

Boston City Hall and Plaza Renovations

BCDC Presentation
06 August 2019



Mayor Martin J. Walsh
City of Boston Operations Cabinet
Public Facilities Department

SASAKI

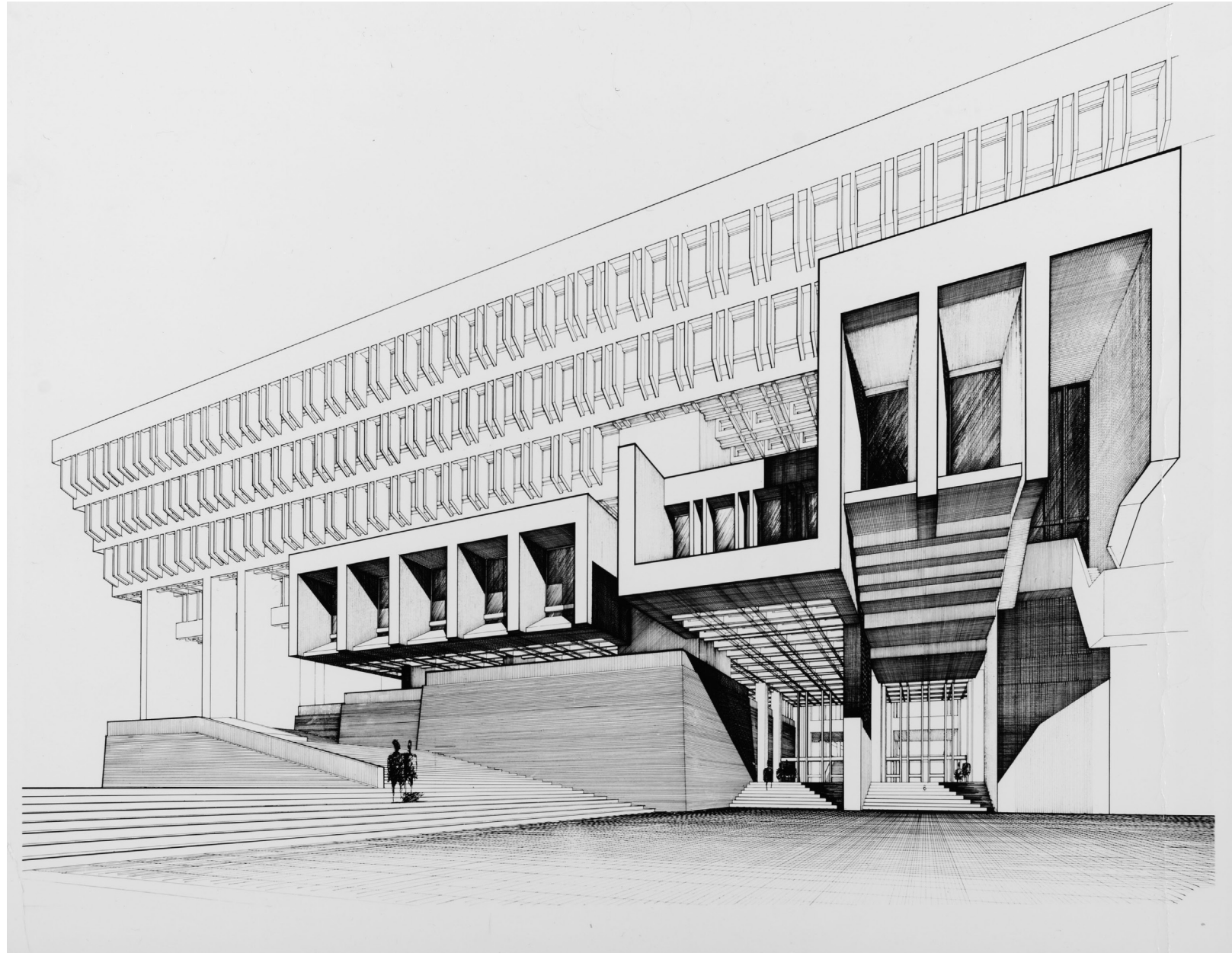


Agenda

Project Background

Plaza Renovations: Phase 1 Schematic Design

Discussion



“We carry the idea of the outside plaza into the building. The bricks come in, like a street. Glass doors suggest the natural extension of sidewalks into a place where people do business.”

– Michael McKinnell in Robert Taylor, “A Plain Man’s Guide”



BOSTON'S PLACE TO GATHER

An aerial photograph of a large, empty red brick plaza in front of a modern concrete building. The plaza is a vast, open space with a reddish-brown hue, surrounded by various urban structures and a body of water in the background. The building in the center is a large, multi-story concrete structure with a grid-like facade. The overall scene is one of urban emptiness and architectural contrast.

“

**Red Brick Tundra...
Windswept Desert.**

- BOSTON HERALD 2016

**A howling concrete void...more than
8 acres of windswept emptiness.**

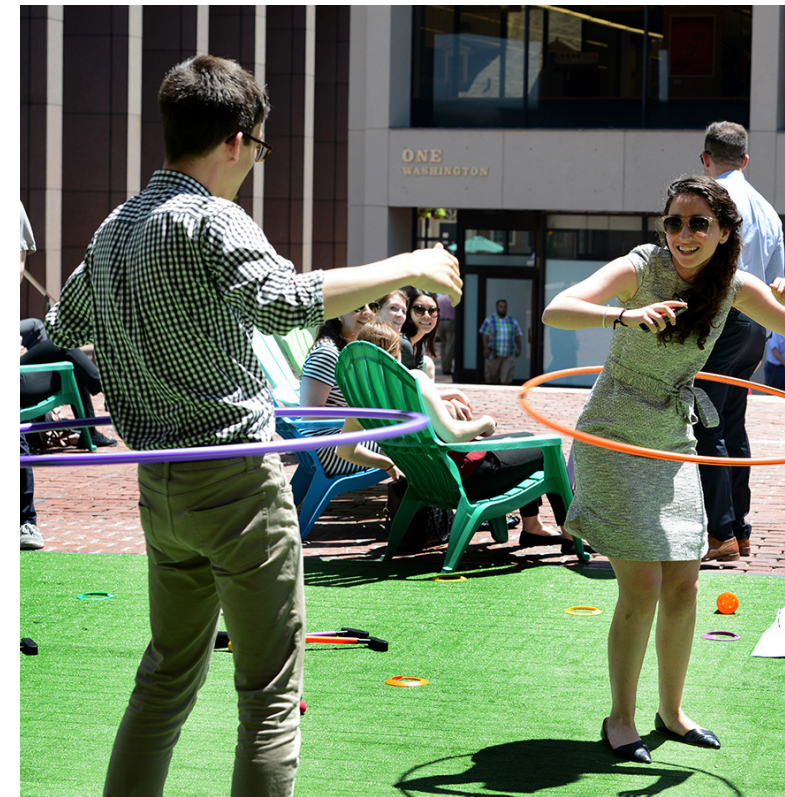
- BOSTON MAGAZINE 2016

**A failure...bleak, expansive,
and shapeless.**

- PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES HALL OF SHAME 2002

”

Temporary Activations Have Improved the Plaza



An aerial photograph of Boston City Hall, a large, brutalist concrete building with a distinctive tiered, cantilevered upper section. The building is surrounded by a large, paved plaza with some trees and a few people walking. In the background, other city buildings and a body of water are visible under a cloudy sky. Six white callout boxes with teal text are overlaid on the image, each pointing to a specific area or feature of the building and plaza.

PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

Deteriorating/Inadequate Infrastructure

Transparency

**Human scale
+ Comfort**

Accessibility

Wayfinding

**Limited loading on
underground tunnels**

A World Beneath the Plaza

TECHNICAL AND STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS

Live load capacity on some of the tunnels beneath the main plaza limits events

- 1898

Green Line
- 1898

Cornhill Tunnel, Abandoned (1962)
- 1898

Washington Tunnel, Demolished (1962)
- 1904

Orange Line
- 1962

Green Line, New
- 1967

BCH & Garage
- 1983

Green Line Vent
- 2015

Government Center Station Renovations



An aerial photograph of Boston City Hall Plaza. The central feature is the Boston City Hall building, a large, modern concrete structure with a distinctive facade of vertical fins. The plaza in front of it is paved with red bricks and has some trees and a few people. In the background, other city buildings and a body of water are visible under a cloudy sky.

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."

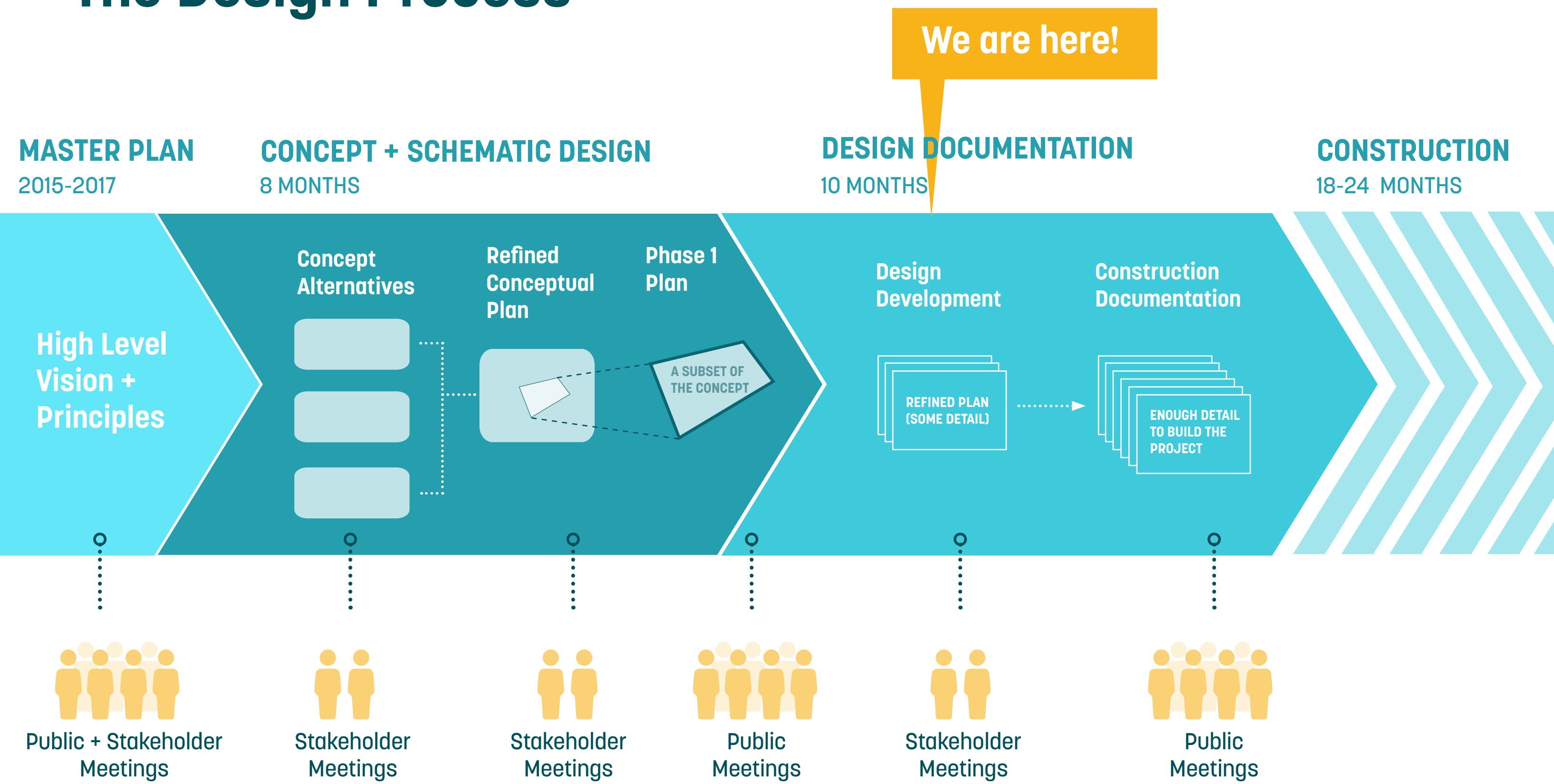
Mayor Martin J. Walsh, 2015 State of the City Address

An aerial photograph of a city plaza, overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter. The image shows a large, multi-story building with a distinctive architectural style, featuring a series of vertical fins or columns. In the foreground, there is a parking lot with several cars and a few people walking. The background shows other city buildings and a body of water.

Plaza Renovations

Phase 1 Schematic Design

The Design Process



KEY COMMUNITY INPUT TO THE DESIGN PROCESS

**A plaza that can host
great events year round!**

Shade and comfortable seating!

**A plaza we can hang
out in and play in!**

An energy-efficient plaza

**Demonstration
stormwater features!**

**Improved loading
capacity**

**Integrated security
+ lighting**

Better wayfinding

**A universally accessible
plaza + building**

Amenities (food, restrooms, etc)

Honored legacy



PLAZA STAKEHOLDERS AND CONSTITUENTS

A Reinvigorated Civic Heart of Boston



**A Welcoming
and Civic
Front Yard**



**A Flexible +
Accommodating
Event Venue**

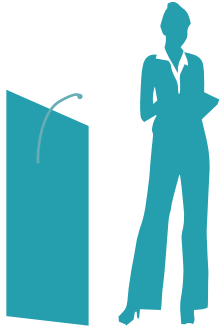


**A Model for
Sustainability
and Resilience**



**A Renewed
Cultural +
Architectural
Legacy**

Program | Elements and Principles



Speakers Corner

- With Flag poles



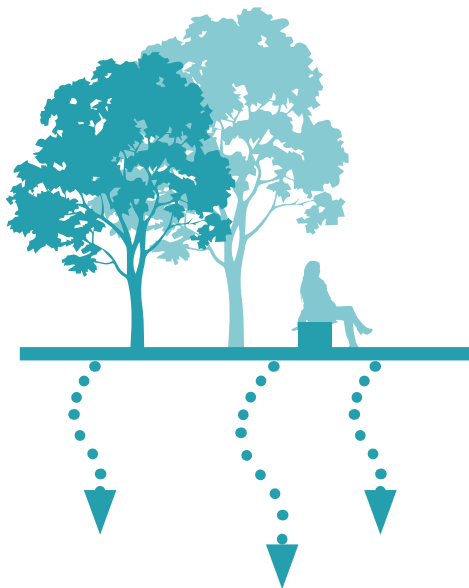
One Large Event Space

- 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 +/- 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

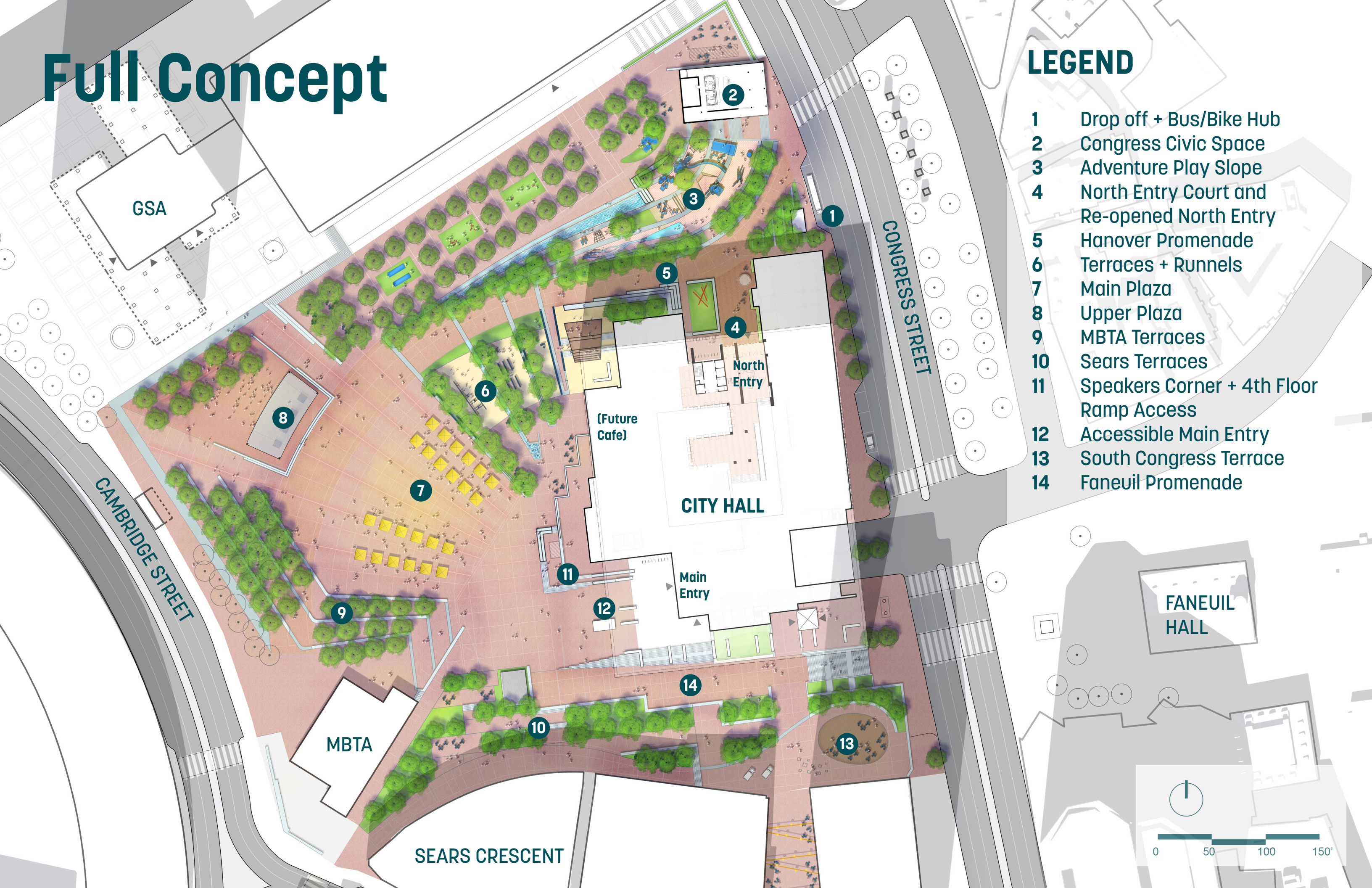
- Areas for lawn games,
- Adventurous playscapes for children



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

GSA

CONGRESS STREET

CAMBRIDGE STREET

(Future Cafe)

North Entry

CITY HALL

Main Entry

FANEUIL HALL

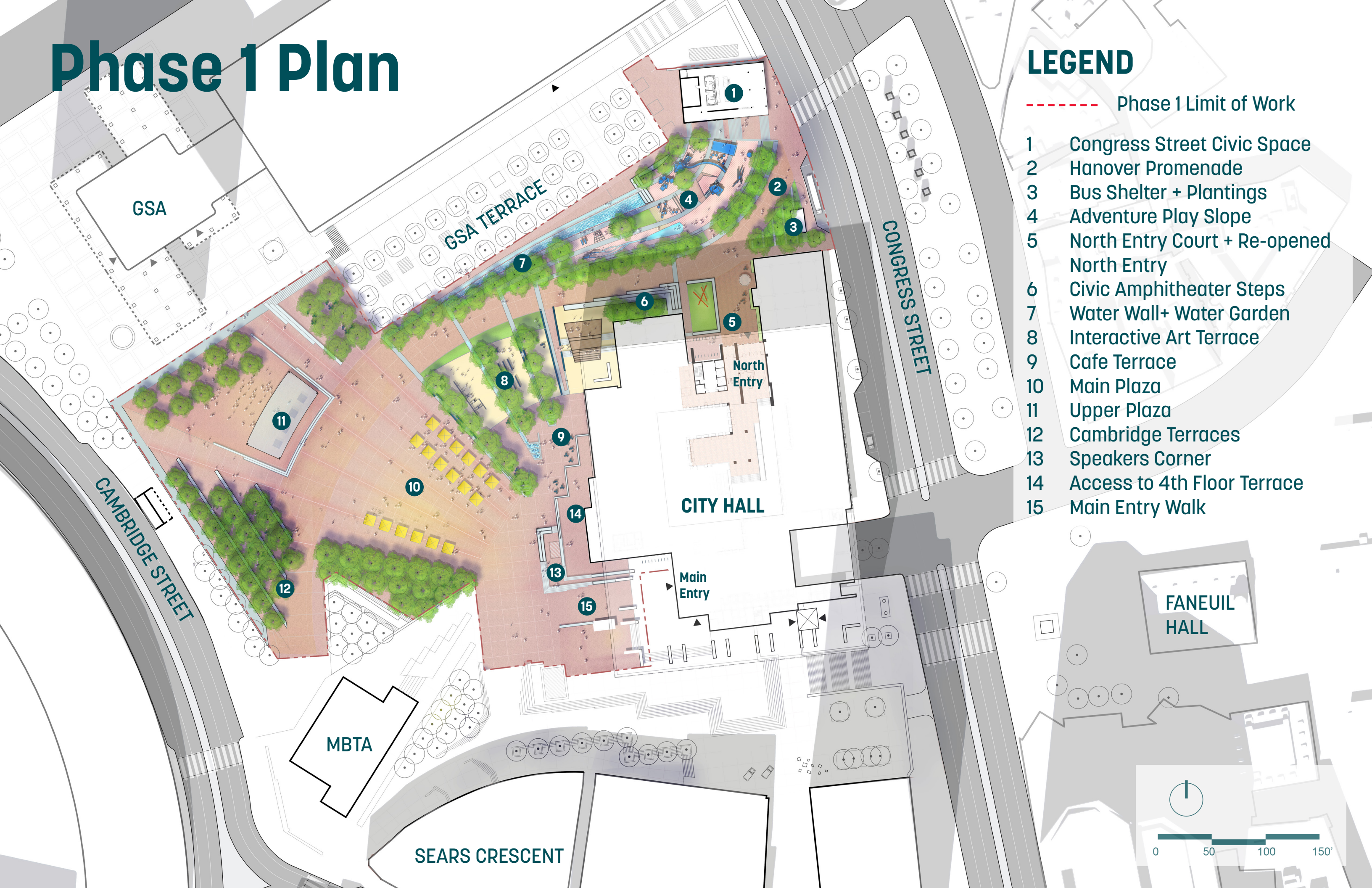
MBTA

SEARS CRESCENT

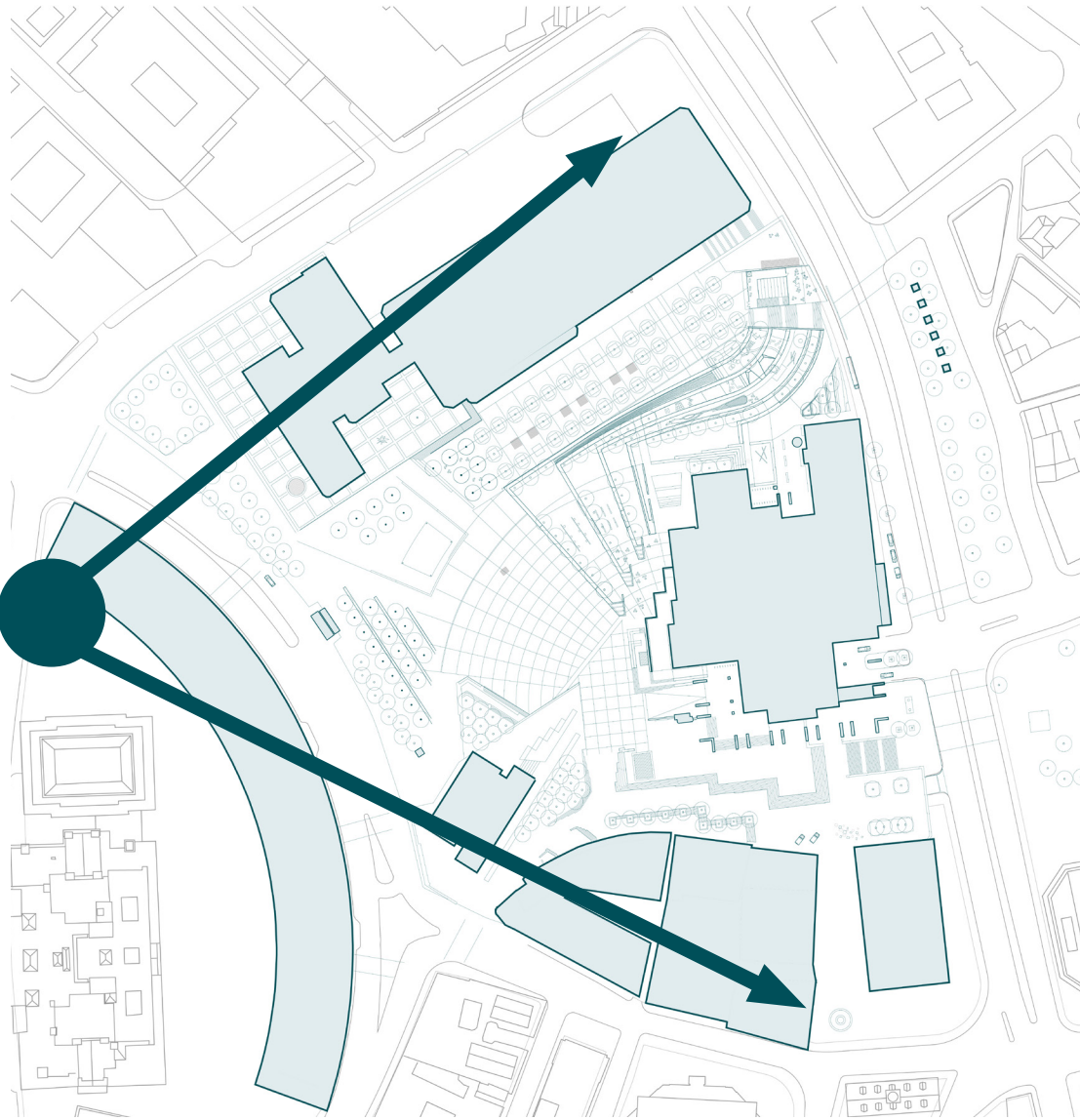


0 50 100 150'

Phase 1 Plan



ORIGINAL AERIAL VIEW FROM CENTER PLAZA



PROPOSED AERIAL

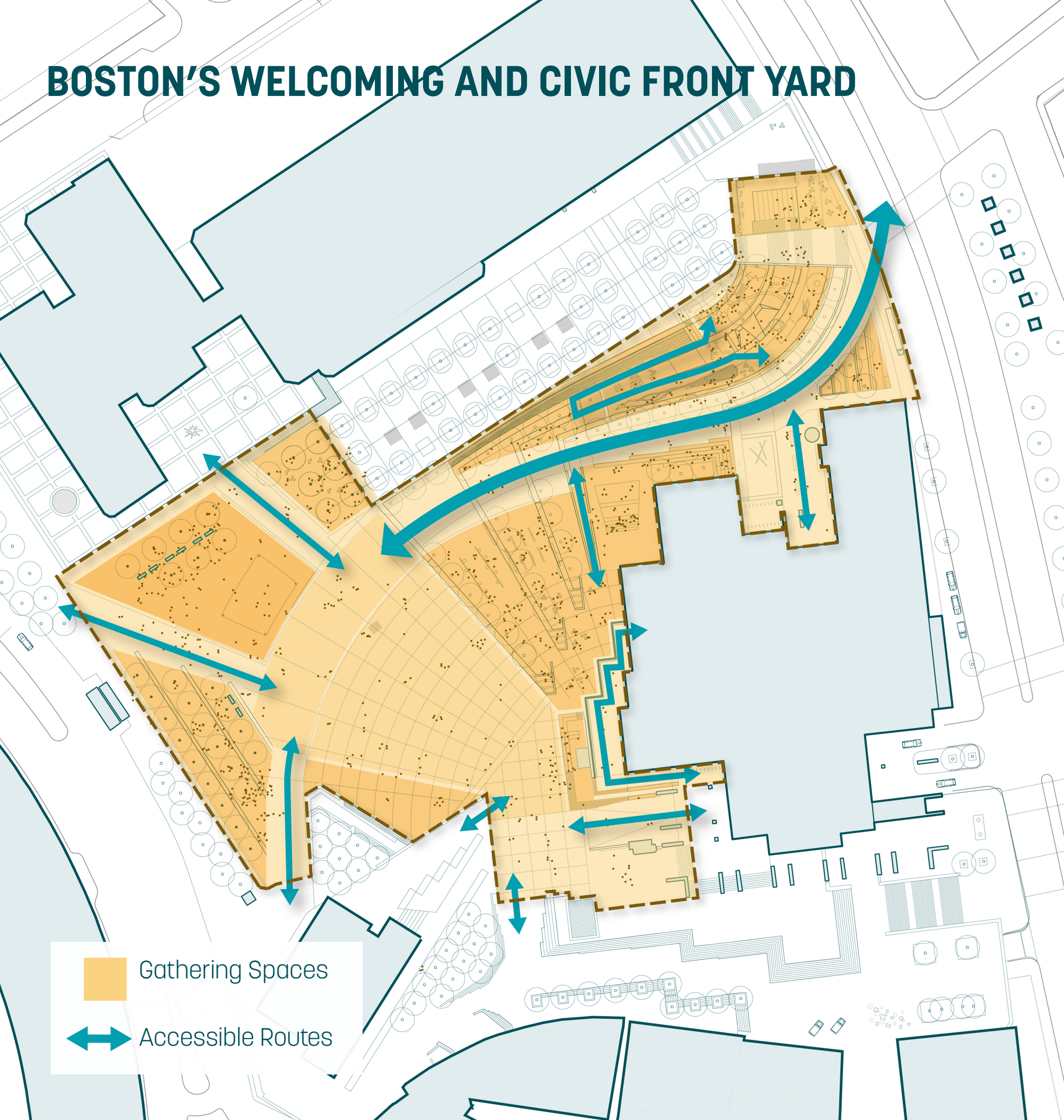




Boston's Welcoming and Civic Front Yard

**A UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE AND COMFORTABLE PLAZA, SUPPORTING
A DIVERSITY OF SAFE ACTIVITIES, DAY AND NIGHT YEAR ROUND**

BOSTON'S WELCOMING AND CIVIC FRONT YARD



BY THE NUMBERS

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

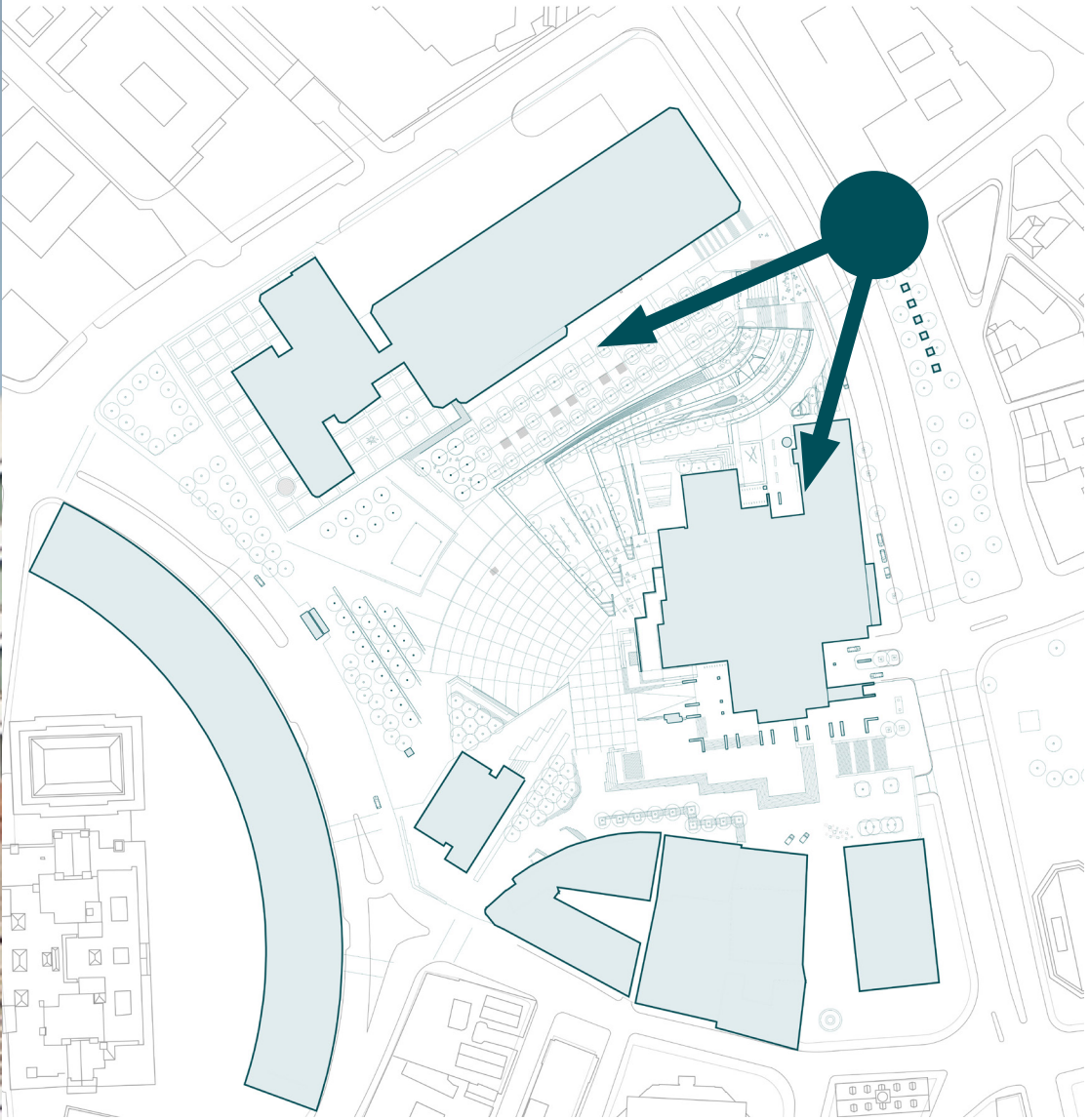
12k

square feet of
destination
adventure
playscape

11k

square feet of
terraces for pop-up
play and interactive
public art

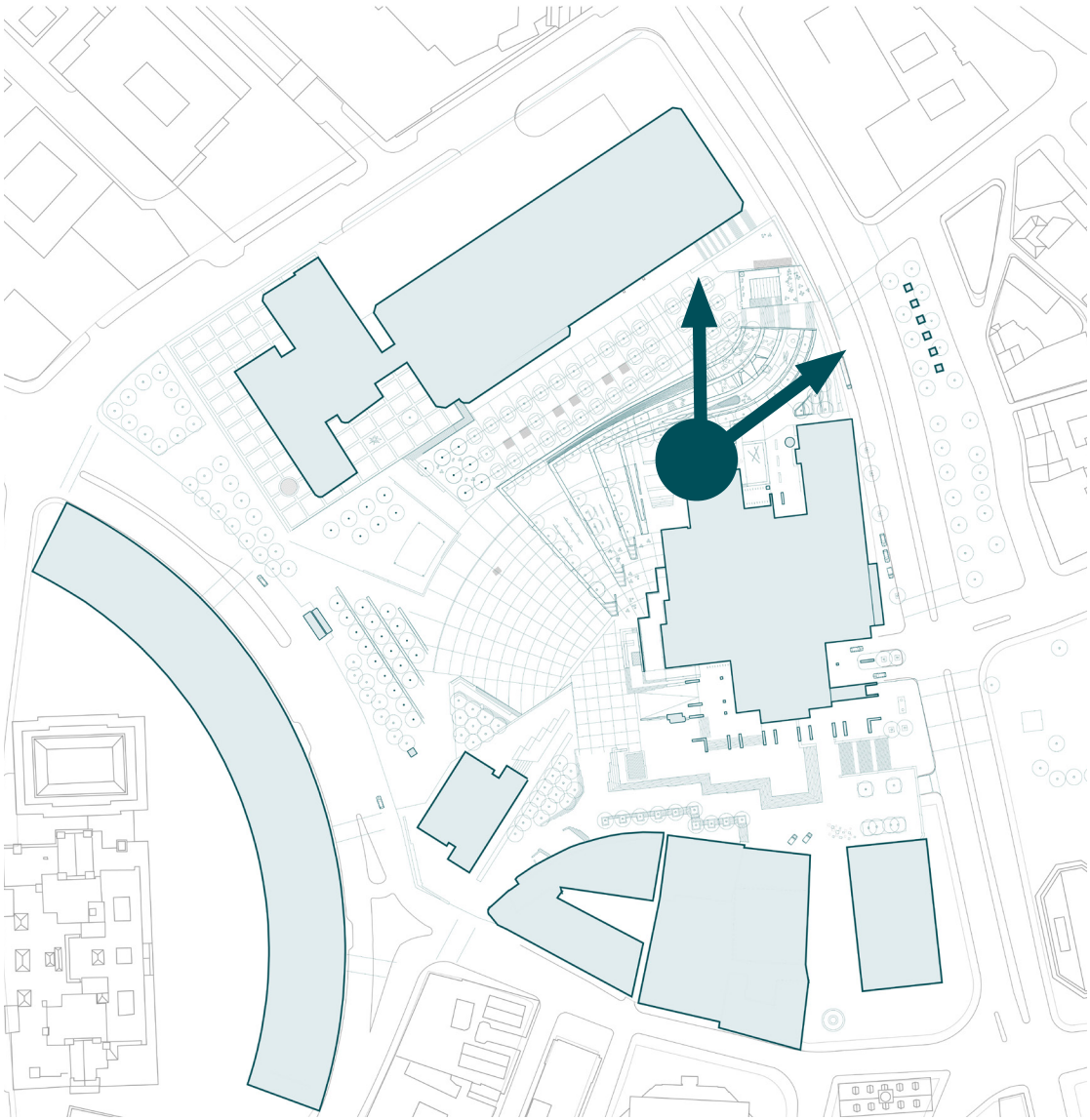
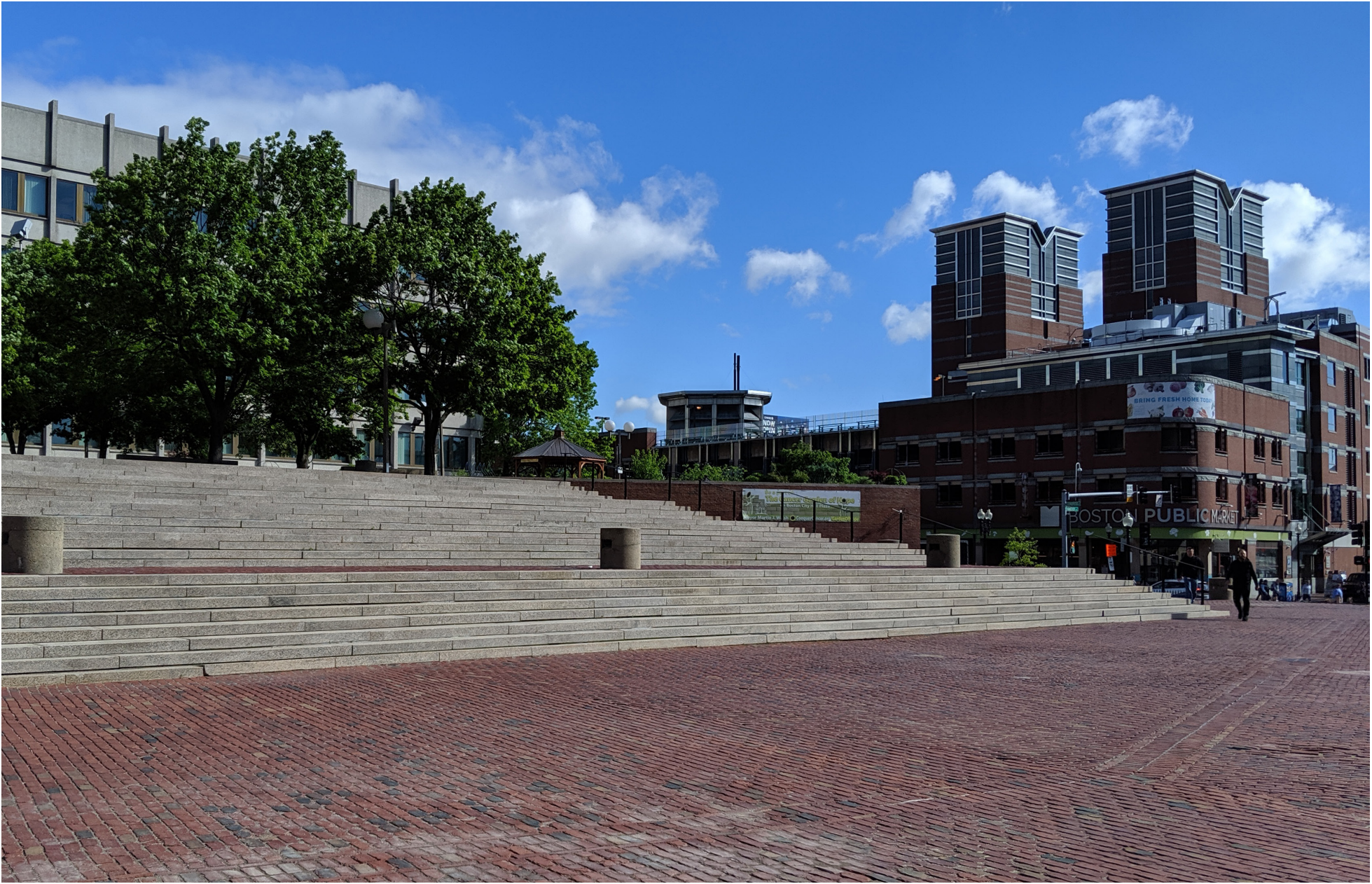
EXISTING VIEW FROM CONGRESS STREET



PROPOSED PLAZA ENTRY FROM CONGRESS STREET



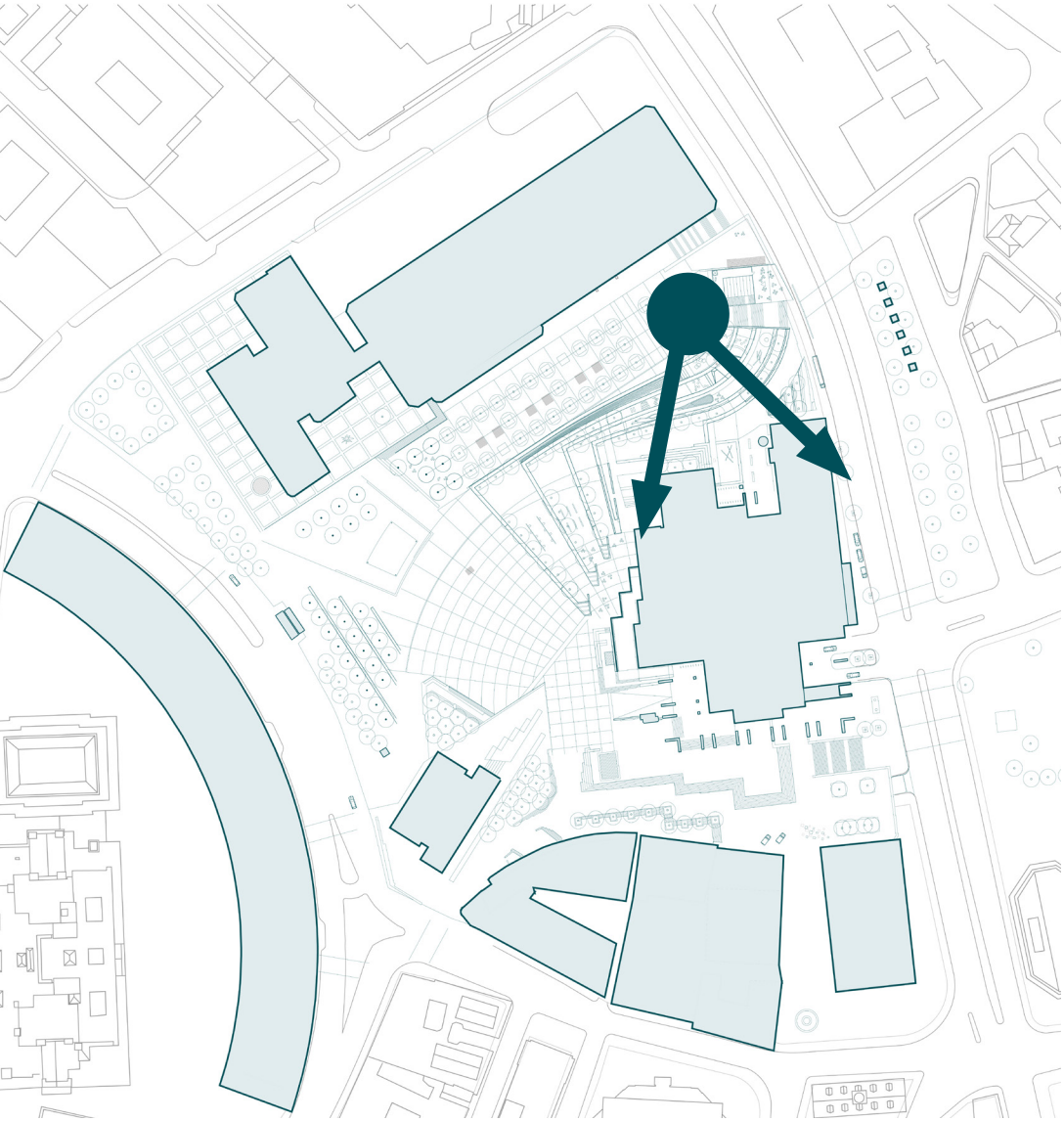
EXISTING VIEW FROM NORTH ENTRY TOWARDS GSA AND CONGRESS STREET



PROPOSED VIEW AT PLAYScape ENTRANCE



EXISTING VIEW AT NORTH ENTRY



PROPOSED VIEW AT NORTH ENTRY

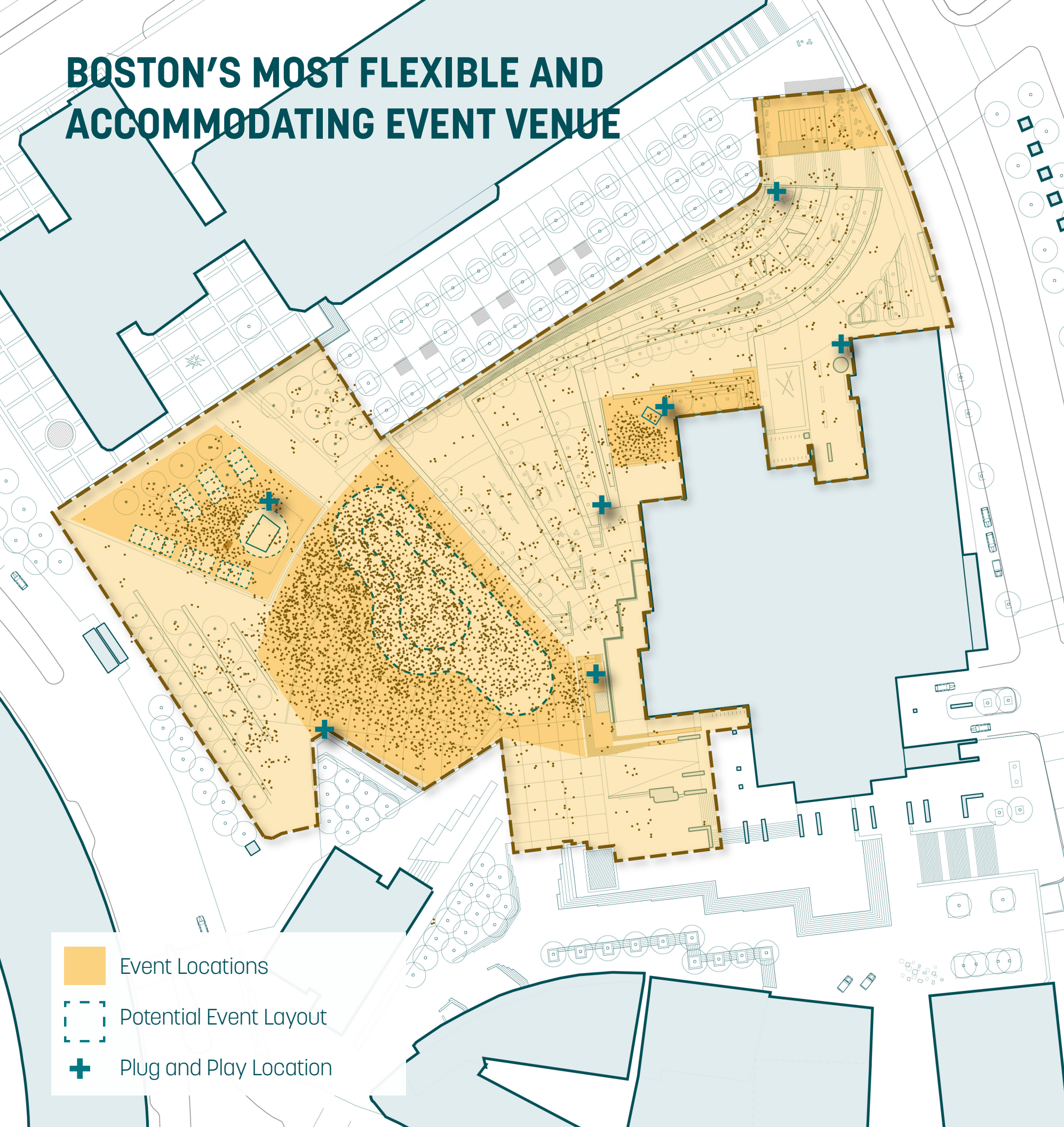







Boston's Most Flexible and Accommodating Event Venue

**SUPPORTING A DIVERSITY OF EVENT TYPES AND
SIZES WITH ROBUST INFRASTRUCTURE**

BOSTON'S MOST FLEXIBLE AND ACCOMMODATING EVENT VENUE



-  Event Locations
-  Potential Event Layout
-  Plug and Play Location

BY THE NUMBERS

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)

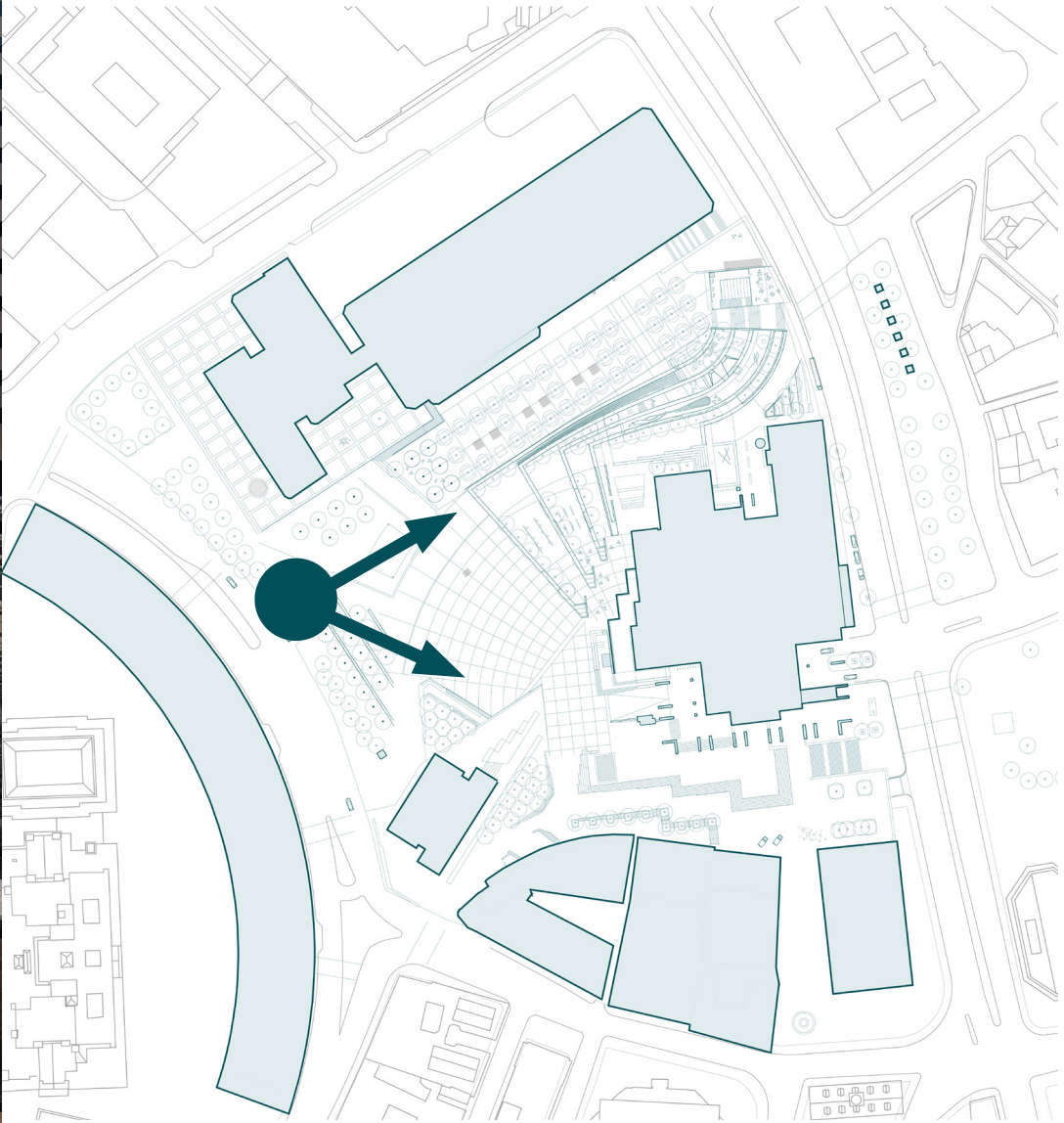
3

small event and
gathering spaces

1

new civic building
to host and
support events

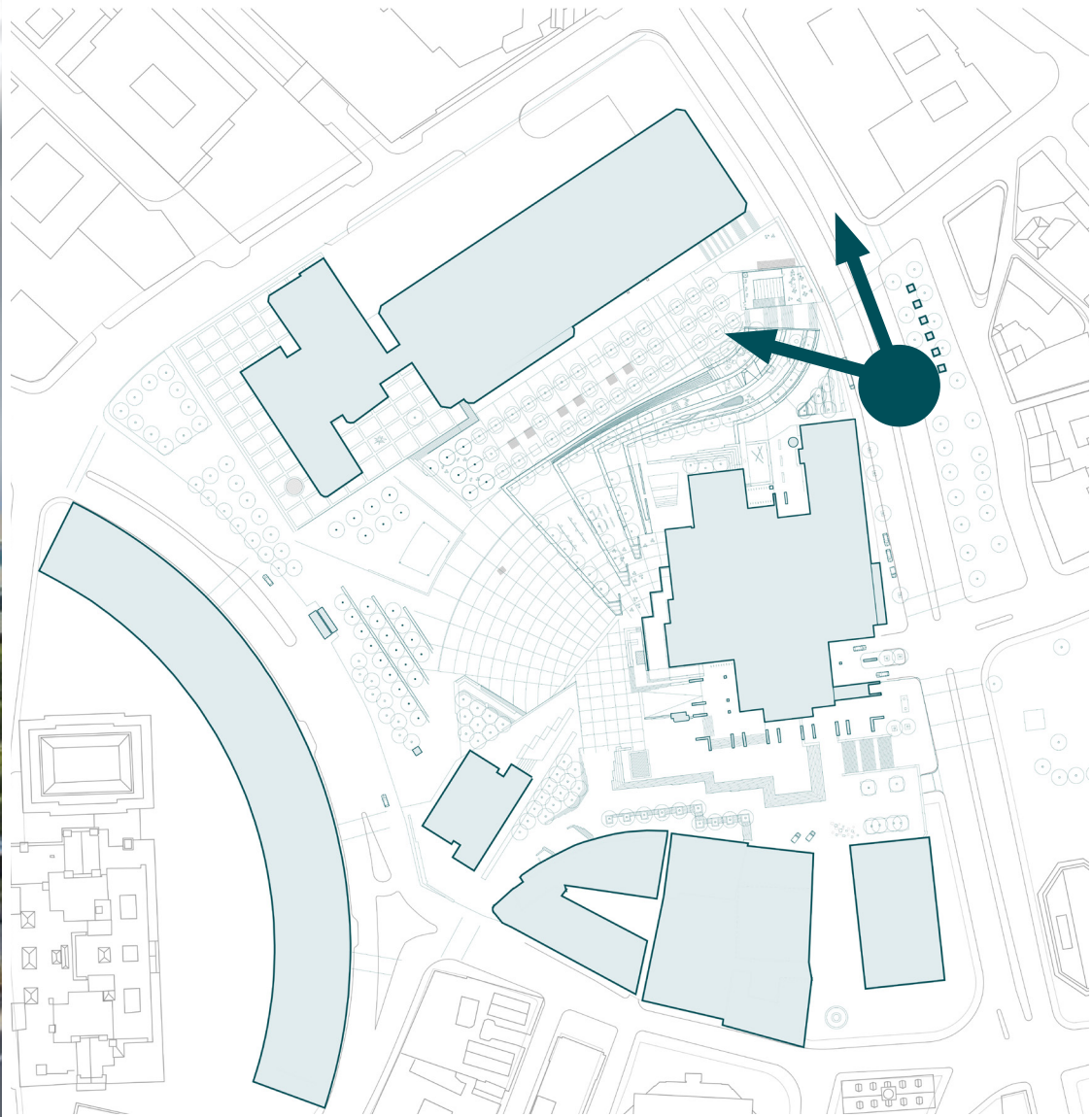
EXISTING VIEW OF MAIN PLAZA FROM CAMBRIDGE STREET



PROPOSED WINTER VIEW OF MAIN PLAZA



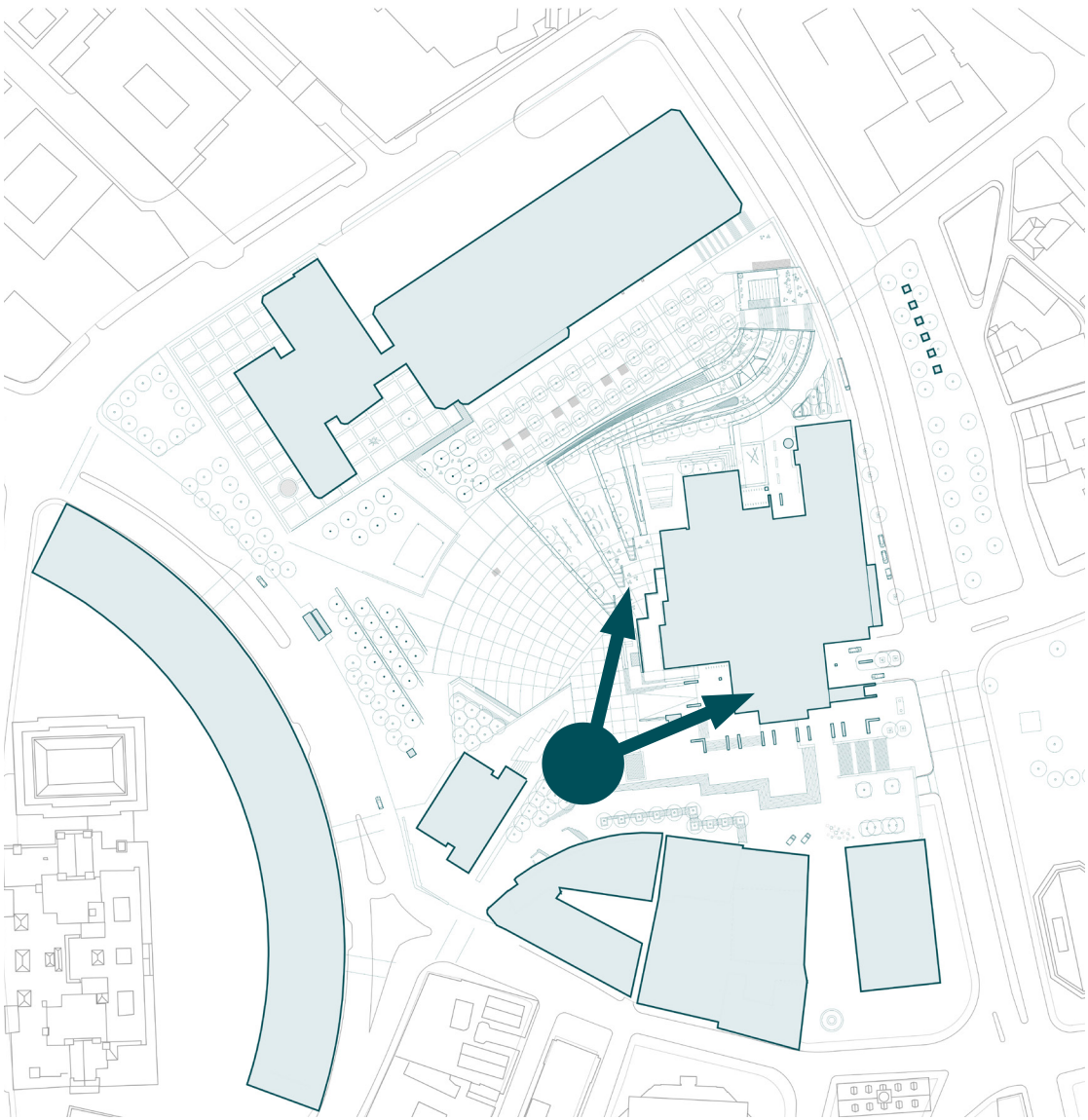
EXISTING VIEW OF STEPS AND MBTA VENT STRUCTURE AT CONGRESS STREET



PROPOSED CONGRESS STREET CIVIC BUILDING



EXISTING VIEW OF MAIN ENTRANCE AND RAMP TO 4TH FLOOR TERRACE



PROPOSED VIEW OF MAIN ENTRANCE, SPEAKERS CORNER AND ACCESS TO COURTYARD

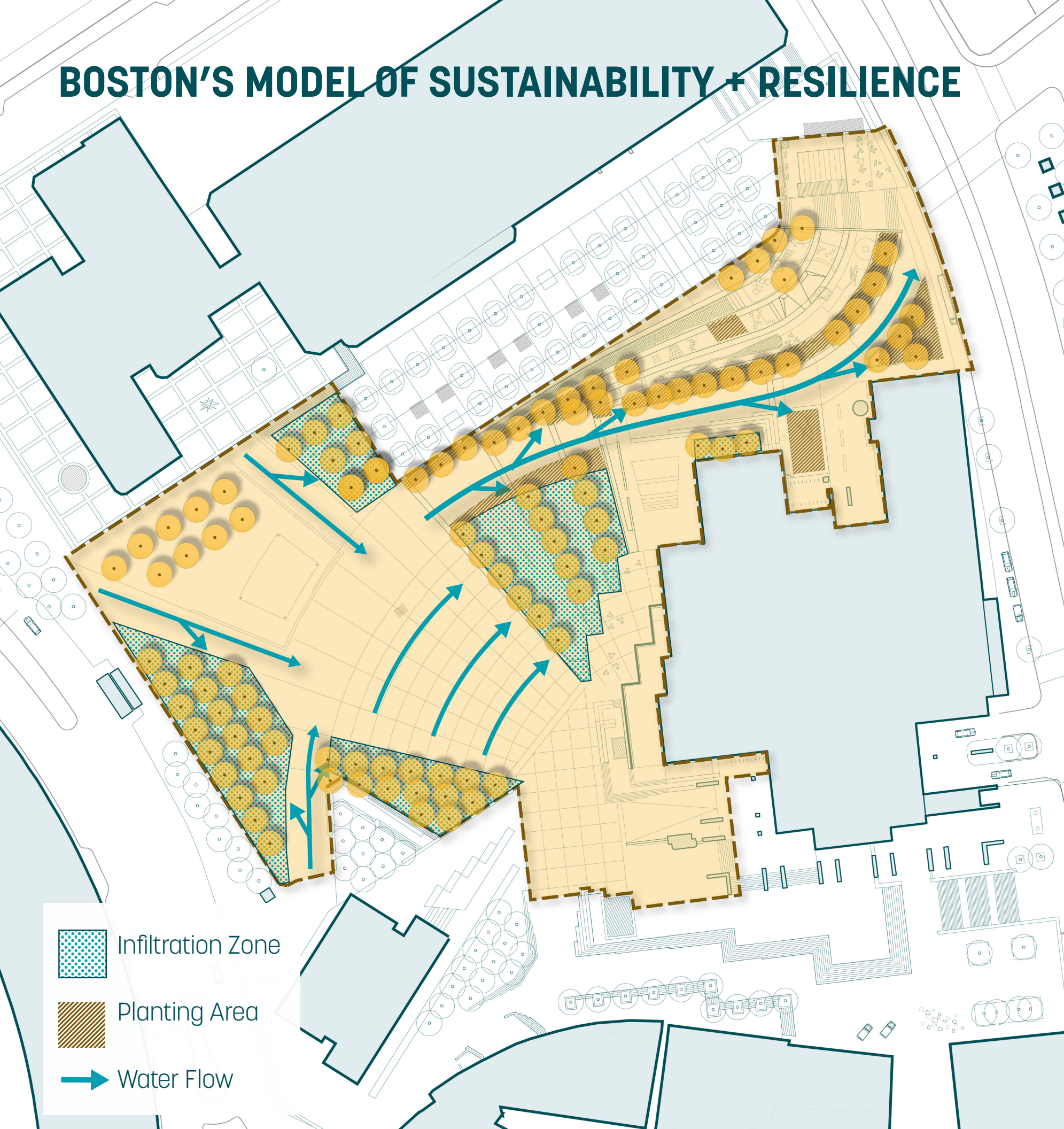




Boston's Model of Sustainability + Resilience

A POROUS, SHADY AND EFFICIENT PLAZA

BOSTON'S MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY + RESILIENCE



BY THE NUMBERS

5x

increase in permeable surfaces
to soak up stormwater

+100

new trees improving shade,
scale and air quality

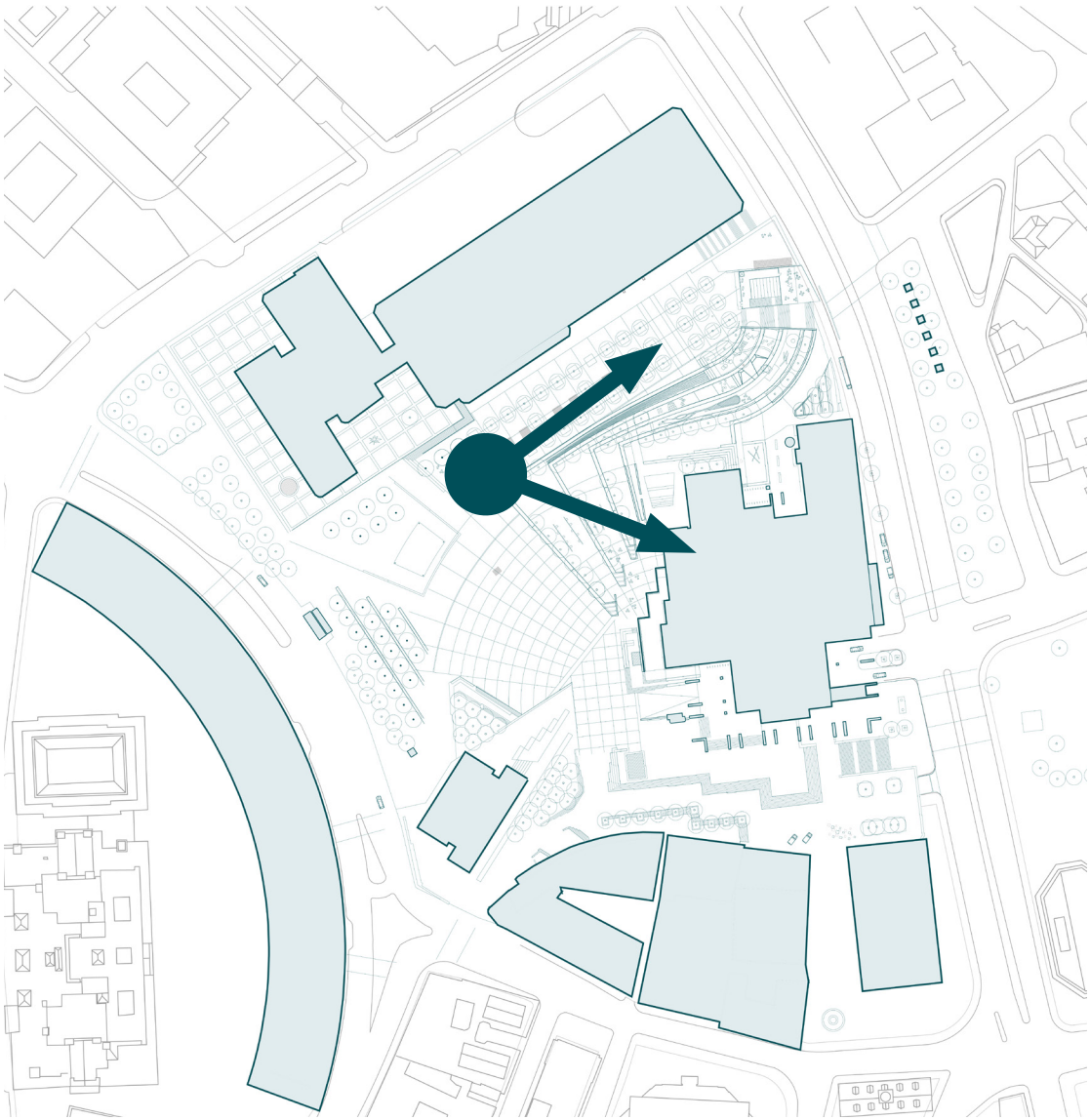
50

lights replaced with
efficient LED technology

22.5K

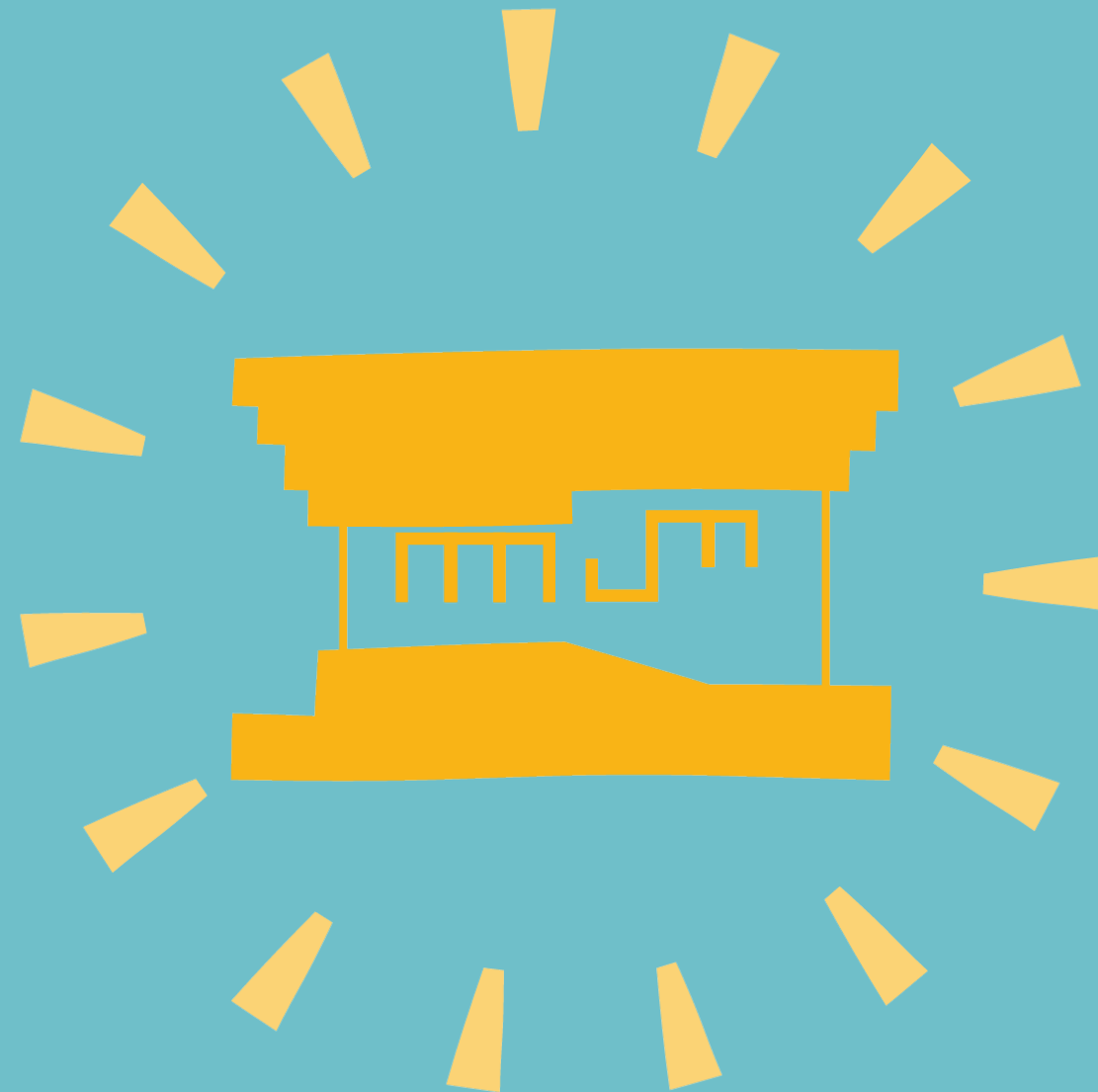
square feet of granite and brick
paving re-used or recycled

EXISTING VIEW FROM MAIN PLAZA TOWARDS CONGRESS STREET



PROPOSED VIEW FROM MAIN PLAZA DOWN HANOVER PROMENADE

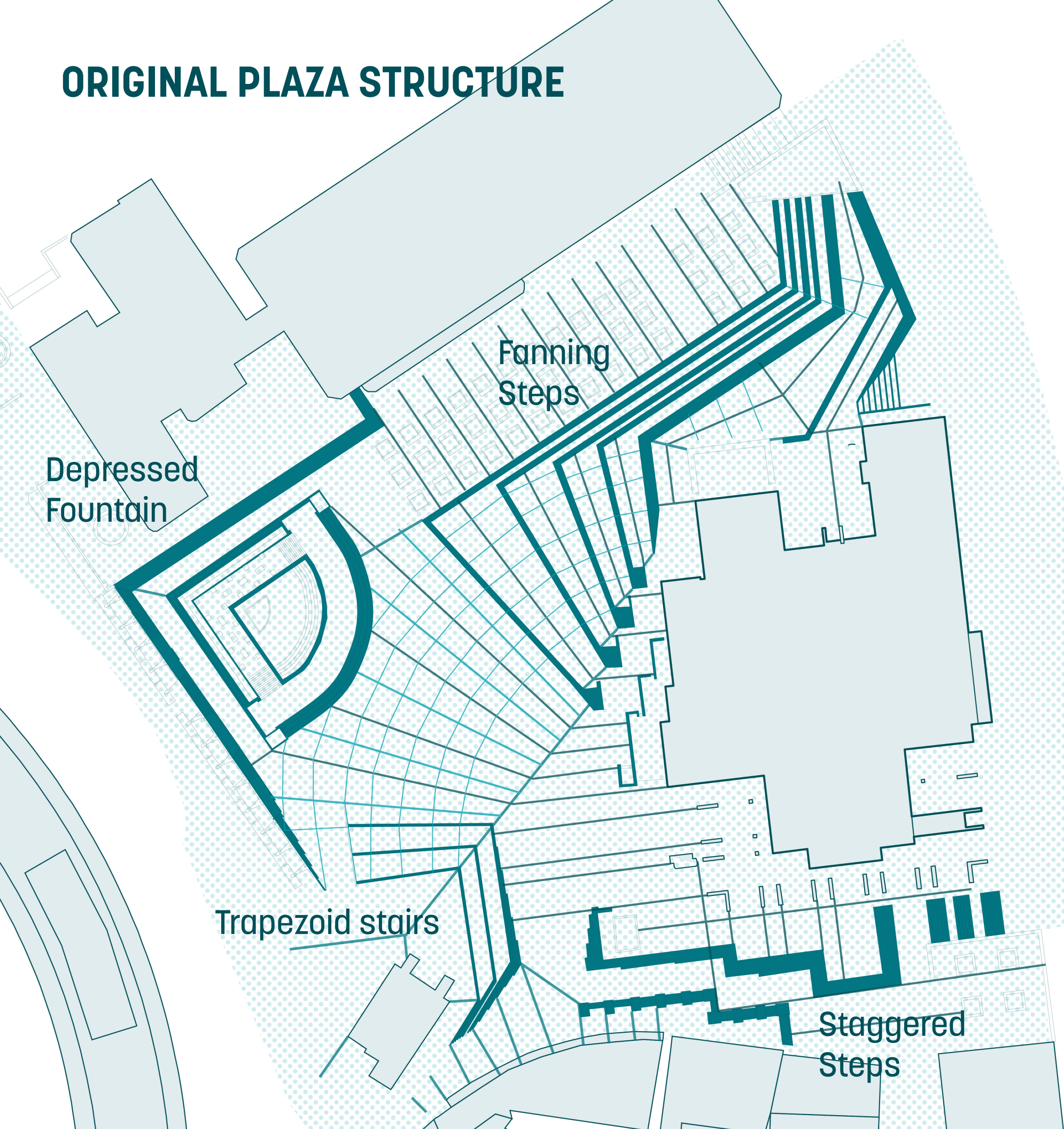




A Renewed Cultural + Architectural Legacy

HONORING AND ITERATING ON THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF
THE BUILDING AND PLAZA'S MODERN-ERA DESIGN

ORIGINAL PLAZA STRUCTURE



Granite Stair Treads
in a Brick Field



Expansion Joints + Brick Pattering

A RENEWED CULTURAL + ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

BY THE NUMBERS

50

years since Boston City Hall + Plaza first opened in 1968

18K

linear feet of granite stair treads honored and reimagined as a diversity of granite banding

5

New expressions of granite banding: paving band, runnel, bench, stairs or wall

Preserved Viewsheds

Reopened North Entry

Honored Banding and Jointing

- Paving Joint/Pattern
- Granite Band (paving, runnel, bench, stairs, wall)



A Reinvigorated Civic Heart of Boston



**A Welcoming
and Civic
Front Yard**



**A Flexible +
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**A Model for
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Discussion
