



From: Jason Zogg

To: CRA Board

Date: 5/16/2016

**MEMO:** Point Park Restoration and Renovations Plan

## CONTEXT

### HISTORY

- Point Park is a jointly owned park space comprised of two unusually shaped parcels owned by Boston Properties (BP) and the CRA. The CRA's land ownership includes a portion of Main St. and an area which is part of MIT's Sloan School landscaping.
- In September 1987, the CRA and BP signed an agreement for BP to maintain the Point Park improvements made by the CRA. BP and the CRA split electricity costs for the park, while BP pays for the insurance. As part of the agreement, BP is responsible for restoration of the park as originally designed. Neither party can make an improvement without the approval of the other party.
- The artwork owned by the CRA was in part funded by a federal NEA grant which comes with certain long responsibilities of ownership and restrictions on changes and modifications to the artwork and its context especially when the artist or artists are still alive.
- A July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014 easement agreement between Boston Properties and the City of Cambridge allowed the City to shift the geometry of the former Broadway bus turnaround roadway to add the ability for vehicles to cross from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street directly to Main St. westbound for the first time in decades.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Point Park is a literal crossroads, a gateway into Cambridge, a bustling meeting place of Kendall Square with a visual connection to Boston. The location represents an important place of connection and transition between the Red Line, Main Street, and MIT to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, East Cambridge, Volpe and Broadway. It is the junction between the two major retail corridors in the district – Main St. and 3<sup>rd</sup> St. It has long view corridors in multiple directions including to the Longfellow Bridge, Downtown Boston, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Main and Broadway. The current park is well populated on weekdays and experiences high pedestrian flows. The major focal point of the park is the *Galaxy* sculpture and fountain.

The physical condition of the park has been deteriorating for a number of years. The hardscape has come to the end of its useful life after 30 years of New England winters. Many physical issues need to be addressed immediately:

- Large swaths of hardscape are missing and have been patched using a variety of materials. These areas often do not match the original material and sometimes are not level. Adjacent construction on Main Street has made the situation more challenged. Cracked granite gives a poor image to the space.
- Silver paint is chipping away from the metal benches.
- Galvanized steel on the moon globes is discoloring and deteriorating.
- The smaller yew bushes have grown scraggly.
- In-ground up-lighting for the Honey Locust trees has been non-functioning for many years.
- The steam on the galaxy sculpture was disconnected by Veolia years ago after One Broadway ended steam service.
- The inner ring of water mist has not been functioning for some time.

## DESIGN PROCESS

### DESIGN ASSUMPTIONS

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In CRA's conversations with the community, we heard that two of Point Park's greatest assets are its trees and the Galaxy artwork and fountain. The preservation and enhancement of these two assets set the basic design parameters for Point Park.

- 1) The shady tree canopy, which provides a critical sense of enclosure and entices visitors to sit on benches that are shaded on sunny days. It is among the shadiest tree canopies of any park in Kendall Square. This is especially evident now with fewer shade-providing trees on the adjacent Main Street.
- 2) Galaxy: The artwork and fountain was created by a collaboration with Otto Pene, Joe Davis and Joan Brigham through the MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies. East artist focused on a different aspect of the complete work. Children and families stop and interact with it, and it is associated in the minds of many people in the Boston-Cambridge community with Kendall Square. Because the original Point Park was designed with the Galaxy in mind, there was no direct down lighting in the park because it would wash out the artwork, therefore in order to preserve the celestial atmosphere, the renovation will not add any additional down lighting.

### DESIGN PROCESS BACKGROUND

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Point Park has been the subject of a series of CRA, Boston Properties (BP), City of Cambridge Community Development Department (CDD) and Department of Public Works (DPW) design processes.

- In March 2012, in connection to BP's approval for Google expansion project, BP contributed \$250,000 to the City of Cambridge (City) for the design and construction of public improvements to Point Park.
- An outgrowth of the Kendall Square – Central Square (K2C2) planning process of 2012-2013, DPW began to redesign the Main Street streetscape and prepare to completely reconstruct the street from the Ames St. intersection to Point Park. Designs were finalized in 2013-2014, construction began in late 2014 and will be completed in summer 2016.
- In 2014 BP had contracted with CBA Landscape Architecture to draw up plans to restore the park to its original condition. BP was asked to hold off until the Main Street streetscape project is finished since it was challenging for pedestrians to move through the area if Point Park was also under construction.
- In 2015 the City held a Kendall Square Open Space Design Competition – which included Point Park, Binney Street Park, Triangle Park and Rogers Street Park. This design competition asked landscape architecture teams from around the country to imagine a system of open spaces in Kendall Square. At the end of that design competition the winning team, Burk Associates, produced a Kendall Square Open Space Framework Plan.
- Stoss Landscape Urbanism was selected by the City through a competitive selection process in Fall 2015 to work on three of the Kendall parks. Point Park became part of Stoss's contractual scope of work only through concept and schematic design, whereas the other parks, Binney St. and Triangle Park, Stoss is contracted to develop construction drawings. Stoss began working with CDD in March 2016. CRA Staff in coordination with BP have been coordinating with CDD Staff and Stoss on their work.
- Both landscape architecture teams (CBA and Stoss) as well as staff from BP and CRA met at Point Park for a site visit with Joe Davis the artist about this project. (Joe has been in frequent communications with CRA staff regarding care of the sculpture, and had hired him to take the tarnish off during summer 2015.)

## MAY 2016 BP/CRA CONCEPT DESIGN BY CBA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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- The initial creative consultation with the Stoss design team was presented to CRA Board's Design Review Subcommittee on 4/27/2016. The Board found many of the basic principles of their work compelling and enriched the overall design process. (See attached)
- With a goal of completion by the end of October in mind, CBA Landscape Architecture working in collaboration with BP and CRA staff prepared a concept plan for a series of improvements which can be constructed during late summer and early fall 2016. Many of the elements of this were inspired by what was presented to the CRA Board in April.
- The scope of work identified for completion in Fall 2016 is as follows:
  - New hardscape – custom glass embedded poured-in-place concrete with radiating granite bands and granite edging at curb line (percentage of glass and color can be customized)
  - Eliminate small shrubs (Yew bushes) but keep larger Honey Locust trees
  - New seasonal garden on the north side of the park with winter color plantings
  - New sidewalk on south side of lawn
  - Bike racks
  - Power outlets in the trees
  - New irrigation control cabinet
  - KSA wayfinding kiosk
  - New custom benches
  - Movable furniture in plaza area
  - New trash receptacles
  - Bollards (proposed solar powered, bolted to surface)

## CONTRA-FLOW CYCLE TRACK

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In April 2016, CDD and DPW asked to construct a raised contra-flow cycle track along the western edge of the park. This would allow cyclists traveling on Main Street eastbound toward Boston to more easily access 3rd street without biking through Point Park, which is a common problem today given the large volume of pedestrians.

In the past several weeks staff at DPW, CDD, CRA, and BP have collaboratively investigated the engineering challenges to make it happen. Our preliminary findings show that this would involve moving the granite curb that DPW had placed last fall, potentially taking down between one or two trees on the edge of the park and trimming back some of the granite vent structure for the underground Galaxy control room. DPW engineers are working on a more detailed design during the month of May 2016.

CBA has taken into account the potential for this contra-flow cycle track into their design work.

## GALAXY RESTORATION WORK

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In collaboration with the artist Joe Davis, some potential restoration work has been identified for the Galaxy. CRA staff working with Cambridge Arts Council Staff will explore submitting an NEA grant for some of this restoration work. The next funding deadline for the NEA *Art Works Grant* is 7/14/2016. Potential restoration work includes:

- Consider refabricating the moon globes in polished stainless steel, which is something Joe Davis had originally intended, and would rectify the deteriorating condition of the current globes.
- Consider installing an efficient electric steam generator of some kind to replace the loss of Veolia steam service
- Test new light bulbs for the moon globes that would replicate the effect originally intended, but use more energy efficient longer lasting technology
- Get the second ring of water mist working again as originally intended

- Newer more energy efficient and longer lasting lighting technologies do not create the same effect on the pavement when placed in the moon globes presenting a unique challenge in finding the correct bulb product.

## FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

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The CRA and BP are actively considering a series of future improvements beyond 2016, although a specific timeline has not been determined. Some of these improvements need considerably more time for thorough design, stakeholder outreach, coordination with adjacent landowners, detailed engineering as well as additional funding. Any further improvements to Point Park would benefit from coordination with MIT's developments across the street to the south. Some medium-long term ideas include:

- Major modifications to the grass lawn at the eastern end of the park – including the idea of raising it and/or adding plantings to create a sense of enclosure, encourage greater use and orient the lawn toward the Galaxy.
- Studying the intersection geometry of “little” Main and “big” Main including a possible raised crosswalk or roadway
- Adding public art or interactive infrastructure elements across the park

## Design Review Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 27, 2016

Robert Healy Public Safety Center / Cambridge Police Station  
125 Sixth Street  
Community Room

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### DRAFT - MEETING MINUTES

### POINT PARK REVITALIZATION SCHEMATIC DESIGN

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The meeting began at 4:08 p.m. in the Robert Healy Public Safety Center.

Ms. Shore and Mr. Hawkinson recorded the meeting.

Present at the meeting: The Design Review Committee consisting of CRA Chair Ms. Kathleen Born and CRA Governor's Appointee Mr. Barry Zevin. Also present were CRA Vice Chair Margaret Drury, CRA Assistant Treasurer Conrad Crawford, CRA Executive Director Tom Evans, CRA Project Manager Jason Zogg, CRA Office Manager Ellen Shore and CRA Urban Design Consultant Chuck Redmon. Representatives from the City of Cambridge were Stuart Dash, Director of Community Planning, Gary Chan, Neighborhood Planner, and Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development. Mike O'Hearn from Boston Properties, Alexandra Lee from KSA and Sarah Gallop from MIT were also present.

There was a presentation by the consultant (attached), followed by questions from the CRA and City representatives, and then opened to public comments.

Mr. Zogg explained that the park is jointly owned between Boston Properties (BP) and the CRA. The CRA owns the artwork in the middle of the park. In the late 1980s, the CRA signed an agreement with BP to operate and maintain the park. The park was inaugurated in 1988. The artwork was funded by a federal endowment which comes with lifelong ownership responsibilities. The physical condition of the park has been deteriorating over the years for various reasons. The park is still a crossroads and a gateway into Cambridge. It is an important intersection and meeting place. It is well populated during the week, especially during rush hour. Two of the park's key assets are the shade trees canopy and the Galaxy artwork, which is a popular Kendall Square icon.

In March 2012, in relation to BP's construction of the Google connector project, Boston Properties was asked to contribute \$250,000 to the City of Cambridge toward improvements to Point Park. In 2014, BP drew up plans but was asked to hold off until the Main Street project was finished. In 2015, the City had a Kendall Square Open Space Design Competition and then a designer selection process, which brought Stoss in to the design of Point Park. In addition to a longer term plan for the park, Stoss will consult with the City and the CRA to incorporate short-to-medium term ideas that would address the immediate problems of the park. The CRA and BP could take the construction drawings this summer and start making improvements in the fall or early next year.

Mr. Chris Reed from Stoss, made the presentation. Stoss is a landscape architecture firm hired by the City of Cambridge to design three parks within the Kendall Square area – Binney Park, Triangle Park and Point Park. Mr. Reed spoke about the park's conditions. Time and age has played a toll on the park. The fountain doesn't function as it once did. While the trees are gorgeous, the shrubs unfortunately divide the park and there is no visible presence that a lawn exists. The seating and paving are deteriorating. When looking at a redesign, the artwork and the use of the space were considered as were changing the type of paving and the use of perimeter seating. The park should be more social and playful and occupy the full space. It should accommodate a better flow of pedestrians which takes the new crossings into account. The fountain defines the site but the ends are gateways or markers of the space.

The redesign would separate the park into four sections – the fountain, the plaza, a lawn and garden plantings. Starting with the lawn, he suggested a tilted lawn with various angles, creating a prow at the eastern edge. The hedges would be removed and suggested introducing hammocks. As for the garden, he suggested various plants with winter color as an important feature. On the plaza, he showed seating arrangements that honored the circular feel of the sculpture but allowed for better traffic flow. Wood material would be used to provide a warmer feel. Movable seating could be used if necessary. Some seating has backs to it while some do not. He mentioned ways to enhance the fountain lighting and use paving materials that reflect light. At the end of the plaza, he suggested using bollards oriented to keep traffic out of the space but allow pedestrians to see oncoming traffic. He showed examples of how an urban rhythm could be technically introduced to the park with interactive bollards, lights in the garden and the wall along the raised lawn that would all reflect train movement.

Mr. Zevin liked the association with the subway. He was happy to see the fountain remain. Committing to the maintenance and janitorial issues is a concern, especially for the delicate materials. He asked about the steepness of the berms.

Mr. Reed said that the slopes are no more than 2-to-1 or 3-to-1 but there would be an accessible pathway to the top. The highest slope is 2.5 or 3.5 to 1.

Mr. Zevin suggested taking the circular wall and pulling it out.

Mr. Reed mentioned that too much would negatively affect the trees.

The interactive wall edge would have a guard rail.

Ms. Drury asked about the height of the prow. Mr. Reed said that it would be 4 to 5 feet.

Mr. Zevin mentioned that drivers need to see around the wall as well. Mr. Reed has been discussing this issue with the transportation department.

Mr. Evans said that raising the crosswalk or the intersection is being discussed when "big" Main connects to "little" Main which would help get better compliance with the stop sign.

Mr. Crawford mentioned the safety of getting from these parks to any adjacent park. Mr. Reed noted circulation studies and the possible need for a sidewalk along the lawn wall. Mr. Reed continued that the Point Park space is tight and he'd like to make the lawn area as big as possible. There are other options to walk safely around the park without going out of one's way.

Mr. Chuck Redmon asked about sculpting a path outside the park across Main Street for entry into the Sloan area. Mr. Evans stated that the CRA owns the land across the street and has provided MIT some easement arrangement so we would have to coordinate with MIT.

In response to Ms. Born, Mike O'Hearn said that Boston Properties is obligated to maintain the park. Because of that, BP is very interested in the any design decision. Mr. Evans added that through an 80-page document from 1988 BP has the right to disapprove any improvements based on the fact that they need to maintain it.

Mr. Zevin asked if Veolia would bring steam back to the park. Mr. Evans explained that one needs to be a Veolia customer for them to deliver steam and this park would not consume enough steam for that to happen. MIT has its own steam plant. Reducing redundancy has been discussed via a Veolia connection on the CRA side of Main Street, and if that were to happen, the CRA might be able to tap into that. In response to Mr. Evans, Mr. O'Hearn said that it would cost about \$100,000 to install steam and even more to run the pipe. There was a discussion about the technical issues of bringing mist to the site. Steve Anderson would be the person to talk to about the Greenway's use of mist.

Mr. Zogg asked the committee about their thoughts regarding the hardscape choices: pavers versus poured-in-place materials. In other words, is it okay to use brick? Mr. Reed explained the granite rings in the orbits would be restored. Anything that was an infill brick would be replaced. The Board liked the poured option. Mr. Zevin asked if there were any City guidelines. Mr. Evans said that the DPW did raise an issue about the City right of way so a confirmation would be needed. Ms. Born welcomes moving away from brick and terracotta and doing something different. She loves the idea of technical visual effects. In response to Mr. Evans, Mr. Reed said that the benches would be custom but he'd work with the in-house shops of one of the manufacturers to pick a closely related line. Ms. Born likes the geometry of the circle and how the other sections relate to the circulation of the area. Born is worried about the elevated grassy area where there's no sidewalk. Ms. Lee agreed that a park next to a road is concerning. Mr. Reed said that he is cognizant of that issue.

Mr. Kaiser referred to the design of Post Office Square Park where everything is faced inward or building a boundary wall. He added that the existing Point Park is too sterile with too much metal. He suggested replacing all the spheres with something more playful. He suggested adding a statue of the Marx brothers. Mr. Redmon suggested ten different statues of famous people sitting on the benches.

Ms. Farooq wondered if modifying the Main Street alignment to goes past the park would create an appeal for people to speed. She added that the topics arising now are beneficial to the long term planning for the park. She disagreed with Mr. Kaiser's thought about bordering the park as this park has evolved to be part of the urban fabric and should be open and inviting.

Ms. Lillian Hsu likes integrating the galaxy into an updated space. Mr. Reed said that the prow area would be accessible. She requested that the plaza hardscape area be built to allow for street performances. She also mentioned that the multiple colors paths are being installed at another park.

Tom Stohlman said that connections from the park and the sidewalk are important features that should be considered. He is skeptical of the prow for getting good views. He would prefer raising the edges and protecting the park from the rushing noisy traffic. He suggested using the landscaping to be the fence.

Ms. Heather Hoffman stated that people will be living across the street so noise and light effects should be considerate of the future residents.

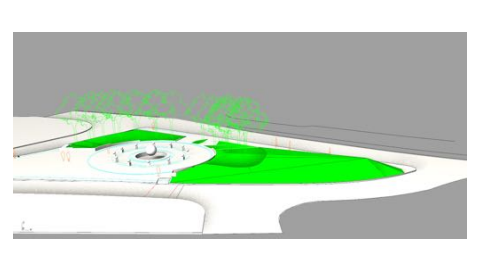
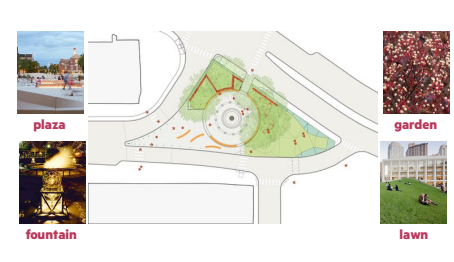
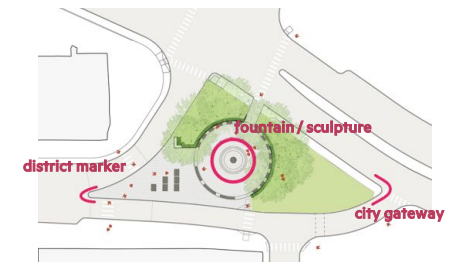
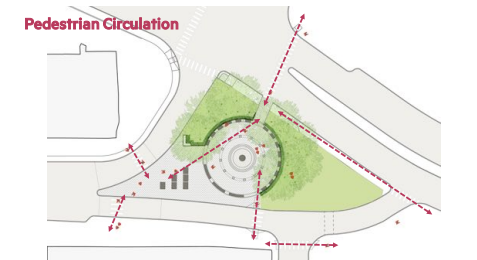
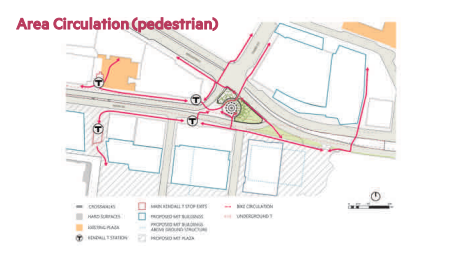
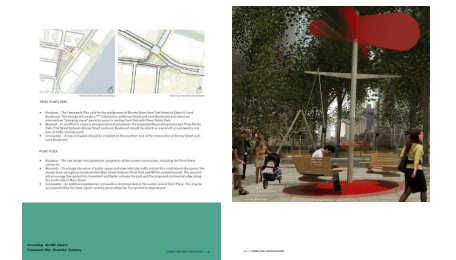
Mr. Kaiser said that some thought needs to be given to the bicycle-pedestrian conflict in the area. He also would like to see a sit-down area for people to play chess.

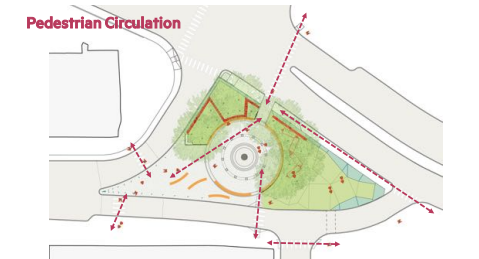
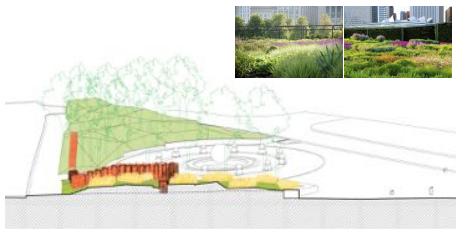
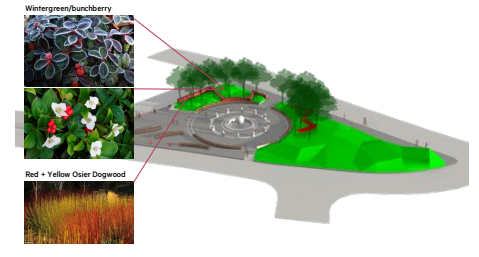
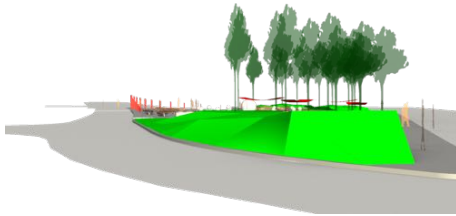
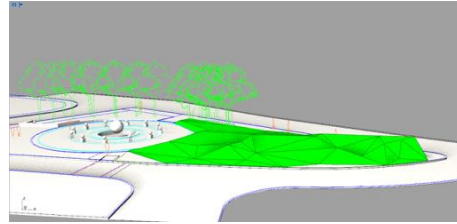
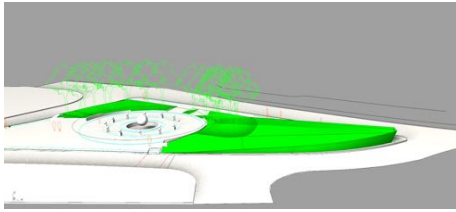
Ms. Born likes an innovative and futuristic look for a Kendall Square park as it should reflect the area.

Ms. Drury is worried about the berms and cutouts of the lawn as she feels that they won't get used.

The discussion on Point Park was closed at 5:13pm.

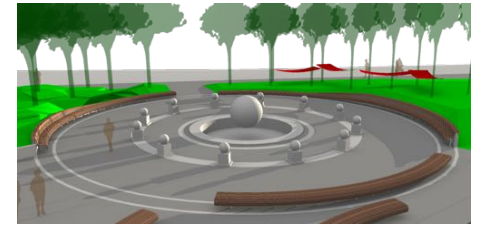
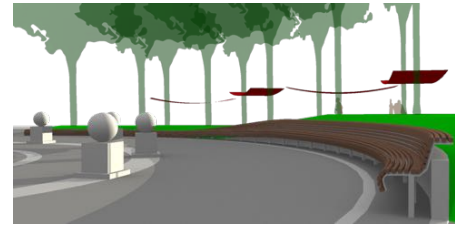




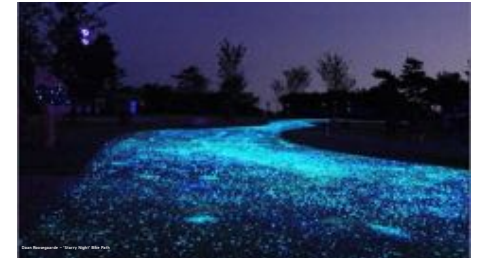




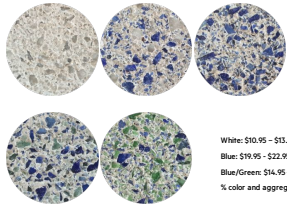
Permanent Seating



Movable Seating

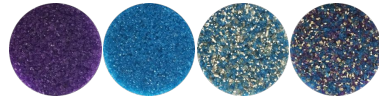


Paving: Wasau Recycled Glass Pavers



White: \$10.95 - \$11.35 per sq ft  
 Blue: \$19.95 - \$22.95 per sq ft  
 Blue/Green: \$14.95 - \$18.20 per sq ft  
 % color and aggregate can be customized

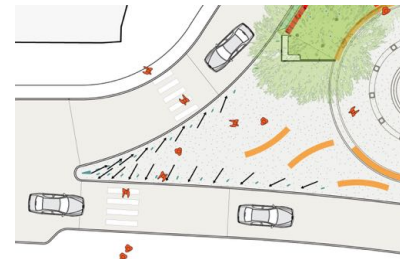
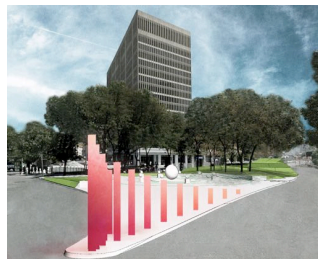
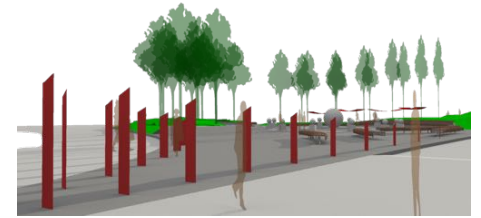
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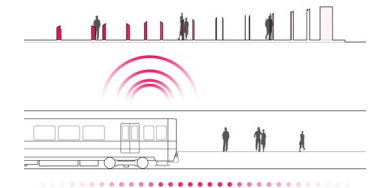
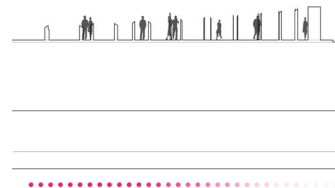
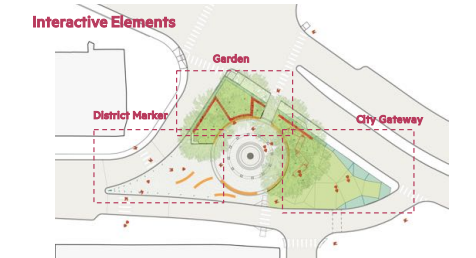
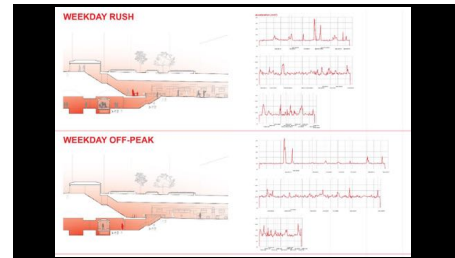
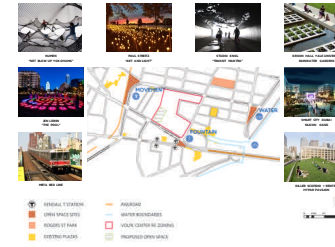
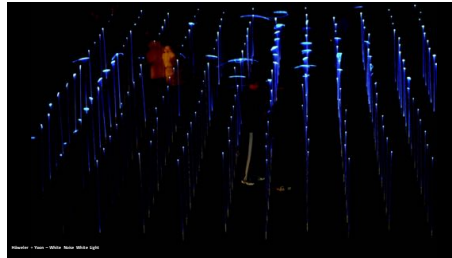
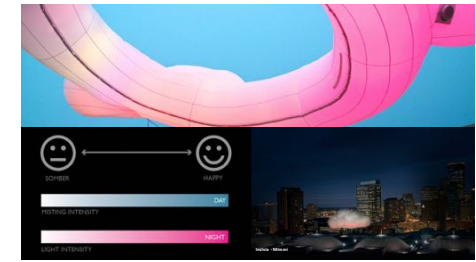


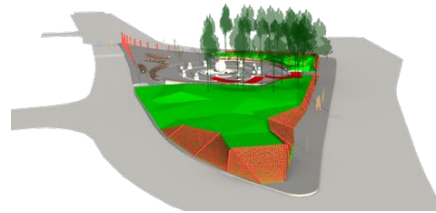
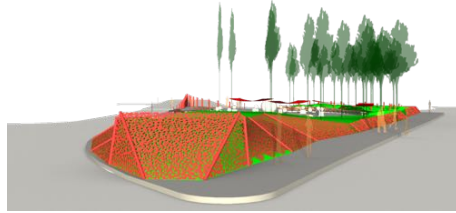
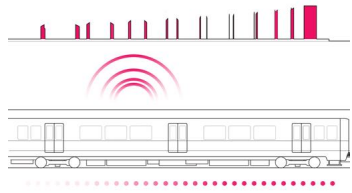
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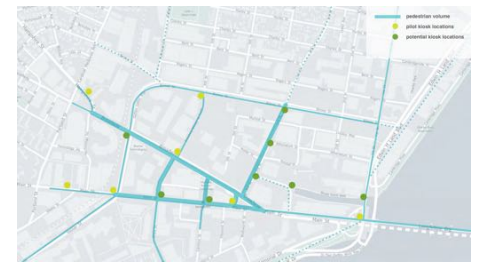
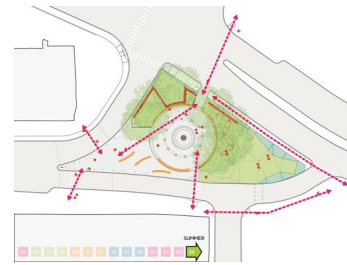
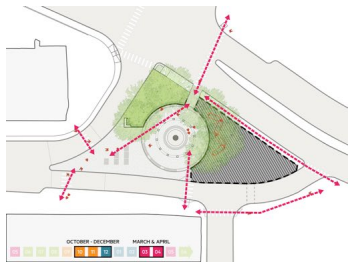
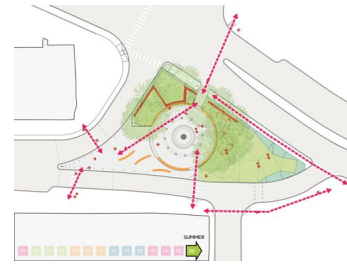
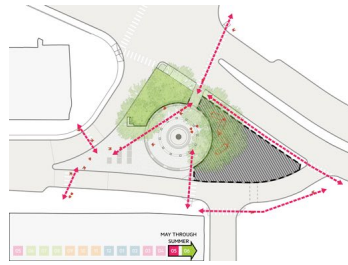
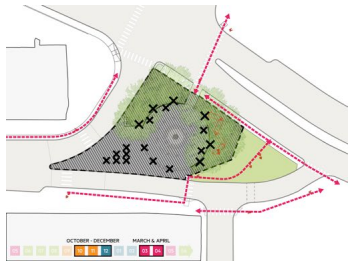


\$12 - \$15 per sq ft  
 Colors somewhat customizable









**Area Circulation (bike)**

