Memorandum
Planning and Urban Development Department
Planning Division

To: Mayor Brennan and Members of the Portland City Council
From: Jeff Levine, Department Head, Department of Planning & Urban Development, Alexander Jaegerman, Planning Division Director, and Caitlin Cameron, Urban Designer, Planning Division
Date: July 18, 2014
Re: Congress Square Redesign

Our staff has been looking at various options for the future design of Congress Square. One chief concern from a planning and urban design perspective is the comprehensive aspect of the design. The design of the Square must be of one solid concept that unifies all of the urban open space, making it comfortable and accessible to everyone. We feel confident that the current design team is still well qualified for the redesign of Congress Square, and that most of the work done to date is valuable regardless of what direction the Council chooses to take on this issue. However, if the scope of the redesign were to change, then a new contract will be required with additional design fees.

For the purposes of this memo, we have outlined three basic redesign scenarios for Congress Square. For each one we have attached a rough concept and an order of magnitude cost estimate*:

1) Existing footprint of Congress Square Plaza without an event center (Attachment 1)
2) Event center and a smaller footprint for Congress Square Plaza (Attachment 2)
3) Event center with a public park over the event center (Attachment 3)

*****Cost estimates based on conversations with design team for costs of comparable projects, not based on quantity unit take-off. Cost estimates are for construction alone and do not include the additional 10-15% fees for construction documents.

Scenario	Cost: Square (excluding plaza)	Cost: Plaza	Design Cost	In Hand	Operations
1) No Event Center/Full plaza footprint	$2m - $2.5m	$1.5m – $2.25m ($100-150/sf)	$100,000	$100,000 for design	Moderate
2) Event Center/ Reduced plaza footprint	$2m - $2.5m	$500,000 - $750,000 ($100-150/sf)	$50,000	$100,000 for design *[plus $525K purchase price plus $45K contribution]*	Low
3) Event Center/Public roof access	$2m - $2.5m	$1.5m - $2.5m [assumes 5,000 sf surface plaza plus 10,000 sf roof plaza]	$120,000	$100,000 for design	Highest

Considerations

- Work to date: The work to date contributing to the redesign of Congress Square is significant and includes valuable community input, expertise and assessments from consultants on the topics of transportation, urban design, and open space planning, a survey of existing conditions, and a vision statement as a result of the visioning process (Attachment 4). The majority of this work remains valid and applicable to the three redesign scenarios presented.
- Easements: The Westin Eastland Harborview Hotel has three existing easement agreements (one not execute) in the public open space (Attachment 5).
- Cost and available funds: Each redesign option carries a different cost implication which should be weighed against available funds and possible funding sources. Congress Square is not located in a CDBG eligible area and therefore, CDBG funds are not a funding source option.
- Partners: The successful redesign of Congress Square, including Congress Square Plaza, will rely on strong partnerships. Friends of Congress Square Park could play an important role as an advocate for the plaza space. If they are identified as a partner then we recommend their role in the redesign process should be formalized. They could also play a role in fundraising and programming the space. The Westin Eastland Harborview Hotel has a vested interest in the success of the square and plaza and therefore is a critical partner in this process. Having already contributed financially to the design services for the square redesign, they should be engaged in discussion of what their role would be moving forward.
- Phasing: Phasing will be a necessity for cost reasons, the design of the square cannot be a piecemeal approach and should be accomplished with a comprehensive design approach that unifies and creates a strong public open space.

Work to Date

A great deal of good work has gone into the redesign of the Square to date. Most of it is valuable regardless of what direction the Council chooses to take:

- **Initial Congress Square Redesign Study Group Meetings** (2008 through 2012)

September 3, 2008:	Congress Square Redesign Study Group Appointed by City Council
April – Sept., 2010:	CSRSG meets 4 times to determine future use of Plaza and recommends that an RFP for design services be developed.
October 19, 2011:	Rockbridge Capital, new owners of the Eastland Hotel, presents proposal for a ballroom facility in Congress Square plaza.
November 21, 2011:	CSRSG sends Communication to City Council in response to Rockbridge proposal.
May 9, 2012:	Rockbridge presents proposal to HCDC with public comment by CSRSG members and others.
August 1, 2012:	CSGSG met and sent a communication to the HCDC with a recommendation not to proceed with the Rockbridge proposal as submitted.

April 24, 2013:	HCDC Meeting with presentation by Rockbridge with revised proposal followed by a month of outreach meetings by Rockbridge with community stakeholders and CSRSG
May 22, 2013:	CSRG considers revised proposal by Rockbridge and makes recommendation (split vote) to HCDC
May 29, 2013:	HCDC meets and reviews and takes public comment on further revised proposal by Rockbridge;
August 21, 2013:	HCDC recommends revised proposal purchase and sale agreement to the City Council.
September 16, 2013:	City Council votes (6-3) in favor of selling a portion of the parcel to Rockbridge to build the event center and directs staff to proceed with a design contract RFP.

- **Visioning process** (completed, Summer 2013)
  Over the course of several months a city-wide visioning process was held to collect input from stakeholders and the general public about their vision for this important public space. This process included public workshops, an online survey, sign boards in Congress Square and at City Hall, opportunities to respond through social media such as Twitter and a Neighborland website to post and vote for ideas, and supplemental educational programs such as a history lecture about the square and a film screening about urban design. The result of this process is documented on the project webpage and culminated in a vision statement to guide the redesign process.
  Team: Planning staff in cooperation with Friends of Congress Square Park, Portland Society for Architecture, and the Congress Square Redesign Study Group, Public meeting moderator services provided by Pam Plumb
  Cost: $1,500 from Planning budget

- **Congress Square Redesign consultant team hired** (ongoing, Spring 2014)
  On Council direction at the September 16, 2013 meeting, the City has a contract with Klopfer Martin Design Group for the redesign of Congress Square. The scope of this contract includes schematic design for Congress Square and design development of the smaller Congress Square Plaza in coordination with the proposed event center. To date, the design team has met with TY Lin to determine curb alignments, provided guidance on the Public Art Selection Panel, coordinated with the Westin event center design team, and presented at two public meetings – the first being an assessment meeting observing existing conditions and the second was to present the results of the site assessment and to present the proposed curb alignments and three concept schemes for the square. Much of this work is applicable to any and each of the alternative paths forward.
  Team: Klopfer Martin Design Group, Utile, Nelson/Nygaard, Planning Staff, TY Lin
  Cost: $50,554.05 expended, sources are CIP and $50,000 matching funds from Rockbridge Capital LLC

- **Survey of existing conditions** (completed May, 2014)
  Work includes a survey drawing of existing conditions in Congress Square and including Congress Square Plaza.
  Provided by: Owen-Haskell
  Cost: $4,970 from City contractual services budget

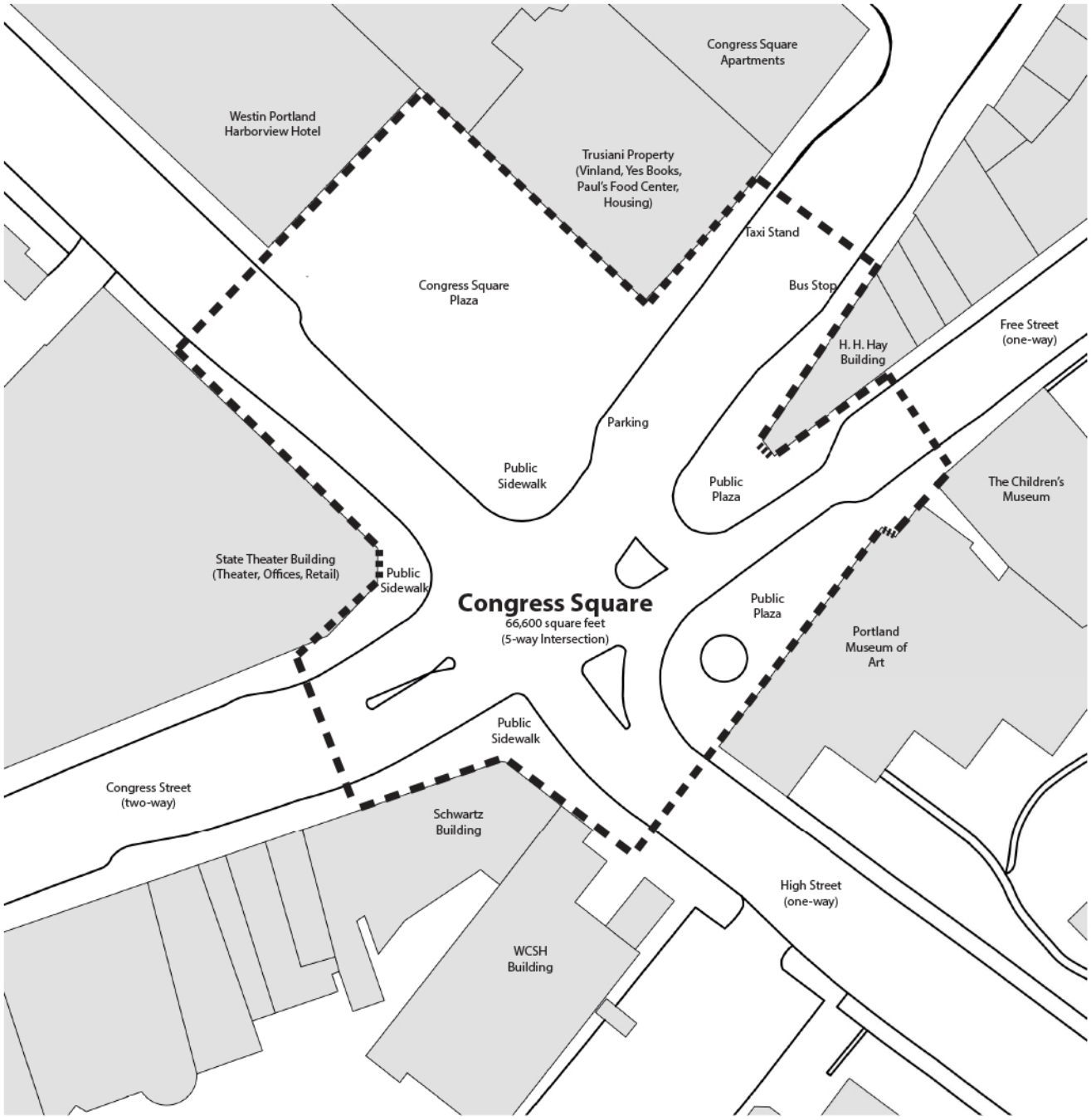
- **Transportation consulting on shared-use, two-way feasibility** (completed, June, 2014)
  Work includes one day of services from transportation consultant Ben Hamilton-Baillie with site observations, consultant meetings with Congress Square Redesign design team and State and High Two-way Study team on the feasibility of shared-use transportation solutions, and a lecture with examples of shared-use space
  Provided by: Ben Hamilton-Baillie
  Cost: $3,113 with $1,613 paid by City through CDBG funds, and $1,500 matching funds provided by Portland Society for Architecture

- **Creation of the Congress Square Art Selection Panel** (ongoing, Spring, 2014)
  The Public Art Committee, with the assistance of City staff and the contracted redesign team, formed a committee of stakeholders, artists, and Public Art Committee members with the purpose of selecting the artist or artwork to be sited in the redesigned Congress Square. Since its formation this group has met once to set goals and a vision for public art in Congress Square. They will resume once the direction for the redesign is determined.

Possible Funding Sources for Additional Planning and Design Work

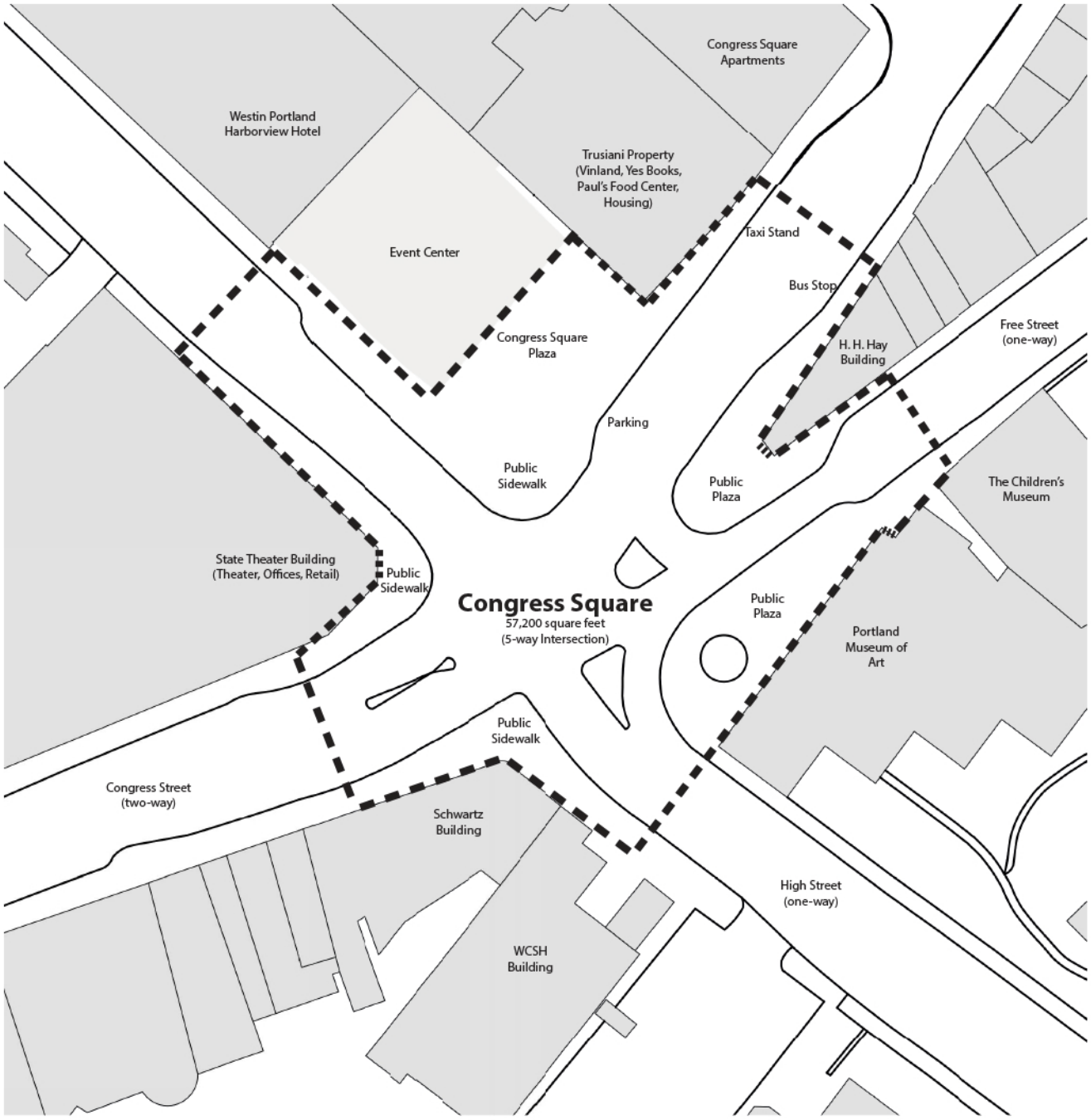
Amount ($)	In Hand?	Source	To be used for:
$100,000 (under contract)	Yes	CIP FY13 $50,000, Rockbridge Capital LLC $50,000	Contract design services for the redesign of Congress Square (Concept design of Square, Design Development of Plaza)
$613,640	No	CIP Request FY16	Construction of Congress Square Redesign Phase I
$1,000,000	No	CIP Request FY17	Construction of Congress Square Redesign Phase II
$179,913	Yes	Public Art Committee budget (CIP % for Art), private fundraising will also be required	Public Art acquisition

- Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding is not a potential funding source for Congress Square redesign because the square is not located in a CDBG eligible census tract.
- Tax increment financing is proposed as one funding source to fill the cost discrepancy.



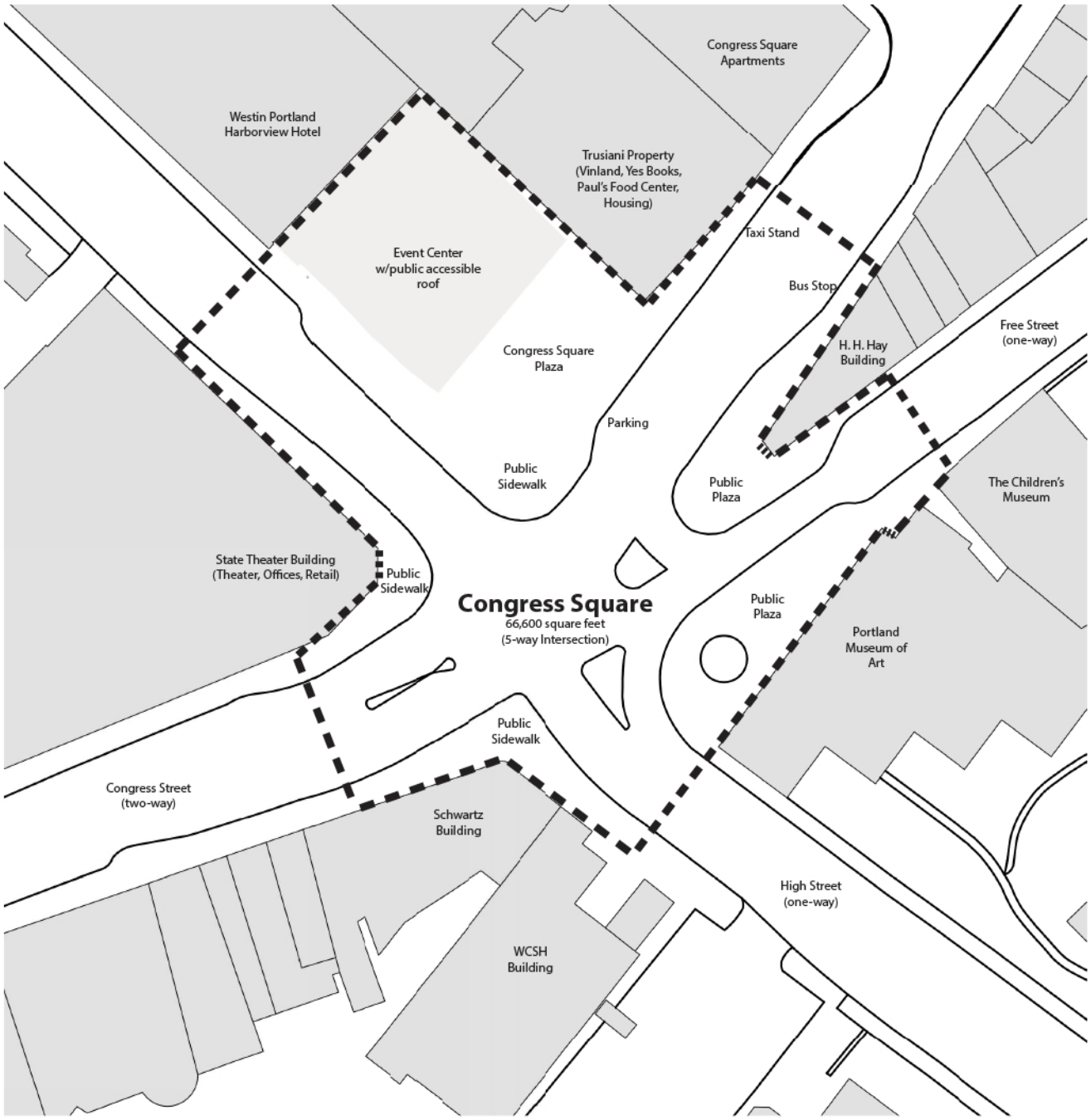
Congress Square Redesign - Scheme 1
NTS

Examples:



Congress Square Redesign - Scheme 2
NTS

Examples:



Congress Square Redesign - Scheme 3
NTS

Examples:

ATTACHMENT 4

Vision Statement

Congress Square is a high quality, distinctive urban space that epitomizes the Arts District while remaining accessible and inviting to all. Year-round, the Square provides a welcome break in the dense, historic district street wall where one encounters a range of activities including events and installations that celebrate local arts and culture, and fosters spontaneity, informal gathering, and fun. As a gateway intersection, the redesigned Congress Square places priority on the pedestrian experience and safety while accommodating all transportation modes in an efficient manner.

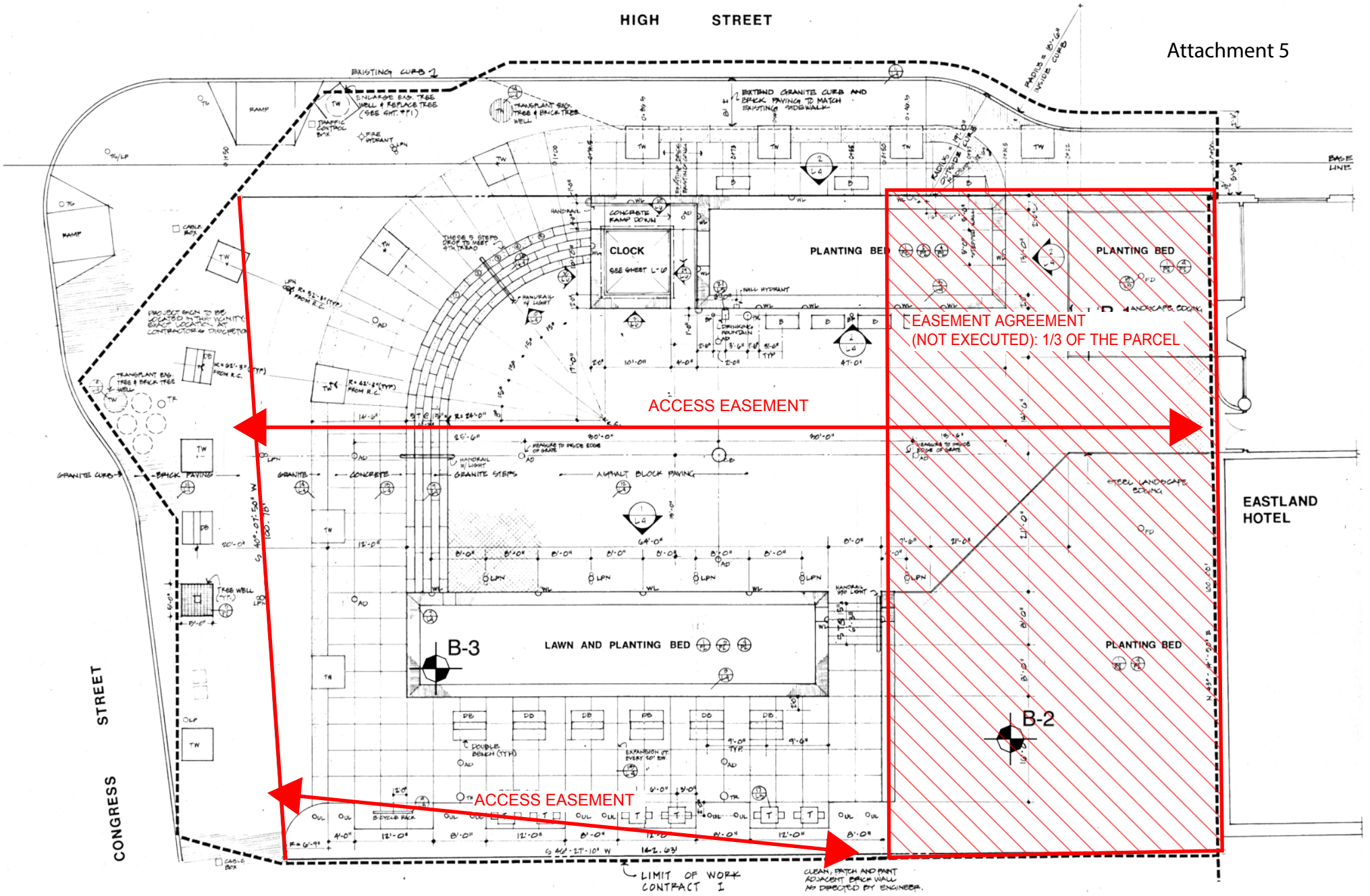
Final design should:

- Deliver an identity of the Square as a whole
- Be of high quality and visually interesting (with quality materials, details, and lighting)
- Acknowledge that the Square is the heart of the Arts District as well as a gateway into it
- Be conscious of its context within the Congress Street Historic District and surrounding landmark buildings
- Attract a range of users of all ages (including shoppers, employees, residents, visitors, and hotel/museum/theater patrons)
- Prioritize the pedestrian experience and safety by enhancing visual and pedestrian access throughout space
- Be accessible to varying physical and financial abilities (elderly, ADA, children)
- Accommodate potential programs & events (such as First Friday, political rallies, musical performance, temporary or interactive art installations)
- Provide for daytime and evening use
- Provide for year-round use
- Feature appropriate balance of green space and hardscape
- Coordinate and integrate with the new Event Center design
- Coordinate with proposed public art installation(s)
- Address night lighting, power, and security needs

Further Considerations for Design:

- Potential for introduction of performance space(s), outdoor dining or food vendors, water feature, and/or public restrooms, etc.
- Adequate seating of various types and in a variety of conditions (sun/shade, etc.)
- Potential for transit accommodations (e.g. bus shelters)
- Relationship amongst the public spaces (Museum Plaza, H. H. Hay Building Plaza, and Congress Square Plaza)
- Potential for shared-use intersection conversion
- Wayfinding and signage compatible with the City's wayfinding plan

Base Assumptions:

- Clock mechanism from former Union Station will be relocated to another site
- Direct access for Event Center onto Plaza will be maintained
- Sunken aspect of Plaza shall be eliminated

Attachment 5