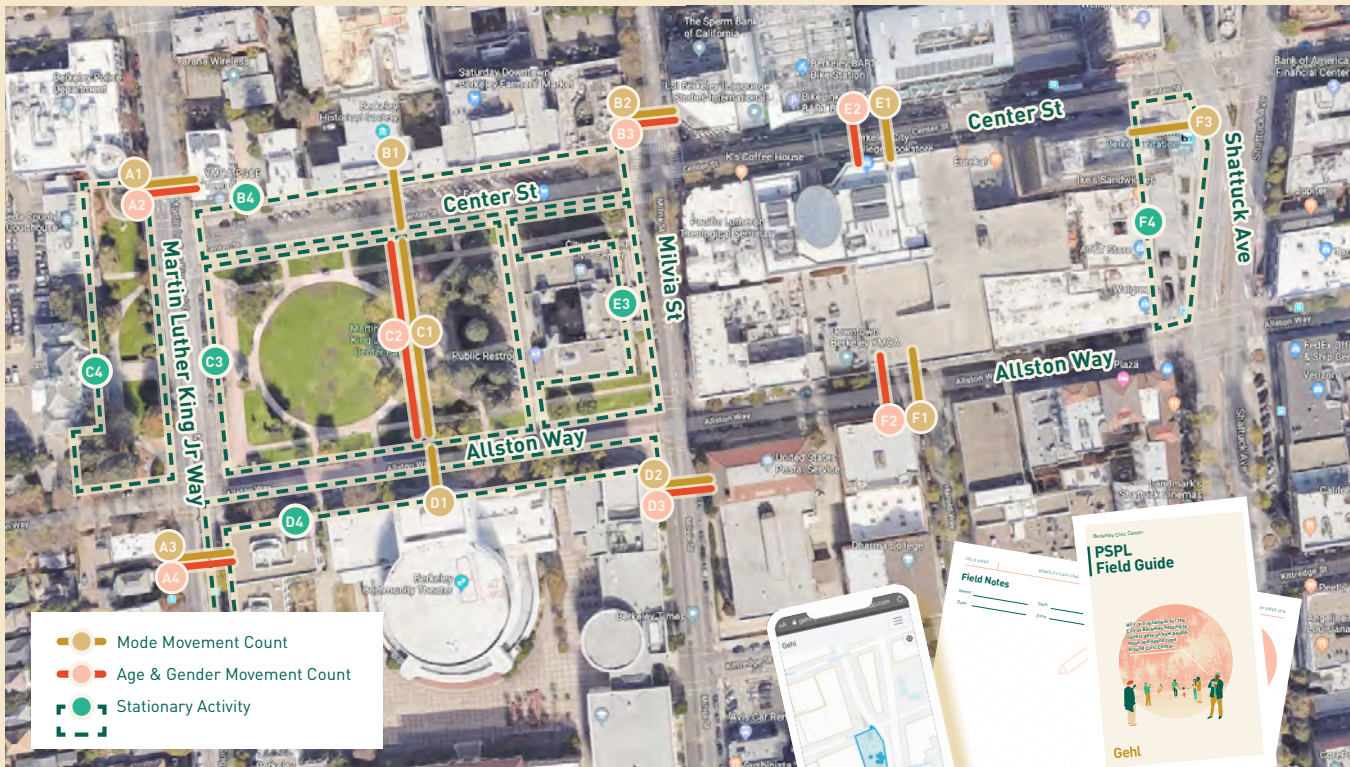




The Berkeley Public Space, Public Life Survey was conducted in October 2019. The survey occurred over the course of a weekday (October 15) and weekend (October 19) and enlisted the help of 21 volunteers including local residents and university students, who surveyed on site alongside Gehl team members.

↑ Survey Volunteers



↑ Public Space, Public Life Survey
Survey locations, volunteer field guide
and digital data collection platform

Public Space, Public Life Key Findings

Overall, Civic Center isn't performing so well ...

1 Civic Center is not in the center, it's on the sidelines

2 Civic Center is not a destination

3 Civic Center does not attract

4 During Farmers' Markets, there's not much spillover into the park

5 There aren't many park activities in Civic Center Park

6 A few dominant activities negatively impact the perception of safety

BUT, the right ingredients are there ...

7

Civic Center is surrounded by a high density of life and a legacy of gathering

9

With the right invitations people do want to spend time here

8

Civic Center is surrounded by public buildings awaiting their next act

10

Civic Center is a multi-generational space

1 Civic Center is not in the center, it's on the sidelines

↓ UC Berkeley Campus Map
Civic Center Park just barely makes it onto UC Berkeley's map

People aren't choosing Civic Center

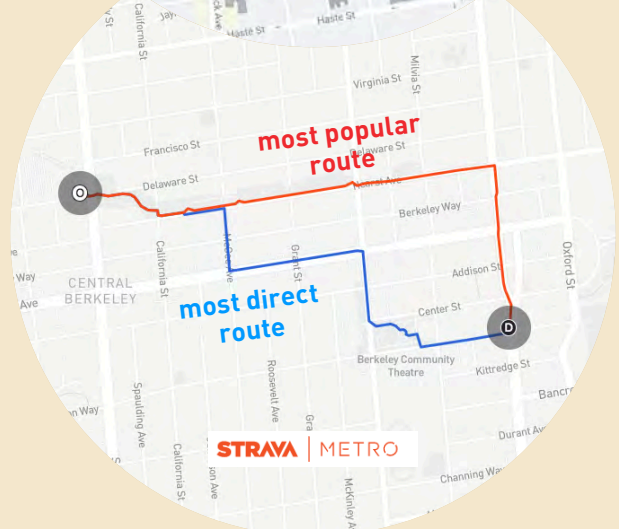
Despite the proximity to the downtown commercial core, UC Berkeley, and other major destinations, people aren't moving through Civic Center.

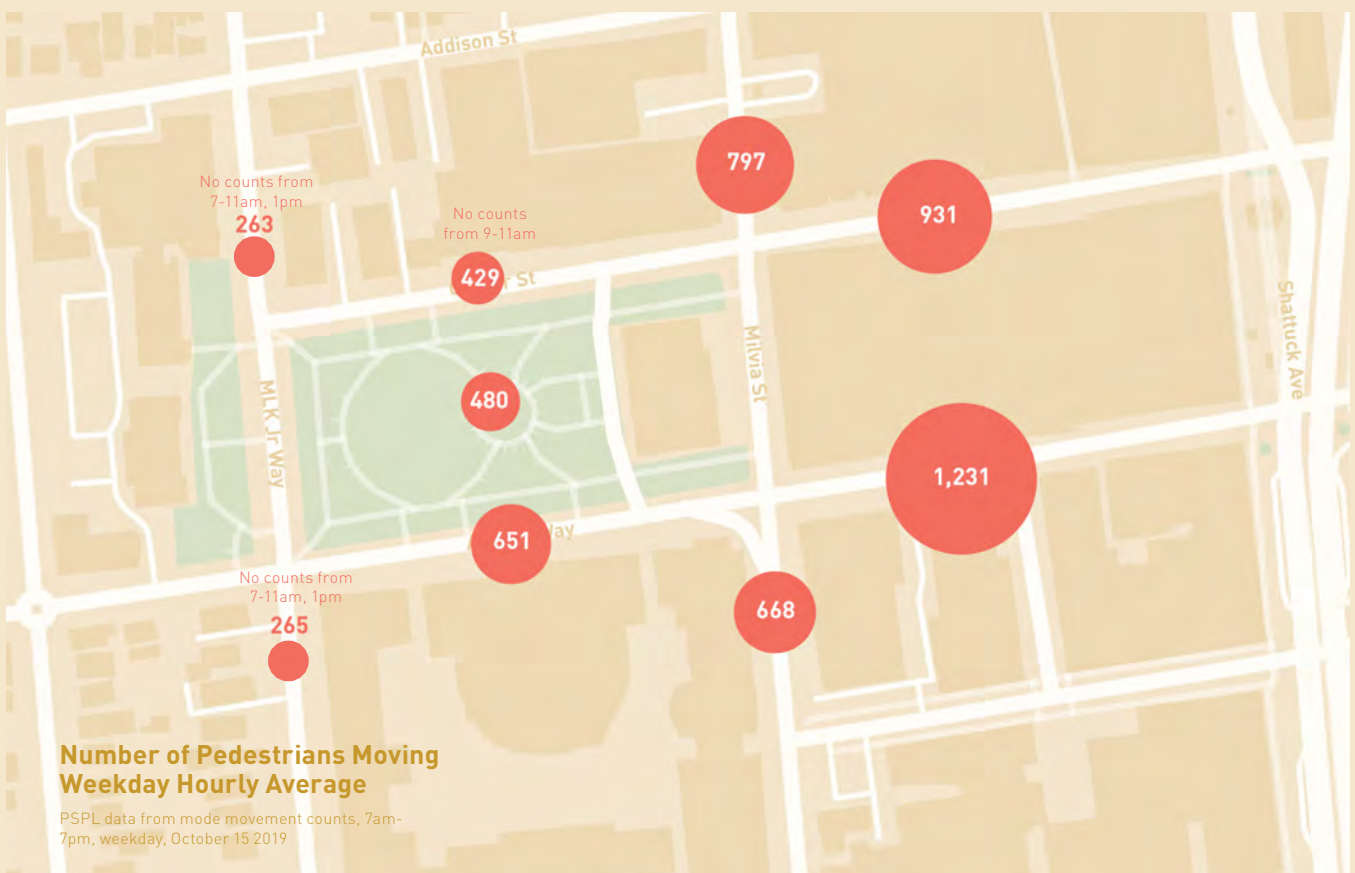
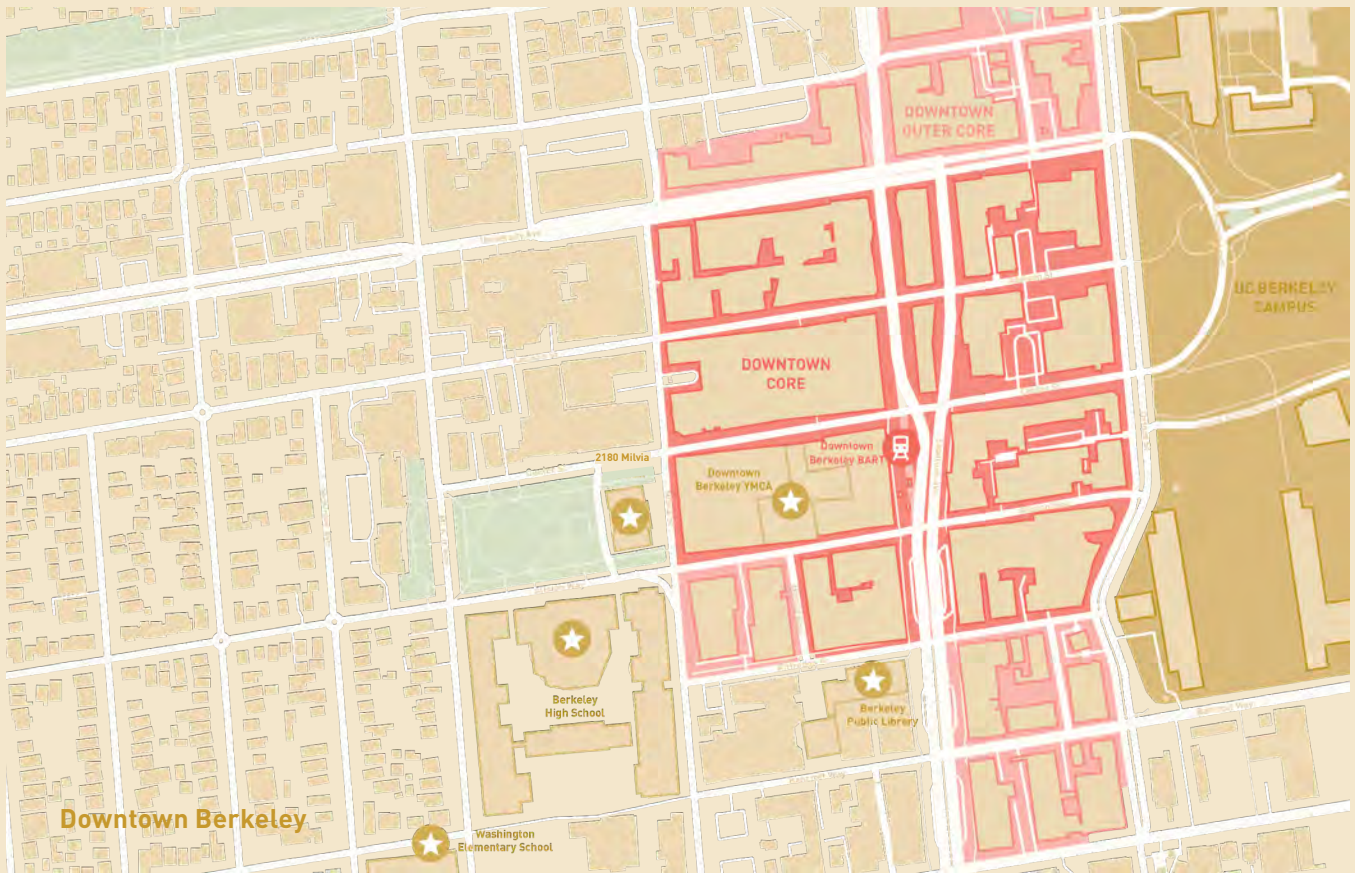


Direct vs. Popular Routes, Strava* Metro Data →

The Strava community chooses running routes that avoid Civic Center Park, even when it's the most direct route.

*Strava is a social fitness network, that is primarily used to track cycling and running exercises, using GPS data.

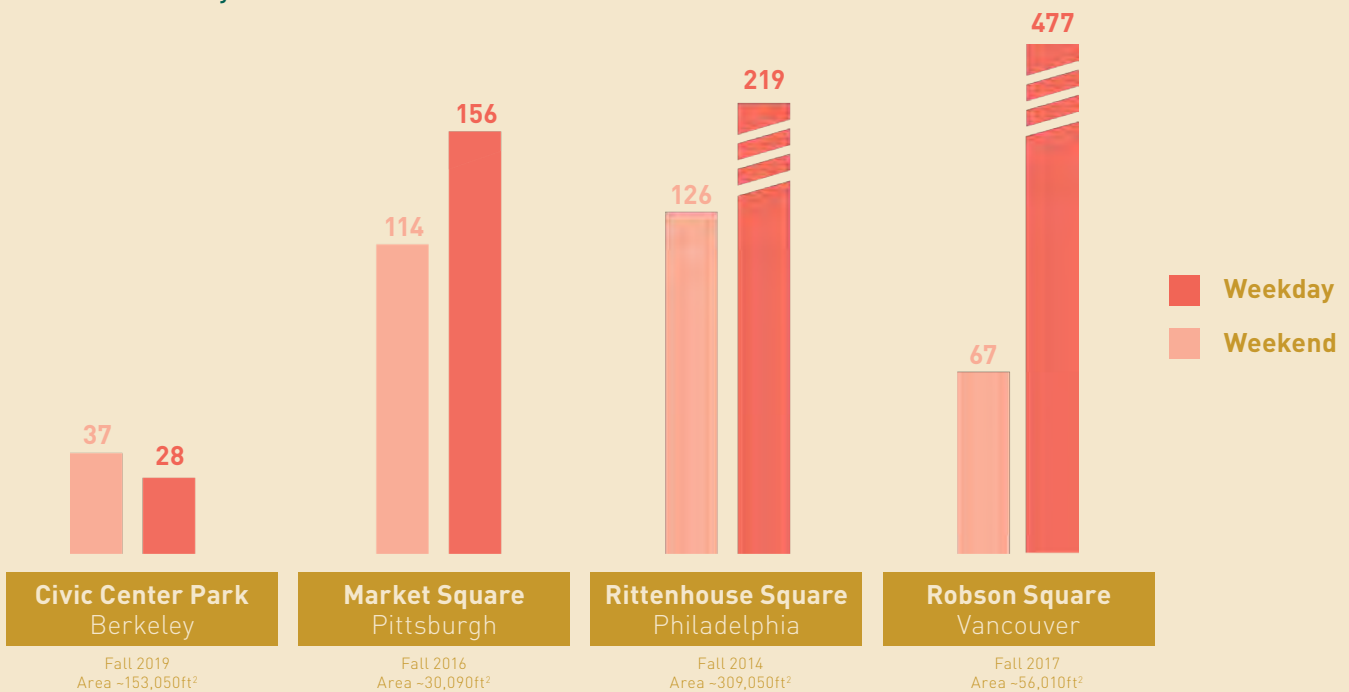




2 Civic Center is not a destination

People aren't choosing to spend time in Civic Center

Civic Center Park isn't inviting people to spend time. Especially when compared to other civic spaces and public squares, Berkeley's Civic Center is falling short of its potential to act as a center of public life and activity.



Stationary Activity, Hourly Average

PSPL data for the number of people staying in MLK Jr. Park from Stationary Mapping Activity, 7am-7pm, weekday + weekend, October 15 + 19 2019



3 Civic Center does not attract

Monumental buildings give their backs to the park

Several buildings around the edge of Civic Center have inactive facades and treat the park as their 'back of house' with blank walls, loading entrances and exit doors facing the public space.



2180 Milvia

With its entrance on Milvia St, 2180 gives its back to the park



Berkeley Community Theater

The facade facing the park is a blank wall with a service entry



4 During Farmers' Markets, there's not much spillover into the park

The influx of people during the Farmer's Market doesn't bring more people to Civic Center Park

The number of people who are spending time in Civic Center Park doesn't change much over the course of the day despite the increased number of people coming to Center Street for the Farmer's Market midday.



Farmer's Market
1,092
hourly moving
peak
weekend, 11am

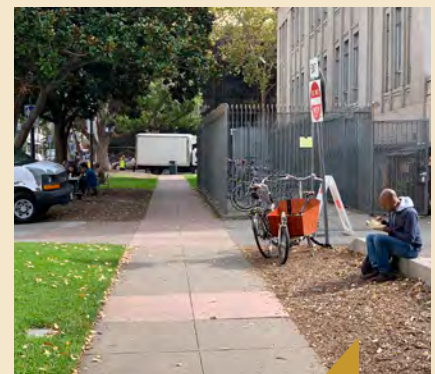
VS



BART Plaza
930
hourly moving
average
weekend

Farmer's Market vs. BART Plaza

At its peak hour, the flow of pedestrians moving through the Farmer's Market on Center Street is about the same as the hourly average for the BART plaza.



↑ Little spillover activity into the park from the Farmers Market

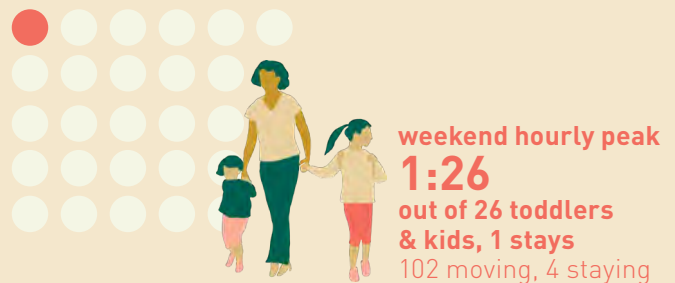
5 There aren't many park activities in Civic Center Park

People aren't engaged in many cultural or recreational activities

The activity breakdown of people in Civic Center shows that people aren't spending time playing, exercising or participating in cultural events or performances – all activities that you would expect to happen in a park!

There aren't many little kids spending time in the park

Civic Center Park isn't very sticky for toddlers and kids! Stickiness is the ratio of people moving through (pedestrian counts) per person spending time (stationary activities). The 'stickiness' ratio for toddlers and kids shows that this age group isn't choosing to spend time in Civic Center Park.



Weekend Stickiness, 0-4 & 5-14 year olds Civic Center Park

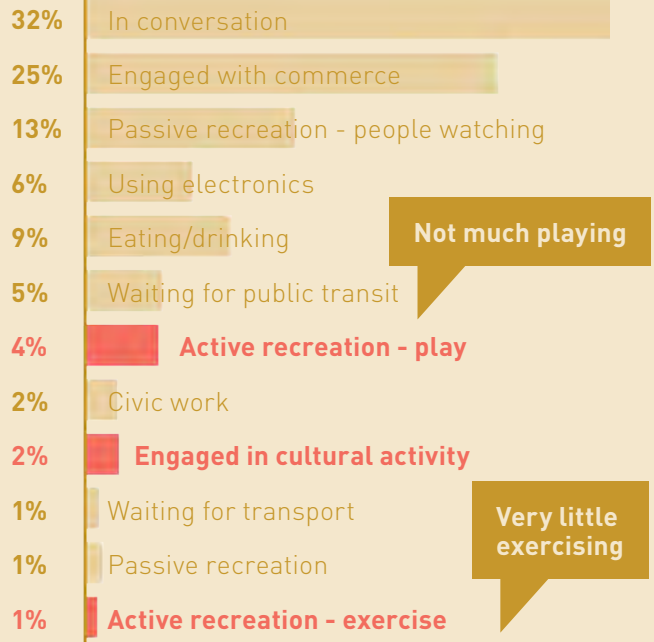
PSPL data from age and gender movement counts, 7am-7pm, weekend, October 19 2019 (peak for toddlers & kids at 3pm)

Stickiness is the ratio of people moving through (pedestrian counts) per person spending time (staying activities)

weekday



weekday



Stationary Activity Breakdown
Civic Center

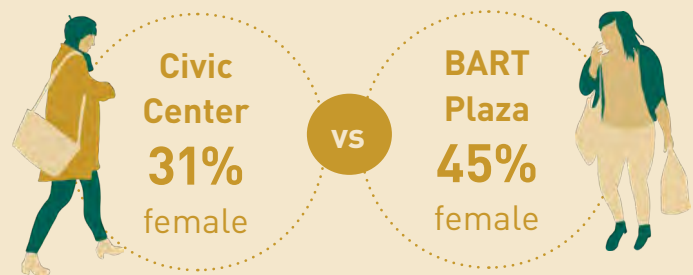
PSPL data from stationary mapping,
7am-7pm, overall, October 15 + 19 2019



6 A few dominant activities negatively impact the perception of safety

The gender breakdown in Civic Center Park is unbalanced

Generally, public spaces that have a balanced (or higher) ratio of women indicates that the space has a high perception of safety. In the park in Civic Center, the low ratio of women could indicate an underlying sense that the space doesn't feel safe or welcoming.



↑ Representation of Women

A higher percentage of women generally indicates a higher perception of safety. While the BART Plaza on Shattuck has a relatively balanced gender representation, fewer women spend time in the park.



↑ People Encamped/Sleeping

While not many in number (3 people), certain activities take up a lot of mental space.

PSPL data from stationary mapping, 7am - 7pm, OVERALL, October 15 + 19 2019



Only a few people around which impacts the perception of the park greatly

↑ Civic Center, Berkeley

↓ Patricia's Green, San Francisco



Patricia's Green in Hayes Valley, San Francisco, is an example of an open space that invites a range of uses and users, where one single activity doesn't dominate the space.

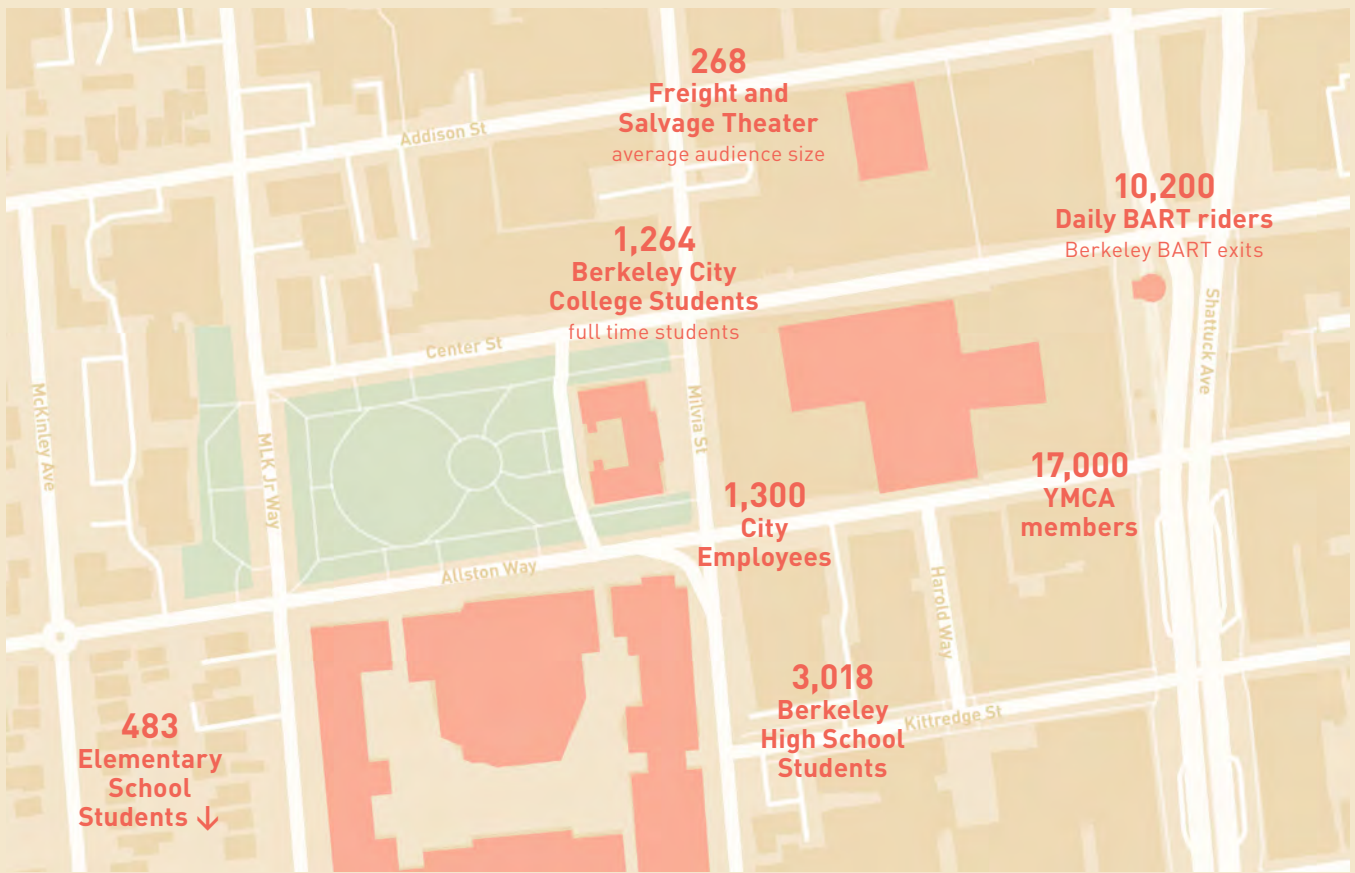
If there are many activities happening, a single activity (like 'encamped'), doesn't impact the space very much

So important, yet so difficult to achieve

7 Civic Center is surrounded by a high density of life + legacy of gathering

People are already around Civic Center

A challenge for any public space is attracting people to the area but in the case of Berkeley's Civic Center, the park is already surrounded by numerous institutions and downtown destinations with high volumes of people.



↑ Berkeley High School



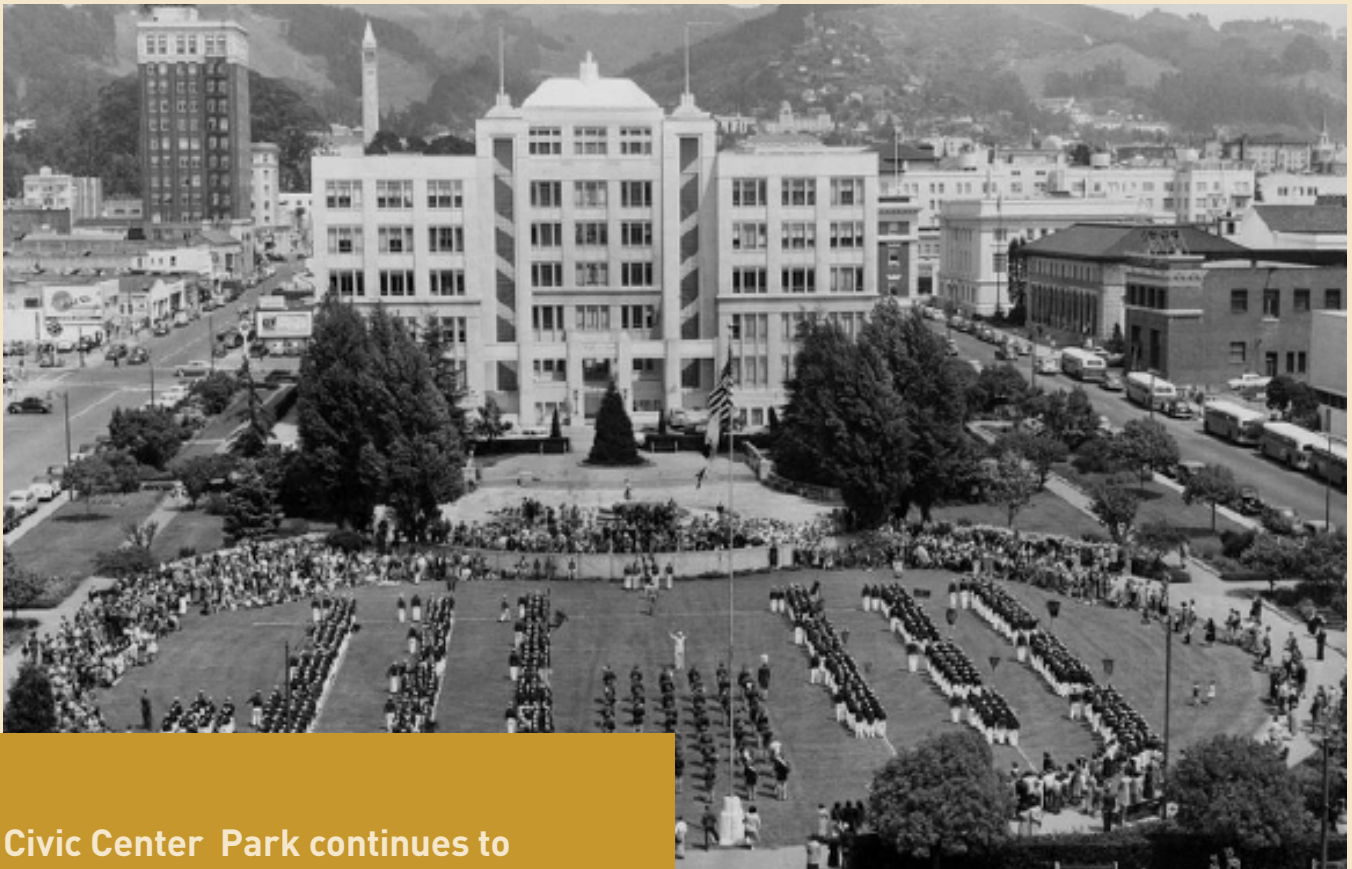
↑ Center Street



↑ YMCA



On Saturdays, the **Farmers' Market** attracts a large number of people and transforms Center Street.



Civic Center Park continues to work well as a gathering space for civic and festive special events.

↑ Civic Center Park¹, 1952



↑ Civic Center Park², 1971



↑ Civic Center Park², 1971

1 - Berkeley Historical Plaque Project Photo, BAHA Archives
 2 - Photos used with permission, courtesy of the Nick DeWolf Foundation © the Nick DeWolf Foundation



↑ PowWow, Oct 2019



↑ Old Time Music Festival, SEP 2019



↑ Old Time Music Festival, SEP 2019



↑ Half Marathon, 2019



↑ Black Lives Matter Movement, JUN 2020

↑ Black Lives Matter Movement, JUN 2020

8 Civic Center is surrounded by public buildings awaiting their next act

The architecture is interesting and varied – lots of potential!

There are several public buildings surrounding Civic Center park that are architecturally very interesting and varied in character. A diverse cast of architectural characters frame the park, each with its own legacy and potential.