



# PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE SE

## Public Life Study

Published in May 2021 based on data collected and content produced in June and July 2018



# FOCUS: ELEVATING THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS ALONG PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE SE

The objective of this study is to understand the patterns of public life in neighborhood parks and public plazas along Pennsylvania Avenue SE in the Capitol Hill Neighborhood of Washington, DC. The study's goal is to elevate the public life of Pennsylvania Avenue SE to become Capitol Hill's Civic and Social Spine through:

1. Enhancing the diverse cultural appeal of parks and plazas;
2. Elevating the pedestrian experience; and,
3. Better serving the park and plaza users.

The Office of Planning conducted an analysis of these public spaces using pedestrian assessment techniques developed by [Jan Gehl](#) to help assess the social performance of the spaces, and ascertain the potential physical design causes for underperformance. These tools include: pedestrian counts, stationary behavior mapping, user surveys, and documentation of pedestrian flows. This public life study also documents uses of the space to better inform the capital funding of park projects and development review of projects in the area.

The study examined two parks; primarily Eastern Market Metro Park and secondarily Seward Square.



**Public Life Study Areas in the Capitol Hill Neighborhood**

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# INTRODUCTION

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pennsylvania Avenue, a key access in L'Enfant's plan for the Capital City, was planned with grand intentions of creating a gateway to the city connecting the Capitol building and the Anacostia River. Later on, it was enhanced with wide sidewalks and a prominent center median lined with grand oaks crating a graceful procession. The scale of development however has never kept pace with the prominence of the street, while its role as a transportation artery has overwhelmed any pedestrian enjoyment of many of the park spaces that abut it.

Today, the avenue has some excellent places, but many parts are unmemorable and lack the vitality of many streets in the District. Several parks along it are either unused, or are spaces that one passes on the way to someplace else. The once grand oak trees have been lost in many parts of the avenue, and the neighborhoods surrounding it are far more interesting places to stroll and walk. Overall, the avenue lacks the sense of place that defines great streets.

New development further East around the Potomac metro station along with the repositioning of the old Hine Junior High School at Eastern Market Metro Park give promise to realizing a more continuous and active public realm. To complement those, the public spaces and streetscape of the avenue must also change to incentivize more use, create memorable spaces that bring more enjoyment to users, and connect spaces along the avenue together though a consistent urban experience.

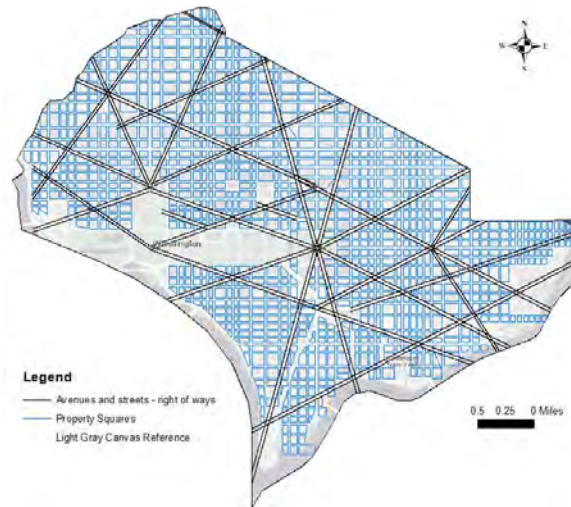
This public life study begins to inform these necessary changes.

The completion and publication of this public life study coincide with the presence of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic in Washington, DC. As a result, since mid-March 2020, and the subsequent April 1st, 2020 stay-at-home order, most public life in the District has slowed down significantly. Though government efforts have since led to some public life recovery, pandemic and pre-pandemic public life patterns remain fairly different.

However, the field work and site analysis for this public life study were completed prior to the March 11th, 2020 DC State of Emergency triggered by the outbreak of the pandemic. As a result, the study team feels that the data and analysis represented herein is an accurate reflection of public life in Pennsylvania Avenue, SE outside of the public health emergency.

# HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Capitol Hill is the largest residential historic district in Washington, DC characterized by uninterrupted rows of townhouses with various architectural styles. Pennsylvania Avenue SE, where our study areas are located, is a prominent City street that features park squares and open spaces defined in L'Enfant's Plan of 1791. This plan looked to incorporate grand diagonal avenues superimposed over a standard street grid pattern.



## L'Enfant's plan of 1791

Typical horse drawn streetcar tracks, introduced in 1862 in order to connect Georgetown and the U.S. Capitol with the Navy Yard.

## 1790s The Beginning

The boundaries of the open space was originally defined in L'Enfant's Plan and then modified in the 1792 Ellicott Plan. The shape of the site was then drawn to its final configuration in the 1804 King Plat.

## 1850s - 1860s Civil War Era

During the pre-Civil War era, there was little development of the properties around Easter Market Metro Park, and there was a marshland located on the eastern portion. During the Civil War, Capitol Hill experienced a large increase in commerce and development due to the Navy Yard's increased activity.

Sources: capitolhilltownsquare.org; planning.dc.gov; The Washington Post; WMATA; Archaeological Identification Survey; HABS survey 1933

# HISTORIC OVERVIEW



An aerial view of Seward Square looking Northwest along Pennsylvania Avenue SE - photo taken from the HABS DC-685 survey

## 1880s Seward Square

Indicated as an open space on both the L'Enfant and Ellicott Plans, this open landscaped area saw its first improvements in the 1880s. Maintained by the National Park Service, this park is named after William Henry Seward, the United States Secretary of State who served under Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson.



Hine Junior High School, built in 1966 and operated until closed in 2008; since then adapted into a mixed-use development

## 1890s - 1960s

Several institutions were built surrounding both Eastern Market Metro Park and Seward Square, and during this time the City used Eastern Market Metro Park's land for storage and as a refuse dump. In 1908, a streetcar line traveled across the square, but was replaced by City buses in the 1950s. In that same year, the Hine Junior High School was built north of the square.



Eastern Market Station, an island platformed underground metro station with the entrance located within the park along Pennsylvania Avenue SE

## 1977 - Now

The metro station, operated by Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) opened on July 1st, 1977. It currently serves the blue, orange, and silver train lines, and is named after the historic nearby Eastern Market. Now, Eastern Market Metro Park operates more as a metro station commuter plaza than a public square, and Hine Junior High School has since been redeveloped.

# PUBLIC LIFE STUDY

## *What Is Public Life?*

Public life is what people create when they connect with each other in public spaces—the streets, alleys, plazas, parks, and city spaces between buildings. Public life is about the everyday activities that people naturally take part in when they spend time with each other outside of their homes, workplaces, and cars. Public life studies analyze the observed human behavior in these shared spaces to inform policy, regulations, and temporary or permanent public space design interventions.

The District of Columbia is fortunate to have a wealth of park spaces, squares, and pedestrian-friendly streets that provide opportunities for a vibrant and rich public life. As the District grows, ensuring that all groups and people can enjoy public life in the DC’s shared spaces is an important part of achieving an inclusive city.

## *Why a Public Life Study?*

1. To better understand the user experience
2. To provide data & evidence for:
  - Improving the design of projects; and,
  - Making choices about capital funding.
3. To inform strategies for improving the avenue
4. To track progress



**Public Life around Eastern Market Metro Station**



# WHAT WAS SURVEYED: Two Parks, Two Conditions

## *Representative Public Spaces*

Upon considering the entire avenue, the study team learned that two different park conditions occur along Pennsylvania Avenue SE. The study team then identified two locations that are representative of these conditions to survey. By understanding the conditions at these two locations, recommendations for spaces along the rest of the corridor can be made.

**Eastern Market Metro Park**, the primary study area, represents active spaces and routinely has people waiting for transit or walking to the metro.

**Seward Square**, the secondary study area, represents most parks along the corridor that are quiet spaces that primarily act as green lawns for passive enjoying.



**Locations of Seward Square and Eastern Market Metro Park in the Capitol Hill Neighborhood of Washington, DC**

# WHAT WAS SURVEYED: Two Times

## *Weekday and Weekend*

Looking at both weekday and weekend times helps show how the study's spaces operate given commuting traffic during the week, and as recreational spaces on the weekend when people have more leisure time.



**WEEKDAY: busy**



**WEEKEND: less busy**

# WHAT WAS SURVEYED: People Moving

## Volume of People Walking and Bicycling

The survey team counted the number of pedestrians and cyclists that traveled through key 'screenlines' within and around the park during a set timeframe. Demographic observations relating to age and gender were also considered.

**PEDESTRIAN SCREENLINE COUNT**

PARK/PLAZA NAME: MA1 LOCATION (MA1, 2B, 3, ETC.): [Handwritten]

DATE:  WEEKDAY  WEEKEND: 6/28

NAME: Thor Nelson

WEATHER CONDITION: [Icons for sun, clouds, rain, snow, etc.]

TEMPERATURE: 70s

TIME IN: 7:42 TIME OUT: 7:52 (STOP EXACTLY 10 MIN)

NOTES:

**DIRECTIONS**

This count will be conducted on each of the screenline locations for 10 minutes every hour (see screenline 1 attached).

The observer will stand at the location and observe and record for each every pedestrian that passes through/making a full mark for their age, gender and if they are performing an action other than walking (grouping, sitting, etc.)

— SCREENLINE COUNT 1 (PEDESTRIANS AND BIKES) CROSSING THIS LINE.

**OFFICE OF PLANNING**  
Design Division

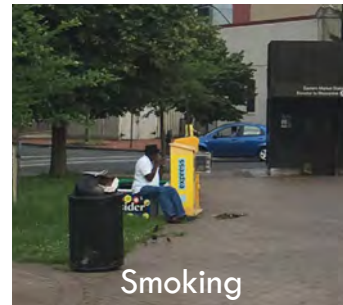
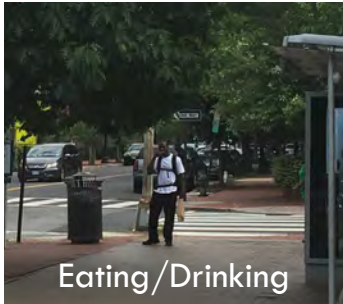
PEDESTRIANS		SUBTOTAL	TOTAL
DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	LEFT TO RIGHT →	← RIGHT TO LEFT	
PERCEIVED GENDER	MALE	FEMALE	
AGE	3-6 YEARS OLD	7-14 YEARS OLD	15-19 YEARS OLD
	20-30 YEARS OLD	31-44 YEARS OLD	OVER 65 YEARS OLD
CYCLING	BURNING/JOGGING	SKATEBOARDS, ROLLERBLADES, ETC.	WHEELCHAIR/SPECIAL NEEDS
GROUPS	WITH PETS	WITH STROLLERS	

Pedestrian Screenline Count Form

# WHAT WAS SURVEYED: People Spending Time

## Body Posture, Activity, Age, and Gender

The survey team mapped the locations of physical features that people visiting the park engaged with. In their inventory, they also categorized activities such as sitting, standing, laying down, eating, and commuting.



**STATIONARY ACTIVITY SCAN** NAME *Erin* DATE *12/16/2018* WEATHER *90, sun/cloud*  
 MARKET PARK MA LOCATION *EMP* TIME *14:55*

PERSON OR OBJECT	PERSON NUMBER	AGE	POSTURE	GROUP	ACTIVITIES										OTHER ACTIVITIES						
					SMOKING	EATING/DRINKING	WAITING FOR TRANSIT	COMMERCIAL	CULTURAL	RECREATION	WORK	OTHER	UNCLASSIFIED	UNCLASSIFIED							
1																					
2																					
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18																					
19																					
20																					
TOTAL																					

OFFICE OF PLANNING  
Design Division

**Stationary Mapping Form**

# WHAT WAS SURVEYED: Intercept Survey

## Habits of Use, Perceptions, and Demographics

Several rounds of an intercept survey of people in Eastern Market Metro Park were conducted to better understand how users feel about the overall performance of the space. The survey gave the team a sense of who visits the park and how the space is used.

**EASTERN MARKET METRO PARK PUBLIC LIFE STUDY**

*5:40pm*

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN OUR SURVEY ABOUT PUBLIC LIFE IN THIS AREA. YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

1 How often do you visit Eastern Market Metro Park?  
 Daily  
 Weekly  
 Monthly  
 Rarely (once per year or less)  
 First time here

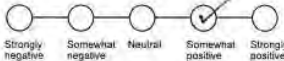
2 How did you get here today? (Select option traveled for longest distance)  
 Walk  
 Bike  
 Bus  
 Light rail/Streetcar  
 Private car  
 Taxi/Rideshare  
 Private bus/Shuttle  
 Metro  
 Other. Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

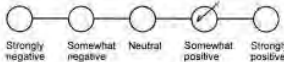
3 What best describes your relationship to this area? (check all that apply)  
 Neighbor/Resident  
 Employee (of nearby institution/business)  
 Student (of nearby school)  
 Tourist  
 Attendee (cultural event or institution)  
 Other. Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

4 What brings you to Eastern Market Metro Park today?  
 Just passing through  
 Shopping/Market  
 Spending time with my family  
 Meeting up with friends  
 Spending time by myself  
 Sightseeing  
 Recreation/Sports/Exercise  
 Walking my pet  
 Cultural event/Performance  
 Political event/Protest

5 If you answered "just passing through" are you headed anywhere in particular?  
 Home  
 Work  
 School  
 Cultural institution  
 Restaurant/Bar  
 Store  
 Another public space  
 Other: Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

6 How much time do you plan on spending here today?  
 Less than 10 min.  
 10 min.  
 20 min.  
 30 min.  
 1 hour or more

7 How do you feel about this neighborhood?  


8 How do you feel about Eastern Market Metro Park?  


9 What three words would you use to describe Eastern Market Metro Park?  
Nice.

10 What two things would you like to do in Eastern Market Metro Park that you can't do now?  
Sit & entertainment

## Survey Form

# WHAT WAS SURVEYED: Public Space Analysis

## 12 Urban Quality Criteria for Public Spaces

These criteria are used to assess the park's performance on the basis of three qualitative themes: protection, comfort, and enjoyment. These three elements help facilitate cohesive social interaction.

### TWELVE URBAN QUALITY CRITERIA

LOCATION:

3 = YES  
2 = IN BETWEEN  
1 = NO

Protection	<p><b>Protection against traffic and accidents.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do groups across age and ability experience traffic safety in the public space? Can one safely bike and walk without fear of being hit by a driver?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Protection against harm by others.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the public space perceived to be safe both day and night? Are there people and activities at all hours of the day because the area has, for example, both residents and offices? Does the lighting provide safety at night as well as a good atmosphere?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Protection against unpleasant sensory experience.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there noises, dust, smells, or other pollution? Does the public space function well when it's windy? Is there shelter from strong sun, rain, or minor flooding?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Options for mobility.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is this space accessible? Are there physical elements that might limit or enhance personal mobility in the forms of walking, using of a wheelchair, or pushing a stroller? Is it evident how to move through the space without having to take an illogical detour?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Options to stand and linger.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the place have features you can stay and lean on, like a façade that invites one to spend time next to it, a bus stop, a bench, a tree, or a small ledge or niche?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Options for sitting.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there good primary seating options such as benches or chairs? Or is there only secondary seating such as a stair, seat wall, or the edge of a fountain? Are there adequate non-commercial seating options so that sitting does not require spending money?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Options for seeing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are seating options placed so there are interesting things to look at?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Options for talking and listening/hearing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it possible to have a conversation here? Is it evident that you have the option to sit together and have a conversation?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Options for play, exercise, and activities.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there options to be active at multiple times of the day and year?</li> </ul>
Comfort	<p><b>Scale.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the public space and the building that surrounds it at a human scale? If people are at the edges of the space, can we still relate to them as people or are they lost in their surroundings?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of climate.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are local climatic aspects such as wind and sun taken into account? Are there varied conditions for spending time in public spaces at different times of year? With this in mind, where are the seating options placed? Are they located entirely in the shadows or the sun? And how are they oriented/placed in relation to wind? Are they protected?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Experience of aesthetic qualities and positive sensory experiences.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the public space beautiful? Is it evident that there is good design both in terms of how things are shaped, as well as their durability?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Enjoyment</b></p>		

### Urban Criteria Form



**PRIMARY STUDY AREA | EASTERN MARKET METRO PARK**

# URBAN CONTEXT AND SITE OVERVIEW

Eastern Market Metro Park is located immediately at and around the Eastern Market metro station entrance at the intersection of 8th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue SE, bisecting the overall park into two main spaces.

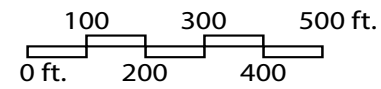
In addition to the Eastern Market metro stop, the plaza features different types of mobility options such as Metrobus and DC Circulator bus stops, a Capital Bikeshare station and a nearby micromobility corral. For that reason, it receives an abundance of commuter traffic during rush hour times before and after work.

The study area sits adjacent to the Southeast Neighborhood Library and is surrounded by different types of uses including both residential and commercial, including major destinations such as Eastern Market and the adjacent open-air farmers market.

Surveys showed that the plaza is mostly used as a pass-through space, and people rarely stay. With proper design and activation, Eastern Market Metro Park can easily become a town square.



Area Land Use Map





# URBAN CONTEXT AND SITE OVERVIEW

## At the Center of Activity



① Seward Square is the secondary study area, named after Lincoln's Secretary of State William Henry Seward, and currently maintained by the National Park Service.



② Eastern Market is an indoor market housed in a brick building constructed in 1871. It is located on 7th Street SE just a few blocks from the US Capitol, and sits alongside Eastern Market's year-round open-air farmers market.



③ 700 Penn, a multi-story mixed-use development, sits across from Eastern Market Metro Park.



⑧ The northern edge condition is of a primarily residential typology, lending itself to a more quiet setting.

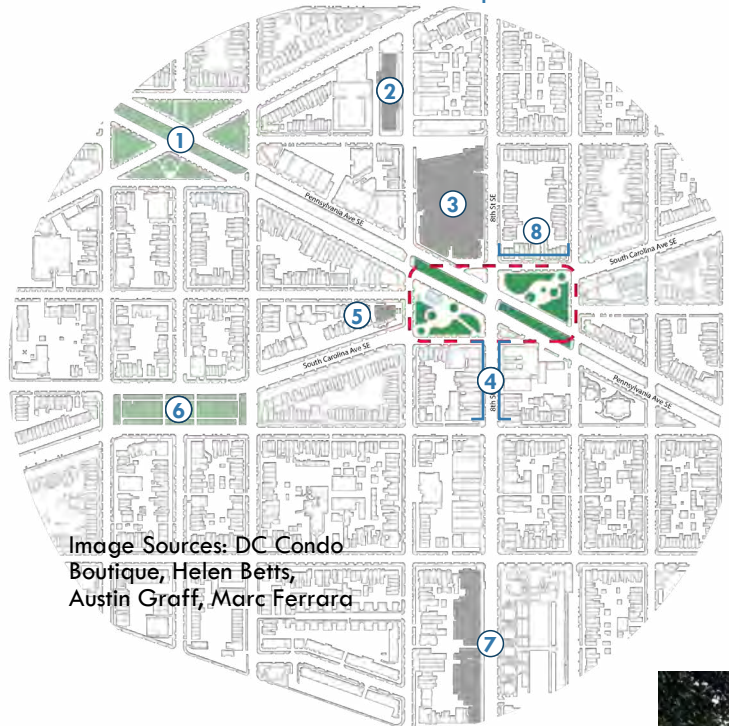


Image Sources: DC Condo Boutique, Helen Betts, Austin Graff, Marc Ferrara



④ The southern edge condition of Eastern Market Metro Park is mostly commercial buildings, and continues to be down towards the Barracks Row Main Street.



⑦ Barracks Row Main Street in Capitol Hill is DC's oldest commercial corridor, winning a prestigious award in 2005. Development continues to grow around this area.



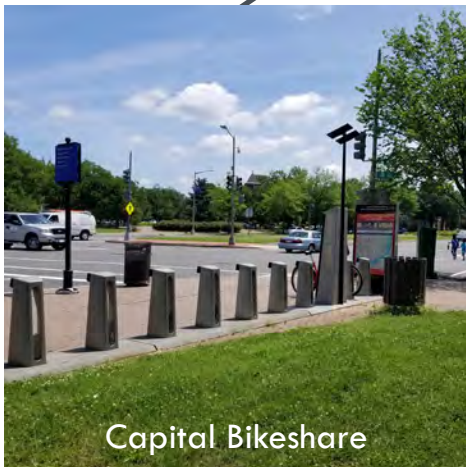
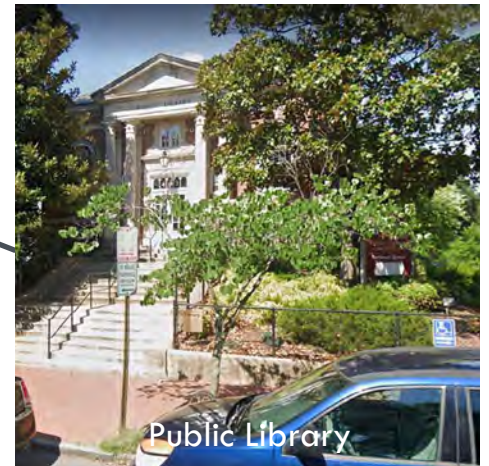
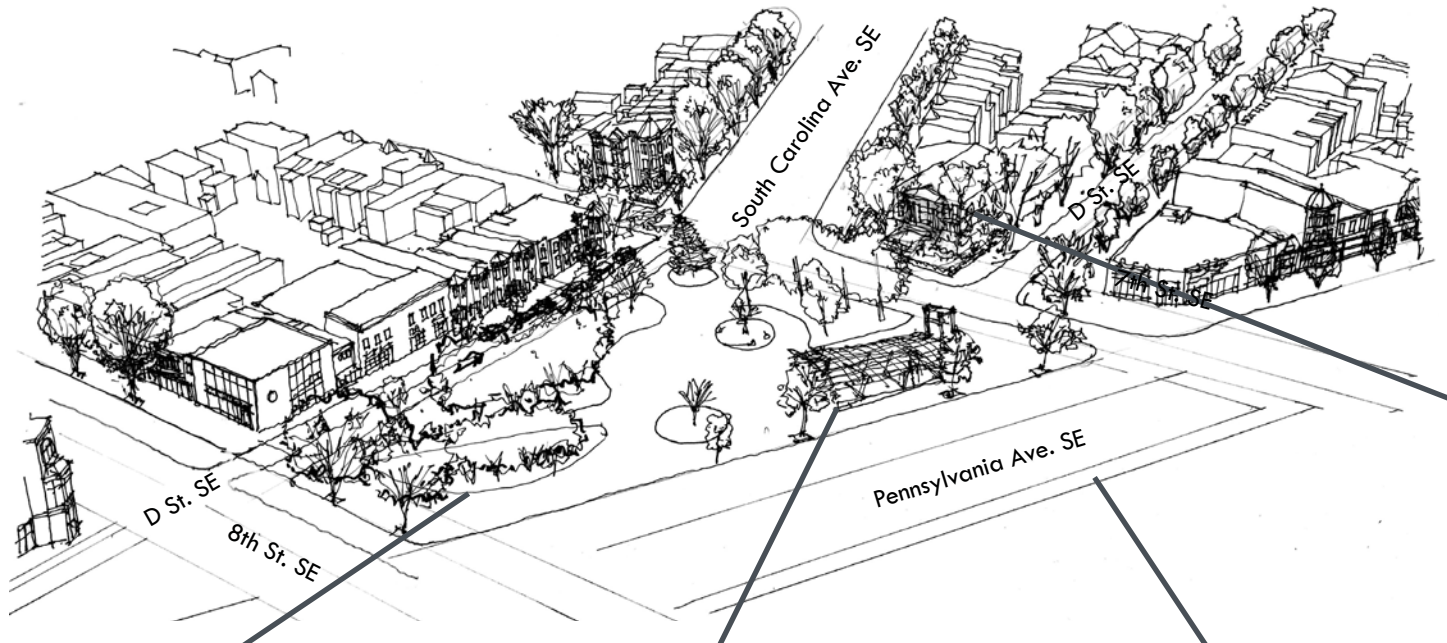
⑥ Marion Park memorializes distinguished soldier Francis Marion. It has interesting walkways, vegetation, and a fenced playground area.



⑤ Southeast Neighborhood Library is one of three Carnegie-funded libraries in DC and the city's second neighborhood library. The neoclassical style building was built in 1922 and renovated in 1982.

# URBAN CONTEXT AND SITE OVERVIEW

## Civic Amenities

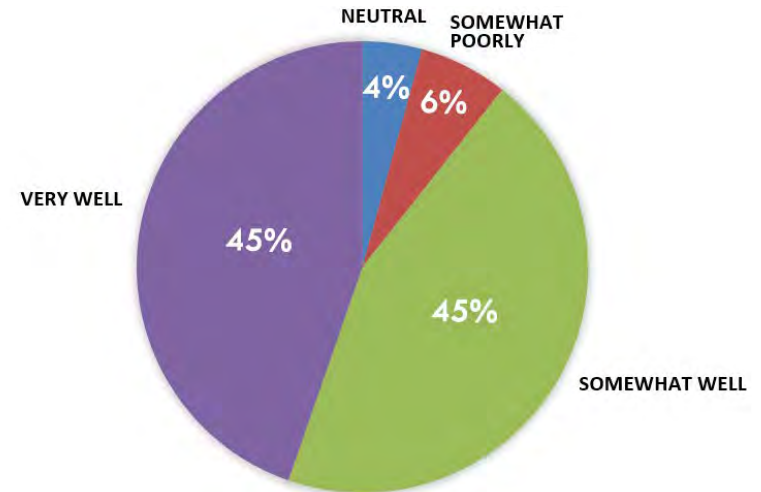


# KEY FINDINGS

## Existing Perception of Safety and Community

During the community engagement process for the concept design phase of the Eastern Market Metro Park Project, safety was raised as a concern for the neighborhood. However, surveyed park users reported feeling generally safe and secure while at the park.

Additionally, the park is situated in the area falling under the purview of the Capitol Hill Business Improvement District (BID). The BID maintains and beautifies the neighborhood's streets and public spaces. That includes keeping spaces such as Eastern Market Metro Park clean, further contributing to its perception of comfort and safety.



**90% of people thought the park was safe.**



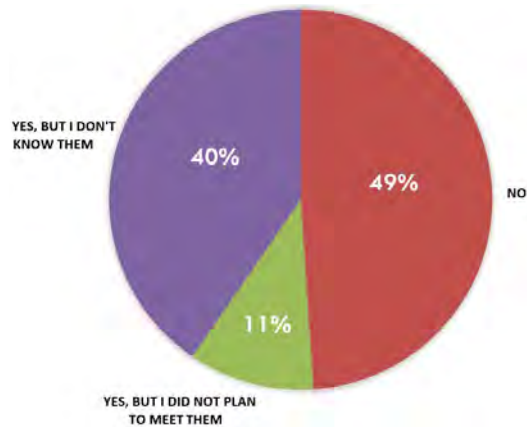
**Members of the Capitol Hill BID Clean Team work to remove trash from the park and streets.**

# KEY FINDINGS

## Notable Sense of Familiarity between Users



Intercept survey results show that several people recognize other park users but don't know them personally.

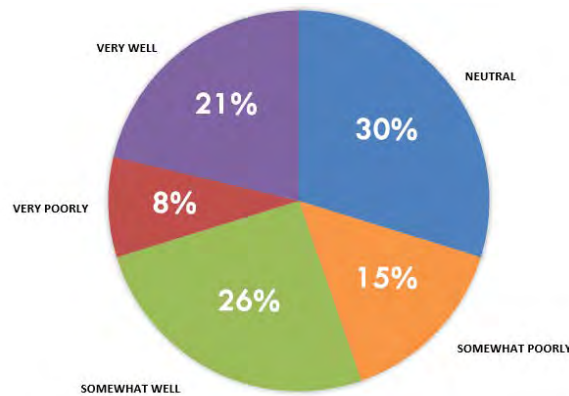


51% of people recognized somebody.

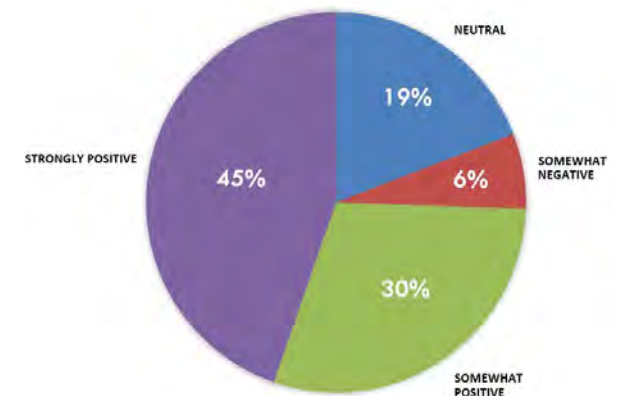
## Neighborhood Park



Almost half of the people surveyed believe that the park performs well and feel strongly positive about the area.



47% of people felt positively about the park's performance as a neighborhood space.



75% of people felt positively about the Neighborhood.

# KEY FINDINGS

## *Lack of Weekend and Weekday User Diversity; Park Generally Not Viewed as Family-Friendly*

**Not many people go to visit this park with their families.**

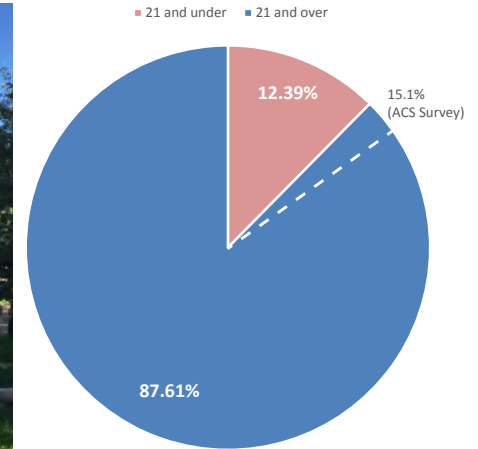
Intercept survey results show that barely anybody came to the park to 'spend time with family.'

**There are not many kid-friendly amenities to draw families in.**

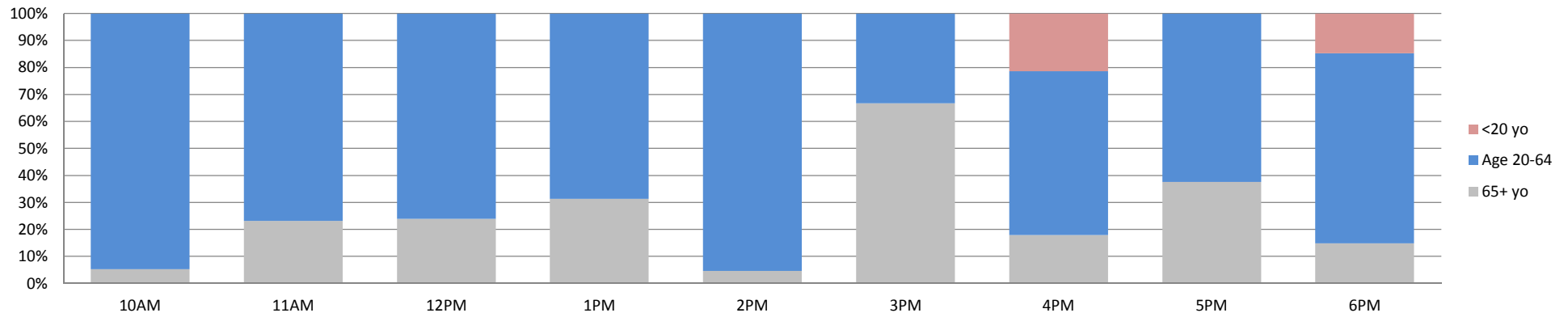
The results of the screenline count show the lack of children passing through and an age breakdown leaning towards adults. The results of the stationary activity scan show that kids are not playing here. Also, the age breakdown leans more towards adults.



**Few children and teenagers hang out at the park.**



**Age Breakdown**  
(Screenline Count and ACS 5-year Survey)

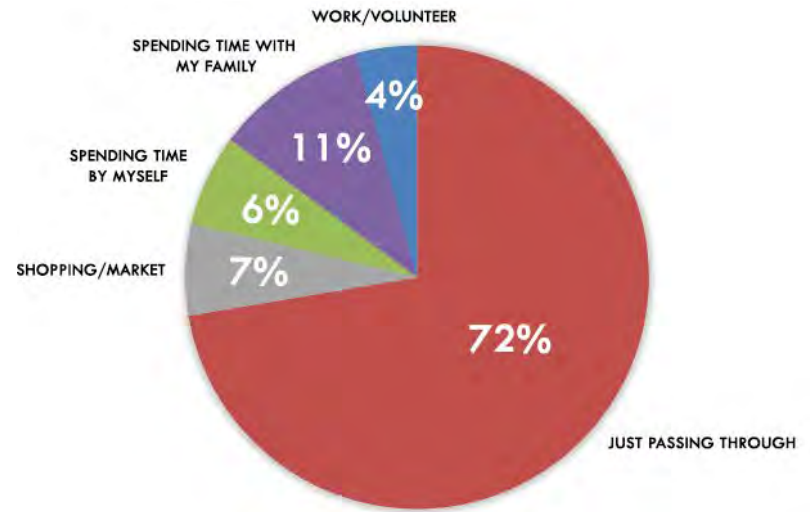


**Weekend Percentage of Stationary Activity per Hour by Age**

# KEY FINDINGS

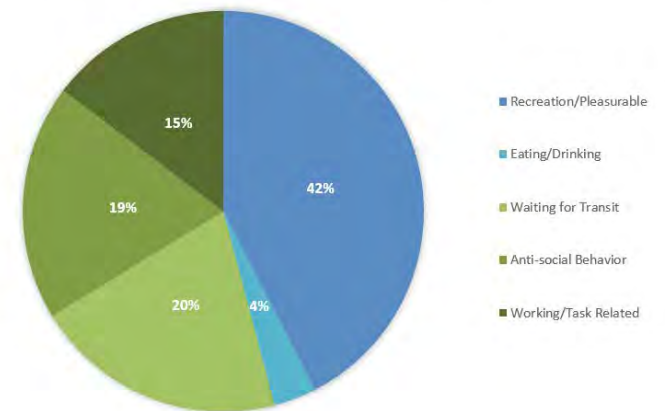
## *A Pass-Through Type of Park*

The park is seen as a pass-through space rather than a plaza to linger in. Among those who lingered, Only 46% of people stated they were there to enjoy the park. Large unused areas can be linked to informal and uncomfortable seating. About 54% of the 667 people observed were engaged in necessary and/or task-oriented activities.



**72% of people said they were ‘just passing through.’**

STATIONARY SCAN OF ACTIVITIES (WEEKDAY & WEEKEND)



**Less than half of people target the park for recreation.**

# 1. HOW CAN EASTERN MARKET METRO PARK BECOME MORE LIKE A TOWN SQUARE?

# CAPITALIZE ON ALL-DAY ACTIVITY

## High Metro Activity and Busy Park

Its proximity to an active Eastern Market metro station means that Eastern Market Metro Park receives significant foot traffic. In fact, the survey results show that most park users arrive by metro or by walking. This also means that the park is underutilized after commuter rush hour.

However, metro ridership numbers reveal that the metro stop is a heavily used one, even during off-peak hours. This means that the park has the potential to be activated after-hours.



Eastern Market Metro Station

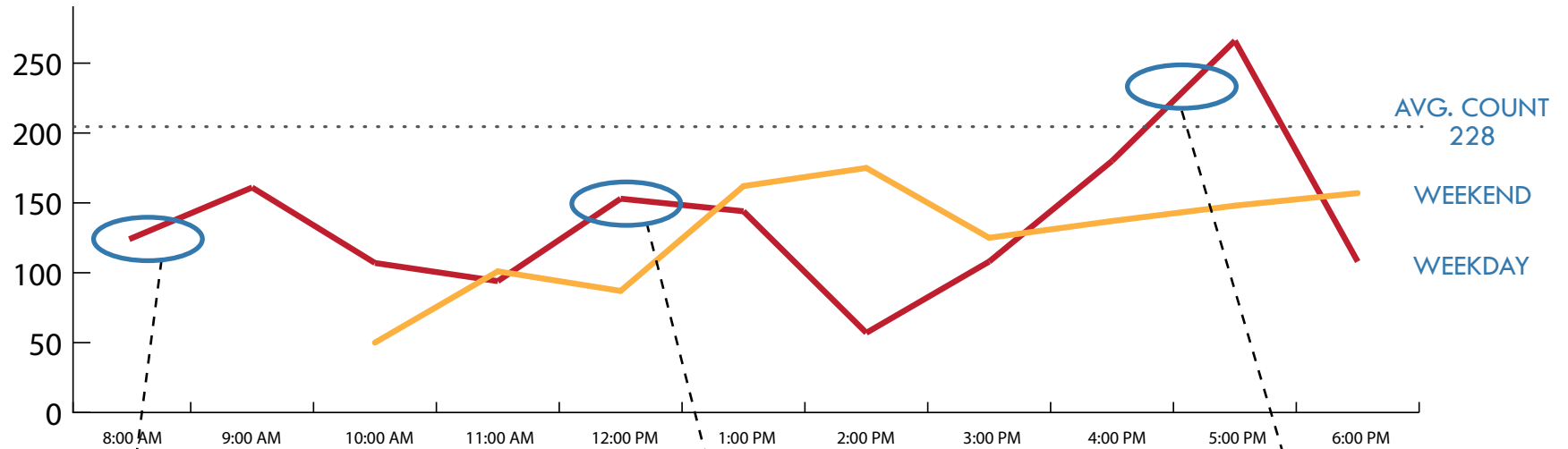
EASTERN MARKET METRO EXIT COUNTS (AVG.) 2018	
Time	Exit Count
AM Peak	930
Mid-day	1343
PM Peak	2895
Evening	1002
Total Weekday	6170
Saturday	3,545

Source: WMATA



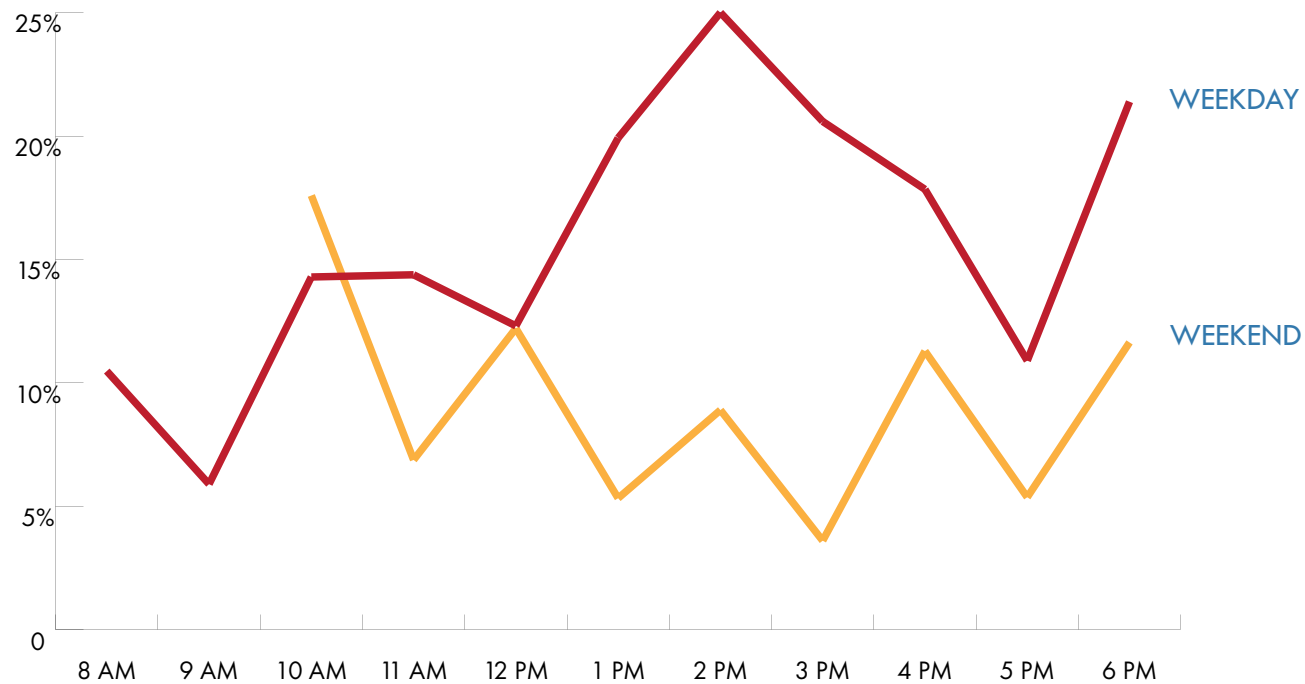
# CAPITALIZE ON ALL-DAY ACTIVITY

## High Average Pedestrian Volumes



# CAPITALIZE ON ALL-DAY ACTIVITY

## Few People Staying



**Eastern Market Metro Park Stickiness Factor (People Staying/People Entering)**

**Eastern Market Metro Park is viewed more as a pass-through by visitors.**

- 72 % of surveyed park users said they were just passing through.
- The stationary activity scan shows a fluctuating amount of people who hang out at the park, but the numbers are generally low.
- The lack of comfortable and formal seating is a main reason why people do not want to stay. Several people surveyed cited that as a concern.

**There is a large discrepancy between people passing by and people engaging in a park activity.**

- Count results reveal a generally low stickiness factor, defined by the number of people staying versus that of people passing through the park. This is most likely due to the lack of park amenities and programming that could attract people and invite them to stay.

## **2. HOW CAN SOCIAL INTERACTION AND LINGERING BE INCREASED?**

# ENHANCE THE PARK'S URBAN QUALITY

## Focus on the 12 Urban Criteria

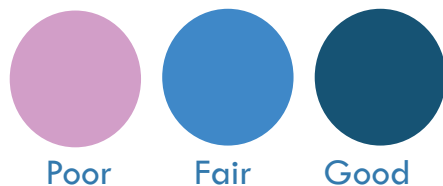
The 12 Urban Quality Criteria developed by Jan Gehl is a scoring criteria used to assess a park's performance as a social space. It addresses a hierarchy of needs that fall under three qualitative themes:

**Protection** | at a basic level, all spaces need to provide protection from the elements, traffic and crime;

**Comfort** | good parks are comfortable places to walk, sit, see and converse; and,

**Enjoyment** | Great parks invite people to be active and spend more time in them.

Eastern Market Metro Park offers a basic level of protection, but lacks design elements to make the park comfortable and enjoyable for users.



Urban Quality Criteria for Eastern Market Metro Park

# ENHANCE THE PARK'S URBAN QUALITY

## Protection

Without basic protection from cars, noise, rain, and the elements, people will avoid spending time in a space. Protection from these things is essential for a place to be used.

Protection against traffic and crashes; feeling safe

### Good

Two of the park's edges are buffered from traffic with vegetation and on-street parking; however, the Pennsylvania Avenue edge could use better buffering.

Protection against crime and violence; feeling secure

### Fair

During the day, the space is busy with people; but lighting at night is sparse, not pedestrian scaled, and creates dark spots. Police patrols can be uninviting and signal unsafety, deterring people.

Protection against unpleasant sensory experiences

### Fair

The park has mediocre protection from the sun during DC's hot summer month, and from wind during windy days. The low sparse tree canopy shelters only a portion of the park adequately.



Few Opportunities to Sit in the Shade



Trees provide protection from the wind and a buffer from travel lanes.









Capitol Hill BID safety ambassadors provide directions for visitors and keep the park safe.

Source: [www.capitolhillbid.org](http://www.capitolhillbid.org)

# ENHANCE THE PARK'S URBAN QUALITY

## Comfort

Without elements that make walking, standing, sitting, seeing, and conversing comfortable, a place does not invite people to spend time there.

 <p>Opportunities to walk and cycle</p>	<b>Good</b> The Park is well-connected to walkable destinations, accessible via on-street bike lanes, and features a Capitol Bikeshare Station.	 <p>Opportunities to see</p>	<b>Poor</b> The park has no public art, does not hold any performance events, and does not invite many people in to watch.
 <p>Opportunities to stand and stay</p>	<b>Fair</b> The metro entrance, rocks, and shaded areas provide some opportunities to stand and stay for a while; but the lack of seating prevents most users from being able to stay in the space for an extended time.	 <p>Opportunities to talk and listen</p>	<b>Poor</b> The active nature of the park encourages people to interact; but the park does not offer spaces for people to relax and talk, and is somewhat too noisy to have extended conversations.
 <p>Opportunities to sit</p>	<b>Poor</b> The park has no formal seating and very little informal seating. Rocks can be used for seating, but do not allow more than one person to sit.	 <p>Opportunities for play and exercise</p>	<b>Poor</b> This park does not have any playable features. Lawn areas offer some opportunity for play but have limited open multipurpose space.



Few Opportunities to Sit, Stay, or Spend Time



No Opportunities to Play or Exercise

# ENHANCE THE PARK'S URBAN QUALITY

## Enjoyment

A great place distinguishes itself from a good place by including elements that invite people to be active and make use of the positive aspects of the park's microclimate and human-scaled elements.

Dimensioned  
at human  
scale

### Good

The existing tree canopy provides the feeling of being sheltered. The open plaza's scale allows for a good facial recognition of individuals from a distance.

Opportunities  
to enjoy  
the positive  
aspects of  
climate

### Poor

The park's pavers help reduce the reflectivity of the harsh summer sun, but there are no other temperature cooling elements such as water features.

Aesthetic  
qualities  
and positive  
sensory  
experience

### Poor

There are little to no features that provide visual interest for the pedestrian, and the undermaintenance of grassy areas deters potential additional active uses that could occur in those spaces.



Human Scale Features and Landscaping



No Opportunities  
to Enjoy the Park in  
the Sun



Harsh Materials and  
Lacking Sensory  
Experience

Source: [www.capitolhillbid.org](http://www.capitolhillbid.org)

# PROVIDE MORE SHADED PLACES

## *Only 30% Open Lawn Space; Majority of Park Unshaded*

People usually like to sit in vegetated spaces and shaded areas, especially during the hot summer months. By providing more shaded areas, more people can stay in the park.

The southern portion of Eastern Market Metro Park has a decent number of trees that can create shade in travel paths and open lawn spaces. However, these shaded areas lack seating.

The northern portion of the park is reasonably shaded by tree canopies, but could benefit from additional open lawn spaces. Its expanded playground will require further shading as a result of the low tree canopy height.



**Sun-Shade Diagram at 2:00 PM on June 21st**



**Expanded Play Areas in the Park's Northern Portion**



### **3. HOW CAN MORE PUBLIC USE AND CULTURAL EXPRESSION BE ENCOURAGED?**

# CREATE PLAYABLE SPACES

## *Spaces for Children;* *Spaces for Cultural Performance*

As the survey shows, Eastern Market Metro Park is well situated to invite people in, but, among other things, does not provide enough play opportunities for them to stay.

Integrating engaging design elements that people can interact with, can invite them to end up spending more time there. Introducing comfortable multi-use community spaces that enable social interaction can make room for different types of cultural and civic events to happen, creating neighborhood pride and activating the space.



**Existing Eastern Market Metro Park**



**Vision of a Playable Eastern Market Metro Park**



**SECONDARY STUDY AREA | SEWARD SQUARE**

# URBAN CONTEXT AND SITE OVERVIEW

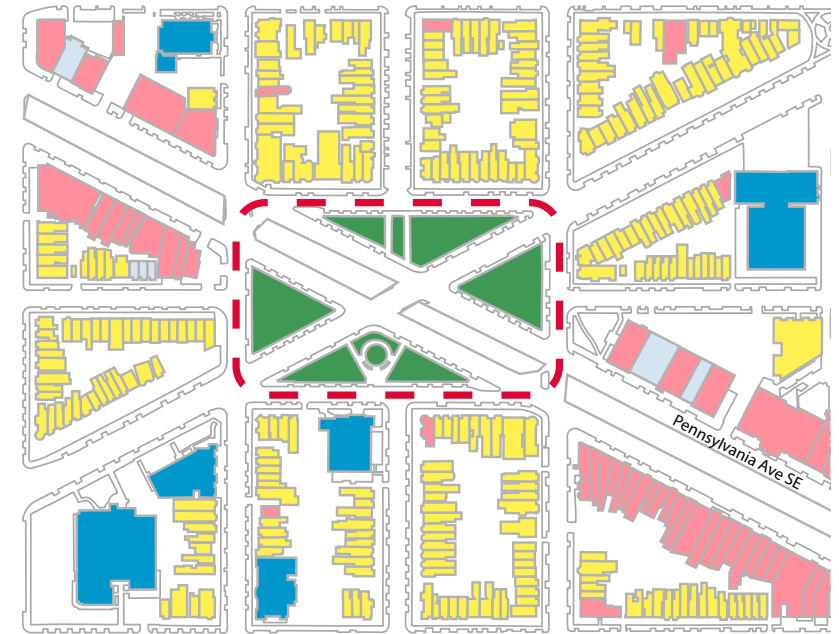
## *A Neighborhood Park in Waiting*

Seward Square centers on the intersection of North Carolina and Pennsylvania Avenues SE, bounded by 4th and 6th Streets SE, in the heart of the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, DC. Named after Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of State William Henry Seward, it is currently maintained by the National Park Service.

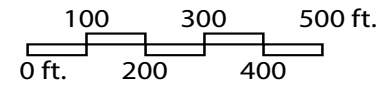
Primarily surrounded by residences, with a church to the South, and a few nearby commercial establishments along Pennsylvania Avenue SE, it sits close to major destinations like the Library of Congress and Eastern Market.

Surveys showed that the park is currently infrequently visited both on weekdays and weekends, despite its centric location. While Pennsylvania and North Carolina Avenues SE bisect the overall park into four spaces, with proper programming, these park pieces could be better utilized.

Given the lack of park space amenities in Capitol Hill, Seward Square is well situated to become a vital park space serving a broader cross-section of nearby residents.



**Area Land Use Map**



# URBAN CONTEXT AND SITE OVERVIEW

## At the Heart of a Neighborhood



The Library of Congress is the research library for the US Congress and the oldest federal cultural institution in the United States. The Folger Shakespeare Library, the John Adams Building, and the James Madison Memorial Building are also nearby.



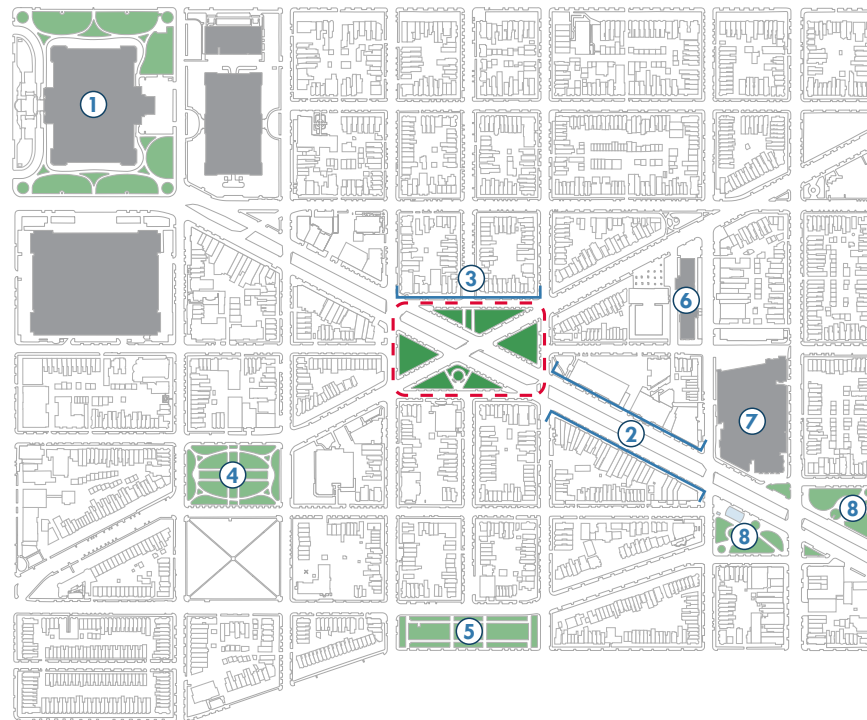
The primary study area, Eastern Market Metro Park, is redeveloped to include a playground.



700 Penn, a multi-story mixed-use development, sits across from Eastern Market Metro Park.



The Pennsylvania Avenue SE corridor features a number of commercial establishments. A variety in storefronts and building facades supports pedestrian activation and visual interest.



Eastern Market is an indoor market housed in a brick building constructed in 1871. It is located on 7th Street SE just a few blocks from the US Capitol, and sits alongside Eastern Market's year-round open-air farmers market.



Buildings around Seward Square are primarily low-scale residential rowhomes. The Capitol Hill United Methodist church is located south of the park.



Folger Park, named after the former Secretary of the Treasury Charles J. Folger, is known for its unique 'fountain benches'.



To the South, along 5th Street SE, Marion Park memorializes distinguished soldier Francis Marion, and features seating areas and a fenced playground.

# HOW CAN SEWARD SQUARE FULFILL ITS ROLE AS A NEIGHBORHOOD PARK?

# INTRODUCE QUALITY NEIGHBORHOOD PARK AMENITIES

## *Comparable Parks*

The percentage of Seward Square visitors is very low compared to the number of pedestrians that pass by the park on Pennsylvania Avenue SE. This means that not enough people choose to enter the park as they walk by it.

North of Seward Square at the intersection of Massachusetts and Maryland Avenues SE, lies Stanton Park. A park of comparable size and location to the secondary study area, Seward Square, it somehow attracts more pedestrians. Taking a deeper look at how these two parks compare might reveal how Seward Square can be more successful.



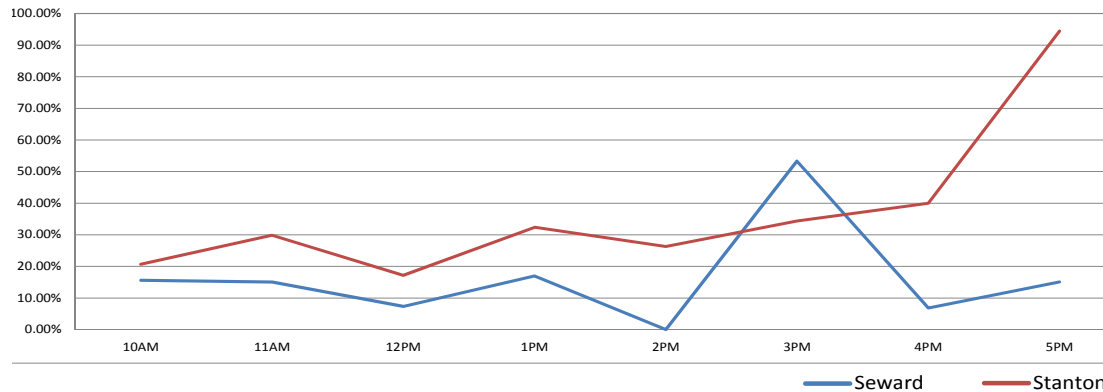
**Stanton Park Location**

# INTRODUCE QUALITY NEIGHBORHOOD PARK AMENITIES

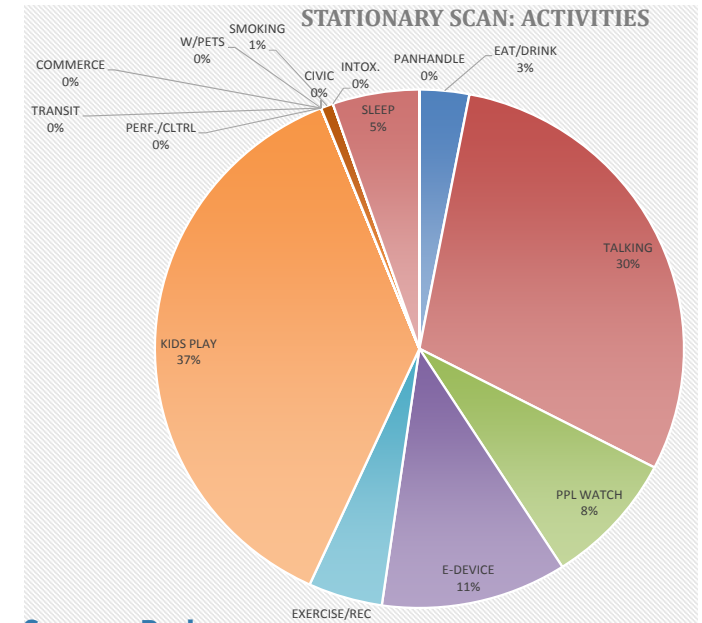
## Foot Traffic and Park Amenities

Though comparable, Stanton Park has a higher stickiness factor percentage than Seward Square, likely due to the presence of engaging amenities such as a statue and a playground. Stanton Park also shows more pedestrians using public seating, thanks to the abundance of quality benches. Seward Square currently lacks seating options due to its broken benches.

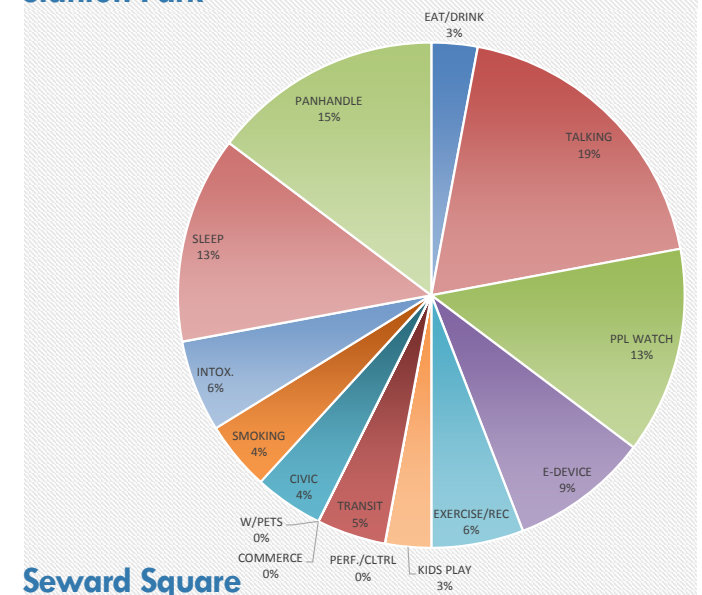
Based on that information, it is safe to assume that by introducing quality neighborhood park amenities, Seward Park can attract more pedestrians and become the neighborhood park it is meant to be.



**Total Stickiness Factor**



**Stanton Park**



**Seward Square**

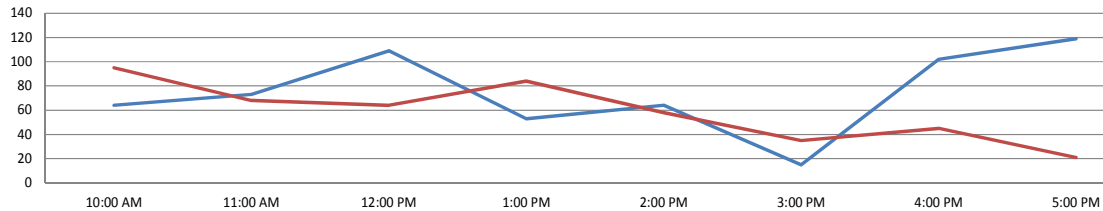


# BUILD ON PARK LOCATION

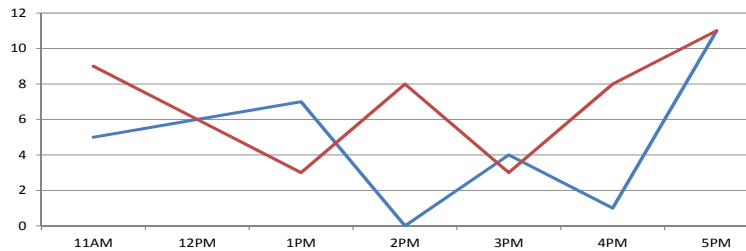
## Take Advantage of Positive Park Attributes

In the comparative analysis between Seward Square and Stanton Park, some positive attributes of Seward Square that could be built on came up:

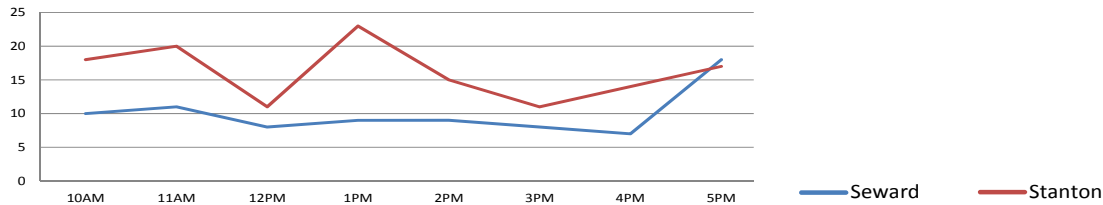
- Fairly accessible by public transportation with a good number of people visiting the park between 10 am and 5 pm
- Increased amount of foot traffic at lunch time and afternoon rush hour
- Potential for amenities and activities to attract visitors



**Pedestrian Count by Hour**



**Pedestrians Using Public Seating**

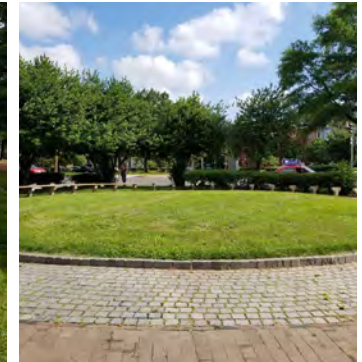


**Stationary Activities by Hour**

— Seward — Stanton



**Open Green Space for Passive Recreation**



**Circular Plaza in the Southern Half of the Park**



**Paths and Benches in Disrepair**

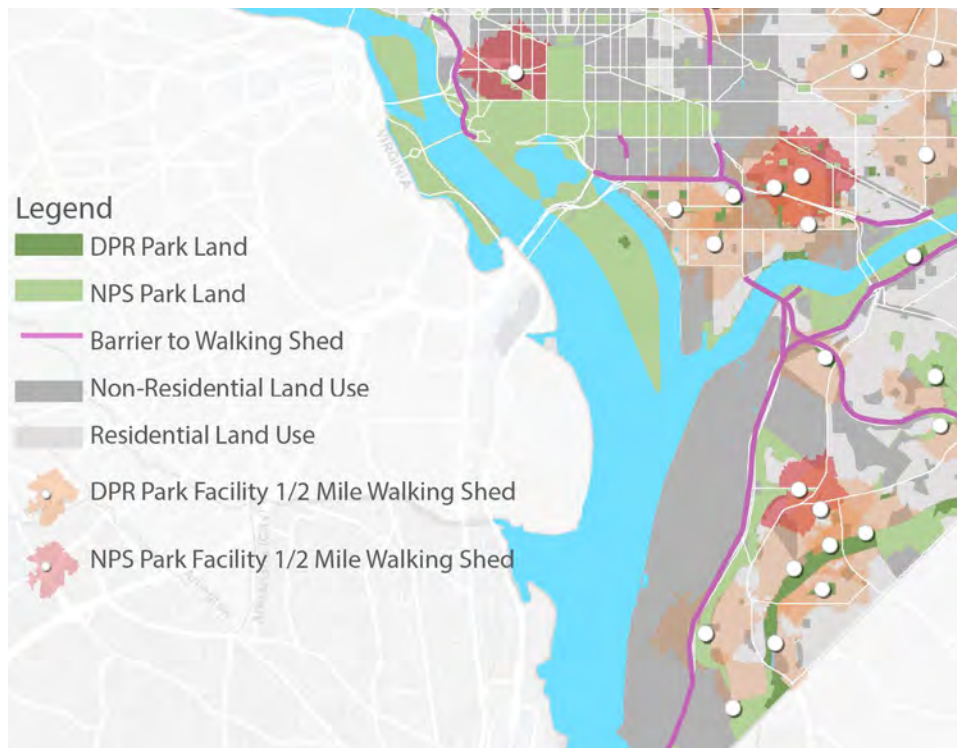


**Worn Paths through the Grass with Desire Lines Unmet by the Current Park Layout**

# BUILD ON NEIGHBORHOOD NEED

## *Not Many Play Opportunities in Capitol Hill*

Despite its significant residential density, Capitol Hill has only three playgrounds. Large parts of Capitol Hill have low or no access to play opportunities. Seward Square is well situated to expand play opportunities for a large swath of neighborhood residents.



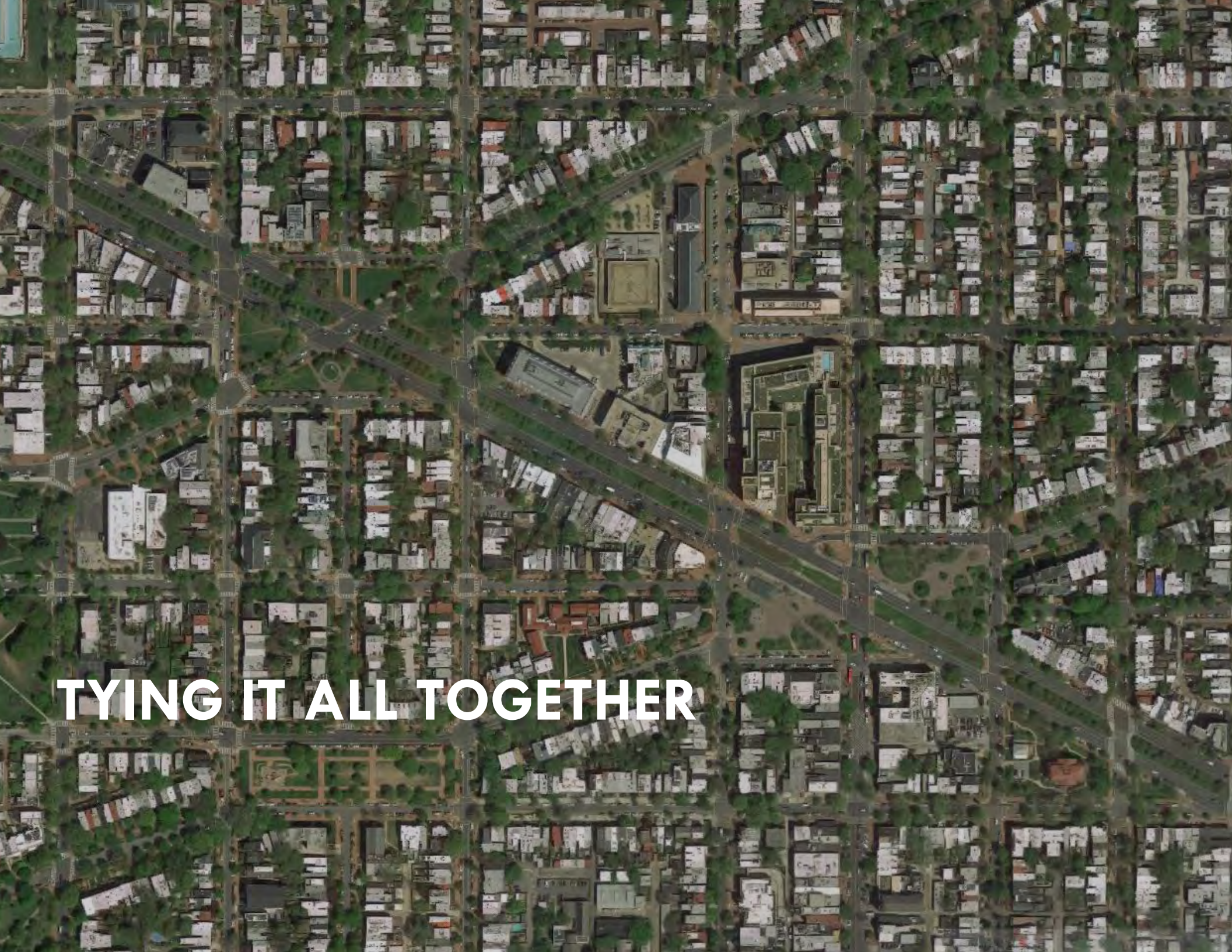
**Play Access Map of Southeast DC (PlayDC Master Plan)**



**Existing Seward Square**



**Vision of a Playable Seward Square**



**TYING IT ALL TOGETHER**

# FIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## 1 *Introduce Active Uses into Parks*

Capitol Hill has excellent access to open space and parks, but low access to play opportunities and recreational facilities. Pennsylvania Avenue SE has several large triangle parks that can be repositioned to better serve resident needs and attract more people to the avenue.



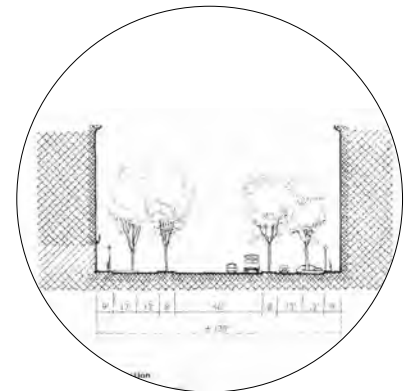
## 2 *Reposition Metro Plazas as Town Squares*

The metro stops along Pennsylvania avenue SE bring a significant number of people into the plazas surrounding them; but with more amenities and programming, these spaces could serve as key social meeting and gathering places for seasonal events and celebrations.



## 3 *Strengthen the Sense of Place for Park Spaces and Along the Corridor*

Pennsylvania Avenue SE is a wide grand street measuring 160 feet in width. Most of the buildings fronting it however, are two or three stories high, leading to a significant building height to street width ratio. This does not provide an adequate sense of enclosure and spacial definition for park spaces, which detracts from a well-defined sense of place.



# FIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## 4 *Create a Unified Landscape and Streetscape Experience*

Creating a more consistent tree canopy with healthy trees of a consistent shape will help unify the street and make for a more comfortable and enjoyable pedestrian experience. Creating a more unified landscape treatment for parks will help bring a greater sense of place to the avenue.



## 5 *Activate Edges*

Most parks along the avenue are surrounded by quiet residential buildings or commercial buildings with long blank facades. Active ground floor uses and engaging facades in buildings help attract more people to the street and its park spaces at all times of day.



# A BIG IDEA: A CONNECTED CORRIDOR



Pennsylvania Avenue SE's median is a grand gesture that unifies the street. Expanding the planting of pin oaks creates a graceful consistent tree canopy around Potomac metro station, and utilizes the historic alignment of the streetcar to introduce a central promenade and cycle track. As a result, along with building on the Public Life Study findings, the avenue can truly operate as a multi-modal street and become one of the greatest streets in the city.

# A BIG IDEA: A CONNECTED CORRIDOR



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## District of Columbia Office of Planning

[www.planning.dc.gov](http://www.planning.dc.gov)

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**For more information on Public Life initiatives in the District of Columbia, visit:**  
[planning.dc.gov/page/public-life-initiatives](http://planning.dc.gov/page/public-life-initiatives)  
or reach out to: [publiclife@dc.gov](mailto:publiclife@dc.gov)



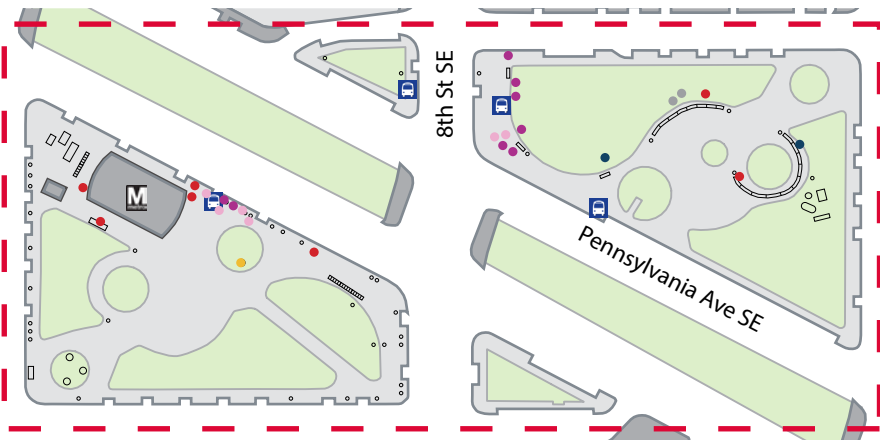


# APPENDIX | COLLECTED DATA

# APPENDIX: COLLECTED DATA

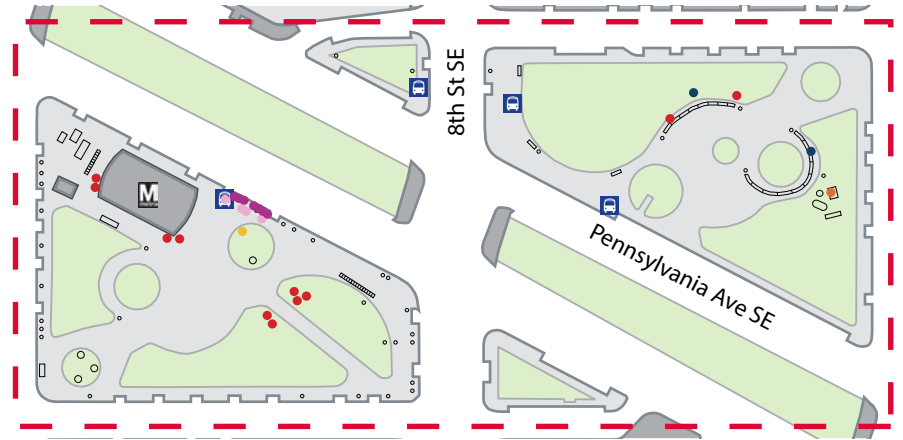
## Stationary Activity Scanning Market Park - June 28 (Weekday)

8 o'clock hour

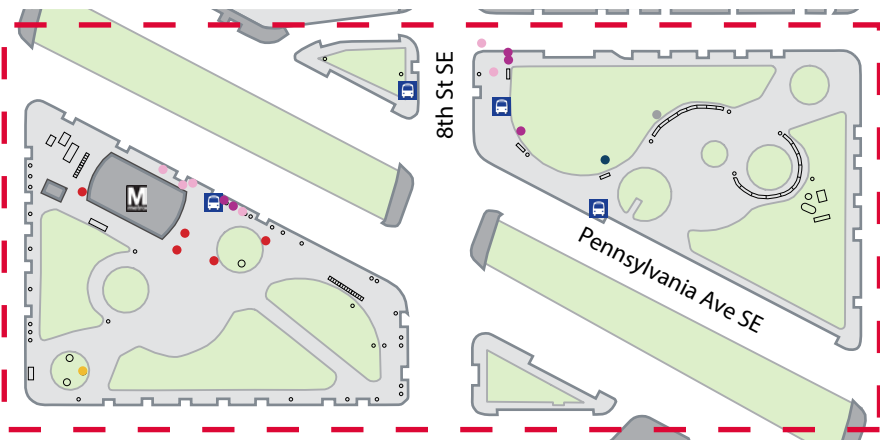


## Stationary Activity Scanning Market Park - June 28 (Weekday)

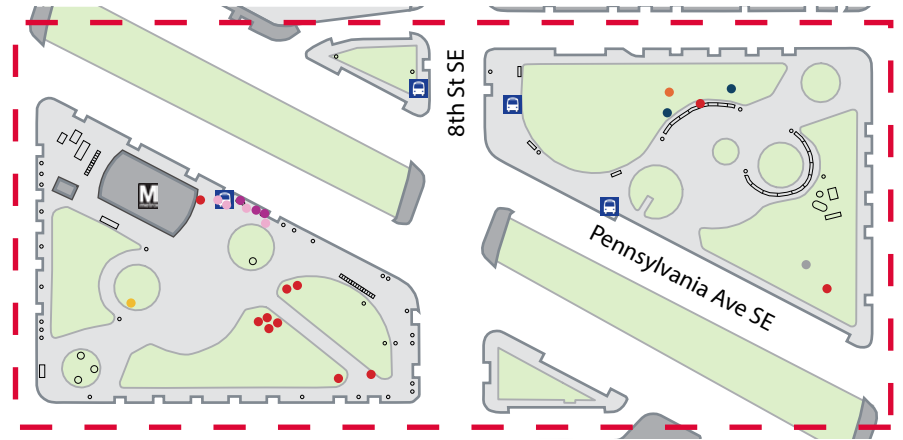
10 o'clock hour



9 o'clock hour



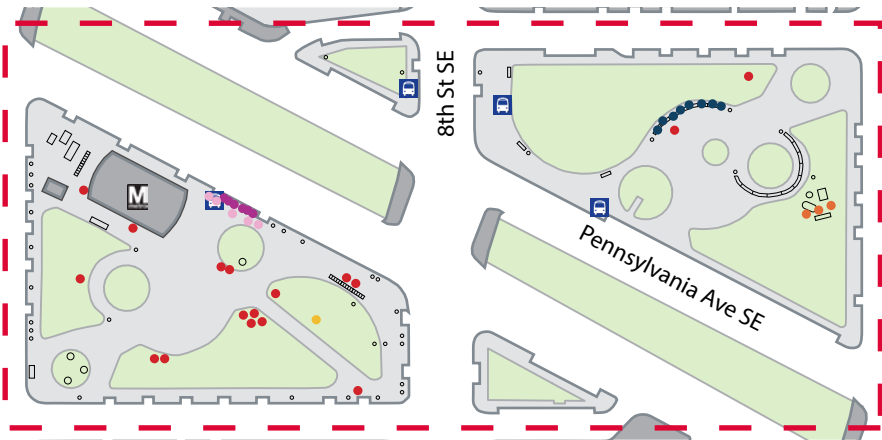
11 o'clock hour



# APPENDIX: COLLECTED DATA

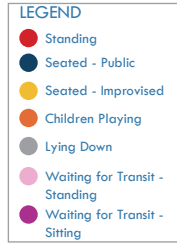
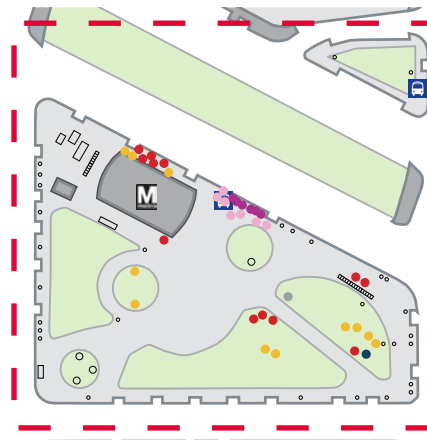
## Stationary Activity Scanning Market Park - June 28 (Weekday)

12 o'clock hour

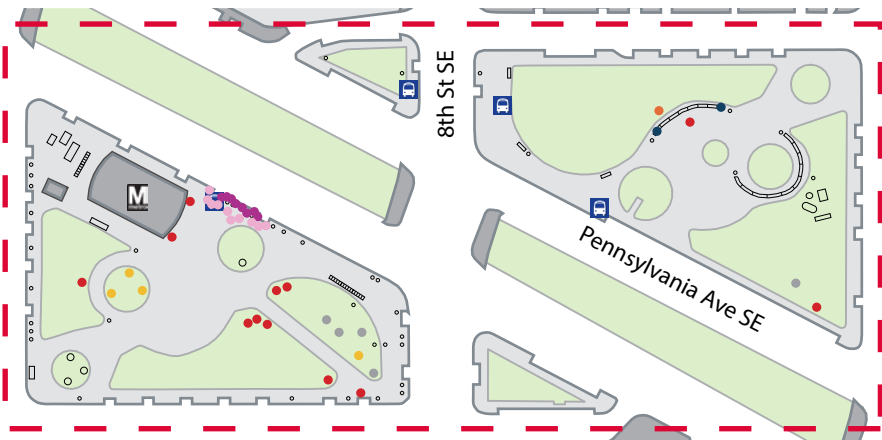


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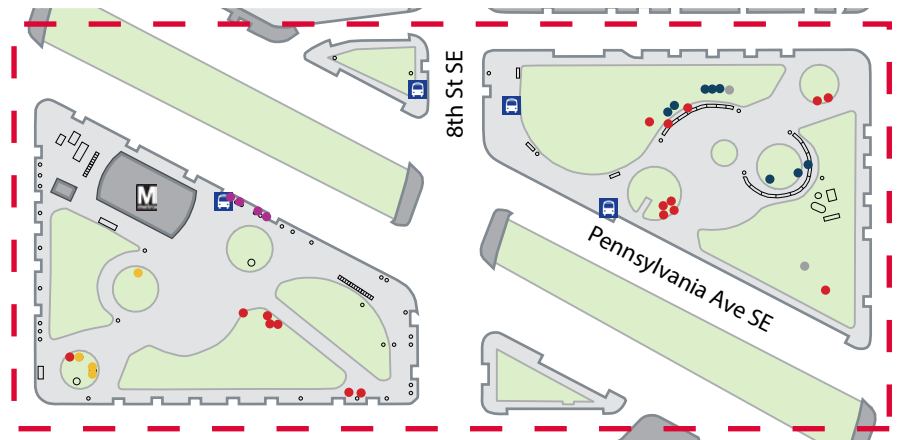
14 o'clock hour



13 o'clock hour



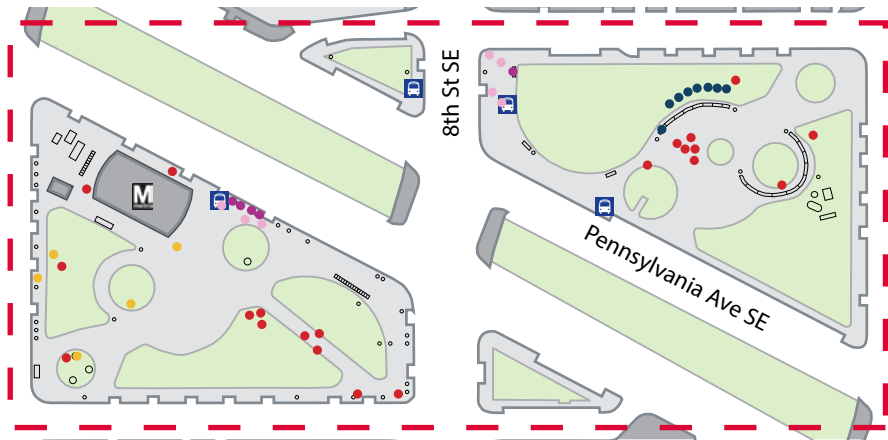
15 o'clock hour



# APPENDIX: COLLECTED DATA

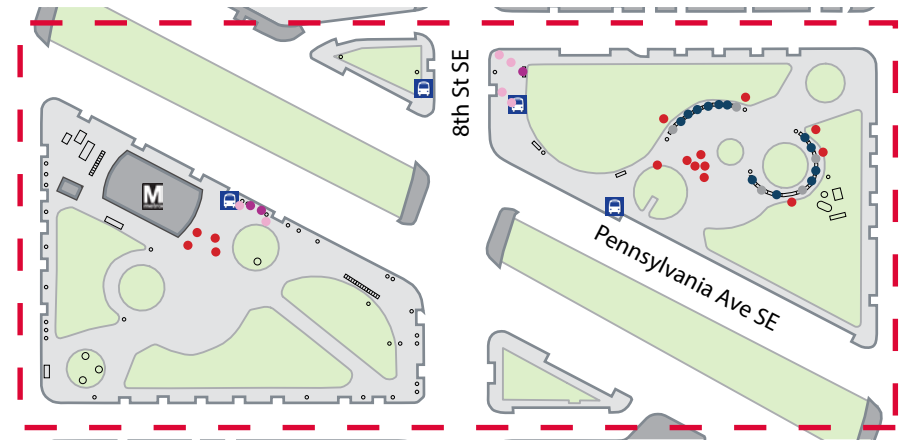
## Stationary Activity Scanning Market Park - June 28 (Weekday)

16 o'clock hour

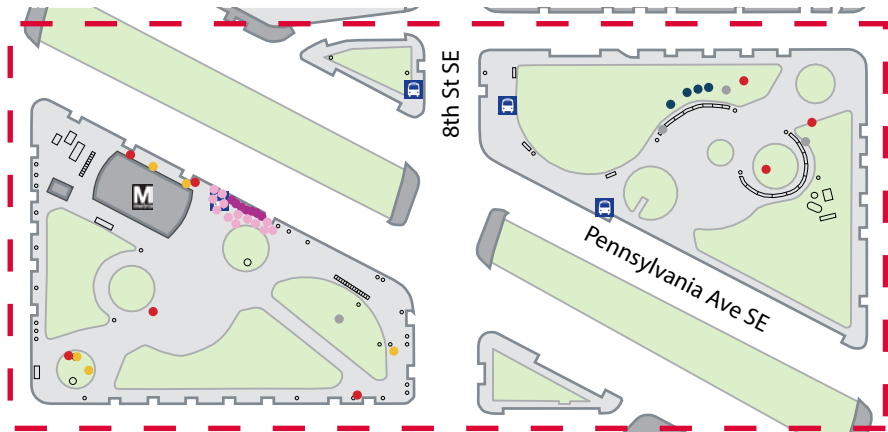


## Stationary Activity Scanning Market Park - June 28 (Weekday)

18 o'clock hour



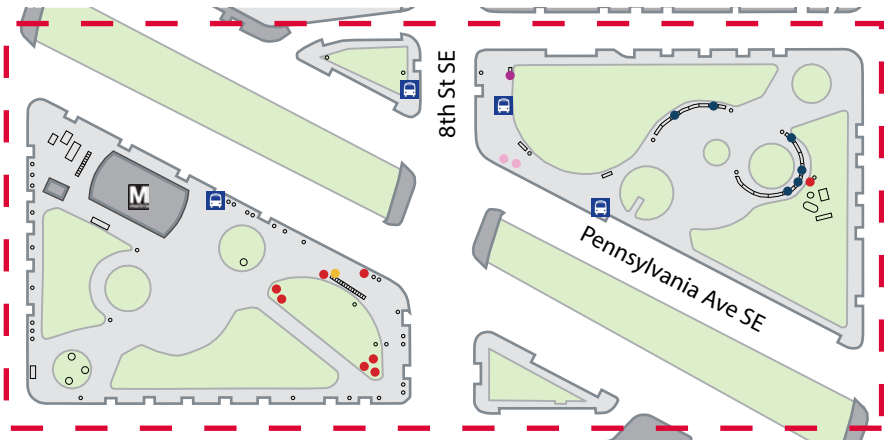
17 o'clock hour



# APPENDIX: COLLECTED DATA

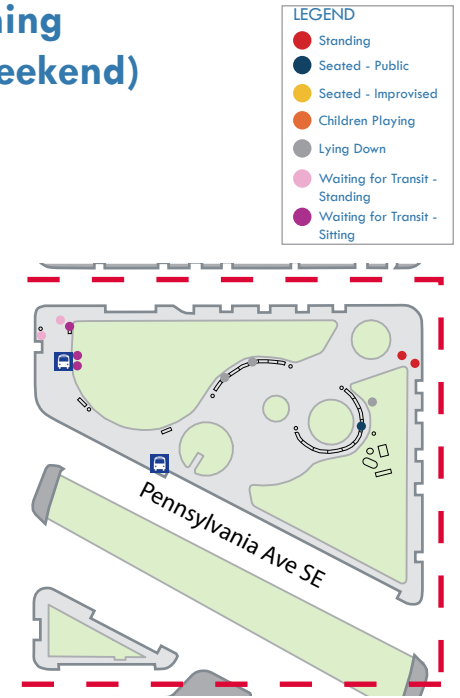
## Stationary Activity Scanning Market Park - July 14 (Weekend)

10 o'clock hour

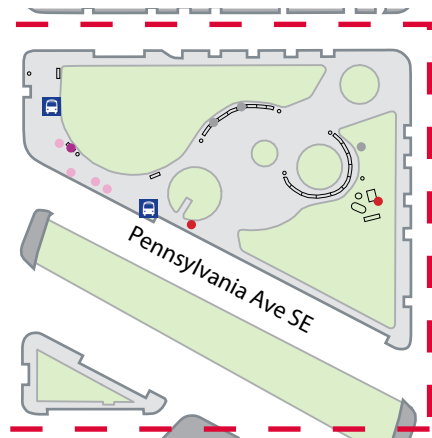


## Stationary Activity Scanning Market Park - July 14 (Weekend)

12 o'clock hour



11 o'clock hour



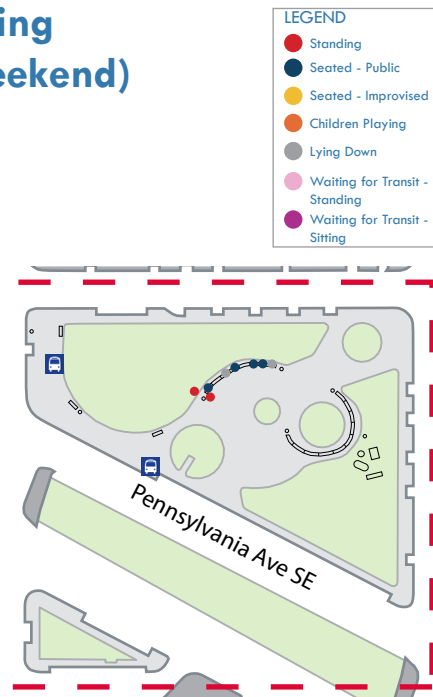
14 o'clock hour



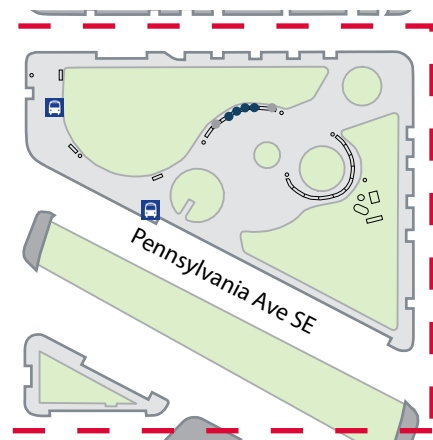
# APPENDIX: COLLECTED DATA

## Stationary Activity Scanning Market Park - July 14 (Weekend)

16 o'clock hour

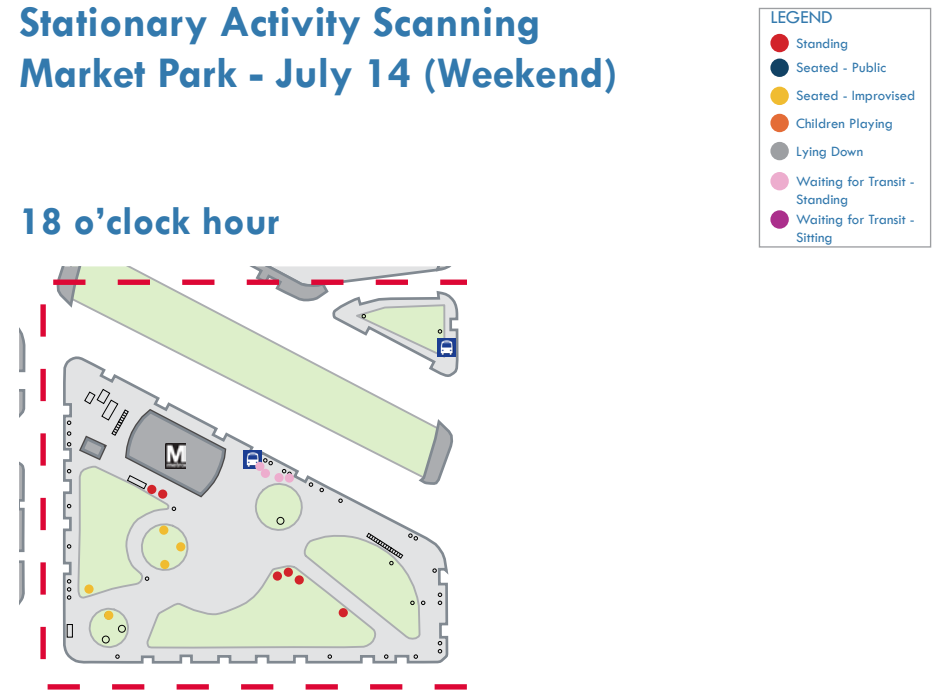


17 o'clock hour



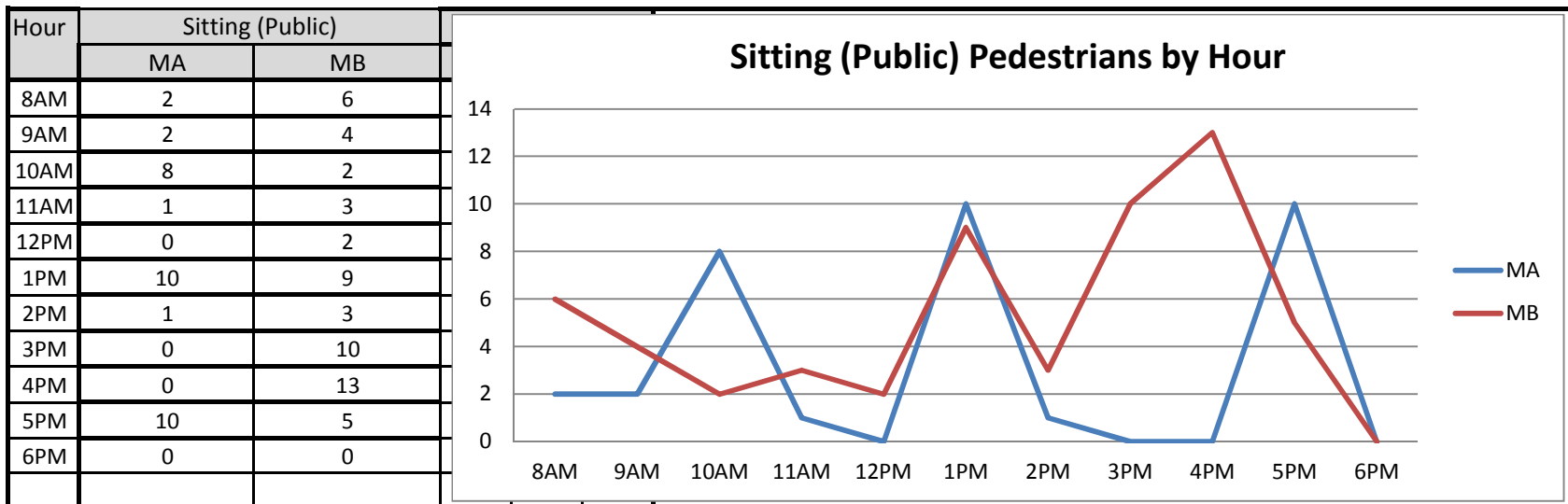
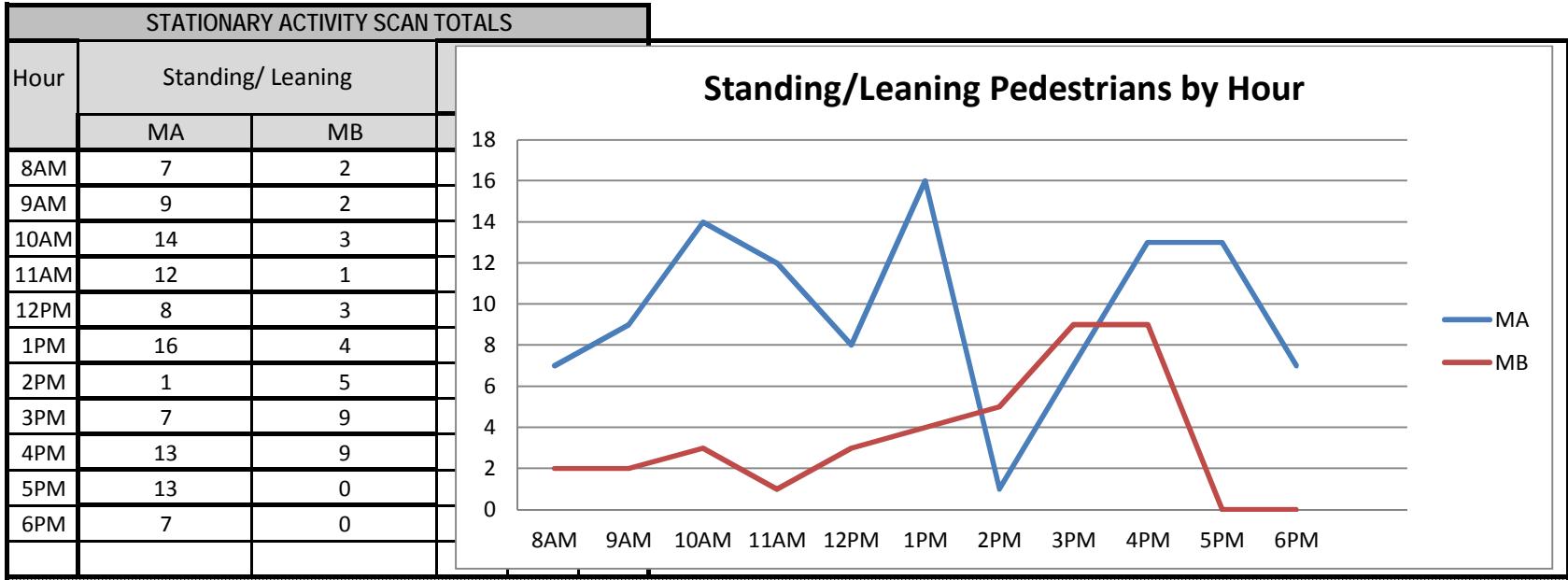
## Stationary Activity Scanning Market Park - July 14 (Weekend)

18 o'clock hour



# APPENDIX: COLLECTED DATA

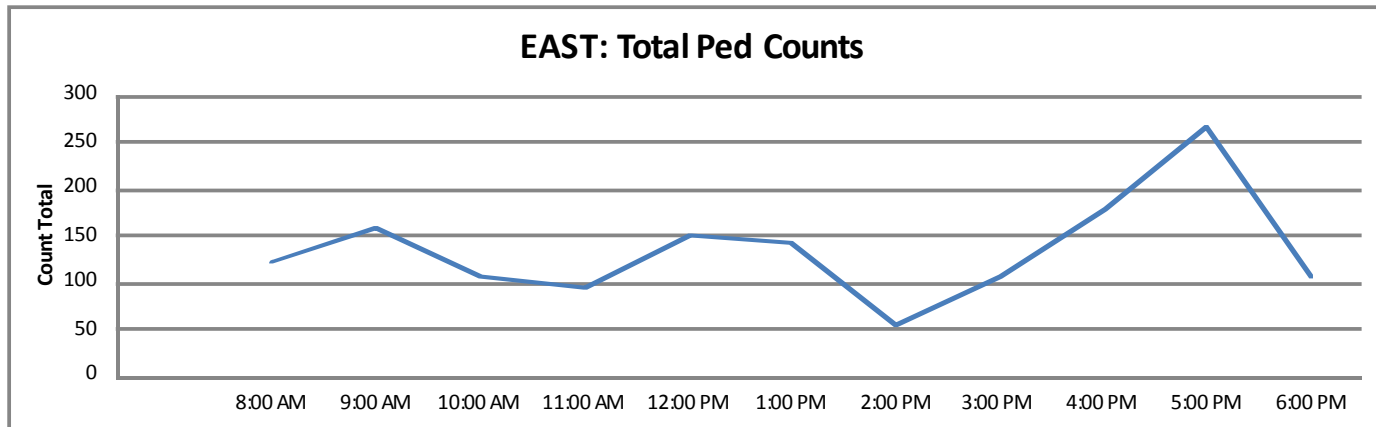
## Eastern Market Metro Park Weekday Survey (June 28)



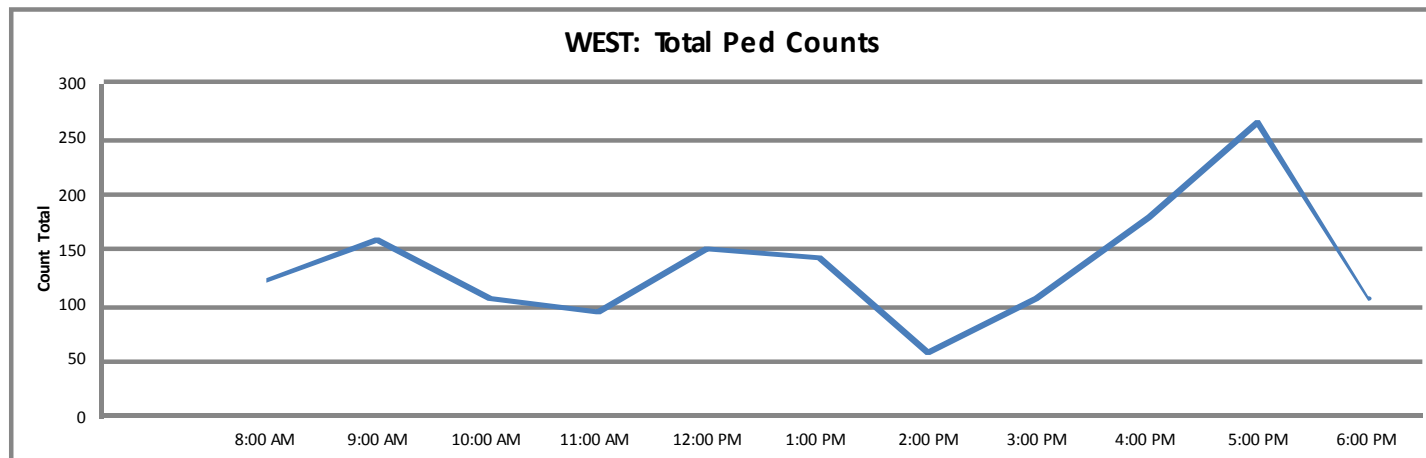
# APPENDIX: COLLECTED DATA

## Eastern Market Metro Park Weekday Survey (June 28)

Hour	Total
8:00 AM	124
9:00 AM	161
10:00 AM	107
11:00 AM	94
12:00 PM	153
1:00 PM	144
2:00 PM	57
3:00 PM	108
4:00 PM	180
5:00 PM	266
6:00 PM	108
	1502



Hour	Total
8:00 AM	125
9:00 AM	161
10:00 AM	75
11:00 AM	59
12:00 PM	115
1:00 PM	97
2:00 PM	13
3:00 PM	62
4:00 PM	104
5:00 PM	111
6:00 PM	35
	957

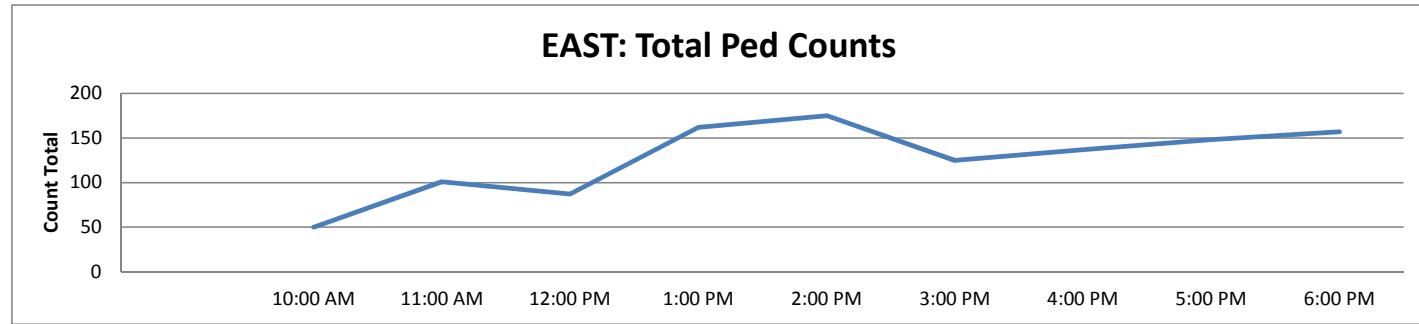




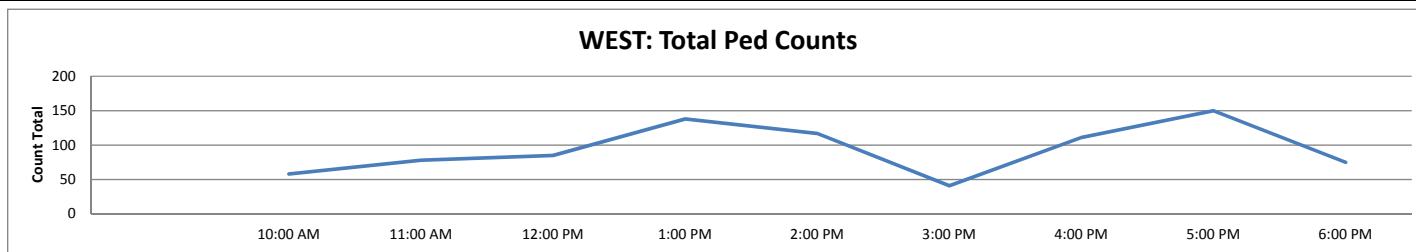
# APPENDIX: COLLECTED DATA

## Eastern Market Metro Park Weekday Survey (July 14)

Hour	Total
10:00 AM	50
11:00 AM	101
12:00 PM	87
1:00 PM	162
2:00 PM	175
3:00 PM	125
4:00 PM	137
5:00 PM	148
6:00 PM	157
	1142



Hour	Total
10:00 AM	58
11:00 AM	78
12:00 PM	85
1:00 PM	138
2:00 PM	117
3:00 PM	41
4:00 PM	111
5:00 PM	150
6:00 PM	75
	853



Hour	Total Ped Count	
	MA	MB
8AM	0	0
9AM	0	0
10AM	8	11
11AM	5	8
12PM	10	11
1PM	12	4
2PM	22	4
3PM	4	2
4PM	20	8
5PM	10	6
6PM	15	12
7PM	0	0

