Boston City Hall and Plaza Renovations

Community Presentation
09 March 2020

Mayor Martin J. Walsh
City of Boston Operations Cabinet
Public Facilities Department
Tonight’s Meeting

Introductions

Design Overview
  Project Foundations
  A Reinvigorated Civic Heart for Boston
  A Virtual Plaza Tour
  Minor Modification to Zoning

Discussion at the Boards
VISION: Early 1960s
TODAY’S PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

Deteriorating/Inadequate Infrastructure

Accessibility

Transparency

Wayfinding

Limited loading on underground tunnels

Human scale + Comfort
Let’s “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
The Design Process

**MASTER PLAN**
2015-2017

**CONCEPT + SCHEMATIC DESIGN**
8 MONTHS

**DESIGN DOCUMENTATION**
10 MONTHS

**CONSTRUCTION**
18-24 MONTHS

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**High Level Vision + Principles**

- Concept Alternatives
- Refined Conceptual Plan
- Phase 1 Plan
- A Subset of the Concept

**Design Development**

- Design Development
- Construction Documentation

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**KEY COMMUNITY INPUT TO THE DESIGN PROCESS**

- Public + Stakeholder Meetings
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Public Meetings
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Public Meetings
- Stakeholder Meetings

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We are here!
A plaza we can hang out in and play in!

A plaza that can host great events year round!

Shade and comfortable seating!

An energy-efficient plaza

Improved loading capacity

Integrated security + lighting

Demonstration stormwater features!

A universally accessible plaza + building

Better wayfinding

Amenities (food, restrooms, etc)

Honored legacy

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A plaza we can hang out in and play in!
A Reinvigorated Civic Heart of Boston

A Welcoming and Civic Front Yard
A Flexible + Accommodating Event Venue
A Model for Sustainability and Resilience
A Renewed Cultural + Architectural Legacy
Program Elements and Principles

Speakers Corner

One Large Event Space
- Paved
- Accommodates 10K-12K
- Accommodates intensive programs like ice skating

Multiple Smaller Gathering Spaces
- Including Activation of 4th Floor Terrace

Human Comfort
- Shade
- Flexible seating in right-sized spaces

Green Infrastructure
- Including stormwater demonstration

Civic Pavilion +/or Stage
- Flexible, rentable facility
- 40x60’ covered stage
- Vehicular service access

Safe+Accessible Connections
- From Cambridge to Congress
- Into all building entries
- To all gathering spaces
- Well-lit and easy to navigate
- Minimizing stairs
- Accessible surface materials

Play for all ages
- Areas for lawn games
- Adventurous playscapes for children

Food Provision
- Areas for food trucks
- Possible Cafe/Retail space
Full Concept

LEGEND

1. Drop off + Bus/Bike Hub
2. Congress Civic Space
3. Adventure Play Slope
4. North Entry Court and Re-opened North Entry
5. Hanover Promenade
6. Terraces + Runnels
7. Main Plaza
8. Upper Plaza
9. MBTA Terraces
10. Sears Terraces
11. Speakers Corner + 4th Floor Ramp Access
12. Accessible Main Entry
13. South Congress Terrace
14. Faneuil Promenade
Phase 1 Plan

LEGEND

- Phase 1 Limit of Work
- Congress Street Civic Space
- Hanover Promenade
- Bus Shelter + Plantings
- Adventure Play Slope
- North Entry Court + Re-opened North Entry
- Civic Amphitheater Steps
- Planted Slope
- Interactive Art Terrace
- Cafe Terrace
- Main Plaza
- Upper Plaza/Gathering Place
- Cambridge Terraces Speakers
- Corner
- Access to 4th Floor Terrace
- Main Entry Walk
PROPOSED AERIAL
ORIGINAL PLAZA STRUCTURE

- Trapezoid stairs
- Depressed Fountain
- Fanning Steps
- Staggered Steps

Granite Stair Treads in a Brick Field

Expansion Joints + Brick Patterning
GOAL:
- Honor the original structure of the plaza, with granite banding, brick paver field with radial jointing, and iconic viewsheds to the building.

HOW?
- Reinterpret the granite banding as paving bands, benches and walls. Honor the radial banding at the main plaza and west facade, more whimsy at north facade
- Honor the original radial jointing in the main plaza and orthogonal jointing adjacent to the building
- Honor the object in the northwest corner of the plaza
100% of plaza spaces and building entries universally accessible

+ 1 newly re-opened public entry to the building

+3K new places to sit throughout the plaza

12K square feet of destination adventure playscape

11K square feet of terraces for pop-up play and interactive public art
BOSTON’S MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY + RESILIENCE

- 5x increase in permeable surfaces to soak up stormwater
- +100 new trees improving shade, scale and air quality
- 50 lights replaced with efficient LED technology
- 22.5K square feet of granite and brick paving re-used or recycled
BOSTON’S MOST FLEXIBLE AND ACCOMMODATING EVENT VENUE

7 “plug and play” locations with infrastructure for events

10-12K people accommodated in one large crowd on main plaza (20-25K on plaza overall)

3 small event and gathering spaces

1 new civic building to host and support events
EXISTING VIEW FROM CONGRESS STREET
WELCOMING GATEWAYS TO AN INCLUSIVE PLAZA
(View from Congress Street)
EXISTING VIEW OF MAIN PLAZA FROM CAMBRIDGE STREET
WELCOMING GATEWAYS TO AN INCLUSIVE PLAZA
(View from Cambridge Street)
BOSTON’S MOST ICONIC AND FLEXIBLE EVENT VENUE

(Winter view across Main Plaza)
EXISTING VIEW FROM MAIN PLAZA TOWARDS CONGRESS STREET
UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO COMFORTABLE ACTIVE PLACES
(View down Hanover Promenade)
EXISTING VIEW FROM NORTH ENTRY TOWARDS GSA AND CONGRESS STREET
A UNIQUE DESTINATION PLAYSCAPE FOR ALL GENERATIONS

(View of Playscape Entry)
EXISTING VIEW AT NORTH ENTRY
A CIVIC AND ACTIVE NORTH ENTRY
EXISTING VIEW OF STEPS AND MBTA VENT STRUCTURE AT CONGRESS STREET
EXISTING VIEW OF MAIN ENTRANCE AND RAMP TO 4TH FLOOR TERRACE
A WELCOMING MAIN ENTRY AND SPEAKERS CORNER
(View of West Facade)
A FLEXIBLE SPEAKERS CORNER (View of West Facade during speaking event)
A Reinvigorated Civic Heart of Boston

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A Model for Sustainability and Resilience
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A Reinvigorated Civic Heart of Boston
Minor Modification to Zoning
Minor Modification

• A modification to the plan that does not substantially change the primary goals of the Government Center Urban Renewal Plan.
Parcel 11 – City Hall Plaza

• Currently the Government Center Urban Renewal Plan only allows for “Public Open Space” Land Uses.

• A minor modification to Parcel 11 in the Government Center Urban Renewal Plan would include the addition of “Community Uses” to be included with “Public Open Space” as Land Use Requirements.
Minor Modification Process

• 30 Day Notice to DHCD – Department of Housing and Community Development
• 30 Day Notice to the Boston City Council
• Community Feedback
• BPDA Board Vote
Thank you!

Please join us at the boards to discuss questions and comments with the city and design team. You may also fill out a comment card with your thoughts.