



nerej

Shawmut Design and Construction completes renovation to Boston City Hall Plaza

December 09, 2022 - Front Section



Boston, MA Shawmut Design and Construction joined the city of Boston on November 18 to celebrate the reopening of City Hall Plaza following its transformational renovation to create a modernized, everyday destination.

The completed construction project, led by Shawmut in partnership with global design firm Sasaki, transformed the seven-acre plaza into a civic space for all. The renovated destination now features universal accessibility, new community spaces, increased environmental sustainability, and critical infrastructure improvements that will ensure the plaza is safe and accessible. City Hall Plaza's redesign includes a focus on:

A Welcoming Front Yard for Civic Life: With Boston's renovated City Hall Plaza, this community space will become universally accessible for residents of all abilities. Opening up the plaza for all includes re-opening the second floor of City Hall Plaza to the public, allowing easier access to the building. The renovation also includes 3,000 new welcoming spaces for residents to sit, 12,000 s/f of playscapes for children and families, and 11,000 s/f of terraces for pop-up play and interactive public art.

Flexible and Accommodating Event Venues: The renovation expanded one of the city's largest event spaces, and created civic event spaces that can be used by all residents. The renovation included creating seven new "plug and play" locations for community groups to utilize, with space for 10,000 to 12,000 visitors on the main plaza and room for a 20,000 to 25,000 person gathering on the entire plaza. The new design includes three smaller event and gathering places, and a new civic building on Congress St. equipped with a bathroom and other facilities to support public gatherings.

A Model of Sustainability and Resilience: Creating a sustainable plaza that meets the city's environmental goals was one of the key parts of the plaza renovation, and this renovation will make City Hall Plaza one of the city's signature civic spaces environmentally sustainable, meeting

Boston's resilience standards.

The renovation includes an increase in green infrastructure through an increased use of permeable surfaces that will soak up stormwater. The design also includes 100 new trees, improving the shade, scale, and air quality of the plaza. Fifty lights were replaced with efficient LED technology, and 22,500 feet of granite and brick paving were reused or recycled.

The project's main goal was to make the plaza more accessible for all while delivering updated programming capabilities, adding infrastructure, and making the plaza more sustainable. This \$70 million investment will connect Congress and Cambridge Sts. with an accessible sloped Hanover Promenade activated by 21st century civic amenities like shady seating and gathering areas, a destination play space, public art space, and an iconic water feature. The main plaza will accommodate events of up to 12,000 people in a wide variety of potential configurations. The project also includes:

- Opening the North building entry;
- Accessibility improvements to the plaza entry;
- Enhanced speakers corner;
- Stormwater retention improvements; and
- Flexible platform for various sized performances.

"To be tasked with the transformation of one of Boston's most beloved and historic spaces has been a tremendous honor," said Kevin Sullivan, executive vice president of Shawmut's New England region. "Through this extensive renewal with our partners from the City of Boston and Sasaki, we've reinvigorated City Hall Plaza to create a more accessible, sustainable, and connected public destination at Boston's civic heart that will serve as a forward-thinking attraction for generations to come."

"City Hall Plaza is a space to bring people together and build community," said mayor Michelle Wu. "I'm grateful for the work of all our City workers and partners to transform the plaza into a welcoming, resilient, and accessible space for residents and visitors to enjoy."

"City Hall plaza is the people's plaza, and it is now a civic front yard that ALL can access and take pleasure in," said chief of operations Dion Irish. "I'm excited to see our community enjoy our playground, event spaces, our new pavilion, and the reopened north entrance to City Hall. The Public Facilities Department, project partners, and numerous City agencies did an amazing job working together, with community input, to create a signature civic space that aligns with our goals and values."

"We are proud of the bold vision the City embraced to make Boston City Hall Plaza an inviting and

accessible outdoor public space,” said Fiske Crowell, Sasaki principal and architect. “A robust community engagement process helped us transform the Plaza from a harsh outdoor environment into a new green space where all are welcome. We are excited to celebrate the reopening of both the plaza and the expanded north entry to the building.”

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540