GENERAL CEUs

- Ensure your conference badge is scanned upon entering and exiting the session.
- Request your session transcript from a City Parks Alliance staff member.
- Transcript requests will be fulfilled within 10 business days of the request date.

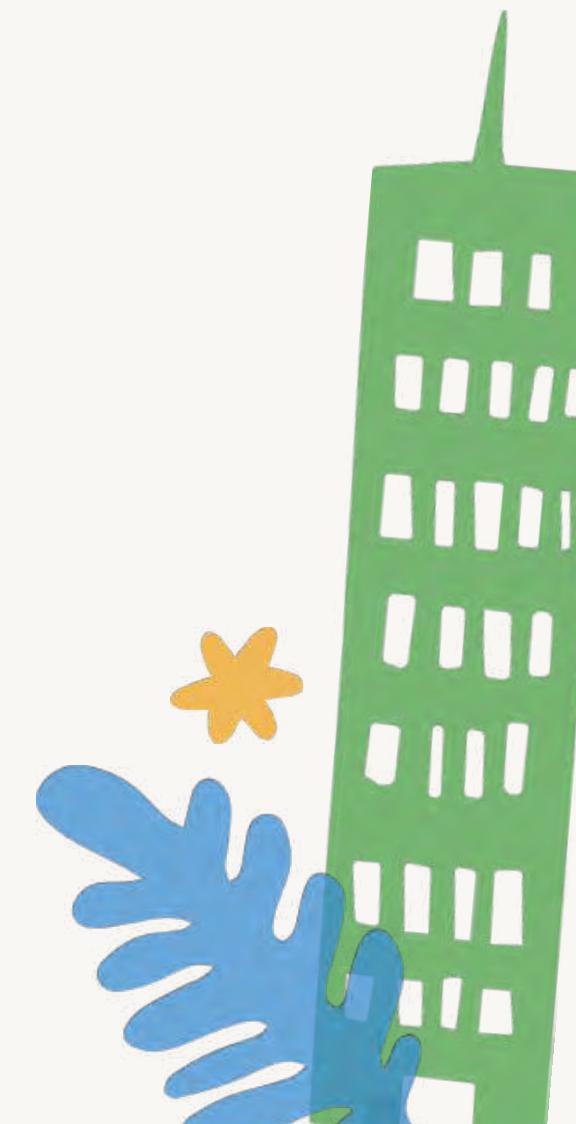
## LA CES

- Ensure your conference badge is scanned upon entering and exiting the session.
- Complete the session evaluation in the mobile app.
- Request your session transcript from a City Parks Alliance staff member.
- Transcript requests will be fulfilled within 10 business days of the request date.

## AICP

- Self-report your participation on the AICP website
- Ensure your conference badge is scanned upon entering and exiting the session.
- Complete the session evaluation in the mobile app.

Participation data is shared electronically with the accrediting agencies.





# Revitalizing Public Spaces Through the Power of Technology

## Friends of the High Line



# The High Line, NYC

Operated & maintained by Friends of the High Line





# Goals & Objectives

**What are we looking to achieve?**

- Attract wider range of visitors
- Amplify physical programming
- Identify best practices
- Serve as a model for peers

# Consultant Team



**Neysa Pranger**  
Principal, UrbanSense



**Manasvi Menon**  
Principal, UrbanSense



**Emily Ladau**  
Accessibility Consultant

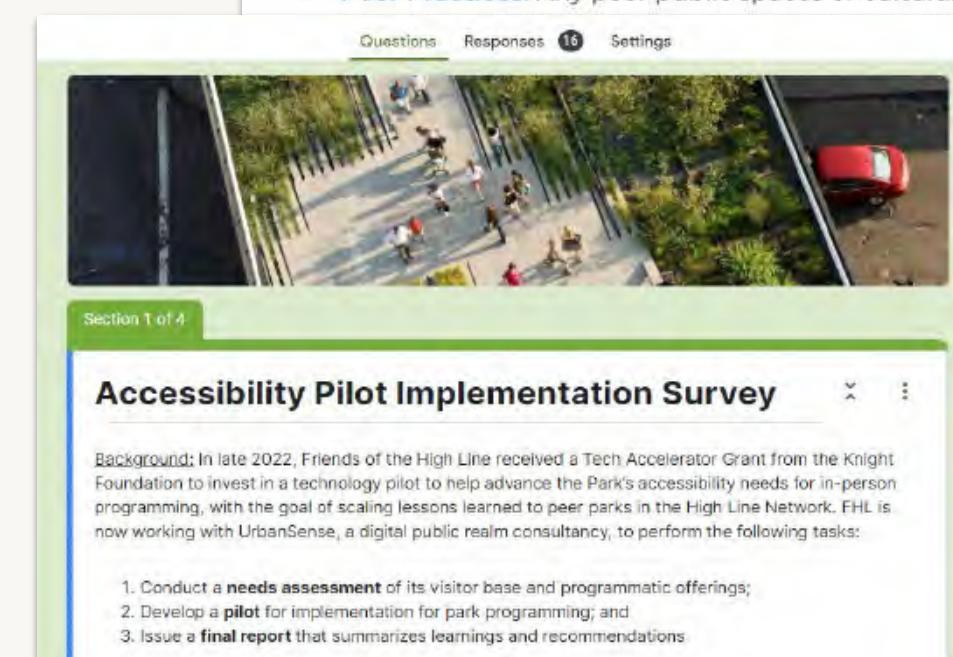
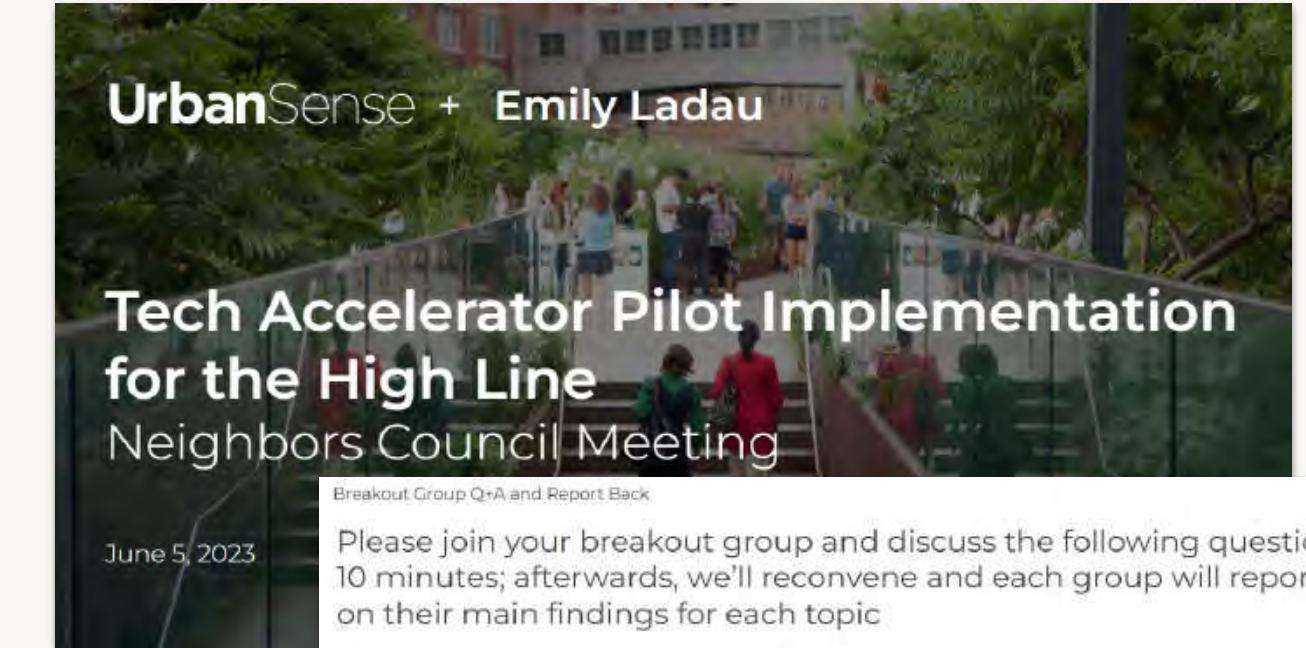


# Project Phases



# Needs Assessment

- Thorough document review
- Community outreach session
- Staff survey & interviews
- SME focus group



# Subject Matter Expert Focus Group



Chancey Fleet



Meryl Evans



Nefertiti Matos

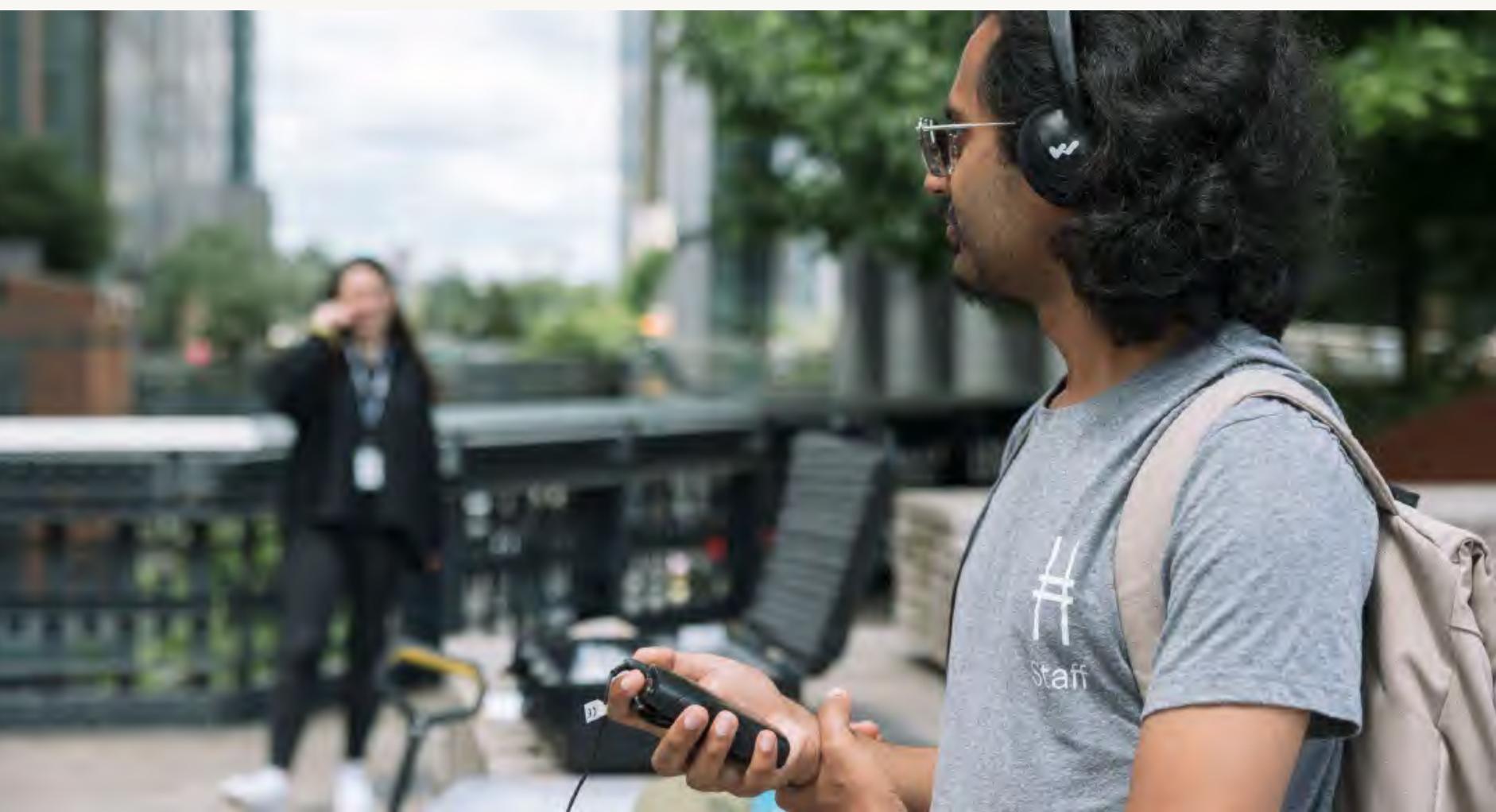


# Recommendations Roadmap

Needs & Recommendations

Evaluation Criteria

Pilot Candidate  
Shortlist



# Outcomes & Next Steps

- Needs Assessment → Ongoing accessibility strategy
- Recommendations Roadmap → Accessibility priorities & solutions
- Roadmap & Pilot → Future funding requests & opportunities
- Lessons learned → High Line Network

# Thank You!



# Technology at Philadelphia's Rail Park

## Plan & Policy Framework for Public Wifi



# The Rail Park

## Philadelphia, PA

An infrastructure reuse project  
transforming historic rail line into  
vibrant & inclusive public green space.

Friends of the Rail Park's mission is to  
enrich the health, culture, and ecology  
of the city, creating inclusive  
opportunities for neighbors and  
residents.



## The Site Today

## 31 STRAWBERRY MANSION

## SOFT CUT

## TUNNEL

## HARD CUT

# The 3-Mile Vision

Connecting Philadelphians to the city and each other like never before!

SASAKI RAIL PARK

17  
CHINATOWN

CENTER CITY EAST

## WEST POPLAR

CALLOWHILL

# VIADUCT

## PHASE I

MAP

MIARE

0 300 600 1,200 1,800 ft



# Research Goals



# Background & Context

Pre-planning work laid the foundation for FRP's longer-term goal of understanding how technology can be a binding agent in the organization's broader thinking, planning, and advocacy work around the community and equitable development in the 10+ neighborhoods the Rail Park touches, and Philadelphia as a whole.





How should FRP prepare for and establish data and privacy policies and practices that are realistic, embraced by the public, and advance Park goals?

# Research

## Focus Areas

- Implementation & Cross Sector Partnerships
- Data Collection & Access
- Community Engagement, Outreach, Accessibility, & Equity



An aerial photograph of the Philadelphia skyline, featuring the Comcast Technology Center, One Liberty Place, and Two Liberty Place. The foreground shows a mix of industrial buildings, residential complexes, and green spaces, including a large green roofed building and a green roofed park area. The city extends into the distance under a clear sky.

# Process Design

# Team

## FRIENDS OF THE RAIL PARK

Executive Director and Community Development Staff

## URBANSENSE PARTNERS

Consultant with expertise in user-centered and community-driven approaches to technology planning for the public realm

## COMMUNITY

Advisory group providing necessary local political and infrastructural context



# Designing for Outcomes



## Intended Outcomes:

- Field scan and applicable case studies
- Policy recommendations for public wifi use and data collection
- Recommendations for implementation
- Document the discovery process
- Identify funding opportunities to continue and scale the work
- Identify additional partners & capacity needed for implementation

# Research Process



# Spotlight: Advisory Committee

- Expertise in climate technology, GIS, private investment & funding, tech advocacy, community development funding, digital inclusion
- Stakeholders from city government, academic institutions, funders, and tech companies
- Participated in full group discussions, individual interviews, and provided feedback on analysis



A wide-angle, nighttime photograph of a city skyline. In the foreground, a large, modern building with a curved facade and a prominent circular mural is visible. The building is surrounded by a parking garage and a landscaped area with a circular pool. The background features a dense cluster of skyscrapers, with one particularly tall building on the left and others of varying heights across the horizon. The sky is a deep blue, transitioning to a lighter orange and yellow near the horizon, suggesting either sunset or sunrise. A full moon is visible in the upper left corner of the sky.

# Results & Recommendations



# Recommendations

## Implementation & Partnerships

Consider various funding sources (inc. government or entrepreneur grants, and university partnerships), leverage emerging technologies

## Data Policy & Access

Use guiding values as north star, needs of end users should determine information collection, rely on best practices, partner thoughtfully

## Engagement & Outreach

Partner with adjacent communities, integrate STEM in fun and creative ways, be destination & connector for Philly neighborhoods

# Implementation Roadmap

Develop a Wi-Fi / Data Privacy Policy	Explore Partnerships for Wi-Fi deployment	Implement Wi-Fi	Foster Community Engagement through Digital	Pursue funding for technology-enhanced programs
<b>#1</b> Pilot an open source communications standard	<b>#3</b> Outreach to potential ISPs and delivery partners	<b>#4</b> Research alternative deployments	<b>#9</b> Explore programming partnerships with schools and local organizations	<b>#12</b> Create a repository of potential funders
<b>#2</b> Establish a data and privacy FAQ		<b>#5</b> Outreach to neutral host providers	<b>#10</b> Explore additional features in Boomerang and/or new CRM tools	
		<b>#6</b> Explore a mesh network	<b>#11</b> Enhance tours with QR codes	
		<b>#7</b> Evaluate costs of going solo versus splitting costs among partners		
		<b>#8</b> Outsource telecom management		





Looking  
Forward

What is your hope for your community?  
What is your hope for The Rail Park?  
你对所在社区有什么希望?  
你对铁路公园有什么希望?

I hope world  
Peace

[www.therailpark.org](http://www.therailpark.org)

@therailpark

[friends@therailpark.org](mailto:friends@therailpark.org)

Write, draw, photograph, or record your answers  
写下,画出,拍下或录制你的答案



What is your hope for  
What is your hope for  
你对所在社区有  
你对铁路公园有  
\* \*

Dream

Loong



DETROIT  
**RIVERFRONT**  
CONSERVANCY

Rachel Frierson,  
Senior Director of Programs and Public Spaces  
[Rachel.Frierson@detroitriverfront.org](mailto:Rachel.Frierson@detroitriverfront.org)

A wide-angle photograph of a river at sunset. The sky is a warm, golden-yellow. In the foreground, there's a dark, low-lying building with a blue roof and a small structure with a dark, conical roof. A paved walkway with a metal railing runs along the right side of the image. The river water is calm, reflecting the sunset. In the distance, a bridge with tall, thin towers spans the river. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

**“BEAUTIFUL, EXCITING,  
SAFE, ACCESSIBLE...**



...WORLD-CLASS  
GATHERING PLACE...



...FOR ALL"



# FOUNDING PARTNERS



THE  
KRESGE  
FOUNDATION





ATWATER STREET



## CULLEN PLAZA





**DEQUINDRE CUT**



DEQUINDRE CUT







## COMPLETING THE VISION





# DETROIT RIVERWALK BEST IN THE USA



**USA TODAY  
10BEST**  
**READERS'  
CHOICE**  
2021

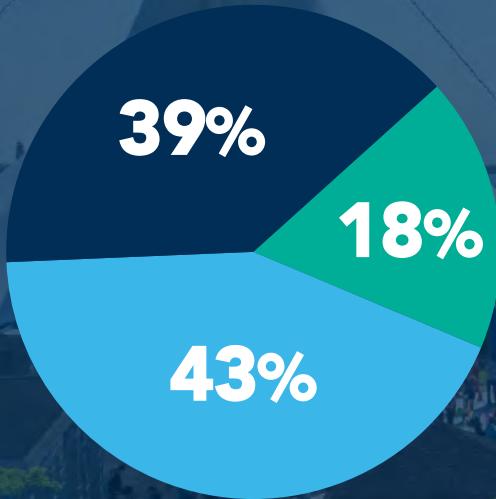


**USA TODAY  
10BEST**  
**READERS'  
CHOICE**  
2022



**USA TODAY  
10BEST**  
**READERS'  
CHOICE**  
2023

# DETROIT RIVERFRONT COMMUNITY



**3,000,000+**

Annual Visitors

**320,000+**

Program Participants

**100% of Detroit**

zip codes visited in 2023



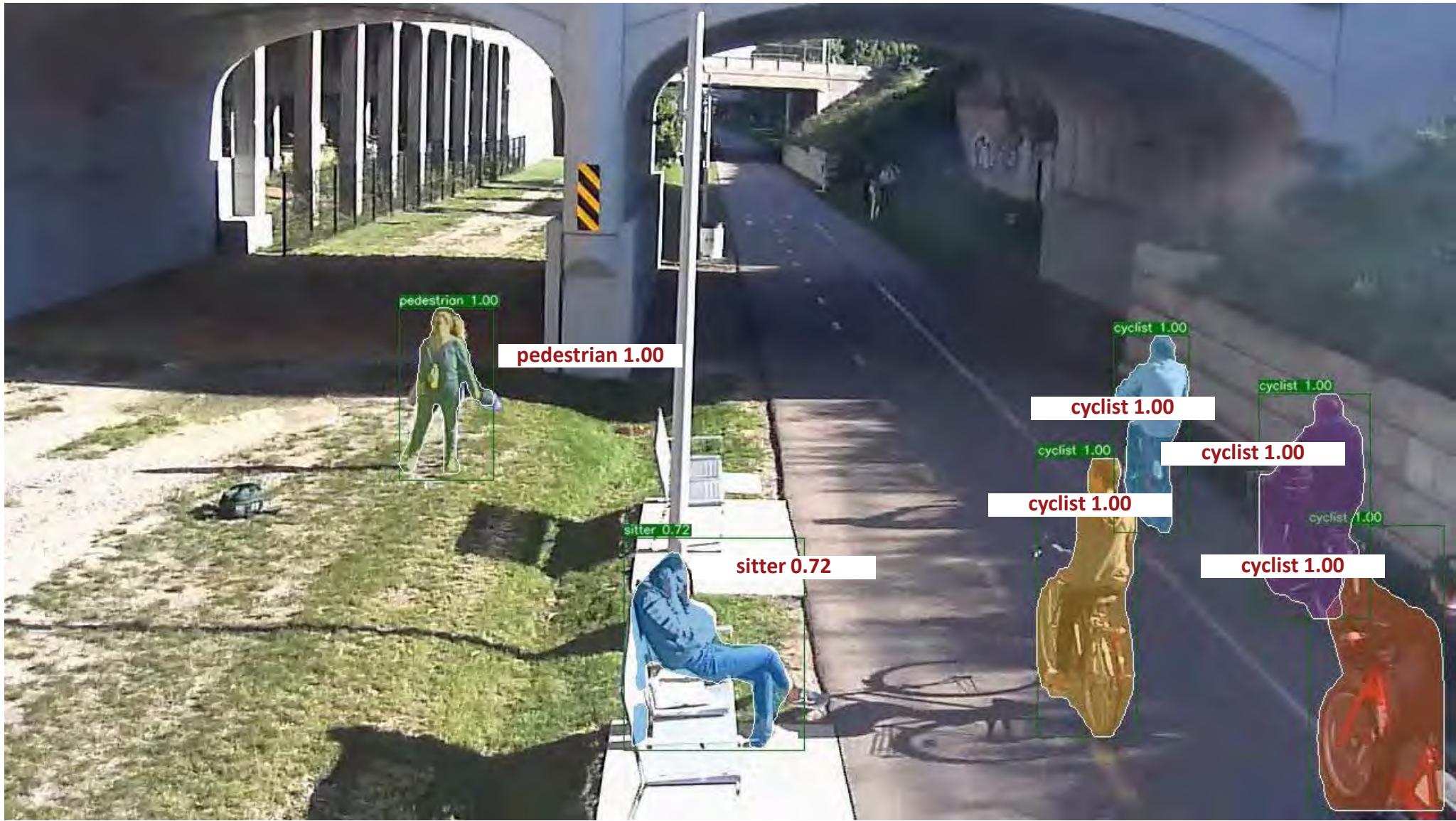
# MEASURING USE THROUGH EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE



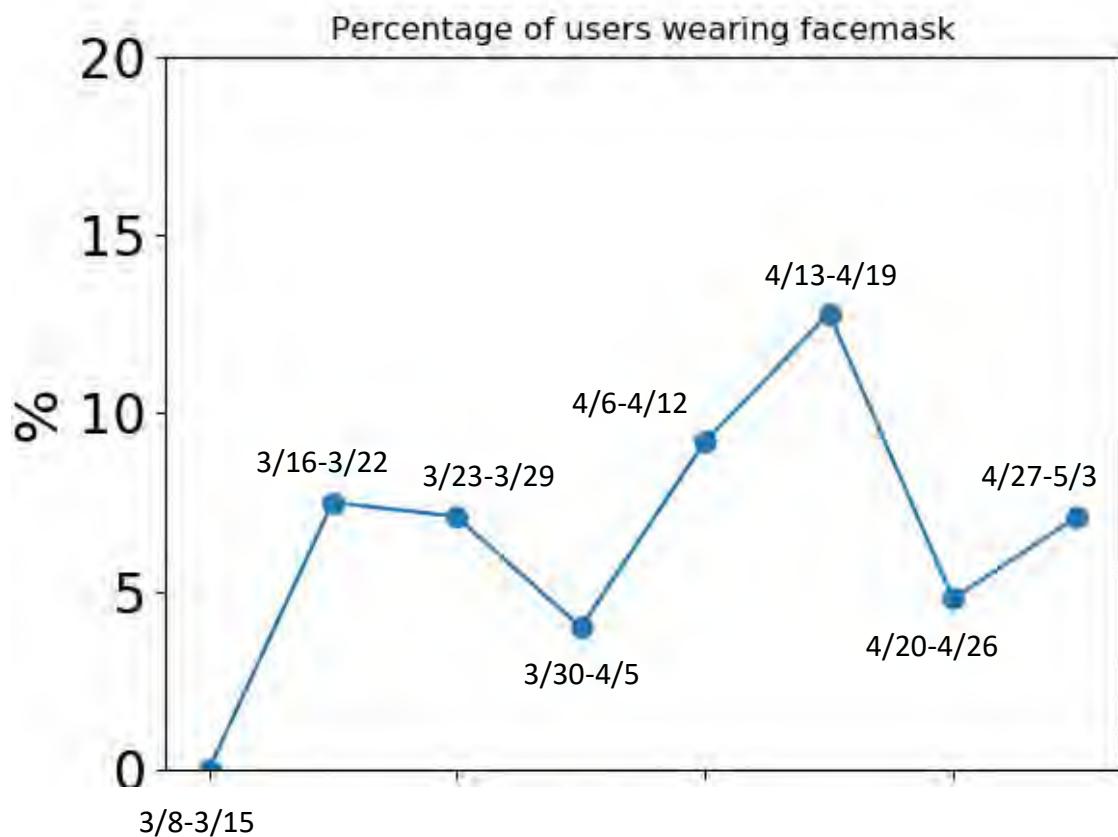
A photograph of two individuals, a woman on the left and a man on the right, working on a wooden structure outdoors. The woman is wearing a blue hoodie and has her hair tied back. The man is wearing a blue beanie, glasses, and a dark hoodie. They are focused on a task involving a blue wooden railing and a metal component. The background shows a building and trees.

# UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PARTNERSHIP

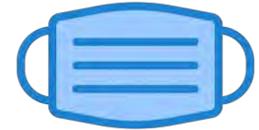
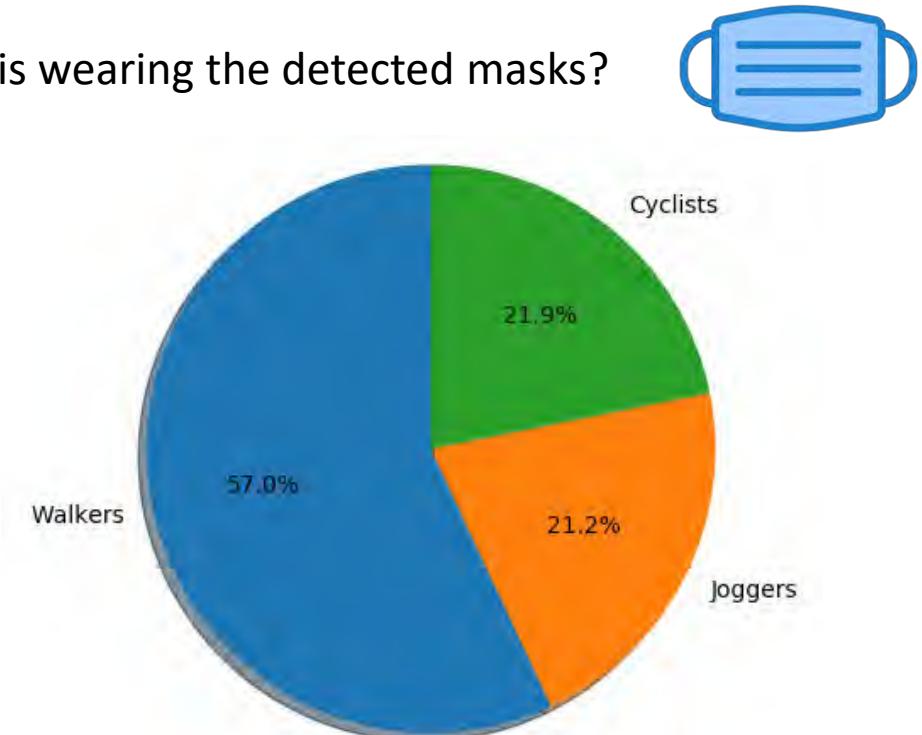
# RESULTS: PEOPLE DETECTION



# TOOLS DURING THE PANDEMIC



Who is wearing the detected masks?



# WHAT IS SOCIAIBILITY?



# Sociability Index- volume and interaction



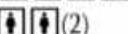
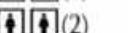
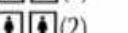
## Goals of park programs:

- Build community
- Make the place approachable
- Increase patron time on site
- Encourage mental wellness activities
- Drive traffic
- Expose people to new things
- Create spontaneous interactions
- Outdoor education
- Build relationship with space
- Bring in/support local business
- Highlight diverse cultures and minorities

:        (8)
:        (8)
:        (7)
:      (5)
:    (3)
:   (2)
:   (2)
:   (2)
:   (2)
:  (1)
:  (1)

# Activity Index – traffic, activity, duration

## Goals of park assets:

- Facilitate conversation and connectivity :  (11)
- Increase comfort/sense of belonging :  (5)
- increase accessibility :  (5)
- Does it fit a need?  
-sit/respite/shade :  (5)
- People are using it :  (4)
- Facilitate connection to nature :  (2)
- Encourage people to spend more time in space :  (2)
- Self sustaining :  (2)
- Facilitate interactions between strangers :  (1)



# BUILDING A SOCIAIBILITY FRAMEWORK

**Movement layer:** Stroll, Jog, Standing, Sitting (w/ dog/stroller), cyclist

**Location/furniture layer:** Dining, Plaza, Bench, Bike lane, river view fence, fountain, etc.

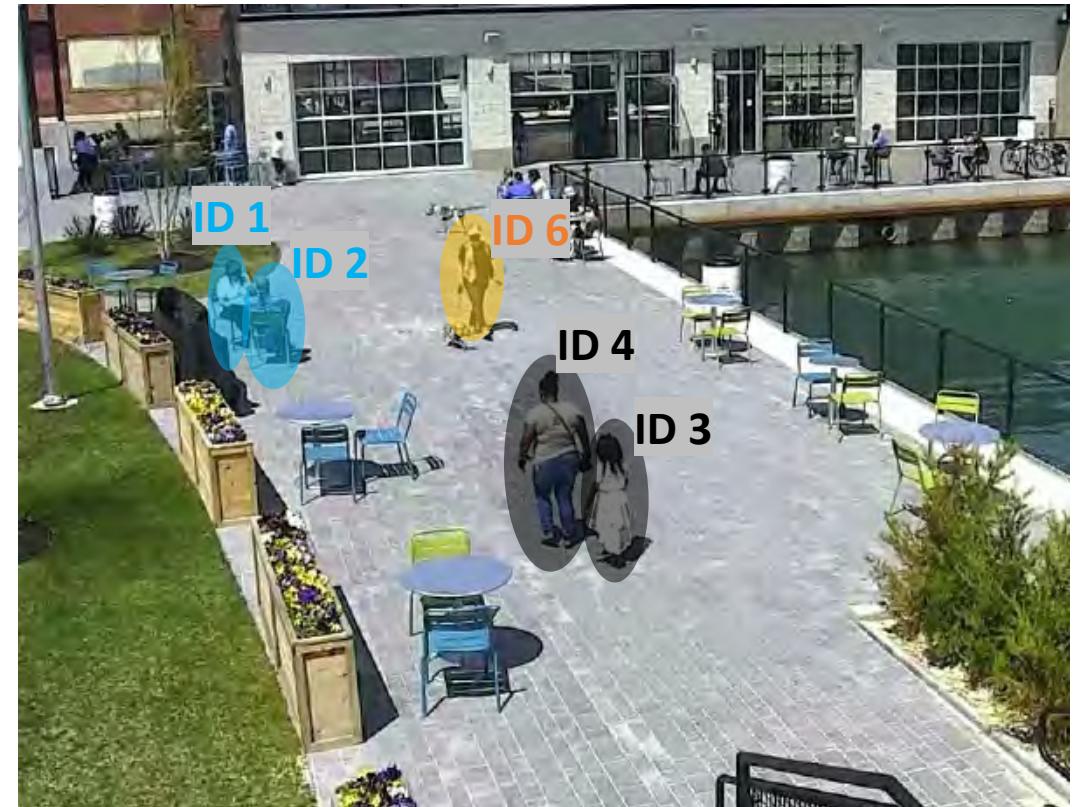
**Social layer:** Passive, Fleeting, and Enduring relationships

Social Activity report:

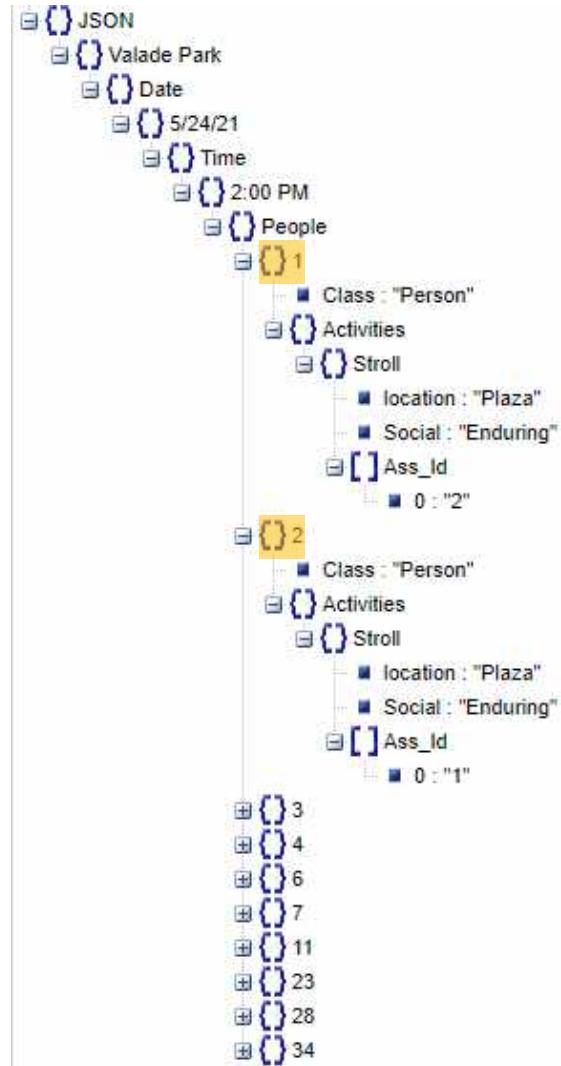
ID4: Enduring stroll in Plaza (with ID 3)

ID1: Enduring sitting in dining area (with ID 2)

ID6: Passive stroll with dog in Plaza



# MEASURING SOCIALIBILITY





# ARCHER GREENWAY



STOP

EMERGENCY

NO  
MOTOR  
VEHICLES

# INTERVENTIONS

A photograph of a group of people walking on a paved path in a park-like setting. In the foreground, a young girl in a pink shirt and white shorts walks towards the camera. Behind her, a woman in a colorful, patterned dress walks alongside a man in a blue shirt and cap. Further down the path, another woman in a blue shirt and cap walks with a blue folder. To the right, a large purple bus with cartoon characters on it is parked. In the background, there is a playground with a blue slide and a red fire hydrant on the left. The scene is set against a backdrop of green trees and a clear sky.

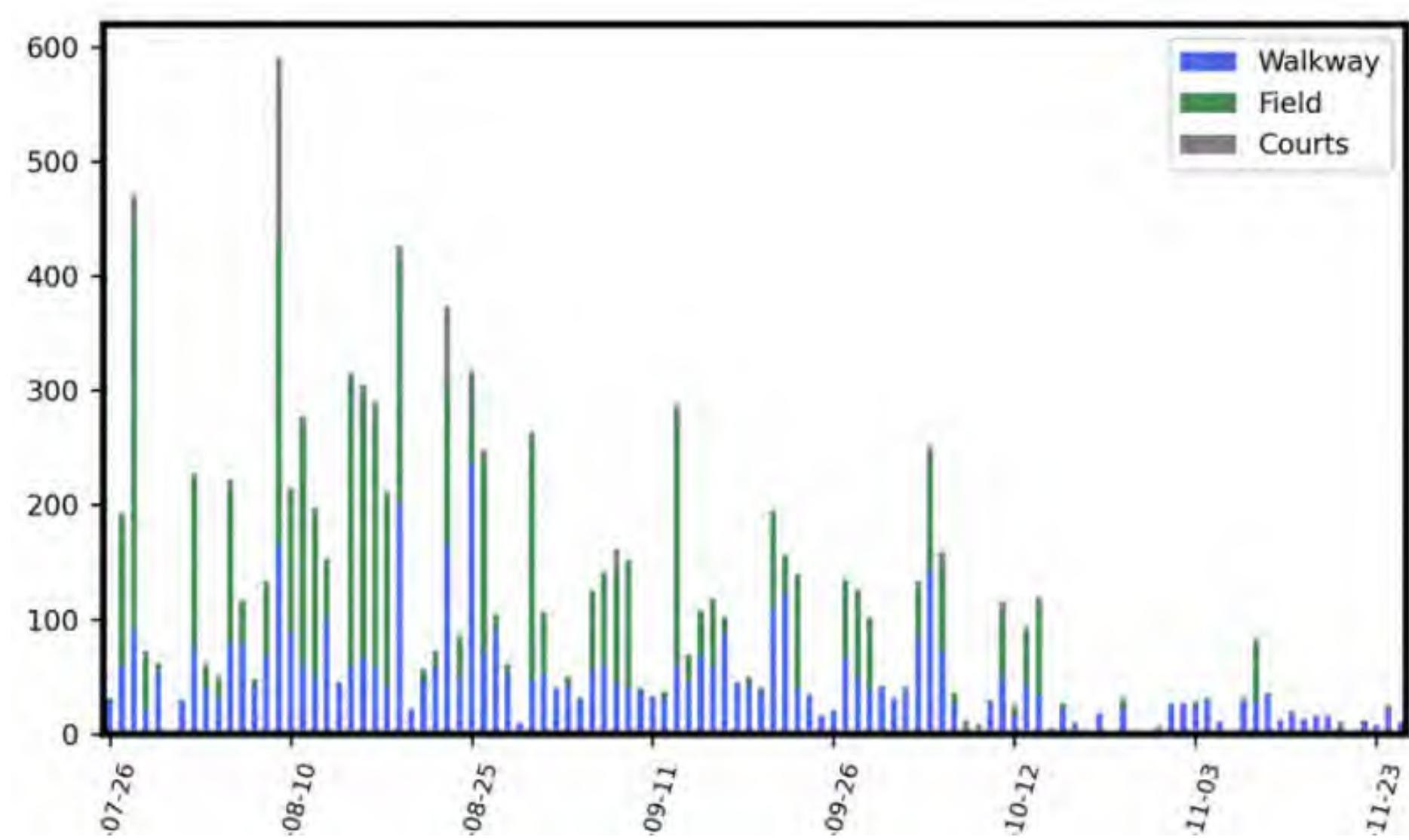
The word "INTERVENTIONS" is displayed in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the top center of the image. The letters are contained within a white rectangular box with a thin black border. The background of the box is the same as the rest of the image, showing the people walking and the purple bus.



*Greetings from the*  
**MAYOR DENNIS W.  
ARCHER GREENWAY**



DETROIT  
**RIVERFRONT**  
CONSERVANCY



### Ice cream:

Walkway 14 days prior: 695 patrons  
Walkway 14 days after: 1057 patrons  
**52% Increase**

### Mailer:

Walkway 7 days prior: 270 patrons  
Walkway 7 days after: 298 patrons  
**10% increase**



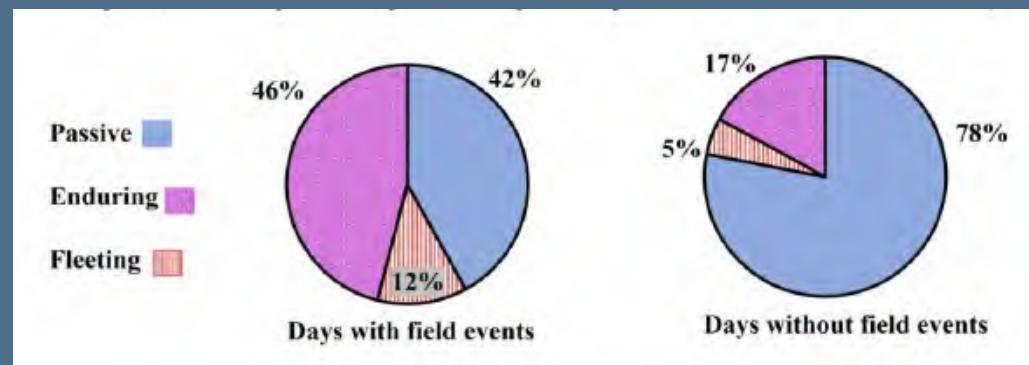
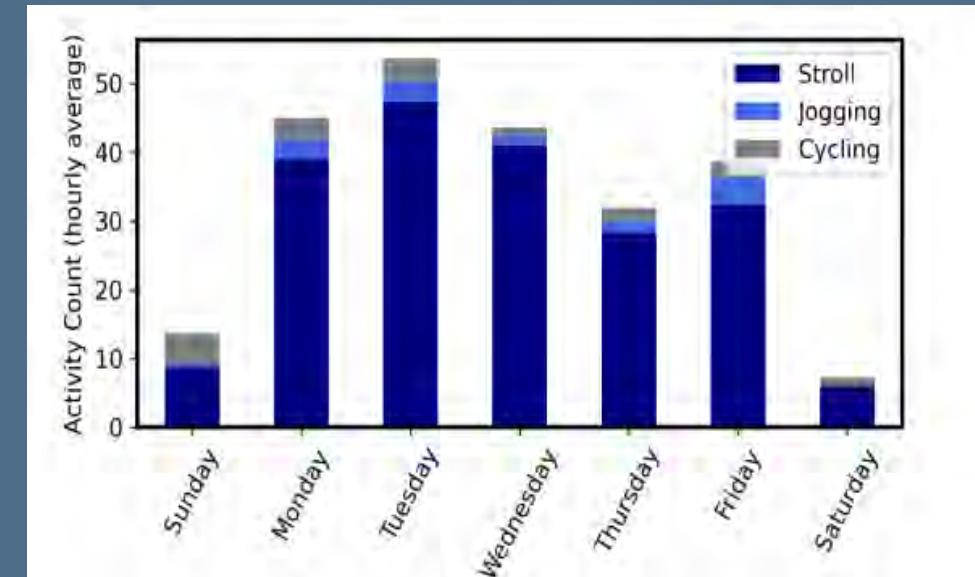
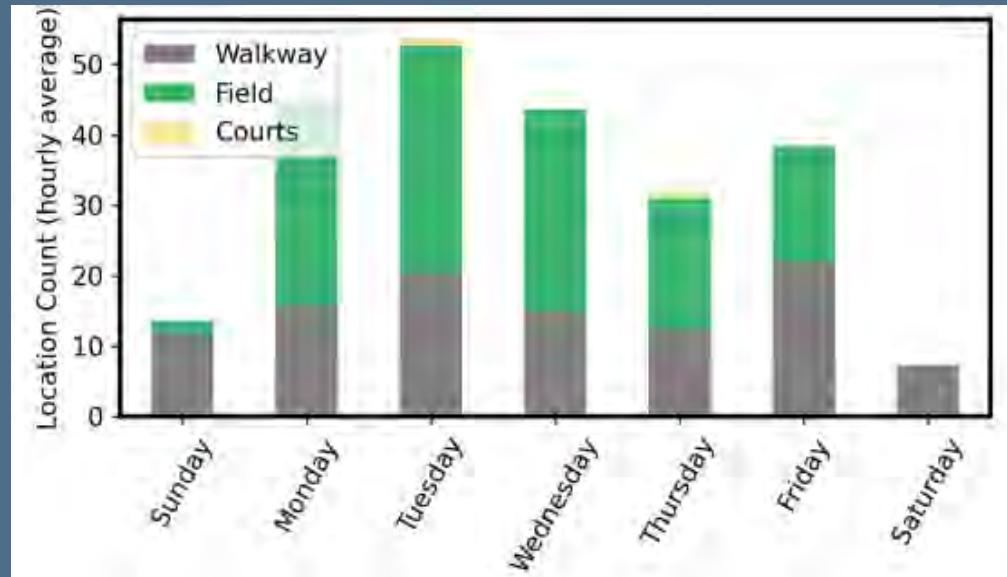
# Detroit Riverfront

83K followers • 394 following





# ARCHER GREENWAY + UM DATA







## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- Find a good research partner or service
- Ask big questions
- Physical counts vs Social counts
- How data explains the importance of parks





## OUR CHALLENGES

- Find a good research partner or service
- Sustainability of this work
- Transparency with the public due to alternative use
- Second use infrastructure



# THANK YOU



DETROIT  
RIVERFRONT  
CONSERVANCY

# the bentway

Revitalizing Public Spaces Through  
the Power of Technology

built for  
a mid-century city





# the Gardiner must be **more** ...

Toronto is blooming upwards, hugging tightly around an elevated downtown highway.

**Today, more than 200,000 people reside next door to the Gardiner Expressway, largely in dense high-rise developments lacking in public space or cultural life.**

But what if the Gardiner could do more?

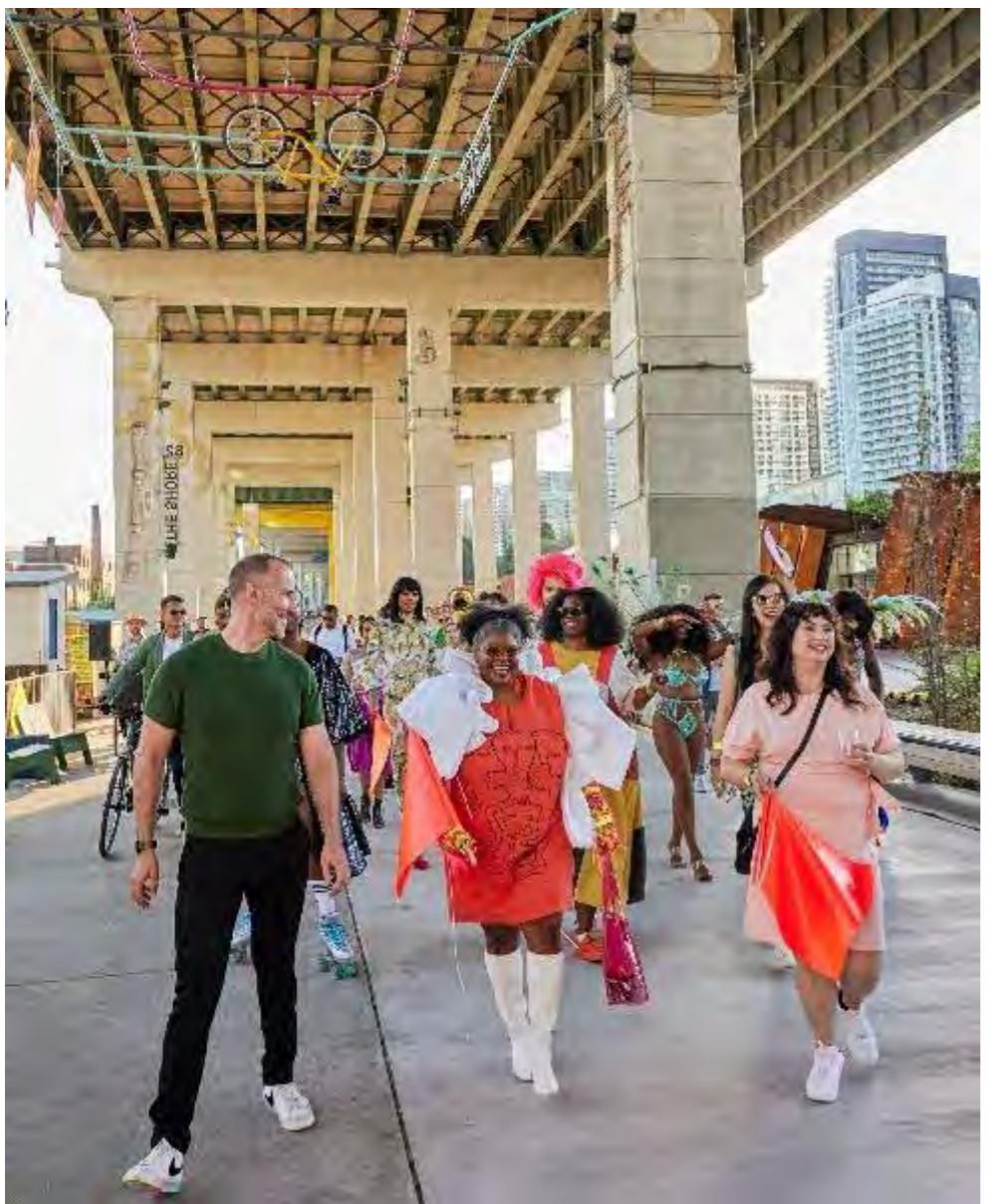
What if we unlocked its opportunities to build stronger communities?



# bentway 1.0 as vital public space

Bentway 1.0 opened in 2018 and quickly became a vital urban backyard; a beloved destination for play, and greenspace.

**We're investing in hybrid infrastructure and building new possibilities for our city.**





# bentway 1.0 as creative platform

The Bentway works with artists, designers and creatives to present free public art, performances, educational and recreational programs.

**Together, we explore the city as site and subject.**

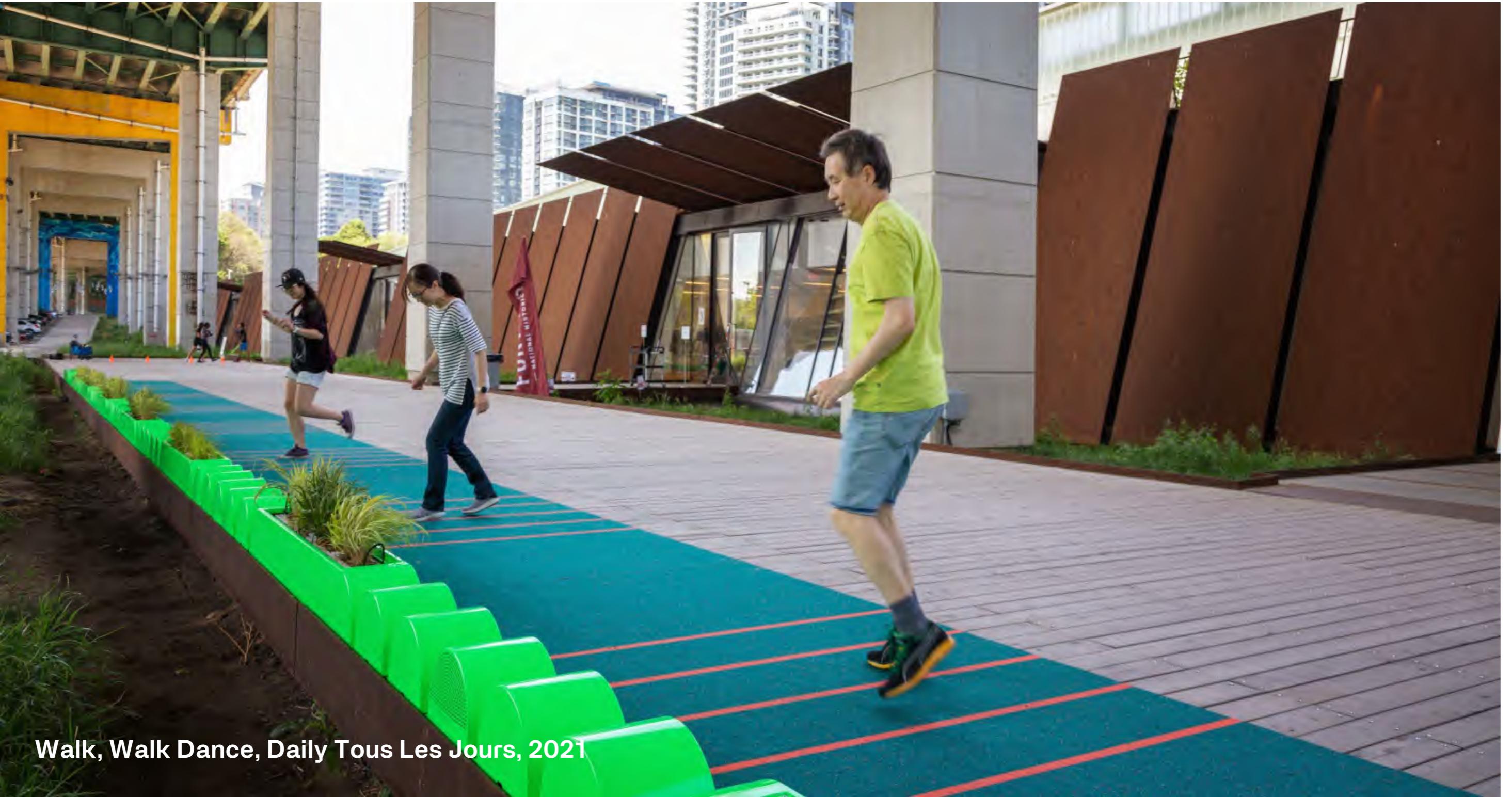


# igniting the urban imagination

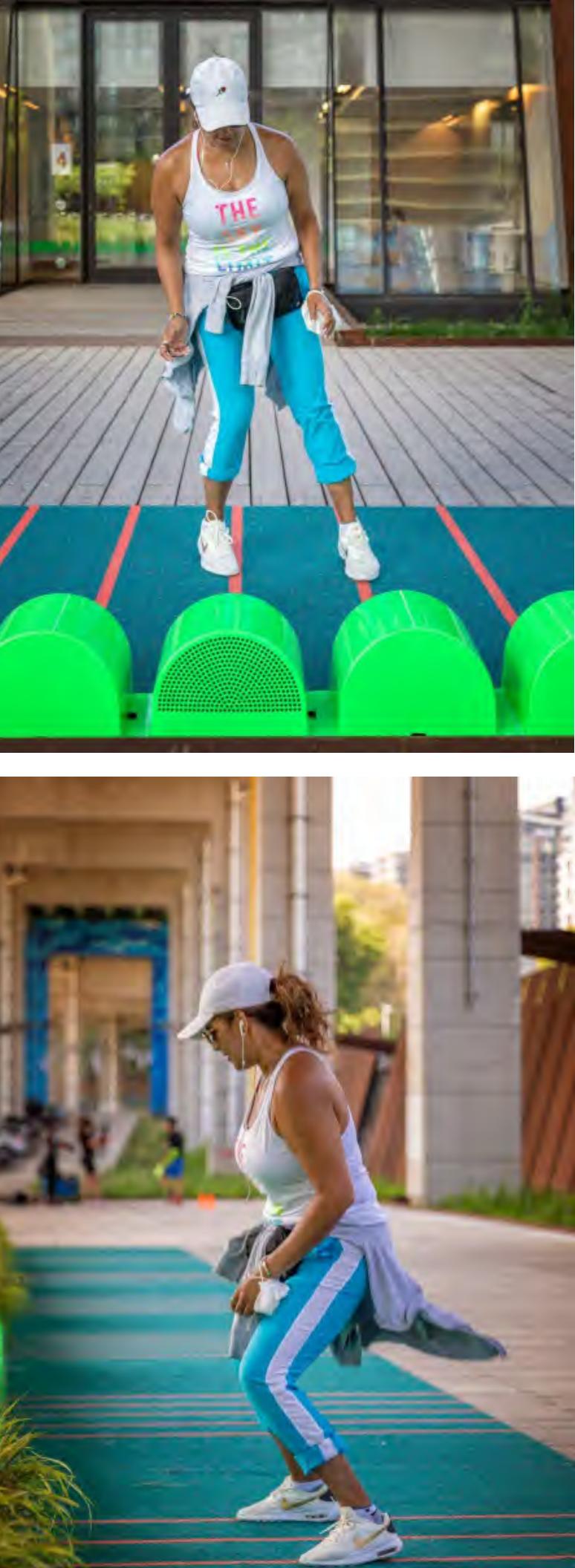
- **Active participants:** Programming that engages neighbours, communities, and the general public as active, primary participants in city-building (*not* as subjects)
- **With creative voices:** Artists and creatives in dialogue with, and about, the city
- **Co-creation:** Co-creation with broader communities, championing diverse voices, perspectives and expertise
- **As a catalyst:** Work that lives a larger life beyond a single site, season, or city



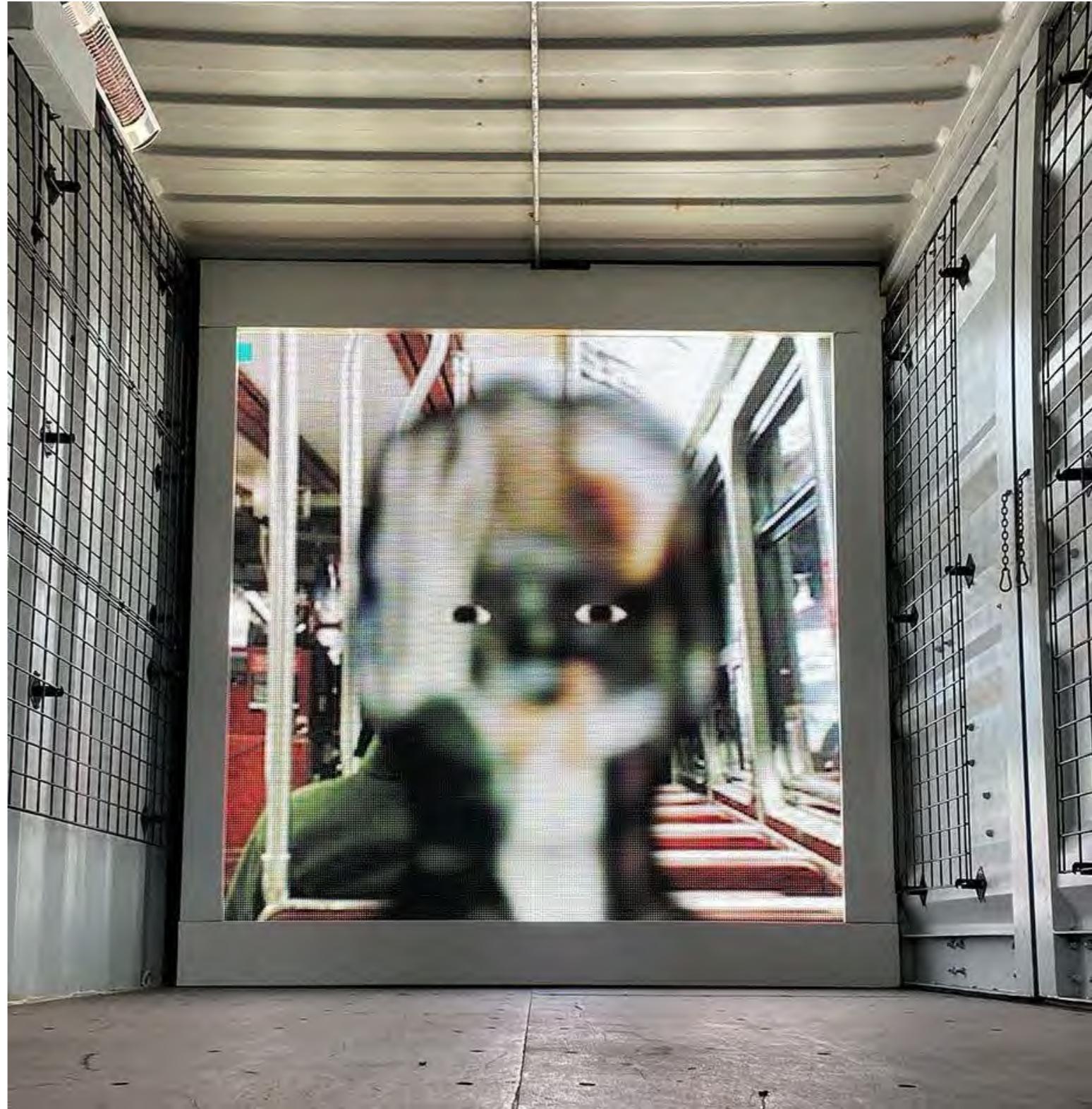
# active participants/ responsive spaces



Walk, Walk Dance, Daily Tous Les Jours, 2021

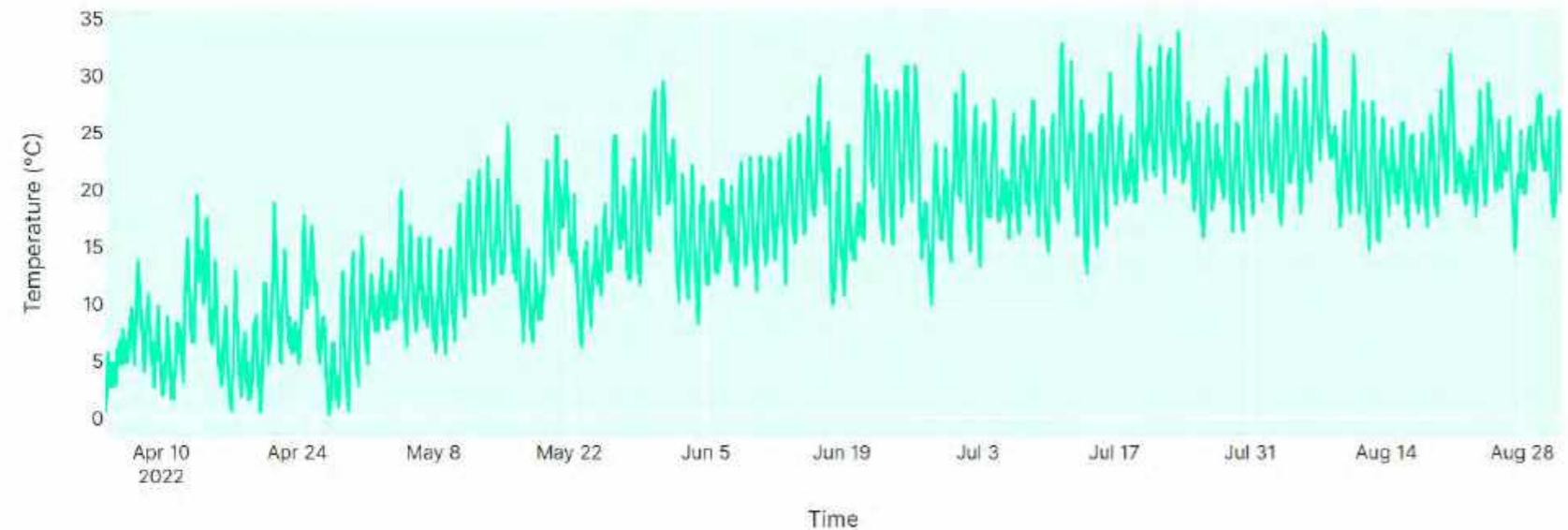


# co-creation/ public agency

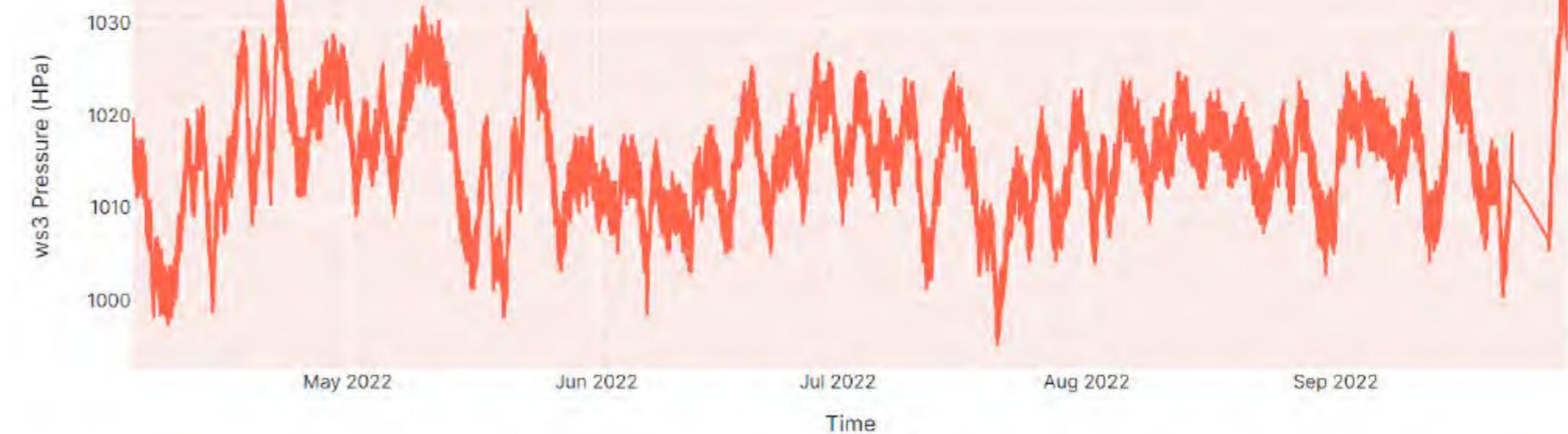


# adaptive artifacts

WS2 Temperature



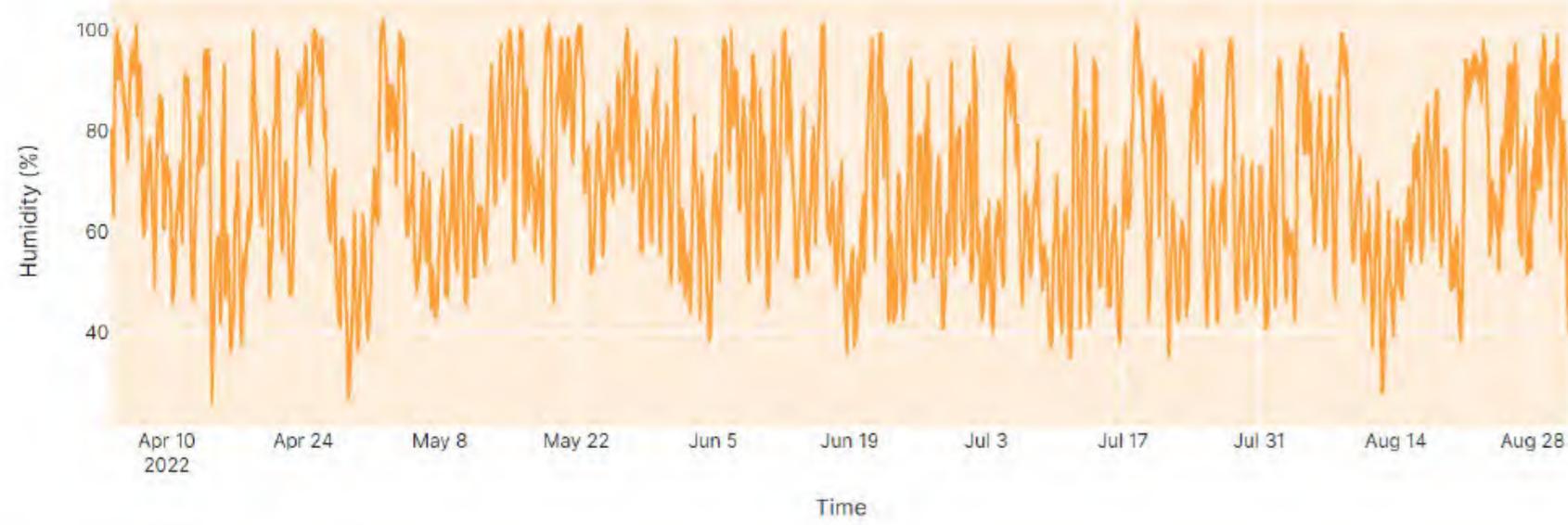
WS3 Barometric Pressure



Date Range

April 4, 2022 – September 1, 2022

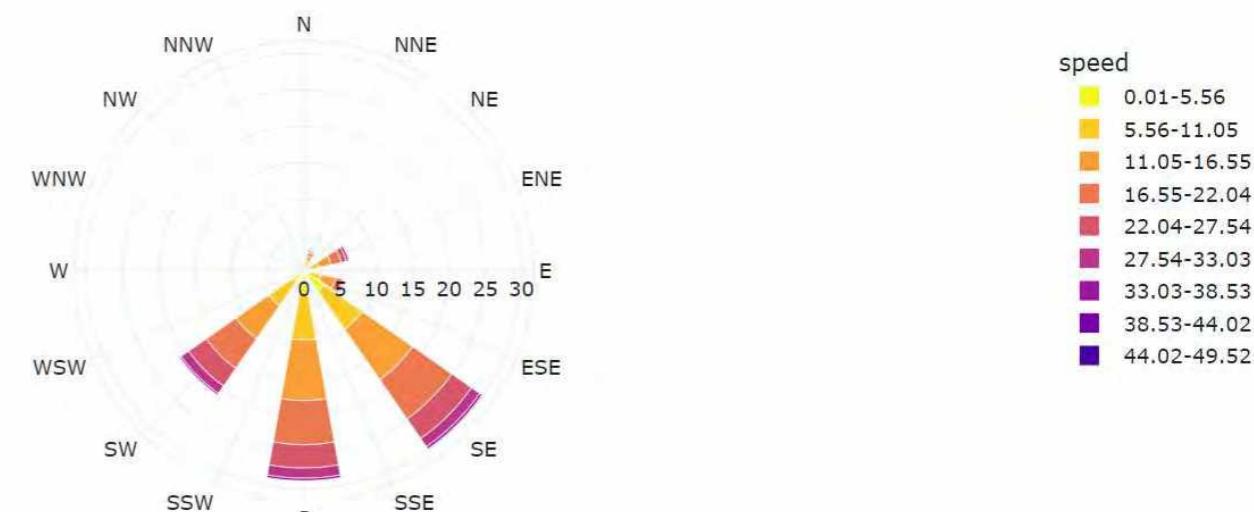
WS2 Humidity



Date Range

April 4, 2022 – September 30, 2022

WS2 Wind Speed Distribution (Km/H)



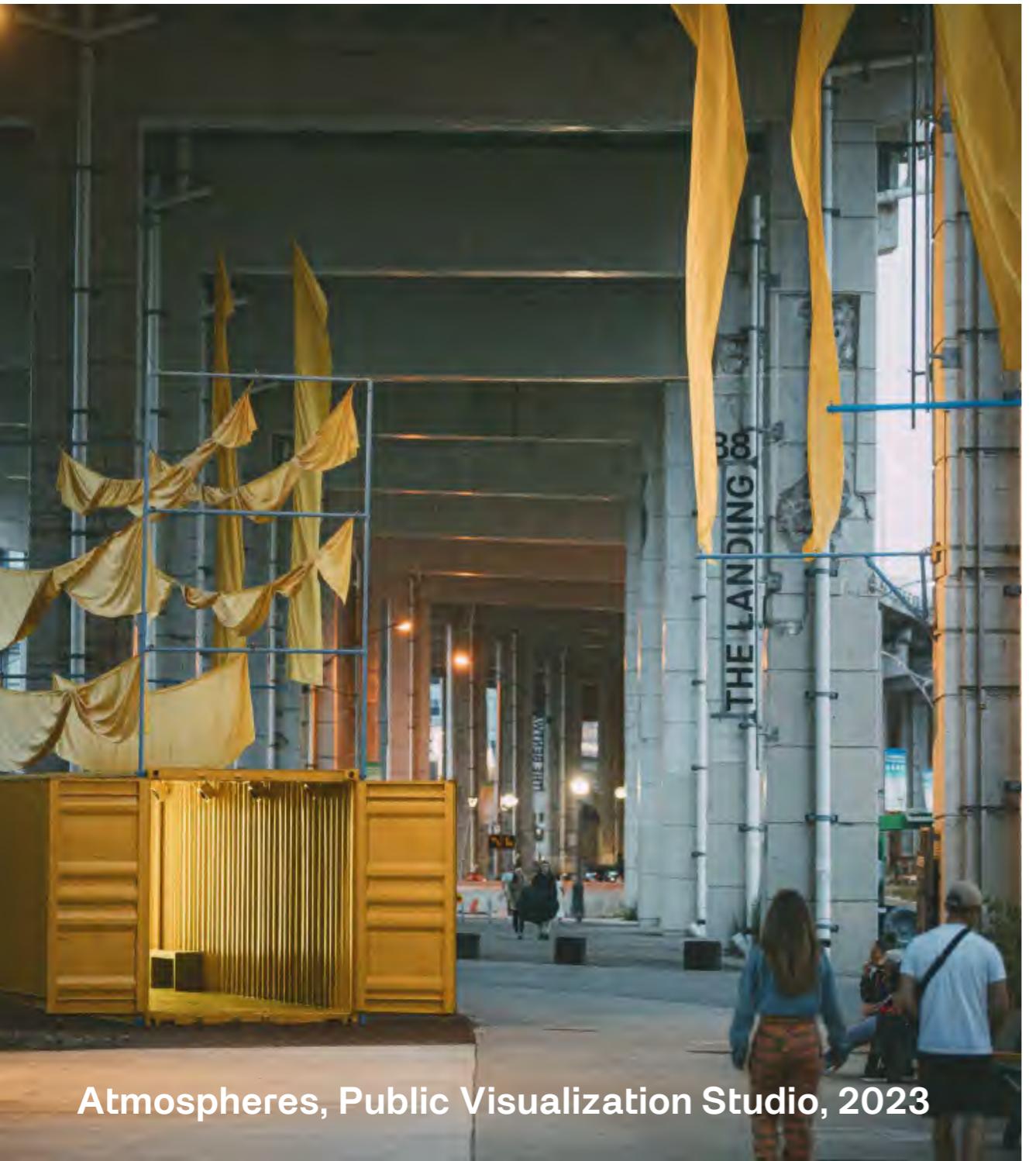
Date Range

April 4, 2022 – September 1, 2022

Date Range

April 4, 2022 – September 1, 2022

# atmospheres/ as a catalyst



Atmospheres, Public Visualization Studio, 2023



# atmospheres/ as a catalyst



# atmospheres/ as a catalyst

atmospheres

What is it  
that I have  
to leave to  
chance?

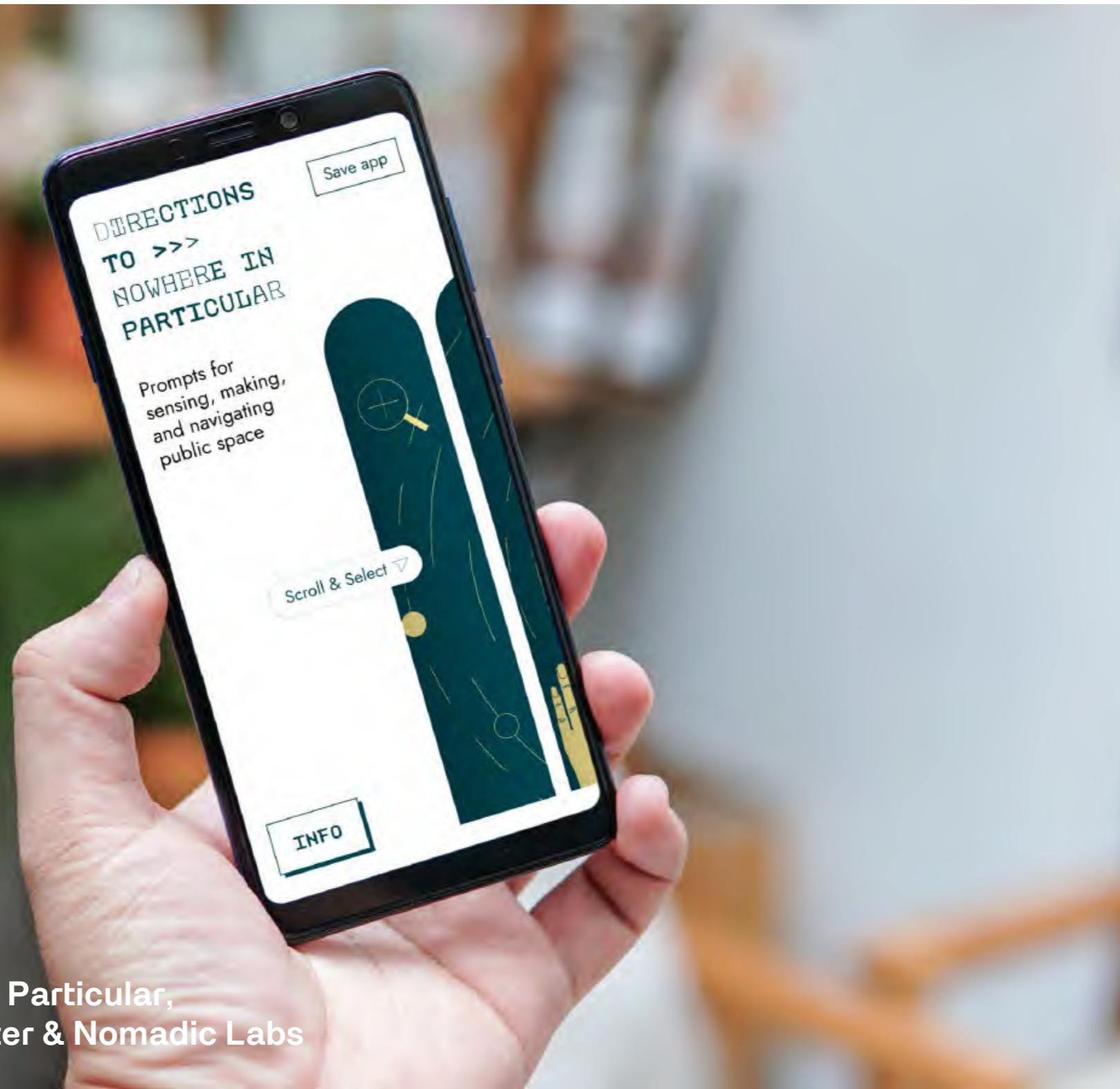
Nehal El-Hadi

atmospheres

Look we have  
all these  
number we  
have been  
collecting

Margaret Pearce

# public space on and offline



Directions to Nowhere in Particular,  
developed with From Later & Nomadic Labs

## 1 Seeking

Notice a lonely piece of  
public infrastructure such as  
a mailbox or fire hydrant.

Create a profile for it on a  
dating app.

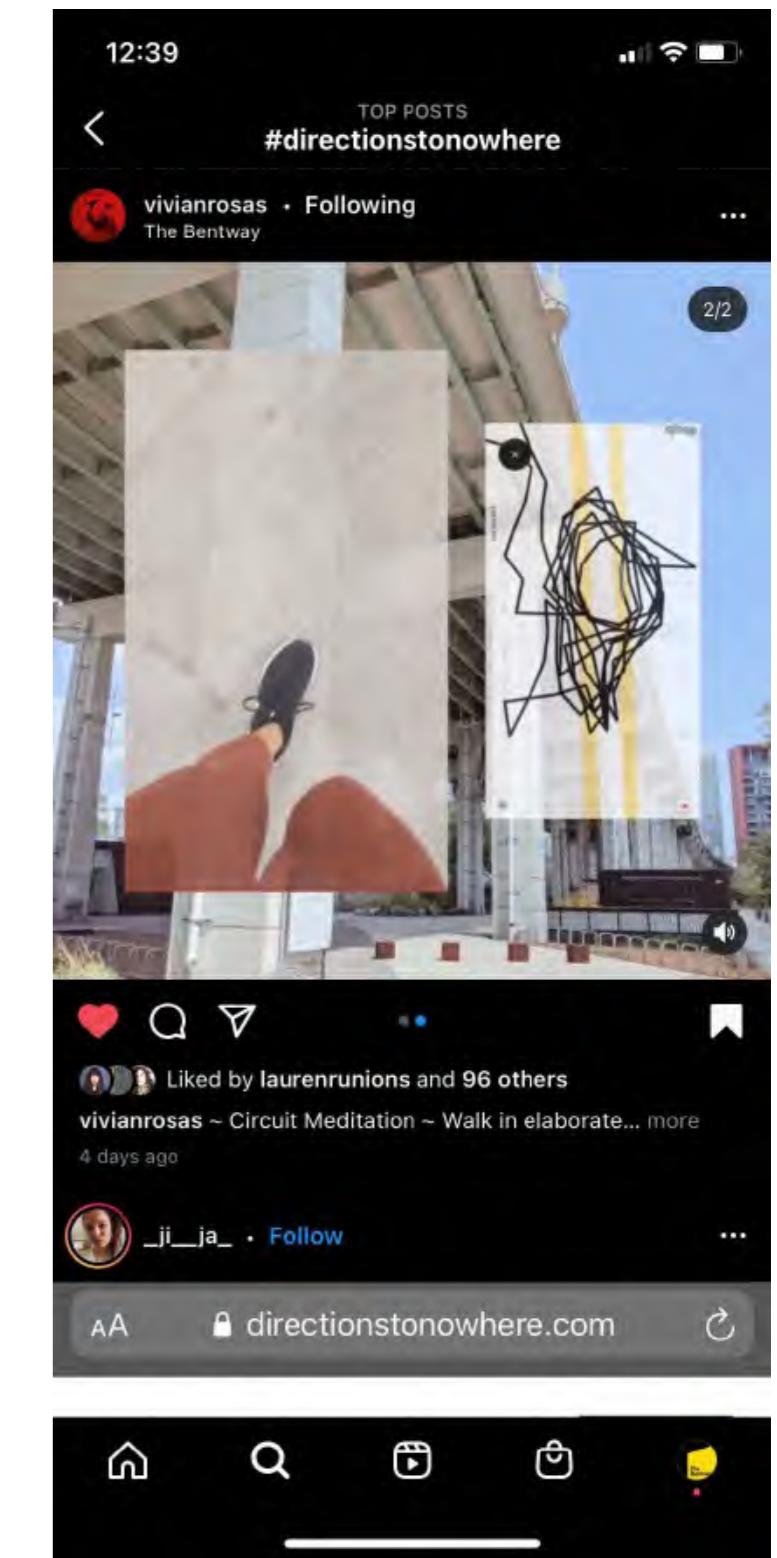
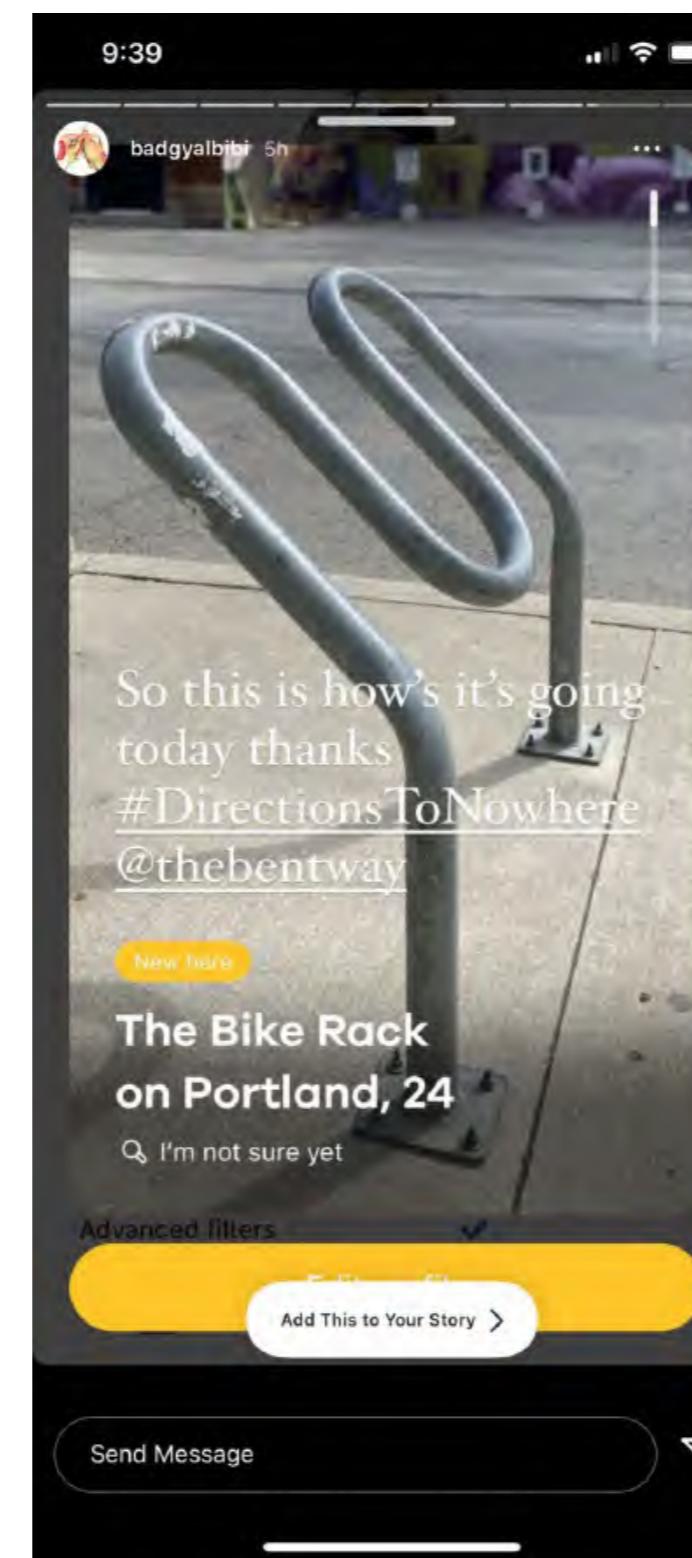
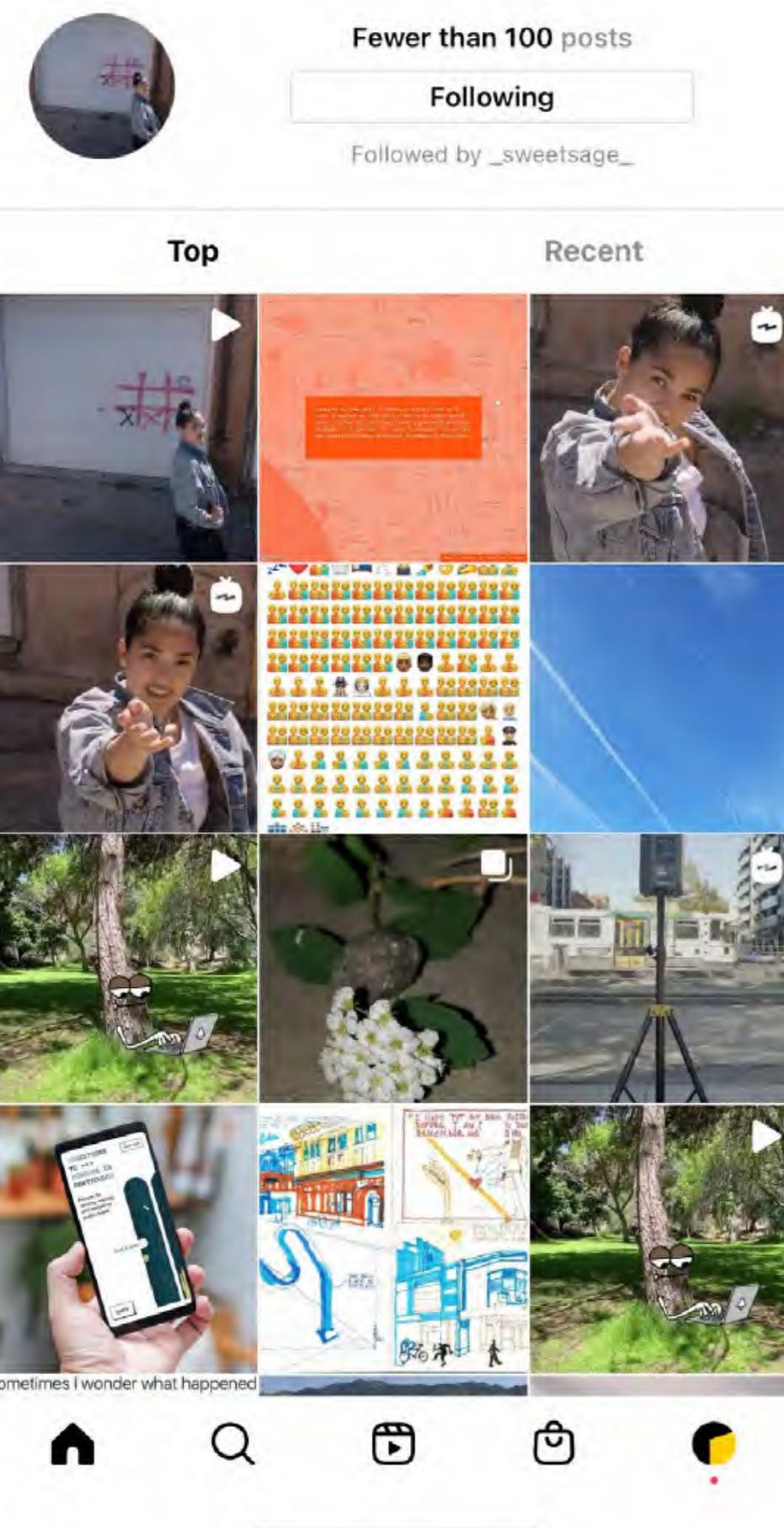


#DirectionsToNowhere



#DirectionsToNowhere

...



# thank you!

**the bentway**

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+1 416 304 0222