Rethink City Hall: Boston City Hall and Plaza Study

PFD Project #7074
Final Report

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor
City of Boston Public Facilities Department
tile REED+HILDERBRAND
"Re-imagine City Hall Plaza as the thriving, healthy, innovative space that it should be. It's time we showed real pride in our front yard."

Mayor Martin J. Walsh, 2015 State of the City Address
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Executive Summary

Introduction
In October of 2015 the Public Facilities Department selected the Utile-led team to undertake the Boston City Hall and Plaza Study, a multi-pronged planning process that led to a comprehensive roadmap for design and operational improvements. The Study, the first to consider the administrative and public service needs of City Hall together with the Plaza, looked at issues ranging from administrative organization, public service delivery, building systems, real estate and property realignment, infrastructure, programming, and funding options, between City Hall, the Plaza, and the surrounding urban fabric. Key goals included the reorganization of city departments so they better serve the diverse constituents who visit the building, renovations to the plaza to encourage a wider range of activities across the day and at all times of the year, and the creation of stronger connections.

Goals and Objectives
The following Goals and Objectives were identified and refined by the design team and Working Group:

- Be the civic heart of the city – welcoming, easy-to-navigate, and accessible entrances and public spaces
- Reinvigorate the Plaza – improve infrastructure, programming, sustainable stormwater management, and accessibility
- Improve service delivery for the public and create efficient adjacencies of departments and meeting rooms
- Refurbish the building to create a sustainable, healthy, and innovative environment and address deferred maintenance liabilities.

Study Methodology and Schedule
The Study was broken down into three phases, reversing typical master planning process to explore programming needs and potential revenue sources before illustrating specific physical design proposals.

- **Phase I: Research and Analysis** looked at the City’s programmatic needs and changing space and technological needs, assessed the cost of along with property realignment scenarios and revenue sources.
- After establishing a program, three comprehensive conceptual approaches were developed in **Phase II: Scenario Testing** and reviewed with City staff, stakeholders, and the community through public meetings, surveys, and suggestion boxes.
- From these three scenarios, a final preferred approach was developed and priced, and in **Phase III: Refine Preferred Scheme and Recommendations** a phased implementation plan and final recommendations were developed.
Background

Boston City Hall first opened in 1968, after a nationwide, two-round design competition for a New City Hall. Out of 256 entries, a distinguished jury of architects and business leaders selected a bold and daring scheme by Kallmann, McKinnell, and Knowles. The monumental design was meant to express a new open and transparent vision of municipal government, with the continuous use of brick paving from the Plaza into the building expressing accessibility and openness to the public functions on the lower levels, the civic spaces projecting on the exterior on the middle level, and the administrative offices above.

The building opened to critical acclaim in the press around the globe, and is considered a major symbol of the movement known as Brutalism (for ‘béton brut’, meaning raw concrete). While most buildings of this era and age would have undergone a major renovation after 25-30 years, limited and ad hoc maintenance to date has undermined the building and Plaza’s performance, significance, and intentions.

Existing Conditions Findings

• The nine-story, 515,000sf cast-in-place and precast concrete building houses the Mayor’s Office, City Council Chamber and Offices, and most of the City’s administrative departments. With its surrounding seven-acre Plaza it anchors the downtown Government Center district.
• The building does not provide pleasant and efficient public service space or meet today’s public service delivery methods. Over time departments have grown and moved based on space available, resulting in an ad-hoc organization that does not consider ideal adjacencies.
• Public destinations such as meeting rooms and transaction counters have been spread across the building, many on them on hard-to-reach upper floors.

There is no space in the building to hold public meetings or events with more than 100 people.
• With a unique floor plans and circulation patterns on each floor, navigation is confusing for visitors. Wayfinding is limited and in some places non-existent.
• Building systems and infrastructure are outdated and, in many cases, in need or repair or full replacement. There are significant code and accessibility issues, both in the building and on the Plaza.
• The Plaza lacks the infrastructure for successful programming and events, has suffered from deteriorated conditions over time due to weathering, limited maintenance, and poor treatment by events organizers, and does not provide for comfortable day-to-day use.
• The City faces $225M - $255M in capital repairs costs in the next 15 years, and $3M yearly in energy costs, for City Hall and the Plaza, 26 Court St, and Hawkins St.
Master Plan Recommendations

Three conceptual approaches were considered during Phase II. After reviewing the options with the public, Working Group, Steering Committee, and stakeholders, the preferred approach was developed to transform City Hall and its Plaza into an 21st century Active Civic Center, with an emphasis on improving efficiency and public service, accessibility, infrastructure, and activation. Key aspects of the master plan approach are:

- Reopen all three original entrances and relocate public transactions and meeting rooms where they are easily accessible from the Plaza level, improving efficiency, transparency, security, and user satisfaction.
- On the upper levels, central conference spaces and open floor plans will allow for a more efficient use of space and interaction between departments.
- Systems upgrades and repairs, phased to address high-priority repairs first, will bring the building to 21st century standards.

- A right-sized Plaza that provides generous shade, universal accessibility, resilient infrastructure, and a sense of security can be a comfortable, welcoming host to daily activity as well as seasonal programming and civic and cultural events.
- By reshaping, reconnecting, and reprogramming the landscape, the Plaza will encourage daily use at the same time that it can accommodate large special events. It will be alive with people at all times of day and it will thrive in all seasons. There will be areas for quiet and rest, for play and enjoyment, for gathering and dining, and for celebrating and protesting.
• Upgrades to infrastructure and a high performing landscape with integrated stormwater management will make City Hall Plaza a public example of resilient design. These improvements are envisioned as a phased set of renewal projects, implemented to maximize transformation while managing capital investment.

**Phase 1 Implementation**

The Master Plan is a long-term vision meant to be implemented over a 25-30 year period as funding is made available. In 2017 the City identified a $60 million capital investment in City Hall and the Plaza over the next 5 years, which will be combined with revenue from the sale of Hawkins St, funding from Boston Water and Sewer Commission, and any additional funding from partners, for a total Phase 1 budget starting at roughly $90 million.

The Phase 1 implementation scope has prioritized critical and time sensitive repairs along with public space and service improvements on the Plaza, with a majority of budget going towards required repairs. Improvements will focus on improving accessibility and infrastructure on the Plaza, and improving service in the public areas on the 2nd floor. A detailed breakdown of costs is included in Chapter 6 and Appendix J.

**Next Steps**

Recommended next steps include initiating the property realignment process, including the sale of Hawkins St and procurement for the Court St renovation. A full ALTA survey is recommended for the Plaza preceding the beginning of the design process for Phase 1 renovations.
Vision
The vision for tomorrow’s Boston City Hall and Plaza is much like its original vision — to encourage civic engagement and represent a progressive belief in the efficiency and transparency of city government. Tomorrow’s City Hall and Plaza is one that is open, welcoming, and accessible to all; one that is a model of efficiency and resilience; one that houses the best in public service and provides space for civic gathering and discourse; one that is active, safe, sustainable, and innovative.

When it opened in 1968, City Hall was a model of progressive thinking about municipal government, with its ‘tripartite’ arrangement of public spaces on the lower levels, the Mayor and City Council’s offices expressed just above, and administrative offices on the upper levels. The brick surfaces of the public levels were a direct extension of the public Plaza outside, which was in turn conceived as an extension of the city’s brick sidewalks beyond. Although changes in the urban context, technology, departmental growth, and increased security have muddied the original expression, the City now has the opportunity to re-activate the Plaza and lower levels of the building with a re-thinking of those areas to be open, active, and multi-purpose.

Strategic connections between the building and Plaza will enliven both inside and out, drawing new users and encouraging 24/7 activation. With careful reshaping, reconnecting, and reprogramming, the entire Plaza will be universally accessible and City Hall will be reconnected with its surroundings. Plug-and-play infrastructure, right-sized spaces, and increased shade will encourage daily use and accommodate large special events.

Reorganizing departments and relocating public meetings spaces to the areas easily accessible from the Plaza will improve efficiency, transparency, security, and user satisfaction. A new suite of multi-purpose meeting rooms located on the 3rd floor mezzanine level will open directly onto the Plaza, allowing visibility and transparency from the outside-in. Renovated transaction areas will provide an improved public service experience with integrated service points and flexibility in staffing to accommodate seasonal peaks.

With a vision for City Hall and Plaza for the next 25-30 years, the first step is to renew both the building and Plaza to shape a more welcoming, efficient, open, and civic City Hall. Ambitious but achievable alterations can realize these values, transform the day-to-day performance of the building and Plaza, and renew the vision of City Hall and Plaza as a symbol of the city’s progressive ideals.
Project Process

Process and Study Team

While past planning efforts have focused solely on the Plaza, this aim of the Boston City Hall and Plaza Study was to establish a 30-year comprehensive master plan that addressed mounting required repairs to the nearly 50-year old building and plaza together with improvements to public service and civic space and the modernization of administrative offices. After beginning public outreach in early 2015 with a Twitter #cityhallplaza call for ideas and an open ‘Request for Ideas, Interest and Innovation (RFI)’ to gather ideas for revitalizing the Plaza, Mayor Martin J. Walsh and the Public Facilities Department launched the Boston City Hall and Plaza Study in the fall of 2015 with a public RFQ and selected the Utile/Reed Hilderbrand team to lead the process.

The full project team, shown in the graphic at right and led by Mayor Walsh and the Steering Committee, included representatives from 15 city departments, abutters and stakeholders, and a design team consisting of architects, landscape architects, real estate and financing experts, municipal operations and service consultants, engineers, cost estimators, and security consultants. Together the design and City team devised a strategic process that seamlessly integrated innovative design thinking with a viable business approach.
The three-phase process reversed typical master planning processes and explored potential revenue and implementation strategies before illustrating specific physical design proposals, beginning with an examination of the City’s programmatic needs and changing space and technological needs. After establishing a program, three comprehensive conceptual approaches to were developed and reviewed with City staff, stakeholders, and the community. From these three scenarios, the final preferred approach was developed and priced, and a phased implementation plan was developed.
Outreach and Feedback

Boston residents, City department representatives and staff, area workers, designers, stakeholders, and abutters generated ideas and voiced their opinions through regular Working Group meetings, Community Meetings, Staff Brown Bag Lunch presentations, and stakeholder meetings. Suggestion boxes installed in City Hall and Community Meeting

comment walls generated feedback and ideas from Boston residents, local business owners, and city employees. Participants called for increased community space and improved access and wayfinding within the building, and a Plaza that is activated with both day-to-day use and events as a civic space that is open to all.

A full calendar of meetings, sign-in sheets, and survey and comment card results are included in Appendix L.
How can City Hall better serve Bostonians?

- “Easier access to evening meetings”
- “Improved wayfinding to city offices”
- “Love the idea of restaurant inside building – bring more folks in”
- “Space for pop-up events for youths and job training programs”
- “Community space for open discussions”
- “Fix the bathrooms. Fix the heating and cooling, fix the lighting, install wayfinding”

What kind of place should City Hall Plaza be?

- “A model community space”
- “More public access/non-restricted areas (café, mini-museum, gallery, event spaces)”
- “Comfortable to traverse when going from one place to another”
- “Seating and more green spaces”
Prior City Campaigns & Concept Testing

The City began public outreach in early 2015 with two campaigns to gather ideas for and gauge interest in reinvigorating the Plaza. In March 2015 the Mayor put out the City Hall Plaza Request for Ideas, Interest and Innovation (RFI) as an informal way to gauge interest and gain information and to inform the development of a possible Request for Proposals or Qualifications. The City received twenty-four responses that ranged from design proposals, to ideas for development, to proposals to operate events. The responses are public record and were collected by the Mayor’s Office of New Urban Mechanics. A selection of proposals is shown at right.

Request for Ideas, Interest and Innovation (RFI)

“Mayor Walsh wants City Hall Plaza to be an inviting and attractive public forum that is robustly used by resident and visitors. It should contribute to the vitality of City Hall and the surrounding neighborhood. It should attract people to spend time on the Plaza relaxing, watching entertainment, participating in educational or cultural or athletic activities, enjoying their lunch, and just generally enjoying the Plaza. The Mayor welcomes any ideas that further these goals from leasing to designing to curating and any other public-private partnership.”
Along with RFI, the Mayor encouraged anyone to submit ideas on Twitter using #cityhallplaza throughout the spring of 2015. The Mayor received 292 Tweets with suggestions and ideas that encouraged landscaping, public art, space for play and gathering, outdoor dining and places to sit.

That summer the Mayor’s office started testing the ideas with the City Hall Front Lawn, Beer on the Bricks events and the City Hall Front Porch in the Courtyard.

From these two campaigns, the City developed a three-part effort to re-think City Hall and the Plaza, including the Boston City Hall and Plaza Study:

**Campus Plan:** Boston City Hall and Plaza Study Master Plan

**Plaza Partner:** 3-year Plaza programming operator [Boston Garden Development Corporation was selected in early 2016]

**Civic/Cultural Partner:** Future RFP for a civic/cultural partner
Pilot Projects

Along with concept testing, the City implemented two pilot improvement projects that addressed pressing improvements to the public realm during the course of the Boston City Hall and Plaza Study.

The **Exterior Lighting Project** illuminated the once-dark building in the manner of the State House and other municipal buildings around the world, making it a civic symbol of the city. 320 new LED lighting fixtures, 122 of which replaced original lights that have not functioned in decades, were hidden on and around the building to illuminate and reinforce the building’s original tripartite design.

The color-changing RGBW LED fixtures allow the building to communicate back to the city through the language of light in times of celebration, to raise awareness, and in times of commemoration. At the same time the project removed the high intensity flood lights and ribbons of conduit that had been haphazardly installed throughout the years to create a better illuminated edge to City Hall Plaza.
Security equipment installed in the Lobby after 9/11 rendered the once-open and gracious Lobby cramped and unwelcoming. The **Lobby Improvement Project** creates a more open, inviting, and efficient entrance to City Hall by redesigning the security sequence, providing wayfinding information to make City Hall easier to navigate, providing a coffee kiosk and comfortable seating for visitors, and replacing the non-functioning original lighting with LEDs to improve light levels and gain energy efficiency. The new security sequence sets a new tone and creates a concierge experience as a public first impression.

New wayfinding elements in the main Lobby and elevator lobbies throughout the building, designed in collaboration with the City’s Department of Innovation and Technology, utilize the City of Boston’s new graphic identity. An interactive touch screen directory in the Lobby provides multi-lingual information and directions in Boston citizens’ seven most common languages. The improvements are scheduled to be completed in summer 2017.
Chapter 1. Problems, Challenges, and Goals

A brief review of the hurdles facing City Hall & Plaza, and a vision for the future.
Summary

Recognized as among the most important municipal buildings of its kind in the United States, Boston City Hall has been the seat of municipal government in the City of Boston since opening in 1968. The seven-acre Plaza is one of Boston’s largest civic spaces, and as such has played host to events ranging from sports celebrations and political rallies to seasonal cultural festivals, but lacks the infrastructure to support large events and its large scale makes it unpleasant and unwelcoming for everyday activity. Over these almost fifty years, the urban context, public safety and security measures, and municipal operations have evolved to the point that the city needs the building and Plaza to adapt for 21st century civic life.

Although the lower levels of the building were originally designed to host all of the public functions, changing department needs and security requirements over the decades has led to an ad-hoc organization of services and departments. Years of heavy use and deferred maintenance have led to wholesale deterioration of systems and materials in the building and Plaza. Today’s shared belief in universal accessibility and resilience (including stormwater treatment and flow reduction) were never anticipated at the time of the Plaza’s design, and improving technologies have changed the nature of workspace. Ambitious but achievable alterations can realize these values, transform the day-to-day performance of the building and Plaza, and renew the vision of City Hall and Plaza as a symbol of the city’s progressive ideals.
Chapter 1: Problems, Challenges, and Goals

Problems

Deferred Maintenance

The 515,000 sf building is nearing its fiftieth year and is showing commensurate signs of age. While most buildings of this era and age would have undergone a major renovation after 25-30 years, ad hoc maintenance to date has undermined the building’s significance, intentions, and character-defining elements. Antiquated MEP systems and deterioration to the building envelope due to infiltration wastes energy and requires constant and on-going maintenance – this has a significant impact on the operations costs for City Hall and other nearby city-owned properties, and impacts users.

Similarly, the brick paving and granite steps on the Plaza have deteriorated over time due to weathering, limited maintenance, and poor treatment by event organizers. The uneven surface is a safety issue and makes the City vulnerable to legal challenges. Due to the uneven surfaces and damage to the many drain inlets, water now puddles frequently after storm events, furthering deterioration. The original fountain was closed in 1977 due to leaking into the T tunnel below, and in 2006 covered with a concrete cap that at the end of its serviceable life. The limited landscaping is struggling and in fair to poor condition.

Code Violations

There are significant life safety and accessibility issues in the building (e.g., egress routes not up to code, non-conforming restrooms, no accessible route to 3M or the courtyard level). While accessibility issues on the Plaza are partly being addressed by Government Center T station, most of the Plaza is difficult to access. There is no accessible route between Congress Street and Cambridge Street.
Dated and Inefficient Facility

Designed for 1960s municipal government, the building does not provide pleasant and efficient public service space or meet today’s public service delivery systems. The public service areas and transaction counters are inflexible, not accessible, and create an unwelcoming interaction between public and staff. When not in use they are and unwelcoming, and there is no place to sit. There is a lack of modern security protocol and office technology; many departments rely on paper filing, the storage of which is a highly inefficient use of space. Department spaces, which have grown or shrunk over the years without a comprehensive plan, do not provide equitably-sized space for staff. Signage and wayfinding is limited.

Lack of Large Scale Meeting Spaces

Meeting rooms are sprinkled throughout upper floors and not easily accessible to the public, particularly for evening meetings. The existing meeting rooms all have a similar capacity, and there is no space to hold a meeting with more than 100 people. The largest, Room 801, holds 98 people and is often over capacity. Poor acoustics and inadequate and outdated lighting, HVAC, and AV make the rooms unpleasant and difficult for meetings. There is no interior space to hold cultural events.
Chapter 1: Problems, Challenges, and Goals

Challenges

Confusing configuration

With three different entrances and no street address, there is no clear front door. The North Entrance is no longer used and after 5pm the only entrance/exit is through the Congress Street entrance, which is narrow, hidden, and not accessible. The floor plan has a different layout on every floor. Well-used constituent services are dispersed throughout the building, and meeting rooms are located on upper floors where they are not easily accessible to the public. Although new directories were installed in the main Lobby and south elevator lobbies as part of the Lobby Improvement Project, throughout the rest of the building wayfinding is limited if not non-existent.

Inefficient use of space

The City is moving to an electronic “paperless” office environment, but many offices are still using valuable office square footage for both active and inactive files. Closed offices along the perimeter and high cubicles are a poor use of space and cut off natural light.

Separate and dispersed departments

Departments that work together are not located adjacent or even on the same floor. With walls separating departments, there is no flexibility for newly combined departments or expansions. Some departments may be better located at 26 Court Street.
Chapter 1: Problems, Challenges, and Goals

Deteriorated conditions and lack of infrastructure

Over the years the perceived scale of the Plaza has gotten larger, due to the covering of the original fountain and the removal of light poles that provided some feeling of scale to the space. Pedestrian access is unclear and it is difficult and unpleasant to walk across, particularly in the dead of winter or height of summer.

The City isn’t fully capturing the value ($) of events because of deteriorated conditions and lack of infrastructure. Failed past plans such as the Trust for City Hall Plaza plan cast a shadow over this effort.

Most of the Plaza doesn’t have good building edges for cafes and restaurants. The Sears Crescent and 28 State Street edge, once active with cafes, has been negatively affected by the deteriorated conditions of the Plaza and the moat that separates the Sears Crescent from the Plaza.

Rather than utilizing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design to make a great, safe, space, guard shacks have been erected along Cambridge Street and at the closed North Entrance.

Maintenance vehicles are parked on the Plaza and underneath the building overhangs, making the Plaza feel like a parking lot.

Challenging topography and sub-surface conditions

There is almost thirty feet of grade change between Congress Street and Cambridge Street. Much of the Plaza is actually a roof, built over active T tunnels for the Green, Blue, and Orange Lines, T vents, abandoned subway tunnels, and the City Hall Garage. The City commissioned a structural survey to aid event programming in 2016, but more information is needed on the tunnels and underground structures. A comprehensive ALTA survey, with sub-surface investigation, is recommended.
Chapter 1: Problems, Challenges, and Goals

Challenges

City Hall was designed for 1960s city government

The nature of civic interaction with municipal government has changed over time, from an over-the-counter relationship to one of civic participation and cultural activation, calling for a need for gathering space and space to do 21st century business.

The original competition brief, written in 1962, called for transaction counters to accommodate 2,800 daily visitors on a typical day. Today technology has made a tremendous change in how the public communicates and interacts with City services, with many transactional services now available online. As a result, today the transaction areas see only 260 visitors daily.

The terraced stair in the main Plaza Lobby, designed as a ceremonial gesture that leads from the Plaza level up to the Courtyard level and ultimate the 5th Floor Mayor’s Office and City Council Offices, once held performances and speeches, but is not accessible and as a result is underutilized.
Dark, unwelcoming, and underutilized public areas

Out of 80 original transaction windows, on an average day only 18-20 of them (20%) are in use at any one time. Twenty-two of them are permanently closed, leaving the public areas dark, unwelcoming, and underutilized. The counters are inflexible, not accessible, and create an unwelcoming interaction between public and staff. The concrete construction and layout of the transaction areas make adjustments extremely difficult without a major intervention.

There is limited seating and the covered-over skylights and non-functioning lighting fixtures have left the spaces dark and unwelcoming. Tile failures over the years due to a lack of expansion joints have led to a patchwork floor and ongoing upkeep.
Chapter 1: Problems, Challenges, and Goals

Challenges

Need for policies and funding

Despite the building’s original intentions, past administrations have upheld its unseemly characterization and repeatedly called to tear the building down. Mayor Walsh saw building’s potential and the value in its easily accessible downtown location, and chose instead to showcase investment in public life through a series of small inclusive projects in the building and in the Plaza indicating a new era. This pivot is exciting but new, and still vulnerable to old attitudes. The idea of the City spending money on City Hall, even to address maintenance issues or to improve the security entrance sequence, is highly debated and politically charged.

The City has applied for a 2017 Keeping It Modern grant through The Getty Foundation to fund a Conservation Management Plan to further study the building’s international significance as a work of concrete modernism and establish policies for building maintenance and changes going forward.
Executive Summary

The following pages outline a proposal to develop a Conservation Management Plan for Boston City Hall—a municipal building internationally recognized as a masterwork of 1960s modernism and civic design. The Conservation Management Plan would complement a long-term master plan study currently ongoing which examines the city’s operational and programmatic needs and ways to improve services to constituents, with a high-level look at the building’s systems and existing conditions. Two pilot projects have been underway, the illumination of the building’s exterior and replacing of the security apparatus haphazardly added in the South Lobby.

Planning, maintenance, and future projects such as these would benefit enormously from the timing of a document that examines the building’s significance, develops policies, and provides a roadmap to implement them. The proposal for this process is outlined with key issues identified across the following pages.

Due to its many significant qualities, Boston City Hall deserves a thoughtful Conservation Management Plan to guide a long-term approach that deals sensitively and sensibly with future changes, repairs, preservation, and upgrades. At a time when many concrete buildings of this era are being demolished, the City of Boston remains excited by the prospect of partnering with the Getty Foundation to create a model for sensitive conservation and respectful evolution of one of Boston’s—and indeed one of the world’s—most recognized municipal works of modernism.

Key Issues

The History and Significance section gives an overview of the building’s significance as a civic symbol, an international example of brutalism, a catalyst for the making of the “New Boston,” an important example of a public competition, an exploration of monumentality in the modern vocabulary and urban renewal in its planning, and the culmination of a line of architectural theory that launched the lifelong partnership of two prominent architects. The Conservation Management Plan will demonstrate how these qualities can guide future policy directives.

The Current Conditions section spells out some of the dangers and problems the building faces, including previous physical modifications, aging elements, and the effects of ad hoc maintenance. Perhaps more urgent, the building is deeply disliked and misunderstood by Boston’s citizenry. The prestige of a Getty Foundation grant would significantly increase the value with which Boston City Hall is held by the public, and the plan’s process would provide depth and leverage for policies that intelligently shape the building’s future. While the previous mayor called for the building’s sale or demolition, the current mayor has called to renew it in thoughtful ways. However, 2017 is an election year and as a consequence it is an important moment to reposition the understanding of the building and develop policies before any risk of changes in administration might limit this work.

The Work Plan section describes the proposed Conservation Management Plan process for Boston City Hall. The document will establish and implement conservation policies that grow out of an assessment of its architectural and cultural significance. Policies will be developed to protect, retain, and enhance the site’s cultural and architectural significance while encouraging public access and adaptation to evolving city needs. The document’s implementation will be assured by working with stakeholders such as the City’s maintenance teams in the Property Management Department and administration from the Public Facilities Department. The core team preparing the Conservation Management Plan is outlined in this section, including architects, historians, conservation experts, engineers, and stakeholders from city departments.
Chapter 1: Problems, Challenges, and Goals

Goals and Objectives

The original RFP for this Study set out four main goals and objectives, centered on improving the citizen experience:

1. Create a welcoming, loved front yard and front door for constituents

2. Strengthen Government Center’s capacity to be the civic heart of the city

3. Make City Hall and Court Street a great place to work and improve services for the public

4. Create an infrastructure that is agile and sustainable

Throughout the Study process, the design team and Working Group further refined the four goals into four aspirations:

1. Be the civic heart of the city – welcoming, easy-to-navigate, and accessible entrances and public spaces

2. Reinvigorate the Plaza – improve infrastructure, programming, sustainable stormwater management, and accessibility

3. Improve service delivery for the public and create efficient adjacencies of departments and meeting rooms

4. Refurbish the building to create a sustainable, healthy, and innovative environment and address deferred maintenance liabilities
What kind of place can Boston City Hall & Plaza be?

Iconic
“The Bean” (Cloud Gate), Chicago

Celebratory
City Hall Lighting Project

Sustainable
Seoul City Hall

Open
National Theater, London

Informative
Boston Harbor Islands Pavilion

Efficient
Boston City Hall 709
Chapter 2: Re-Imagining the Plaza and Enhancing Activation

Reestablish the Plaza as Boston’s foremost civic gathering place.
Chapter 2: Re-Imagining the Plaza and Enhancing Activation

Summary

A renewed City Hall Plaza will return to its rightful place at the forefront of urban activity and realize the original intention that it serve as a site of vibrant public engagement with government. By reshaping the ground, the entire Plaza will be universally accessible and City Hall will be reconnected with its surroundings. Right-sized terraces will break the Plaza down into human-scaled rooms, each with its own character and use. Easy connectivity between those terraces will also ensure capacity for large civic events. Shade trees will moderate climate, improve stormwater management, and rescale spaces for human occupation.

Additional connections between the building and the Plaza will enliven both inside and out and further efforts to make government more transparent and engaging. Retail or food and beverage concessions at the edges of the Plaza or within City Hall will draw new users and encourage 24/7 life on the Plaza. Increased use and more eyes on the plaza bring improved security as well. Paired with a coherent system of vehicular controls, identifiable access points, and distributed communications infrastructure, the plaza’s capacity to support day-to-day and special event activity safely will be greatly enhanced.

The study team looked at current and past uses of the Plaza, including the City’s recent concept testing and activation by the Plaza Operator, and evaluated programming and precedents from other cities around the country and around the world. Precedents and program fits can be found in Appendix E.
The original intent of the Plaza was to represent a progressive vision of civic life and vibrant public engagement. Today, that vision is clouded by deferred maintenance challenges and changing expectations for how a civic landscape functions.
Improve accessibility for all users

- Existing steps navigate almost 30 feet of grade change, up from Congress Street to Cambridge Street, but are not accessible. Sloped surfaces can provide accessible routes across the site, to all building entries, and to all program areas.
- The current accessible route into the building winds from Court Street along the Washington Mall and to the Plaza Lobby via a narrow ramp. On the south side of the building, the Congress Street stairs are a major public route to and from Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market, but present a large and inaccessible barrier.
- Meetings with the GSA have identified a desire for an accessible connection between the GSA terrace and the north side of the Plaza.
Chapter 2: Re- Imagining the Plaza and Enhancing Activation

Challenges / Opportunities

Integrate infrastructure to enhance use and durability

- The lack of infrastructure - power, water, lighting, data, drainage, sewer – results in temporary running of utilities and structures that damage the pavement and create pedestrian hazards.
- Integrated plug-and-play infrastructure will facilitate both large events and day to day activities.
- A layout of flexible program spaces can facilitate public use of the Plaza, and avoid makeshift layouts that damage the surface and make the Plaza feel closed off during events.

Challenge Temporary utilities and structures clog and damage the Plaza

Opportunity Plug-and-play infrastructure supports both large events and daily activity
Rescale for human comfort

- The original fountain and terraced steps created a varied and more intimate set of spaces. Over the years the Plaza has become an undifferentiated void, and the default location for large rallies and gatherings.

- Because of logistics and safety concerns, the City no longer wishes to hold large 40,000-person gatherings on the Plaza, preferring instead rolling rallies that distribute the crowd. Rightsizing and differentiating spaces will bring variety and more humanity back to the Plaza, while still accommodating events up to 25,000 across the whole Plaza.
Challenges / Opportunities

Make the Plaza a symbol of urban sustainability

- Every year 10,000,000 gallons or 15 Olympic swimming pools of stormwater falls on the Plaza and is flushed directly down the drains. We could engage, enjoy and reuse that water.
- Modern civil engineering and sustainable design standards require infiltration or reuse of stormwater.
- BWSC has agreed to fund a stormwater demonstration system on City Hall Plaza as part of an EPA mandate.

**Challenge** 15 Olympic swimming pools of water falls on the Plaza each year and is flushed directly down the drains

**Opportunity** Treat, engage, and reuse that water
Increase shade and reduce heat island

- Less than 10 percent of the Plaza is shaded, increasing the urban heat island and making the Plaza uncomfortable to occupy in the heat of summer.
- Carefully placed trees can moderate temperatures and create comfortable places to gather by creating outdoor rooms, while maintaining eye-level views and visibility.
Vision: Active Civic Center

Link inside and outside to create a more robust civic hub

- Provide additional opportunities to discover and access City Hall’s services
- Serve as the most visible expression of Boston’s vibrant political and cultural life.
City Hall could be a civic space for the 21st century, serving as a platform and showcase for urban innovation

- Boston could build on the momentum of the City’s engagement initiatives, and City Hall could become a model for 21st century civic discourse. Civic/innovation organizations and retail entrepreneurs could expand programming to the Plaza.
- New improved lower level public meeting spaces and activation of the courtyard and lobby could double as civic and cultural event space, and assist in activation during and after typical working hours.
Vision: Active Civic Center

City Hall and Plaza could be a recognized “first stop” for visitors that also enriches residents’ experience

- 18 million tourists visit historic attractions nearby
- 19,500 residents live within a half mile of the Plaza
- There are 1,740 City Hall workers and 162,900 office workers within a half mile of the Plaza
- 600 citizens visit City Hall daily to complete transactions
- Additional program could include:
  - Visitors’ Center
  - Ticket sales location
  - Iconic imagery
  - Citizens’ gallery
  - Extension of The Freedom Trail
  - Local business showcase kiosk

Historical introduction to the city

Wayfinding and sites of interest

Iconic “we’ve arrived” imagery

Local gallery residencies

Local showcase café kiosk

Ticket sales
Potential Plaza operators should be challenged to develop a market-viable, vision-consistent program that mixes and matches:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR&amp;A conducted a high-level study of retail capacity based on the workforce both in City Hall and surrounding area. The conservative analysis suggests 10,000-20,000 SF of retail that advances project vision could be supported in the building and/or on the Plaza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail was not found to be viable along Congress Street, but visible retail such as a destination restaurant at the base of the building confronting the Plaza would activate the Plaza and complement Plaza-level meeting spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail kiosks, a gift shop, café cart, and/or visitor center would further activate the interior transaction areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-Traditional Funding Opportunities

- The 2016 Boston Winter Market showed that with infrastructure upgrades and programming there can be successful retail activation on the Plaza. 300,000 people visited the Winter Market and skating path between December 2016 and February 2017.
- In 2015 Dîner en Blanc was held in the Courtyard, with 3,000 guests that activated the Courtyard and showed the potential of the space.
Chapter 3: Re-imagining Service
Summary

We thoroughly analyzed City Hall and tested several re-organization scenarios. We’re convinced that City Hall can become welcoming, easy-to-navigate, and reflective of a progressive vision of city government and civic life.

The team held a series of service delivery workshops with the Working Group to help define the City’s service philosophy and look at new service delivery frameworks, resulting in a plan to co-locate and integrate public services on the lower levels of City Hall.

In future department relocations and building renovations, the building should be reorganized to locate all public services on the lower levels, where they are easily accessible and highly visible. The upper levels should be organized by department type, to increase the efficiency of city business and allow for more collaboration between departments. A semi-public shared conference and resource hub located near the south elevators on the upper levels will open up the rest of the floor for flexible, open workspace, and provide an easily securable area and ability to limit access to other areas of the floor.
Chapter 3: Re-Imagining Service

Service Delivery and Meeting Room Reorganization

Locate public services on the lower levels

- Move high demand constituency services and public meeting rooms to 2nd Floor and 3rd Floor Mezzanine level.
- In-demand meeting rooms that should be moved include 801 and the BPDA Board Room, which are both used for a wide range of meetings.

Current: Dispersed and hard to find

Proposed: Cohesive and easy to access
Integrate and co-locate services to improve citizen experience

• Current citizen transaction services are specialized, and often require the citizen to visit two departments (e.g., BTD to apply for a moving truck permit, and then PWD to pay for and acquire the permit) or wait in two separate window lines (e.g., inquire about a parking ticket at one window, and then pay the ticket at another window) to accomplish one task.

• The team’s recommendation is to streamline citizen service delivery by providing integrated service points and shared counters for streamlined public service delivery.
Chapter 3: Re-Imagining Service

Upper Floor Organization

Department adjacencies

- Organize the upper floors by department synergies to give a roadmap for future renovations and moves.
Create workplace efficiency through adjacencies

- Future renovations and department moves should locate departments by type, with an emphasis on creating adjacencies between departments that work together.
Create synergies and share resources using Bolling Building model

- Provide a semi-public central reception and conference room zone, sized to accommodate both internal meetings and consultations with outside advisors.
- Meeting rooms and kitchenette areas would be shared by all departments on the floor, increasing the amount of available department space.

Upper Floor Organization

Consultation & Collaborative Spaces

- Conference Rooms (4-6 people)
- Conference Rooms (6-8 people)
- Conference Rooms (8-10 people)
- Conference Room (16-20 people)
- Reception Area
- Consultation Rooms
- Kitchen
- Lounge
Flexible, open office floors

- Utilize open workstations to increase efficiency in the use of space and open up window walls to maximize daylight and dispersal of perimeter heat.
- Locate closed offices and meeting spaces along the interior circulation hallway and existing cores and allow for flexibility and collaboration by removing walls between departments. Locate open collaboration areas where they can be used by multiple departments.

**Current** Individual offices block windows, conference rooms distributed throughout

**Proposed** Private offices line interior hallway, shared conference suite accessible from elevator and departments separated by collaboration zones instead of walls
Chapter 3: Re-Imagining Service

Office Guidelines

Workspace renovation guidelines

- Within the strict structural grid, City Hall allows for rooms of various sizes. Closed offices should be sized to align the walls with the precast concrete ceiling grid above.
- Open workstations shall be 5’-6” x 8’ to work with the structural grid and utilize low partitions to keep the workspace open and maximize daylight. An example of a pilot renovation project in City Hall Room 709 is shown below.

City Hall Room 709

Utilizing the Grid Three options illustrating how different mixes of office and support types can be organized
Workspace renovation guidelines

- Private offices shall be designated for Directors and above, with larger Executive offices for Chiefs. Shared offices may be utilized for Directors or other positions as applicable.
- A range of rooms sizes shall be provided in the shared core, with a mix of large and small conference rooms, huddle rooms, and phone rooms.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Welcoming
Efficient
Open
Civic
Summary

The vision for tomorrow’s City Hall and Plaza is much like its original vision — to encourage civic engagement and represent a progressive belief in the efficacy and transparency of city government. Projects to renew both the building and Plaza will shape a more welcoming, efficient, open and civic City Hall.

By reshaping, reconnecting and reprogramming the landscape, the Plaza will encourage daily use at the same time that it can accommodate large special events. It will be alive with people at all times of day and it will thrive in all seasons. There will be areas for quiet and rest, for play and enjoyment, for gathering and dining, and for celebrating and protesting.

Upgrades to infrastructure and a high performing landscape with integrated stormwater management will make City Hall Plaza a symbol of resilience. These improvements are envisioned as a phased set of renewal projects, implemented to maximize transformation while managing capital investment.

Reorganizing departments and relocating public transactions and meeting rooms to areas easily accessible from the Plaza level will improve efficiency, transparency, security, and user satisfaction. And by linking these civic uses with passive uses, and connecting indoors and out with more generous and centrally located entrances, a hub of public energy will be created at the heart of the Plaza.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Plaza: Existing and Proposed
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Right-size spaces and provide infrastructure for all-season activities

Make the entire Plaza accessible to all

Make all entrances fully accessible

Engage people with seasonal fountain

Enable play, gathering, and relaxation

Locate planting and furnishings to integrate security and vehicle access controls while remaining visually permeable
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Plaza: Existing and Proposed
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Provide space and infrastructure to support events

Make the Plaza and all building entries accessible

Improve wayfinding and views to Faneuil Hall

Provide shade, enclosure and areas for stormwater recharge

Rescale the Plaza and enable everyday activity
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Interior: Existing and Proposed
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

- Improved Lighting and Daylighting
- Open & Shared Transaction Areas
- Integrated Service Points
- Comfortable Seating
- Seating and Meeting Areas
- Future Restaurant/Café Space
Improved Accessibility

**Make the entire Plaza universally accessible**

- Reshape terraces, steps and slopes to provide clear routes to all doors and between Cambridge and Congress Streets (shown in blue).
- Expand the Congress Street sidewalk and provide accessible drop-off by reducing travel lanes.
- Encourage multiple points of entry into the Plaza from the surroundings, and create identifiable access points for clear wayfinding and enhanced security control (shown in dark red).
- Fill in the moat along the Crescent to improve connections between the place and adjacent buildings.
- Provide exterior elevator near Congress Street stairs to connect Congress Street to Plaza.
Right-size terraces and increase areas of shade

- Define the edges of the Plaza with trees and provide areas of shade and respite.
- Define spaces of intimate scale that can be used for both everyday activities and for gatherings and events.
- Preserve a large event space for special occasion and seasonal programming.
- Preserve and enhance views to Faneuil Hall and Old North Church.
- Maintain open views at eye level for enhanced visibility and safety.
Improved Resilience

Demonstrate sustainability and resiliency

- Replace the outdated system of 95 area drains that clog and convey water directly to the sewer system with a more resilient system of trench drains and permeable pavement that manages and treats stormwater.
- Build robust multi-benefit systems, linking tree planting areas, soils, and stormwater management.
- Educate through demonstration – utilize the BWSC’s EPA-mandated funding to create a stormwater demonstration system that both educates the public and activates the Plaza.
Distribute plug & play infrastructure

- Expand functionality for day-to-day users with distributed seating and charging stations.
- Build a flexible, modular support system for special events that can provide power, data, water, waste, and structural infrastructure for a Plaza operator or individual event planners to plug-and-play.
- Integrate a distributed security system for daily and special event management.
- Develop an animated but dark-sky friendly lighting approach.
- Accommodate maintenance vehicles in existing garages and provide storage for maintenance and event equipment.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Activated Civic Center

Enhance and expand daily activities

- Build synergies between program areas to extend and expand use.
- Locate areas of activity at edges to take advantage of adjacent animation.
- Distribute uses around the site to bring activity to all parts.
- Include areas for quiet, gathering, dining, and play — spaces that engage people of all ages and interests.
- Enable clear circulation through active zones
- Link indoor and outdoor space to improve transparency and increase public uses.

Enable clear circulation

Activate the edges

Link inside and outside activities
Activated Civic Center

Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Accommodate special events and seasonal operations

- Right-size the spaces to accommodate special events up to 10,000 in the large terrace, and retain the ability to expand event capacity to 25,000 by expanding to the whole Plaza.
- Improve the North Stage to enhance capacity for regular concerts.
- Develop a flexible infrastructure framework throughout the Plaza to provide flexible and efficient systems for events.
- Provide structural support for a variety of plaza uses.
- Provide infrastructure and an improved space for speeches at Speakers’ Corner.
- Work closely with a seasonal operator to bring a vibrant range of events to the site.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Master Plan Proposal

A vision of City Hall for the next 25-30 years

- Create a civic hub that connects the Plaza and public levels of City Hall.
- Re-open all three entrances and locate multi-purpose meeting rooms and dining at the Plaza level.
- Strengthen the edges of the Plaza and create spaces to accommodate both everyday activity and large events.
- Improve Plaza accessibility and infrastructure for activation and improved public use.
Reinvigorated Civic Heart of the City

Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

- Provide space and infrastructure to support events
- Create connections between Building and Plaza
- Rescale and regrade the Plaza and enable everyday activity
- Make the entire Plaza and all building entries accessible
- Enable play for all ages, gathering, and relaxation
- Provide shade, enclosure, and areas for stormwater recharge
- Reconnect adjacent buildings with the Plaza
- Provide space and infrastructure to support events

Enable play for all ages, gathering, and relaxation
Master Plan: Northern Edge

- Elevated Lawns
- Spaces for Gathering and Relaxation
- Play for All Ages
- Improved Stage
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

**Accessible Drop-Off at North Entrance**

Enable play for all ages, gathering, and relaxation

**North Entrance Expansion and Renovation**

Expand shade and integrate lawn

**Improved and Expanded Stage**

Provide an accessible drop-off adjacent to the North Entrance.

**Potential for historical marker**

Strengthen the edges of the Plaza and create spaces to accommodate both everyday activity and large events.

**Improve Plaza accessibility and infrastructure for activation and improved public use.**

- Employ Complete Streets concepts to Congress Street: reduce traffic lanes, expand sidewalk, and add street trees.
- Expand and reopen the North Entrance.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Master Plan: Central Hub

- **Daily Activity**
- **Outdoor Dining**
- **Space for Seasonal Programming**
Create indoor-outdoor connections and enable daily activity and special events

- Accommodate special events up to 10,000 in the Large Program Area, and retain the ability to expand event capacity to 25,000 by expanding to the whole Plaza.
- Provide infrastructure for all-season activities throughout the Plaza.
- Configure Large Program Area and adjacent spaces so that events can be held without closing off the Plaza. Require event organizers to lay out events in a way that maintains circulation through and around the event.
- Locate planting and furnishings along Cambridge Street to integrate security and vehicle access controls while remaining visually permeable.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Master Plan: Southern Edge

- Civic Platform
- Stormwater Management
- Activated Edges
- Educational Resiliency
Activate the edges and improve accessibility and sustainability

- Expand and renovate the Congress Street entrance and provide an external elevator to connect Congress Street to the Plaza (refer to pp 73-74).
- Cut back the steps to improve accessibility and wayfinding and views to Faneuil Hall.
- Replace existing antiquated system of 95 individual area drains (throughout Plaza) prone to clogging and integrate a stormwater management system to support the trees, with linear drains, porous paving, and structural soils.
- Educate through demonstration – utilize the BWSC’s EPA-mandated funding to create a stormwater demonstration system that both educates the public and activates the Plaza.
- Promote active retail along Sears Crescent and Washington Mall properties by filling in the depressed ‘moat’ and planning for outdoor café dining.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Improved Access to City Services

Connected, Transparent, Accessible

- Connect the lower levels of City Hall to the Plaza and create a central hub of day and night activity. Locate meeting rooms on levels 3 and 3M where they are easily accessible and visible to the public, and open up level 3M to the Plaza.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

- Meeting Rooms at Plaza Level
- Plaza and Entrances Fully Accessible
- Shared and Open Transaction Areas
- Dining and Seating Activate the Plaza
- Meeting & Exhibition Space with Views to Faneuil Hall
- Expand and reopen the North Entrance
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Master Plan: 1st Floor

- Expanded Sidewalk and Improved Landscaping
- Potential Area for Scrim of Cultural Activation
- Congress St Entrance Expansion and Renovation
- Plaza Elevator
**Improve accessibility and increase visibility**

- In the 1960s Congress Street was to be an high-speed arterial road and the building was designed to turn its back on the road. With Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market now a retail and tourist destination, City Hall needs a welcoming and accessible entrance rather than a back door.
- Expand the entrance with a double-height addition in the underutilized space under the building overhang to create a fully accessible entrance lobby with space for both wayfinding and security sequence.
- Improve signage, landscaping, security, and lighting.
- Provide an accessible route from Congress Street to the Plaza via an exterior elevator located under the building overhang.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Master Plan: 2nd Floor

- Move child care closer to entrance and Plaza play area
- Rebuild ramp to make compliant
- North Entrance Expansion and Renovation
- Retail or Meeting Space
- Renovated cores: accessible bathrooms and replaced elevators

Improved and Shared Citizen Service Areas
Reconfigure to provide direct access from south elevators
Improved Accessibility: Remove escalators for expanded stair and new elevator
Improve public service delivery and transaction areas

- Expand and re-open the North Entrance to provide a fully accessible entrance lobby with space for both wayfinding and security.
- Renovate and reconfigure the 2nd Floor to improve wayfinding and accessibility. Provide shared service counters that allow for integrated service points and flexibility in staffing to accommodate seasonal peaks.
- Improve lighting and daylighting by repairing the skylights and replacing lighting with high-efficiency LEDs.
- Provide signage and wayfinding, refresh finishes, and replace buckling floor.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Master Plan: 3rd Floor & Mezzanine

- Café space and seating/informal meeting space at 3M level
- Renovated cores: accessible bathrooms and replaced elevators
- Multi-Purpose Meeting Rooms and Restaurant at 3M/Plaza level
- Open brick walls to create transparency to Plaza

Plaza Elevator

Meeting and Exhibition Space with 300+ capacity and views to Faneuil Hall

Improved Accessibility: Remove escalators for expanded stair and new elevator
Concentrate civic gathering spaces and meeting rooms at Plaza level

- Create a suite of multi-purpose meeting rooms on level 3M and open up the brick walls to create visibility and transparency from the Plaza. Locate a 4,000-5,000 restaurant space adjacent to the meeting rooms to activate the Plaza and provide synergies.
- Move the existing deli and coffee shop from the 8th and 1st floors to the 2nd and 3rd floors adjacent to transaction areas and meeting rooms to concentrate activity on the lower levels.
- Take advantage of the only column-free space in the building to create a large multi-purpose meeting room in the main Lobby that can open up to accommodate 300+ people. Space can be used for public meetings, cultural events, civic events, lectures, programming, etc.
- Provide an accessible route to the courtyard/4th floor level.
- Improve wayfinding, lighting, and refresh finishes.
Chapter 4: Master Plan Vision

Master Plan: 4th Floor

- Renovated cores: accessible bathrooms and replaced elevators
- Relocate child care and provide space for future cultural partner
- Utilize courtyard for events, meetings, seating
- Improved Accessibility: New elevator
Renovated cores: accessible bathrooms and replaced elevators

Open workstations organized in department neighborhoods, separated by collaboration zones instead of walls

Closed offices for Directors and above, along existing cores and interior hallways

Refresh finishes, lighting, signage, and wayfinding

Central conference suite and shared staff resources
Chapter 5: The Business Plan
Balancing potential revenue sources and ambitions

In conventional feasibility studies, design proposals are proposed and then priced. This kind of process often results in sticker shock and a lack of understanding of how to secure necessary capital. This Study looked at alternative revenue sources for a capital project. Areas of focus include the disposition of city-owned real estate, the establishment of a nonprofit conservancy that can develop and manage compatible commercial enterprises on city property, opportunities for philanthropic support (also enabled by a conservancy), BWSC demonstration project funds, and conventional city capital project financing options.

With the goals of improving the working environment, the delivery of public services, and the use of space, the Study looked at the current space needs for the City’s administrative spaces, ideal adjacencies, and public service needs. Focusing on the downtown properties of City Hall, 26 Court Street, and Hawkins Street, the team looked at each property’s deferred maintenance requirements and ability to meet the City’s staff and public service needs, and explored cost-effective and mission-driven ways to liberate buildings for disposition and the conversion of existing spaces into revenue-producing functions that can also activate and enliven City Hall and the Plaza.
Property Assessment

Leveraging Real Estate Assets and Limiting Liabilities
- The City identified five properties for study: City Hall, 26 Court Street, Hawkins Street, 1010 Mass Ave, and 201 Rivermoor. The team looked at the City’s administrative space needs and at the highest and best use of each property. A summary is included on this and the following pages, and the full analysis can be found in Appendix F.

26 Court Street
- Disposition/redevelopment is the highest and best use, but the building’s location and layout makes it the best annex to City Hall. The building has roughly $40M of required repairs, but with renovation could be brought up to Class B+/A- office space and excess space could be rented out for ongoing revenue.

Hawkins Street
- Disposition/redevelopment is the highest and best use. The building has roughly $15M of required repairs, and its layout as four inter-connected buildings make it difficult to use efficiently.

1010 Mass Ave
- Real estate value has not yet reached its peak potential, and the building serves existing “pick-up truck customer” transactions well. There is room on site for a new building wing, and potential for expansion across the street. Other departments that serve permitting functions, such as BTD and PWD, could be considered for relocation to 1010 Mass Ave.

201 Rivermoor
- Serves as City’s archives and storage location. Minimal real estate value, but if City Hall departments adopted a comprehensive digital filing and archiving policy, space could be opened up in City Hall. Rivermoor could increase its capacity with a butler building addition or other low-cost option.
Current Space Distribution: Focus Properties

- With the Boston Public Schools Department move to the Bolling Building, there is currently roughly 50,000SF of available space in Court St. There is roughly 26,000SF of available space in Hawkins St.

![Space Distribution Diagram]

**Court St.**
- Gross SF: 143,000 GSF
- Rentable SF: 136,000 RSF
- Usable SF: 100,000 SF

**Hawkins St.**
- Gross SF: 76,000 GSF
- Rentable SF: 72,000 RSF
- Usable SF: 53,000 SF

**City Hall**
- Gross SF: 500,000 GSF
Focus properties require significant capital investment and reflect ongoing operational costs

- The City is facing $225M - $255M in capital repairs costs in the next 15 years for City Hall, the Plaza, 26 Court Street, and Hawkins Street. The three properties have energy expenses of $3M per year, plus operational costs which were not made available for this Study.
- With 76,000sf of vacancy in the Court St and Hawkins St properties, the team looked at limiting the City’s financial liabilities through consolidation of space, leasing, and disposition of real estate.
- The Study found that the cost of doing ‘nothing’ is actually quite significant.
- The recommendation is to sell Hawkins St, and renovate Court St along with City Hall and Plaza. Post-renovation, unoccupied floors of Court St can be rented, with rental revenue offsetting the cost of the Court St renovation.

City Hall & Plaza
Required Repairs– Building
($155M to $165M)

Required Repairs– Plaza
($30M to $40M)

Total
($185M to $205M)

Energy Expense Liability (Ongoing)
($2.3M/year)

Court St.

Required Repairs
($30M to $35M)

Energy Expense Liability (Ongoing)
($375,000/year)

Hawkins St.

Required Repairs
($10M to $15M)

Energy Expense Liability (Ongoing)
($240,000/year)

Status Quo – The Cost of Doing Nothing
($225M-$255M)

Energy Expense Liability (Ongoing)
($3M/year)
Potential asset sale values

- Byrne McKinney & Associates looked at the potential sale and rental values of Court St and Hawkins St, and compared carrying costs over 30 years.
- Option 1: Keep 26 Court and Sell Hawkins has a lower carrying cost over time than doing ‘nothing’ (aka addressing required repairs only) and than Option 2: Keep Hawkins and Sell 26 Court due to the rental revenue potential of unused floors at 26 Court Street. The following pages provide more detail for Option 1. In all, five options were studied, which are all included in the appendix.

![Chart showing annual real estate carry](chart.png)
Property Realignment

Option 1: Keep 26 Court* and sell Hawkins
*renovate and rent surplus space

- 26,000 SF move from City Hall to Court St. (incl. Fair Housing & Disabilities Commission for synergy with DND)
- PFD moves to City Hall from 26 Court St, BPDA and Cable Office move to City Hall from Hawkins

This assumes a full renovation of all office spaces and a comprehensive transition to digital filing and archiving.

Diagram:

- City of Boston
- BRA
- BHA
- Shelter
- Available Space
- Basement
- Circulation/Core
- Sell

TO BE RELOCATED BY STATE

Final Report
Option 1: Keep 26 Court* and sell Hawkins
*renovate and rent surplus space

Court Street: Project Cost (143,000 GSF @ ~$310/GSF) ($44,000,000)
Rental Revenue (58,000 RSF @ $35/RSF, NNN; 95% Occupancy) $1,900,000/Year
Value of Rentable Area (@ 5.0% City Cost of Capital) $38,000,000
Net Surplus/(Gap) ($4,000,000)

Hawkins Street: Sale Proceeds (Sale of Shell to Sale of Permitted Office Site) $30,000,000 to $60,000,000

Overall Net Surplus/(Gap) $26,000,000 to $46,000,000

Coverage of City RE Liabilities
  Court Street (Current & Future) 100%
  Hawkins Street (Current & Future) 100%
  City Hall & Plaza (Current – $201.5M in Deferred Maintenance) 13% to 23%
    (Future – Additional Renovation Costs) 0%
Chapter 5: The Business Plan

Non-Traditional Funding

Funding Examples

- Non-traditional funding approaches such as public-private partnerships and non-profit conservancies are utilized across the country for public spaces, such as Bryant Park in New York City, Philadelphia City Hall’s Dilworth Park, the Rose Kennedy Greenway, and in Canada, Montreal’s Quartier des Spectacles. These examples should be considered as precedents for alternate funding approaches that could bring more money into the Plaza.

- Boston City Hall Plaza is currently managed by the City of Boston and has limited funds for operations, management, and maintenance.

- The City is currently testing a three-year Plaza Operator pilot with Boston Garden Development Corporation. The first of a series of seasonal programming, Boston Winter, saw 300,000 visitors to the Plaza between November 2016 and February 2017.

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<th>PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Precedent: City Hall Plaza, Boston, Klyde Warren, Dallas, The Green, Charleston
Public-Private Partnership Precedents

**Bryant Park** New York City
- Privately managed by a non-profit group: Bryant Park Corporation.
- Events often have corporate sponsorships.

**Rose Kennedy Greenway** Boston
- Operated and maintained by non-profit conservancy: Greenway Conservancy
- Conservancy is funded 60% through private donations, endowment income, and earned revenue, 40% from state funding. BID (business improvement district) proposed to raise $1M per year from area property owners and businesses.

**City Hall Dilworth Park** Philadelphia
- Funded and maintained by pre-existing non-profit group Central City District (CCD). CCD contributed $55M to renovation.
- Leased to city for 20 year term, with option to renew.

**Quartier des Spectacles** Montreal
- Operated by non-profit: Quartier des Spectacles Partnership. $7M CAD annual operating budget, from city and private funders. City maintains spaces, outdoor events are always free to attend, events often have corporate sponsorships.
## Potential Project Scale

### Optimized Civic Center
- The Study looked at various levels of project scale, starting with the required repairs to City Hall and the Plaza as a baseline. From there, the team looked at three levels of renovation: Spruce Up, Optimized Civic Center, and Destination Civic & Cultural Hub. The latter two incentivize private/cultural investment along with the City’s funds.

- As illustrated on the following page, as more improvements are made the money spent on repairs and operational costs goes down.

- The Optimized Civic Center was selected as the goal because of its optimized relationship of improvements to repairs in modernizing the building and the Plaza and the ability to attract third party investment.

- More information on required repairs can be found in Appendix B, and detailed cost estimates can be found in Appendix J.

### Required Repairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Repairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spruce Up</td>
<td>Heating plant replacement, Sprinkler system upgrade, Window replacement, Storefront/Curtain wall replacement, Exterior entrance door replacement, Roofing and skylight replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimized Civic Center</td>
<td>Roof drain piping replacement, Elevator/escalator replacement, Courtyard waterproofing, Interior/Exterior lighting replacement, Accessibility upgrades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination Civic &amp; Cultural Hub</td>
<td>Structural refurbishment at garage, Plaza paving replacement, Plaza waterproofing, Site lighting, Partial granite step replacement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Deferred Maintenance and “Spruce Up” scope plus:
- Significant renovation of office spaces and relocation of meeting spaces to central area on floor 6-9
- Full lobby renovation including removing existing stairs and add new stair connecting to Congress St.
- Relocate meeting spaces from upper levels to 3M

### Deferred Maintenance and “Optimized Civic Center” scope plus:
- New lobby elevators connecting 1-3
- Renovate level 1 lobby
- Glass over central courtyard space and infill exterior openings on floors 3,4 and 5 with curtain wall to fully enclose courtyard as interior space
- Replace concrete on floors 6-9 with glass walls open to light wells
- Add 20-30K sf of new space to City Hall at NW open corner around perimeter of courtyard
- Add 30-40K sf of new addition to the north of City Hall

### Total project cost: assumes 35% soft costs and three years of escalation at 5%.
Chapter 5: The Business Plan

Required Repairs

Spruce Up

Optimized Civic Center

Destination Civic & Cultural Hub

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Recommended Scale
Chapter 6: Phase 1 Implementation
Summary

The Master Plan vision outlined in the previous chapter is a long-term vision meant to be implemented over a 25-30 year period as funding is made available. In 2017 the City identified a $60 million capital investment in City Hall and the Plaza over the next 5 years, which will be combined with revenue from the sale of Hawkins St, funding from Boston Water and Sewer Commission, and any additional funding from partners, for a total Phase 1 budget starting at roughly $90 million.

The Phase 1 implementation scope has prioritized critical and time sensitive repairs along with public space and service improvements on the Plaza, with a majority of budget going towards required repairs. Improvements will focus on improving accessibility and infrastructure on the Plaza, and improving service in the public areas on the 2nd floor. The team recommends pursuing the Phase 1 implementation project as one project in which construction is phased, to maintain use of part of the Plaza, and either the Plaza entrance or North entrance, at all times.
Enabling Project: Renovate 26 Court Street and Sell Hawkins Street

**Enabling** Initiate Hawkins disposition and 26 Court renovation

**Phase 1A** Move Hawkins staff to renovated floors in 26 Court Street and 22 Drydock (BDPA staff). Use 26 Court for swing space. Complete Hawkins sale.

**Phase 1B** Rent surplus space in 26 Court to pay for renovation. Move departments to 26 Court to enable Phase 1B City Hall renovations.

Disclaimer: The diagrams and images are not to scale and are used for illustrative purposes only.
Phase 1 | 5-Year Financing Strategy

**Total 5-Year Funding**
$87M - $91M+

**Potential Other Sources**
- BWSC Stormwater Demonstration Funding $1M-5M+
- Public/Private Partnerships $TBD
- Restaurant / Plaza Operator $TBD
- Cultural Partner $TBD

**Bond Financing**
Base Capital Project Contribution $60M

**Real Estate Disposition**
- Property Realignment Revenue: $30M+
- Court Renovation Cost: ($44M)
- Court Rental Value: $40M

---

October 2017
### Phase 1 | 5-Year Scope: High Priority Repairs and Public Space Improvements

#### Assessing high priority repairs

- A high-level systems assessment identified roughly $200M of required systems and infrastructural repairs in the building and Plaza within the next 10 years.
- Systems recommended for replacement within 5 years totaled $139M, well above the available funding within the first 5 years.
- Based on the funding available, the 5-year repair scope was further reduced, prioritizing very high priority systems repairs and accessibility on the Plaza and in the main public areas of City Hall. Future phases will

#### 1. Initial estimate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heating Units &amp; Window Replacement, Sprinkler Replacement, Drinking Water Filtration, Roof Drain Replacement, Storefront/Curtainwall, Roof Replacement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Required Repairs with the next 10 Years = $200M

#### 2. Recommended scope based on systems assessment

- **5 Year Repairs = $139M**
- **8-10 Year Repairs = $61M**

#### 3. Recommended scope based on budget available

- **5 Year Repairs = $62.8M**
- **8-10 Year Repairs = $137.2M**

*Costs are Total Project Cost based on February 2016 estimate, and include 35% soft costs and three years of escalation at 5%*
Phase 1 | 5-Year Scope: High Priority Repairs and Public Space Improvements

**Improvements**
- North Entrance Expansion $4.7M
- Transaction Areas Accessibility $4.4M
- Transaction Service Improvements $3.9M
- Lower Level Meeting Room $1.2M
- Plaza Accessibility & Improvements $12.5M
- Elevator Expansion to Courtyard $1.7M

**Phase 1: $91.2M**

**Public Space Improvements** $28.4M

- Plaza Waterproofing & Surface Replacement $26.8M
- Garage Repairs $6M

**Building Required Repairs** $30M

- Building Repairs:
  - City Council Chamber $2.3M
  - Congress St Masonry Repairs $3.5M
  - Heating & Cooling Plant $11M
  - Sprinkler Repairs $1.5M
  - Façade Repairs $2.4M
  - Courtyard Waterproofing & Surface Replacement $8.5M
  - Façade Repairs $2.4M
  - Skylight Reglazing $125K

- Plaza Repairs:
  - Plaza Waterproofing & Surface Replacement $26.8M
  - Garage Repairs $6M

**Building Water & Sewer Commission** $5M

* Costs are Total Project Cost based on March 2017 estimate, and include 35%soft costs and three years of escalation at 5%
Phase 1: Accessibility & Infrastructure Improvements
Chapter 6: Phase 1 Implementation

Phase 1 Scope

* Costs are Total Project Cost based on March 2017 estimate, and include 35% soft costs and three years of escalation at 5%

$12.5M
Plaza Accessibility & Improvements

$32.8M
Plaza Required Repairs

$16M
Building Public Space Improvements

$30M
Building Required Repairs
Chapter 6: Phase 1 Implementation

Future Phase Plaza Scope

- **$2.5M** Congress St Repairs & Improvements
- **$10M** Plaza-level Meeting Rooms & Restaurant Infrastructure
- **$6.6M** Upper Terrace Repairs & Improvements
- **$5.4M** Congress St Entrance Expansion and Renovation
- **$1.3M** Washington Mall Repairs & Improvements
- **$5M** Plaza Elevator

*Costs are Total Project Cost based on March 2017 estimate, and include 35% soft costs and three years of escalation at 5%.*
Phase 1: Public Service & Accessibility Improvements

* Rendering shows full master plan approach. Scope of Phase 1 improvements to be determined.
Phase 1: Second Floor Improvements & Building Repairs

$3.9M Improved and Shared Citizen Service Areas

$4.7M North Entrance Expansion

$30M Building Required Repairs

- City Council Chamber $2.3M
- Congress St Masonry Repairs $3.5M
- Heating & Cooling Plant $11M
- Sprinkler Repairs $1.5M
- Façade Repairs $2.4M
- Courtyard Waterproofing & Surface Replacement $8.5M
- Façade Repairs $2.4M
- Skylight Reglazing $125K

* Costs are Total Project Cost based on March 2017 estimate, and include 35% soft costs and three years of escalation at 5%
Chapter 6: Phase 1 Implementation

Phase 1: Third Floor Improvements

* Costs are Total Project Cost based on March 2017 estimate, and include 35% soft costs and three years of escalation at 5%
Chapter 6: Phase 1 Implementation

Phase 1: Courtyard Improvements

+$1.7M Improved Accessibility

* Costs are Total Project Cost based on March 2017 estimate, and include 35% soft costs and three years of escalation at 5%
### Phase 1 | 5-Year Scope: High Priority Repairs and Public Space Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Project Cost *</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Priority Required Repairs – Building</td>
<td>$30M</td>
<td>$30M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Repairs - Plaza</td>
<td>$32.8M</td>
<td>$32.8M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Plaza Renovation</td>
<td>$12.5M</td>
<td>$12.5M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction Areas Accessibility Improvements</td>
<td>$4.4M</td>
<td>$4.4M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction Areas Service Improvements</td>
<td>$3.9M</td>
<td>$3.9M</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Entrance Expansion</td>
<td>$4.7M</td>
<td>$4.7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Space on 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; or 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Floor</td>
<td>$1.2M</td>
<td>$1.2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevator Expansion to Courtyard</td>
<td>$1.7M</td>
<td>$1.7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSA Terrace, Washington Mall &amp; Congress St Renovation and Repairs</td>
<td>$11.7M</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress St Lobby Expansion</td>
<td>$5.4M</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior Elevator Connecting Plaza to Congress St</td>
<td>$5M</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required Repairs/Operating Costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>$113.3M</strong></td>
<td><strong>$91.2M</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Costs are Total Project Cost based on March 2017 estimate, and include 35% soft costs and three years of escalation at 5%.*
Rethink City Hall: Boston City Hall and Plaza Study

PFD Project #7074
Final Report
October 2017

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor
City of Boston Public Facilities Department

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