

## CENTER CITY REPORTS

# TRANSFORMING DILWORTH PLAZA

### Creating a New Amenity in the Center of the City

For the last year, the Center City District has been working on a major design initiative to transform Dilworth Plaza on the west side of City Hall into a new vibrant, civic space at the center of the city. The goal is to create an active, but appropriate forecourt to one of Philadelphia's most historic structures as part of a broader agenda to improve the infrastructure and civic spaces of Center City, as outlined in our most recent *State of Center City* report. Funding from adjacent property owners and from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the William Penn Foundation has supported the effort, along with extensive outreach to adjacent businesses, owners and civic groups.

Designed by a team of internationally recognized local architects, landscape architects and engineers, including KieranTimberlake, OLIN, Urban Engineers, and CVM structural engineers, new plans will create a broad open plaza, accessible from the street without the use of stairs or ramps. The plaza will be composed of green, shaded sitting areas and lawn, an outdoor café, and a programmable, playful fountain that can be turned off in segments to accommodate a range of special events, concerts, outdoor markets, or winter ice-skating. With new sloping glass entrances, animated at night by artist-designed lighting, Dilworth plaza will also serve as a prominent gateway to Philadelphia's extensive network of transit lines.

### A Welcoming Space for the 21st Century

Dilworth Plaza was created as a 1960's urban renewal project that eliminated city streets, condemned adjacent property and annexed new geography to the west side of City Hall. Dedicated in 1977 and named for former Mayor Richardson Dilworth, the current design includes a large sunken plaza to the north and a spiral staircase that interrupts the pedestrian axis of Market Street as it passes through City Hall. A series of walls, stairs, barriers and overgrown trees limits access and blocks the visibility of much of City Hall, obscuring hundreds of Calder sculptures that adorn the building. Though surrounded by office buildings, hotels and new residential condominiums, the barren, hard surfaces of the existing plaza are seldom used as a gathering space.



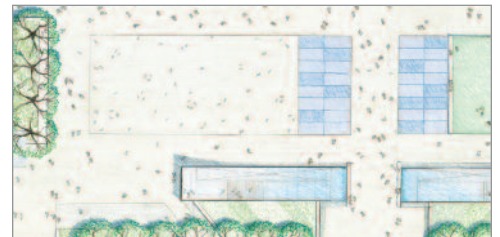
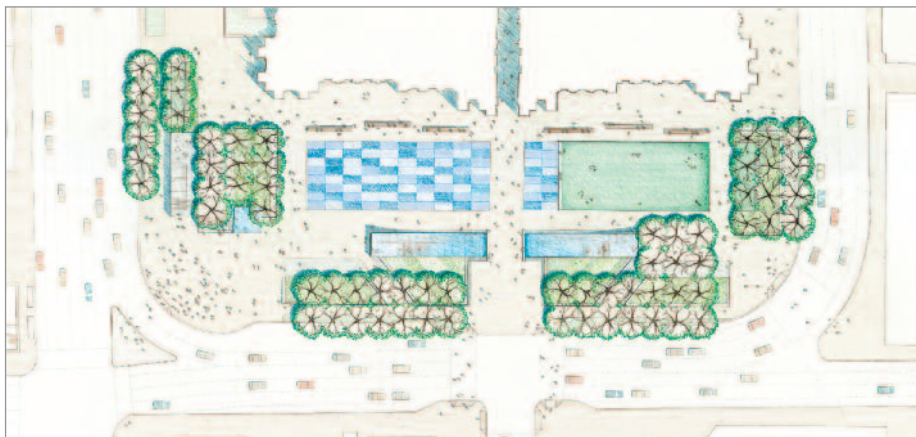
Dilworth Plaza can be transformed from a space that people only pass through to an attractive park for leisure activities and a vibrant civic space that can be used for multiple civic functions.





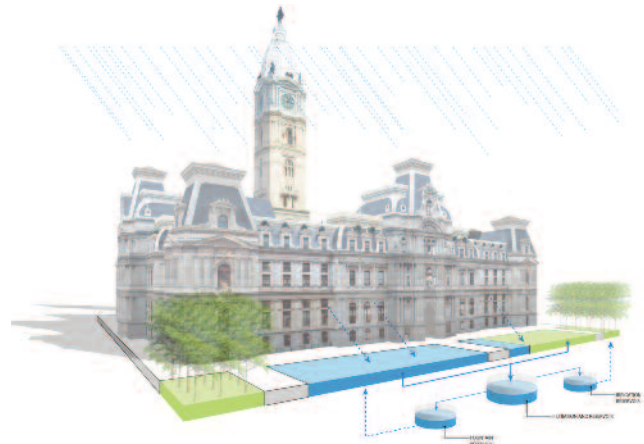
**Existing views of Dilworth Plaza:** Changing elevations and hidden spaces make for an unwelcoming space.

The demolition of elevated train tracks west of City Hall in the 1950s opened up the north side of Market Street for Penn Center office development. Originally, the roadway on the west side of City Hall hugged as close to the building as it does on the east side. The rectangular parcel just west of City Hall (shown above) was expanded by condemnation of buildings on the south side of Market Street and annexed to create Dilworth Plaza.



**Site plan for new Dilworth Plaza:** A lawn panel (130 x 60 feet), located on the southern end, gently slopes up to the south to provide easy views towards the fountain. The programmable fountain (180 x 60 feet) can be turned partially or completely off to allow for concerts, events or movies. At the northern end, adjacent to a cluster of trees and lawn, is a café. Two sloping glass headhouses provide stairways and one elevator to the transit concourse below. Curb bulb-outs at 15th and Market shorten the crossing distance and create a new legal crosswalk from the south side of Market, next to the “Clothespin,” directly to Dilworth Plaza.





Center Square was the original site for a pump house designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe that drew water from the Schuylkill River and distributed it throughout the city. Philadelphia's first public fountain was also located in Center Square. The new design recreates this historic use through the collection of on-site rain water, its purification and storage occurring in a reservoir below the plaza lawn. The water is then redistributed to support the irrigation of the plaza landscaping and for public enjoyment in the programmable fountain.



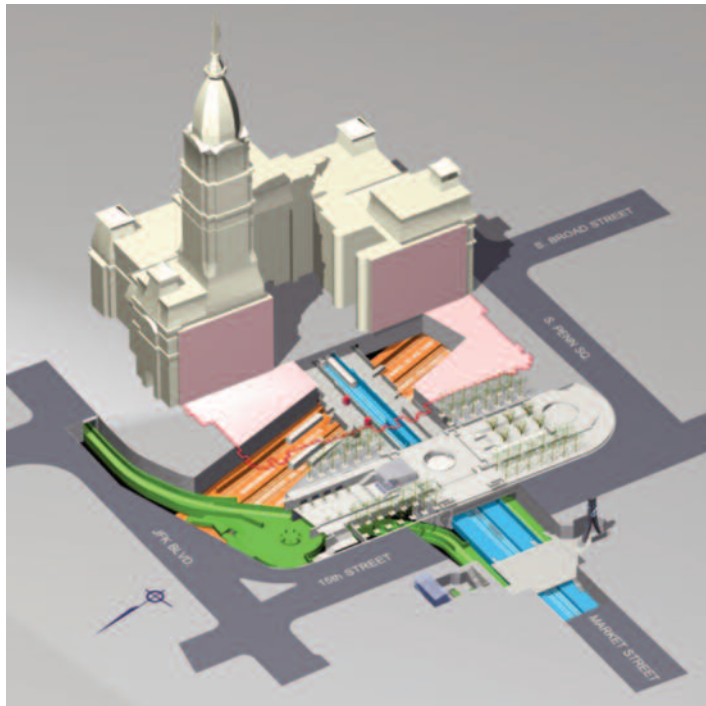
Looking northeast towards the expanded Convention Center on North Broad Street, an outdoor café will provide a place for breakfast, lunch and afternoon meetings, affording views of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. An elevator provides a third entrance to transit and a direct link to the 15th Street subway-surface station.

A revitalized Dilworth Plaza will become a meeting space at lunchtime for more than 25,000 workers in adjacent office buildings and an attractive link to the shopping and hospitality district on East Market Street. For thousands of new downtown residents, Center Square will join William Penn's four other squares as a vibrant green amenity. With the expanding Pennsylvania Convention Center opening a new front door on North Broad Street in 2011, the plaza will serve as a visitor destination and a link to South Broad Street's Avenue of the Arts and to the restaurants that line Walnut and Chestnut Streets. From chairs outside the café on the northwest corner of City Hall visitors, workers and residents will enjoy the mile long view up the Benjamin Franklin Parkway to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

### Creating a Sustainable Space

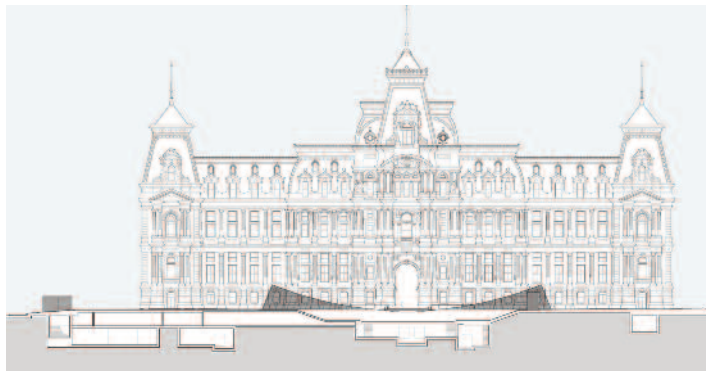


	Proposed	Existing
Impermeable Paving	69,266 SF	112,178 SF
Permeable Paving	14,598 SF	0 SF
Fountain	11,561 SF	2,841 SF
Planting & Lawns	27,685 SF	6,643 SF



Bower Lewis & Thrower

A cross-section reveals the multiple levels of transit infrastructure beneath City Hall and Dilworth Plaza that limit the location for vertical connections to the service plaza.



On the western side of the plaza, two glass head houses provide connections to the transit concourse below. The structures are shaped with an arcing profile so they appear to slide under the central walkway that extends the Market Street axis through City Hall Courtyard. Rising to a height of 20 feet at the top of the stairs, the pavilions are 21 feet wide and 96 feet long and frame the central portion of City Hall without obscuring the view.

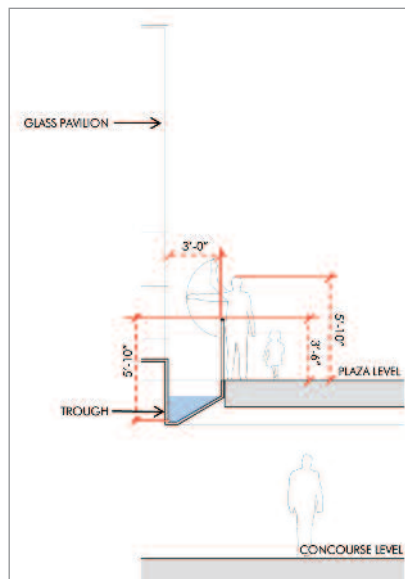
### A Gateway to Transit

City Hall sits atop four levels of transit infrastructure including the Market-Frankford and Broad Street lines, the subway surface routes to West Philadelphia and connections to the Regional Rail lines at Suburban Station. Working in partnership with SEPTA and their architects, Bower Lewis & Thrower, the CCD's design team is coordinating this project with a major renovation to the Broad Street subway station below City Hall.

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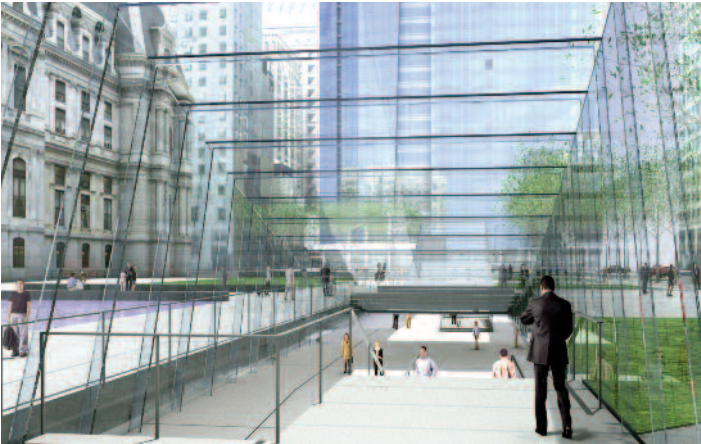


Highly visible gateways to transit will be enhanced by a lighting artist.



The glass headhouses will be made of shatter-proof glass, protected by graffiti resistant film and maintained at very high standards. They will be separated from the plaza surface by a sloping 3 foot wide trough filled with water that will be recycling as part of the landscape irrigation system.

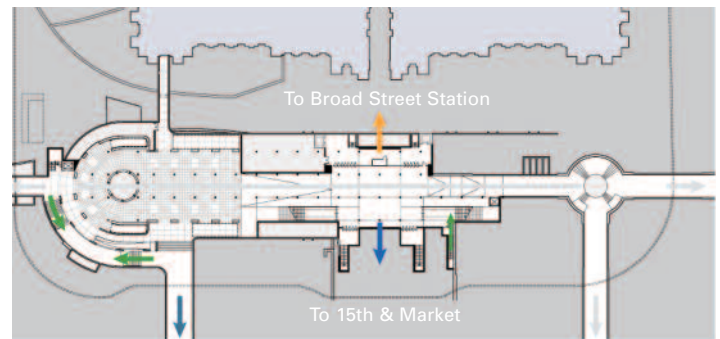
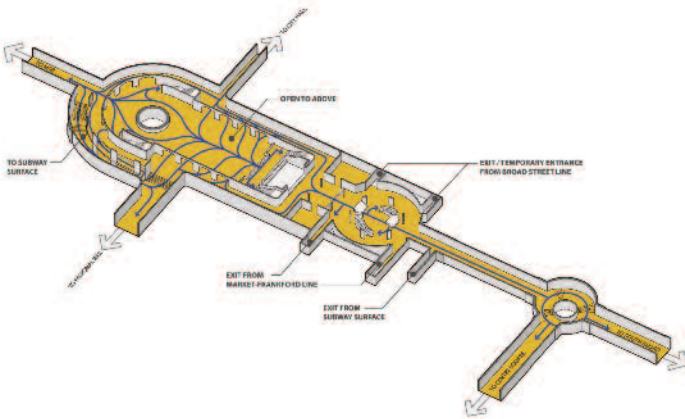




Wide entrances to the underground welcome passengers to transit and bring light to the concourse level.



A new transit room provides computerized wall graphics and new entrances to both the 15th and Market subway station and the Broad Street line.



The current concourse beneath Dilworth Plaza is a maze of walkways with walls and columns that obscure clear views. New stairways will descend into a staffed, concourse room that will provide access to the Broad Street line and create a new entrance to the 15th and Market subway station.



The semi-circular sunken plaza at the north end will continue to provide direct underground access to City Hall, Municipal Services Building and Suburban Station, but will be bridged over and illuminated. The current archways will be preserved but will be closed and converted to rear-projection display panels that will recount the history of the site from William Penn's original plan, through the building of City Hall, the construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad station, and tell the story of Richardson Dilworth's role in Philadelphia's renaissance of the 1950s. The statue which commemorates Dilworth, *Phoenix Rising* (1982), will most probably be preserved in place but elevated so that it emerges into the new street level plaza, while continuing to allow light to reach the concourse and the 15th Street subway-surface station.

### A Well-Managed Public Place

Like Boston’s Post Office Square and Manhattan’s Bryant Park, the new Dilworth Plaza will have a dedicated maintenance corporation, a public-private venture endowed by contributors, and supported by revenues generated from activities on the site, and from the City of Philadelphia and the Center City District. High-quality materials and a sustainable design are the hallmarks of all great civic spaces.

### Funding the Project

Generous support from adjacent property owners, from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the William Penn Foundation has enabled the CCD to complete schematic design and receive conceptual approval from the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Construction funding for this \$45 million project is expected to come from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, federal transportation resources, local foundations, private donors and a possible CCD bond issue.



### Design Objectives for Dilworth Plaza

- Make City Hall accessible and welcoming by eliminating all walls, barriers, stairs and changing elevations and creating one level surface for the entire plaza.
- Enhance and frame the views of City Hall through landscaping and architecture.
- Create an active gathering place with green and sustainable design and a programmable fountain that can easily be turned off to allow for a broad range of civic and cultural events.
- Build high-quality and prominent entrances to public transit while improving the ease of access to subways, trolleys and regional rail.
- Provide highly-visible opportunities for communication media that tell the history of Center Square, interpret City Hall’s extensive public art and inform visitors about the city’s many destinations that are accessible on foot or by transit.
- Create a well-funded management entity that can maintain improvements in a first-class manner and program a broad range of activities.

### Project Design Team

Urban Engineers, Inc., *Project Manager and Civil Engineer*

KieranTimberlake, *Architect*

OLIN, *Landscape Architect*

CVM Structural Engineers, *Structural Engineer*

Marvin Waxman Engineers, Inc., *MEP Engineer*

Ricca Newark Design, *Food Service Consultant*

With Septa and BLT Architects

*All images were prepared by KieranTimberlake and OLIN, unless otherwise noted.*