

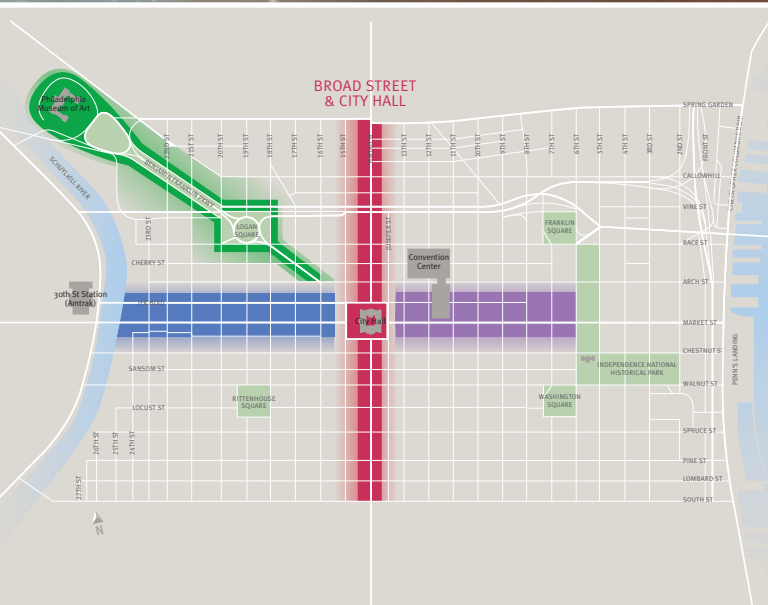


J.B. Abbott

CENTER CITY: PLANNING FOR GROWTH

BROAD STREET & CITY HALL

The proposals for enhancing Broad Street emerged from a collaborative effort with the Avenue of the Arts, Inc. Primary design and planning work was done by MGA Partners; concepts for Dilworth Plaza were developed by the Olin Partnership in cooperation with adjacent property owners.



Prepared by
Center City District &
Central Philadelphia Development Corporation
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KEY PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES

- The Avenue of the Arts is thriving and expanding on Broad Street south of City Hall with restaurants, hotels, residential high-rises, shops and cultural facilities. Modest improvements to several buildings and innovative public space programming could further activate the street.
- North Broad Street has far less vitality where vacant and underperforming parcels disrupt the sense of continuity between major institutions. But the expansion of the Pennsylvania Convention Center and the growth of education, health care, hospitality and residential uses can extend the success of the Avenue of the Arts to the north.
- New pedestrian lighting between Race Street and City Hall should be an essential component of the Convention Center expansion. All new development should include ground-floor pedestrian-oriented uses that activate the street.
- The City of Philadelphia has made dramatic improvements to the appearance of City Hall through a comprehensive program of restoration and cleaning. City Hall's portals aligned along Broad and Market streets now should become well-lit, animated pedestrian pathways that link adjacent areas together day and night. The center courtyard and surrounding public plazas should be redesigned and programmed through a collaborative effort of institutions along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and the Avenue of the Arts to create a vibrant civic gathering space.
- As Philadelphia's only public observation deck, City Hall tower should be actively promoted and the visitor experience enhanced from the ground floor all the way to the observation deck.
- The barrier effect of the Vine Street Expressway should be mitigated short-term with reconfigured traffic patterns. Long-term, consideration should be given to a full or partial cover at Broad Street to create an expanded campus for Drexel College of Medicine and Hahnemann Hospital.
- As North Broad Street improves, east-west connections should be enhanced to emerging communities on either side.

Until the middle of the 20th century, Broad Street on either side of City Hall was the Philadelphia region's prime downtown business location. Architecturally distinctive office buildings, corporate headquarters and banks lined the street. All were well served by the Pennsylvania Railroad's Broad Street station and by the underground subway lines. High-quality retail establishments clustered along Chestnut Street, making the corner of Broad and Chestnut the 100% location in Center City.

The creation in the 1950s of Penn Center, a transit-oriented cluster of office buildings on West Market Street and JFK Boulevard, provided the first new office buildings downtown since the Depression. A steady western migration began as tenants decamped from Broad Street. By 1990, vacancy rates in some buildings on South Broad were as high as 40%, while Chestnut Street suffered from significant vacancies and a deteriorating retail environment.



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The movement of City Hall to Center Square at the end of the 19th century shifted Philadelphia's business district to South Broad Street.

Revival through Arts

The kernel of the idea for the Avenue of the Arts first appeared in the 1963 *Plan for Center City*. Throughout the 1970s, Central Philadelphia Development Corporation continually worked with cultural institutions on plans for Broad Street's revival, centered on a new home for the Philadelphia Orchestra. Studies funded by the William Penn Foundation in the late 1980s extended the area, scope and diversity of the proposed arts district. In 1990, CPDC released a new streetscape plan for a 15-block-long arts district from City Hall to Washington Avenue with a suggested development framework for new projects.

When Mayor Rendell took office in 1992, he made this initiative his own and created the Avenue of the Arts, Inc. as a leadership organization to guide development. He initially raised close to \$200 million in private, public and foundation resources for the renovation of existing theaters, new facilities and streetscape enhancements.

Today, the Avenue of the Arts south of City Hall is a vibrant



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(1-2) Modest enhancements suggested by MGA Partners can activate the corner of the Kimmel Center and provide new customer services, like centralized ticket operations and visual graphics about coming attractions. (3) The Philadelphia Theatre Company's new location, between Lombard and Pine streets, extends the vitality of the Avenue of the Arts.

cultural district lined with restaurants, hotels, residential high-rises and shops that animate the street day and night. The completion of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in 2001 and the ongoing construction of new, high-quality residential and cultural developments are steadily expanding this mixed-use district to Washington Avenue.

North Broad Street has less vitality. Despite the presence of significant institutions like the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), the Drexel College of Medicine, Hahnemann Hospital, Roman Catholic High School, the Philadelphia School District and the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News, North Broad Street's major anchors are physically and programmatically disconnected by vacant and underutilized properties. City Hall itself disconnects North Broad Street from the vitality to the south with its barren public plazas, portal gates that deter nighttime movement and an interior courtyard devoid of activity. To the north, the Vine Street Expressway provides easy vehicular access to the area, but creates a daunting physical barrier for pedestrians, as high-speed traffic dominates the public environment.

A Time of Change

But the opportunity for change is at hand. City Hall has been significantly improved by the Street administration's multi-year commitment to cleaning and restoring the exterior of the massive building. The Center City District's 2004 illumination of the renewed facades has improved the nighttime presence of this architectural icon, while the 2005 holiday lighting offered a glimpse of how City Hall could be transformed with interesting programming that activates civic spaces.

PAFA has already expanded north into a new building with galleries and retail at street level. The expanded Pennsylvania Convention Center will place its front door on North Broad, bringing thousands of new visitors and prompting demand for hospitality development in the area from Broad Street to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. A vibrant new residential community, the Loft District, is emerging to the east between Callowhill and Street Garden streets, while residential conversions on Broad Street are putting new life in old industrial and office buildings as far north as Ridge Avenue, strengthening connections to Temple University.

Opportunities abound to further enhance Broad Street, extending its success north and south through a series of actions to overcome barriers and obstacles to pedestrians, generate new development and enliven Philadelphia's longest, most prominent boulevard.

Goal 1: Enhance lighting.

Since 1996, the Center City District has illuminated Center City sidewalks with more than 2,000 pedestrian-scale streetlights, encouraging evening activity. The lighting of the

facades of cultural institutions, statues and monuments along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway demonstrates how illuminating the exterior of buildings in a coordinated fashion can create a heightened sense of place. The CCD's festive lighting at City Hall during the 2005 holiday season showed the dramatic potential for special event lighting to draw crowds and highlight the unique architecture of Center City.

On North Broad Street, new pedestrian lighting between Race Street and City Hall should be an essential component of the Convention Center expansion, creating a sense of safety for visitors and others. Roman Catholic High School has already illuminated its facade. Other significant landmark buildings should do the same. On South Broad, in the fall of 2007, the CCD is adding permanent facade lighting to some buildings and changeable projected schemes for others, following the lead of many European and Asian cities.

At City Hall, the entire street-level perimeter plaza should be relit, as should the four portals to the inner courtyard.

Goal 2: Improve the visibility of the City Hall visitor center, tower and tour program.

The city's Department of Public Property, Independence Visitor Center Corporation and the CCD are collaborating on renovating the visitor center at City Hall, providing an upgraded interior and retail store, as well as new exterior signs and banners to draw visitors. City Hall tower is the only public observation deck in Center City and should become a must-see destination for visitors, open weekends and evenings in warm weather months. The next city administration should make improvements to the tower experience a priority, building on the extraordinary exterior improvements of the last eight years.

Goal 3: Activate the public spaces around City Hall.

The open spaces around City Hall — Dilworth Plaza, City Hall courtyard and the Municipal Services Building (Paine) Plaza — are largely barren, underutilized and intimidating. Yet these spaces have potential to be great civic assets.

Dilworth Plaza, beneath which all the city's transit lines converge, should function as a primary transit hub with redesigned access and improvements at both concourse and street level. All the unnecessary grade changes, walls, barriers and visual obstacles on the western side of City Hall should be leveled and replaced with a great civic gathering space with a landscaped park and cafe on the southern end and a major new at-grade water element that can provide the location for winter ice skating. The entire plaza and interior courtyard should be professionally programmed with events that highlight the arts, cultural and visitor attractions of the city. The balance of the plaza surrounding City Hall should be permanently greened to eliminate park-



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Tom Grallish, Philadelphia Inquirer



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Dan Bosin Associates, LLC



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The Lighting Practice

(4) The CCD's 2005 holiday lighting of City Hall is a prelude to more extensive lighting enhancements to South Broad Street. (5) The renovation of the information center in the ground floor of City Hall is the first step in enhancing the visitor experience and making greater use of the observation tower. (6) Many more landmark buildings on North Broad Street can follow the lead of Roman Catholic High School by illuminating their facades.



(7-8) The Olin Partnership envisions the complete reconstruction of Dilworth Plaza on the west side of City Hall with a new high-visibility, transparent entrance to public transit, a great green lawn and landscaped space to the south, and a new fountain to the north that can be used for winter ice skating.

ing and guarantee its role as William Penn's fifth public square. Pedestrian crossings on all sides of City Hall should be significantly improved to make the entire Center Square a great civic space in the city.

Goal 4: Fill in the gaps and strengthen institutional relationships on North Broad Street.

The clustering of institutional uses on and adjacent to North Broad Street suggests opportunities for collaboration to form a new educational precinct in Center City with a series of interconnected campuses, as a counterpart to the campus that Thomas Jefferson University is creating in the southeast quadrant.

As Drexel College of Medicine and Hahnemann Hospital continue to expand, they could form a unified medical campus by mitigating the surrounding swirl of car, truck and bus traffic and overcoming the barrier effect of the Vine Street Expressway. A full or partial cover over the expressway between Broad and 15th streets would provide space for Drexel to expand and create a walkable campus link between different components of the campus. Reconfigured traffic patterns between the expressway and Broad Street would further improve the pedestrian experience and mitigate the barrier effect of the highway and its on- and off-ramps.

The proximity of educational institutions — The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Roman Catholic High School, the Philadelphia School District headquarters, Community College of Philadelphia, Masterman School, Benjamin Franklin High School and several charter schools — similarly suggests an opportunity for collaboration to form a cohesive educational precinct as a key generator of economic activity in northern Center City.

With improvements to the public environment, the market will take care of remaining gaps in the physical fabric with the construction of new residential developments and hotels to serve the expanded convention center. But North Broad will only reach its full potential if all new developments design their ground floors in a way that adds life to the street, as is being done on South Broad Street at Symphony House with the new Suzanne Roberts Theater for the Philadelphia Theatre Company.

Goal 5: Provide new and exciting programming and amenities to maintain momentum on South Broad Street.

To build on success, South Broad Street should continue to add attractions and amenities that draw people and contribute to active street life. A consolidated ticket operation for all of the cultural institutions would be an important public amenity. Outdoor music and food, special events and festivals would further reinforce South Broad Street as an exciting regional destination.



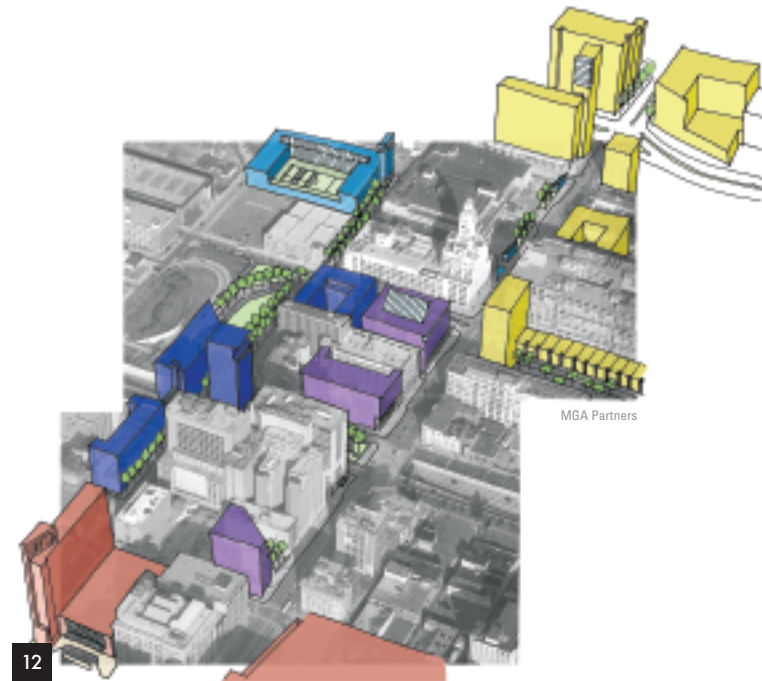
9 Philadelphia City Planning Commission Delineator, R. David Schaaf, RA



10 Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau



11 MGA Partners



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(9) The Philadelphia City Planning Commission envisions a vibrant new public plaza adjacent to the Municipal Services Building, enhancing pedestrian connections to North Broad Street. (10) The Convention Center expansion can add new life and new uses to North Broad Street. (11) Drexel College of Medicine and Hahnemann University's campus could bridge the Vine Street gap by building over the expressway. (12) MGA Partners envisions an expanded campus for education and health care institutions aligned along 15th street and connected to new residential developments on North Broad Street.

- Hospitality Development
- Higher Education & Health Care Development
- Education Related Development
- Residential Development



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