

**Congress Square Plaza
Event Center Proposal
May 17, 2013**



Congress Square Plaza – Event Center Proposal

Canal 5 Studio Design Presentation



Congress Plaza 1910



View across Congress Square, c. 1910.

Hammond Heirs Block at center. H.H. Hay at right

Greely Laundry at future site of Congress Plaza 1924



Eastland Hotel under construction 1926



Eastland and Congress Square Hotels 1931



THE EASTLAND AND CONGRESS SQUARE HOTELS, PORTLAND, MAINE

© 1931

Walgreens Drugs, Congress Square 1941



Congress Square 1963



Congress Square 1977

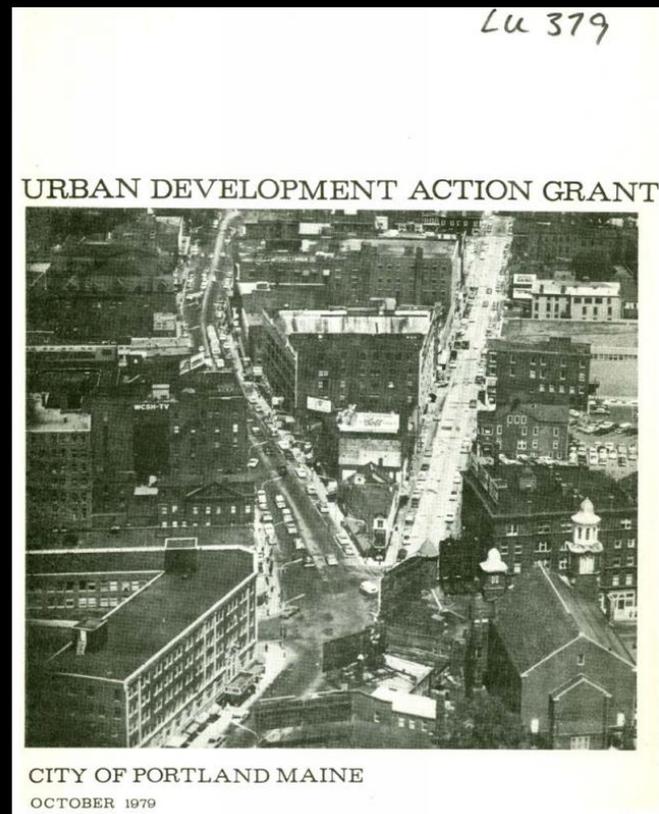


Creation of Congress Square Plaza

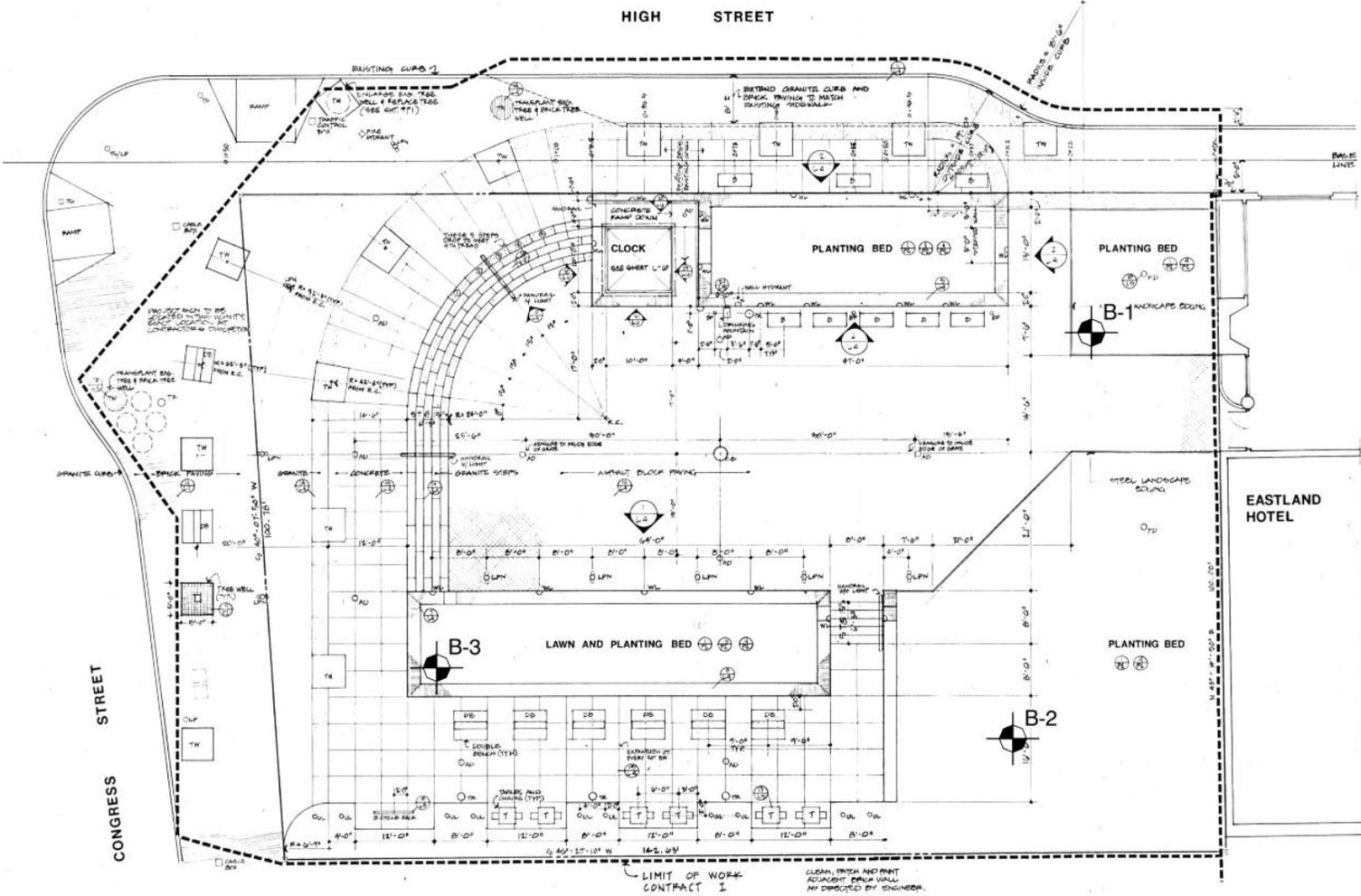
1979 UDAG Application

Urban Development Action Grant funding was used for:

- Creation of Congress Square Plaza
- PMA's Payson Wing
- Eastland Hotel Renovations
- Gateway Parking Garage
- Restoration of H.H. Hay Building
- Congress St. façade improvements
- Streetscape Improvements



Congress Plaza design drawing 1979



Congress Plaza Programming



Congress Plaza looking West



Congress Plaza looking North



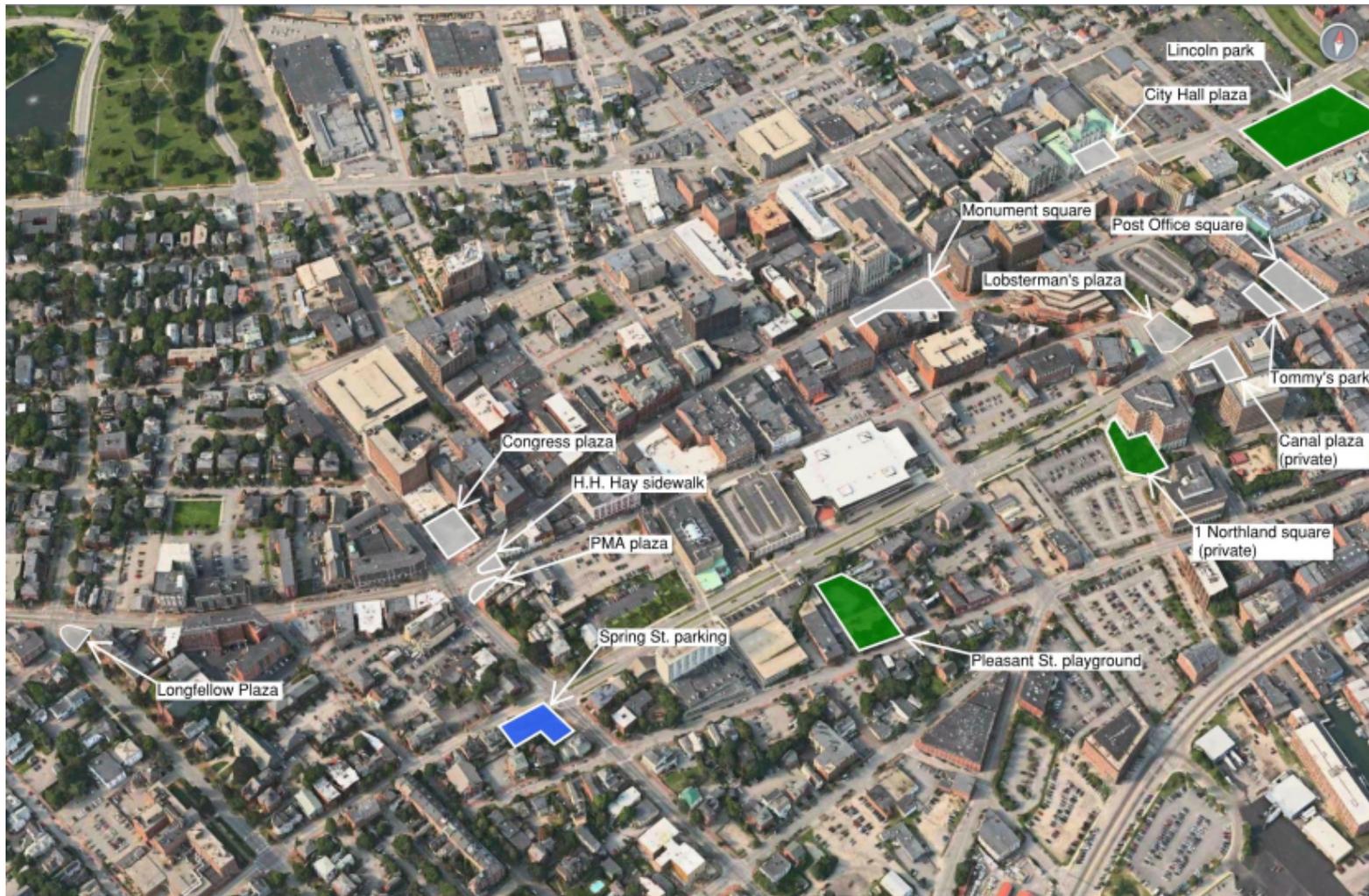
Portland Peninsula Open Spaces



Portland Peninsula Open Spaces

Portland Peninsula Open Spaces					
Name	Square Footage	Type	Ammenities	Notes	Location
Bramhall Park	1,600	plaza	trees, benches	underutilized, bus stop.	Congress St. at Deering Ave.
H.H. Hay Sidewalk	2,900	plaza	hardscape		Congress Square
Longfellow Plaza	3,000	plaza	sculpture, hardscape, seating for 9 +/-	landmark plaza at busy urban intersection	Longfellow Square
City Hall Plaza	4,100	plaza	hardscape	south facing,	389 Congress St.
Congress Plaza Proposed	4,800	plaza	trees, benches, hardscape, seating for 60 +/-		
PMA Plaza + Sidewalk	5,000	plaza	trees, benches	North facing, birch trees, benches under arcade	Congress Square
Boothby Square	5,500	plaza	bench, lawn	underutilized, island in Fore St. Controversial sculpture removed	Fore St at Silver St.
Tommy's Park	8,300	urban park	trees, benches, lawn, seating for 32 +/-	less popular than Post Office. more shade. Street food vendor	Middle St & Exchange
Congress Plaza Proposed + sidewalk	8,800	plaza			
Lobsterman's Plaza	9,100	plaza	sculpture, hardscape, seating for 45 +/-	landmark plaza at busy urban intersection	Middle St & Temple
Buoy Park	9,200	urban park	sculpture, hardscape, lawn, benches	street vendors in summer	Commercial St at Ferry Terminal
Tate-Tyng Tot Lot	11,600	residential park	trees, play equipment	playground	York St above Harbor View Park
Clark St. Playground	12,900	residential park	trees, lawn, play equipment	playground	Clark St near Danforth
Post Office Square	13,000	urban park	ornamental trees, benches, sculpture, seating for 60 +/-	popular. variety of sitting/watching opportunities, pleasant scale	Middle St & Exchange
Lobsterman's Plaza + sidewalk	13,500	plaza			
Spring St. Parking	13,900	parking	trees, lawn,	potential for residential park near Congress Square	Spring St at High St.
Tommy's Park + sidewalk	13,900	urban park			
Congress Plaza Existing	14,500	plaza	performance space, trees, hardscape		Congress Square
Canal Plaza (private)	15,400	plaza	trees, seating at ledge	underutilized, north facing, tunnel like due to scale of buildings	Middle St near Union St.
Congress Plaza Existing+ sidewalk	18,500	plaza			
Peppermint Park	18,700	residential park	trees,benches, play equip.	playground	Cumberland Ave near Washington
Northland Square (private)	21,500	urban park	ornamental trees, benches, lawn	pleasant landscaped and maintained private park	Behind Spring st at Union St.
Monument Square Plaza	22,000	plaza	sculpture, hardscape	active urban space, scaled for large crowds. farmers market	Monument Square
Pleasant St. Park	26,200	residential park	benches, playground	not easily accessed from Spring St.	Pleasant St. at York St.
Monument Square + sidewalk	29,400	plaza			

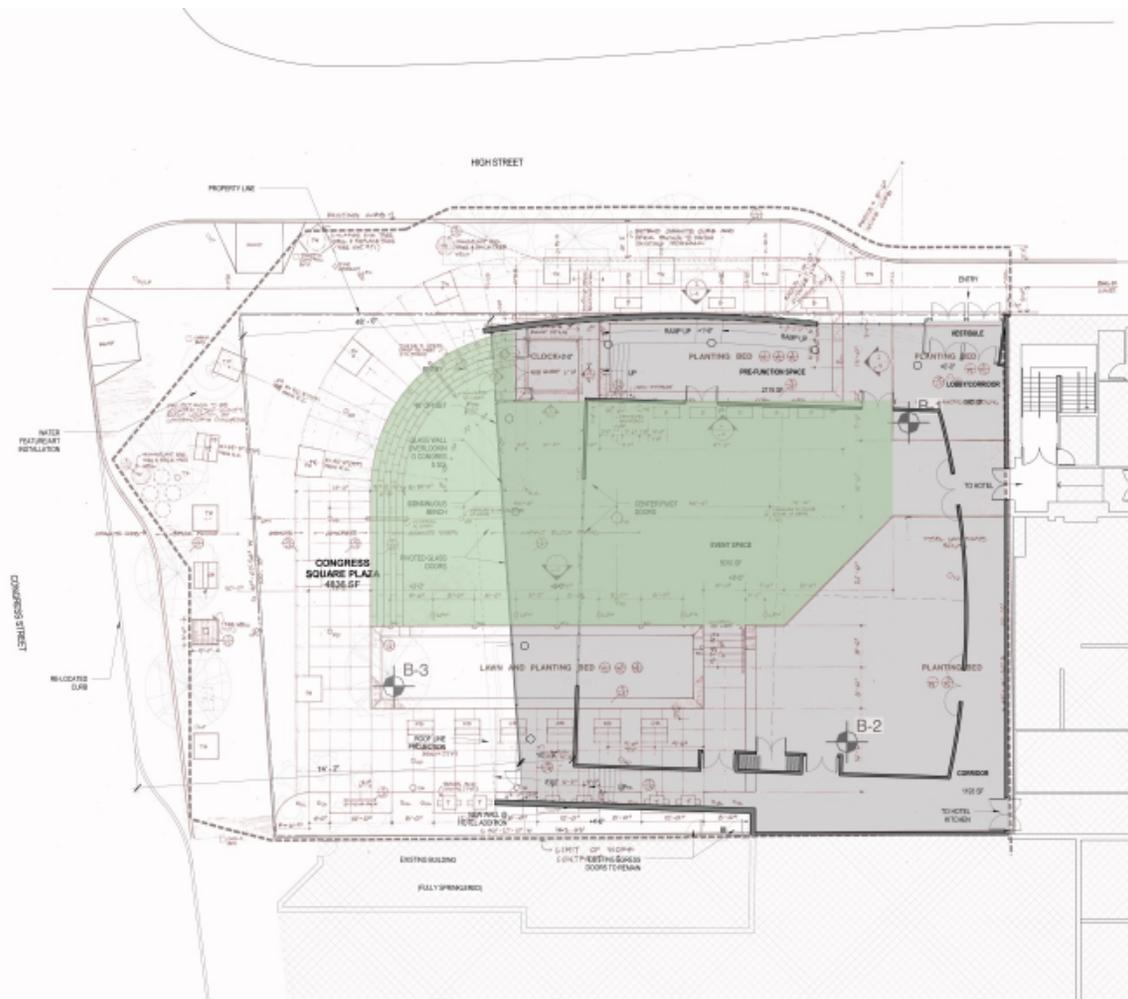
Congress Street Spine



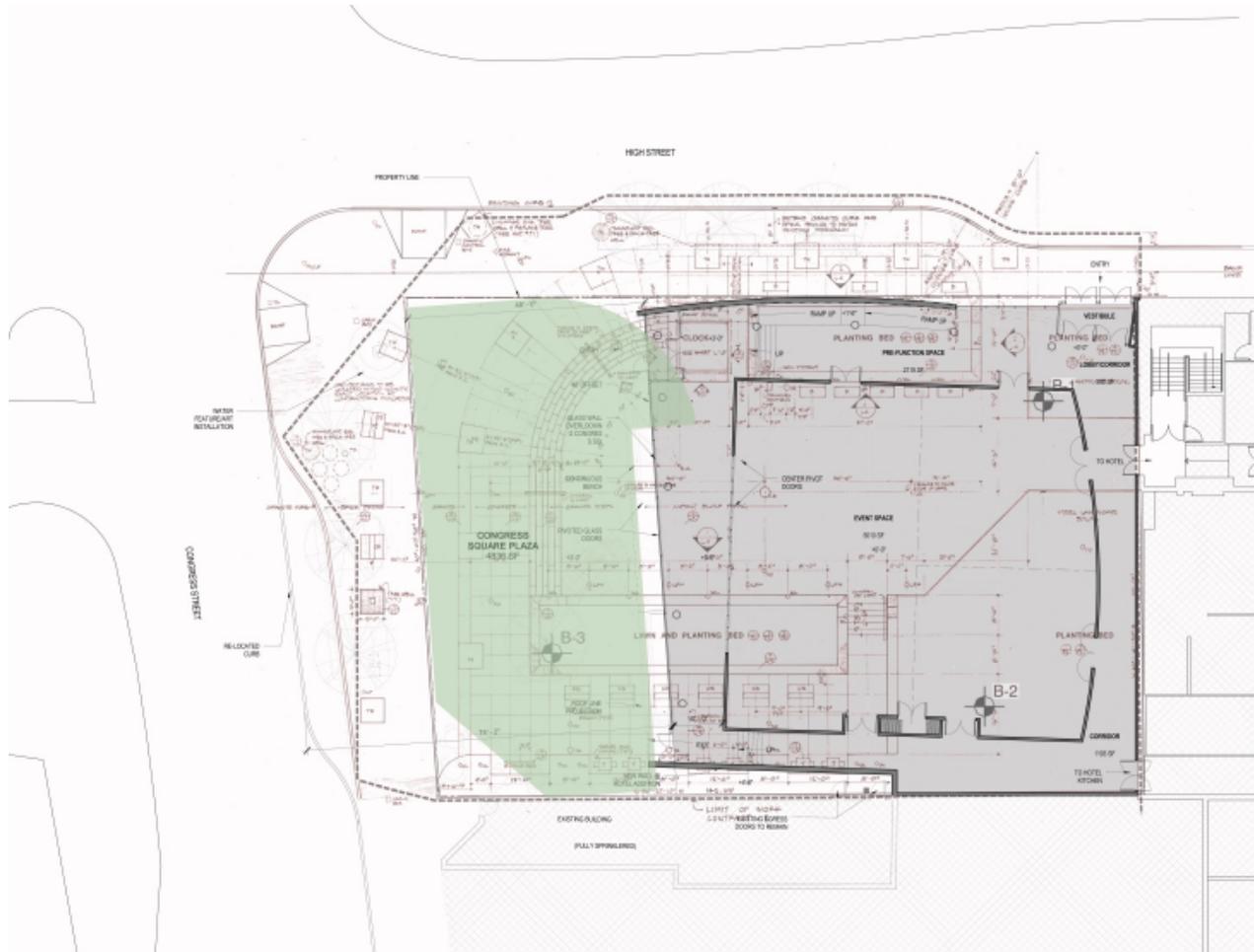
Proposed addition and plaza areas



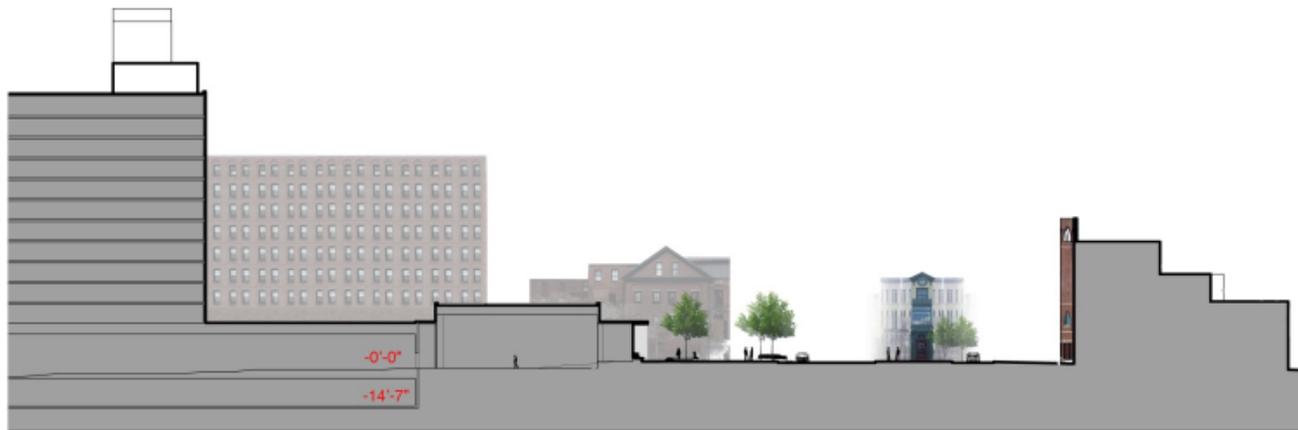
Proposed addition and plaza areas



Proposed addition and plaza areas



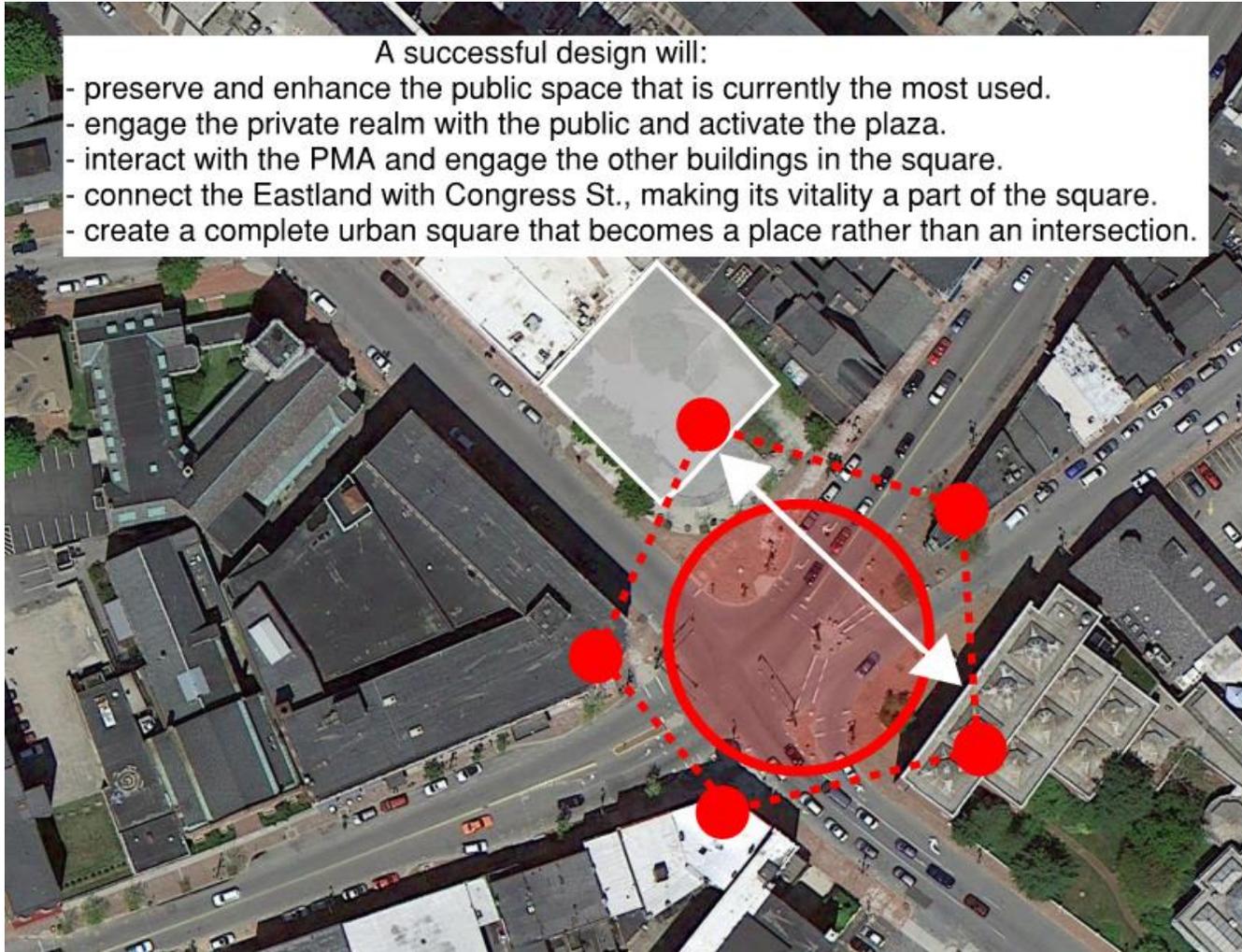
Comparative sections through Congress Square



Design Objectives

A successful design will:

- preserve and enhance the public space that is currently the most used.
- engage the private realm with the public and activate the plaza.
- interact with the PMA and engage the other buildings in the square.
- connect the Eastland with Congress St., making its vitality a part of the square.
- create a complete urban square that becomes a place rather than an intersection.



New York City Public Plaza Design Standards

- Minimum area for public plazas is **2,000 square feet**.
- Public plazas should generally be **regular in shape**.
- Major portions of public plazas are required to have average **width and depth of 40 feet** (Up to 20% may be less than 40' in depth).
- **Visibility** into and throughout the public plaza is of paramount importance in promoting a sense of openness and safety.
- **South-facing** plazas are generally preferred.
- Plaza usability is significantly determined by the relationship between the sidewalk and the plaza. First 15 ft. called "**sidewalk frontage**", and is required to have 50% of its area free of obstructions.
- Plazas may generally **not be sunken** below street level. Plazas with dramatic differences in elevation between sidewalks and plazas lessen their usability, attractiveness, and perception of safety.
- **Circulation paths** are required that are at least 8 feet in width and extend to at least 80% of the depth of the plaza.
- The provision of abundant, well-designed, and comfortable **seating** is one of the most critical elements of public plaza design.
- **Trees** and other planted areas are essential components of successful and enjoyable public spaces.

Qualities of successful urban spaces

- Successful spaces provide a variety of **seating** opportunities, with “socially comfortable” choices available...in sun, shade, in groups or alone.
- The most successful spaces are **open** to the action, **yet protected**.
- People seek “**suntraps**”, and the absence of wind and drafts. Physically and psychologically they feel comfortable.
- The most common activity in these spaces is “**people watching**”.
- **Trees** must be provided in proportion to the space, and be related closely to sitting spaces.
- The close **linking to the street** is integral and is far and away the critical design factor.
- Successful spaces use **compression** as a means to promote social interaction.
- Successful spaces are **comfortably scaled** and sized in relation to surroundings, the tendency is to overscale.
- Successful spaces provide “**triangulation**”, an external stimulus that provides a linkage between people. It can be a physical object, activity, or sight.
- Smaller cities, with fewer people in their downtowns, need to compress in order to **concentrate diffuse activities**.

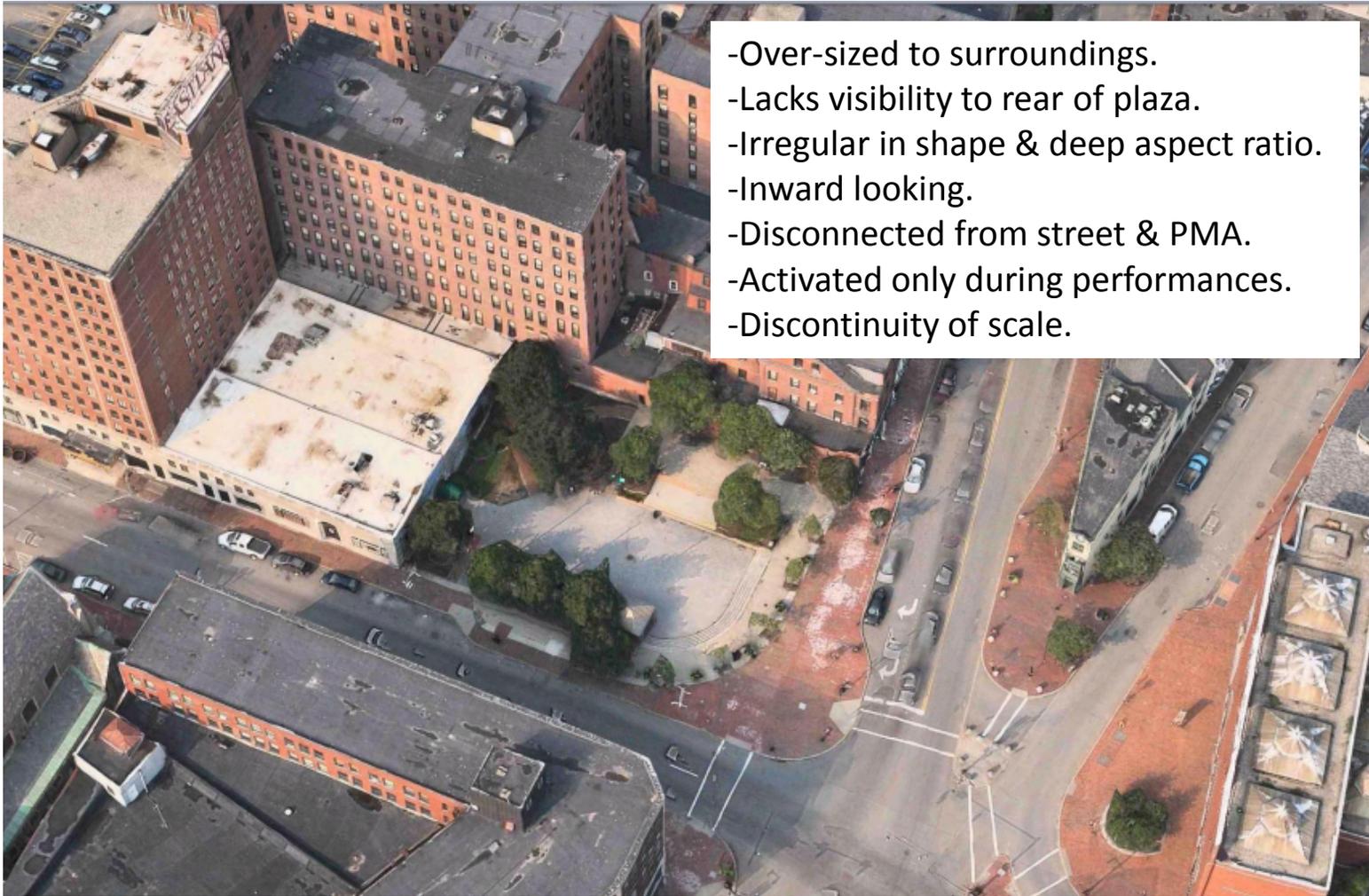
“The street is the river of life of the city, and we come to these places not to escape from it, but to partake of it”.

“The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces”

William H. Whyte

Project for Public Spaces, New York, NY

Congress Plaza Existing

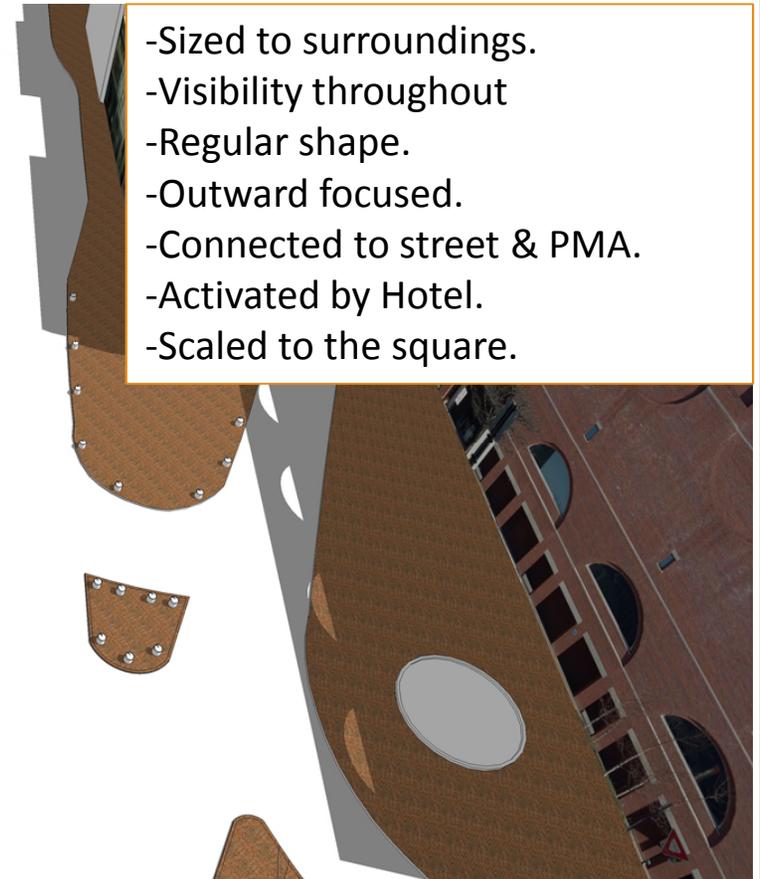


- Over-sized to surroundings.
- Lacks visibility to rear of plaza.
- Irregular in shape & deep aspect ratio.
- Inward looking.
- Disconnected from street & PMA.
- Activated only during performances.
- Discontinuity of scale.

Congress Plaza Proposed



- Sized to surroundings.
- Visibility throughout
- Regular shape.
- Outward focused.
- Connected to street & PMA.
- Activated by Hotel.
- Scaled to the square.



Site Plan

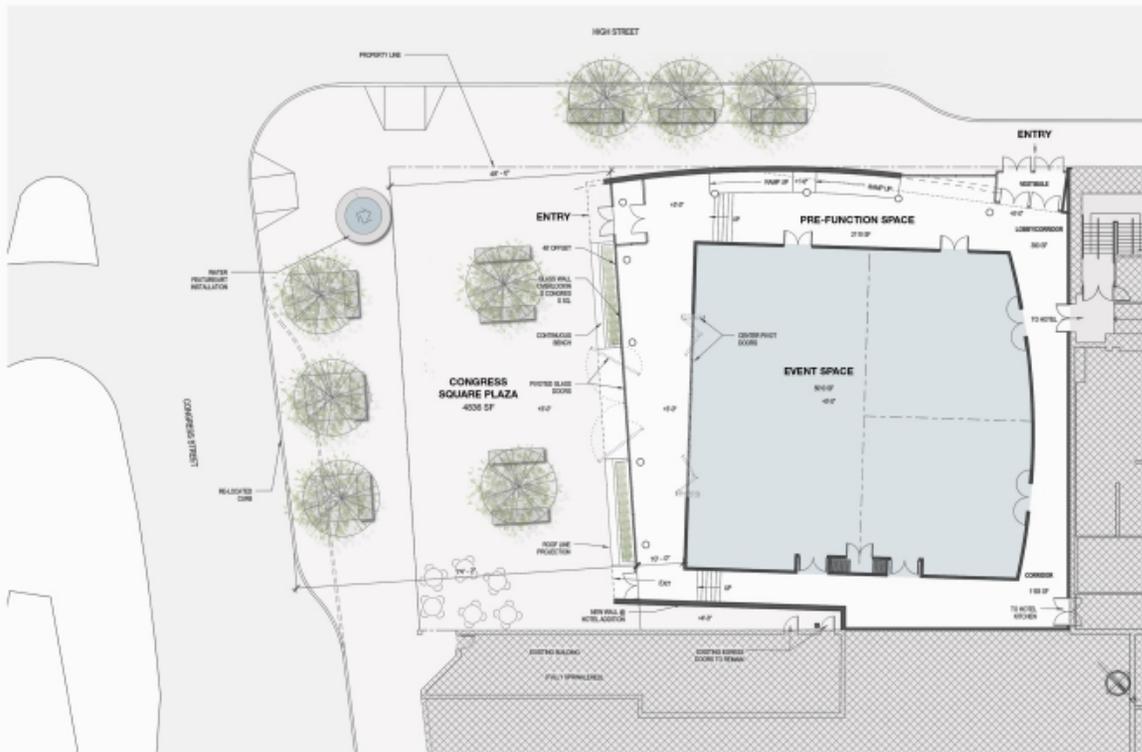


CANAL **5** STUDIO

Seagull's Eye View



Floor Plan



High Street Elevation



View of plaza looking from Congress Square



CANAL **5** STUDIO

View of plaza looking east from High St.



Detailed view with glass doors closed



Detailed view with glass doors open



CANAL **5** STUDIO

View of plaza form High Street



CANAL **5** STUDIO

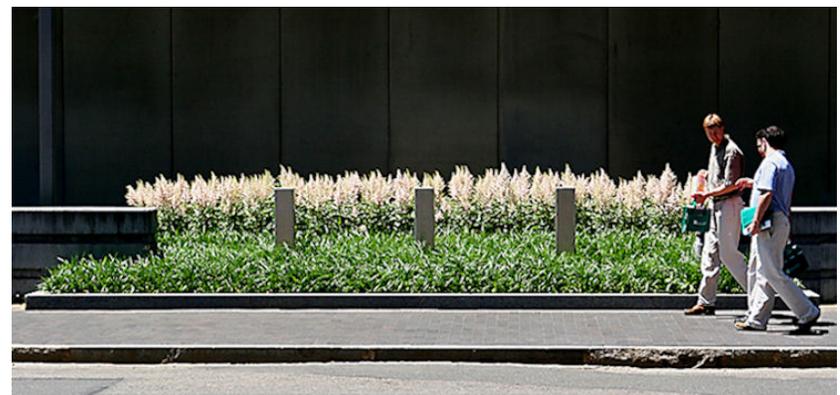
View of Congress Square



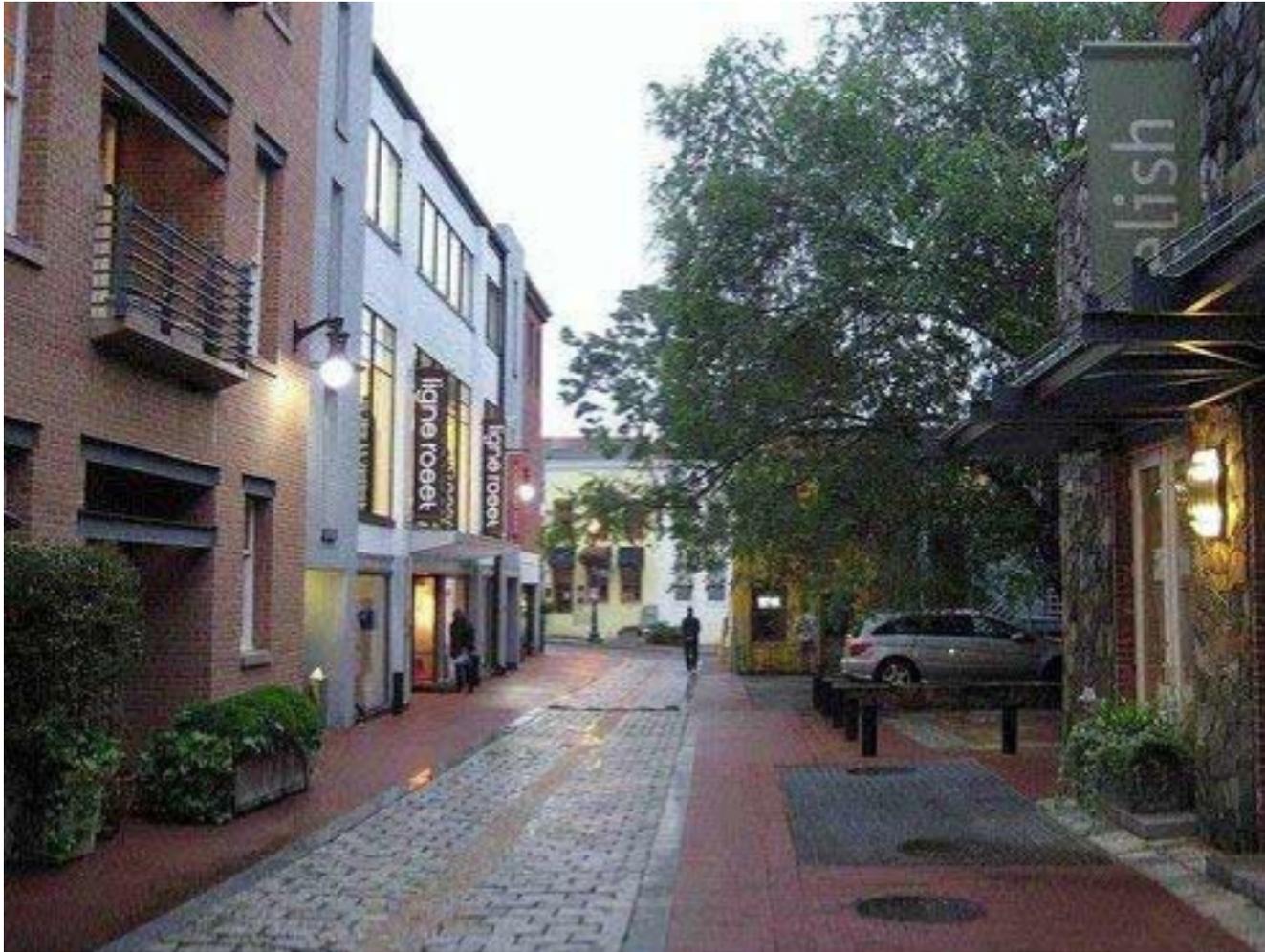
Examples of Street Plazas



Examples of Street Plaza Details



Example of a “Woonerf” streetscape



Conclusion

- The Event Center reestablishes the frame of Congress Square.
- The Event Center creates a human scaled public plaza activated by the hotel and engaged with Congress Square.
- The Event Center offers an opportunity to unify fragmented public space in Congress Square utilizing a Woonerf (Living Yard) concept to define a cohesive urban space.
- The Event Center helps restore Congress Square to its historic role as a center of economic and cultural vitality and creates high quality urban space.