

OLD WEST BRINGS NEW TECHNOLOGY TO HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

18 trees provide comfort and shade in Fort Worth's Sundance Square Plaza

Downtown Fort Worth, Texas was a popular hangout for outlaws, cattlemen, gamblers, cowboys, and many legendary names from the glory days of the Old West.

The site's historic architecture and rich heritage has been preserved through the development of Sundance Square, a 35-block collection of restored and replicated turn-of-the-century storefronts, outfitted with colorful landscaping and brick-paved streets, including some of Fort Worth's oldest and architecturally unique structures alongside new businesses and stores. Named after the Sundance Kid of Butch Cassidy fame, both of whom were regulars to the area in their day, Sundance Square is part of a revitalization project 30 years in the making that aims to preserve the area's rich and colorful history as an entertainment, commercial, and recreational hotbed for tourists, workers, and residents alike.

Converted from two old surface parking lots, the Sundance Square Plaza boasts many attractions including a permanent, multi-purpose stage, decorative water fountains featuring ever-changing waterfalls and cascades, and two rows of Cedar Elms along the plaza's perimeter. The

completion of Sundance Square Plaza in fall 2013 marked the cornerstone of the redevelopment effort, unveiling a new centerpiece of downtown Fort Worth that offers an engaging, dynamic space that can host a variety of events and facilitate an array of encounters.

Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Ltd. designed the Plaza to ensure that its trees be planted in a sustainable manner that would foster growth and support a large canopy to provide shade for many years to come. In light of the often arid Texas climate, they also wanted to engage innovative and efficient irrigation techniques to guarantee that the trees have access to all the resources they need year-round.

Silva Cells were selected in order to provide and maintain the necessary soil volume to reach these goals and prevent the soil compaction that could otherwise occur in this highly-trafficked area. Additionally, the flexibility of

the Silva Cell system was conducive to the design team's goals of innovative water irrigation. Kameron Aroom, leader of the design team for this project at Michael Vargason, described their goals for the site as follows:

"Our biggest goals were to provide a volume of soil that would encourage the trees shading the plaza to grow and form a solid canopy while preventing compaction of the



amended soil panel below due to large crowds during events. Grading in the plaza was designed to slowly sheet water into the allée, and decomposed granite was used to prevent runoff. Water efficient irrigation techniques were used in the allée to help sustain the trees during the hot Texas Summer months.”

Urban Enrichment for the transformation that has taken place in the city’s central business district thanks to the new Sundance Square Plaza.



960 frames and 480 decks were installed in a two layer system along the perimeter of the plaza, bringing 800 cubic feet of soil volume to each tree. Alongside the major commercial and entertainment redevelopment of Sundance Square, the plaza promises to usher in a new era of outdoor socializing and bustling activity beneath a magnificent urban canopy that will do its history proud. Because of these sustainable revitalization efforts, what was once a couple of surface parking lots in the midst of a decaying urban area has now been showcased in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Town & Country*, *Southern Living* and *Historic Preservation*. Additionally, the City of Fort Worth received the National League of Cities James Howland Award for

Installation Summary

Average soil volume per tree: 533 ft³

Number of trees: 18

Total Silva Cells: 960 Frames, 480 Decks

Installation date: October 2013

Installation type: Trees

Project site: Plaza

Project designer: Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Ltd.

Contractors: Greenleaf Professional Tree Service

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