

customized experience



Why are Customized Experiences needed?

It is important to note that equity does not necessarily mean equal, meaning not all parks and recreational facilities should have the same amenities. While basic amenities such as benches, signage, or lighting elements could be standardized to reflect the City of Tempe's normative brand and level of service goals, other features such as landscaping, play structures, and provision of types of sports facilities should be different from other parks and recreation spaces. This approach allows each park to be identifiable to a place and reflect the interests of the people who rely on that specific park in their neighborhood. Heritage, arts, culture, scenic views, and natural features of Tempe are strong components of community identity and could be better celebrated and showcased within Tempe's public realm. There is evidence that this approach increases civic pride, strengthens social ties, and builds community trust.

Currently, Tempe community members express there is little reason to visit a park outside of their neighborhood enclave as they contain mostly all the same features and attractions. Basic amenities such as ramadas, trees, playgrounds, and site furnishings may still be the baseline condition needing to be achieved for all community members to have access to green space, but how they are designed or redesigned to tell a story of the local culture allows each park to strengthen the identity of a place. This may be accomplished through special events and programs at regional or community parks, but also through distinct small-scale design interventions in neighborhood landscapes. Well-designed outdoor play environments must include a variety of experiences, be accessible to people with varying skill sets, and, most importantly, be of interest and fun. The experience at Daley Park should

be vastly different from the experience at Escalante Park with park users finding more incentive to visit parks outside their immediate neighborhood or popular regional parks. In addition, designing parks that are reflective of the people, uses, and needs of the immediate neighborhood creates opportunities for distinction. For instance, the Bridgeland master-planned community¹ located just outside the Houston metropolitan area boasts nearly 60 parks, a few designed as community or regional parks and many others designed to be located within a quarter-mile of homes. Neighborhood parks are designed around themes of imaginary play (e.g., maze gardens, sculpture parks and tree houses), extreme sports (e.g., skate parks, bike courses, rope swings), and leisure (e.g., lazy river, bocce ball courts, wildlife habitat creation/pollinators) making each one a unique experience for all community members.

Tempe's arid climate and increasingly hot temperatures, along with storm events, require contextual and adaptive design of spaces. Inspiring examples show that making spaces comfortable year-round and at all times of the day maximizes participation in public life.

¹ Assembly-Guidelines.pdf (growsmartmaine.org) <http://growsmartmaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Assembly-Guidelines.pdf>