

Center City Reports

Transforming Dilworth Plaza (2011–2013)

A publication of the
Central Philadelphia
Development Corporation
and the Center City District
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Creating a New Amenity in the Center of the City

Dilworth Plaza will soon be transformed into a high-quality, well-managed civic space, a gateway to transit and a sustainable centerpiece that links together Philadelphia's primary employment, hospitality and cultural districts.

In the fall of 2010, the Dilworth Plaza project was awarded a \$15 million TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant by the Obama Administration, matching a \$15.5 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Additional funding is committed from the City of Philadelphia, SEPTA and from local foundations, with construction scheduled to start in 2011.

The goal is to create an active, but appropriate forecourt for Philadelphia's historic City Hall, as part of a broader public-private initiative to improve the infrastructure and civic spaces of Center City. Funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the William Penn Foundation, the Center City District and adjacent property owners have supported the design effort during the last two years, along with extensive outreach to adjacent businesses, owners and civic groups.

Located on the west side of Philadelphia's City Hall, the plaza sits atop the intersection of SEPTA's Market-Frankford line, Broad Street subway and subway-surface trolley lines, and enjoys easy connections to the regional rail lines, all of which bring more than 300,000 transit riders downtown daily. For pedestrians, the renovated Dilworth Plaza will connect the Pennsylvania Convention Center's new Broad Street entrance to South Broad's Avenue of the Arts, tie together East and West Market Streets and provide a solid anchor for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

Designed by a team of internationally recognized local architects, landscape architects and engineers, including KieranTimberlake, OLIN, Urban Engineers, and CVM structural engineers, the new design will create a broad open plaza, accessible from the street without the use of stairs or ramps. The plaza will have green, shaded sitting areas and a large lawn, an outdoor café, and a programmable 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 lighting, Dilworth Plaza will also serve as a prominent gateway to Philadelphia's extensive network of transit lines.



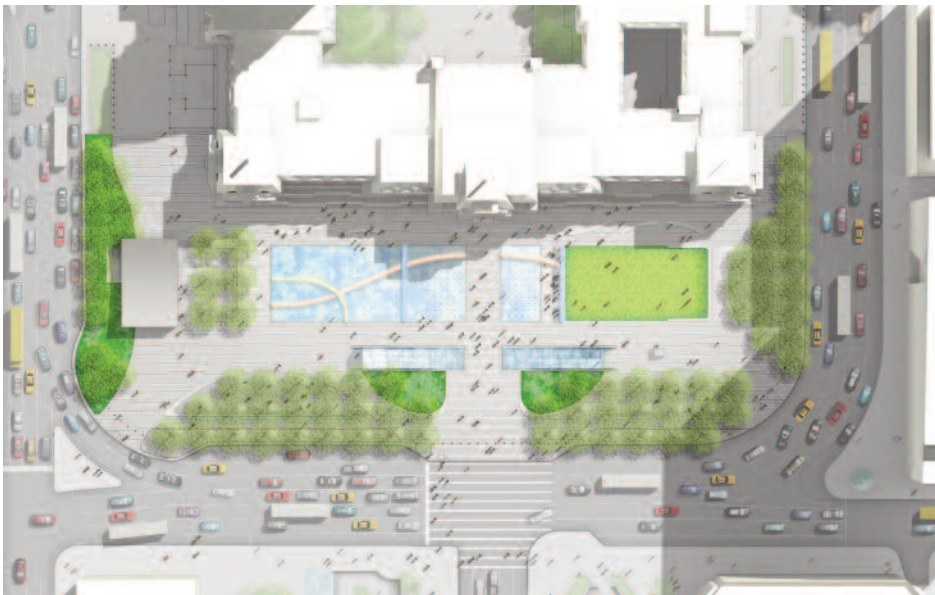
Dilworth Plaza will be transformed from a place that people only pass through to an attractive park for leisure activities and a vibrant public space that can be used for multiple civic functions.

Transforming Dilworth Plaza



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.

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



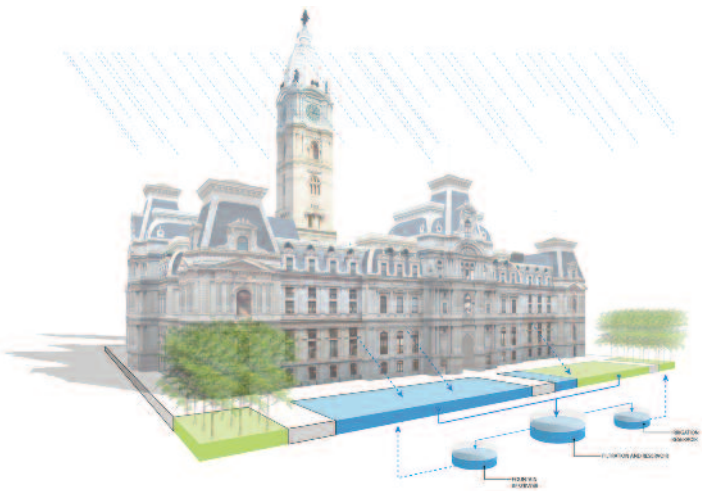
Site plan for new Dilworth Plaza: A lawn panel (115 x 60 feet), located on the southern end, gently slopes up to the south to provide easy views towards the fountain. The programmable fountain (185 x 60 feet) can be turned partially or completely off to allow for concerts, events or movies. At the northern end, adjacent to a cluster of trees and lawn, is a café. Two sloping glass headhouses provide stairways 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. Elevators provide direct access to the concourse.

Transforming Dilworth Plaza

A Welcoming Space for the 21st Century

Dilworth Plaza was created as a 1960s' 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.

More than 185,000 people each day are within a 10-minute walk of Dilworth Plaza, including 50,000 workers in nearby office buildings for whom it will become a meeting space at lunchtime and an attractive link to the shopping and hospitality district on East Market Street. For thousands of new downtown residents and hotel guests, Center Square will join William Penn's four other squares as a vibrant, green amenity. It will link the new Broad Street front door of the expanded Pennsylvania Convention Center with 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.

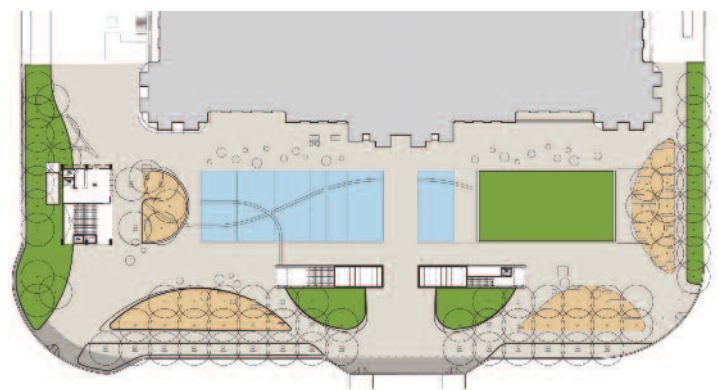


Center Square was the original site for a pump house designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe that drew water from the Schuylkill River and distributed it throughout the city. Philadelphia's first public fountain was also located in Center Square. The new design recreates this historic use through the collection 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.



A new cafe in the northeast corner will be visible from the Broad Street doorway of the expanded Convention Center and will afford patrons dramatic views up the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

Creating a Sustainable Space



	Proposed	Existing
Impermeable Paving	72,760 SF	112,178 SF
Permeable Paving	12,351 SF	0 SF
Fountain	11,160 SF	2,841 SF
Planting & Lawns	20,138 SF	6,643 SF
Canopy Cover	30,914 SF	23,679 SF

Transforming Dilworth Plaza

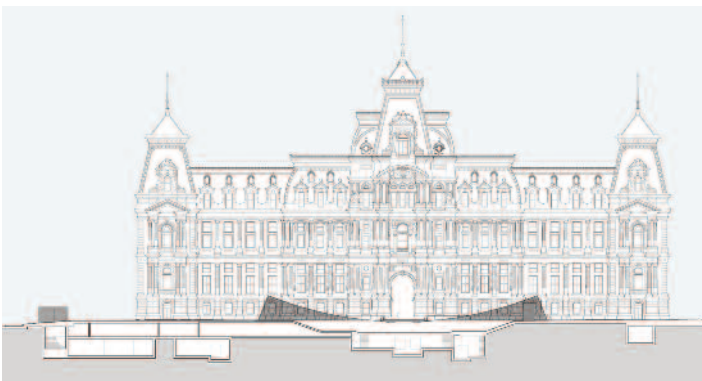
A Gateway to Transit

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, BLT, the CCD's design team is coordinating this project with a major renovation to the Broad Street subway station below City Hall.

On the western side of the plaza, two glass headhouses 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 headhouses are 21 feet wide and 96 feet long and frame the central portion of City Hall without obscuring the view.



Highly visible gateways to transit will be enhanced by nighttime lighting.



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A cross-section reveals the multiple levels of transit infrastructure beneath City Hall and Dilworth Plaza.

Transforming Dilworth Plaza



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



Image courtesy of SEPTA and BLT Architects

A new transit room provides luminous walls with kinetic graphics and new staffed entrances to both the 15th and Market subway station and the Broad Street line.

A specially commissioned work of public art created by internationally-known artist Janet Echelman (www.echelman.com) will be integrated into the fountain and will trace the path of the trains below in real time, coded to the colors associated with each transit line. Thin columns of dry mist will emanate from the fountain, evoking the steam from the city's first water pumping station that was located on this site as well as the steam from the trains at the Pennsylvania Railroad Station that was located across the street. Echelman's use of dry mist enables people to walk through the installation without getting wet. A video presentation by Echelman, including a simulation of her artwork, can be found on the Center City District's website, www.centercityphila.org.



The semi-circular sunken plaza at the north end will be bridged over to accommodate the fountain area, landscaping and new cafe. The statue which commemorates Dilworth, *Phoenix Rising* (1982), will be relocated by the City of Philadelphia and replaced by a new interpretative program of signs and digital graphics that will tell the history of the site, the story of Mayor Richardson Dilworth's extraordinary contribution to the revival of the city, and provide current information about arts, cultural and entertainment venues easily accessible from the plaza.



Transforming Dilworth Plaza



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 budget, endowed by contributors, and supported by revenues generated from activities on the site, and from the City of Philadelphia and the Center City District. Dilworth Plaza will be managed and maintained by the Center City District.

Economic Impact

The \$50 million in one-time construction expenditures to create Dilworth Plaza will create 1,060 jobs and nearly \$40 million in wages over the 30 month construction period and generate an additional \$122 million in total economic output for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including more than \$72 million in indirect and induced expenditures by the individuals and firms engaged to build the project.

One-time construction expenditures will also generate over \$780,000 in municipal taxes, including \$430,000 in wage taxes, \$96,000 in sales taxes and \$254,000 in business privilege taxes over the 30-month construction period.

The ongoing operation and maintenance of the plaza, café and new transit station entrance will generate more than a dozen new jobs and associated tax revenues and increase the attractiveness and value of adjacent buildings.

Design Objectives for Dilworth Plaza

- Make Dilworth Plaza 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*

CMS Collaborative, *Fountain Consultants*

Ricca Newark Design, *Food Service Consultant*

Janet Echelman, *Artist*

C&G Partners, *Environmental Designer*

Local Partners, *Media Designer*

With SEPTA and BLT Architects

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