This tour ties together several successful and award winning projects including the recently redesigned Marion Street, historic Mills and Scoville Parks, and Austin Gardens.

**Learning Objectives**
1. Learn about how connectivity between urban parks and urban streets plays a vital role in their success
2. Learn about redeveloping and constructing projects in a historic urban environment
3. Explore design challenges associated with redesigning historic spaces
4. Learn how the public process and an engaged community can shape the outcome of projects

**Field Session Co-Leaders:**

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Daniel Grove is a Principal at The Lakota Group in Chicago, addressing a wide range of urban planning, landscape architecture and design solutions, with a focus on community engagement and creative problem solving. Daniel has been with Lakota for 14 years and was the Project Landscape Architect for both phases of design and construction of the Marion Streetscape project.

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Phillip Hutchinson is a licensed landscape architect and an Associate Principal with Altamanu Inc in Chicago with a focus on urban parks and transportation projects. Altamanu has been involved in the master planning, design and construction of 12 parks for the Park District of Oak Park. Among these, Phillip directed the design and reconstruction of historic Mills Park in 2011 and Scoville Park in 2012.

**Scoville Park**

Purchased in 1912, Scoville Park was the first parcel of land purchased by the Park District of Oak Park. Originally designed by noted landscape architect Jens Jensen, the Park turned 100 years old in 2012. Scoville Park was named by the National Park Service to the National Register of Historic Places. The focal point of the park, the majestic World War I “Peace Triumphant” Monument statue, was unveiled on November 11, 1925 in the presence of General C.G. Dawes, Vice-President of the United States. As part of the Park District’s Capital Improvement Program, the Memorial was restored in 2009-2010 and a complete renovation of Scoville Park was completed in June 2013.
Austin Gardens

Henry W. Austin, Jr. donated the land in 1947 on the condition that it remains a public park bearing the Austin family name. The wildflower woodland habitat was planted in 1970 by the League of Women Voters. Since 1975, Austin Gardens has been used as a performance space by the Oak Park Festival Theatre. A Trust for Austin Gardens is held by the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation. The Park District of Oak Park is constructing a 2,100 square foot multi-use “Environmental Education Center” which will be host to children’s nature day camps, environmental education programs for adults and children and other community events.

Marion Street

Marion Street was converted to a pedestrian mall in the 1970s. Over the years the ‘Marion Mall,’ and its ability to attract and retain tenants, deteriorated while other blocks in the downtown thrived. To combat the decline, the Village prioritized the enhancement of Marion Street as a catalytic project that reopened it to vehicular traffic, with a European design and high end materials that would enable it to be closed for street festivals and sidewalk sales events, and include traffic-calming elements to ensure low traffic speeds and pedestrian safety. A second phase, south of the commuter rail line, was completed in 2011.

Mills Park

Mills Park carries the namesake of its second owner, Herbert S. Mills who purchased the property from the original owner, John Farson’s, widow in 1910. The Park District of Oak Park acquired the property in 1939. Outbuildings on the attendant grounds were subsequently razed and Mills Park has been maintained as open space since that time.

In fall 2011 a major renovation of to this 4.43 acre park commenced. New accessible entrances in the historic fence (restored in 2011) opened the historic site to all, allowing greater access to the museum and park. Park improvements included paved walkways leading to and from the new entrances, a looped walking path in the northwest corner, interpretive signage, and a children’s “nature discovery” play area including a unique labyrinth using motifs from Pleasant Home. New benches, lighting and landscaping were also part of this project. Additionally, 51 shade trees and 86 ornamental trees were planted throughout the park and 7 heritage oak trees will be planted at a later date.