

WHAT MAKES A CITY GREAT?

Urbanites across the US agree on a few things: they want great food, they love waterfronts, and they value historical architecture. So, what do today’s planners and designers need to understand to shape a more satisfying and sustainable urban experience? Here is what residents from Boston, New York, Chicago, Austin, San Francisco, and Washington DC say they like and don’t like—and design insights on how we can make our cities better.

ACTIVITIES

OUT AND ABOUT



46%
of people will venture to a new part of a city to try out a new restaurant



And they love consumer activities: 56% of people enjoy shopping and going out to eat as their favorite city activity

DESIGN INSIGHT

Recognizing the powerful draw of food and beverage establishments, we can activate new or revitalized neighborhoods by incentivizing restaurants—and today’s hot mobile food scene.

ARCHITECTURE

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

36

PERCENT

of people believe a building’s history makes it iconic

54

PERCENT

would like to see their city invest more in renovating existing historical buildings to improve their city’s architecture

57

PERCENT

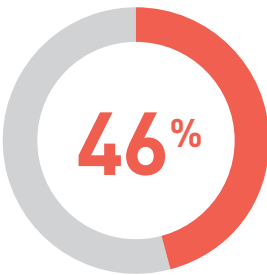
of people stop to admire historic features of a building

DESIGN INSIGHT

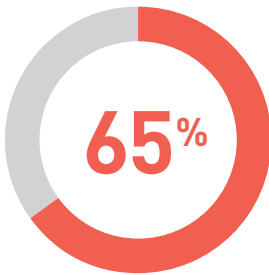
We can elevate contemporary architecture and people’s impression of it by creating buildings with character, detail, and human scale. New buildings that relate to the public realm also will be more successful.

PARKS + OPEN SPACE

THE GREAT OUTDOORS



46%
of people are looking for cities to invest more in community focused events and attractions like farmer’s markets, swap meets, and food trucks



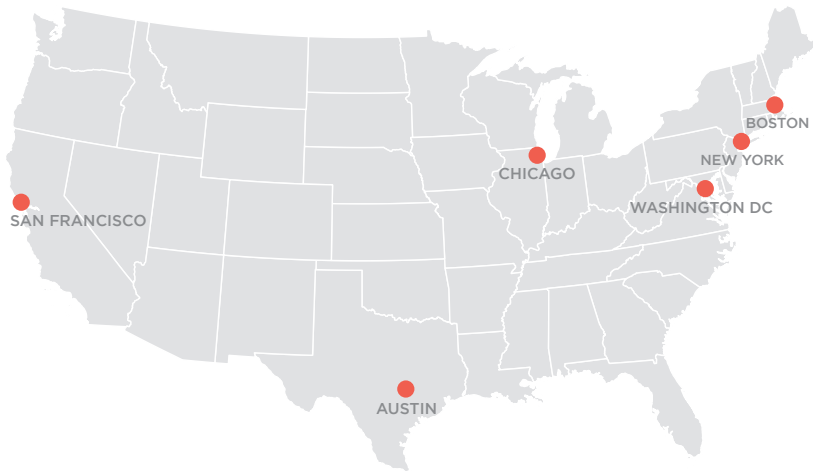
65%
of people’s most memorable experiences happen in a community park or on a street

DESIGN INSIGHT

Although most cities are already densely packed, we can transform existing underutilized space into new parks and other amenities. It takes design innovation and, often, engineering ingenuity, but these spaces ultimately provide unique and memorable outdoor experiences.

REGIONS

NOT ALL REGIONS THINK ALIKE



San Franciscans are most interested in buildings with unique designs or featured art (47%).

Austinites love their food trucks, farmer’s markets, and swap meets (53%).

Washington, DC residents are looking for more adventure! 44% would like to see more large parks that support both passive and adventurous activities.

New Yorkers are least likely to be enticed by a new restaurant (34%), but love their parks (42%).

Bostonians want more community-based activities, like farmer’s markets (51%). Bostonians are also most interested in buildings with history (63%).

Chicagoans are most satisfied with the city’s cultural offerings (80%), but not as satisfied with its people (66%).

WHILE WE MAY BE IN THE “CENTURY OF THE CITY” THERE IS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE TO IMPROVE URBAN LIFE THROUGH PLANNING AND DESIGN INNOVATION.

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