



Town Branch Park did extensive community outreach to shape an inclusive plan. Photo: Courtesy of Town Branch Park

HIGH LINE NETWORK CASE STUDY

Asking Intentional Questions

Organization: Town Branch Park, Inc.

Park: [Town Branch Park](#)

Location: Lexington, KY

Infrastructure type: Parking Lot

Theme: Community Engagement

Project phase: Advocacy & Design

In Lexington, Kentucky, a park is slated to emerge from what was once a nine-acre parking lot. A diverse group of local leaders, the Town Branch Park Partners, was formed to make sure the project lives up to its mission to be the “community’s living room.” They set guiding principles in a 2019 inclusive park plan that specifies “recognizing the African American history and other under-told stories connected to the site” and “collectively imagining a park that contributes to the vitality of all people and fosters a sense of belonging.”

They didn't pluck these principles out of thin air. Instead, they relied on input from a community survey. In addition to connecting with the networks of staff, Board members, and park partners,

they reached out to historically underrepresented communities. They provided interpreter services in the top seven languages spoken in Lexington. They arranged in-person outreach for senior citizens and those experiencing homelessness. They placed paper copies of the survey at public library branches. They hosted events where participants could talk over a meal. They got 2,077 responses—double their target.

The survey aimed to gather input on what people enjoy about Lexington's parks—and what barriers make them feel unwelcome. The community was asked to select from a list of barriers including personal, emotional, and/or cultural safety concerns; lack of transportation; lack of diversity/representation; and lack of physical accessibility. The data the Park Partners gathered is informing Town Branch Park's design, operations, and programming. And the inclusive park plan helps Town Branch Park to hold themselves accountable to the community input they directly incorporated into their plan.

"Continuing community engagement in the evolving park design has been a multipronged effort focused on providing fun and meaningful ways to encourage a diversity of voices to provide input," says Executive Director Allison Lankford.

Related Resources:

[CFT Case Study: Asking Intentional Questions](#)

WHO WE ARE

Presented by the High Line, the High Line Network is a group of infrastructure reuse projects—and the people who help them come to life. As cities become denser and land for traditional parks becomes more scarce, residents are finding creative ways to bring greenspace to their neighborhoods. Projects in the High Line Network transform underutilized infrastructure into new urban landscapes. Redefining what a park can be, these hybrid spaces are also public squares, open-air museums, botanical gardens, social service organizations, walkways, transit corridors, and more. For more information about the High Line Network, please visit network.thehighline.org