Urban Parks, Plazas, and Streetscapes

The parks and plazas of our cities, and even the streetscape corridors, are welcome respite from the density and hard surfaces of the built urban environment, and are often the only places with plants, greenery, and a hint of nature. Urban parks, plazas, and streetscapes require a skillset unique to the urban environment in which they are located. Design must address and accommodate pedestrian circulation and desire lines; absent this, parks develop into a network of “cow paths” or become entirely and unintentionally paved plazas. Plant specification requires special attention to address the constraints of what are often shady and windy sites. The foundation must be especially well prepared, so that the growing environment isn’t poorly drained compacted soils or urban fill, but instead, consists of a blended planting soil that takes account of soil physical structure, chemistry, and drainage. In addition to the constraints on planting, we believe that urban parks, plazas, and streetscapes should be approached from a subjective perspective, where the designer asks what a person’s experience should be in a space and how best to accommodate a good experience from a user’s perspective. This includes not only provision of the requisite amenities such as seating, but also consideration of wind screening, shade structures, as well as seating in sun pockets and inviting microclimates, spatial enclosure, and connection with the adjacent or surrounding streetscape and the larger environment. Wolff Landscape Architecture, Inc. has the project experience and qualified personnel to be able to address the challenges of designing, documenting, and construction of successful urban projects. A representative list of our projects follows:

BMO Harris Park, Chicago, Illinois, 2021
Riverside Investment & Development Company, Goettsch Partners, BMO Harris

700 at the River District Master Plan (2017) and Phase I (2020), Chicago, Illinois
Riverside Investment & Development Company, Goettsch Partners

Pinecrest, Orange Village, Ohio, 2018
CallisonRTKL, Fairmount Properties

150 North Riverside Plaza, Chicago, Illinois, 2016
Riverside Investment & Development Company, Goettsch Partners

590 West Madison Pocket Park, Chicago, Illinois, 2016
Third Millennium Group, Jones Lang LaSalle

Wolff Point West Tower, Chicago, Illinois, 2015
Hines, Magellan Development Group LLC, bKL Architecture LLC, Pelli Clarke Pelli

Reit Research & Management, Goettsch Partners

Division Street Enhancements, Melrose Park, Illinois, 2012
Village of Melrose Park, Hancock Engineering

Village of Bellwood
300 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois, 2009
Hines, Pickard Chilton Architects, Inc.

Lincolnshire Corridor and Entry Planning, Lincolnshire, Illinois, 2008
Village of Lincolnshire

Chicago Police Memorial Foundation, Chicago Park District

Halsted Street (Roosevelt Road to 16th Street), Chicago, Illinois, 2004
South Campus Development Team, Chicago Dept. of Transportation, Wight & Company

Kingsbury Park (Chicago Ave., Kingsbury, Larrabee, Hobbie streets), Chicago, Illinois, 2003
Centrum Properties

Irving Park Road (California Avenue to Melvina Street), Chicago, Illinois, 2003
Chicago Department of Transportation, Wight & Company

Lake Street Corridor Study and West Entry, River Forest, Illinois, 2003
Village of River Forest

Dearborn Street and LaSalle Street Streetscapes, Chicago, Illinois, 2000
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Chicago Department of Transportation

Chicago Gateway Green Expressway Partnership, Chicago, Illinois, 2000
Chicago Gateway Green Committee

Erie Terraces, Chicago, Illinois, 1998
Department of Planning and Development, Chicago Department of Transportation

Randolph Street Market Revitalization, Chicago, Illinois, 1996
CTE Engineers, Inc., Chicago Department of Transportation

State Street Renovation, Chicago, Illinois, 1996
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Chicago Department of Transportation

Donald J. DePorter Gateway, Chicago, Illinois, 1996
Chicago Gateway Green Committee