Paris, France
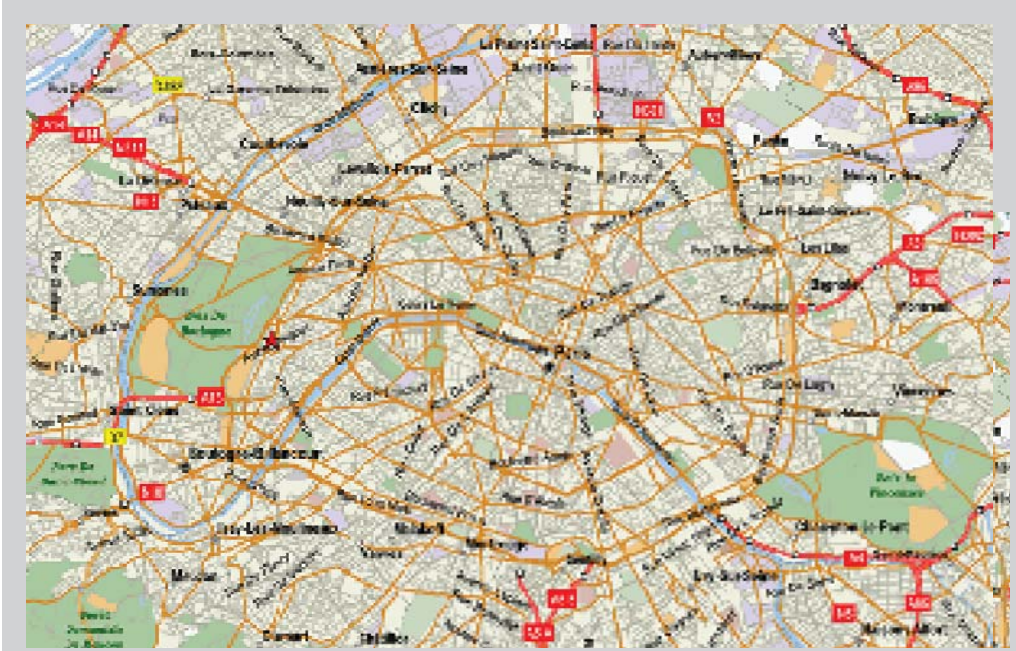
Tauschia Copeland

City of Paris
 Green space showing the major parks

(Mapquest)

Paris has one of the richest histories of any city that is still considered an important hub for international commerce. The city has not always been the tourist attraction that it is today. It was in the 1850s when the city began its transformation into the city that it is today. One of the main reasons why the city went through this transformation was because the windy medieval streets made the city a dirty, dark and unsanitary place. The park system within Paris today is not necessarily a system, but rather, a rehabilitation effort to make Paris a more enjoyable, breathable city. Though the parks, gardens and forests within the city limits today were meant to air out the city, the French traditions of elaborate gardens and landscaping still hold true with every green space within the city limits. There are three distinct types of official green space in Paris, though many small neighborhood parks are not counted among the city's official parks. They are parks, gardens and forests. The two forests on the NW and SE corners of the city have many activities within them such as: the floral park of Paris, the French national sports institute, a horse ranch, and even a XVI century castle. Parks in Paris are parks when they have a more natural look to the organization of the wildlife, and gardens contain more controled French garden patterns and landscaping. Paths through all of these places, even what is considered forest, are either paved and narrow, or wide and permeable. Since many of these parks are connecting offices to residents to commercial areas, paths are needed or the parks will not be used to get from one place to another. The other open space in Paris is made up of boulevards, plazas, courtyards, ect. Every public building has some type of open space in front of it creating meeting places and space for people to reside, as well as space for events such as concerts or markets. It is the grand boulevards that connect all of the landmarks in Paris that make the city such an easily navigated one. These boulevards do not have the purpose of connecting green space, but usually there are parks on either side and/or they eventually lead to some sort of open space whether it be the gardens in front of the Louvre, or the plazas in front of the governmental buildings.

Parc Montsouri

Known for its causeways and nautral scenary.

City Statistics

City Population:
2 125 800

City Area:
177 km2

Density Level:
12,000 / km2

Park Acreage:
37 official Parks

Governing bodies:
European Union
President of the Republic
Mayor of Paris

(pictureguide)

Context

  During the French Renaissance, Paris was considered one of the most dark, overgrown and unsanitary cities of Europe. The weather is poor, and the narrow, windy streets made it rather difficult to navigate. Then in 1858, Haussmann began to transform Paris into the city that we know today: grand tree lined boulevards, plazas and parks always within walking distance, and their infamous roundabouts to name a few of the things that one thinks of when Paris comes to mind.

        Below on this page, there is a diagram showing the open space recorded in 1962. As the diagram shows, these spaces are not connected to each other by any sort of main cauway. The open space in the form of plazas and landmarks are what Haussmann chose to connect visually and physically. Parks were a part of his plan to navitage a pedestrians to major landmarks, for eample, the park between La Place de la Concorde and Champs Elysee.

Open Space Map of Paris drawn in 1967
Atlas Published by the Mayors Office in Paris
Brown - public space
Orange - private space
Black - population dispersal

(Beaujeu-Garnier, Jacqueline. Atlas de Paris et de la région parisienne: Paris, 1967.)

Major Components

a. Connective corridors
Haussmann Blvds (tree lines, sidewalks)
pockets parks present as a part of walking path through the city
paths with permeable surfaces through city parks which connect neighborhoods

b. Anchors
2 main forests on NW and SE corners of the city
interior gardens with purposeful space meant for both tourists and residents
are instalations and historical refernces involved in every park.

c. Civic
Plazas and coutyards exists in front of the majority of the civic buildings open for public use.

Example of Haussman Boulevards

www.greatbuildings.com

The red lines on this map indicate the painted bike routes in Paris.

(paris.fr)

Though the city has not converted their roads to be more fitting for bike riders, it is still pedestrian, mass transit and auto friendly.

Funding and Planning Mechanisms

France is one of the more socialist countries in Europe and therefore, citizens are taxed for everything. After a certain amount of earnings, you can have up to 50% of your income taken for taxes. Funding parks and open space in France has come to the French with a bit more ease than Seattle and other American cities because parks and gardens are an important part of the French culture, not created as an aestheticly pleasing and healthy alternative to traditional city structures. Having said that, the agency that is in charge of insuring the protection of green and open spaces within Paris (L'Agence régionale des espaces verts d'Île-de-France created in 1975), is funded primarily from market based programs and donations.

The document in the column is the French equivalent to the US Growth Management Act which asked Washington cities to put together in the early 1990s. The logo underneath the booklet cover is the French green party who is publicly fighting this document's implementation for they feel as though the environment does not carry as much importance in their growth management as it should.

Initiatives

There is also an effort to get residents involved in caring for the open green spaces. The advertisement on the left is a way that the agency in charge of forest caretaking has tried to get youth involved the keeping their forests preserved.

Many Parisians, in fact surprisingly most that are French, take a month long vacation over the summer to leave their concrete surroundings and head for the coast. There are two things that have come out of this migration. Historically, it has simply greatly decreased traffic on the roads and passengers in the metro, but recently, Paris decided to take one of these lightly used roads and turn it into a beach for those Parisians that are still left to dwell in the city between July 15 and August 15th. The city took a road which runs along the Seine (during the auto-crazed years of Europe, most waterways were lined with roads on either side), brought in ton after ton of sand, a couple palm trees, and created a great open space in the middle of one of the most dense cities in the world for residents and tourists alike to enjoy
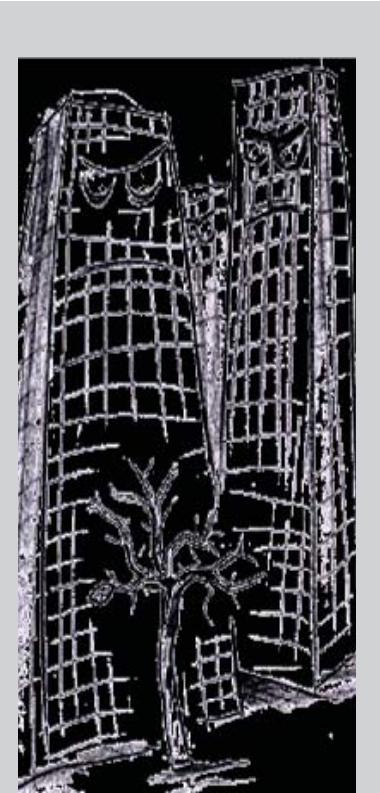
www.aev-iledefrance.fr

Lessons Learned

1) **Monumental Blvd connecting monumental structures**

2) **Not connecting people to green space but rather creating an enjoyable walk to the work place, the market, and for tourists.**

3) **The space in the parks has an evident purpose and accessibilities for those who wish to use that space for that purpose (concerts, flying kites or model airplanes)**

4) **The lower height restrictions make the park experience more natural for the buildings of the city are not seen while one resides in the interior of the park, even the small scale pocket parks.**

Paris Plage

www.parishotel.com

Resources:

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