

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Urban Parks: Qualities of Success and Application to Indianapolis Parks

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Urban parks are shared spaces, which are essential components of a healthy community. A successful urban park serves the intended users. To determine this success, it is necessary to define the focused mission and the targeted user group, and ultimately evaluate to what extent the park meets these parameters. This paper examines the history of parks, benefits they provide, and the subsequent planning, design, and management practices which foster successful city parks. Planning for a successful urban park should involve the diversity of potential users in order to determine appropriate and desired amenities and programming. Natural scenery, visibility for safety, recreational space, and walking paths are just a few of the qualities park planners must integrate in order to provide the most sought-after area. To measure how well the researched attributes contribute to the success of an urban park, I will survey three Indianapolis, Indiana neighborhood parks. Survey criteria include user activity, lighting and visibility, and recreational spaces. The park observation and documentation illustrates how attributes enhance or discourage successful use.