

Memorandum



To: Alex Smith, Director Art Commission
From: Erin Kindt, Project Manager, DPP
Date: November 28, 2023
Re: Request for Art Commission Review

We respectfully request to be included on the Art Commission agenda for December 13th for Concept Approval for improvements to the Municipal Services Building's Thomas Paine Plaza.

A brief description of the project follows, and drawings will be submitted by the deadline on Wednesday December 6, 2023. Please note that this project was previously presented to the Art Commission in July 2023 however, immediately following that meeting our project budget was reduced to \$9M resulting in a revised design to fall within our new funding parameters.

The Municipal Services Building ("MSB") and Thomas Paine Plaza were designed by Vincent Kling in 1962 during a transformative era in Philadelphia's city planning. The project consolidated public services for the growing city government into a 16-story building and raised plaza on a site next to City Hall that had long served as a public gathering space for concerts, speeches, and protests.

With a grand below-grade concourse and full basement of municipal offices, MSB's Paine Plaza sits above the street level and is accessed by several wide stairs and a ramp. Although the Plaza has served as a public square, backdrop for tourist photos and protest site, Paine Plaza suffers from its lack of visibility, seating, physical amenities and shade.

While Phase 1 of this project focused on waterproofing the roof deck of the plaza, Phase 2 design improvements will reinvent Thomas Paine Plaza's role as a dynamic civic square for the present day. Reimagining the plaza as vibrant, accessible, and inviting space, the new design supports MSB employees and their constituents, while creating new spaces for citizens, civic organizations and visitors to visit and relax, or protest and be heard.

Managed by the Department of Public Property, the estimated project cost for Paine Plaza improvements is \$9M. Improvements include:

- New main entrance accessible ramp / sloped walk
- New landscape
- Large plaza associated with Jacques Lipchitz' *Government of the People*

- Designated skateboarding area
- New lighting
- New pavers / paving
- New seating interventions and furniture
- Shade structures
- Bicycle parking and access

Thank you for your attention. Please contact me directly if you need more information.

cc: Valerie Bergman, Deputy Commissioner, DPP: Valerie.Bergman@phila.gov
Pedro Pinto, Project Director, DPP: Pedro.Pinto@Phila.gov
Marguerite Anglin, Public Art Director, OACCE: Marguerite.Anglin@phila.gov
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Sam Emory, Ground Reconsidered: emory@groundreconsidered.com

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA Plaza Improvement Project

Reconsidered
Ground
Landscape Architecture

the
lighting
practice

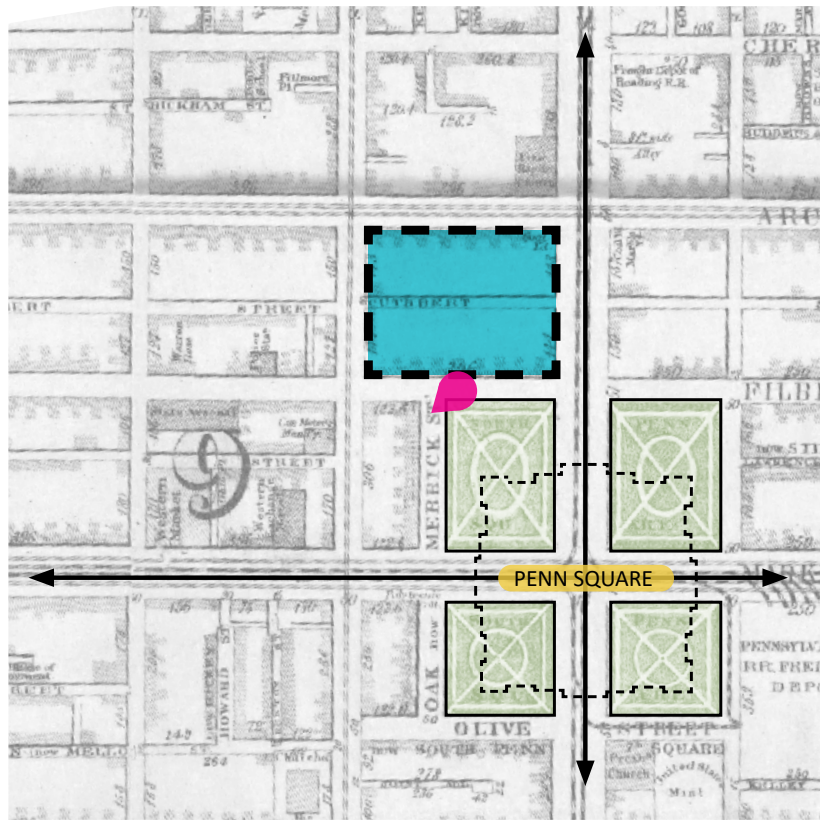
KSE
KS Engineers, P.C.



Department of
Public Property

RESIDENTIAL FABRIC

Mid-1800s: Project site was typical Philadelphia residential rowhouse fabric.



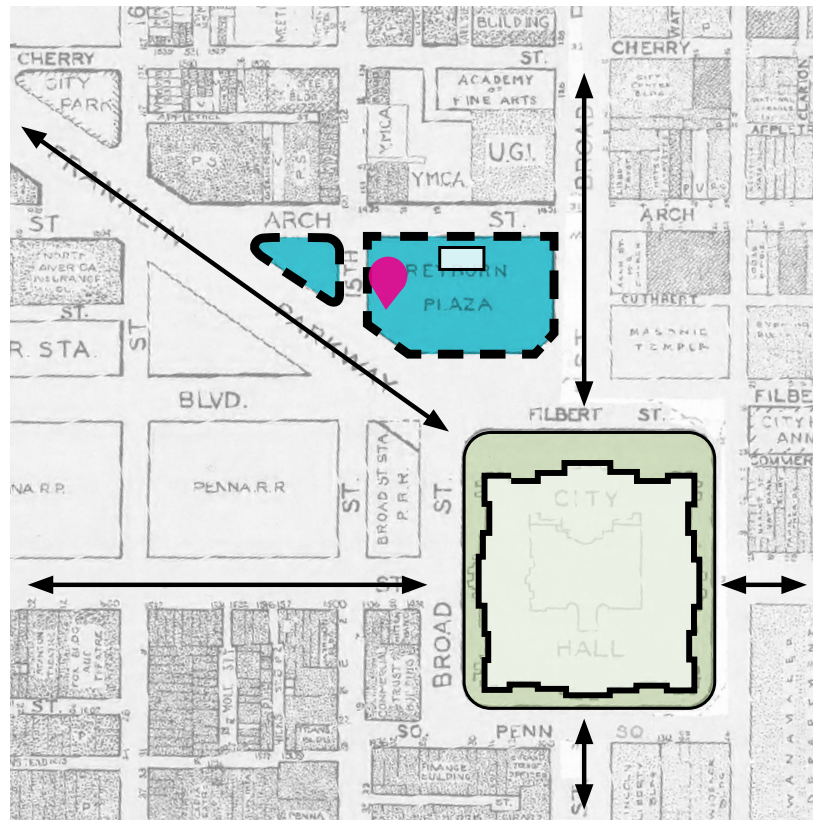
1862 Philadelphia Atlas



Image: Free Library - Historical Images

REYBURN PLAZA

1917: The site is redeveloped as Reyburn Plaza in tandem with the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.



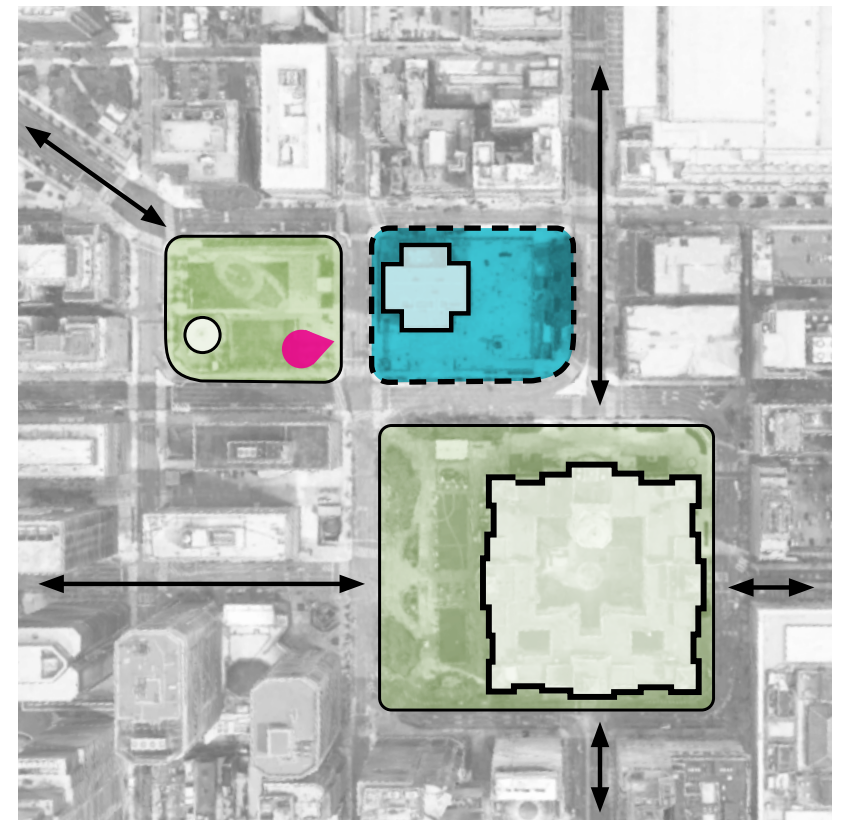
1942 WPA Land Use Map



Image: Temple University Archives

MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING

1962: The site is redesigned under Edmund Bacon's vision for downtown Philadelphia.



2023 Aerial Image



Image: Vincent Kling & Associates

SITE HISTORY

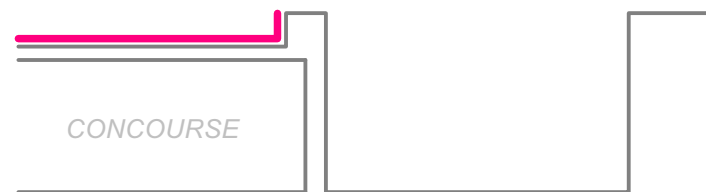
THOMAS PAINE PLAZA
Plaza Improvement Project

Ground Reconsidered
Landscape Architecture

Department of
Public Property

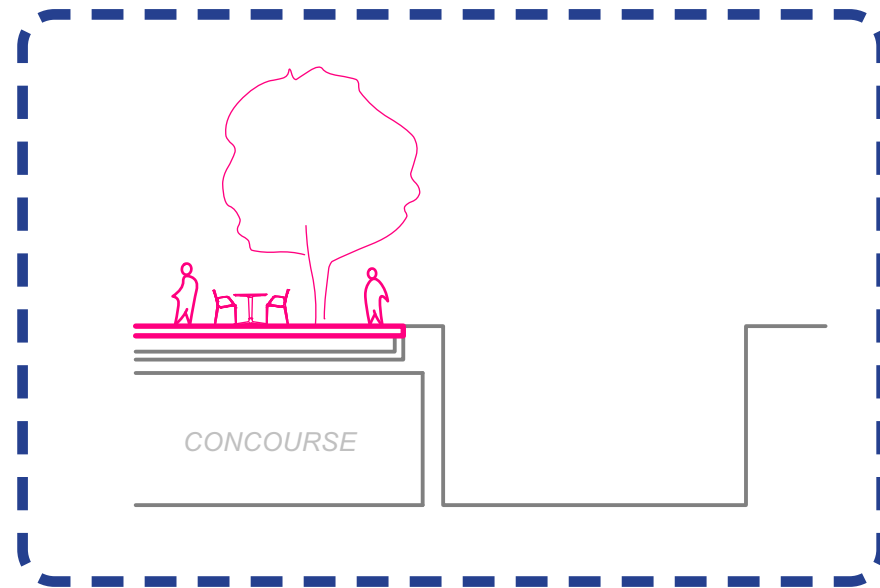
1 ROOF WATERPROOFING PROJECT

Replace waterproofing membrane across extent of plaza



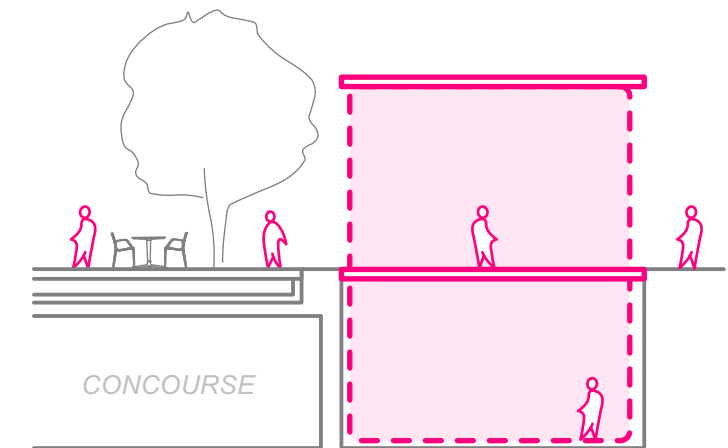
2 PLAZA IMPROVEMENTS

Make improvements to the design of the plaza, within existing perimeter walls and above structural deck

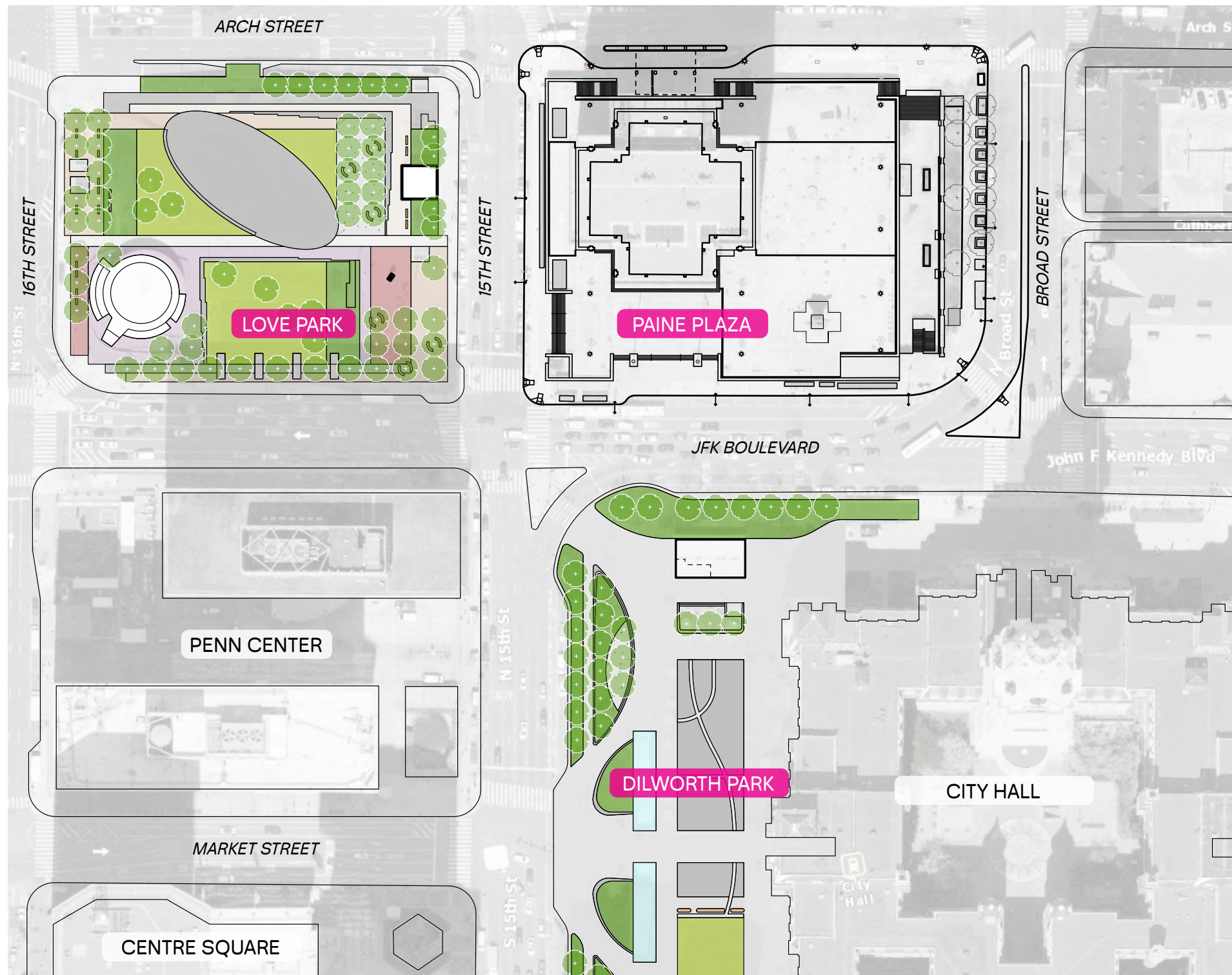


3 FUTURE PHASE

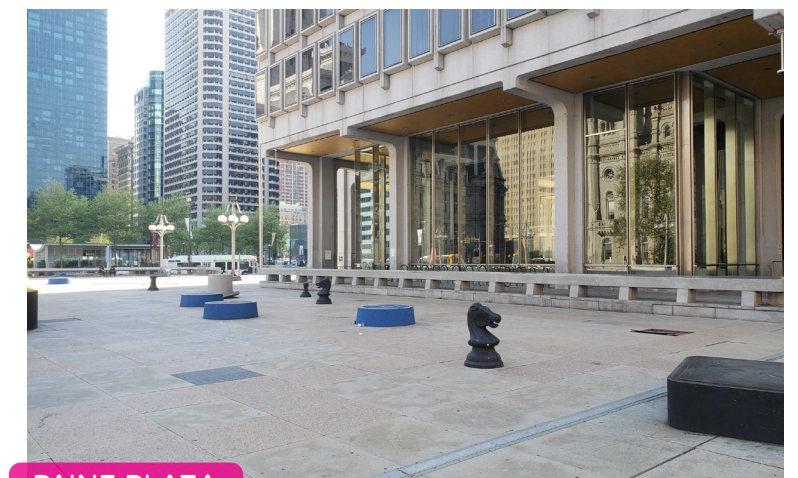
Infill the sunken plaza area and further connect to surrounding sidewalks per Philadelphia 2035 plan



PROJECT PHASES



DILWORTH PARK



PAINE PLAZA



LOVE PARK

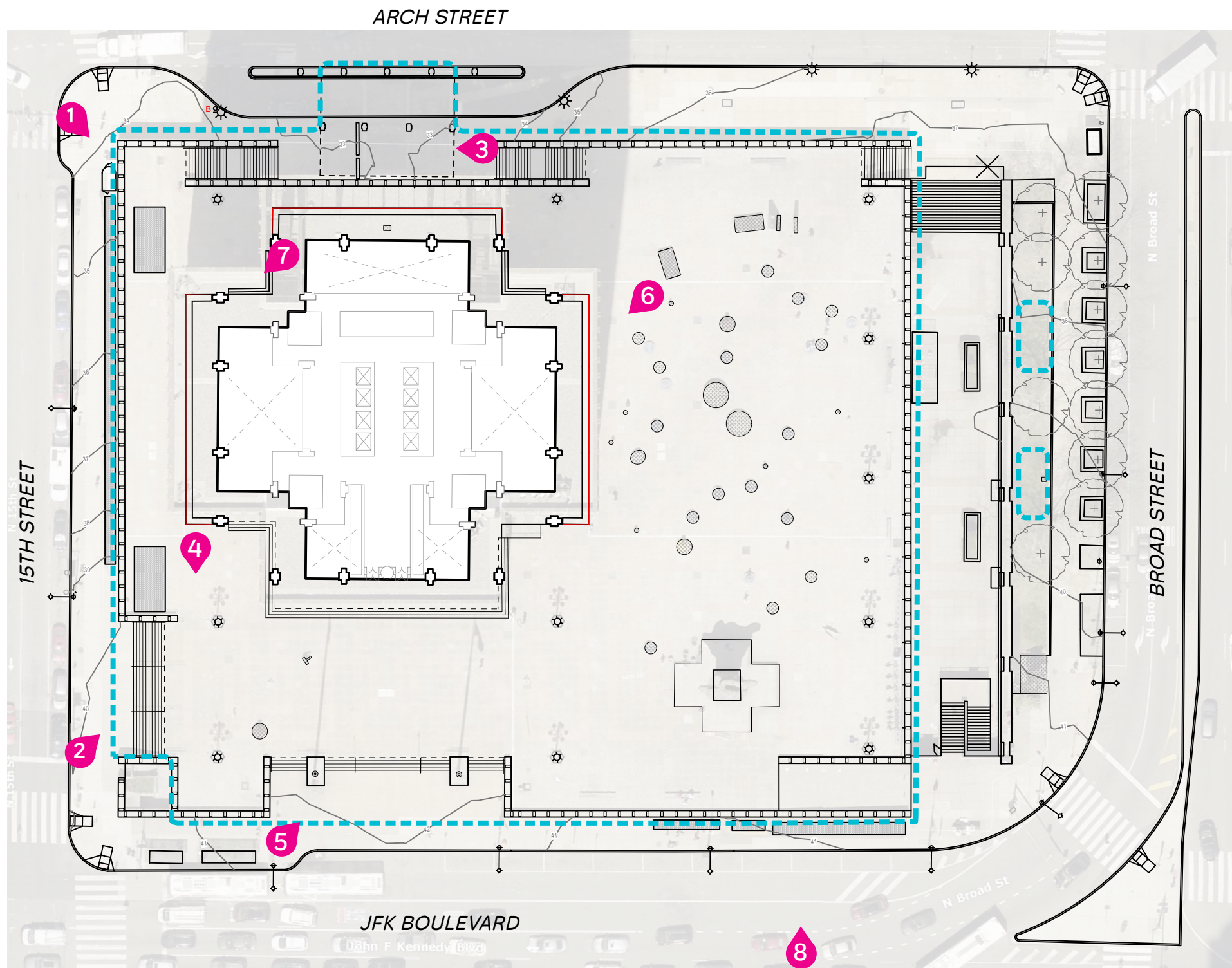
Image: PPR

SITE CONTEXT

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA
Plaza Improvement Project

Ground Reconsidered
 Landscape Architecture

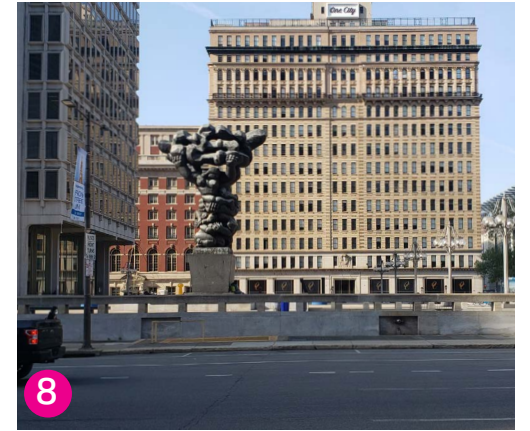
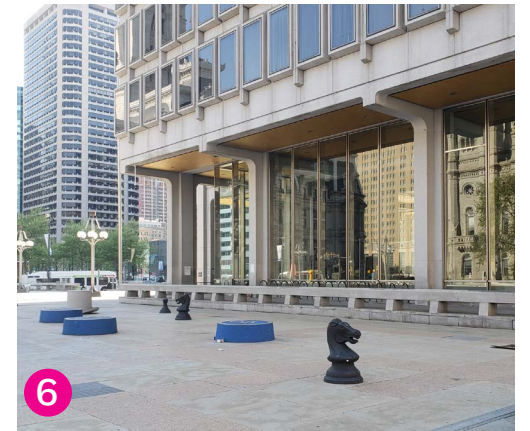
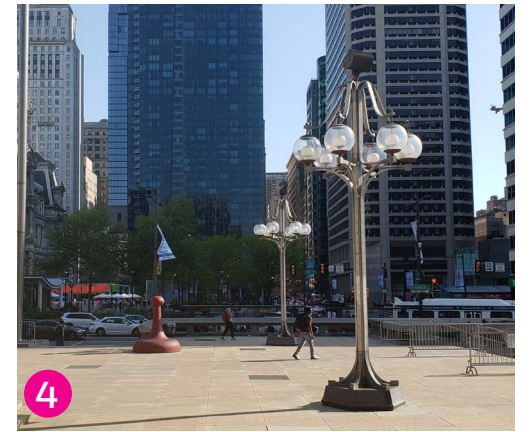
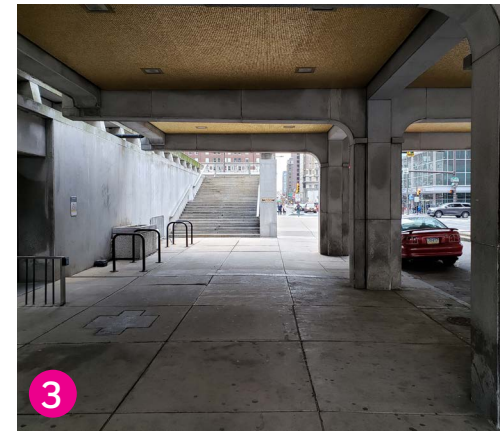
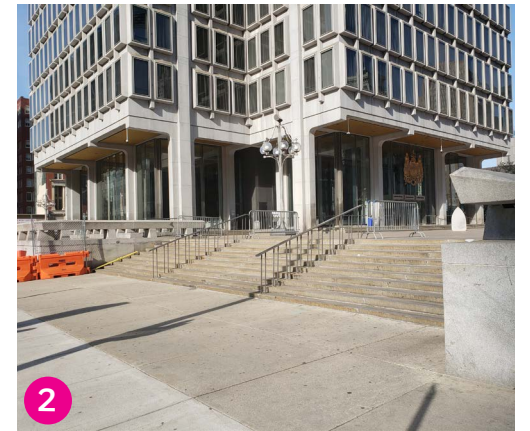
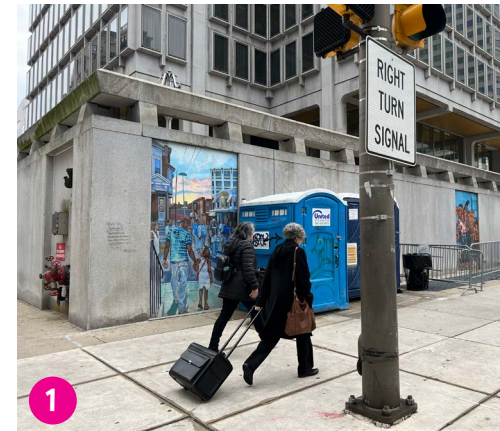
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 PROJECT AREA

EXISTING CONDITIONS

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA
Plaza Improvement Project



The plaza will remain a civic stage to host protests, demonstrations, and large events.

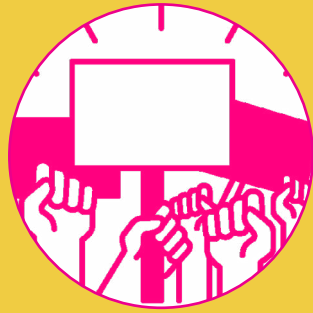


Photo © Conrad Brenner



Mural by Russel Craig. Photo © Kimberly Paynter

Based on survey feedback received, the top priorities for improving the plaza include:

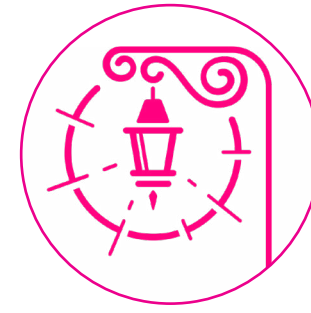
1 PLANTS AND GREEN SPACE



2 SAFE PLACES TO SIT, RELAX, AND GATHER



3 A VIBRANT, INVITING ATMOSPHERE



4 IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY



Here's some of what we heard about each of these priorities:

"Please **ACTIVATE THIS SPACE!** Rotating garden treatment with seating areas for gathering like in front of City Hall that can be activated for a variety of uses."

"Create several **OUTDOOR SEATING AREAS** that are cleaned daily, especially in the mornings."

"Please remember it's intention to be a **PUBLIC SPACE TO BE ENJOYED BY ALL** who visit our city."

"A **WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE** where it's **ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE...**"

"It is important to make a space that is **WELCOMING TO ALL!**"

"Focus on **GREEN SPACE.**"

"It would be great to have some **GREENERY** to make the space **SHADY** on hot days."

"**A LOT OF SEATING, NATURE, AND SHADE!**"

Need **USABLE SPACE** for employees working in MSB

"I would like to see **COLOR**"

"The new Plaza must have a **BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE** environment and be **INVITING TO USERS**, including families and City employees."

"It should be as **INVITING AND ACCESSIBLE** as possible for all Philadelphians..."

The design addresses these priorities in the following ways:

- adds shade trees
- adds plant beds
- locates seating near plants

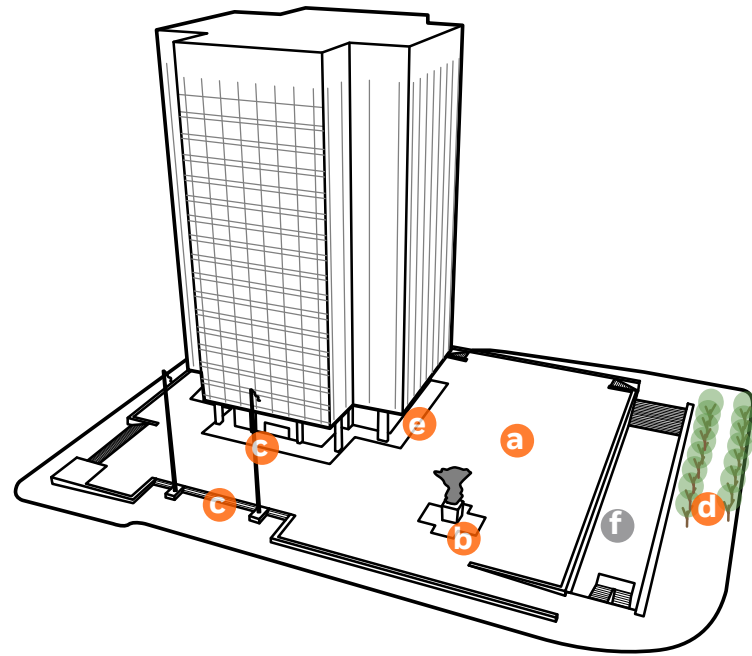
- creates seating near building
- makes space for outside meetings and lunch
- provides variety of seat types and locations

- adds new lighting throughout
- provides space for public art
- improves views from sidewalk to plaza

- sloped walk or ramp from JFK Boulevard sidewalk
- sloped walk to MSB entry
- better circulation and wayfinding through site

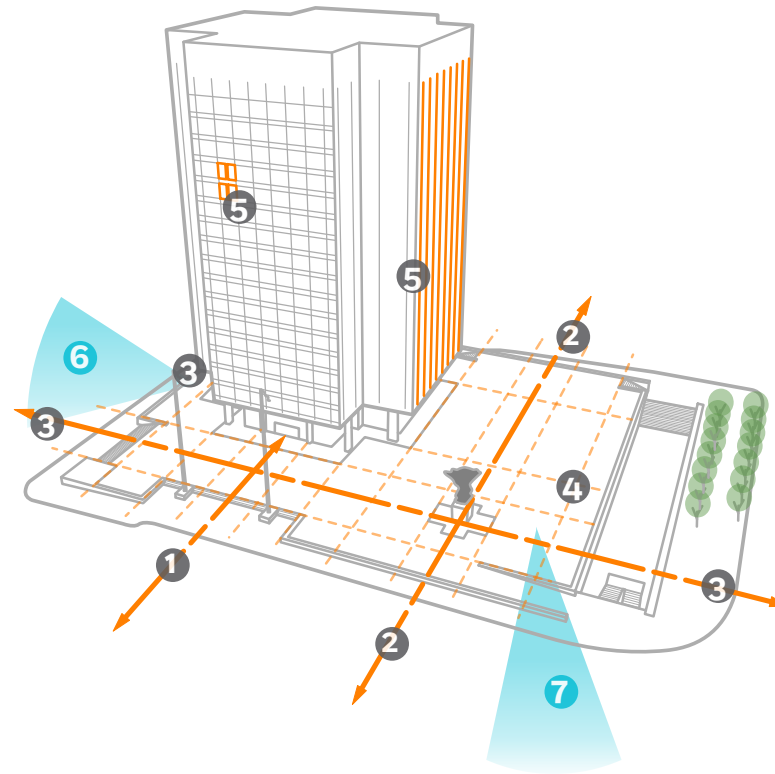
ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

SITE INVENTORY



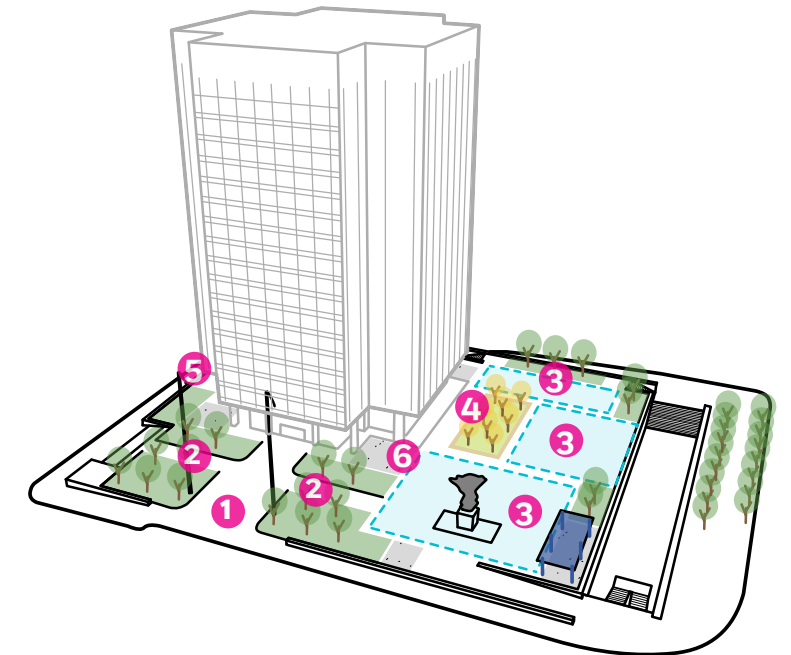
- a** Underutilized and undefined plaza
- b** *Government of the People* sculpture
- c** Non-accessible arrival sequence
- d** Limited shade trees
- e** Perimeter of MSB uninviting
- f** Sunken courtyard (not in scope)

SITE POTENTIAL



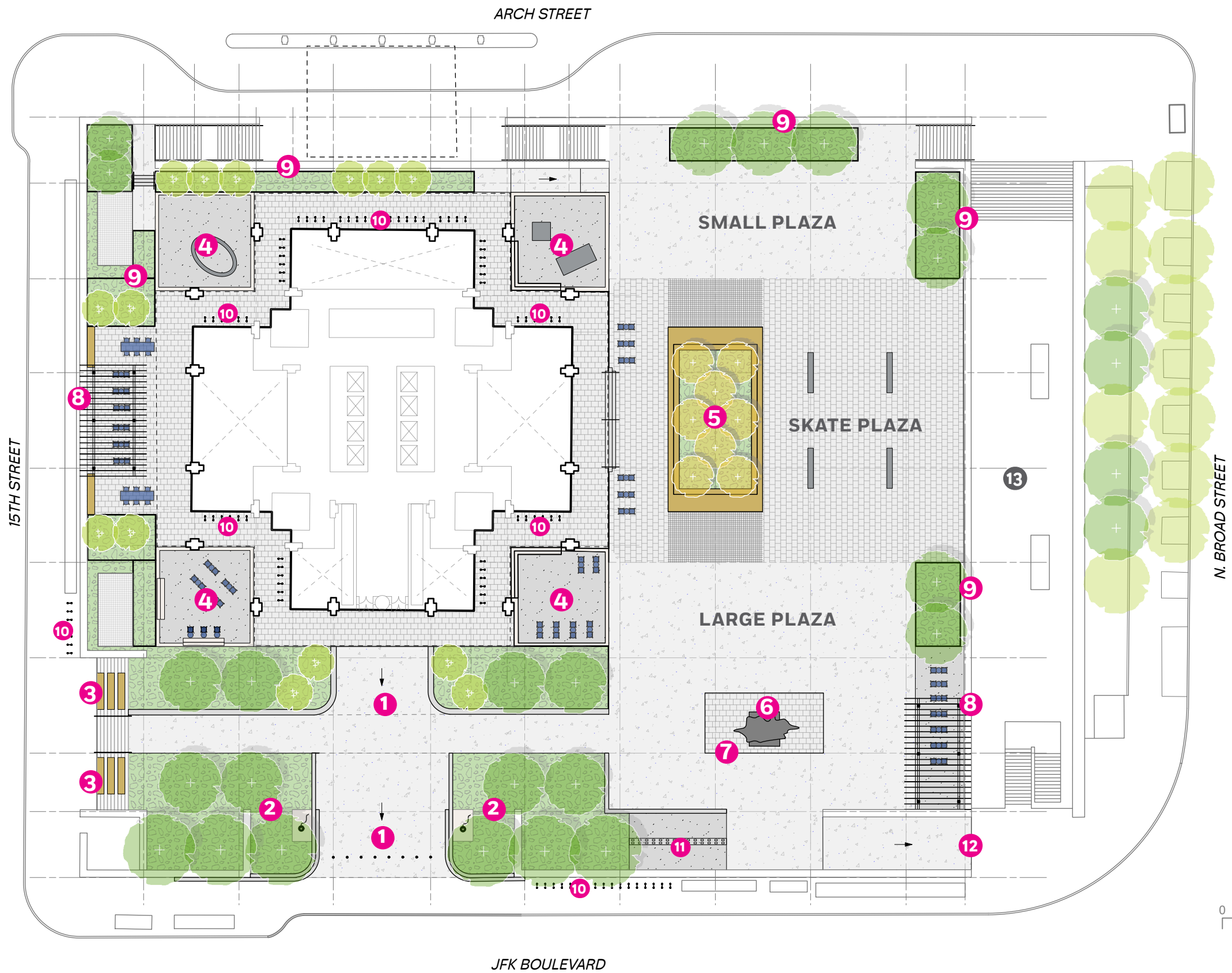
- 1** Axis through MSB and Dilworth Park
- 2** Axis through City Hall corner tower + statue
- 3** Axis from Love Park to Masonic Temple
- 4** Regulating lines across plaza
- 5** Rhythm of linear fins + windows
- 6** Views of Love Park
- 7** Views of City Hall

SITE DESIGN



- 1** Accessible arrival sequence
- 2** Arrival grove + seating
- 3** Defined plaza spaces
- 4** Central seating element + grove
- 5** West terrace
- 6** Exterior rooms at MSB corners

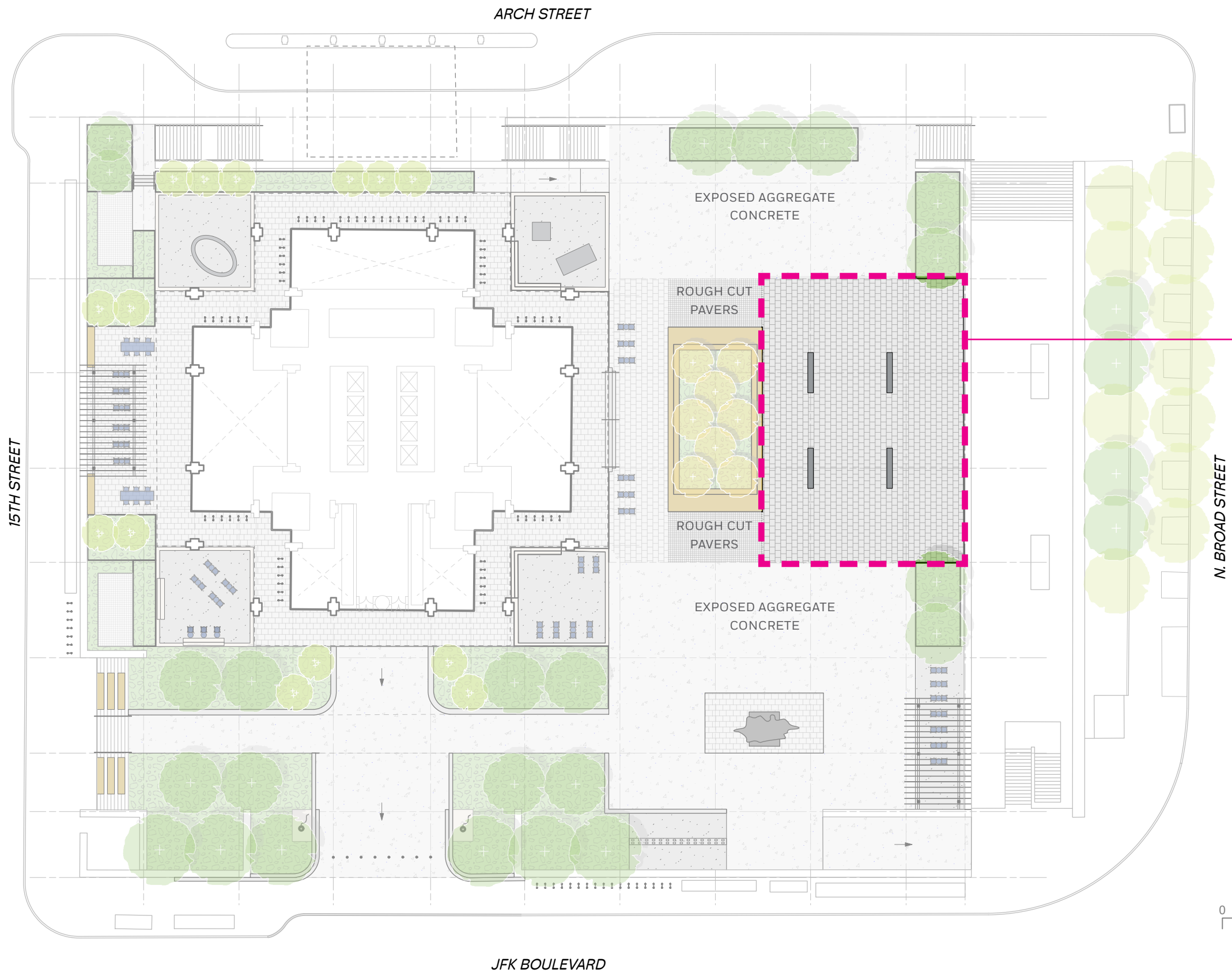
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT



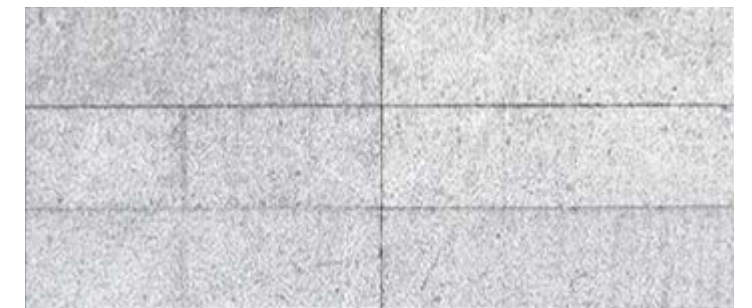
SPACES + ELEMENTS

- 1 New sloped walk flanked by seatwalls
- 2 Arrival grove
- 3 Terraced seating
- 4 Seating areas at MSB corners
- 5 Grove / seating
- 6 *Government of the People*
- 7 Stage / platform
- 8 Trellis structure
- 9 Planters at plaza perimeter
- 10 Bike parking
- 11 Indego bike share station
- 12 Existing sloped walk
- 13 Sunken plaza (not in scope)

PROPOSED PLAN



FLEXIBLE USE SKATE PLAZA

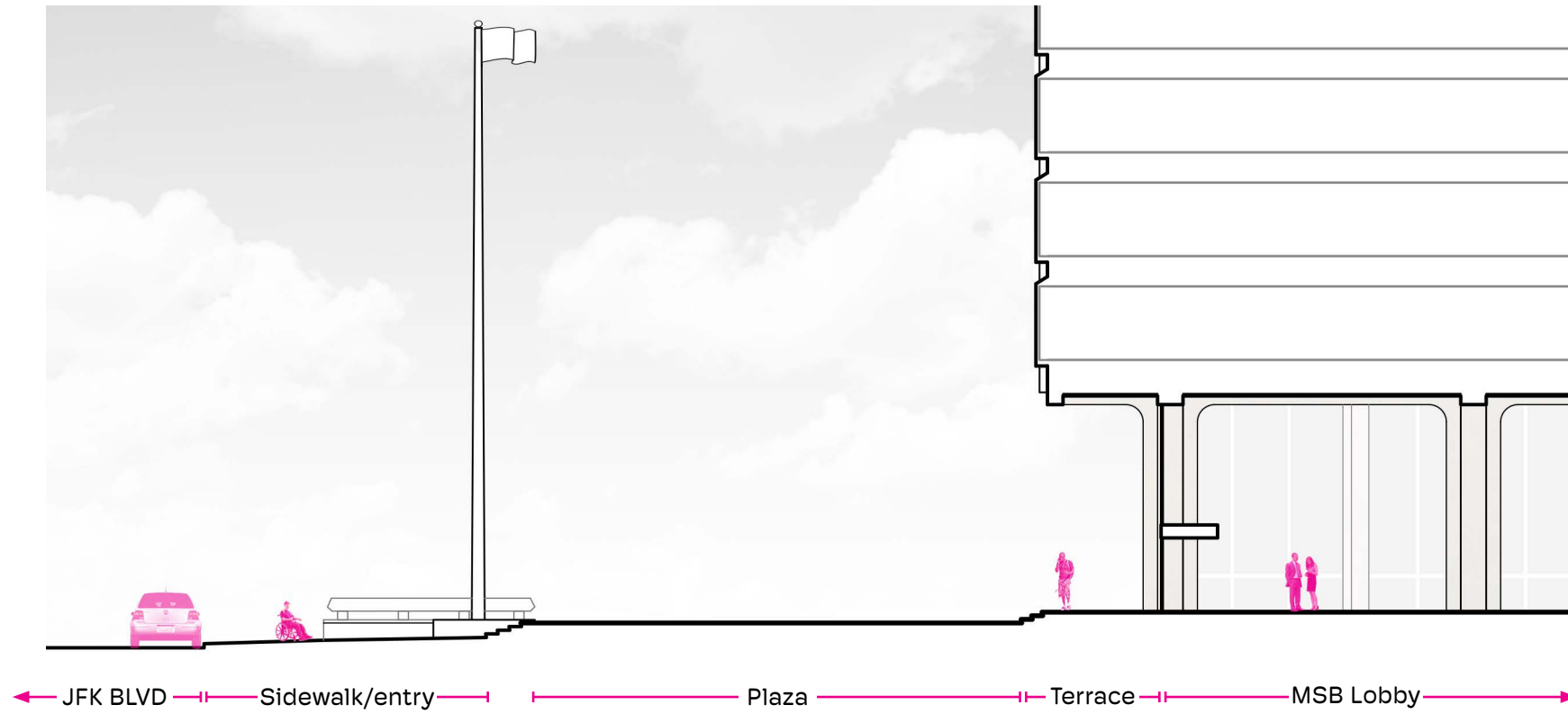


Pavement image: Jose Hevia

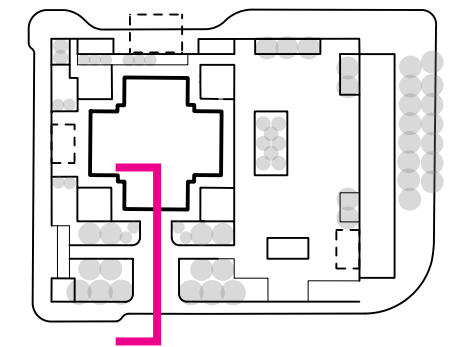
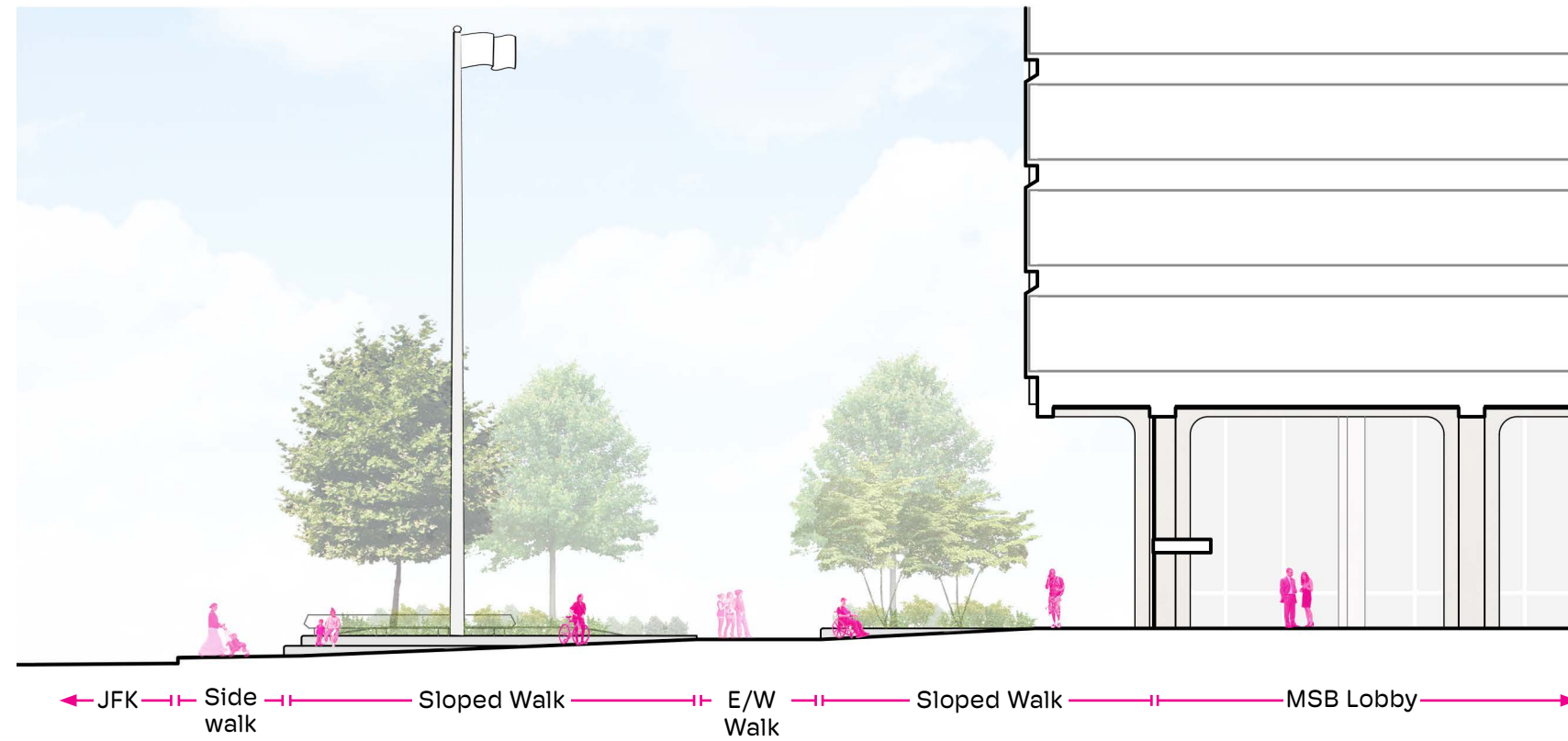


PROPOSED PLAN - SKATE AREA

EXISTING



PROPOSED

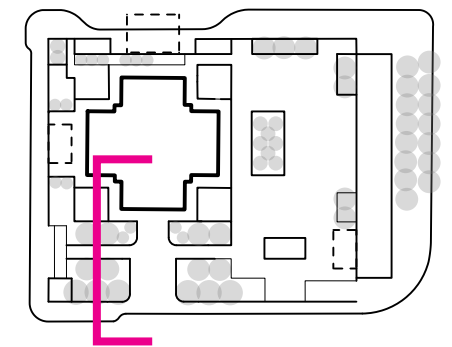
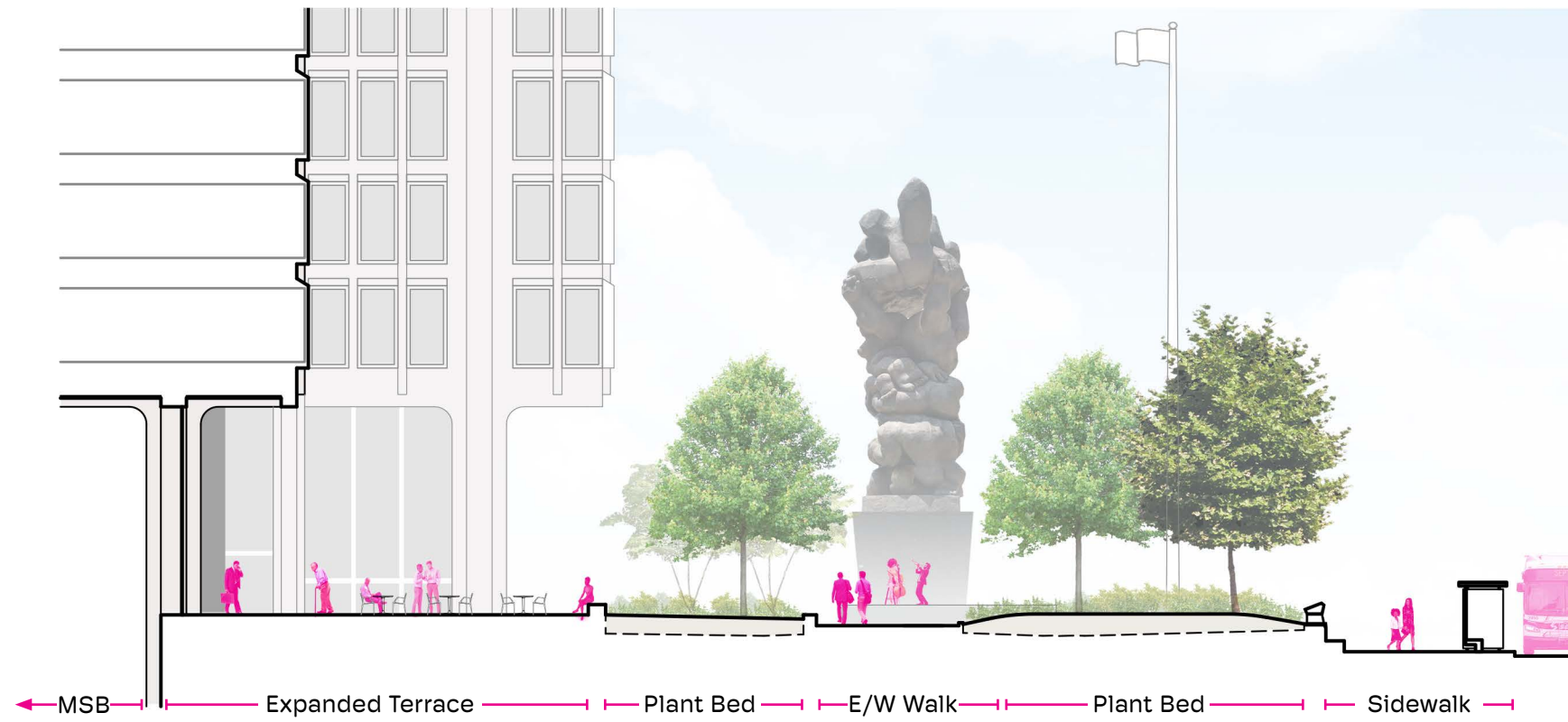


SITE SECTIONS - JFK BOULEVARD ENTRY

EXISTING



PROPOSED



SITE SECTIONS - PATH FROM 15TH STREET



Granite seat walls



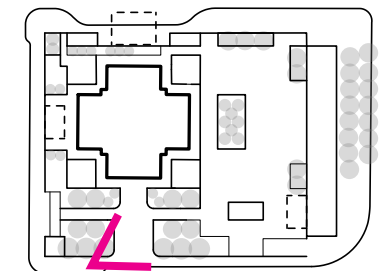
Ornamental trees



Accessible entry path



Arrival grove



Site arrival at JFK Boulevard

SITE PERSPECTIVES



Arrival grove



Granite plaza pavers

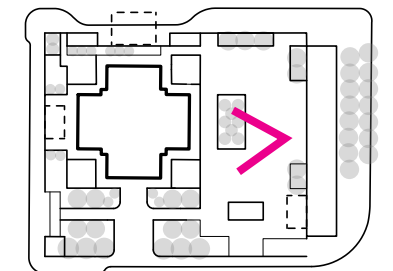
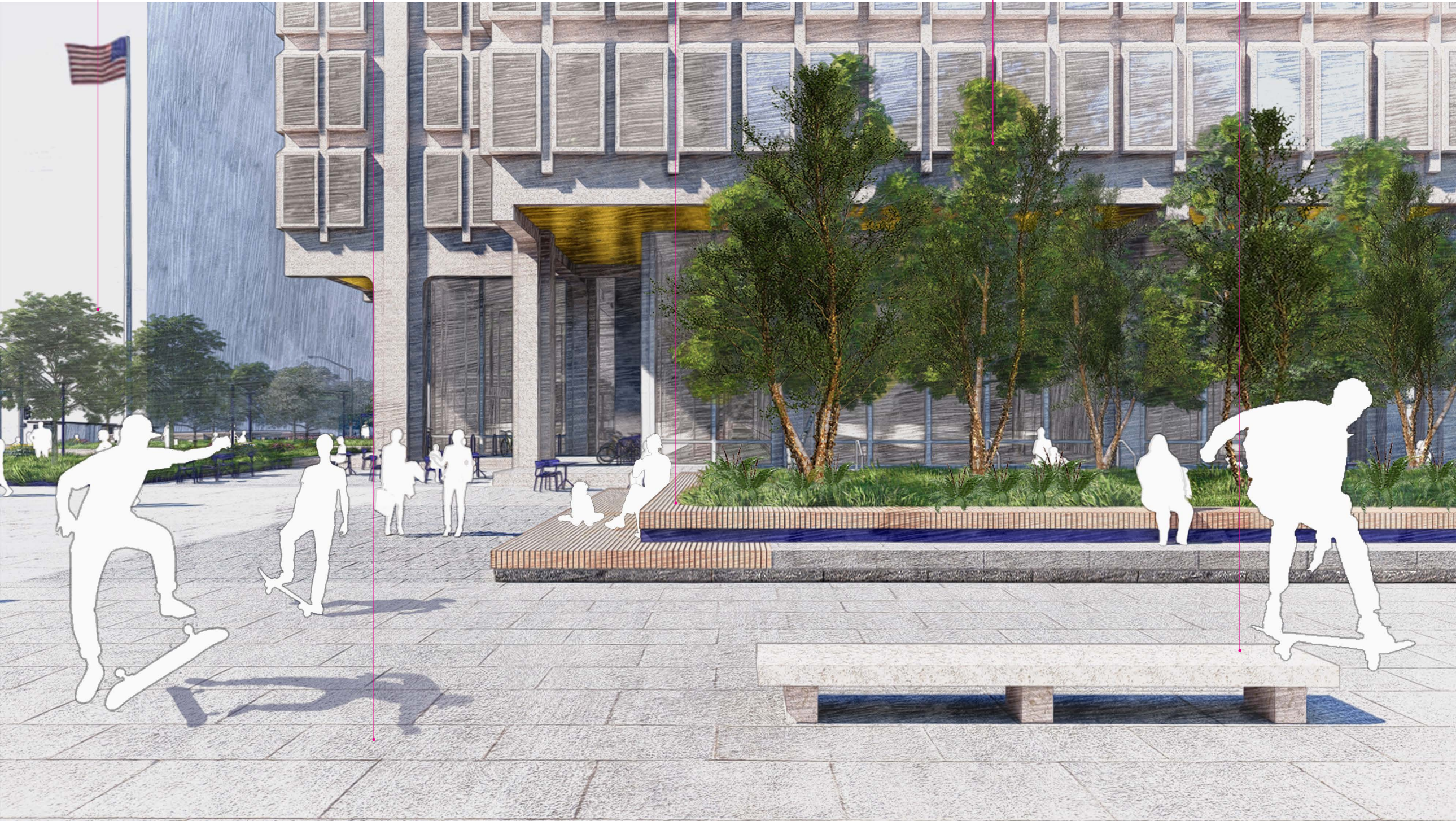


Granite + wood seating



Plaza grove

Salvaged granite bench



Skate Plaza

SITE PERSPECTIVES

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA
Plaza Improvement Project

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Bike racks



Plaza grove



Perimeter planters

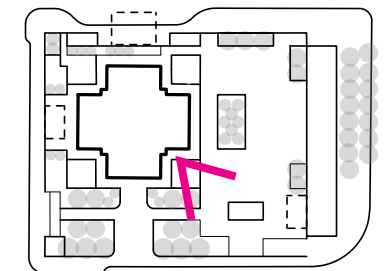


Flexible seating



Shade trellis

Government of the People



View to Large Plaza

SITE PERSPECTIVES



Shade trellis



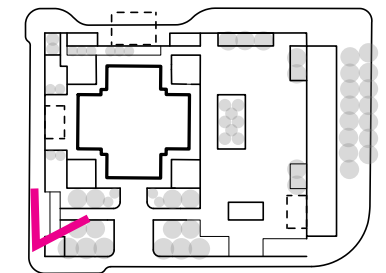
Plant beds



Terraced seating



Arrival grove



Site arrival at 15th Street

SITE PERSPECTIVES

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA
Plaza Improvement Project

Ground Reconsidered
Landscape Architecture

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Public Property



- 1** Type A20 & A21
Retrofit Downlights
- 2** Type D1
Railing Light
- 3** Type M1
Bench Light
- 4** Type M2
Ingrade Tree Uplight
- 5** Type M4
Stringlight Accent
- 6** Type P2
Post-top Pole Light
- 7** Type P1
Pole Mounted Flood Light
- 8** Type M2
In-grade Statue Accent
- 9** Type D3
Pole Mounted Flag Accent
- 10** Type L1
Cylinder Sconces
At Trellis Structures
- 11** Type D17
Driveway Light

EXTERIOR LIGHTING CONCEPTS

Trellis downlights

MSB soffit downlights

Pedestrian poles



String light accents

Bench lights

Handrail lights

EXTERIOR LIGHTING - NIGHT VIEW

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA
Plaza Improvement Project



Ground Reconsidered
Landscape Architecture





A20 A21



M4



P1



D1



D3



L1



M2



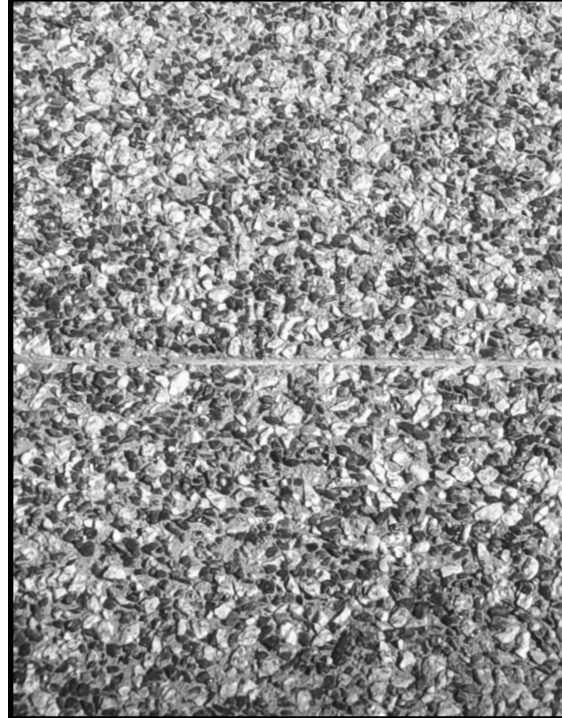
P2

LIGHT FIXTURE SELECTIONS

GRANITE PAVERS



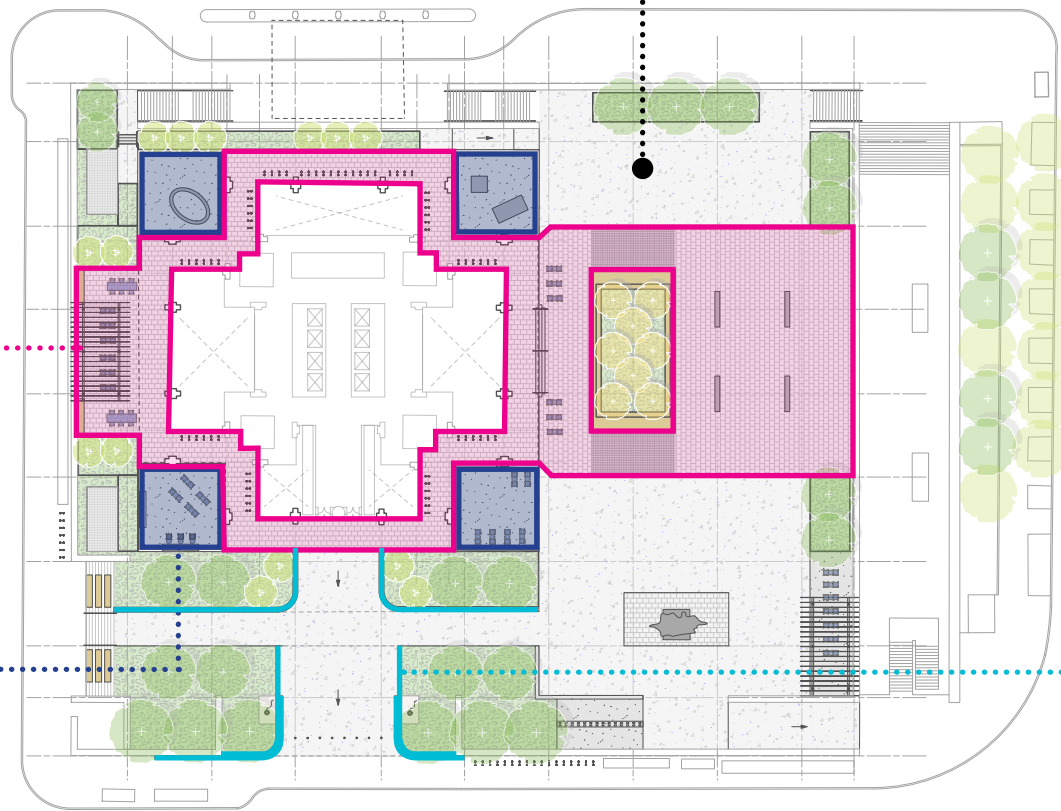
EXPOSED AGGREGATE CONCRETE



GRANITE SEAT WALLS



STONE FINES



View of seat walls

MATERIALS

BUILT-IN SEATING



Wood seat tops on existing stairs

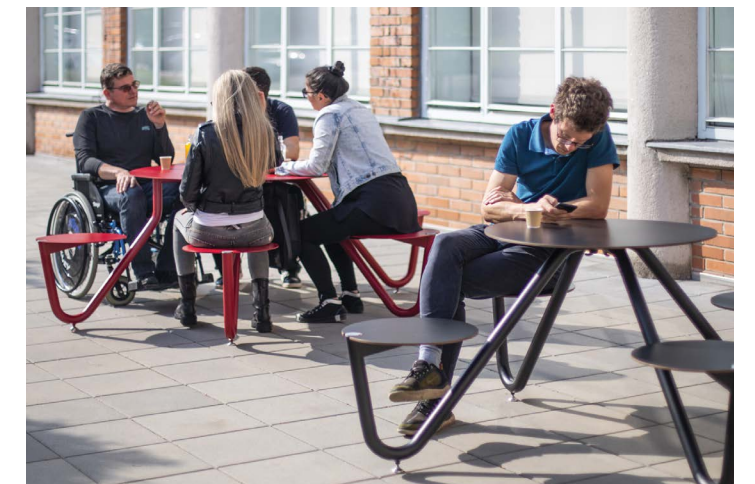
BICYCLE RACKS



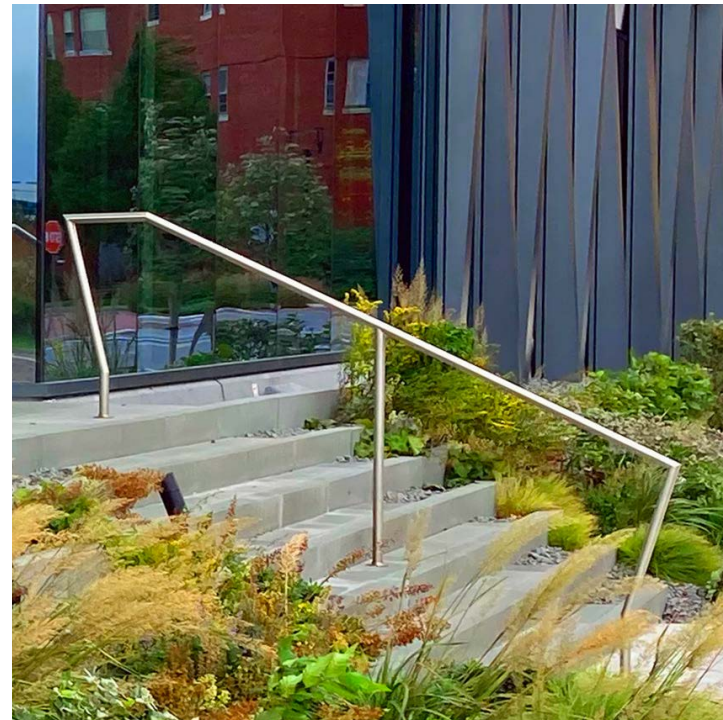
PLANTERS



PICNIC-STYLE BENCHES + TABLES



HANDRAILS



Stainless Steel

TRASH RECEPTACLE



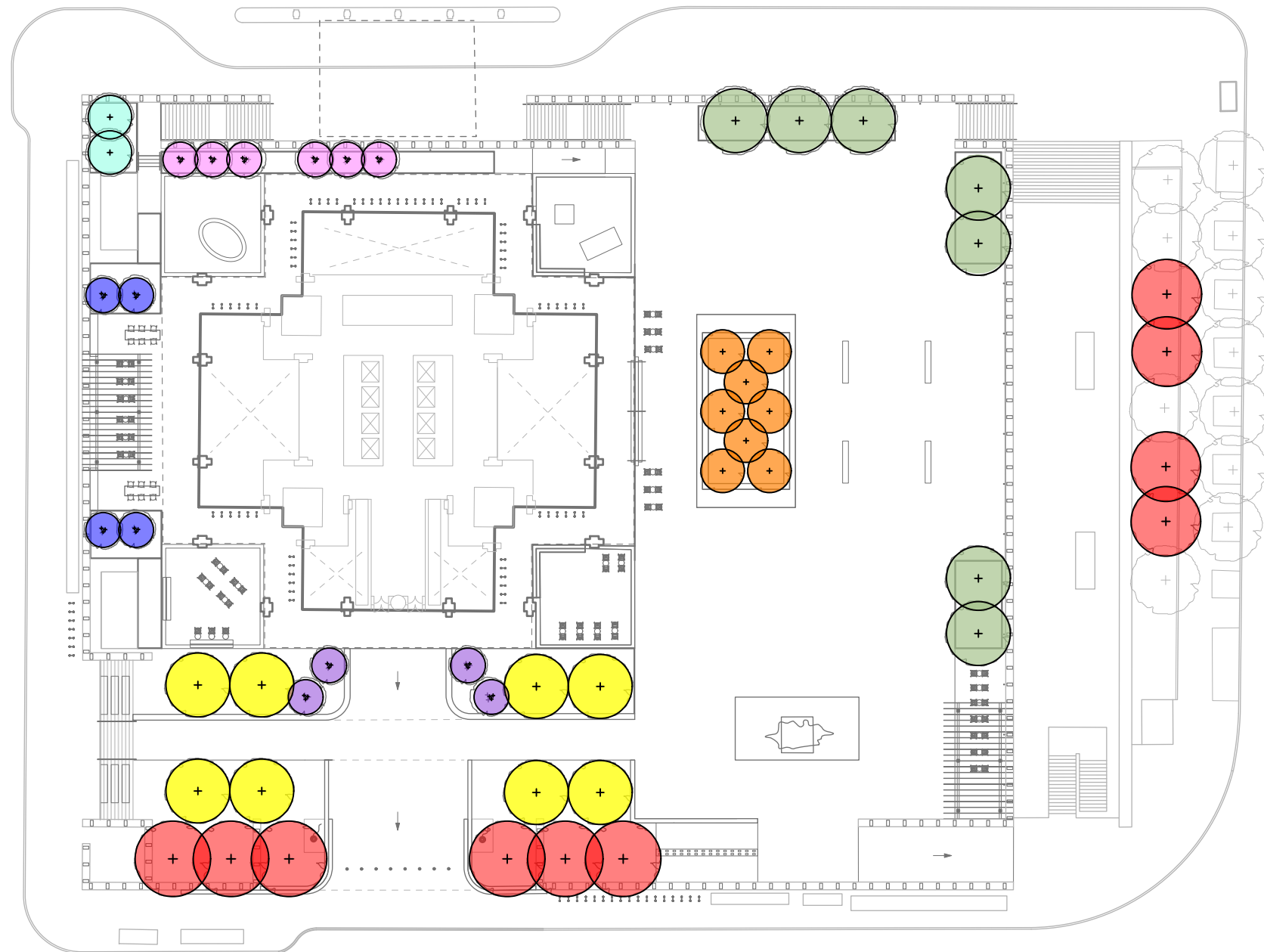
ACCENT COLOR



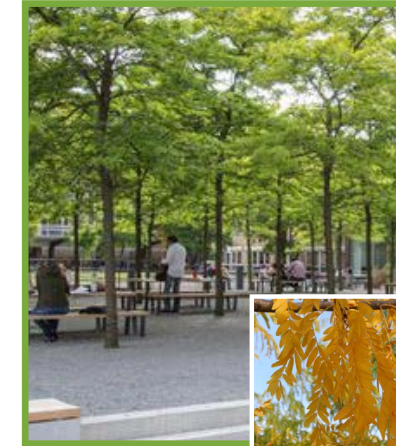
FLEXIBLE CHAIRS + TABLES



FURNISHINGS + COMPONENTS



EAST PLAZA PLANTERS



'Shademaster' Honey Locust
Gleditsia triacanthos inermis
'Shademaster'

ARRIVAL GROVE



'October Glory' Red Maple
Acer rubrum 'October Glory'

PERIMETER TREE



'Morton Circle' London Plane Tree
Platanus x acerifolia 'Morton Circle'

NW CORNER PLANTER



Shawnee Brave Baldcypress
Taxodium distichum 'Mickelson'

PLAZA GROVE



River Birch
Betula nigra 'DURA-HEAT'

BUILDING ENTRY



'Constellation' Dogwood
Cornus rutgerensis 'Rutcan'

WEST TERRACE



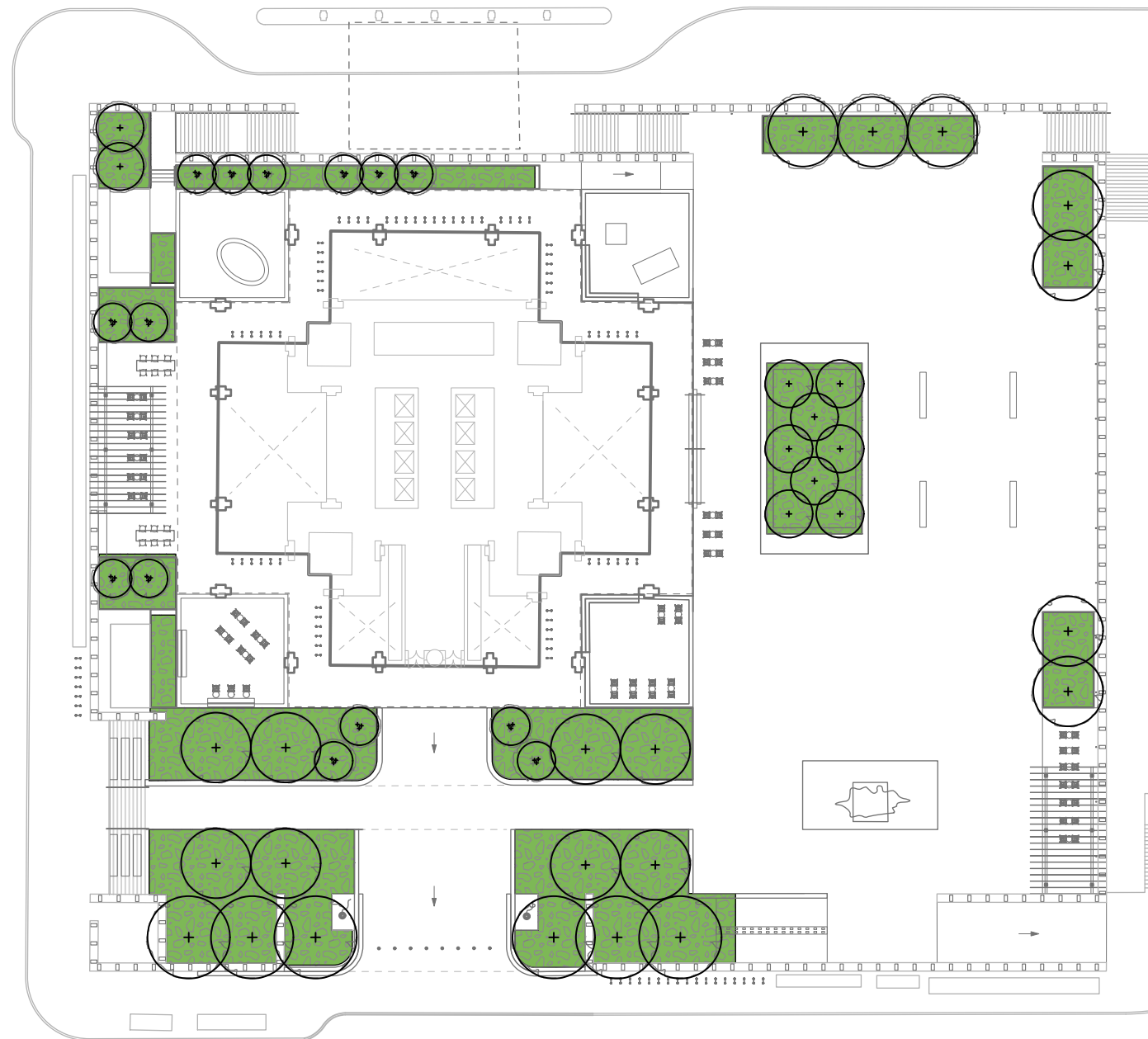
Smoketree
Cotinus coggygria

NORTH PLANTER



Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry
Amelanchier x grandiflora
'Autumn Brilliance'

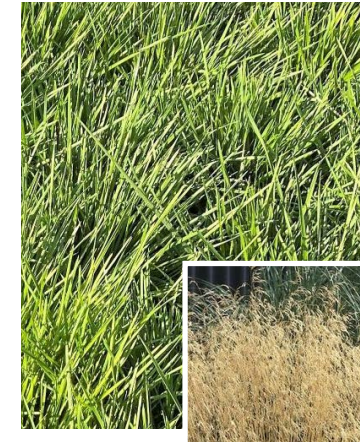
PLANTING PLAN - TREES



GRASS MATRIX



Blue Grama Grass
Bouteloua gracilis



Tufted Hair Grass
Deschampsia cespitosa



Pink Muhly Grass
Muhlenbergia capillaris



Wood's Sedge
Carex woodii

SHRUB ACCENTS



American Cranberrybush
Viburnum trilobum



Witch-hazel
Hamamelis virginiana



'Ruby Slippers' Oakleaf Hydrangea
Hydrangea quercifolia "Ruby Slippers"

PERENNIAL ACCENTS



Blue Mistflower
Conoclinium coelistinum



Showy Coneflower
Rudbeckia fulgida var. fulgida



Argentinian Vervane
Verbena bonariensis



Threadleaf Blue Star
Amsonia hubrichtii



Foxglove Beardtongue
Penstemon digitalis



Purple Cone Flower
Echinacea purpurea

PLANTING PLAN - PLANT BEDS



View from Love Park / Aerial

SITE PERSPECTIVE

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Landscape Architecture

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View from City Hall / Aerial

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