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SWA Designs Pacific Plaza, the First of Four New Parks in Downtown Dallas



Dallas, TX (April 4, 2017) - “This site has been a park-in-waiting for a long time!” says SWA Dallas Managing Principal Chuck McDaniel, referring to a downtown parking lot that’s been in place since 1921. The firm’s involvement with the 3.2-acre park began in 2012, when it generated the idea for a successful “land swap” between the City of Dallas and the developer of the adjacent One Dallas Center. After being selected to design Pacific Plaza in early 2016, McDaniel and his team jumpstarted their design process by holding two public “envisioning” sessions, then crafted the park based on their findings. The main elements people said they wanted were water, nature, structure, and social connectivity.

The new neighborhood park will deliver on those requests and more, employing a series of curvilinear paths that circle a vast acre of open space and meander through an allee of shade trees that soften the edges of the site and buffer the street activity. A halo-shaped pavilion dominates the southwest corner while a large grove of mature, healthy live oaks from the existing Aston Park defines the southeastern section, providing scale and ample shade and mitigating the heat-island effect. Along the western and northern sides is a dramatic stone seat wall called the “thread,” stretching 670 linear feet and stitching together the various spaces. The park will feature native/regionally adapted low-water use vegetation. Strategic programming of amenities and uses will foster a supportive environment for nearby businesses and residents, and long term maintenance and management plans will be developed in conjunction with the design to ensure longevity and a successful future for the park.

"Everyone associated with Parks for Downtown Dallas is excited by the prospect of commencing work on Pacific Plaza, the first of four priority park projects recommended in the 2013 Update of the Downtown Parks Master Plan," said Robert W. Decherd, chairman of Parks for Downtown Dallas. One hundred percent of the construction costs will be funded by his group. HKS Architects, the lead occupant of One Dallas Center, whose Dallas headquarters opens onto the park, has also made a generous donation. Construction on Pacific Plaza will begin in early 2018 and is expected to continue for 12 to 18 months.

"Quality 'green space' is an asset wherever it is found," says McDaniel. "During the next few years, there will be a chain of parks throughout downtown Dallas that will work together to cool the air, enhance the aesthetics of our city and make downtown an even more livable and walkable place."

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About SWA

SWA plans and designs healthy, inspiring outdoor spaces throughout the world. The firm's purpose is to help clients create places that are at once ecologically resilient, aesthetically compelling, and socially beneficial. With more than 200 professionals throughout its seven studios worldwide, SWA offers clients both a deep bench of talent and experience as well as the energy, personal commitment, and responsiveness typical in smaller firms. SWA was founded nearly six decades ago and has contributed to more than 800 award-winning projects in 60 countries.

SWA opened its Dallas studio in 1985. The Four Seasons Resort and Club, ExxonMobil Headquarters, Deloitte University, Williams Square, Griggs Park and the Katy Trail are a few of the studio's many Dallas-area projects.

www.swagroup.com.

For more information, contact SWA Communications Manager Julie Eakin: jeakin@swagroup.com