

An aerial photograph of a city center, likely Boston, showing a mix of modern and older buildings, streets, and a large central plaza. The image is tilted at an angle. Two green banners are overlaid on the image, containing text.

GREENING  
AMERICA'S  
CAPITALS

A SYMPOSIUM  
*on*

GREENING  
GOVERNMENT  
CENTER  
CITY OF BOSTON

## VISION

The Symposium on the Greening of Government Center will gather leading experts to conceptualize a new vision for Boston City Hall, the Plaza and all of Government Center and to identify key issues and goals for the EPA / City of Boston Green City Hall Plaza Design Charrette. The Mayor is seeking a vision that will exemplify the very best practices of sustainability, green building, technology, infrastructure, and systems that will catalyze the greening of the entire Government Center District.

## WHAT

- Elicit the very best ideas and most innovative thinking from industry leaders and experts for a newly envisioned green Government Center, sustainable and green City Hall and revitalized Plaza.
- Feature both feasible and cutting edge sustainable and green technologies and practices that should be incorporated into area buildings, City Hall and the Plaza.
- Identify specific sustainability and green building opportunities and set performance criteria for the whole of Government Center, City Hall, the surrounding buildings, and a revitalized Plaza.
- Craft multiple comprehensive visions that consider alternative and adaptive reuses of existing Plaza spaces that accommodate a range and scales of public uses.
- Identify key issues and goals for the subsequent City Hall Plaza Design Charrette.

## WHO

Moderator, Ted Landsmark, Boston Architectural College

### *Panelists*

- Bob Fox, Cook + Fox Architects
- Alex Krieger, Chan Krieger NBBJ
- Janet Marie, Smith Baltimore Orioles
- Matthias Rudolph, Transsolar
- Chris Reed, Stoss Landscape Urbanism

# WHY

City Hall Plaza is the single largest urban space in Downtown and presents a unique opportunity for re-conceptualizing urban green space. Originally conceived as an outdoor civic space, the seven acre plaza does not live up to its potential. Unshaded, wind-swept, and hard to access, the Plaza is unwelcoming to the very pedestrians it is intended to serve. The expanse of brick lacks focus and is unsupported by the surrounding uses and nearby destinations. With few trees and little vegetation, the Plaza is a vast impermeable surface that requires an extensive drainage system.

Although located adjacent to historic Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market, Downtown Crossing and the Financial District, millions of visitors, workers and residents seldom utilize the plaza. Efforts to activate the Plaza with public celebrations, farmers markets, and other gatherings have had limited impact.

## *Historical Context*

City Hall Plaza is at the heart of the urban renewal plan that created the Government Center District in the 1960's which, at the time, was a model for urban renewal. Having fulfilled its original purpose of promoting a city center and helping in the creation of today's Downtown and Financial District, many believe it is time to re-envision the Plaza. In redefining its role for the 21st century, the Plaza has the potential to become a beacon for green and sustainable urbanism that will once again spur growth and redefine both the surrounding Downtown area and the City of Boston.

## *Physical Description*

The 7 acre Plaza is bounded by the Sears Crescent Building to the south, Cambridge St. to the west, the JFK Building to the north, and Congress St. to the east. The Plaza's four corners are defined by a redesigned MBTA Government Center head-house, the Plaza Fountain (covered over), the Cancer Garden of Hope, and the grand stair descending to Faneuil Hall.

## *Government Center/ City Hall Plaza Opportunity*

The product of an award winning plan when it was envisioned in the 1960's, Government Center has helped shape all of downtown Boston. Today we have the opportunity to rethink Government Center, to apply new planning principles that promote sustainability and social responsibility.

# EXPLORATION

This Symposium seeks to bring together the best minds in the region to explore and articulate broad sustainability objectives and innovative means of greening the heart of Boston.

The Symposium will focus attention on the following topics and help identify key issues and goals for the EPA/City of Boston Green City Hall Plaza Design Charrette and implementation strategies for a green and sustainable City Hall Plaza.

## *People and Program*

- Creating a people centric Plaza with revitalized public spaces that promote civic life
- Flexible accommodation of existing and new active uses
- Integration of edge uses, adjacent spaces and surrounding streets

## *Landscape and Cityscape*

- Enhancing opportunities for trees and ground vegetation
- Framing view corridors, gateways and cross Plaza connections
- Creating a contemporary, sustainable green open space
- Celebrating art, ecology and the urbanscape

## *Water and Energy*

- Collection and re-use of rain water within the Plaza area.
- Integration of building and green Plaza features
- Management of storm water and run off
- Installation of on-site renewable energy
- Reduction of Heat Island effects and creation of Cool Zones

## *Transportation and Circulation*

- Integration of transit station access into Plaza programming and circulation
- Enhancing bicycle and pedestrian circulation, access and handicap accessibility
- Accommodating service access and parking for daily and special events



THOMAS M. MENINO  
*mayor*

