

YOUR LAND Magazine Fun Facts Sheet:
Test your knowledge about PopCourts! A Small Plaza That Turned Into a Movement
By The Lamar Johnson Collaborative



As a post-pandemic response, PopCourts! is a public plaza that not only transformed a historically disinvested commercial corridor but also changed how the City of Chicago thinks about vacant space.

Designed, funded and built in less than a year, the project became a case study and inspiration for the "Public Outdoor Plaza" program. The "POP" program, has pledged to fund ten more community plazas along neighborhood retail corridors in historically underinvested and primarily black and brown communities.

The success of PopCourts! and its brand inspired the city to dedicate 10 million dollars to a city-wide Public Outdoor Plaza (POP) program to support community-based organizations in their efforts to spur economic development and activate underutilized commercial corridors.

Below are four fun facts about PopCourts!



PopCourts is a series of how many multiple "Pop" projects? Can you name at least four (4) "Pop" projects?

Answer:

1. PopCourts - POPCourts! was designed to provide a stage for neighborhood gatherings, a canvas for community artists, and a safe space for the local youth. The project includes three zones, familiarly known as "Courts," each serving a variety of community functions.
2. PopGrove - PopGrove was developed on a vacant site along a commercial corridor in a neighborhood that lacks greenspace and biodiversity. The project team took special care to incorporate indigenous and pollinator-friendly vegetation, increase the tree canopy, and utilize permeable materials across the site.
3. PopFit - PopFit improves African American health by increasing opportunities for recreation, including a multi-functional field, a walking track, and fitness equipment in a neighborhood with insufficient outdoor sports facilities.



American Society of
Landscape Architects



4. **PopHeights** - PopHeights, is the first park built in the Roseland neighborhood in 50 years. The project benefits area residents by providing inspiring, beautiful, and culturally relevant programmed community spaces.

How many dedicated design spaces and/or features - can you find on the cover of YOUR LAND?

Answer: There are five: Murals, Basketball Courts, Food Trucks, Lawns, and Streetscape Art, and the flexible programming allows activities to "Pop" up and transform over time.

Each Court has unique characters and materials.

- The **basketball court** doubles as a sports and community plaza.
- The gravel drive is for **food truck** parking, farmer's markets, and other seasonal vendors, becoming an informal business incubation space for the community and contributing to the economic resilience of the corridor—the **shaded lawn** functions as a food court with casual seating that attracts visitors of all ages.

Which African American history-maker featured in the streetscape art served as keynote speaker at an ASLA conference?

Answer: Maya Angelou. Angelou was the keynote speaker at ASLA's national conference held in Chicago, IL on October 9, 1995. (Source: ASLA Archives)

Which ASLA Award did PopCourts receive?

Answer: 2023 Honor Award in Urban Design

(Source: [2023 Professional Awards - PopCourts! – A Small Plaza That Turned Into a Movement](#) / Photo Credits: West Side Health Authority, community partner (PopCourts!, PopGrove, PopF!t) Far South Community Development Corporation, community partner (PopHeights!) City of Chicago - Department of Planning, partner)



American Society of
Landscape Architects

