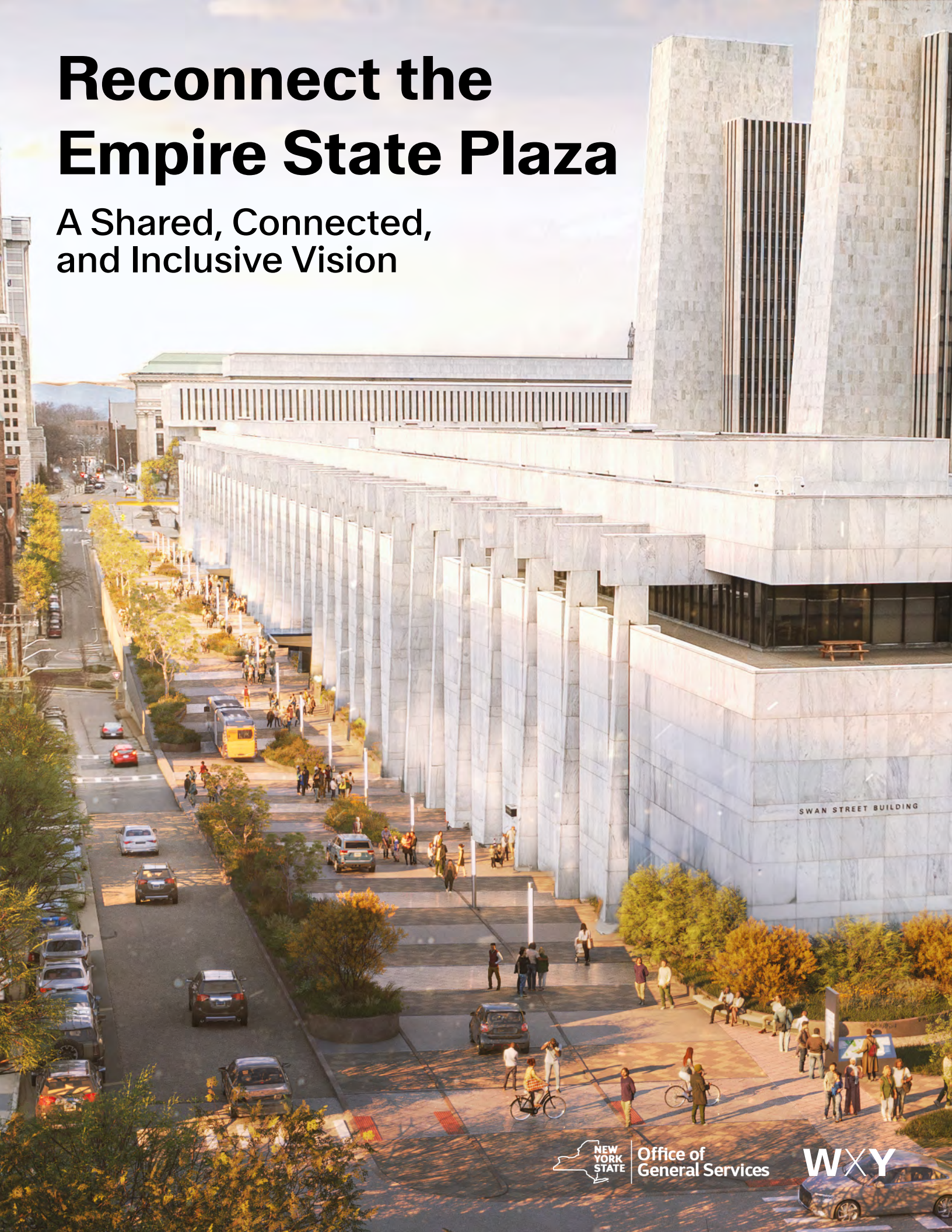


Reconnect the Empire State Plaza

A Shared, Connected,
and Inclusive Vision



Office of
General Services

WXY

Acknowledgments

This report reflects the contributions of many individuals who shared their time, insight, and perspectives throughout the process of the Reconnect the Empire State Plaza project. We extend our sincere thanks to the New York State Office of General Services, members of each focus group, and the many Albany residents who participated in public forums and survey. Their input was essential in shaping a shared vision for a more connected, active, and inclusive Empire State Plaza.

Prepared for
New York State Office of General Services

Prepared by
WXY architecture + urban design
2026

→
Artwork by Hannah Pangburn, inspired by the Empire State Art Plaza Collection. Exhibited during National Youth Art Month 2024, in partnership with the Office of General Services, the Capital Area Art Supervisors, and the New York State Art Teachers Association.





Letter from the Governor



For half a century, the Empire State Plaza has anchored New York's civic identity, defining our capital city's skyline and serving as the seat of state government. Beyond the Plaza's imposing architecture, it is a place where New Yorkers work, gather, experience culture, and engage with their government. As we make critical infrastructure investments in this historic complex, we have an opportunity to make it an inclusive and dynamic public commons that welcomes our state's diverse communities for generations to come.

In 2025, I launched the Championing Albany's Potential (CAP) Initiative, dedicating a transformative \$400 million investment to breathe new life into the capital city's downtown core. This coordinated effort is designed to spur housing growth, attract new residents, and energize the city's public spaces. The Empire State Plaza sits at the very center of this transformation. As part of this effort, I have invested \$25 million to begin implementing meaningful improvements and directed the Office of General Services to develop a roadmap for strengthening the connection between the Empire State Plaza and the communities surrounding it.

This comprehensive report represents a fundamental shift in how we view our civic infrastructure. Grounded in feedback from local residents, workers, and community leaders, this vision would turn a government complex into a welcoming, accessible public space. It represents our shared commitment to progress, to interweaving government and culture with Downtown Albany's social fabric. The Empire State Plaza is your plaza.

Our capital city deserves a downtown core that is welcoming, energized, and integrated into the daily life of its residents. Through the Reconnect the Empire State Plaza report and the rest of the CAP initiative, we are paving the way for transformational changes to build a more accessible, connected, and prosperous Albany for generations to come. I look forward to the work ahead and seeing this shared vision take shape in the years to come.

Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York



Letter from the Commissioner



For many, the Empire State Plaza is a familiar backdrop — a place they commute to for work, a thoroughfare for visitors traveling from the New York State Museum to the New York State Capitol, or a destination to take in stunning architecture and iconic American modern art. The Office of General Services (OGS) oversaw its construction and, since its completion in 1978, has cared for this 98-acre complex, which has stood for more than half a century as a defining symbol of New York State government in the center of Downtown Albany.

The Plaza’s history is multifaceted, shaped by monumental ambitions and urban renewal processes that forever changed Albany’s downtown. To enable its construction, thousands of residents were displaced and neighborhoods erased. Today, under Governor Kathy Hochul’s leadership, that history moves us forward. It challenges us to ensure the Plaza is not only our state’s capital center, but a welcoming, inclusive, and active space that reflects and serves the people who call Albany home.

Through Governor Hochul’s Championing Albany’s Potential (CAP) Initiative, OGS is advancing the Reconnect the Empire State Plaza project, a community-focused vision to reimagine this vital civic space, as we continue to address long-deferred maintenance and infrastructure issues in a master plan for the site. Leveraging a \$25 million investment from the CAP Initiative, we will take immediate action to make our spaces more livable and vibrant, from improving wayfinding and accessibility to enhancing walkability and green space along Swan Street to improving visitor experience in the Concourse.

At its core, this work is about connection, and making it easier for people to arrive, navigate, and feel a sense of belonging once they’re here. At the same time, we’re elevating the Plaza’s role as a cultural destination by enhancing events and programs that celebrate the diversity of New York — from music and art to local food and community traditions — ensuring the Plaza remains dynamic, relevant, and alive for generations to come.

This vision has been shaped by community voices. Over the past six months, OGS has conducted extensive public outreach, engaging thousands of residents and leaders in business, the arts, and government. Nearly 2,000 individuals contributed their insights through a multilingual online survey, and 400 participants joined public forums to share their perspectives. Their input drives this work.

The Reconnect the Empire State Plaza report identifies programmatic improvements, high-impact near-term projects and four visionary design concepts that have the power to transform the Plaza into a more inviting, connected, and active public space — one that encourages gathering, exploration, and return visits while strengthening its relationship with surrounding neighborhoods. Implementation will occur in phases, with improvements funded by the CAP Initiative becoming visible in the next few years, and larger investments aligning with statewide priorities, infrastructure investments, and the continued revitalization of Downtown Albany.

OGS remains committed to serving as thoughtful stewards of the Empire State Plaza and to working in partnership with the community as these transformative visions become reality.

Jeanette M. Moy
Commissioner, New York State Office of General Services (OGS)



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Introduction



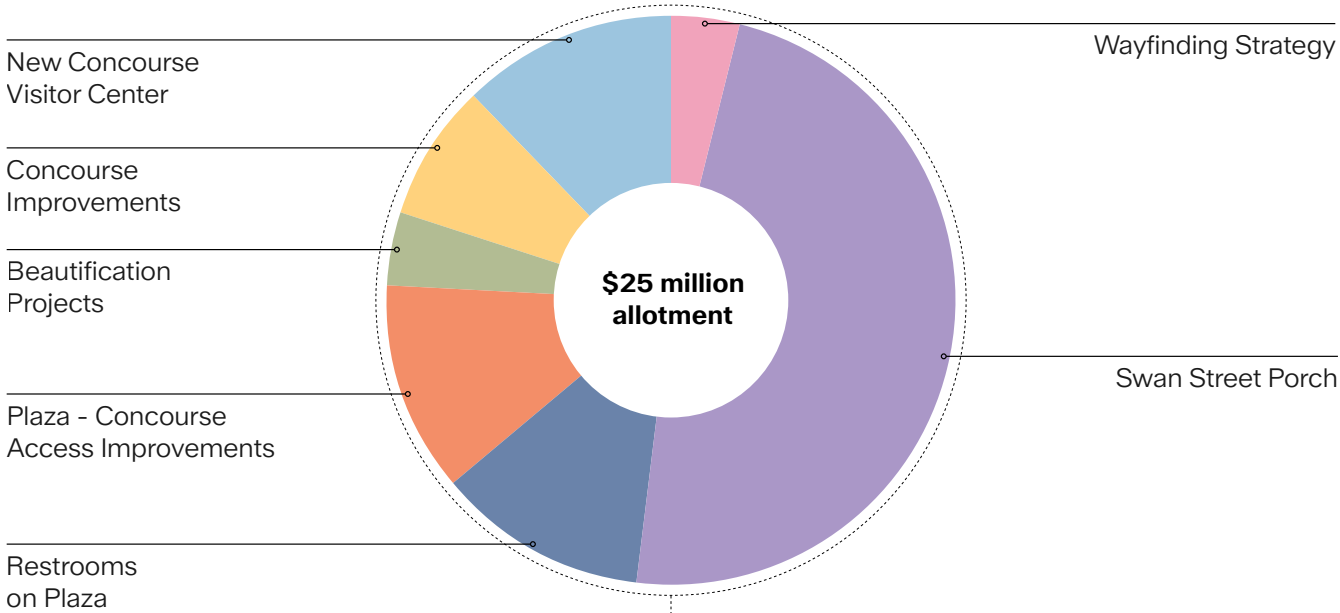
Executive Summary

Following six months of public dialogue, OGS proposes five high-impact near-term projects and four visionary design concepts to inform future potential improvements at the Plaza.

Building on Governor Hochul's historic investments, the Reconnect the Empire State Plaza report marks a turning point for the 98-acre government complex in downtown Albany. Drawing insights from over 2,000 participants through surveys, forums, and focus groups — the first coordinated public visioning since the Plaza opened nearly 50 years ago — the report details programmatic recommendations, high-impact near-term projects, and four long-term visionary design concepts. High-impact near-term projects include improved wayfinding and navigation, and upgrades to the visitor experience in the Concourse and the Plaza. Long-term visionary projects include upgrading the Swan Street and Madison Avenue gateways to the Plaza, bringing green space to the Plaza, and enhancing accessible pathways to downtown Albany. Collectively, this vision seeks to elevate the ESP into a vibrant space where government, culture, and communities come together.

Leveraging a \$25 million investment from Governor Hochul's Championing Albany's Potential initiative, OGS will begin to implement this vision, with visible changes in the near term, delivering crucial improvements including:

- **Improving navigation and signage:** Clarifying wayfinding to help people get around more easily.
- **Enhancing visitor experience:** Expanding the Empire State Plaza Visitor Center to serve as a welcoming hub for tours and visitors.
- **Upgrading the Concourse food court:** Making the Concourse food court, with small local business vendors, more inviting.
- **Improving Plaza level accessibility:** Enhancing the pathways between the Concourse and the Plaza level.
- **Providing public restroom access:** Constructing permanent ADA-compliant restrooms on the Plaza level.
- **Swan Street Porch:** Transforming the Swan Street Bridge into a welcoming gateway to the Plaza.



\$25 million allotment of the Championing Albany's Potential Initiative investment to Empire State Plaza

Visionary Projects

Future projects, including aspirational long-term design concepts, could be sequenced alongside necessary infrastructure improvements as part of OGS' capital planning and prioritization.



1 Swan Street Porch
Reimagine the Swan Street bridge as a vibrant face towards the historic Center Square neighborhood, with strategic traffic-calming measures and pedestrian improvements.



2 Madison Avenue Gateway
Adapt Madison Avenue and the Biggs Laboratory as a welcoming gateway that connects visitors and residents to the Plaza's cultural hub.



3 Central Plaza
Repurpose the Central Reflecting Pool as a multifunctional community lawn for events, programs, and recreation.

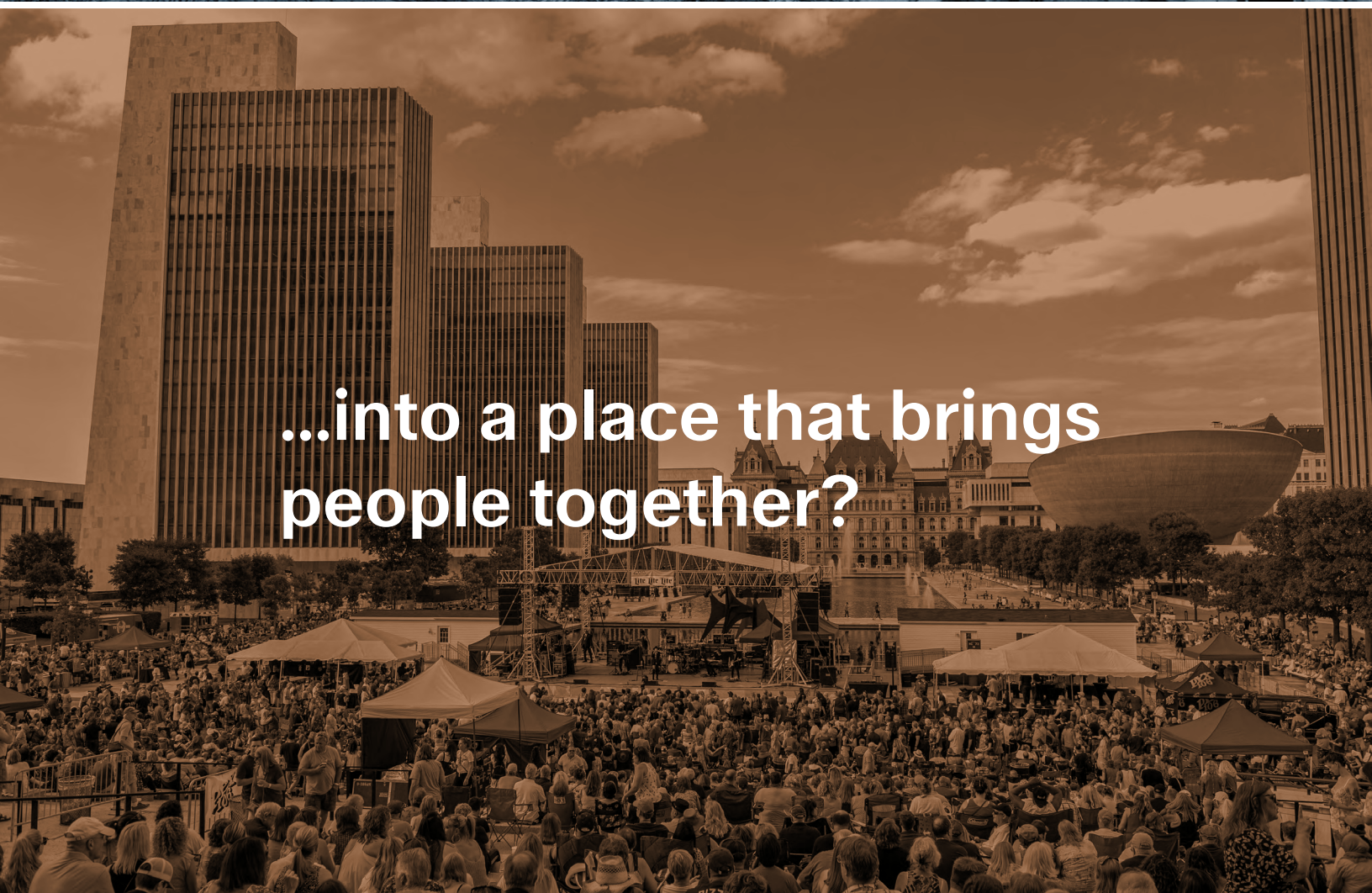


4 Downtown Walkway
Along with parallel infrastructure investments, reposition Eagle and Lancaster streets as the Plaza's front door and create a universally accessible Downtown Walkway as a vital connector between the Plaza and downtown.

Note: All renderings are design concepts, not finalized designs.



How do we turn a
symbol of urban renewal...



...into a place that brings
people together?

Overview

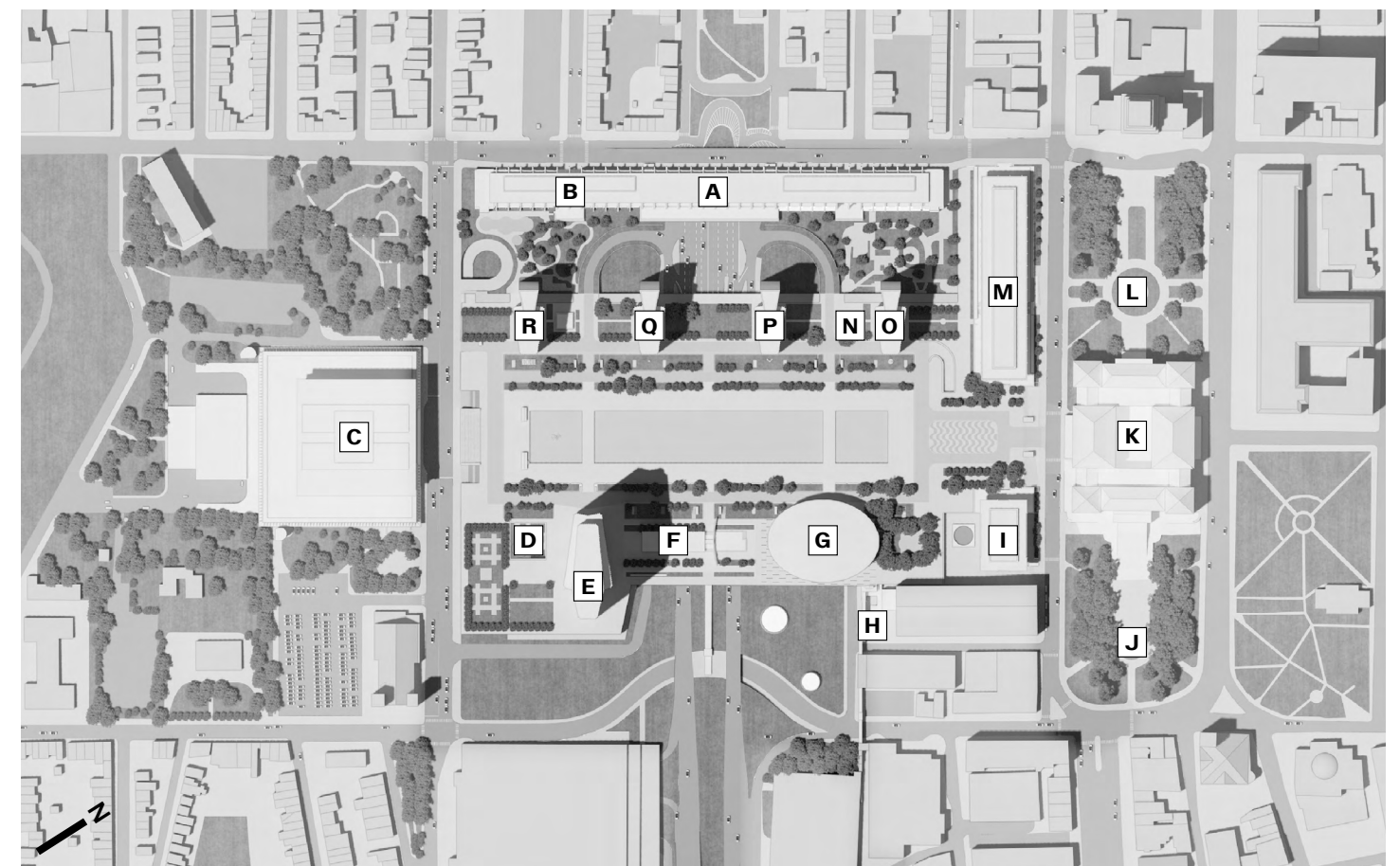
How can the Empire State Plaza connect to Downtown Albany and its surrounding neighborhoods?

In 2025, Governor Hochul announced the Championing Albany's Potential (CAP) initiative, a coordinated effort to reimagine Downtown Albany through strategic investments in its infrastructure, public realm, and economic assets. In support of this work, the New York State Office of General Services (OGS) launched the Reconnect Empire State Plaza project, a first-of-its-kind initiative to envision the Plaza, one of the nation's foremost examples of high modernist architecture, as a more welcoming, active, and connected space for visitors, daily users, and surrounding neighborhoods. Governor Hochul is supporting this vision with an initial \$25 million investment to revitalize the Empire State Plaza (ESP), building on the hundreds of millions of dollars she has dedicated to decarbonization and addressing long-standing deferred maintenance at the Plaza.

Through stakeholder focus groups, public brainstorming sessions, and a public survey, OGS engaged over 2,000 participants to develop ideas for the Plaza's future. This report articulates a phased approach to enhancing the Plaza's key assets, in concert with strategies to activate its iconic public spaces.

Site Legend

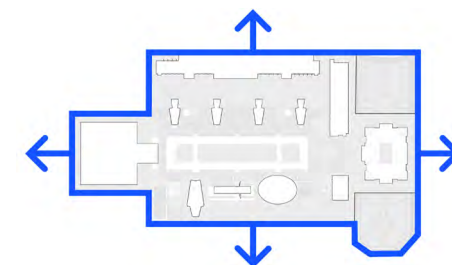
- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| A Swan Street Building | J East Capitol Park |
| B Children's Place | K Capitol Building |
| C New York State Museum | L West Capitol Park |
| D Biggs Lab | M Legislative Office Building |
| E Erastus Corning II Tower | N Seasonal Skate Rentals |
| F Cornerstone | O Agency Building 4 |
| G The Egg Performing Arts Center | P Agency Building 3 |
| H Downtown Walkway | Q Agency Building 2 |
| I Robert Abrams Building for Law and Justice | R Agency Building 1 |



Reconnect the Empire State Plaza strives to **bridge the barriers** between the 98-acre Plaza complex and its neighbors through **targeted design interventions** and **inclusive programs**.

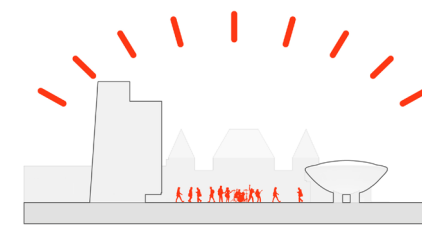
Together, **near- and long-term strategies** can **soften the edges** between the Plaza, Downtown Albany, and adjacent neighborhoods, strengthening **physical and social connections** across the city.

Project Goals



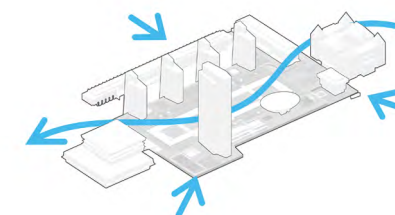
Reconnect

Reconnect the Plaza to its surrounding communities and Albany's downtown through strategic physical and programmatic improvements that reimagine the Plaza's infrastructure, highlight its unique architectural legacy, and acknowledge its history of urban renewal and displacement.



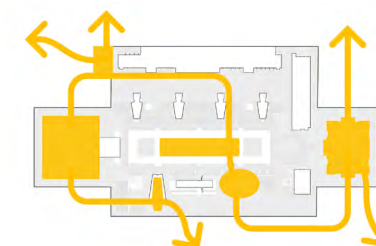
Celebrate

Craft physical and programmatic ideas that reposition the Plaza's key assets, including its incredible modern art collection, to enhance Downtown Albany as a destination.



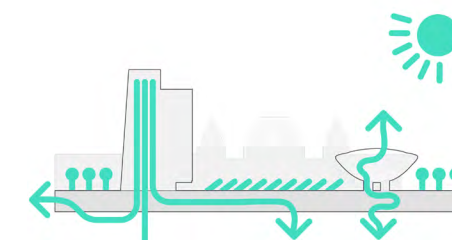
Invite

Invite residents, workers, and tourists to make the Plaza their own through regular community programs and events, and through design elements that connect the interior and exterior spaces into a single and integrated experience.



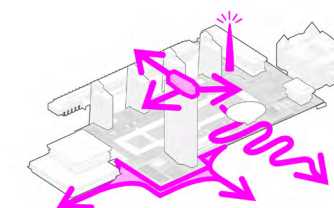
Align

Develop near-, medium-, and long-term implementation plans for the site that align with strategic institutional plans, capital projects, and state priorities. These priorities include investments in Downtown Albany, necessary infrastructure work, and State Capitol improvements.



Adapt

Complement ongoing sustainability plans that adapt the Plaza to long-term climate changes, while creating flexibility for future planning and investment.



Reimagine

Rethink the design, use, and navigation of the Plaza, including the Biggs Laboratory space and the underused retail spaces on the Concourse.

Public Engagement

Over the course of the project, OGS heard from over 2,000 online survey respondents, 400 public forum attendees, and 60 focus group participants:



- Focus Groups**
- Focus groups included arts and culture, neighborhood, economic development, and government leaders. Participants discussed ideas to deepen partnerships with different organizations working locally and regionally to enhance Albany's cultural and civic reputation.
 - Participants supported more consistent programs on the Plaza, along with physical infrastructure enhancements to improve the experience of State workers, neighbors, and visitors.



- Online Survey**
- Almost 2,000 people responded to a multilingual online survey conducted by OGS.
 - The survey results revealed that people see the Plaza primarily as a place for work and government, as well as a center of arts and culture.
 - Improving pedestrian access was a high priority for getting people onto the Plaza.
 - Respondents expressed a desire to see more local vendors and more diverse programs for younger generations and families.
 - Albany residents are eager for the Plaza to serve as a hub for everyday services and a civic commons.



- Public Forum 1**
- Over 200 people attended the first public forum to provide input on the current state of the Plaza.
 - Food, retail, and other practical everyday services are sought at the Plaza by both residents and workers.
 - Accessibility was identified as a major challenge for wheelchair users, young families, and cyclists.



- Public Forum 2**
- During the second public forum, held at the Corning Tower Observation Deck, over 200 people gathered to provide feedback on early-stage concepts for the Plaza.
 - Participants reiterated concerns and ideas related to pedestrian safety, access, and lighting.
 - Many participants expressed an eagerness to celebrate the Plaza's unique historic character and architecture, while expanding its daily functionality.

Although the findings from each engagement varied, public feedback broadly focused on three key themes: Public Perception, Access, and Connectivity.



- Public Perception**
- The Plaza has a split public perception as the home of government and a place of iconic cultural assets. 63% of survey respondents primarily associated the Plaza with government, and 59% with work.
 - Many feel the Plaza is not a place for them. A lack of attractive events, programs, vendors, and retailers are among the top challenges identified by public engagement participants.

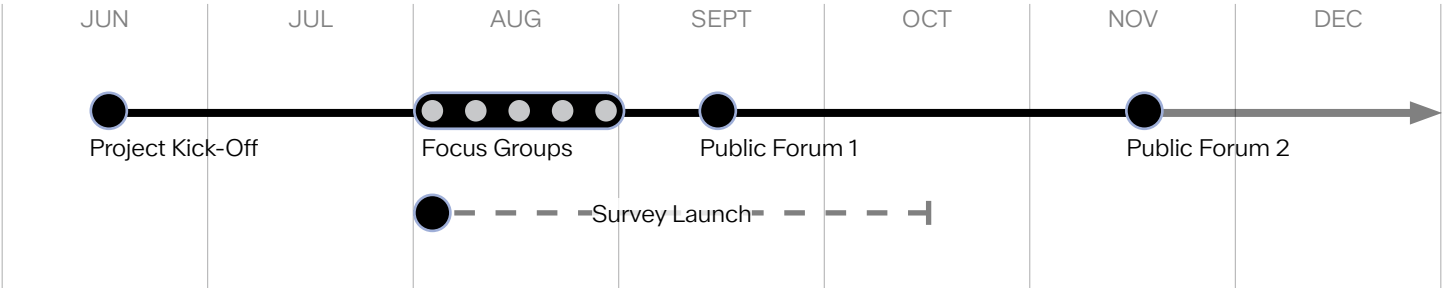


- Access**
- During Public Forum 2, participants expressed a desire to have expanded operational hours at some of the Plaza's most iconic assets, including the Empire State Plaza Art Collection and the Corning Tower Observation Deck, amongst others.
 - People are eager for improvements that facilitate safe and year-round entry to the Plaza, specifically universally accessible routes onto and through the Plaza. When survey respondents were asked what they wished the Plaza had, or would do more of, results focused on improved pedestrian access and connections.

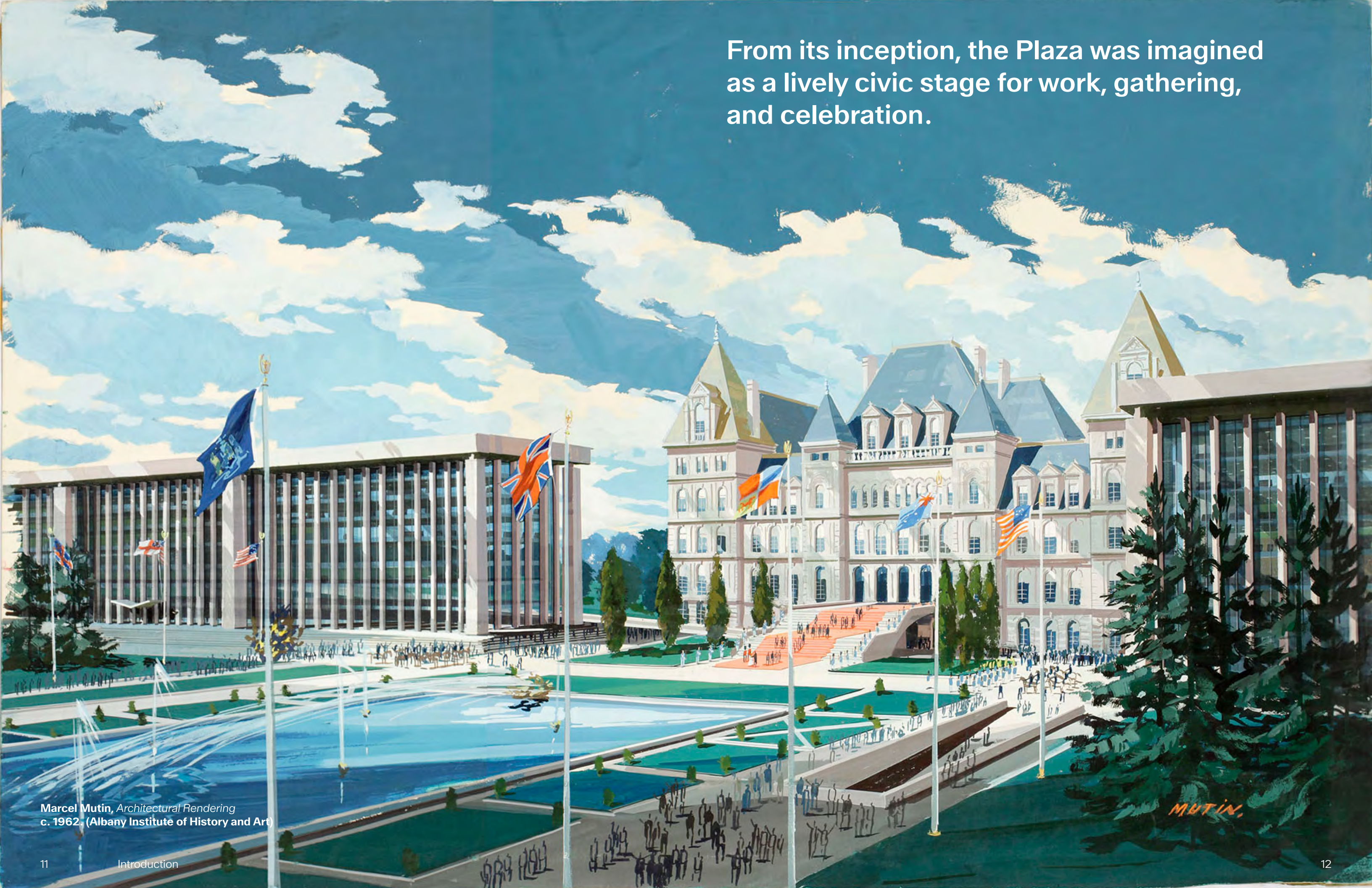


- Connectivity**
- Over 350 open-ended responses to the online survey identified strengthening connections with adjacent neighborhoods as a priority.
 - There is a clear desire for the Plaza to serve as a hub that links everyday services and programs for residents, as well as State workers. For over 400 online survey respondents, access to food, vendor markets, and transit emerged as major potential attractions besides events.

Public Engagement Timeline



From its inception, the Plaza was imagined as a lively civic stage for work, gathering, and celebration.



Marcel Mutin, Architectural Rendering
c. 1962. (Albany Institute of History and Art)

Site History: Revisiting the Vision

Under Governor Nelson Rockefeller, the Empire State Plaza, designed by Architect Wallace K. Harrison, was envisioned as an embodiment of modern civic values, but became a stark symbol of government intervention.

The Empire State Plaza stands on the site of a neighborhood formerly known as "the Gut." Since the 1800s, this area, situated on a bluff overlooking Albany's downtown, had been home to newcomers, including European immigrants and Black southerners who relocated during the Great Migration. By the late 1930s, the diverse neighborhood had been redlined, setting the stage for systemic disinvestment in the area.

Two decades later, comprehensive redevelopment was a dominant but destructive mode of urban renewal. In the early 1960s, comprehensive plans to modernize the capital city were developed, including the Albany Plan and plans for the South Mall Arterial. Aligning with urban planning principles of the time, the Plaza was envisioned as a consolidated governmental and cultural complex, with the South Mall Arterial serving as New Yorkers' main access point to this modern civic space.

After Governor Rockefeller unveiled the Plaza's plans, over 7,000 residents were evicted, and their homes were demolished. Thriving communities were displaced and dispersed to other parts of the Capital Region. Construction officially began in 1965. In parallel, Rockefeller appointed a commission of art experts to acquire a museum-quality ensemble of modern artworks for the Empire State Plaza Art Collection. The Empire State Plaza opened to the public in 1973, with construction finally concluding with the opening of The Egg in 1978.



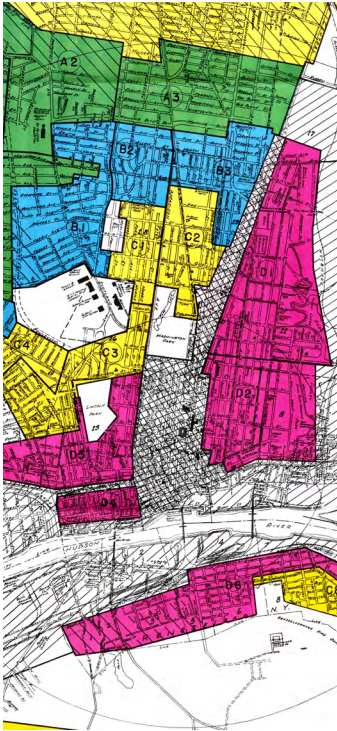
Mid-1800s

Albany is significantly urbanized. Hundreds of homes and businesses grow where the Plaza is today.



1899

After the demolition of the previous Capitol, construction of the present-day Capitol building begins in 1867. It is declared complete in 1899.



1938

Albany's "Gut" and "Pastures" neighborhoods are redlined.



1960s

Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands visits the capital city with Governor Rockefeller.



1963

South Mall Arterial is constructed.



1963

All 98 acres in "the Gut" acquired through eminent domain. Over 7,000 predominantly immigrant and Black residents are evicted.



1965

Empire State Plaza plans unveiled and construction begins.



1976

Empire State Plaza is fully operational.

The Plaza Today

An assessment of existing features, infrastructure, activities, and perceptions of the Plaza today.



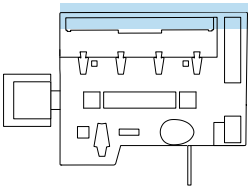
Site Overview

- 1 West Plaza / Swan Street
- 2 South Plaza / Madison Avenue
- 3 Central Plaza
- 4 East Plaza / Eagle Street
- 5 North Plaza / State Street
- 6 Concourse



Site Analysis and Observations

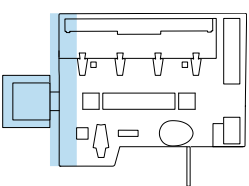
1 West Plaza / Swan Street



Swan Street is dominated by vehicle traffic, lacking a safe and welcoming pedestrian identity. This limits community connection, accessibility, and year-round use.

- Wayfinding and entrance are unclear and uninviting.
- Traffic speed and design prioritize vehicles.
- Crossings and ADA routes feel unsafe and disconnected.
- Winter closures limit access and activity.
- Plaza edge lacks a strong, community-facing identity.

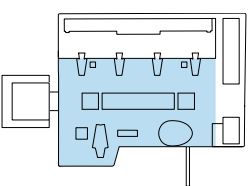
2 South Plaza / Madison Avenue



Ad hoc programs, hidden access, and car-oriented edges limit use of the South-end of the Plaza year-round. As a result, connectivity and civic presence are affected.

- Temporary facilities are mismatched to program needs and permanent infrastructure.
- Accessibility is adversely impacted by unclear entry points, seasonal stair closures, and limited bike access.
- Car-oriented edges weaken memorial spaces and interrupt the pedestrian connection to Lincoln Park.

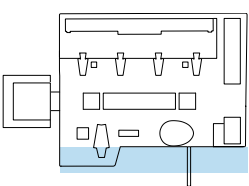
3 Central Plaza



Unclear access points and wayfinding limit use of the space and affect ongoing and future programs.

- The Biggs Laboratory is a unique asset that will be vacated in the coming years. On relocation, the space could potentially support broader public uses.
- Wayfinding makes Concourse and restroom access difficult.
- The Cornerstone at the Plaza space presents an opportunity to introduce flexible, multi-user programs.

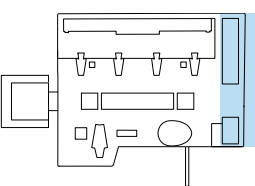
4 East Plaza / Eagle Street



The East Plaza, including Eagle and Lancaster streets, lack safe, welcoming connections, pedestrian access, and effective linkages to Downtown Albany.

- Pedestrian and cycling routes feel unsafe and disconnected.
- The existing Downtown Walkway and Eagle Street feel uninviting and difficult to navigate.
- Connections to neighborhoods and historical landmarks are unclear.

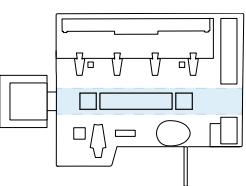
5 North Plaza / State Street



Hidden entrances, unclear circulation, and underdefined Concourse spaces limit the visibility, access, and everyday use of key civic assets.

- The Vietnam Memorial and key entries from State Street feel concealed and difficult for visitors to find.
- Concourse spaces and courtyards lack defined programs.
- Access to The Egg is unclear and irregular, despite the shade and comfort the base of the building provides during the summer months.

6 Concourse



Poor connections to the Plaza and street-level, along with limited activations, suppress foot traffic and weaken the Concourse experience.

- Concourse access feels hidden and lacks clarity, flexibility, and visibility.
- Poor lighting and lack of seating prevent the art collection from being fully appreciated.
- Limited attractions and unclear entry points make it difficult to attract visitors and businesses.

Issues at the Plaza Today

Design and Infrastructure



Aging infrastructure limits accessibility, connectivity, comfort, and use across the Plaza. As a result, the visitor experience is fragmented.

- Unclear navigation and weak connections between the Plaza and Concourse limit the use of space.
- Car-oriented edges and limited, poorly-signaled pedestrian entrances create barriers for visitors and residents.
- Infrastructure needs for events have outgrown the Plaza's original design.
- Usability of some spaces across the Plaza is affected by long-deferred maintenance.

Public Perception and Value



Association with government and underpromoted assets reduce public interface with the site, despite strong potential to inspire broader audiences.

- Strong associations with government can discourage broader community use and everyday visits.
- The Plaza's tourism assets have limited hours and visibility, restricting their reach beyond weekday audiences.
- The world-class art collection does not function as a clear, museum-like experience.
- The Plaza's ambitious mid-century design is not celebrated as an architectural experience.

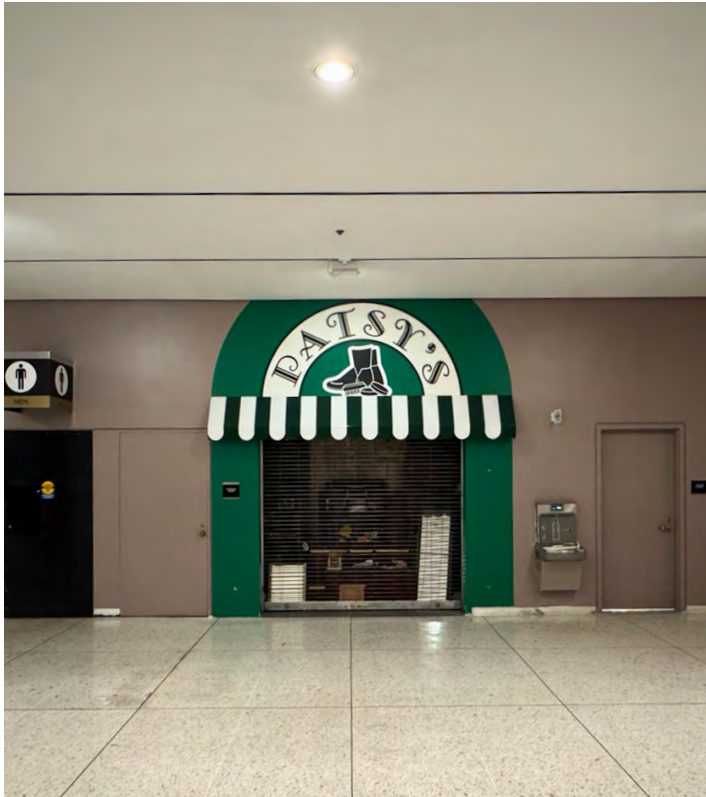
Safety and Security



Inconsistent lighting, visibility, and activity impact perceptions of safety that limit the use of key connectors and public spaces.

- Security concerns impact the location of part of the art collection.
- Lighting around public art and pedestrian paths is insufficient, particularly at night.
- The Downtown Walkway is a key connector, but it is unwelcoming, often inaccessible, and underused.

Funding and Revenue Generation



Inconsistent foot traffic makes it difficult to sustain diverse program offerings, attract new businesses, and constrain revenue generation.

- A robust schedule of 800 events is supported by a small team.
- Business retention on the Concourse is challenged by seasonal and inconsistent foot traffic.
- Similar to the greater Downtown Albany, the Plaza is ready for fresh ideas that invite long-term engagement from businesses and visitors.

Public Engagement

Grounding the vision in public input and shared priorities.



Public Engagement Findings

From Broad Participation to Clear Themes

As a core component of the project, we set out to build a deeper understanding of how the public views the Plaza's potential. To support a robust stakeholder dialogue, OGS launched an online survey in three languages, which received nearly 2,000 responses; hosted 400 participants across two public forums in some of the Plaza's most iconic spaces; and organized six focus groups with approximately 60 local leaders.

Each engagement invited dialogue, encouraged conversation, and solicited direct feedback from the public about their vision for the future of Empire State Plaza. Thousands of suggestions were offered, demonstrating the interest participants had in seeing change across the complex.

Although the findings from each engagement varied, public feedback focused on various facets of three main topics: Public Perception, Access, and Connectivity.

Public Perception

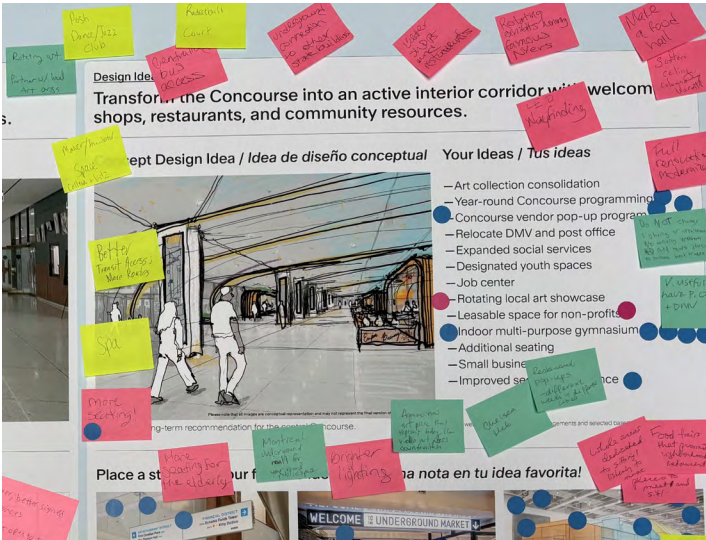
- The Plaza has a split public perception as the home of government and a place of iconic cultural assets.
- Many feel the Plaza is not for them, whether due to the presence of government or the absence of vendors, programs, or events of interest to them.

Access

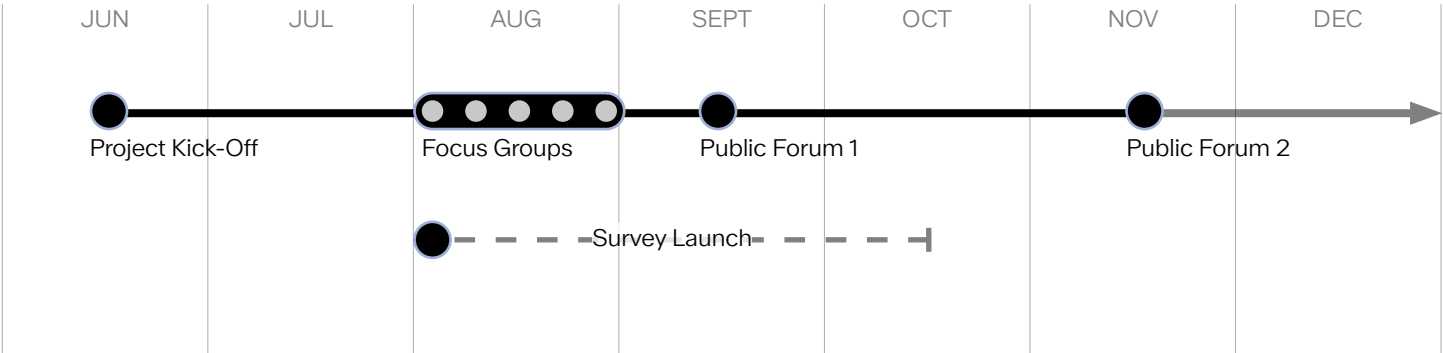
- There exists a deep desire for enhanced public access to the Plaza's attractions, like the art collection and the Observation Deck.
- People are eager for improvements to facilitate safe, year-round, and universally accessible routes onto and through the Plaza.

Connectivity

- The Plaza could do more to explicitly make connections with adjacent neighborhoods and local communities.
- There is a clear desire for the Plaza to serve as a hub for everyday services and programs for residents, as well as State workers.



Major Public Engagement Milestones





Public Survey Results

Focus on welcoming visitors at Madison Avenue and State Street.

- Many visitors get to the Plaza through underground parking and the Concourse.
- Very few get to the Plaza via the Downtown Walkway from the Capital Center and MVP Arena.
- State Street and Swan Street are underutilized gateways.

1	Madison Avenue	28%
2	Underground parking	24%
3	State Street	17%
4	Off-site parking	11%
5	The Concourse	8%
6	Swan Street	8%
7	Covered walkway from MVP Arena	2%

Question: "How do you arrive at the Plaza today?"

People want more routine needs met on the Plaza.

- Food and beverage options on the Plaza remain a top priority.
- More green spaces, community events, and family-friendly activities, as well as enhanced pedestrian accessibility, were top priorities for respondents.

1	Food & beverage options	59%
2	Green spaces	48%
3	Better pedestrian access	39%
4	Community events	34%
5	Parking	32%
6	Evening programs	31%
7	Wintertime activities	29%

Question: "What activities and attractions do you desire?"

People primarily come to the Plaza for work or events.

- Many describe themselves as event attendees, but few are out-of-town visitors or tourists.
- Art and historical program offerings may be an underutilized asset and attraction.

1	Work	50%
2	Live performances	47%
3	Seasonal events	38%
4	Art and history	30%
5	Food	24%
6	Hanging out	21%
7	Cultural events	11%

Question: "What is your primary reason to visit the Plaza?"

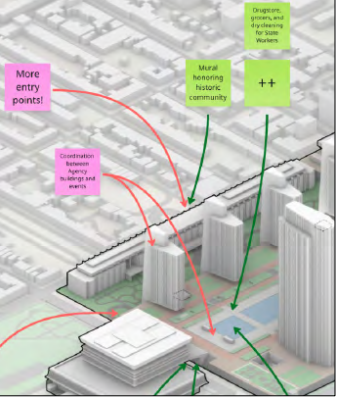
The Plaza should connect to its neighbors and nearby attractions.

- Specific neighborhoods and commercial areas were identified for direct connections.
- A significant number of respondents desire connections to larger transit systems (e.g., Amtrak, CDTA, Empire State Trail, etc.) and parks.

1	Downtown	165
2	Arbor Hill / South End	124
3	Lark St. / Center Sq.	70
4	CDTA / Transit	68
5	Amtrak / Rensselaer Stn.	52
6	Bikeways / Empire State Trail	47
7	Parklands	45

Question: "What connections would you like to see?"

Key Takeaways

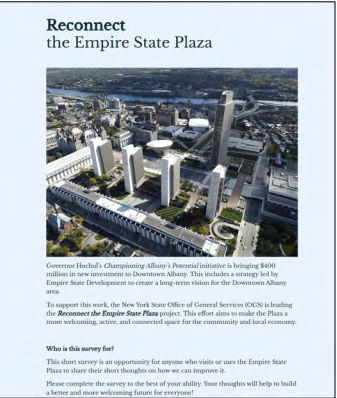


The Plaza, its assets, and connections could be better leveraged through partnership opportunities.

Focus Groups

- Focus groups included leaders from arts and culture, local communities, economic development, and government.
- The monumental scale of the Plaza is impressive, but its fortress-like edges and the lack of gateways deter visitors.
- Underused facilities and misaligned hours of operation limit the Plaza's potential to better serve the public.

Annotated site plan with Focus Group comments.



There is a strong desire for the Plaza to connect to adjacent neighborhoods and expand spaces for activity and greenery.

Online Survey

- The Plaza is primarily seen as a place for government and work, but also as a center of arts and culture.
- Pedestrian accessibility remains a high priority and concern.

Online survey introduction.



Focus on everyday access to facilities and services, along with more frequent activities and program offerings.

Public Forum #1

- Accessibility is a major stated challenge for young families, cyclists, and wheelchair users.
- Food, retail, and other practical everyday services are sought at the Plaza by both residents and workers.
- Operational hours of the Plaza and its assets could be reconsidered to invite more public presence.

Opening remarks at Public Forum 1.



Transformative ideas sparked excitement and engagement while highlighting space's iconic qualities.

Public Forum #2

- Participants were eager to hear about concepts that introduced more noticeable and pedestrian-oriented gateways.
- They expressed a desire to celebrate the architecture of the Plaza and to find ways to memorialize its history, while also expanding daily functionality.
- Suggestions on programming were targeted and wellness focused.

Participants at a Public Forum 2 activity table.

Vision

Articulating a more connected, cohesive, and accessible Empire State Plaza.



Overview

From Public Input to Program Priorities and Phased Action

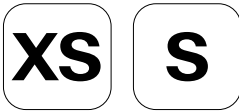
Through feedback and internal discussions, a core set of program categories was identified: 1) Circulation and Visitor Experience, 2) Public Programs, 3) Institutional Coordination, 4) Open Space and Landscape, 5) Retail Opportunities, and 6) Accessibility for All.

Together, these themes outline high-priority areas that can be addressed across the Plaza: clarifying access and wayfinding; softening the central Plaza into a more park-like environment; expanding everyday amenities, public programs, and partnerships that support regular use by workers, neighbors, and visitors. Organized by category, the recommendations support the shift from the Plaza

being a closed government complex, into a destination that invites people to engage, linger, learn, and return.

At the same time, these recommendations recognize that change must occur over time. Some strategies focus on near-term tactical improvements that can test ideas and deliver progress quickly. Others outline medium-term shifts to strengthen use patterns, partnerships, and public perception. Long-term recommendations identify transformative opportunities that will require sustained coordination, investment, and planning.

Near-Term Projects 1–3 Years



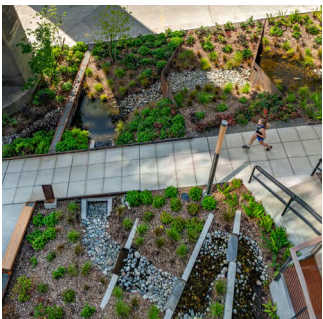
Discrete, fast, and adaptable projects that demonstrate visible change quickly



Medium-Term Projects 4–6 Years



Investments in new uses and spaces, transforming pilots into capital projects



Long-Term Projects 7–15+ Years

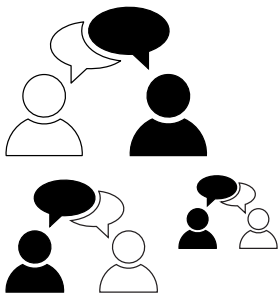


Comprehensive, enduring transformations



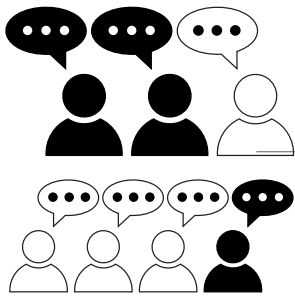
Synthesis of Stakeholder Feedback

Record



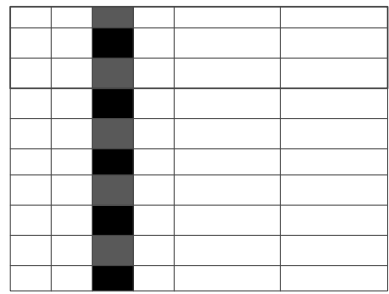
Record comments from all engagements and discussions

Analyze and Categorize



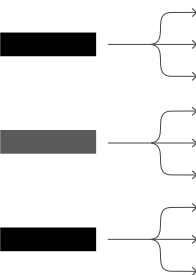
Catalog comments and information by type, area, and focus

Collect



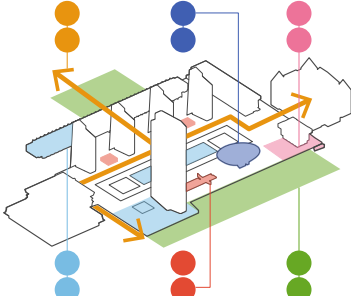
Create a comprehensive project matrix of all suggestions

Organize



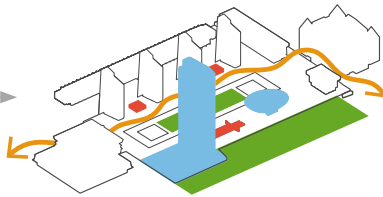
Sort projects based on program category, area, or similar goals

Recommend



Recommend projects based on frequency, feasibility, and goal

Propose



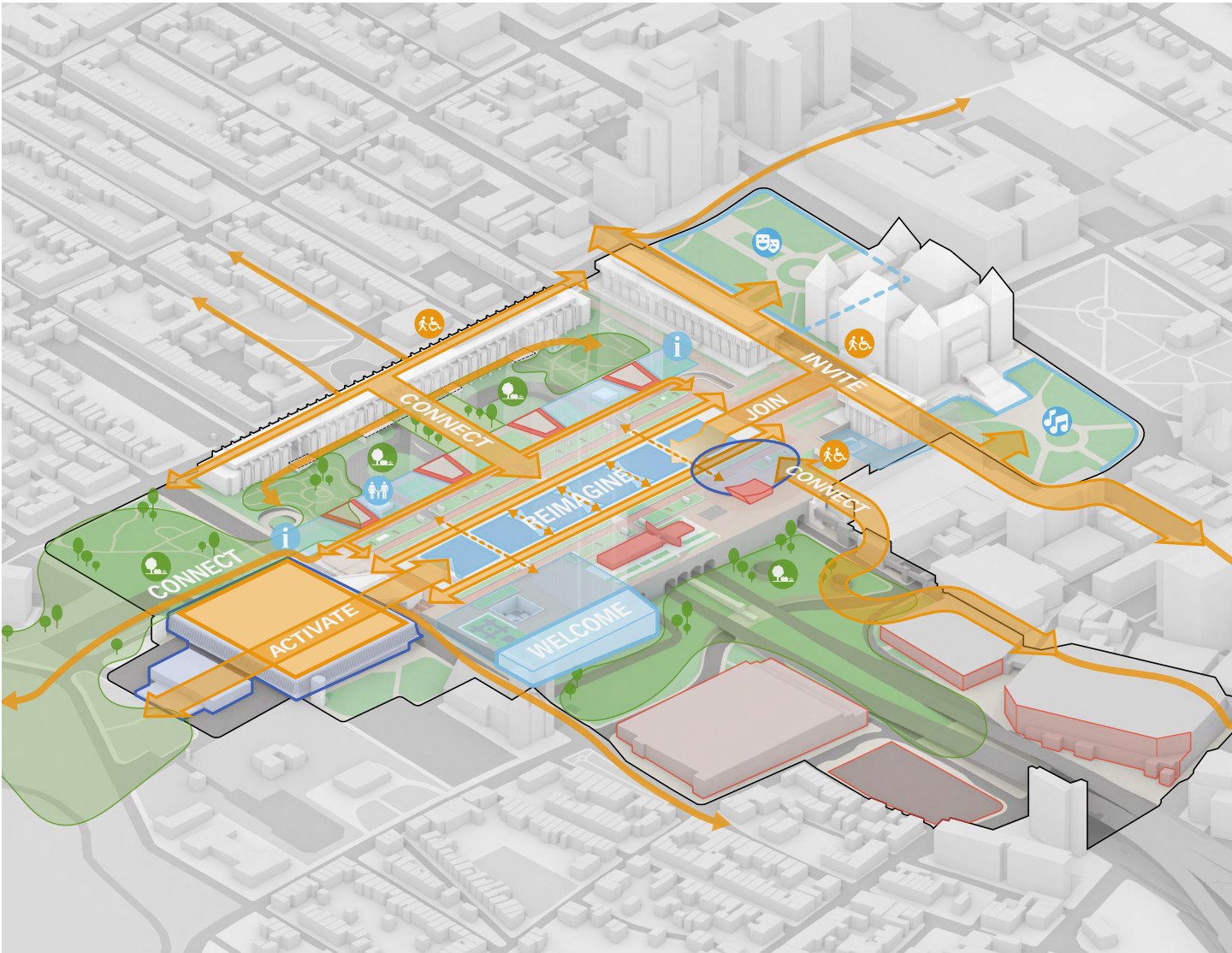
Propose Visionary Concepts that distill public ideas into a design concept

Plaza Opportunity Framework

Analyzing the Plaza’s potential through six interrelated themes.

The Plaza Opportunity Framework is based on the public feedback collected, and provided the basis for the selection of a series of potential visionary concepts to catalyze the Plaza’s long-term transformation. We defined six core program categories that served as lenses to identify and analyze opportunities across the Plaza:

- Circulation & Visitor Experience
- Public Programs
- Retail Opportunities
- Open Space & Landscape
- Universal Accessibility
- Institutional Coordination



Circulation and Visitor Experience
Make access and activities on the Plaza more visible to cultivate community participation.



Accessibility For All
Improve safety and navigability conditions for pedestrians, families with strollers, and wheelchair users.



Institutional Coordination
Unify Plaza stakeholders through partnerships, programs, and promotion under one civic and cultural voice.



Open Space and Landscape
Softening the edges and replacing hardscaping to transform the Plaza into a more park-like environment.

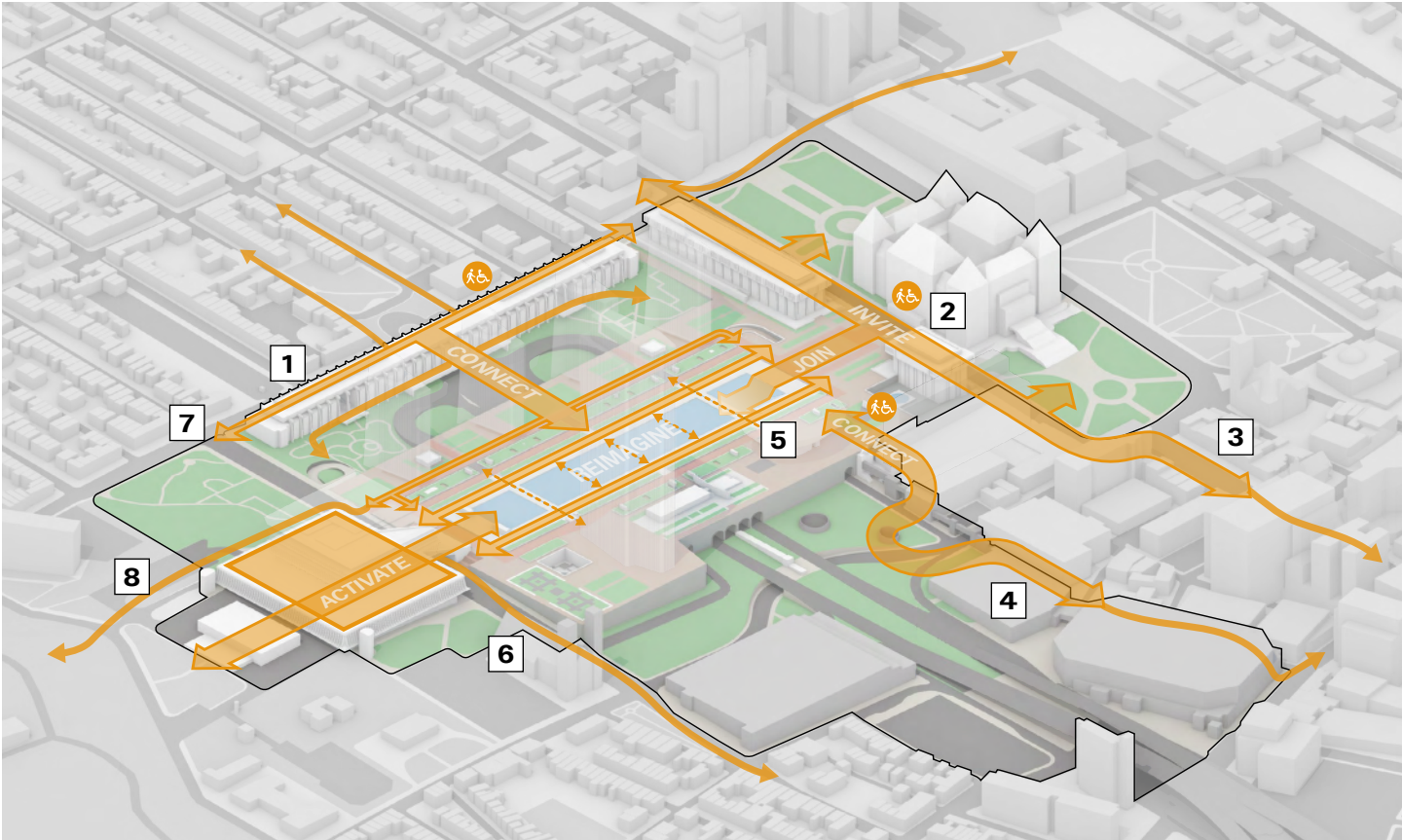


Retail Opportunities
Bring more food, retail, and practical services to increase regular use and recurring interest.



Public Programs
Create spaces and programs that align with the desires of diverse audiences and reinvigorate the perception of the Plaza as a community asset.

Circulation and Visitor Experience Recommendations

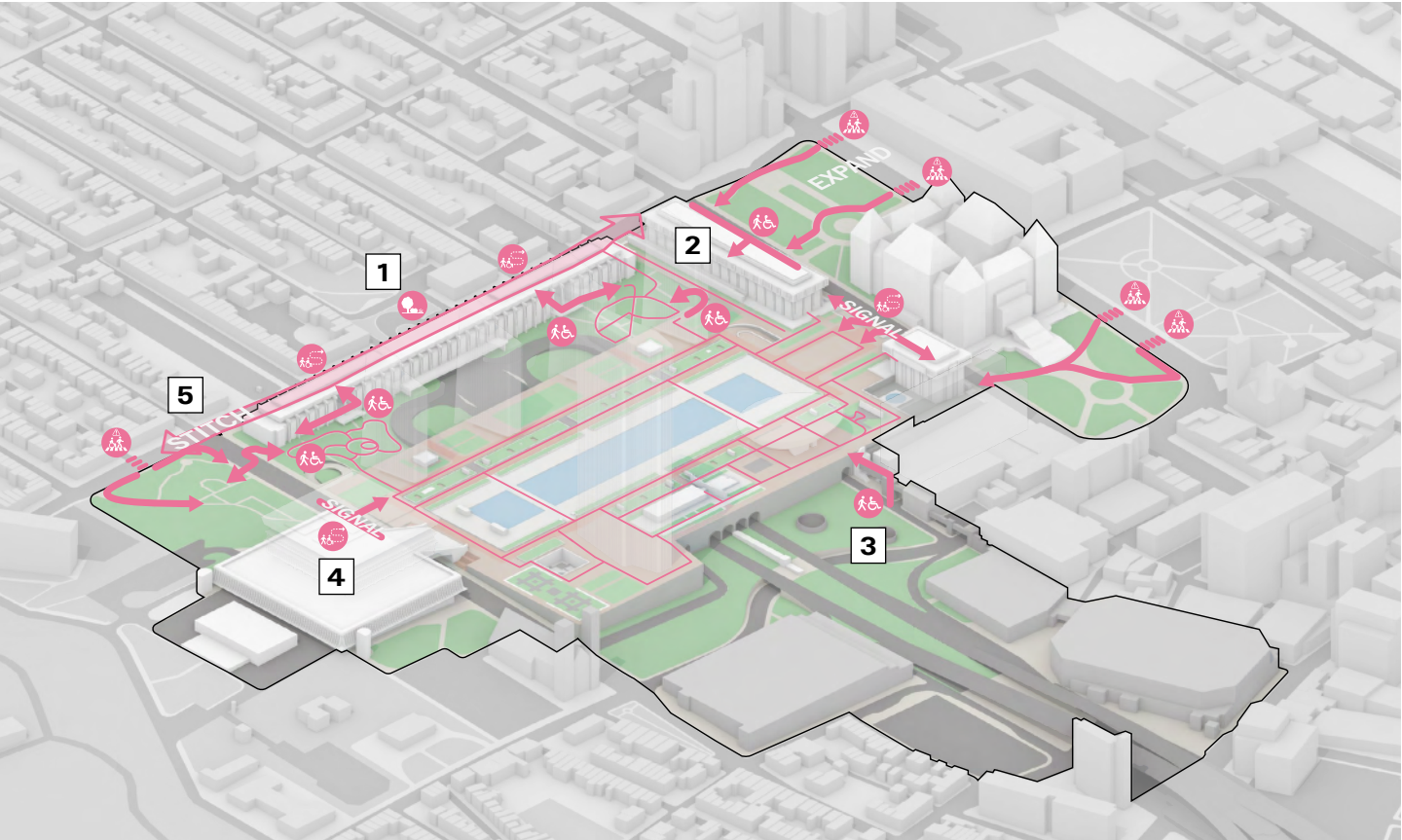


Make access and activities on the Plaza more visible to cultivate community participation.

1. Transform Swan Street into a neighborhood gateway.
2. Unify the Plaza and the Capitol at State Street.
3. Enhance connections to Downtown Albany.
4. Better connect the Plaza to the Concourse.
5. Enhance traffic calming measures on Madison Avenue.
6. Create clear gateways and information points.
7. Improve the Plaza's pedestrian connection to Lincoln Park.



Universal Accessibility Recommendations

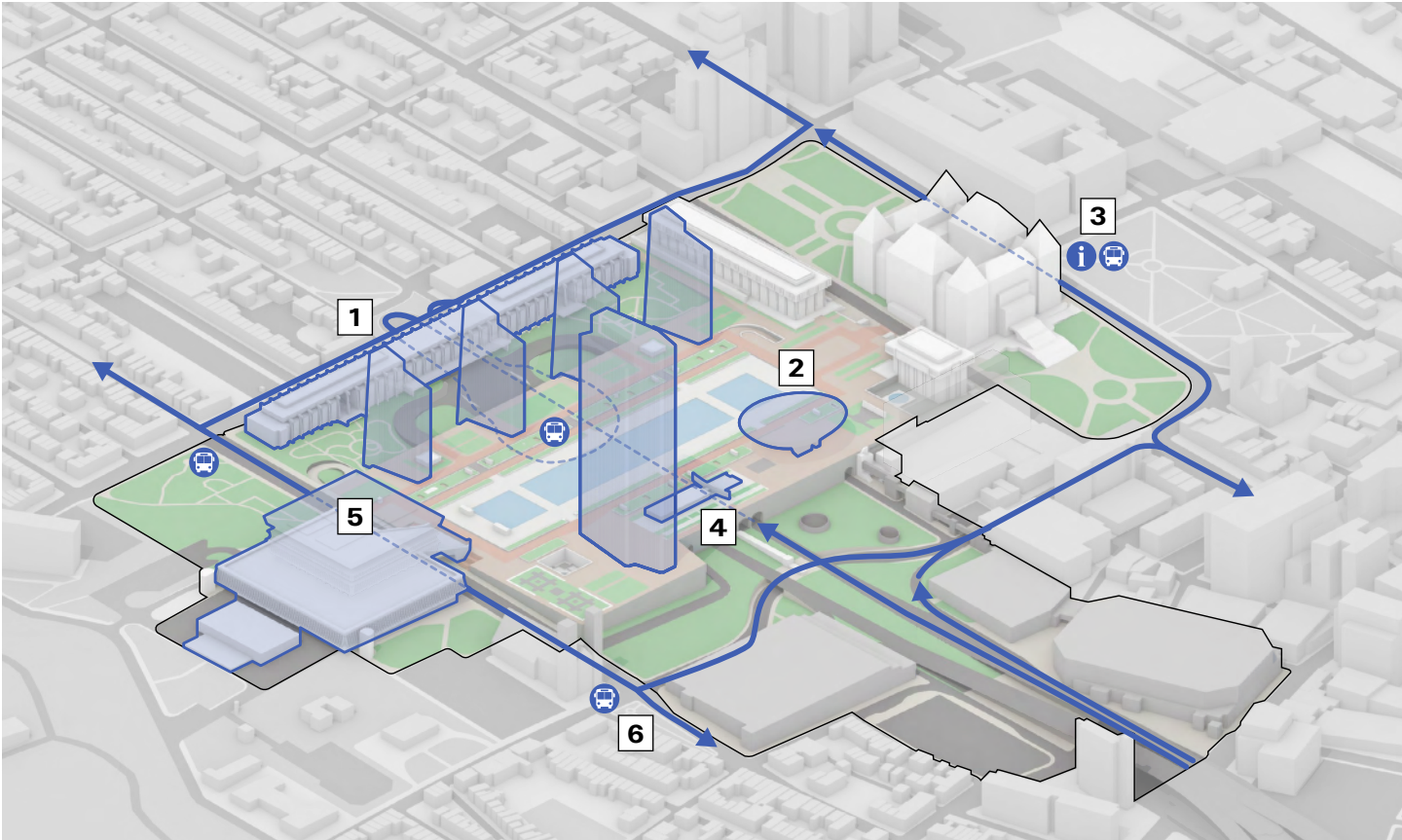


Improve safety and navigability conditions for pedestrians, families with strollers and wheelchair users.

1. Convert Swan Sweet to a universally-accessible community connector.
2. Close gaps in the accessible circulation network.
3. Create a universally-accessible Downtown Walkway to connect the Plaza to downtown Albany.
4. Maintain key accessible routes to the Plaza during winter and better signal necessary closures.
5. Enhance the pedestrian network near Madison Avenue with traffic calming measures.

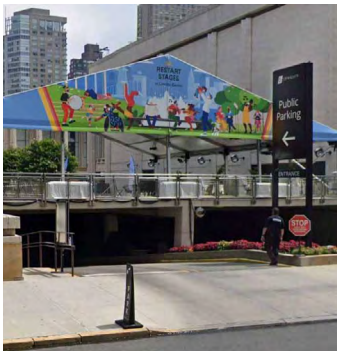


Institutional Coordination Recommendations

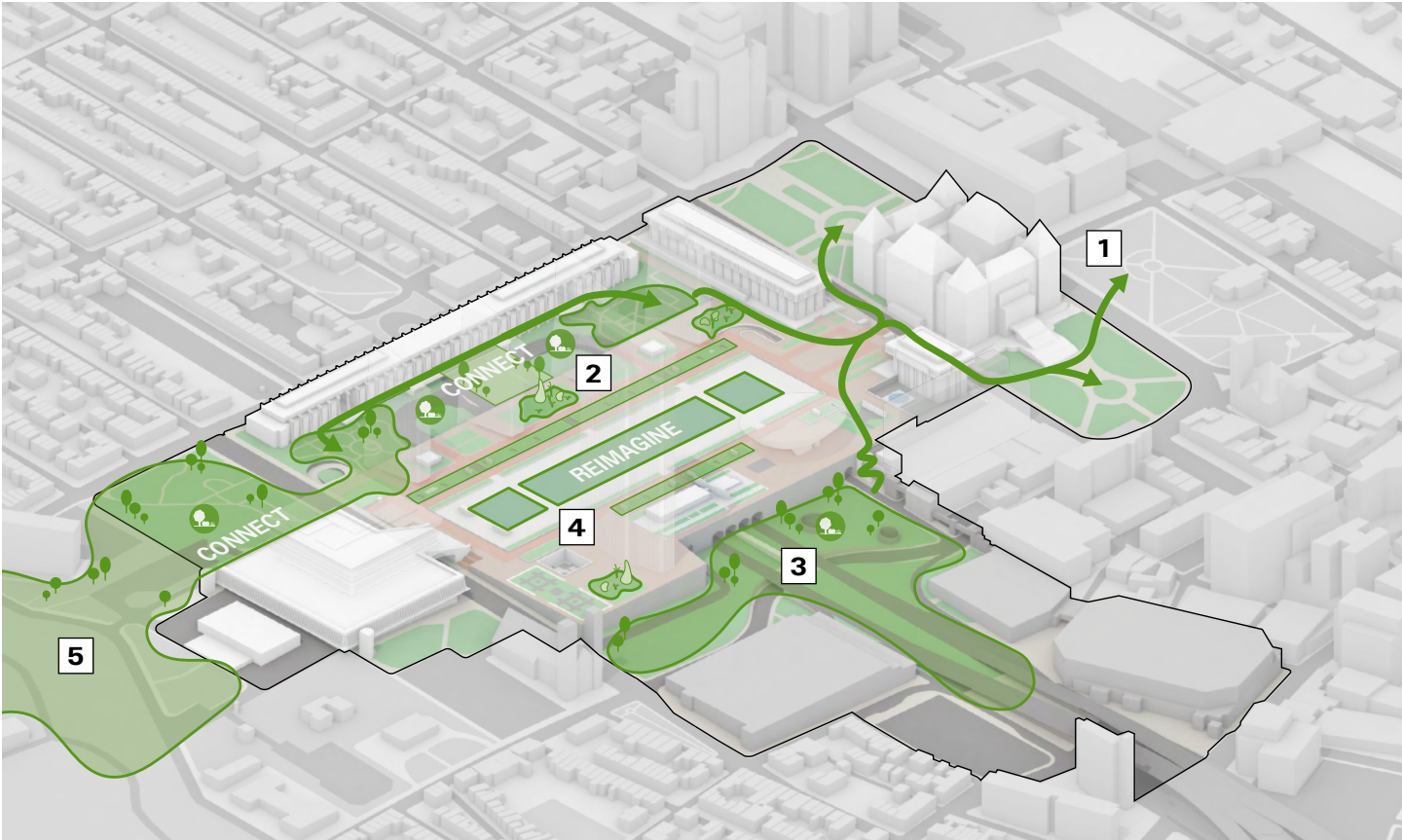


Unify Plaza stakeholders through partnerships, programs, and promotion under one civic and cultural voice.

- 1. Optimize underutilized spaces across Plaza buildings.
- 2. Leverage the Plaza’s arts and cultural institutions as part of a larger calendar of events and program offerings.
- 3. Create an expanded Visitor Center to serve as a hub for tour groups and visitors passing from the Museum to the Egg and the Capitol via the Concourse
- 4. Rethink the Cornerstone at the Plaza as a destination and activation space.
- 5. Enhance circulation and connectivity between the Plaza and the Museum.
- 6. Work to address parking access and safety challenges.



Open Space and Landscape Recommendations

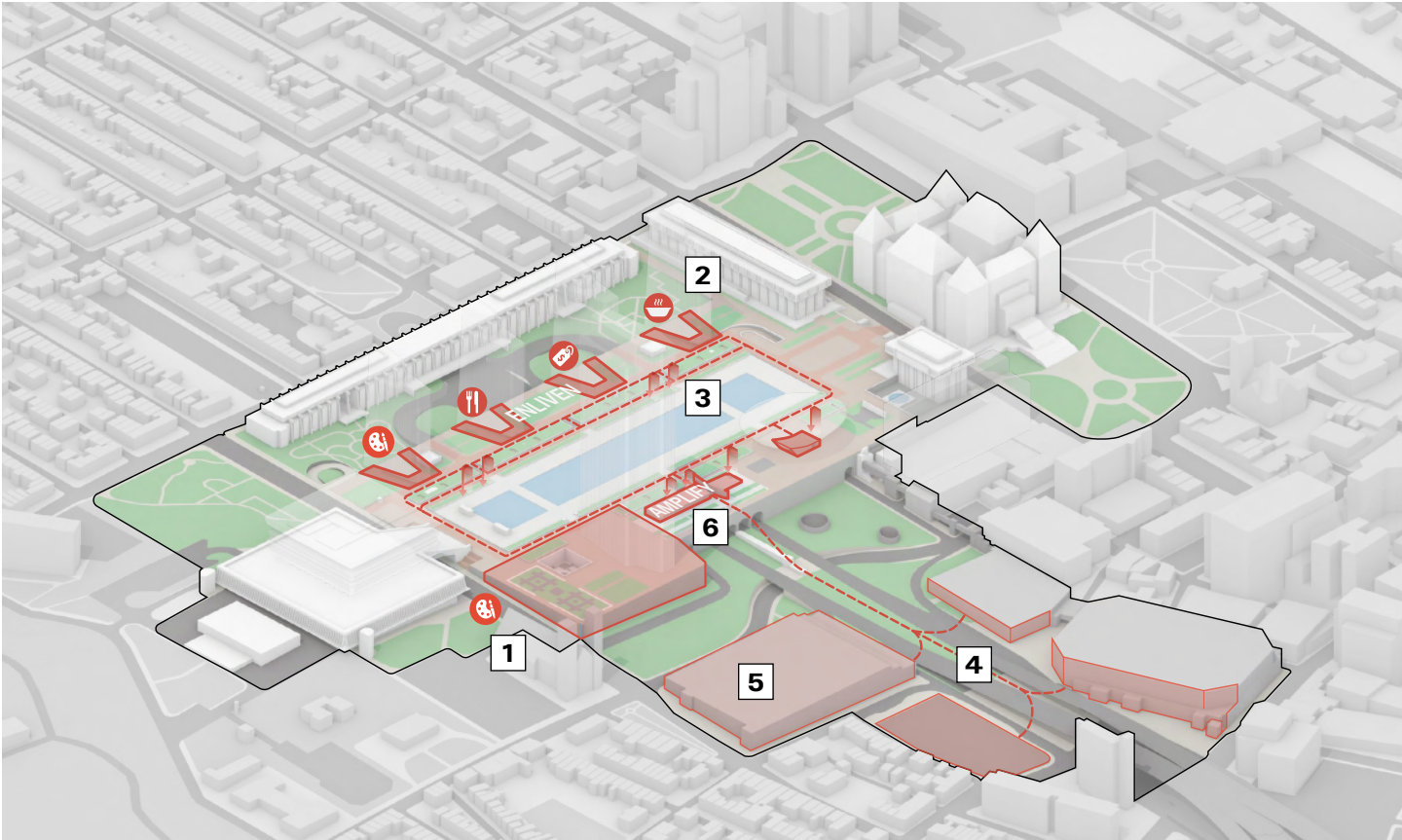


Soften the edges of ESP and replace hardscaping to transform the Plaza into a more park-like environment.

- 1. Enhance connections to green space in Albany.
- 2. Diversify the Plaza canopy and landscape.
- 3. Anticipate a future South Mall Arterial redesign as part of the Reimagine I-787 project.
- 4. Create and connect green spaces at the Plaza level.
- 5. Create a gateway from Lincoln Park to the State Museum.



Retail Opportunity Recommendations

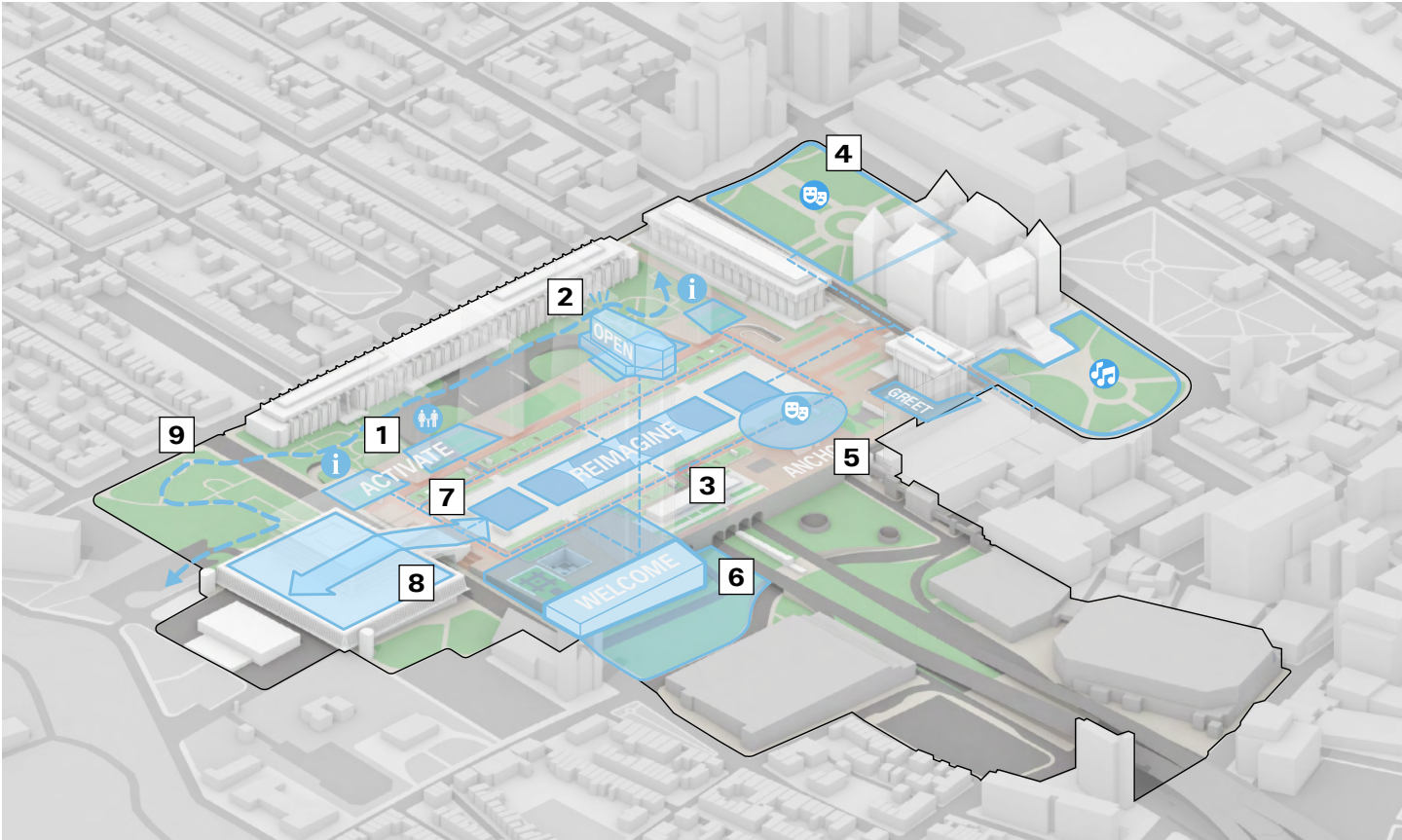


Bring more food, retail, and practical services to the Plaza level to generate regular use and recurring interest.

1. Consider the consolidation of the Empire State Plaza Art Collection to enhance access and visibility.
2. Explore activities and programs to increase foot traffic at the Plaza level.
3. Strengthen connections to Concourse-level retail activity.
4. Improve pedestrian connectivity between the Plaza and Downtown Albany's businesses and venues.
5. Enhance public parking access on nights and weekends.
6. Amplify the Cornerstone at the Plaza as a destination and commons.



Public Program Recommendations



Create spaces and programs that align with diverse audiences and reinvigorate the Plaza as a community asset.

1. Activate the western edge of the Plaza as a public space.
2. Rethink the Observation Deck experience.
3. Reimagine the large center reflecting pool as a community lawn.
4. Activate the Capitol parks.
5. Use The Egg as a canvas for projections.
6. Make the Eagle and Lancaster streets lawns a front door to the Plaza and reposition the Biggs Laboratory space.
7. Enhance infrastructure for events.
8. Activate the State Museum steps.
9. Create user-friendly trails for public art and memorials.



Programs and events at the Empire State Plaza need to be **more responsive, recurring, and accessible** to broaden connections with surrounding communities.



Public Program Recommendations

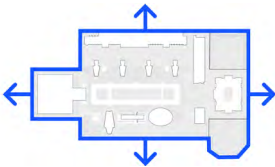
Access



Secure
Ensure security protocols keep visitors and workers safe, while maintaining public access to the Plaza.



Interpret
Enhance wayfinding to invite the public into the complex and add signage that highlights the Plaza's unique history and architectural legacy.



Reconnect

- Enhance the program calendar with a more widespread digital presence.
- Explore the feasibility of expanded weekend hours for iconic attractions to increase accessibility and visitor engagement.



Align

- Improve the existing public Wi-Fi network at the Plaza and enhance dedicated Plaza landing page for digital engagement.
- Leverage construction fencing as an opportunity for informational signage and historical education.

Culture



Reposition
Reposition landmark assets, including the Cornerstone at the Plaza, Biggs Laboratory, and the Concourse, to accommodate more public-facing, accessible programs and activities.



Storytelling
Leverage the Empire State Plaza Art Collection to enhance tourism, identity, and the status of the Plaza, while exploring opportunities to share more about the site's history.



Celebrate

- Encourage engagement with the Plaza's history, art, and architecture.
- Use temporary art activations to highlight existing assets.
- Align the Plaza's art collection with Hudson Valley arts institutions.

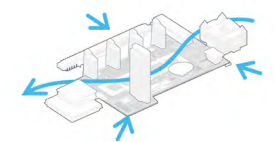
Activation



Partner
Build infrastructure to offer diverse program opportunities, including intergenerational ambassadors, formal partnerships, and external program committees.



Routine
Expand routine programming catered to neighboring communities, State employees and visitors, including more family-friendly programs.



Invite

- Partner with local institutions to develop new programs.
- Develop short-run programs with community members using Plaza spaces.
- Create platforms for art engagement throughout the Plaza and Concourse.

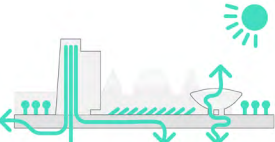
Structure



Upgrade
Enhance event infrastructure with improved performance spaces that complement the Plaza's architecture and Plaza-level restrooms.



Play
Embrace the Plaza as a space for play that enables a wider range of programs, including more usable lawns for flexible activities.



Adapt

- Transform Plaza landscapes into educational spaces on ecology, energy, and Albany's development history.
- Implement adaptable, sustainable infrastructure for events on the Plaza and revive landmark assets.



Reimagine

- Reinvigorate the Downtown Walkway with lighting and rotating artwork.
- Designate more space for community programs.

MEASURE (all)

Craft key performance indicators (KPIs) for events, including regular data collection, impressions, tracking, and audience goals to track long-term success.

Public Program Action Items

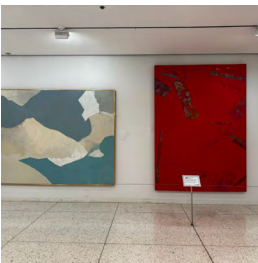
Program Calendar Example

Weekdays

- Cater to the community's desire for art, play, wellness, and food
- Offer expanded hours of access
- Curate smaller, low-impact programs
- Offer midday and evening activities for workers
- Provide activities for residents



8:30 - 8:45 AM
15-Minute Walking Meditation
Memorial Gardens



12 - 1 PM
Art Walk and Talk with AIHA Curator
Concourse



5 - 6 PM
Fitness at the Plaza Series
Cornerstone



6 - 7 PM
Community Yoga Class
Empire State Plaza

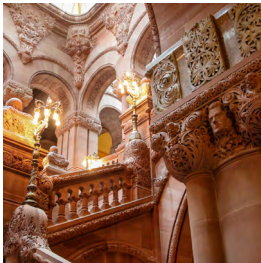
10 AM - 12 PM
Archives Jr. Investigation Station
NYS Museum



12 - 1 PM
BrainFood: Hits from History!
NYS Museum



5:30 - 6:30PM
First Fridays: Tour of the NYS Capitol
Capitol Building



6 - 9 PM
First Fridays: Summer Night Market
Empire State Plaza



Weekends

- Create iconic, seasonal programs
- Develop regular family-oriented programs
- Adapt year-round programs for the wintertime
- Embrace local collaborators
- Support sustained educational programs



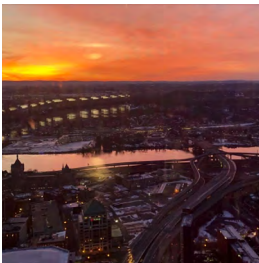
9 - 10 AM
Zumba Fitness Class
Concourse



12 - 1 PM
Family Ice Skating
Empire State Plaza



3 - 6 PM
Community Ice Skating Lessons
Empire State Plaza



6 - 8 PM
Sunset on the Observation Deck
Corning Tower

10 - 11 AM
Gallery Drawing Series
NYS Museum



12 - 2 PM
Plaza Outdoor Games
Empire State Plaza



4 - 5 PM
Community Bicycle Lessons
Lincoln Park



8 - 10 PM
Capitol Park After Dark Movie Series
West Capitol Park



MORNING

LUNCHTIME

AFTERNOON

EVENING

High Impact, Near Term Improvements Across the Plaza

Responsive to insights from public feedback, OGS will undertake a series of high-impact near-term improvement projects that will produce meaningful changes to the experience of Plaza visitors.

Improving navigation and signage



Clarifying wayfinding to help people get around more easily.

OGS is developing a wayfinding plan to facilitate navigation of users across the government complex. The plan includes a circulation study and environmental signage strategy that will inform the creation of a more welcoming and easier to navigate Empire State Plaza.

Enhancing visitor experience



Expanding the Empire State Plaza Visitor Center to serve as a welcoming hub for tours and visitors.

To improve the guest and visitor experience at the Plaza, OGS will relocate the existing visitor center to a more ample and central space at the heart of the Concourse. The new space will offer new possibilities to host bigger groups and tours, as they pass from the New York State Museum to the Capitol. The new space will invite visitors to explore more of the Plaza, Downtown Albany, and the Capital Region.

Upgrading the Concourse food court



Making the Concourse food court, with small local business vendors, more inviting.

The Concourse food court features exclusively local businesses, from Umana Yana to Kuma Ani to Herbie's Burgers. Established as a common gathering space for visitors and workers, the existing food court will be upgraded to be a more welcoming space. The project will refresh the look and feel of the food court, and add technology to enable the space to host public gatherings. As a result, the space will be better equipped to serve its patrons.

Improving Plaza-level accessibility



Enhancing the pathways between the Concourse and the Plaza level.

Navigation between the Plaza and Concourse levels is limited and confusing for visitors and users. To remediate this divide, OGS will introduce improved ADA-compliant signage and complete modifications to strategic access points that will enhance links between the Plaza level and the Concourse.

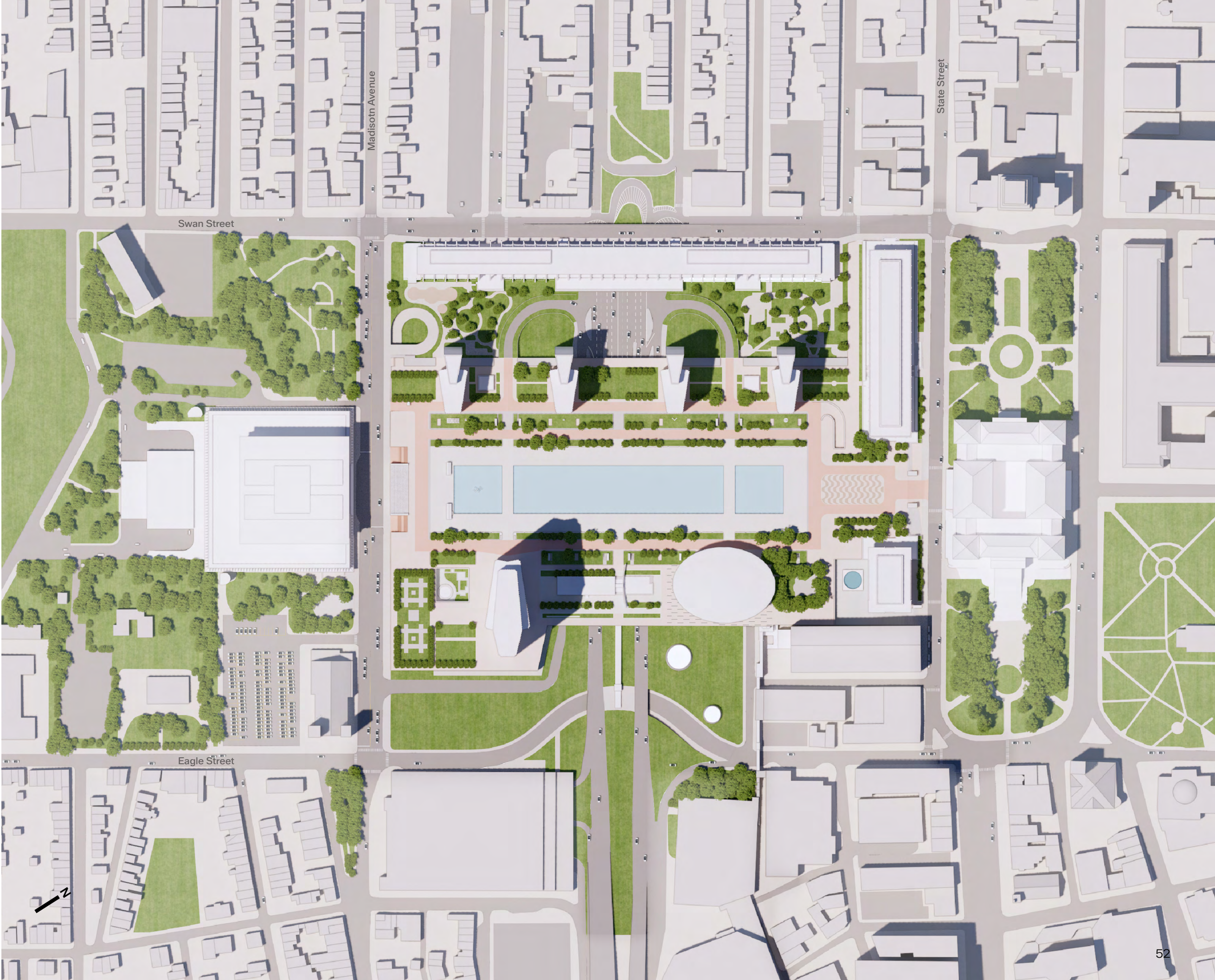
Providing public restroom access



Constructing ADA-compliant restrooms on the Plaza level.

To modernize the Plaza and meet all visitors' needs, OGS is building new ADA-compliant Plaza-level restrooms. The current lack of restrooms at the Plaza level presents an obstacle for visitors, especially for wheelchair users, families with strollers, and other mobility aid users, who are forced to travel long distances to access to the Concourse level. Adding these facilities to the Plaza level will offer comfort for everyone.

The Plaza Today



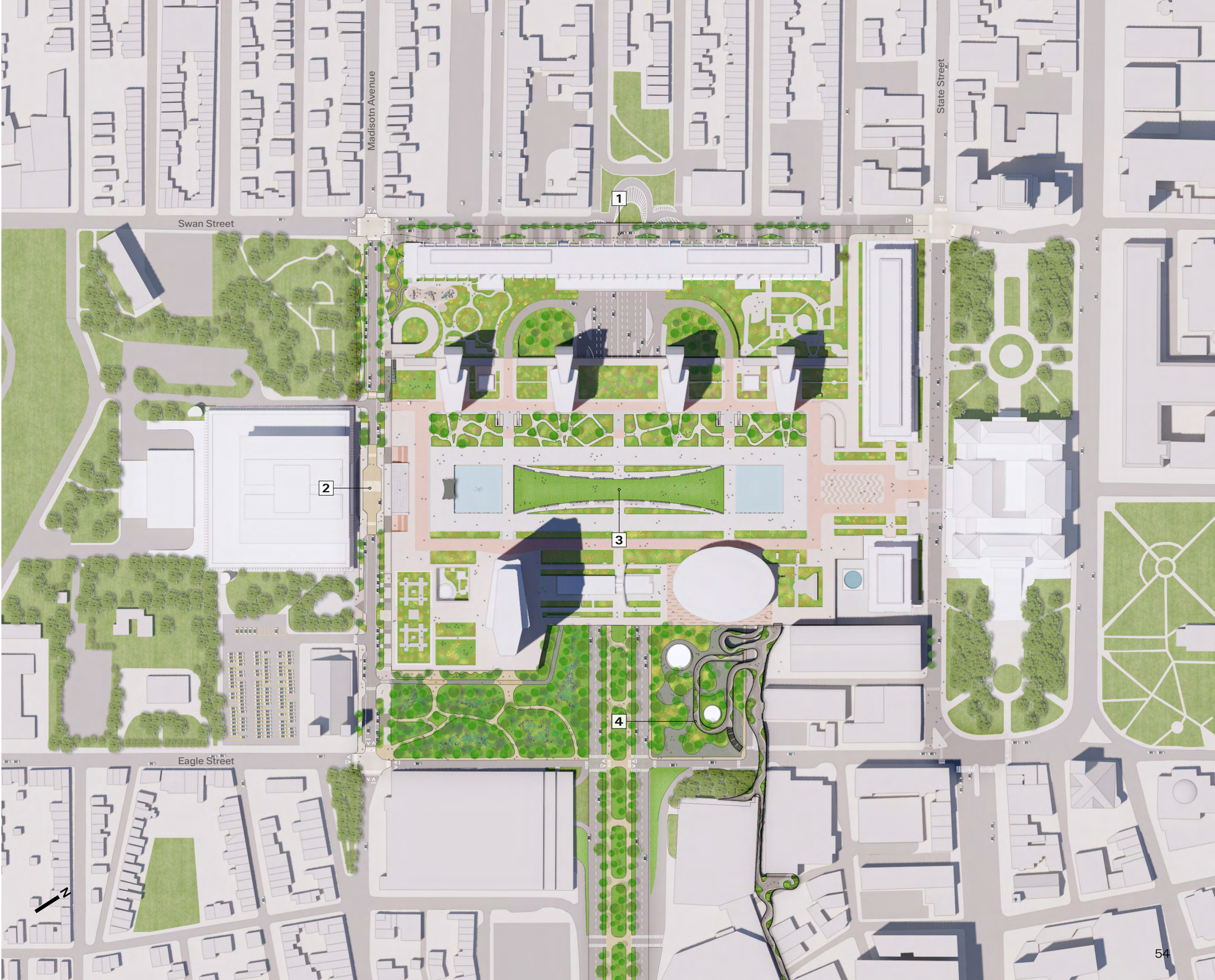
Visionary Projects

Reflection on the Plaza’s existing conditions, interpretation of public feedback, and feasibility analysis resulted in four Visionary Projects. These projects can be sequenced with necessary infrastructure work to build public amenities while addressing long-deferred maintenance.

Each concept is focused on a major face of the Plaza and uses design strategies to address the initiative’s primary focus: reconnecting the Empire State Plaza to its neighbors while celebrating its rich modernist assets and presenting an aspirational idea for its future.

- 1 Swan Street Porch
- 2 Madison Avenue Gateway
- 3 Central Plaza and Pools
- 4 Downtown Walkway

Note: All renderings are design concepts, not finalized designs.



Swan Street Porch

Reimagine the Swan Street Bridge as a neighborhood gateway, with a welcoming side facing the Center Square neighborhood.

Design Concept Summary

The Swan Street Bridge is in need of significant infrastructure upgrades, which OGS will be undertaking. Leveraging CAP Initiative funds, OGS will transform the Swan Street Bridge into a welcoming “front porch,” as part of its larger infrastructure project. Today, the Swan Street Bridge is largely dominated by traffic and parking. Public feedback indicated a desire to calm traffic while reimagining the wall facing the Center Square neighborhood. The Swan Street Porch would invite the neighborhood into the Plaza, add more pedestrian-friendly spaces, and maintain the critical pick-up/drop-off and transit functions on Swan Street today.

Strategies and Principles

- Invigorate the Swan Street Bridge as a pedestrian corridor with art showcases or banners. Promote culturally inclusive programs and stories about the site's history.
- Improve pedestrian connections. Enhance gateway quality at Swan Street by introducing more frequent accessible connections that link the Plaza’s green spaces to Albany’s larger network of parks.
- Create a lively streetscape along the Swan Street Bridge. Reposition parking to allow for a more public pedestrian corridor to and from Swan Street.



The Porch at 30th Street Station
Philadelphia, PA



San Juan Heal
Lincoln Center, New York City

Note: All renderings are design concepts, not finalized designs.





Swan Street,
Existing Condition

Note: All renderings are design concepts,
not finalized designs.



Swan Street,
Design Concept

Note: All renderings are design concepts,
not finalized designs.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Planter Beds | 4 Pedestrian Lighting |
| 2 Swan Street Building Entry | 5 Unique Paving Treatment |
| 3 Pick-up / Drop-off | 6 Wayfinding Totem |

Madison Avenue Gateway

Adapt Madison Avenue and the Biggs Laboratory into a vibrant front door that could welcome visitors and residents to the Plaza’s cultural hub.

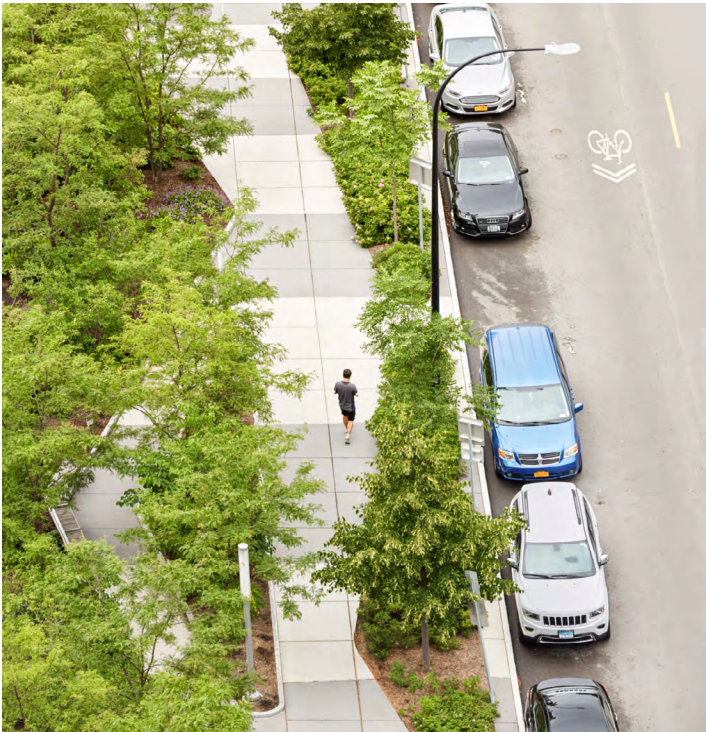
Design Concept Summary

To address long-deferred maintenance and water intrusion on critical building systems underneath Madison Avenue, OGS will need to undertake infrastructure upgrades along Madison Avenue. During public engagement, residents expressed a desire to have sustained traffic calming on Madison Avenue, as well as more greenery and intuitive signage for the State Museum and the concourse. The Madison Avenue Gateway would address this possibility with a more pedestrian-focused streetscape, complemented by long-term improvements to the front lawn on Eagle Street.

Biggs Laboratory, slated to relocate, offers a potential new civic and cultural space that could invite public use and complement the cultural and educational sites on Madison Avenue today.

Strategies and Principles

- Create a sense of arrival. Activate the entries beneath the stairs at the Madison Avenue Gateway with lighting and artwork that spark interest, beautify, and signal it as a primary entrance to the Plaza, Concourse, and State Museum.
- Nourish local curiosity. Leverage public realm improvements and design cues to signal the wealth of history and culture located in Albany, at the Plaza, and at adjacent institutions (e.g., the State Museum, The Egg, and the Capitol).
- Improve pedestrian connectivity. Expand safe pedestrian access by improving universal accessibility at Plaza and Concourse entrances, and by constructing clear, walkable routes to nearby assets such as Lincoln Park.

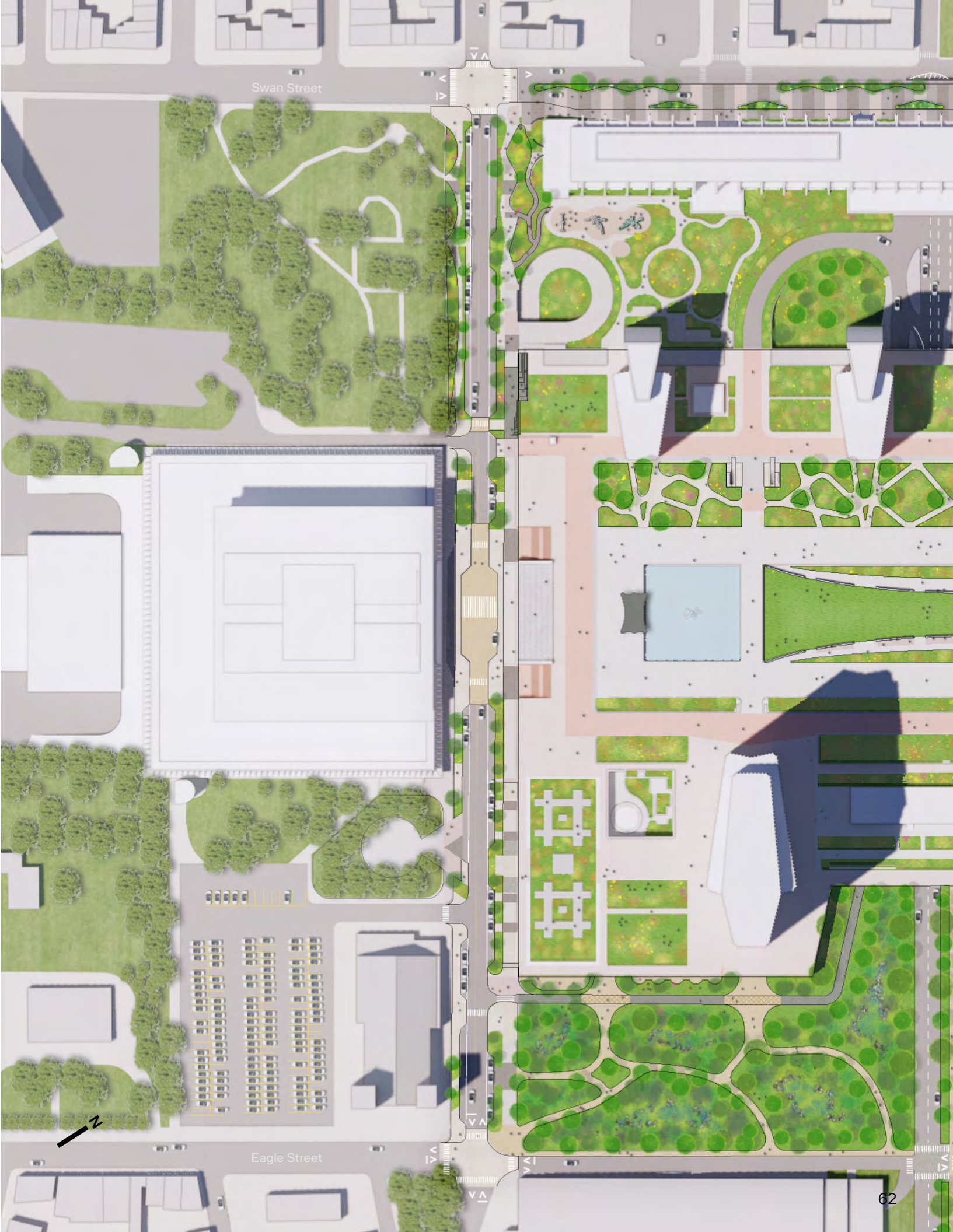


Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Streetscape
Buffalo, NY

Note: All renderings are design concepts, not finalized designs.



Boston City Hall Renovation
Boston, MA





Madison Avenue,
Existing Condition

Note: All renderings are design concepts,
not finalized designs.



Madison Avenue,
Design Concept

Note: All renderings are design concepts,
not finalized designs.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Unique Paving Treatment | 4 Plaza |
| 2 Covered Bus Stop | 5 Vegetated Swale |
| 3 Curb Bump Out | 6 Shared Street |

Central Plaza and Pools

Reimagine the central reflecting pool as a multifunctional community lawn for events, public programs, and recreation.

Design Concept Summary

To address significant infrastructure and maintenance challenges caused by water intrusion and to fulfill the public's desire for more usable landscapes on the Plaza, the central reflecting pool could be reimaged as a great lawn. This new green space would significantly expand the Plaza's seasonal usability, introduce native landscapes and gardens, and create a new backdrop for everyday use and large-scale events.

Strategies and Principles

- Reenvision the Plaza as a collection of spaces that can accommodate both everyday needs and large events. Take advantage of one or more spaces for seasonal activities, markets, special occasions, etc.
- Leverage landscape to diversify the user experience. Balance ornamental and single-use spaces with flexible public-use spaces, drawing on community feedback.
- Embrace and build on historic character. The reflecting pools are considered part of the Plaza's aesthetic identity. New articulations within that footprint honor the historic design, while creating space for more active use.

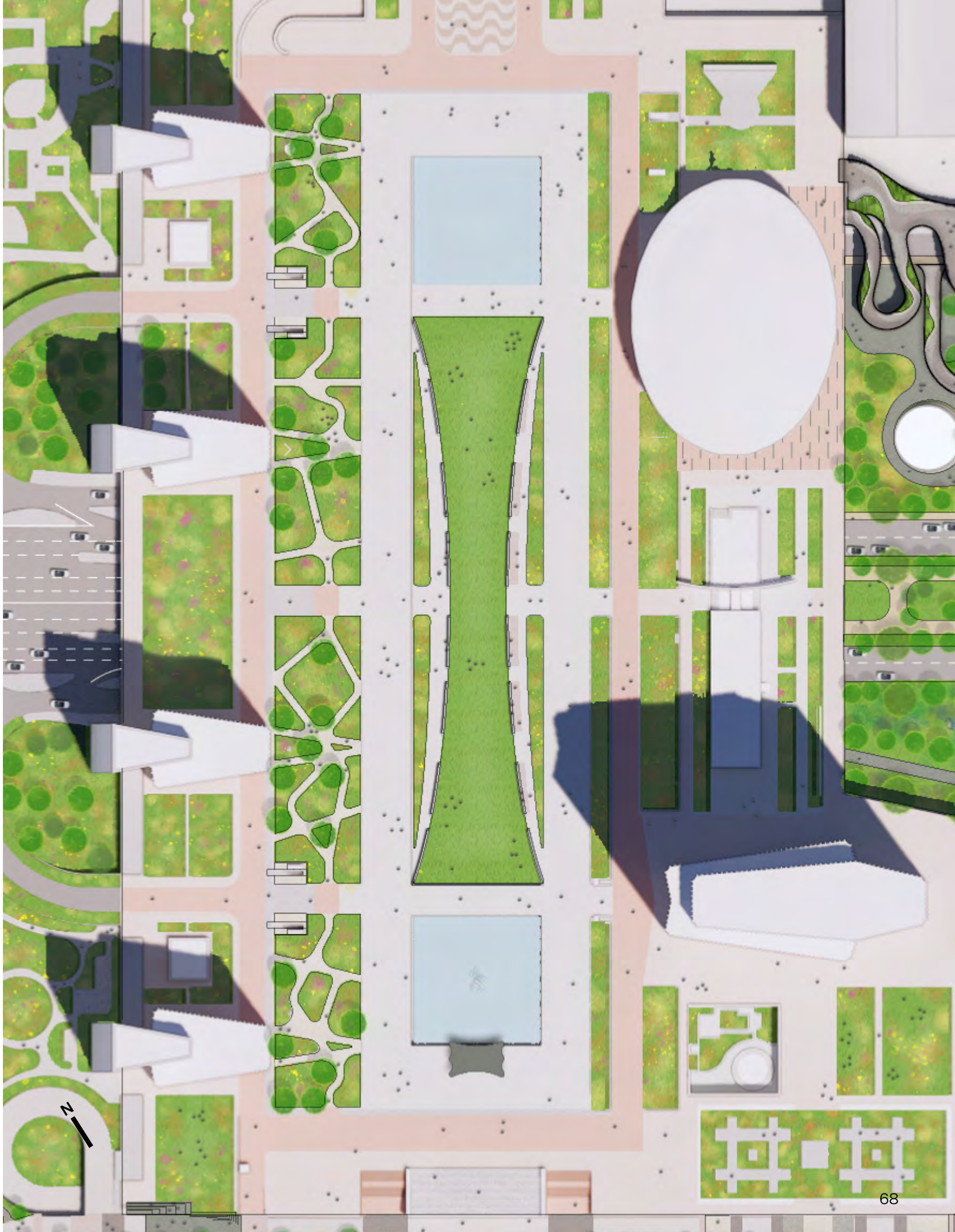


Downtown Cary Park
Cary, NC



Skanderbeg Square
Tirana, Albania

Note: All renderings are design concepts, not finalized designs.





Central Plaza and Pools,
Existing Condition

Note: All renderings are design concepts,
not finalized designs.



Central Plaza and Pools,
Design Concept

Note: All renderings are design concepts,
not finalized designs.

- 1** Existing Reflecting Pool
- 2** Central Lawn
- 3** Performance Pavilion

- 4** Raised Planter Beds
- 5** Seat Wall
- 6** Native Plant Garden Space

Downtown Walkway

Position Eagle and Lancaster streets as the Plaza’s welcoming front door by reimagining the Downtown Walkway as a new pedestrian experience connecting to Downtown Albany.

Design Concept Summary

Survey results indicated that relatively few users take the Downtown Walkway to access the Plaza today. However, the public expressed a significant desire to create universally-accessible paths of travel from the Plaza to downtown. Near-term investments could help reposition the Walkway as an active interior corridor with signage, public art, and lighting. In the longer term, working in partnership with Albany County, stewards of the Downtown Walkway, the infrastructure could be reimagined as a universally-accessible connector that strengthens links between the Plaza, Concourse, the Capital Center, the MVP Arena, and downtown, while creating a unique series of vantage points overlooking the Hudson River.

Strategies and Principles

- Enhance the user experience. Weatherization, climate control, and ample lighting will fundamentally transform the walkway experience.
- Invest in an iconic connection to downtown. Explore the creation of a universally-accessible walkway from the Plaza with connections to the Concourse, Eagle Street, and Downtown Albany.
- Turn towards downtown. This artery would connect Downtown Albany to nearby assets and transform Eagle and Lancaster streets from back-of-house to front lawn.



Ala Moana Boulevard Pedestrian Bridge
Honolulu, HI

Note: All renderings are design concepts, not finalized designs.



Mandela Park
Almere, Netherlands



Downtown Walkway — Near-Term Vision

Illuminate the existing walkway.

Enhance the existing passage with colorful glazing, integrated lighting, and reflective surfaces to create a brighter, safer, and more inviting experience.

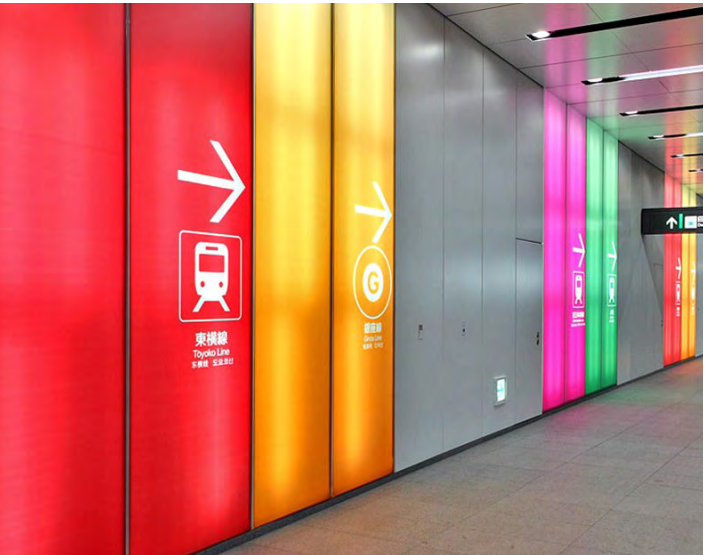


Palais des Congrès,
Montreal, QC, Canada



Guide the journey between the Plaza and Downtown Albany.

Use intuitive wayfinding, graphic cues, and landmarks to guide visitors seamlessly between the Plaza and Downtown Albany.



Shibuya Metro Station
Tokyo, Japan



Activate the walkway with art.

Activate the corridor with murals and artwork that celebrate community identity and create a changing visual experience.



Dallas Museum of Art
Dallas, TX



Consider recladding exterior.

Extend the civic architectural language established on the Plaza to the walkway, creating a more cohesive and unified pedestrian experience.



Grand Avenue Park Bridge
Everett, WA



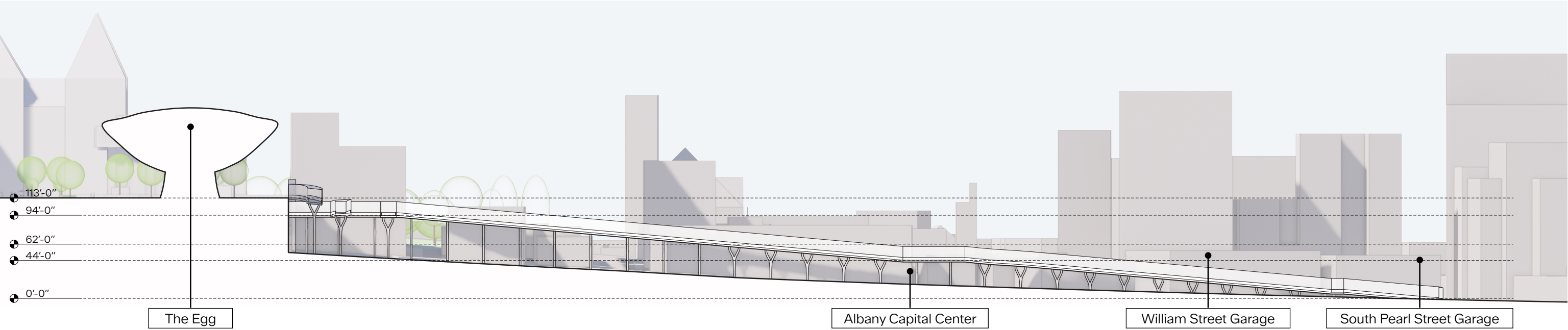
Downtown Walkway — Long-Term Vision



Downtown Walkway,
Design Concept



Downtown Walkway,
Design Concept



Note: All renderings are design concepts,
not finalized designs.

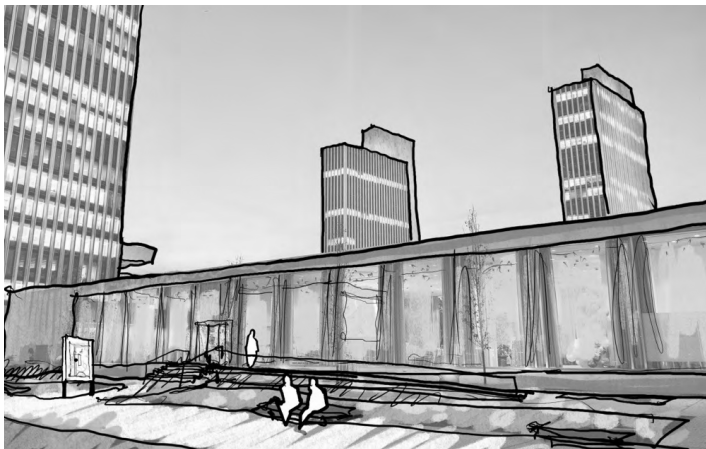
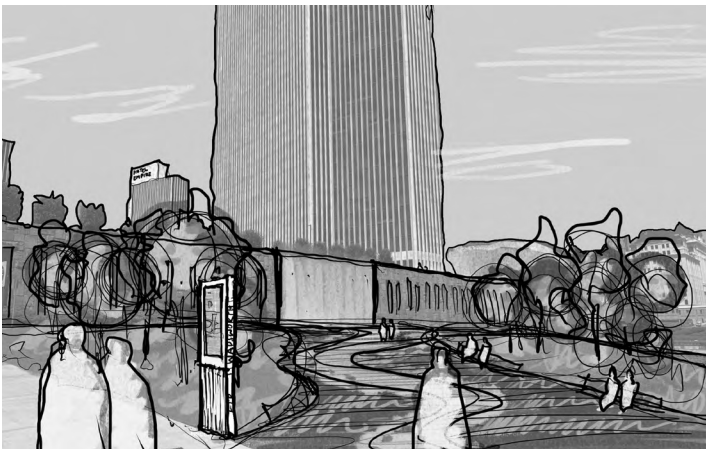


Aerial view of Empire State Plaza, Facing West
Design Concept

Note: All renderings are design concepts
not finalized designs.

- 1** Swan Street Porch
- 2** Madison Avenue Gateway
- 3** Central Pools
- 4** Downtown Walkway

Opportunity to Reposition Landmark Plaza Assets



Explore transforming this laboratory space into a public-facing civic asset — a gallery, library, archive, or Museum Annex for the Empire State Plaza.

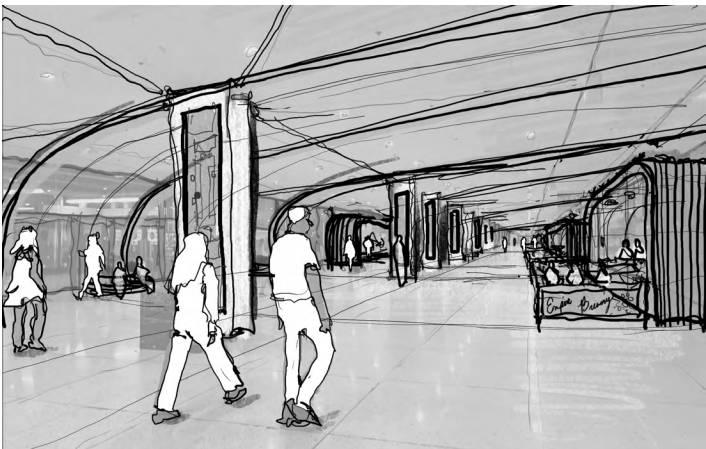
Biggs Lab Conversion

Biggs Laboratory will become vacant once its current operations are relocated to the W. Averell Harriman State Office Building Campus. This instrumental site — home to one of the earliest environmental labs in the nation — is embedded in the Plaza and could add to its array of public-facing assets. The space presents a great opportunity to rehabilitate and repurpose some of the currently private spaces for a new public use. Community feedback has highlighted several desired adaptive reuse options for the lab, including a branch of the Albany Public Library, a home for the New York State Archives or Museum annex, or a gallery for artwork.

Consider converting the Cornerstone at the Plaza building into a flexible multipurpose space to bring community activity up to the Plaza level.

Cornerstone Commons

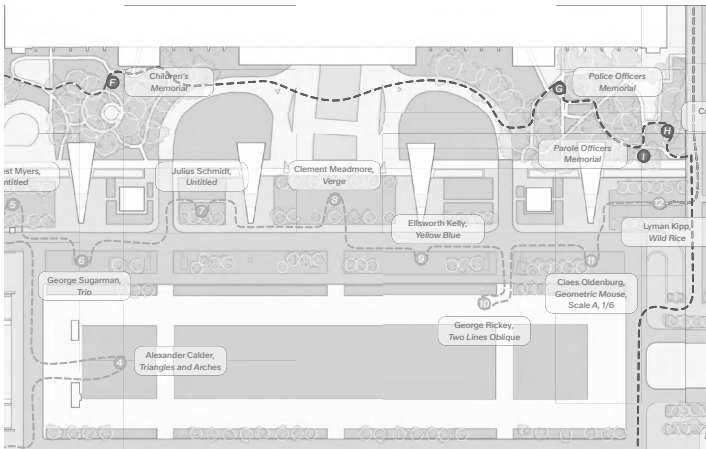
The Cornerstone is a beloved asset by both state workers and residents alike. Many public engagement participants suggested more space for food and beverage options on the Plaza, particularly to accommodate after-work events. While food and beverage may no longer be feasible operationally, the space offers an opportunity to host publicly accessible, community-driven programs. Repositioning the Cornerstone at the Plaza as a multipurpose community space can also bring renewed activity at street level, supporting the Plaza's overall invigoration.



Evaluate the possibility of the Concourse as a lively indoor street that caters to the everyday needs of state workers and neighbors year-round.

Concourse Corridor

The Concourse is a vital artery for state workers and visitors in Albany's colder months, but it has evolved to function similar to a highway rather than a neighborhood street. Establishing additional everyday services could better meet the needs of concourse visitors, encourage daily visits, and increase foot traffic. Vendor rosters will continue to balance the stability of recognizable local brands with emerging entrepreneurs to ensure that the variety of retail, food, and beverage options feel both contemporary and connected to Albany's business community.



Help the public see the art collection in a new light by revisiting education, engagement, and exhibition.

Art Collection

The first acquisitions of the Empire State Plaza Art Collection took place in 1966 while the Plaza was still under construction. Today, the 92-piece museum-quality collection is an asset to the Plaza, the city, and the region. With public feedback focusing on providing more access to the collection, there is great opportunity to enhance the experience of visitors by creating a library of audio tours and improved signage for the collection, as well as expanding operational hours and rearranging the collection. With new strategies to showcase the collection, visitors can experience this unique asset with new eyes and as a singular destination in Albany and New York State.

Implementation

Looking ahead to the anticipated progression of funded projects in the coming years.

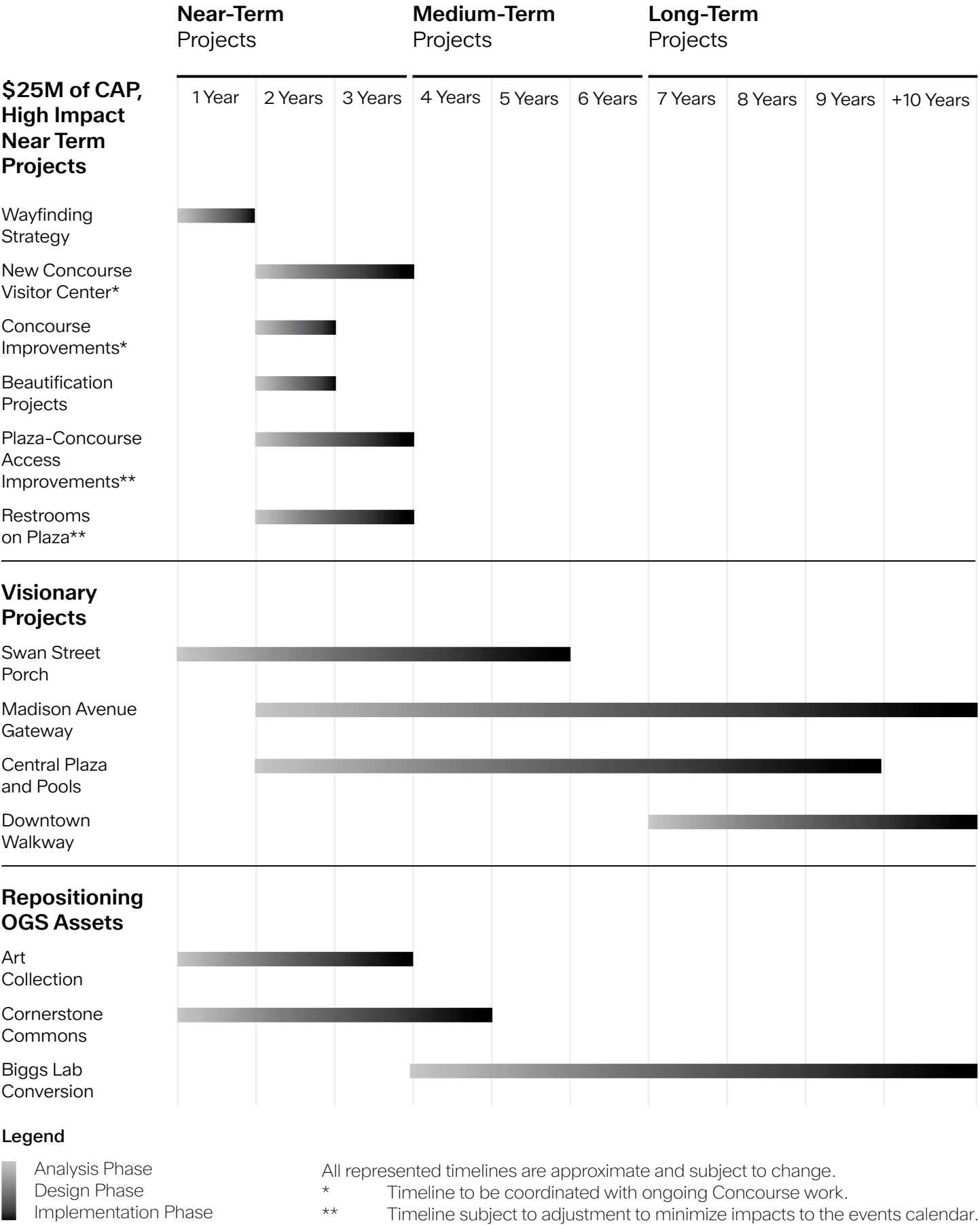
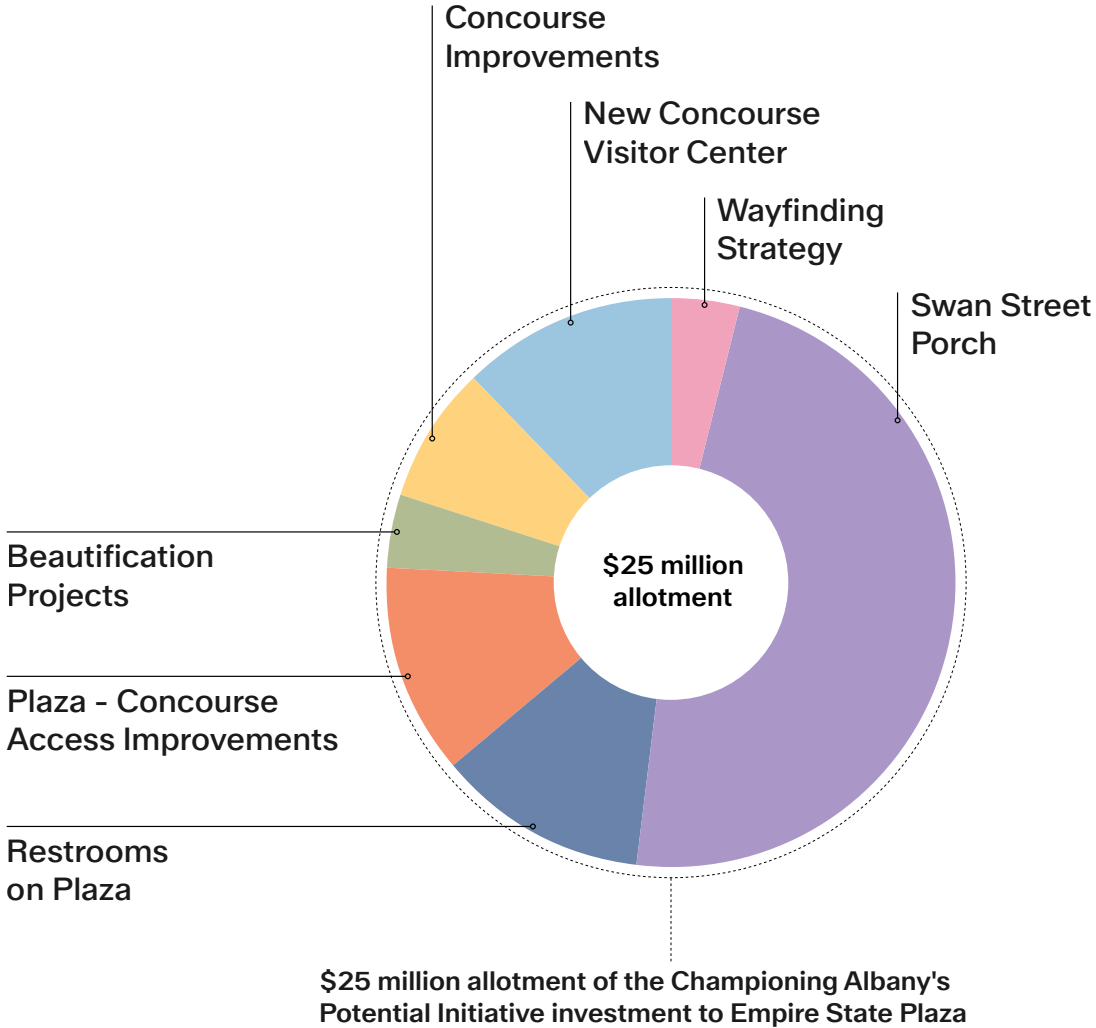


Implementation Overview

Realizing any of the visions outlined in this report will require a phased approach and continued, close collaboration.

The vision outlined in this report requires a phased approach for successful implementation. Each project rearticulates the Plaza's connection to Albany's community and urban fabric. High-impact near-term projects aim to deliver results within three years, while medium-term projects, such as the proposed Visionary Project on Swan Street, align with necessary capital improvements and will transform the Plaza's most public faces into welcoming community gateways within the next decade. Long-term visions, like the Central Plaza and Pools, would transform the Plaza's most prominent edge as a destination, but require significant investment, planning, and coordination.

Governor Hochul's \$25 million CAP Investment will enable us to act on public feedback by transforming Swan Street's streetscape, improving wayfinding, upgrading the Visitor Center, enhancing the Concourse food court, improving Plaza-Concourse access, and providing ADA-accessible restrooms. These early actions deliver visible near-term improvements while laying the foundation for future investment. Visionary Project development will be coordinated alongside OGS's regular capital planning and prioritization process. As part of its ongoing work, OGS will develop a comprehensive master plan to further coordinate proposed improvements with the New York State Historic Preservation Office.



Ongoing OGS Initiatives



Observation Deck

The 42nd floor of the Corning Tower features a 52-year-old indoor observation deck accessible to the public during business hours. The space is currently underutilized, and the public is generally unaware of its existence or its unique views.

The Observation Deck project seeks to rehabilitate, modernize, and reimagine the use of this space to accommodate diverse user experiences. The project will introduce new finishes, furnishings, lighting, AV & IT equipment for flexible use, ADA-compliant restrooms, and necessary HVAC upgrades and asbestos abatement.

The space will serve as a destination for visitors and locals alike, as well as those looking to host events in the tallest location in Albany.

Artwork Lighting

OGS is committed to enhancing the Empire State Plaza's exterior artwork collection by not only showcasing the art but also creating a well-lit pathway for guests to follow around the Plaza after sunset.

With energy-efficient photocell sensors that will automatically turn lighting on and off, the project will extend visitor viewing hours and enhance visibility and safety on the Plaza. The investment is expected to elevate the collection's cultural presence and deepen public engagement.



Comprehensive Master Plan for Empire State Plaza

Building upon the visioning and engagement work completed during the Reconnect Empire State Plaza initiative, OGS will create a comprehensive Master Plan for ESP. The Master Plan will translate the resulting vision from the Reconnect report into a framework of coordinated projects that reconnect the Plaza with downtown Albany and the adjacent residential neighborhoods. To ensure good stewardship, all projects will respect and enhance the Plaza's significant historic landscape.

The Master Plan will serve as the guiding document for capital projects that, when taken together, realize the vision of a well-connected, accessible, and activated campus that serves both state employees and the broader Albany community while preserving the historic landmark Empire State Plaza.



State Capitol Eastern Approach

The renovation of the New York State Capitol's Eastern Approach is a comprehensive project designed to preserve and enhance this significant National Historic Landmark.

The project focuses on the grand staircase that connects the center of East Capitol Park to the New York State Capitol. The initiative encompasses the rehabilitation of the Capitol's north and south promenades, executive drive, and east portico, alongside the restoration of East Capitol Park.

The project also includes installing new windows and doors that precisely match the original specifications and maintain the building's historical aesthetic. Lastly, the historic bronze lamps are undergoing thorough cleaning and conservation. This multifaceted project aims to uphold the historical significance and functional excellence of the Capitol's eastern approach.



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