

# Memorandum



**To:** Alex Smith, Director Art Commission  
**From:** Erin Kindt, Project Manager, DPP  
**Date:** January 31, 2024  
**Re:** Request for Art Commission Review

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We respectfully request to be included on the Art Commission agenda on February 14th for Final Approval for improvements to the Municipal Services Building's Thomas Paine Plaza.

Drawings will be submitted by the deadline on Wednesday February 7, 2024.

The team has reviewed and incorporated all previous Art Commission comments and has addressed all concerns brought up in the conceptual meeting. We are excited to present this project for Final Approval.

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  
Karen Skafte, Ground Reconsidered: skafte@groundreconsidered.com  
Sam Emory, Ground Reconsidered: emory@groundreconsidered.com



An architectural rendering of the Thomas Paine Plaza improvement project. The scene shows a wide, paved plaza with a central walkway and side gardens. In the foreground, there are large, tiered wooden planters or seating areas. To the left, a modern building with a glass facade and a covered outdoor seating area is visible. In the background, a large, ornate building with a clock tower and a statue on top is the focal point. Two flagpoles with the American and New York City flags stand in the plaza. Trees and landscaping are integrated throughout the design. The sky is blue with light clouds.

# THOMAS PAINE PLAZA

## Plaza Improvement Project

**Reconsidered**  
**Ground** Landscape Architecture

the  
lighting  
practice

**KSE**  
KS Engineers, P.C.

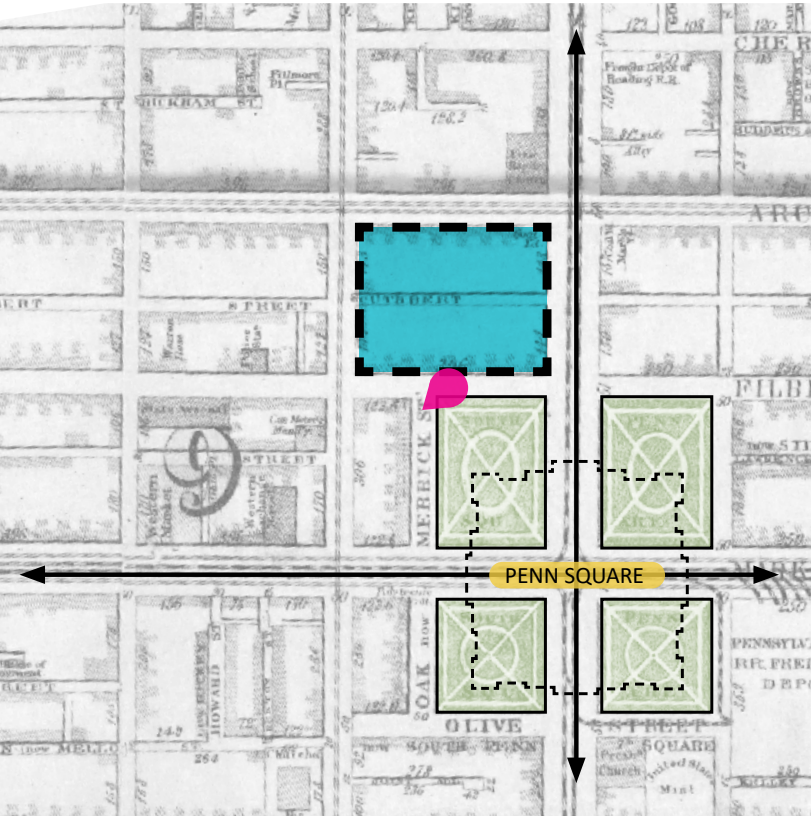


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**Public Property**



RESIDENTIAL FABRIC

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



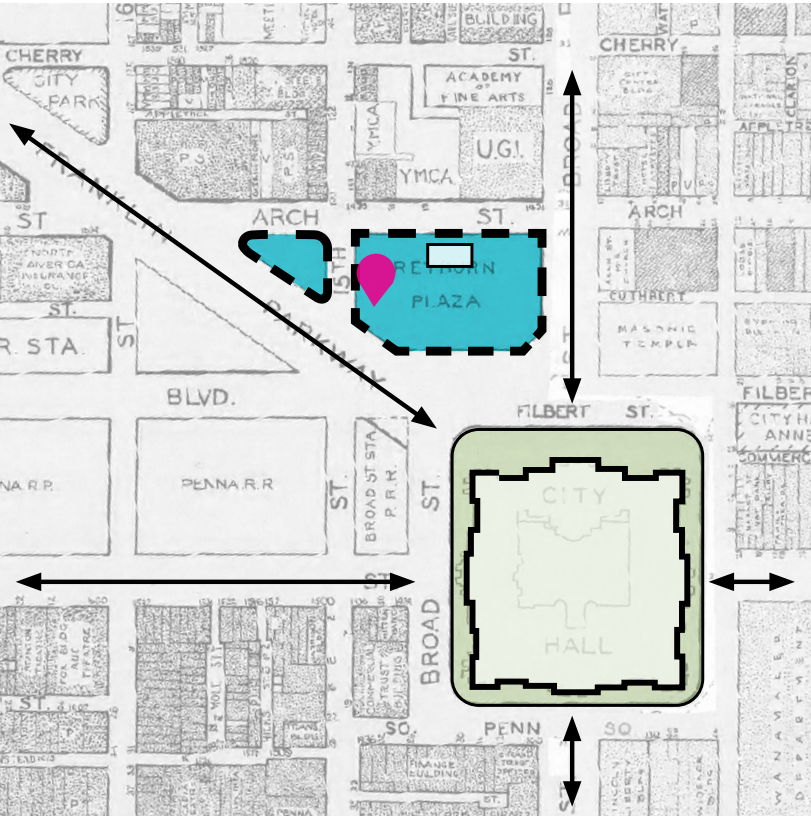
1862 Philadelphia Atlas



Image: Free Library - Historical Images

REYBURN PLAZA

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



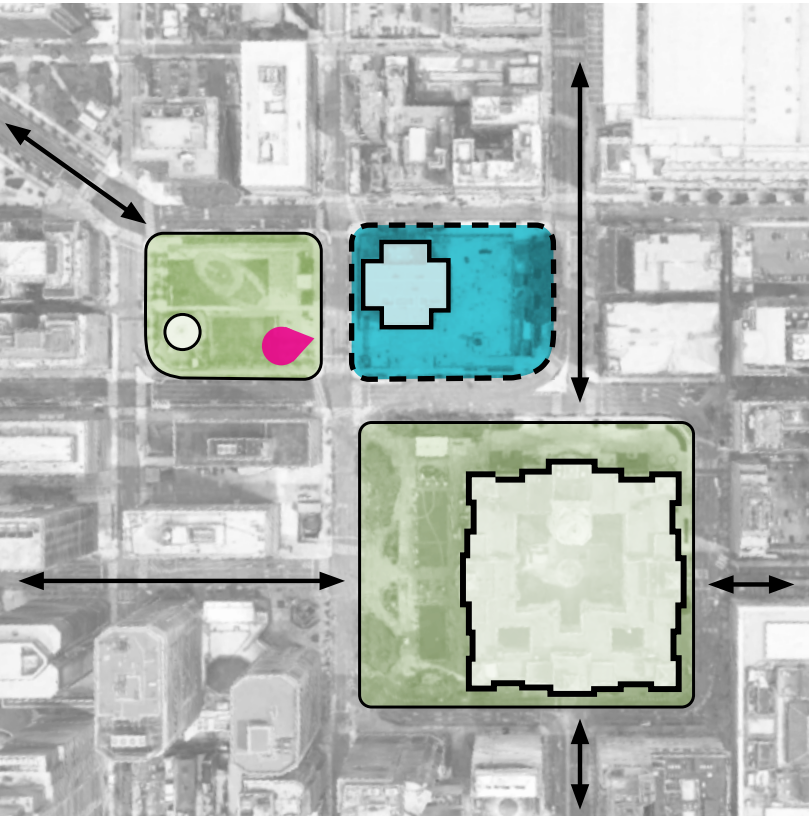
1942 WPA Land Use Map



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

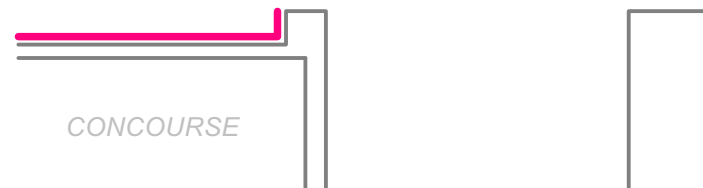
Ground Reconsidered  
Landscape Architecture

Department of  
Public Property



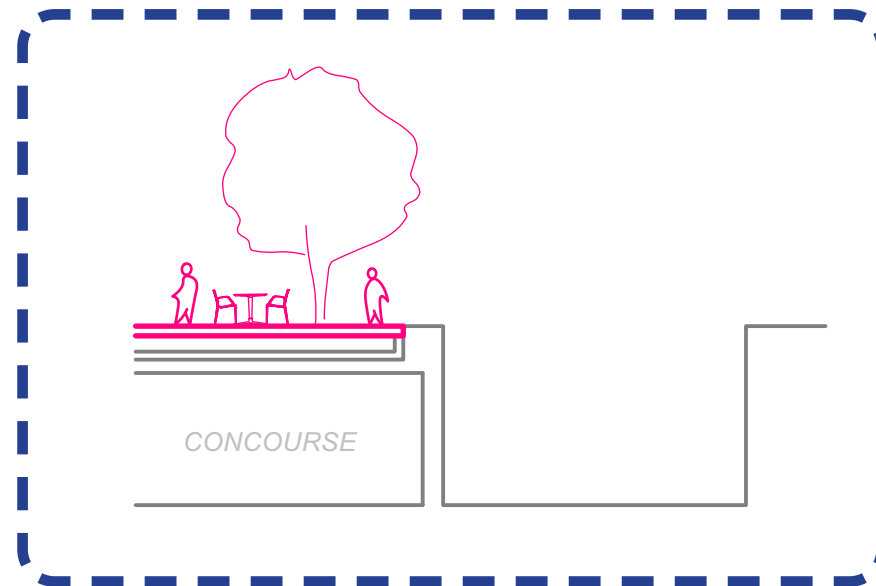
**1 ROOF WATERPROOFING PROJECT**

*Replace waterproofing membrane  
across extent of plaza*



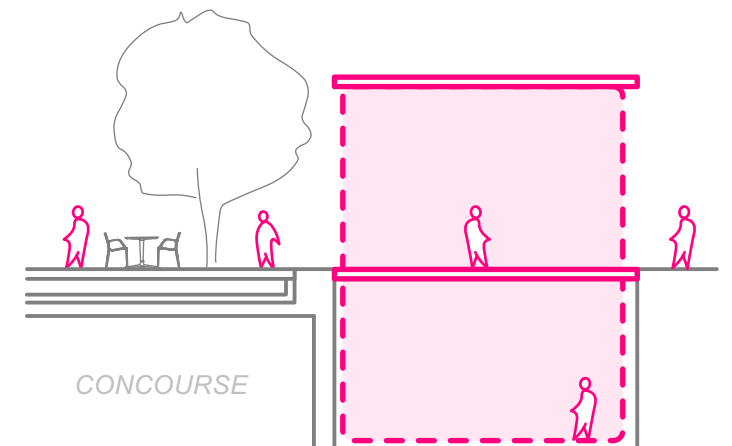
**2 PLAZA IMPROVEMENTS**

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



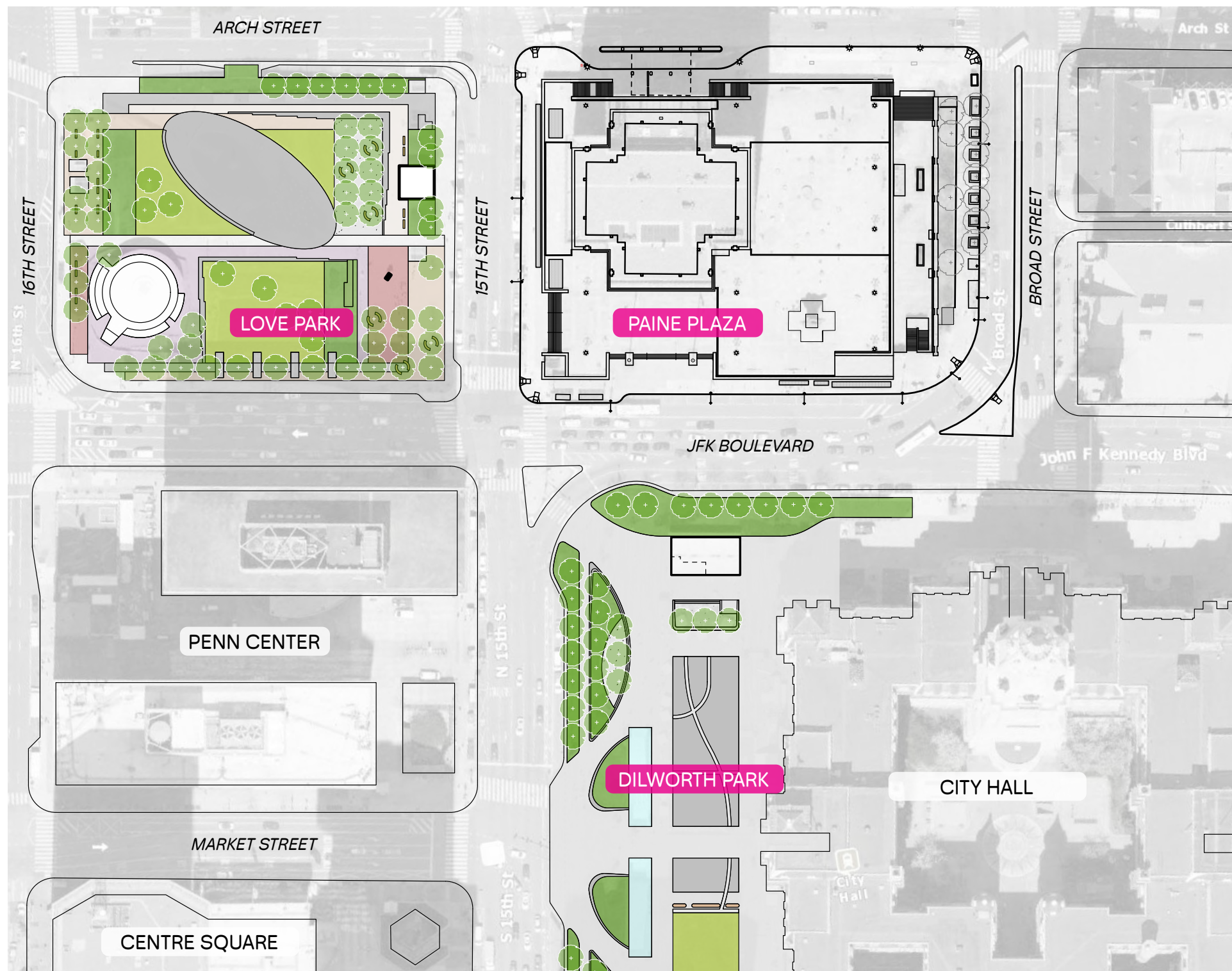
**3 FUTURE PHASE**

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

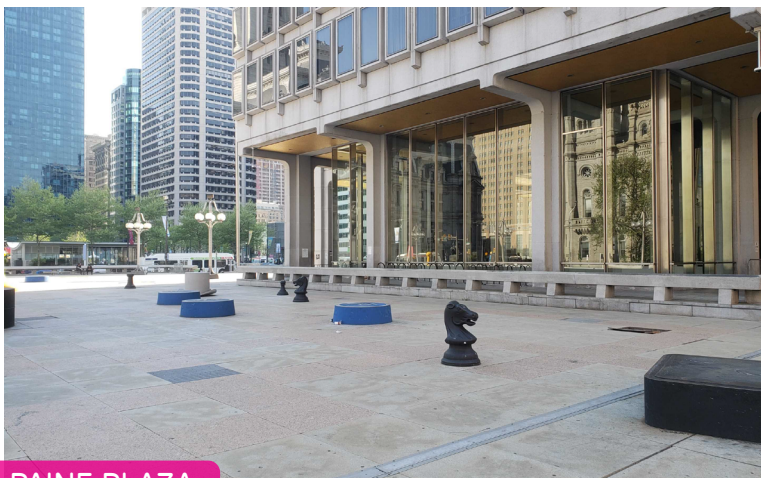


**PROJECT PHASES**





DILWORTH PARK



PAINE PLAZA



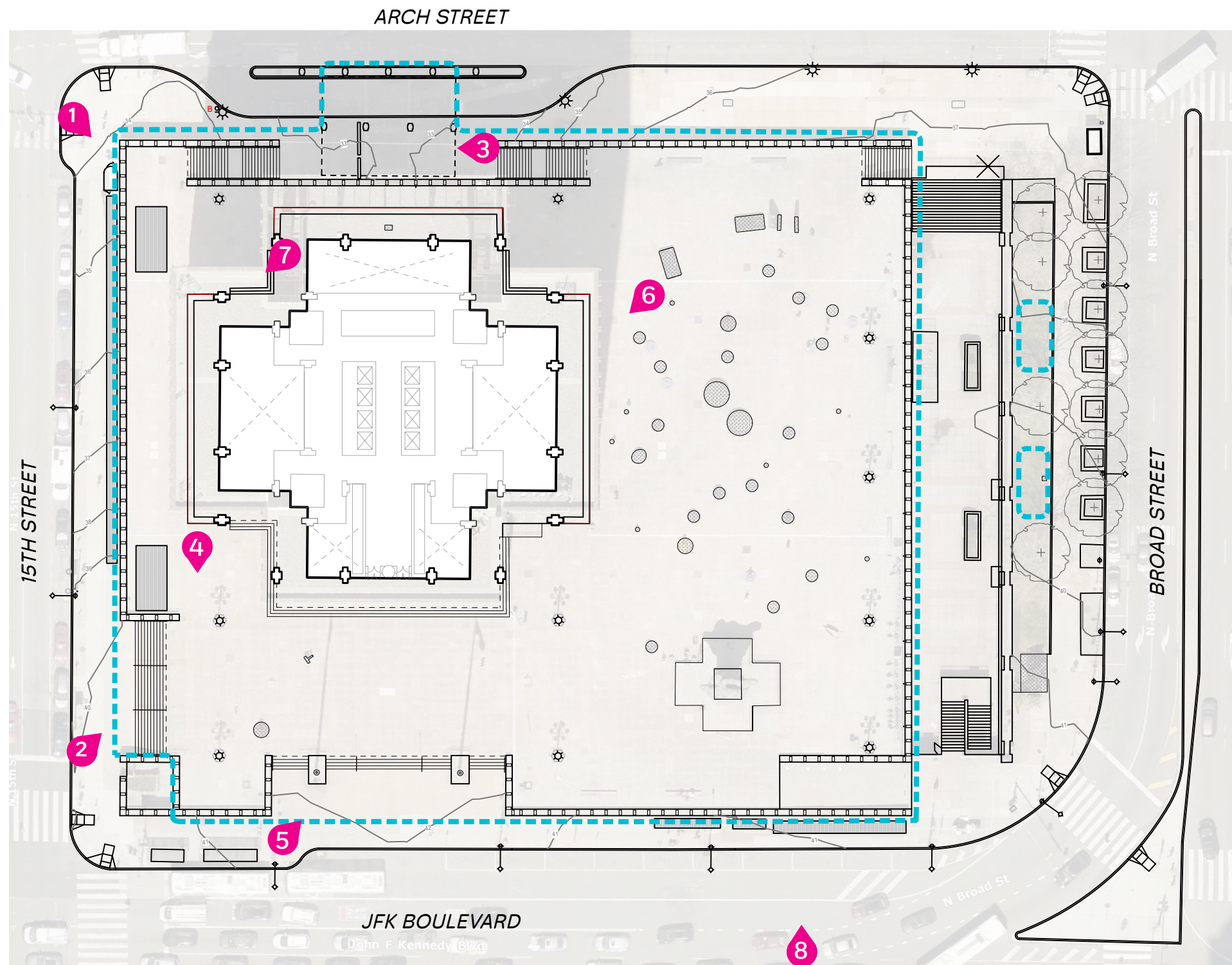
LOVE PARK

Image: PPR

# SITE CONTEXT

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
**Plaza Improvement Project**

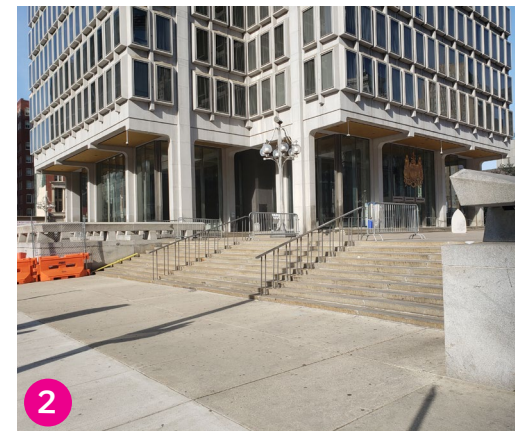
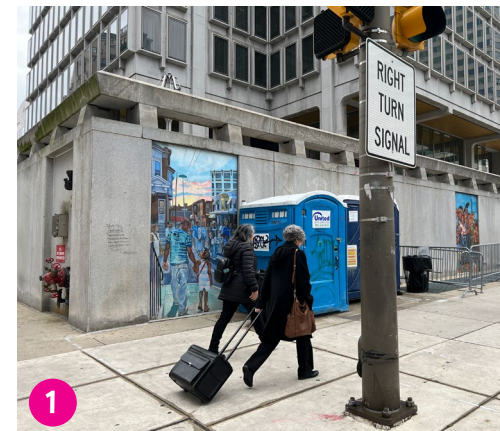




 PROJECT AREA

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
Plaza Improvement Project





FOCUS GROUPS

- Conducted five one-hour focus group sessions with Municipal Services Building employees in April and early May
- Solicited feedback on opportunities, constraints, and image preferences

ONLINE SURVEY

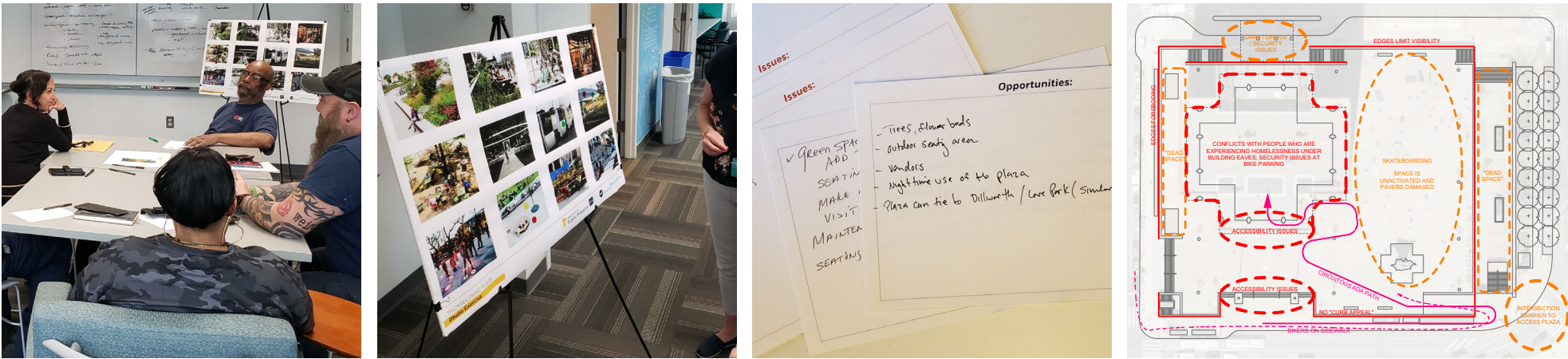
- Survey sent to Municipal Services Building employees and was open for two weeks in May
- Building on focus group suggestions, the survey sought feedback on which types of improvements should be prioritized for Paine Plaza
- Survey received 300 responses

POP-UP EVENT

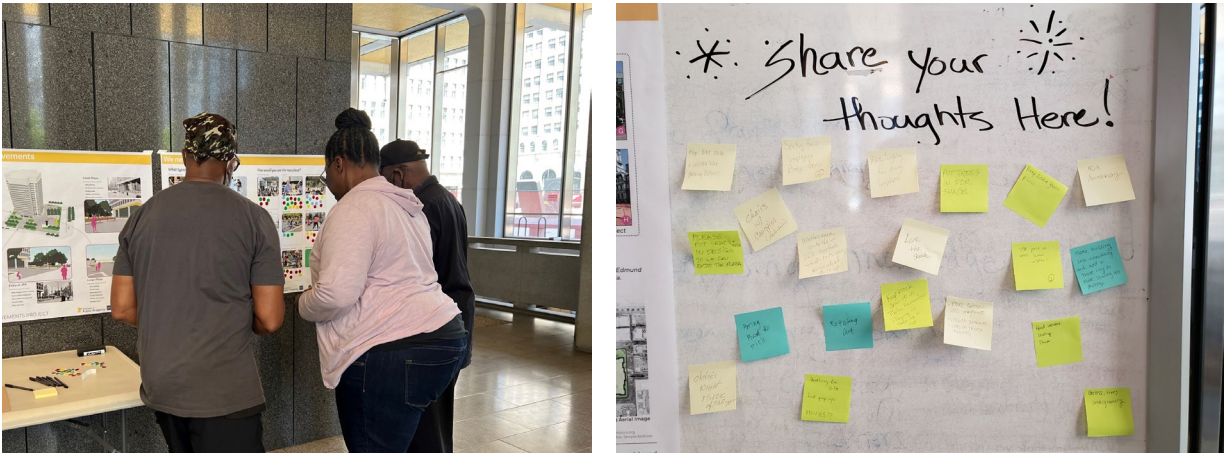
- Held a pop-up engagement event in the Municipal Services Building Lobby on June 1
- Shared images of proposed improvements and received feedback on design, programming and furnishings
- Obtained feedback from MSB employees and public visitors to the building

ENGAGEMENT WITH SKATE PHILLY

- Met with representatives of the Philadelphia skateboard community
- Identified criteria to support skateboarding activities while respecting other plaza users



Focus group activities



Pop-up engagement event



Images from Skate Philly presentation

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



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

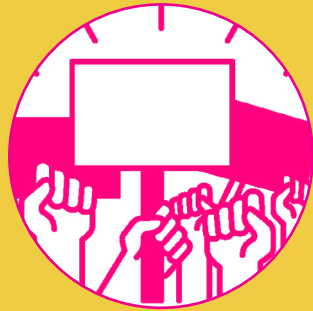


Photo © Conrad Brenner



Mural by Russel Craig. Photo © Kimberly Paynter

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

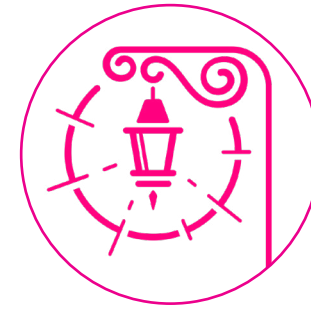
## 1 PLANTS AND GREEN SPACE



## 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

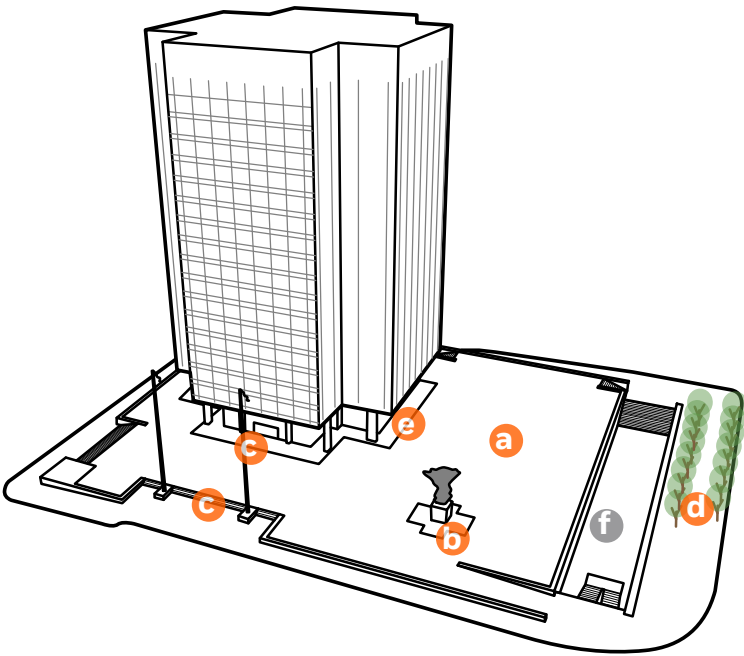
- adds new lighting throughout
- provides space for public art
- improves views from sidewalk to plaza

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

## ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

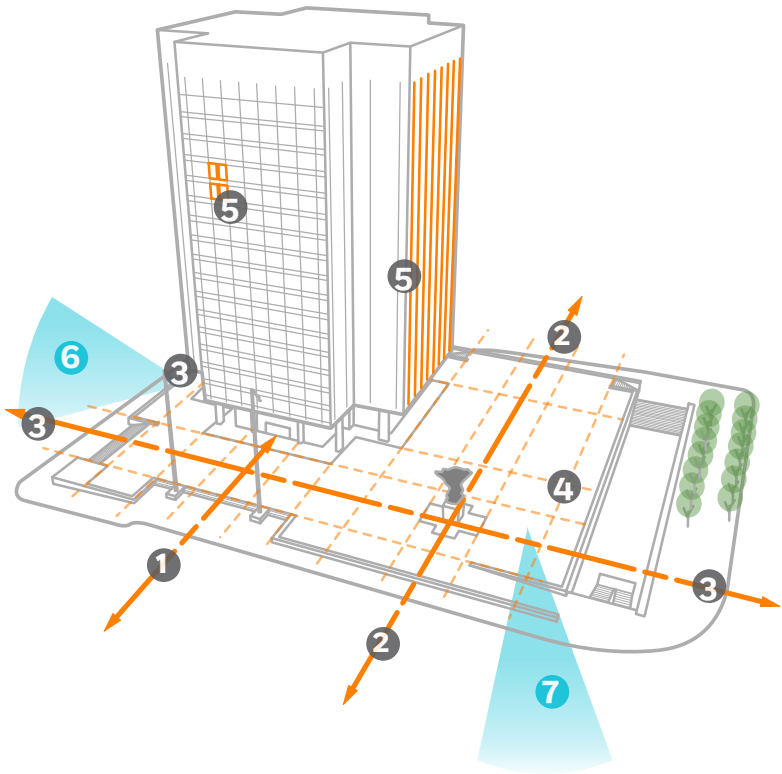


SITE INVENTORY



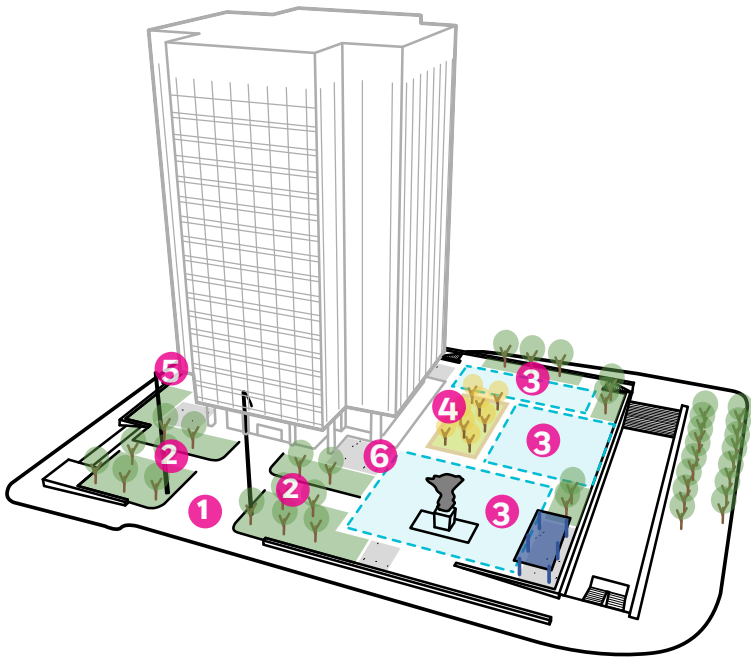
- a Underutilized and undefined plaza
- b *Government of the People* sculpture
- c Non-accessible arrival sequence
- d Limited shade trees
- e Perimeter of MSB uninviting
- f Sunken courtyard (not in scope)

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

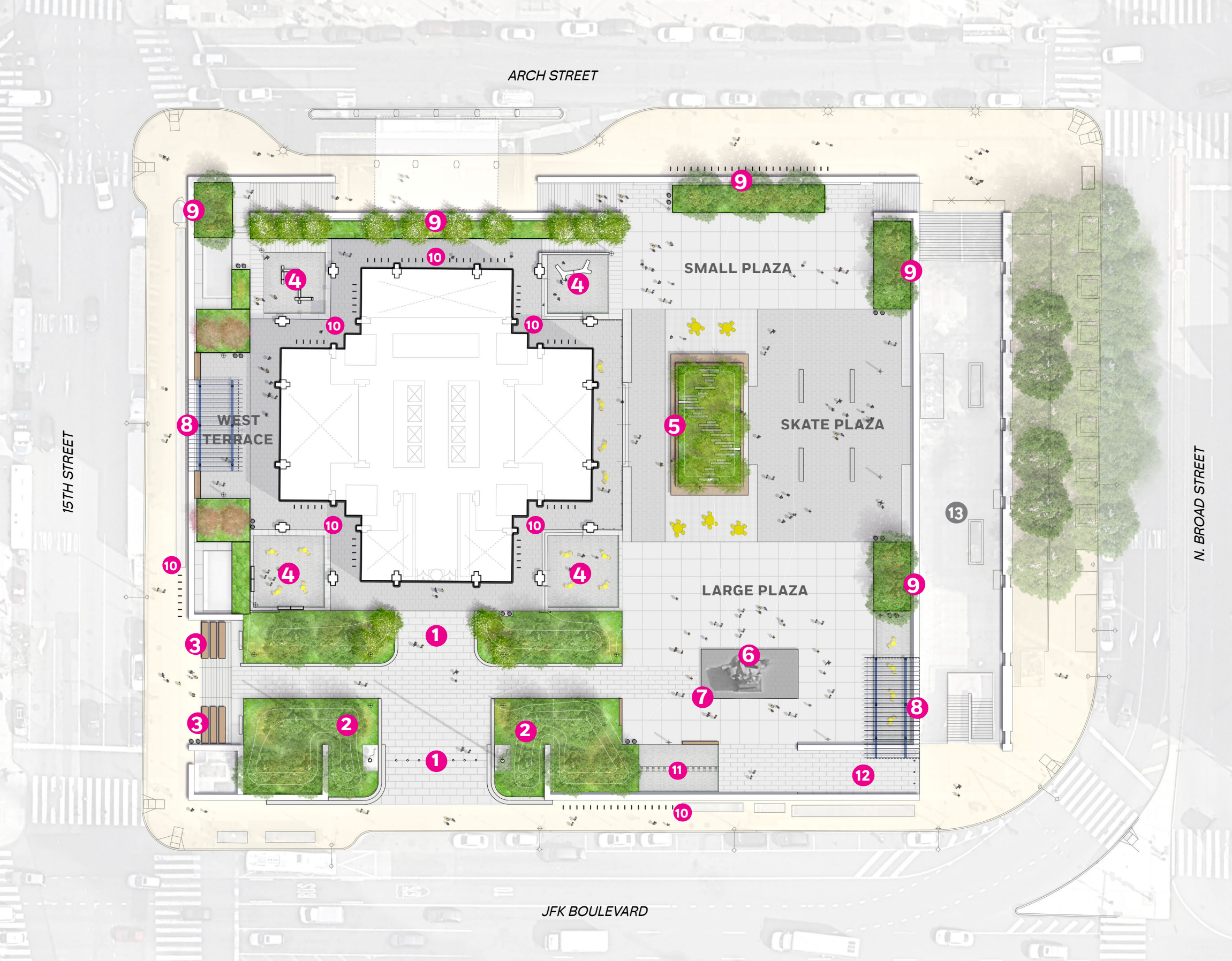
SITE DESIGN



- 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

- ❶ New accessible entry flanked by seatwalls
- ❷ Arrival grove
- ❸ Terraced seating
- ❹ Seating areas at MSB corners
- ❺ Grove / seating
- ❻ *Government of the People*
- ❼ Stage / platform
- ❽ Trellis structure
- ❾ Planters at plaza perimeter
- ❿ Bike parking
- ⓫ Indego bike share station
- ⓬ Existing sloped walk
- ⓭ Sunken plaza (not in scope)

## PROPOSED PLAN

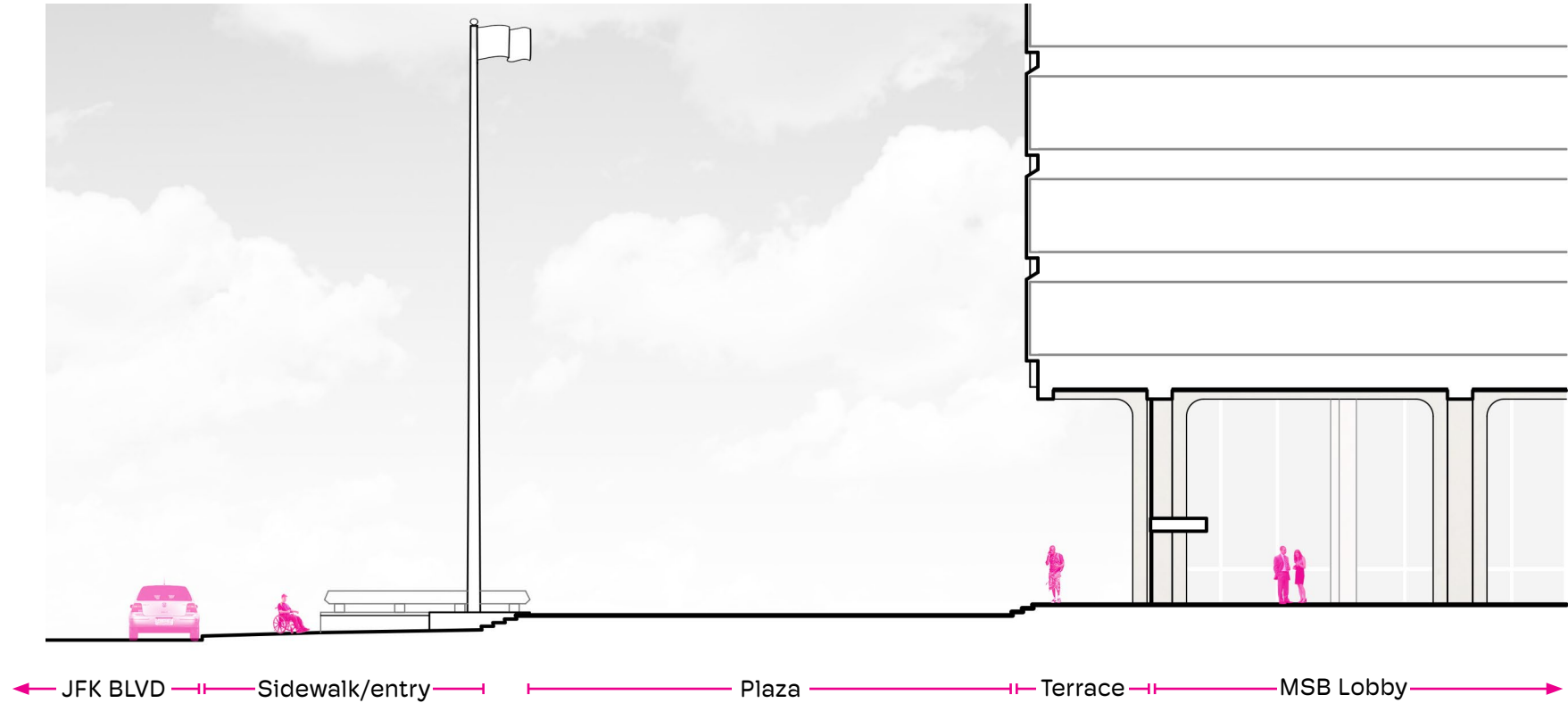
THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
Plaza Improvement Project

Ground **Reconsidered**  
Landscape Architecture

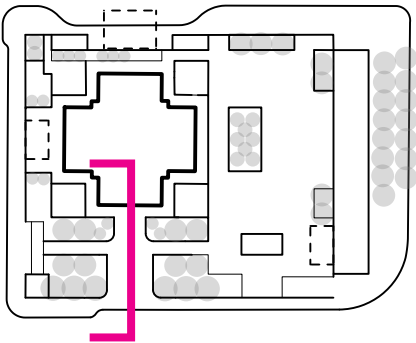
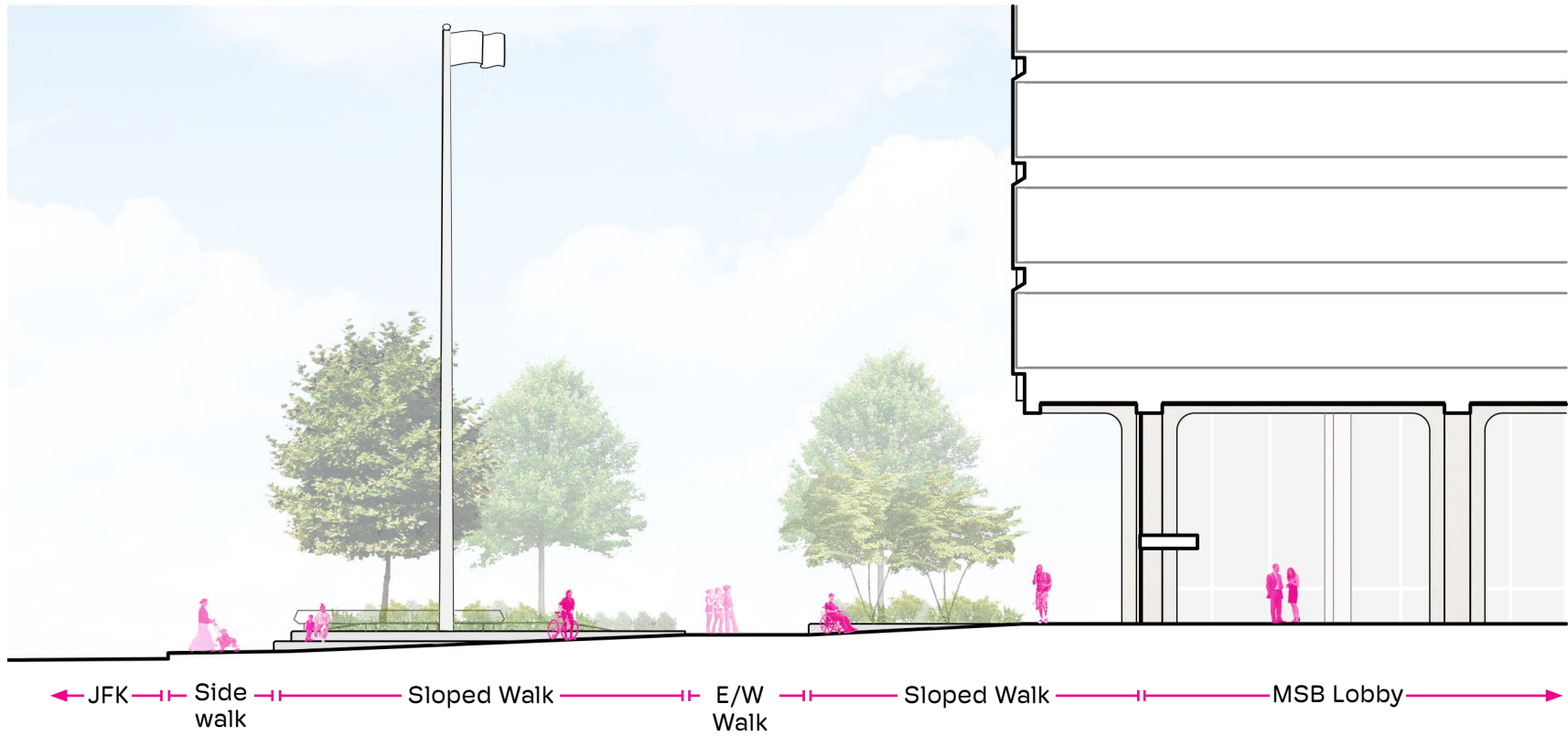
 Department of  
**Public Property**



EXISTING



PROPOSED



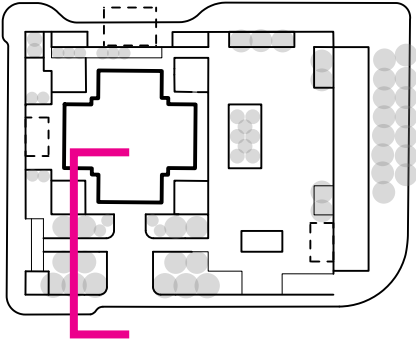
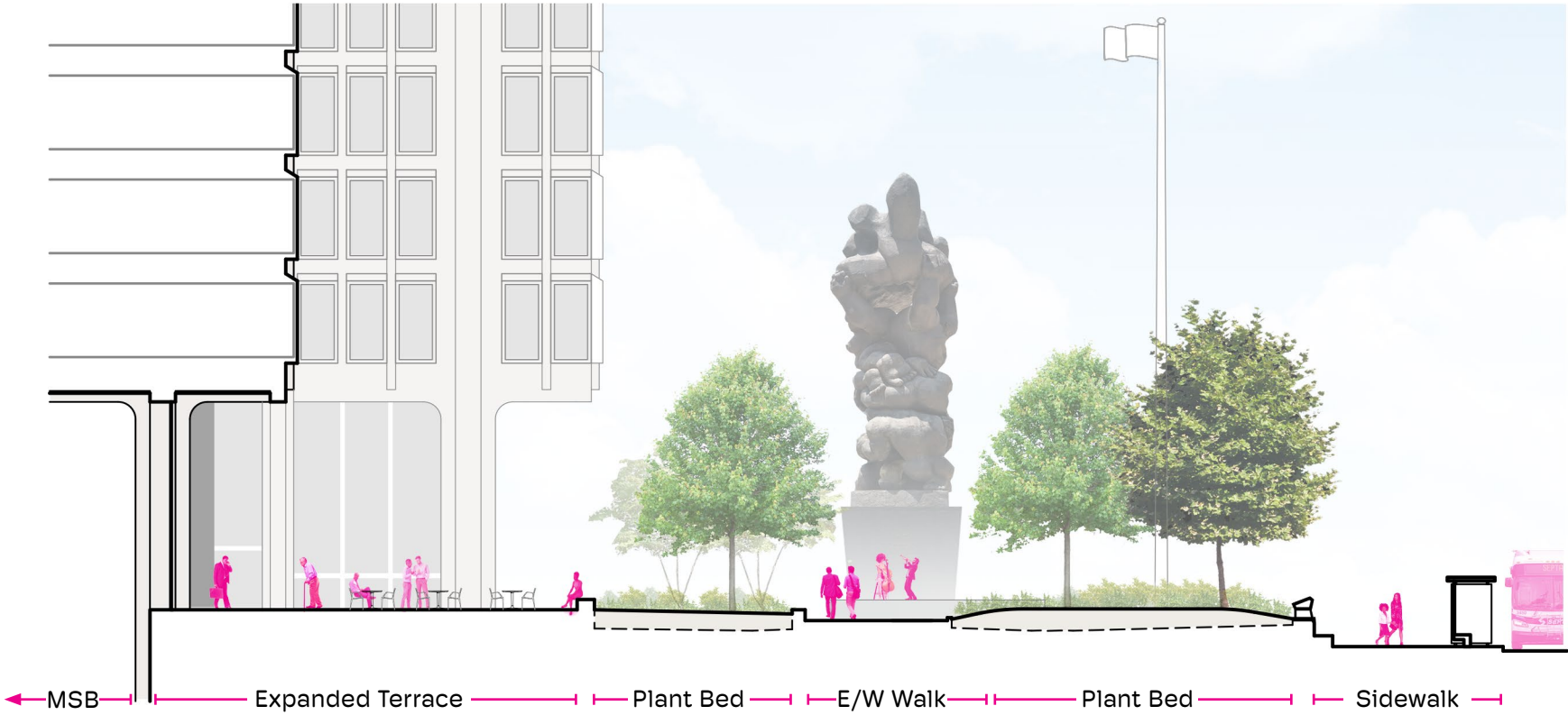
**SITE SECTIONS - JFK BOULEVARD ENTRY**



EXISTING



PROPOSED



**SITE SECTIONS - PATH FROM 15TH STREET**





Granite seat walls



Ornamental trees



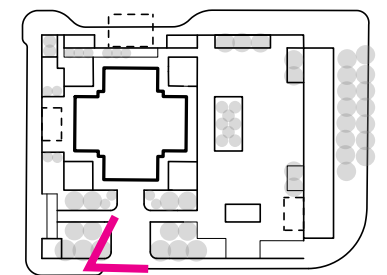
Accessible entry path



Arrival grove



Site arrival at JFK Boulevard



## SITE PERSPECTIVES

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
**Plaza Improvement Project**

**Ground** **Reconsidered**  
Landscape Architecture

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Shade trellis



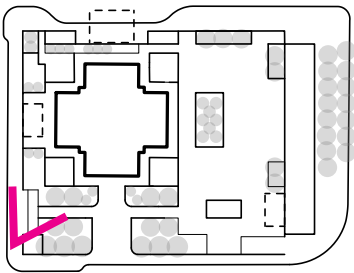
Plant beds



Terraced seating



Arrival grove



Site arrival at 15th Street

**SITE PERSPECTIVES**





- 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/P1A  
Pole Mounted Flood Light
- 8** Type M2  
In-grade Statue Accent
- 9** Type P2A  
Post-top & Flag Accent
- 10** Type D17  
Driveway Light
- 11** Type A17  
Recessed Trellis Downlight

## 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



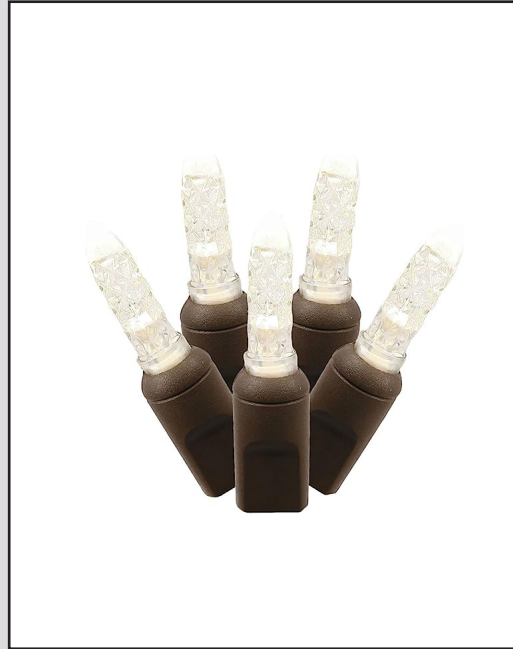
**Ground** **Reconsidered**  
Landscape Architecture







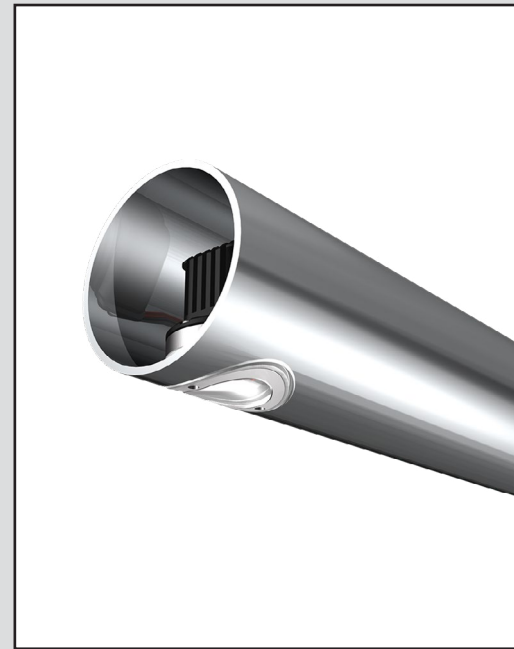
A20 A21



M4



P1 P1A



D1



P2A



A17



M2



P2

## LIGHT FIXTURE SELECTIONS





Ornamental  
trees



Plant beds and  
seat walls

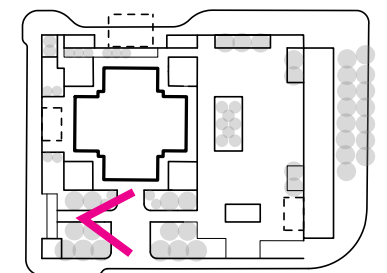
Government  
of the People



Shade trellis



Arrival grove



Axial view to *Government of the People*

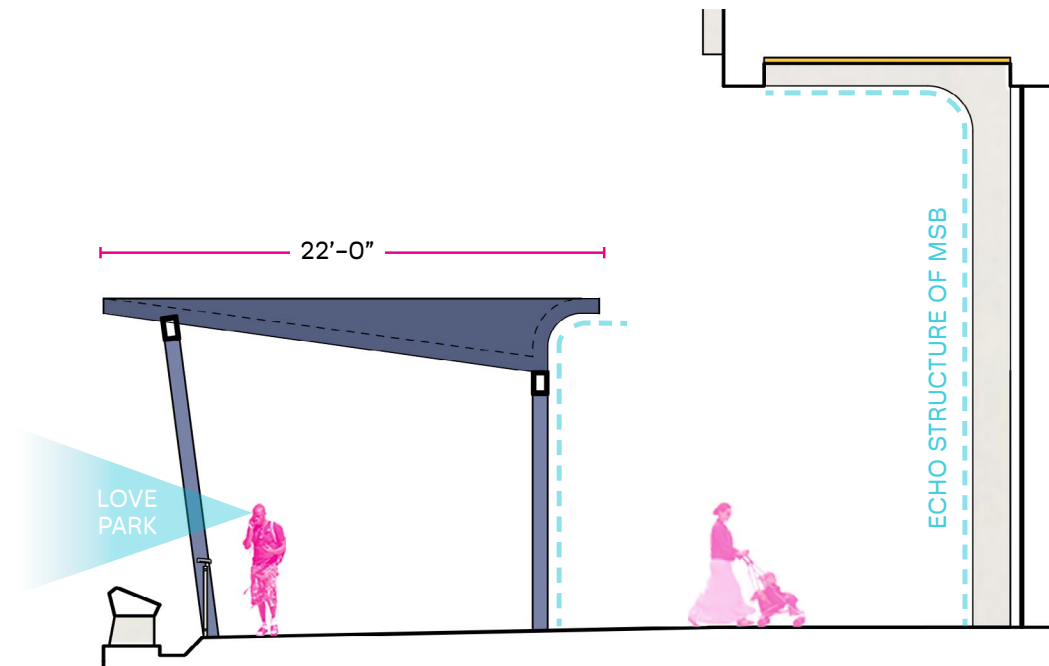
## SITE PERSPECTIVES

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
**Plaza Improvement Project**

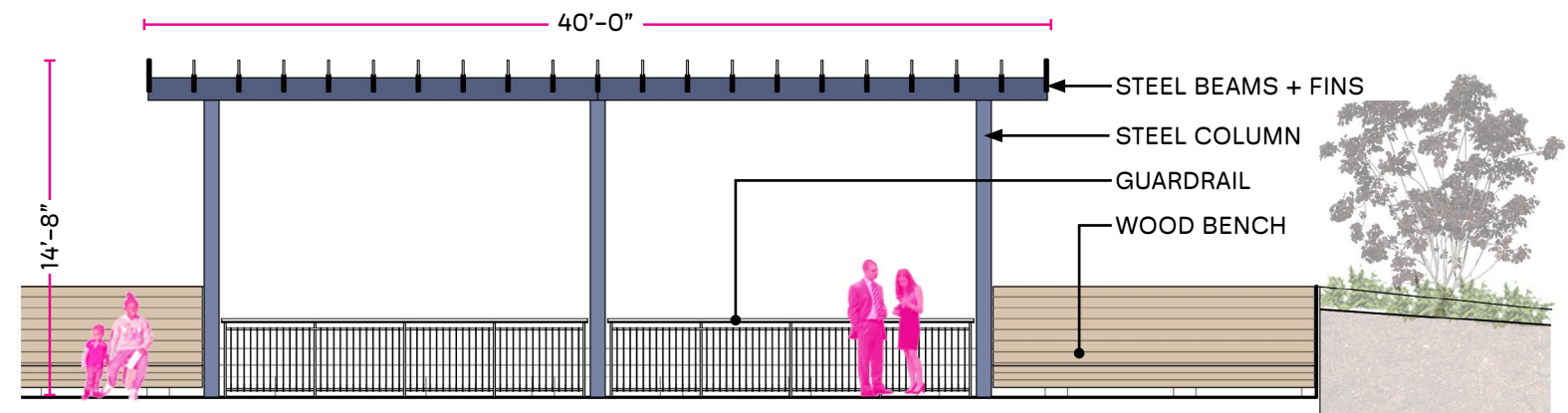
**Ground** **Reconsidered**  
Landscape Architecture

 Department of  
**Public Property**



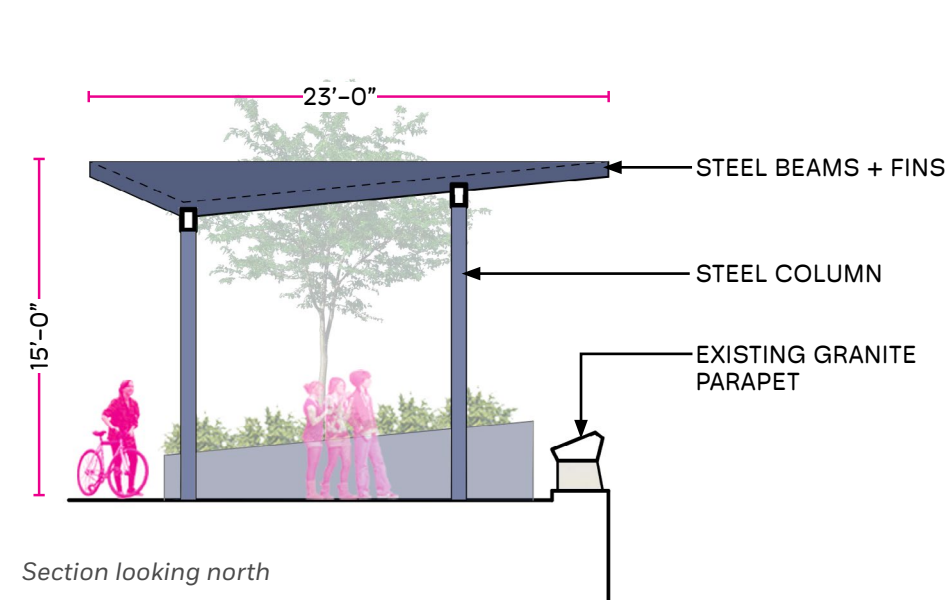


Section looking north

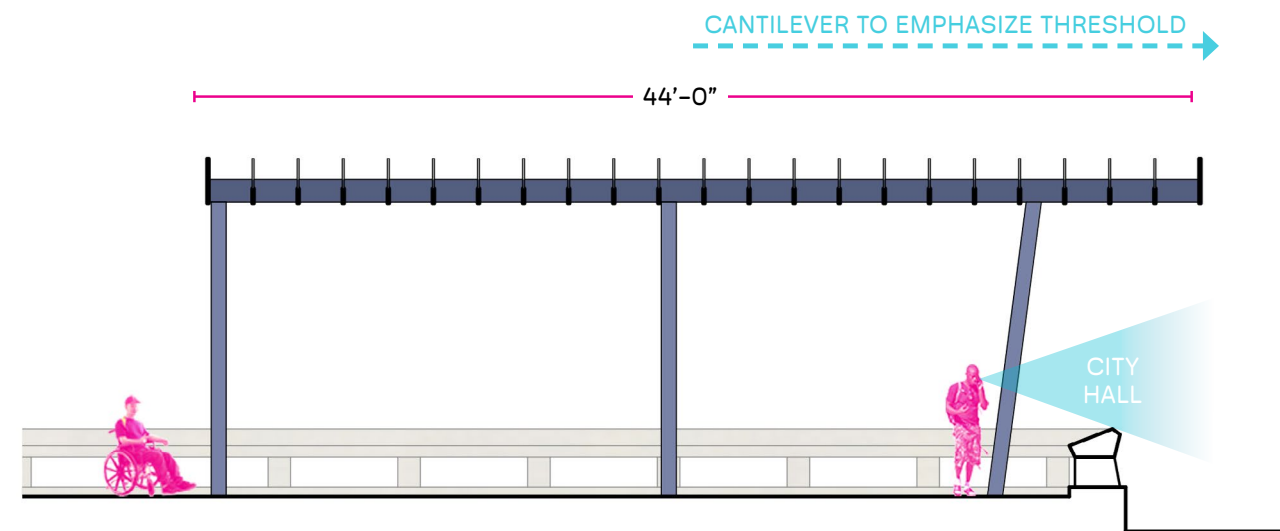


Elevation looking west

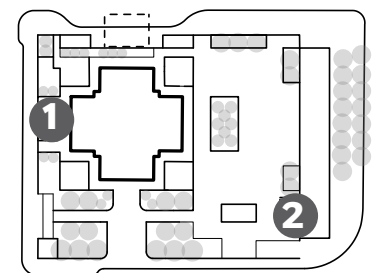
- 1 West trellis - located on terrace overlooking Love Park



Section looking north



Elevation looking east



- 2 East trellis - located on southeast corner by existing site entry walk

## TRELLIS DESIGN





Ornamental  
trees



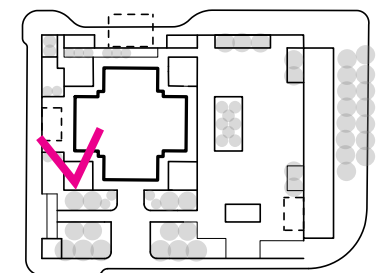
Planters and adjacent seating



Shade trellis



New lighting  
in MSB soffit



View of west terrace looking north

## SITE PERSPECTIVES

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
Plaza Improvement Project

**Ground** **Reconsidered**  
Landscape Architecture

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Government of the People

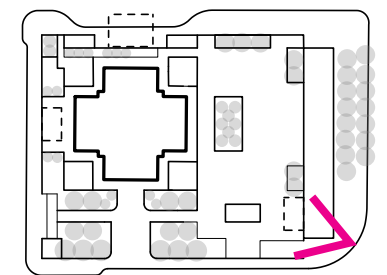


Shade trellis



Perimeter trees

Benjamin Franklin, Craftsman



View from corner of Broad St. and JFK Blvd.

## SITE PERSPECTIVES

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
Plaza Improvement Project

Ground **Reconsidered**  
Landscape Architecture

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**Public Property**



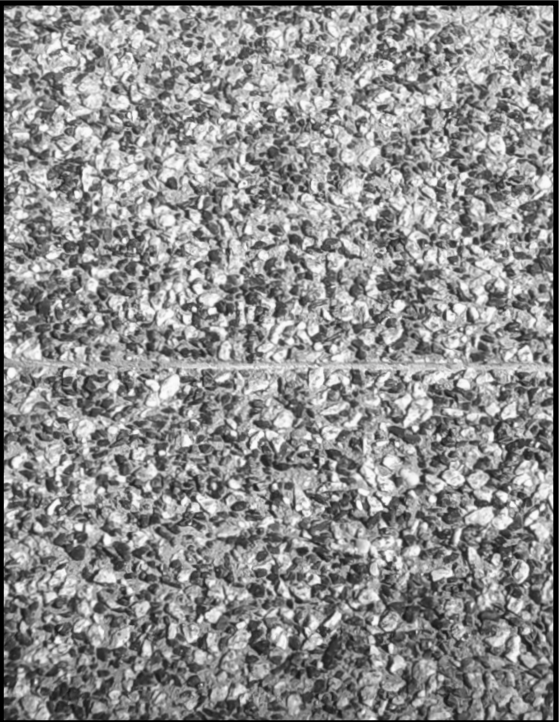
GRANITE PAVERS



COBBLES



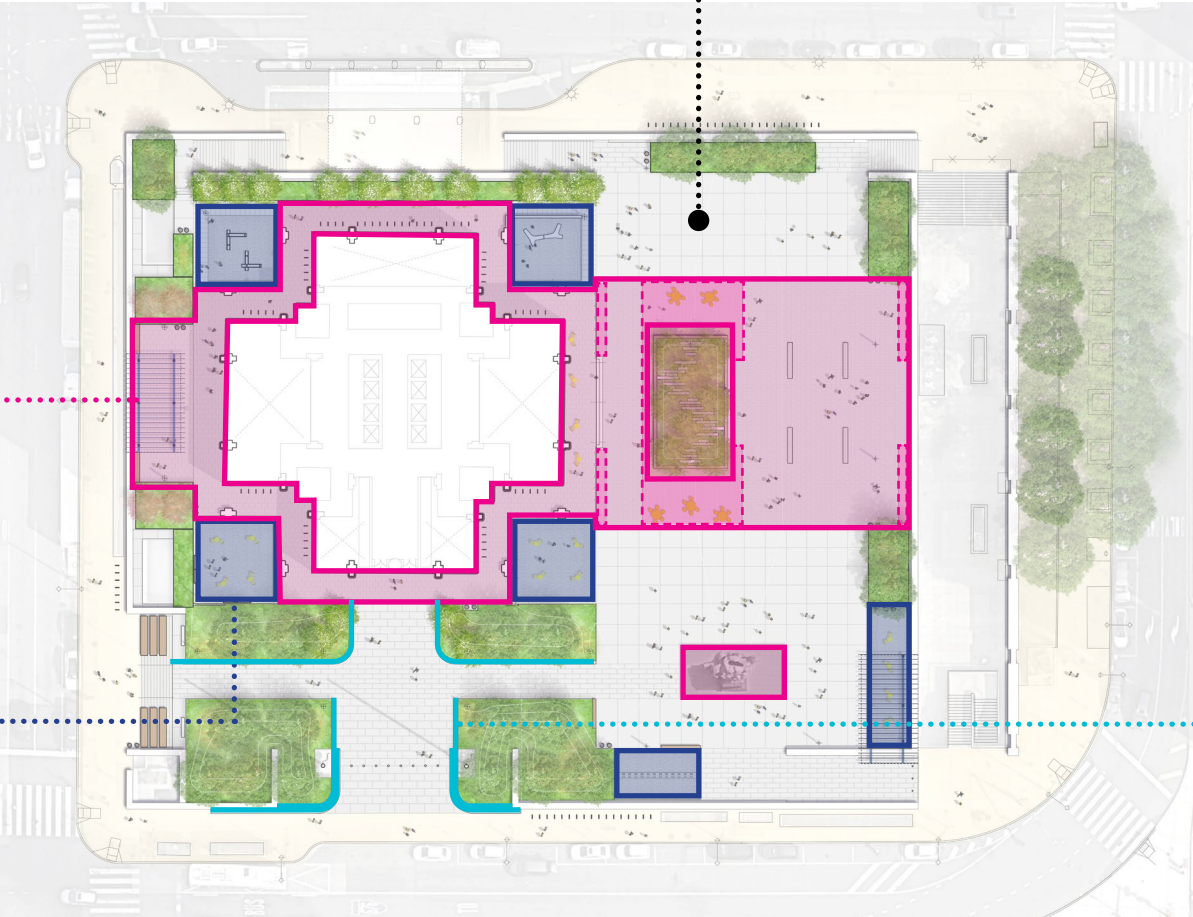
EXPOSED AGGREGATE CONCRETE



GRANITE SEAT WALLS



STONE FINES



**MATERIALS**





Arrival grove



Granite plaza pavers

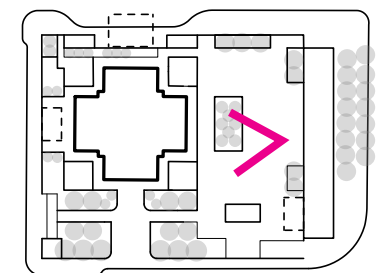
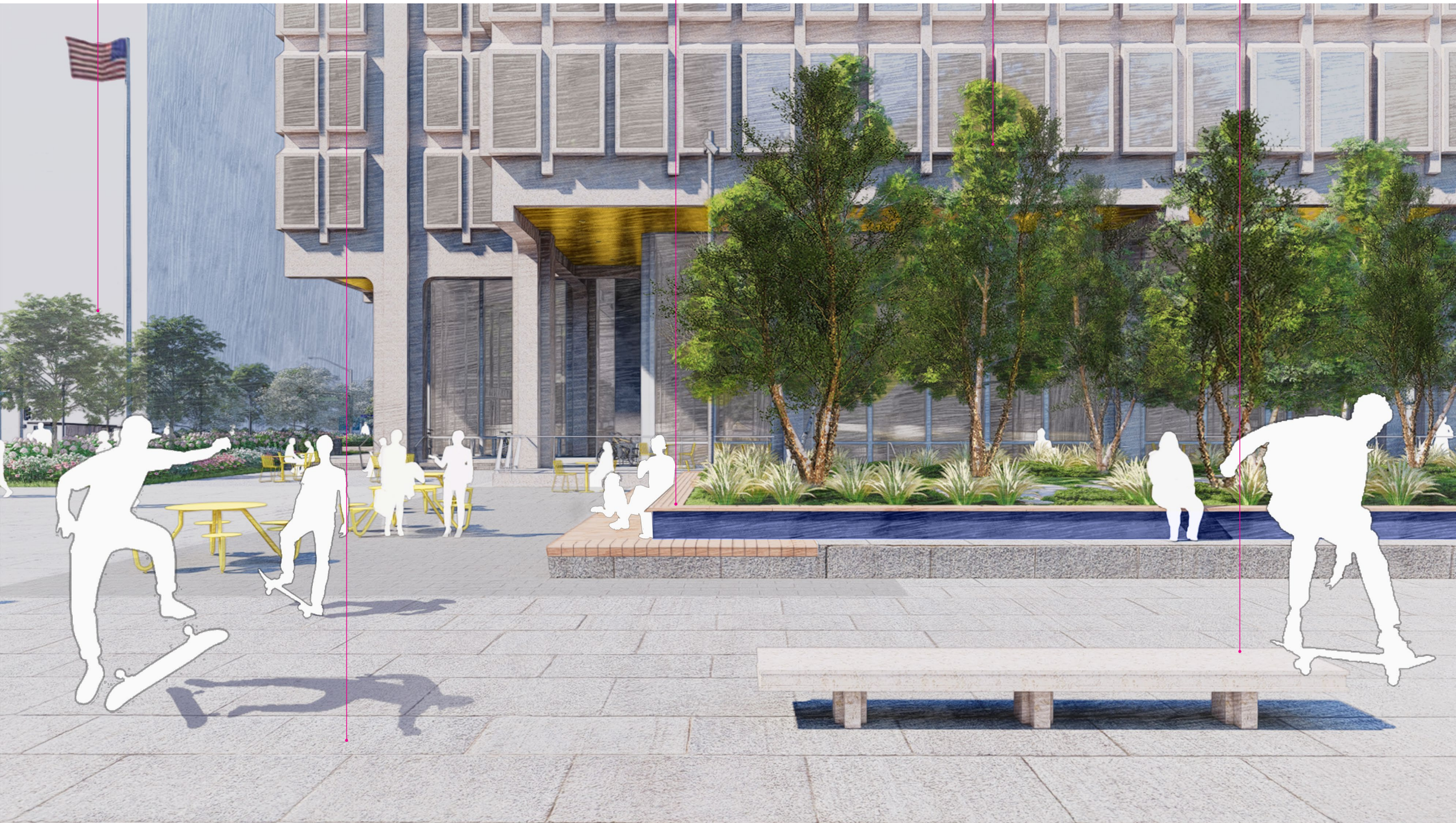


Granite + wood seating



Plaza grove

Salvaged granite bench



Skate Plaza

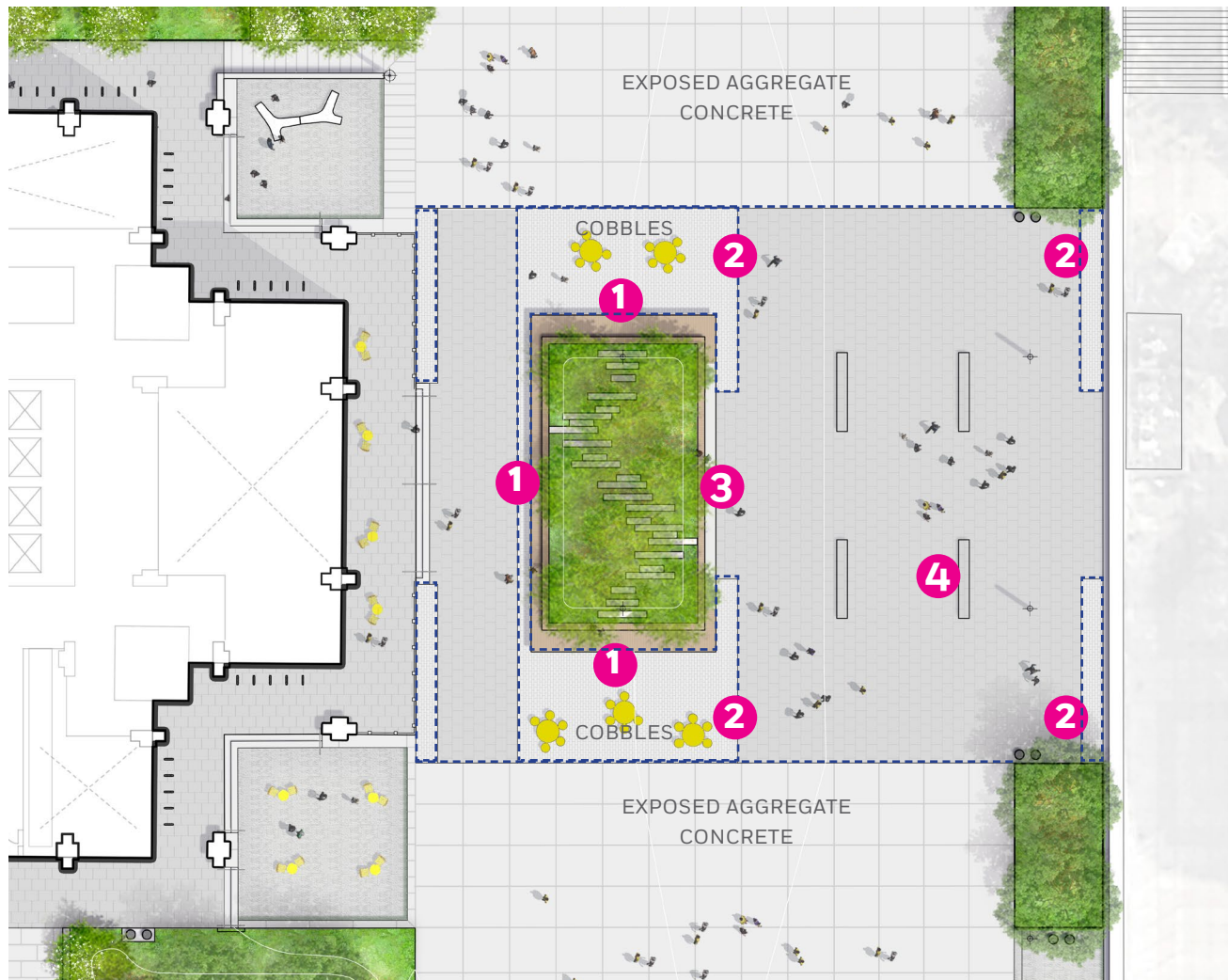
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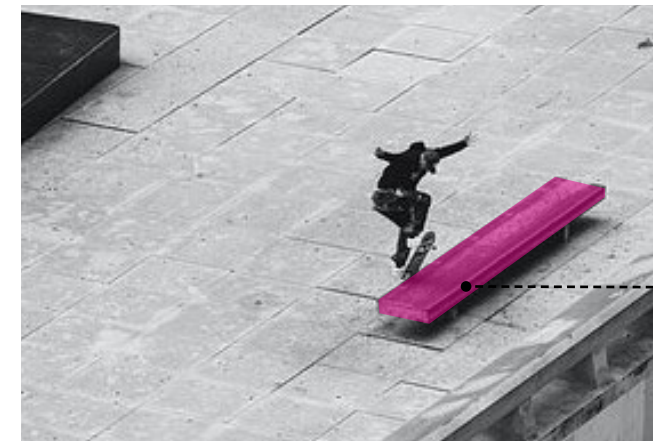


Partial Plan - East Plaza

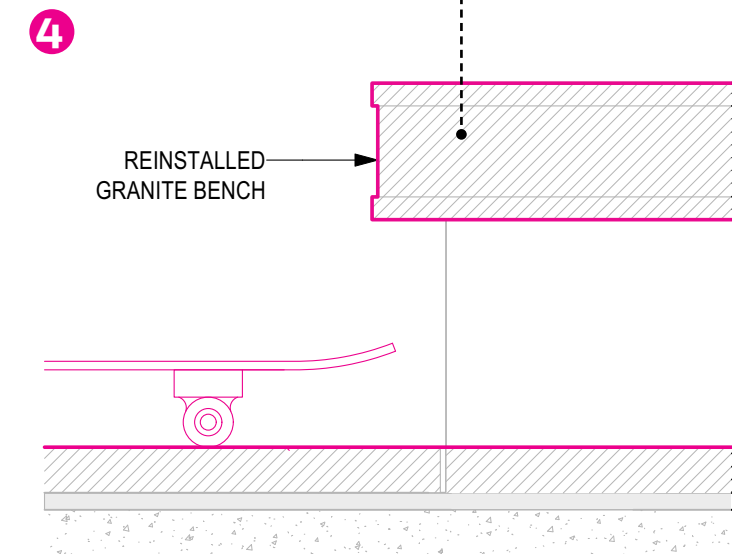
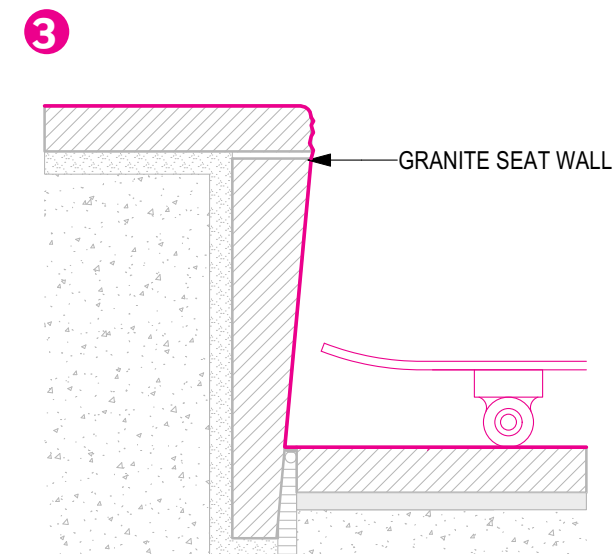
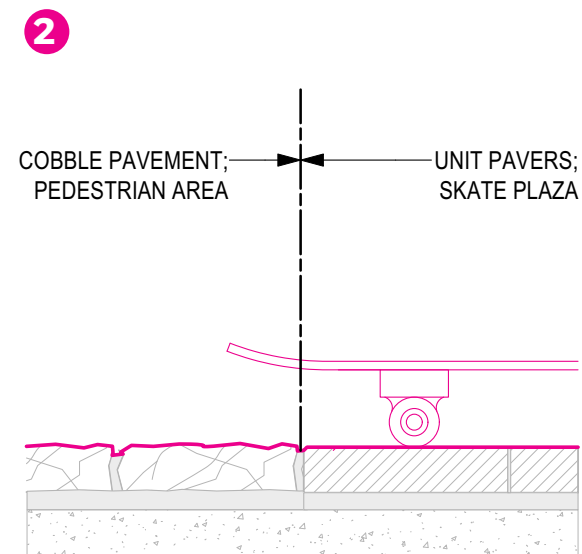
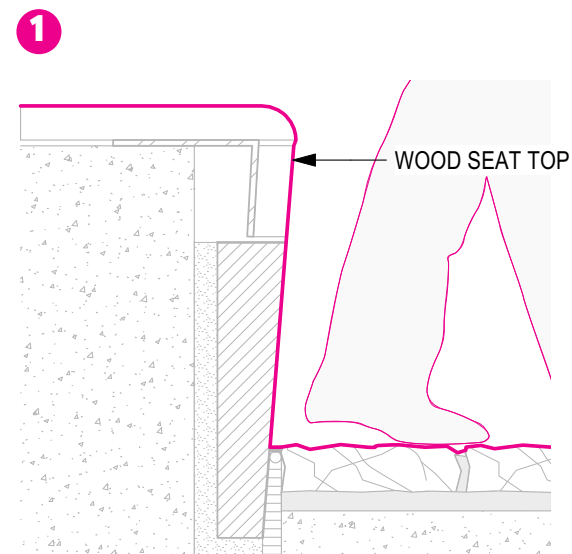


Precedent: Born SkatePlaza, Barcelona

Image: Jose Hevia



Reinstalled granite benches



## SKATE PLAZA DETAIL



BUILT-IN SEATING



Wood seat tops with integral fins on existing granite stairs

BICYCLE RACKS



PLANTERS



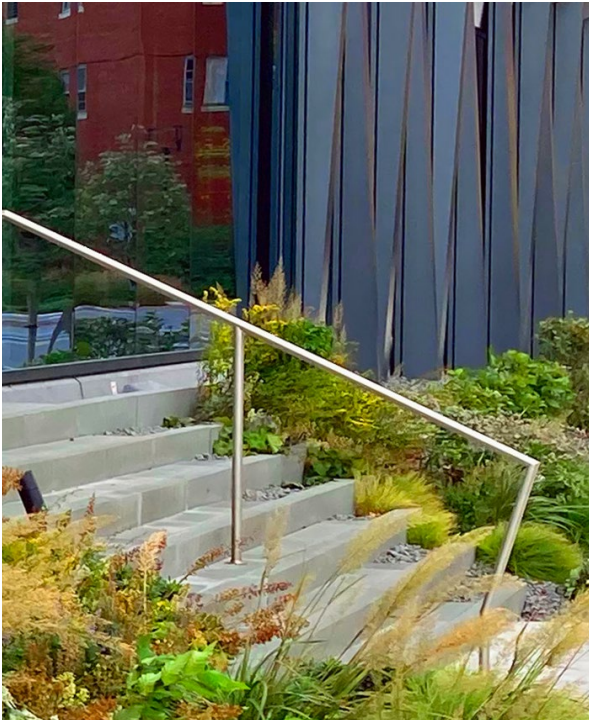
SCULPTURAL BENCH



PICNIC-STYLE BENCHES + TABLES



HANDRAILS



Stainless Steel

TRASH RECEPTACLE



SCULPTURAL BENCH



FLEXIBLE CHAIRS + TABLES



ACCENT COLOR



FURNISHINGS + COMPONENTS





Bike racks



Plaza grove



Perimeter planters

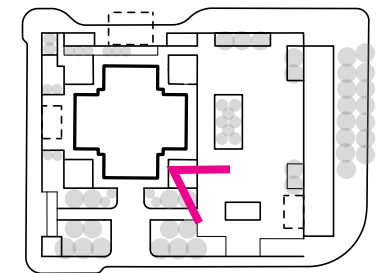


Flexible seating



Shade trellis

Government of the People



View to Large Plaza

## SITE PERSPECTIVES

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
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Pedestrian light pole

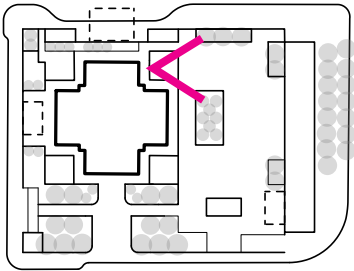
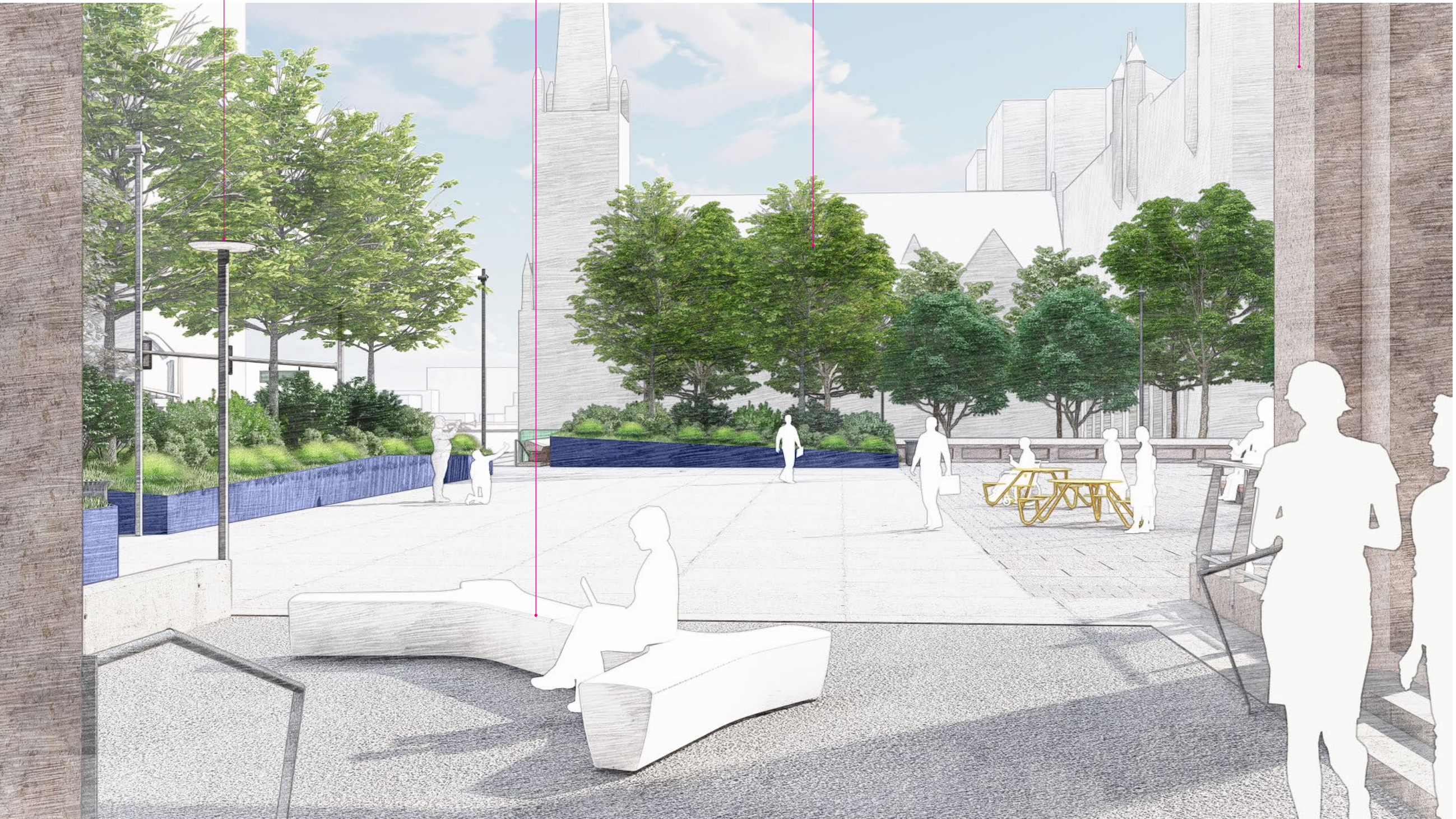


Sculptural benches  
in stone fins



Perimeter planter

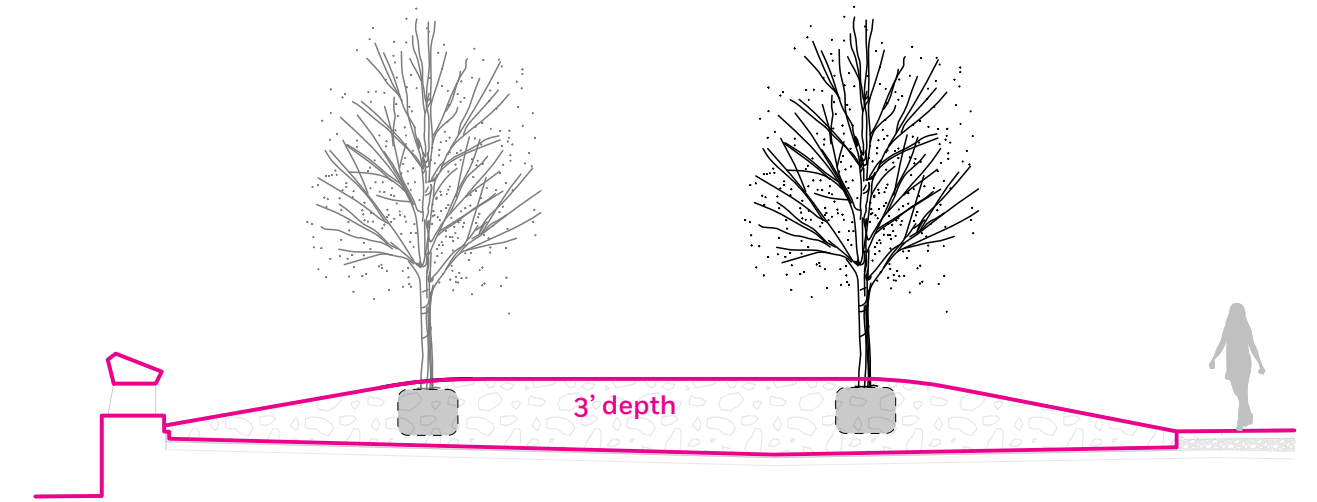
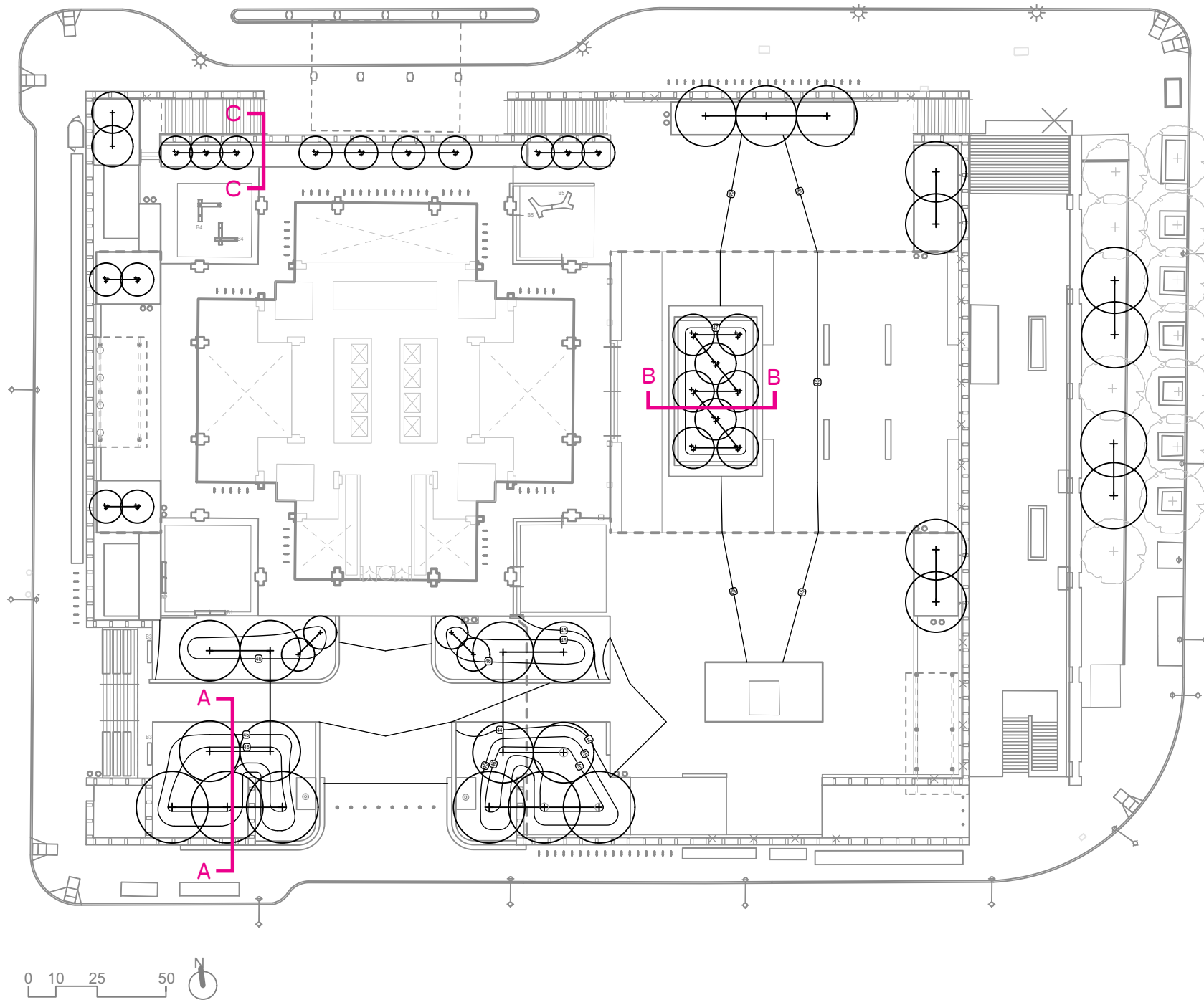
Building column



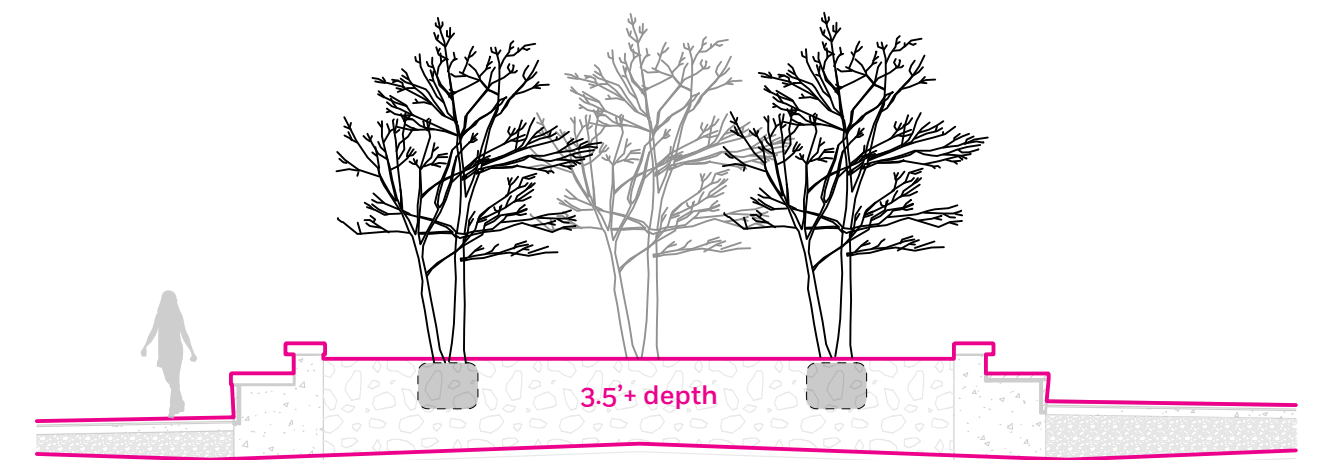
View to Small Plaza

**SITE PERSPECTIVES**

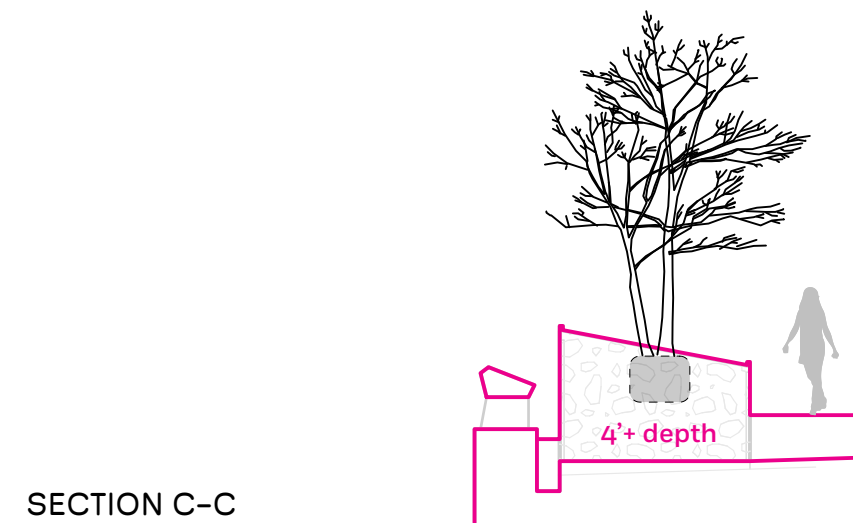




SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B



SECTION C-C

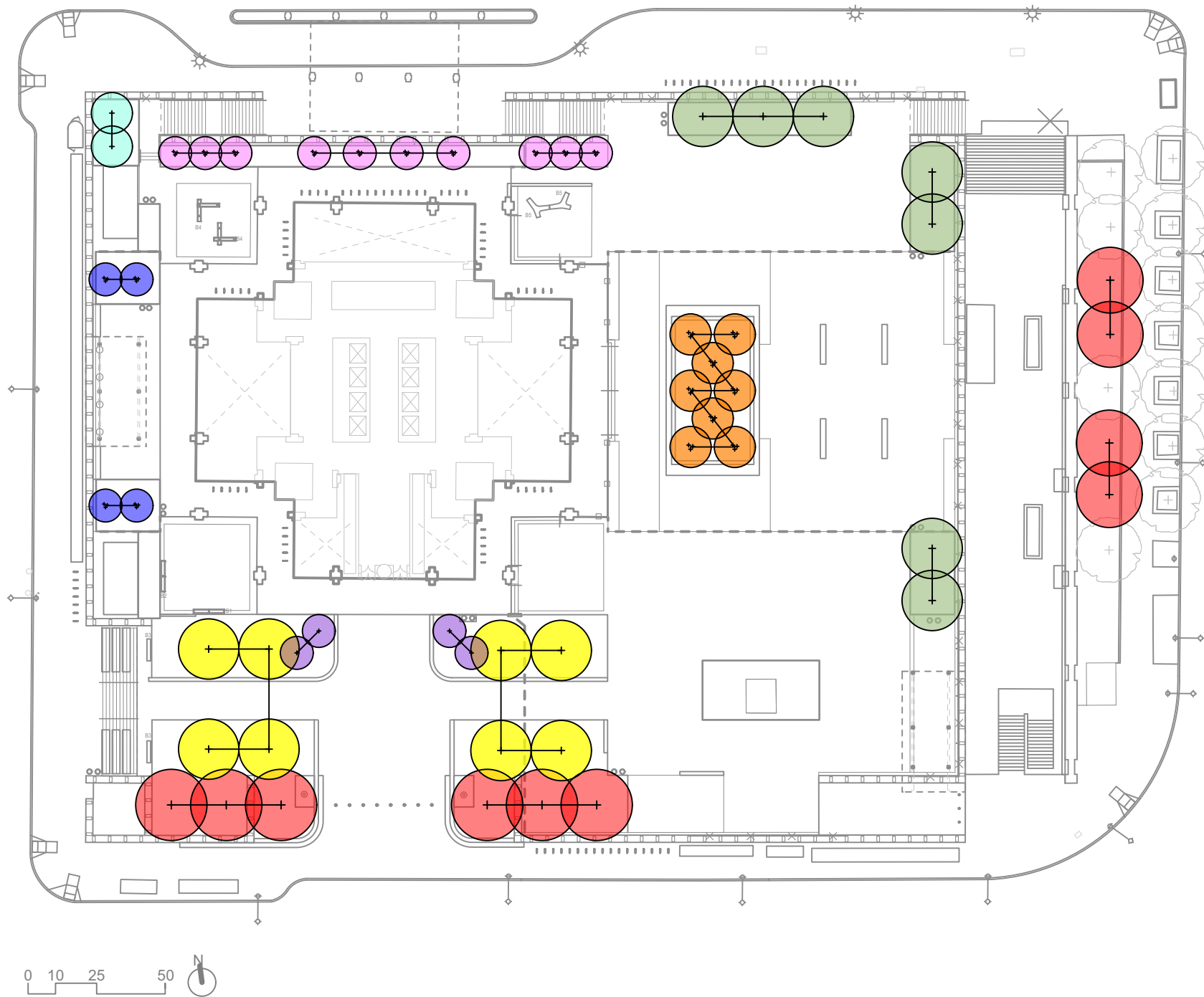
## PLANTING PLAN - GRADING FOR TREES

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
Plaza Improvement Project

**Ground Reconsidered**  
Landscape Architecture

 Department of  
**Public Property**





## PLANTING PLAN - TREES

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
Plaza Improvement Project

### EAST PLAZA PLANTERS



**'Shademaster' Honey Locust**  
*Gleditsia triacanthos inermis*  
'Shademaster'

### ARRIVAL GROVE



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

### PERIMETER TREE



**'Bloodgood' London Plane Tree**  
*Platanus x acerifolia 'Bloodgood'*

### 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



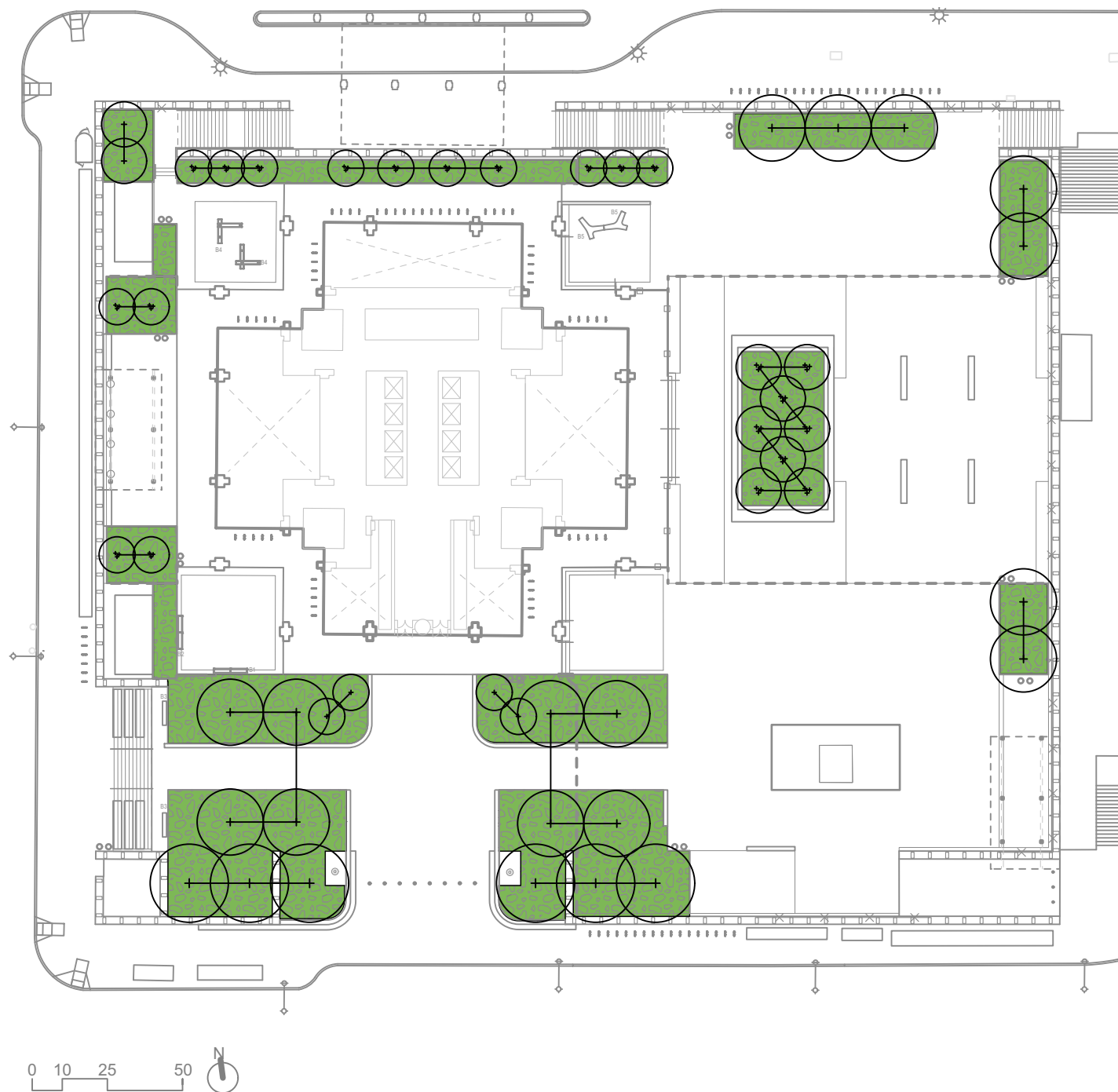
**Smoketree**  
*Cotinus coggygria*

### NORTH PLANTER



**Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry**  
*Amelanchier x grandiflora*  
'Autumn Brilliance'





## GRASS MATRIX



**'Shenandoah' Switchgrass**  
*Panicum virgatum 'Shenandoah'*



**Mexican Feather Grass**  
*Nasella tenuissima*



**Pennsylvania Sedge**  
*Carex pensylvanica*



**Autumn Moor Grass**  
*Sesleria autumnalis*

## SHRUB ACCENTS



**'Morton' Black Chokeberry**  
*Aronia melanocarpa 'Morton'*



**'Otto Luyken' Cherry Laurel**  
*Prunus laurocerasus 'Otto Luyken'*



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

## PERENNIAL ACCENTS



**'Hummelo' Alpine Betony**  
*Stachys monieri 'Hummelo'*



**Threadleaf Blue Star**  
*Amsonia hubrichtii*



**Showy Coneflower**  
*Rudbeckia fulgida var. fulgida*



**Blazing Star**  
*Liatris spicata*



**'Angelina' Stonecrop**  
*Sedum rupestre 'Angelina'*



**Purple Cone Flower**  
*Echinacea purpurea*

## PLANTING PLAN - PLANT BEDS





View from Love Park / Aerial

## SITE PERSPECTIVE

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
**Plaza Improvement Project**

**Ground** **Reconsidered**  
Landscape Architecture

 Department of  
**Public Property**





View from City Hall / Aerial

## SITE PERSPECTIVE

THOMAS PAINE PLAZA  
**Plaza Improvement Project**

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