

Public Comment

Public Comment received online from 11/6 – 11/13

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 1:16:15 PM

First Name: Tracie

Last Name: Reed

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am a Maine licensed architect, and car-free millennial residing in Portland's West End. I have lived in Portland for eleven years and have been car-free for 1.5 years. My life is centered on our peninsula, since I have elected to practice what I preach, which involves being highly attuned to my carbon footprint. I shop locally and recreate locally, spending winters skating on Deering Oaks pond, and summers basking in the sun atop the Eastern and Western Promenades. One of the reasons I am so enamored with our city is because of its open green and public gathering spaces. These provide a rich and diverse fabric within our urban community.

In reviewing both the concept designs and cost estimates provided by Wright-Ryan construction I am most intrigued by Option 1. It provides the most flexibility in uses and accessibility for all. This summer I frequently attended events at Congress Square Plaza, from World Cup matches, swing dances and lunches and dinners with friends when the Small Axe truck was in service. This diversity in programming was fabulous and the park has a tremendous capacity for welcoming large groups of people (like it housed for the world cup games) whilst remaining suitable for more intimate gatherings. Option 1: Ground-Level Park seeks to enhance the diversity or programming and scalability that has made this past summer's programming so successful.

I strongly encourage the City Council to re-affirm the Congress Square ReDesign Study Group's vote in favor of further development of a Ground-Level Park.

Tracie J. Reed, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C
Portland

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 1:47:10 PM

First Name: Danielle

Last Name: LeBlanc

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Please consider option one, or any other ground-level design concept for the park. It is more accessible, and more natural looking for that space.

Thank you!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 2:04:53 PM

First Name: Clare

Last Name: Congdon

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The flatter design (option #1) seems much more accessible. It is better for people of a wider variety of ages and physical abilities.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 2:20:40 PM

First Name: Jenna

Last Name: Howard

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The people of Portland voted not to give up our public space. With option 2, the public LOSES at least 7,700 square feet of our current usable 15,000 sq. ft. public space.

If the city is going to invest more than 1 million dollars, we would like that investment applied to the full space, and not a small portion of that.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 2:38:32 PM

First Name: Sandra

Last Name: Donahue

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option one meets more of the needs of the people.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 2:55:13 PM

First Name: Chris

Last Name: Moore

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Ground Level Park
Provides flexibility for future years.

Activates square with walkway and multiple areas for sitting and temporary and permanent art.

Play structure to encourage children to the park.

Costs are reasonable and simple design will prevent cost overruns.

Maintenance of ground level park is much less expensive

Elevated park

Seems rife with major complications involving legal, management and liability issues

Cost of project is entirely unknown and is likely to increase drastically when city is required to pay for building upgrades to support park.

450 ft ramp to rooftop park is MAJOR barrier to entrance for senior citizens, the disabled and parents with strollers.

Incredibly high long term maintenance issues involving snow removal, landscaping and roof repair.

Less park -for a lot more money - not sure the point.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 3:04:01 PM

First Name: Amy

Last Name: Jaffe

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I strongly prefer option #1

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 3:34:35 PM

First Name: John

Last Name: Leeke

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 1, because it does not involve selling any park land to the hotel corporation.

But, really, how do you justify spending all this money on option 1.? This is not a rhetorical question. I would like to hear a detailed answer at the council meeting.

I have surveyed conditions of the existing park and the only thing I can find wrong is about 8 lineal feet of cracked concrete in three places and none of them even present a tripping hazard. I say fix the cracks and call the park good.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 3:50:14 PM

First Name: John

Last Name: Leeke

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Why is the study group hiding the fact

that Option 2. includes selling off part of the park's land? This is not a rhetorical question, I want and answer presented at the council meeting.

I read through all five documents and did not see this very salient fact stated. It may be there, but it is well hidden. At a minimum the main headline comparison graphic should clearly mark and label this land as "Sold to the hotel corporation."

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 4:05:14 PM

First Name: John

Last Name: Leeke

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Why redesign the park at all? Every time I walk by there I stop in or walk through the park. I think it's very friendly and accessible. I see disabled people there all the time. What's the reasoning and politics behind spending over a million dollars at the park? This is not a rhetorical question. I want an answer at the council meeting.

If the city actually has a million dollars for this park, then it should spend it on programs for the existing park. They could hire a full time caretaker for the park for 25 years to provide security and help for any park visitors and still have a big pile of money left over to put on entertainments, picnics and parties. Get a grip on reality. We really don't need more steel, concrete and bricks at this park.

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 5:02:11 PM

First Name: David

Last Name: LaCasse

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The KMDG ground level option demonstrates that park attributes that are critical to a park's success can be fully achieved. The roof top park option does not come close to this same level of success.

The ground level public space is/provides:

- More ACCESSIBLE to a range of users of all ages, physical and financial abilities. All of the ground level option is accessible to everyone. The roof top option has 481 feet of ramp , 24 feet high. . For someone in a wheelchair this will be like climbing a mountain! The only truly accessible part of the roof top concept is a small square next to the sidewalk, the rest of the park will be off limits to many people that live in this area.

- More OPEN, INVITING AND WALKABLE encouraging the pedestrian experience by enhancing visual

sightlines and pedestrian access through the space. People can cross through from High to Congress and visa-versa. They can enter from multiple points because of the permeable edges. The outer park draws people into the inner park. Can you imagine a woman with children and stroller walking up 481 feet of ramp into a space she can't see from below! This roof space will not be used!

- FLEXIBLE AND TIMELESS DESIGN allowing for a variety of destinations, amenities and activities, and further, to allow the programming to evolve with changing community needs for generations to come. The ramp in the roof top option has to be there to be ADA compliant. To get to the roof requires a 480 foot ramp or approximately 40 steps.
- EASIER ONGOING MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT to ensure that the design does not exceed our community's resources. For example, snow removal at ground level will be far easier ensuring that year-round programming is possible. Easy access to ground level event space will allow for a greater range of events. (How does a band get its equipment to the roof, or a vendor transport tables and goods for a market?)
- OPPORTUNITY FOR AN ACTIVE EDGE with retail or food through a permanent kiosk or structure in the back corner or food trucks on High St. Tables and Chairs can be located close to the food in the ground level option. There is no room for tables and chairs in the roof top option.
- PLAY STRUCTURES and a variety of spaces that are safe for play and encourage multi-generational activities. No space for play structures in the roof top option.
- BETTER OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC ART (both permanent and temporary physical and performing because of the flexibility of space) which will enhance its identity as the heart of the Arts District
- BETTER VALUE - based on these estimates, we can get more quality occupiable space (for events, performance, standing, sitting, play), for a significantly lower cost. (Based on these concept designs, option 1 would cost \$112 per sq ft of occupiable space, compared to \$306 per sq ft for option 2.)

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 5:39:42 PM

First Name: Christopher

Last Name: Parker

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: While I like both designs, I prefer the one with the event center.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 7:34:02 PM

First Name: Robert

Last Name: Theberge

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Seems like revitalizing the existing ground level park would be much less expensive to initiate and maintain than an elevated park.

An elevated park poses several problems like access, usability, and controlling what goes on up there since most of it won't be visible from the street. There is also the issue of who is liable for roof leaks...sooner or later it's going to happen. Who is responsible for the roof system over the conference center and who pays for its' replacement when it's needed.

I see way too many problems with a roof park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 9:10:31 PM

First Name: Jessica

Last Name: Tomlinson

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I prefer Concept #1 for its ground level access.

Concept #2 with the park on top of an events center is a solution for a business who wants a greenspace. It is not a public park. Parks should be accessible. It also compromises the ability to do arts programming.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 10:08:07 PM

First Name: Emma

Last Name: Holder

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Portland needs parks that are easily seen and easily accessible to all levels of mobility.

In order to participate in municipal spaces, people need to know they are there. A roof top is a great place for a private garden certainly, because its so out of sight - out of mind.

The majority of the people wouldn't make the effort to climb up to a roof top. Not to mention those in wheelchairs or with baby strollers, or trying to bring vending or musical equipment to the space.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/6/2014 10:23:29 PM

First Name: Dominic

Last Name: Tracey

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Just leave it the way it is! We are sick of hearing about this! Seriously, just tell the Westin to go screw themselves and be done with it!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/7/2014 7:52:02 AM

First Name: Bud

Last Name: Buzzell

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Hi We need the congress square park for quite a few reasons No.1 its a bery place for the kids to play in during the summer. No.2 they have quite a few summer concerts where people can go and sit to listen to them like myself. The people that you see laying or the benches is out side of the park circle. Your asking for people like us to give up the most important things thats happened to portland in a long time and i don't think thats right. My name is bud buzzell and I'm a part of the portland disability council.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/7/2014 9:03:22 AM

First Name: Annie

Last Name: Wadleigh

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I support the ground-level park option as being far more accessible and pedestrian-friendly as well as retaining the scale, open design, and spirit of Congress Square. The ground-level option would retain the pedestrian nature of Congress Street and make the area more flexible as well as reduce maintenance costs. I strongly support the ground-level vision in retaining the character of Congress Square. Thank you.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/7/2014 2:46:41 PM

First Name: Justin

Last Name: Jaffe

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Eliminate the sunken aspect by leveling the park. Add more amenities. Sculptures. Stuff for kids to climb on.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/7/2014 4:23:01 PM

First Name: Isabel

Last Name: Anderson

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts:

40 steps to get up to a park? This would seem to weed out two groups that are prime users of parks: moms with little kids, senior citizens. Not nice!

Maintenance in the winter would be a nightmare. And expensive.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/7/2014 4:50:28 PM

First Name: Karen

Last Name: Snyder

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 1 is the best and only choice.

Option 2 is ridiculous. The Portland planners and Mayor Brennan have manipulated and lied to the public. They have understated the amount it would cost to maintain a park on a building roof in which the property would still be sold to Mayor Brennan's good ol' boy at Rockport LLC who wants to buy the land. There is extreme conflict of interest and Mayor Brennan and any city council member who votes for this ridiculous scheme should be fired.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/7/2014 4:51:30 PM

First Name: Anne

Last Name: Pringle

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Since it was re-instituted, I have attended all meetings of the CSRSG I have kept an open mind on the two options the Council asked to be explored.

Following the presentation by the City's selected design team earlier this week, there is no question in my mind that a ground level park is the much better option. It will be more dynamic, be better used and available for more hours of the day, and will be a real attraction for City residents, visitors, and hotel

guests. The conceptual design for the above-ground park is disjointed (because of the substantial ramping and stairs required) and will have smaller, less interesting public spaces, culminating in a rooftop green space that will not be visible or inviting even during the day and likely not open at night without dedicated security.

I do not dispute the need for more event space, but we need to realize that one event room is NOT an "event center" and public open space should not be sacrificed for limited private benefit. Rather than focusing on selling public space to secure one event room, why don't we start talking about how to build a true, centrally located "event center" that can benefit all hotels?

As a longtime Portland resident and taxpayer, I certainly appreciate the substantial investment that Rockbridge has made in restoring the hotel, but have concluded that the community's appreciation does not warrant sale of a valuable public space that has far greater potential, as demonstrated by the efforts this summer of the Friends of Congress Square Park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/7/2014 5:26:25 PM

First Name: Elizabeth

Last Name: Streeter

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I definitely want the entire park used for the public on the ground. The event center would only be for the hotel, with very few, if any, times when the public can use it or parts of it. It breaks up the park so that the larger activities that took place there this summer would not be possible. The green roof seem like a joke. The accessibility for baby carriages, disabled people, etc would be impossible. The space is not inviting, especially on a very hot day. What would be up there - chairs, tables, trees? How much more would it cost than a simple ground park? How much would it cost to maintain it? Would it be visible for surveillance?

This summer has shown that the space can be fine with little change. I like the stairs down - it's great seating. Make the space differentiated from the sidewalk area but not too separate. The stage area is also very good for music and performance. Perhaps relocating the clock would help with visibility . The plan you show has trees in the back corner - ridiculous! That is where unsavory activity takes place. Put some children's equipment back there - a corner for play, with good visibility. The whole problem with the park has not been the stairs, etc, but the fact that it was not maintained or programmed. Seating, shade, food and WiFi brings people! . A big help would be public toilet facilities. For everyone, not just the homeless. People from all walks of life, locals and visitors can share the same space, as they do in any of the great parks you have been studying.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/7/2014 9:05:33 PM

First Name: Karen

Last Name: Luse

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I think a ground level park is more accessible and open.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/7/2014 10:48:04 PM

First Name: Andrew

Last Name: Graham

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I find the raised park a far superior solution. The design is compelling, the multi-levels interesting, the varied heights add an interesting texture to the corner, and it deals with the topography of the site effectively. I find the concerns expressed regarding the ramps and the supposed lack of sight lines into the higher space to be specious objections that are not born out by any real data. The concern for visibility from the Congress St sidewalk should certainly be a part of the design brief, but I think it is a non-issue, personally.

The ground-level park, however, I find poorly realized. Making the primary feature a short-cut diagonal through the corner seems like a cynical solution. There seem to be far less functional space in the park in this design, with the majority devoted to what is essentially a large pedestrian way.

I would expect, however, that the Eastland and its developers should pay a large portion of the development cost of the park - at least \$1M - and that they not be allowed to privatize it for events. I think that the city council should play hardball and get them to pay a substantial price to get their event center.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 11/8/2014 1:11:29 AM

First Name: suzanne

Last Name: laberge

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: the ground level design is entirely visible from the street, accessible to all and the space remains an open one..
the elevated park is harder to see, and could therefore be less safe. less inviting as more effort to get to. doesn't keep the spirit of the the park

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/8/2014 7:45:01 AM

First Name: Dawn

Last Name: Tully

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: on the street level. Available to all

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/8/2014 11:56:28 AM

First Name: Ashley

Last Name: Salisbury

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Keep it simple! Aside from aesthetic and use concerns, there is so much execution risk with an elevated park. An elevated park will be way more expensive and has so many variables that make it unsuited to this climate. Remember: the high line in NY ALREADY EXISTED!

The last thing this city needs is another 300 person hotel conference room--which is what this really is. An "event center" is actually public.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/8/2014 11:57:39 AM

First Name: Samuel

Last Name: Swenson

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Hi, 'Thank You' for your time and effort. I personally am still puzzled by the rush to entirely redesign Congress Square Park. The existing space is wonderful as is! If the original awning design was used there would be shade in the summer, the landscaping improved, the trees trimmed, and a new clock design we could have a fine park for a small expense and take the leftover money for programming for events and staffing of a info booth. I am baffled as to why people want to destroy a perfectly fine existing space. Best of luck on the most open public use of this space regardless of my criticism .

-Sam Swenson

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 11/8/2014 12:47:11 PM

First Name: Joe

Last Name: Kievitt

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Both concepts have some successful elements but both are EXTREMELY over designed and will feel outdated in 5 YEARS OR LESS (this BTW, is the biggest issue with all of the over designed, already dated construction going up all over Portland). In addition they are unnecessarily extravagant/over priced.

This design (<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/7275>, page 9) is closest to what I feel would work best , however, concrete or stone benches, good lighting and added green space/grass on the north side would be needed.

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 11/8/2014 12:48:23 PM

First Name: Penny

Last Name: Harris

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I like the both but prefer the 2nd. It seems more unique. It could create the type of interest that people will invest to update the buildings around the area and encourages people to the area and lifts expectations of ourselves. Supports the PMA new entr design.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 11/8/2014 1:10:37 PM

First Name: alison

Last Name: hildreth

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: After studying the 2 options presented on Wed. night I have come to the conclusion that option 1 is the only choice if a park is to exist at all in Congress Square plaza. Option 2 does not allow for any performance area, any gathering spot of sufficient size. Most of the area is taken up with 485 ft. of ramps and stairs. A small terrace is accessible by a set of 17 stairs in front of the event center. This surely not a viable gathering space and the only place left is in the middle of the sidewalk. Handicapped people and families with young children some in strollers are never going to manage stairs or 480 feet of ramp. As far as a performance space on top. How to get equipment, lights, electrical and sets up there? Then there is the safety issue. The ramp in the back and on the side are completely hidden from view. Who will patrol this area? The park had a vibrant summer with lots of events and people enjoying the space. Now that there is a Friends group with a board and the dedication to make the space a success I really think the council should vote with the majority and allow the redesign of the park to become a reality.

In terms of economic benefit which I believe is driving the idea of the event center (which will be small anyway) there will be some who are attending events, who will come out and buy a meal or a gift, but many stay in the hotel with a good restaurant, bar, TV etc. In the building that I own we are next to the

Holiday Inn and I never see many attendees heading to downtown Portland to buy. On the other hand it has been shown over and over again that a vibrant and beautiful park affects the neighboring businesses in a dramatic positive way. Bryant Park, Madison Square Park, Strauss Park, the Highline are all examples of this.

Why go this added expenditure (and it will much much more than has been estimated) when a vote has been taken, the results are in, people want and deserve a park.

And if we get a Bloomberg Grant we can have 365 days of events in the park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/8/2014 1:31:54 PM

First Name: not given

Last Name: not given

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: While I don't love either design, the essential question is about the elevated park. And, I trust that there would be many more phases before a design was selected.

-I would rather see the entire intersection be included in the "shared space" idea, not just from the PMA to the current Congress Square. This is the time to do it correctly. Even though both Congress and High can be heavily trafficked with automobiles, it is imperative that they move slowly through the space. I encourage the elimination of the traffic signals all together. This will slow everyone down and keep a more constant and logical flow of all modes.

-I like that High Street is shown as 2-way.

-The cost estimate for the elevated park seems to err on the side of being very low. The #17 and #21 comments about the reinforced roof indicate that there may be a significant difference between this estimate and reality. And, what I heard from City staff in one public meeting was that the hotel would not pay for the difference between a standard roof and one that must bear this type of weight load. Given all of the current unknowns, it seems important to determine a price range for the elevated park so the public and Council understand the real dollar amounts.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/8/2014 5:25:53 PM

First Name: HENRY

Last Name: COBB

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: In my judgment option 1 is far superior, because it maximizes the accessibility and flexibility of public open space adjoining Congress Square, at the heart of Portland's Arts District. By comparison, option 2 significantly reduces the accessibility and flexibility of public open space, while significantly increasing both the initial construction cost and the

ongoing operating cost of Congress Square Park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/8/2014 9:26:16 PM

First Name: Grace

Last Name: Braley

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The Congress Square Park space is a welcome open area at the end of a long, narrow block of Portland's interesting brick buildings.....It is a good space that lets light in, allows people to sit down or stroll or engage in a program.

Such an open space in a small area needs to be immediately open and accessible from the sidewalk. Putting it up a stairway or ramp or both, drastically reduces the accessibility, and some people might never see it at all. However clever the intention, it removes it from the "public", which is who it is for. I have been to a number of the places in the pictures (not all relevant to this), and essentially, I am only more affirming in my opinion.

So many things have been carried out there, demonstrating how it can be quite enjoyable if it is promoted and maintained. A garden/park up in the air would be more intensive maintenance, not what we need here at this time.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/9/2014 8:52:49 AM

First Name: Gretchen

Last Name: Preneta

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I favor the street level option for Congress Square Park. This option would keep the park accessible for all, which I believe is one of the most important parts of maintaining the character of the City. I am completely opposed to elevating the park and making it more of an event-specific space. A street level public place should already provide a fantastic venue for events that are, again, accessible to everyone.

I moved to Portland because there is something for everyone here, regardless of socioeconomic status. I feel that slowly creeping away with some of the decisions that the City has made, particularly with regard to making the City a tourist-focused place (never a good idea if it comes at the expense of the people who live here).

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/9/2014 5:20:34 PM

First Name: Peter

Last Name: Monro

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I have attended several design sessions and am a regular visitor/ user of the park in the past year. Almost any version of an on the ground park will provide more a great deal more accessibility, space and flexibility then anything built over a room of any type.

Furthermore, to activate the park's full area will require activating its edges, which would be almost impossible atop a structure.

Please allow a full length design process to proceed toward an on the ground park integrated with Congress Square as a whole unfettered by artificial deadlines or design imperatives guided only by what is best for potential users of this space.

If so permitted to progress to its conclusion, such a design process will turn out to be the best outcome even for the Westin hotel.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/9/2014 5:34:26 PM

First Name: Sandra

Last Name: Rudman

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: A real park at Congress Square will only help to make Congress Street live up to its distinction of one of the 10 best streets in the nation. The atmosphere of the park has changed so much over the last year and I look forward to upcoming improvements.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/10/2014 8:53:31 AM

First Name: Anne

Last Name: Fowler

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I think the Park should be as accessible as possible.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/10/2014 11:00:44 AM

First Name: Lucian

Last Name: Burg

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I think the 2 level elevated park is many times more interesting and makes the park area much more lively. with all those places to sit as the elevation changes. Very exciting design. Both designs are good, but many of our choices in Portland are so cautious, that I think something lively like the 2nd design is well worth considering.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 11/10/2014 11:14:24 AM

First Name: Joann

Last Name: Bisson

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: It seems that when you consider price, accessibility, sight lines, cleaning and maintenance the ground level park is less expensive, more accessible, and safer.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/10/2014 2:57:37 PM

First Name: Ashley

Last Name: Bahlkow

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: This is actually a lot of space that is centrally located. What about turning the whole thing into a garden for food for Preble St. and or more community garden space? There are over 100 people on the waiting list for a community garden in the city.

I believe we need to start thinking more about using our spaces to beautify the city AND grow more food locally.

If this is not possible, please option 1.

Thank you.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/10/2014 4:24:44 PM

First Name: joan

Last Name: grant

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I'm all for the ground level park. Main reason is accessibility. I live nearby and doubt I'll ever wind up that long ramp to get to the top. Also it seems unwise for the city to get into such a complicated plan as the roof top when it benefits very few, maintenance will be a nightmare and expensive.

The ground level park has been successful as a community building place this summer and I think it can continue to be so without expensive changes, rather improvements can be done in small steps.

Please don't sell our park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/10/2014 5:12:01 PM

First Name: Clifford

Last Name: Tremblay

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: As a junior architect and urban designer, it is my professional opinion that Option 1 is the best choice for Congress Square Park, the surrounding neighborhood, and the City.

Option 1 is a flexible and accessible space (no steps or long ramps) and promotes interaction and cross traffic. Option 2 inhibits citizens from using the space with many barriers, physically and mentally - vertically and horizontally. KMDG / Utile mentioned that these features were "inviting," but there shouldn't be features to entice users. It should be natural, just like the cross traffic that Option 1 creates by generating a meaningful path from Congress to High Street - a shortcut. Cross traffic creates more "guardians" monitoring each other, making a safe environment with a self-fulfilling safety / user loop. Option 2 is the opposite. It has many blind corners and places to loiter, drink alcohol, urinate, and camp out for the night. It will be hard for the police to watch this site.

I commend the designers on both options, but as they said, Option 2 was hard to work around. I imagine it was like trying to put toothpaste back in the container. They even had to change the footprint of the event center to make it work. I had a professor that once said, "If you find yourself using too many tricks, materials, and complicated movements to make a project work, start over." It is like an inexperienced designer wanting to incorporate everything and ending up with a mess, like soup with too many spices! Option 1 is flexible and open. The design can change in innumerable ways at this point. Option 2 is limited, spatially and experientially. The flexibility of Option 1 will pay off in the future in terms of performances, art, markets, food, and how people will use in general.

Last, I feel the construction estimate is inaccurate and minimizes Option 2 by withholding real costs: the kiosk, the extra structure that Rockbridge will not pay for to support the roof, and the additional maintenance cost. It doesn't help that firms with vested interest in Option 2 created the two estimates. Of course you are going to cut the cost of a job you want to get!

I hope you listen to the public on this matter and not antiquated versions of urban planning and economics. Parks pay off!!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/10/2014 7:01:37 PM

First Name: Asher

Last Name: Playts

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Keep public space public!!!!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/10/2014 10:26:34 PM

First Name: not given

Last Name: not given

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: great work

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/11/2014 6:36:55 AM

First Name: Laurie

Last Name: Davis

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: After reviewing the designs I have a very strong preference for Option 1 as it is more accessible, open, flexible and visually pleasing.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/11/2014 6:41:33 AM

First Name: Susan

Last Name: Wiggin

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option One please.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/11/2014 5:28:51 PM

First Name: Angelika

Last Name: Schechter

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 2 is not inviting because:

- visitors do not like to go uphill/climb stairs (it's hard enough to get them away from Commercial St.) and even at 5% any inclination is hard on people who need to use them.
- It does not feel like a public park but like the front stoop of a private venue
- Cutting grass is much easier when flat than at an angle: believe me!
- Safe: at this height, there is no way for someone at street level to see mischief on the rooftop, or to get there quickly. Even with that open space, one could hide there most effectively especially at night.
- Clean & Safe: the alley along Vineland is a sure dirt trap and hiding place, like the one connecting Exchange St. to the Fox Court Bathrooms...
- Maintenance: In winter, snow has to be removed from all steps else the park is not accessible. Again from experience, lots of costs in labor + erosion of the steps by snow & salt.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/11/2014 5:54:07 PM

First Name: Kathleen

Last Name: Conway

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 1 is less costly for Portland taxpayers. The way the park sits now, it looks like a cesspool. Fill it in and make it ground level. option 2 leaves many unanswered questions costwise-Stick with Option 1.!!!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/11/2014 6:07:27 PM

First Name: abraham

Last Name: s

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Last June, I voted to save the park (as part of the Protect Portland Parks Referendum) - and that includes preserving the entire public footprint of Congress Square Park.

As a ground-level park, the potential many Portlanders witnessed this past summer can be maximized with a redesigned, rejuvenated, and re-landscaped urban public park. The vicinity that surrounds the corner of High Street and Congress Street continues to be built-up and intensified. With the resurgence of Congress Square Park, the space can counteract as a downtown oasis, and even the 35-year-old tress will become more important air-quality factors. The Park- as a ground-level park- makes all the good sense in the world, counterbalancing the burgeoning downtown, and providing public respite space for the state's most densely-populated neighborhoods (Parkside + West End), along with the Arts District.

The hybrid privatized "event" building, with the small park area, is precisely what voters opposed. It would be an unnecessary compromise and a major step backwards for Portland's public spaces. In the most practical terms, the "option 2" would be prohibitively expensive and inaccessible for those who cannot climb up ramps. This would surely exclude the elderly who live in the Plaza Building and regularly use the Park. Maintenance would also be problematic at best- considering elevators, sight-lines for law enforcement, and upkeep.

Option 1 provides for potentially vital green space, a public venue, and a unique public park that stays public.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/11/2014 6:14:23 PM

First Name: joanna

Last Name: streeter

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I work in the city of Portland and have enjoyed having beautiful parks to eat in/walk in/sit in. There is nothing appealing about having an events center in a small city park. The recent efforts of local organizers have shown that people care for their parks and will do anything to make them work for the city of Portland.

Please don't squander this resource. There are many people willing to work hard to ensure this park works for everyone. If you allow someone to build a structure, then that option is always lost. Let the people of Portland do everything they can do to fix this park, do not allow a business to have greater influence on the future of this park than the people!

thanks for taking this into consideration, and for protecting our resources!!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/11/2014 7:48:54 PM

First Name: Doris

Last Name: Ortiz

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: While I do appreciate each of the designs, I feel that option 1 offers more accessibility and the performance space is located in a better place in the plan. My main concern is the idea of turning High Street into two directions with one lane heading out of Portland. The Westin valet parking already causes traffic to stop when cars are double parked in front of the hotel for loading and unloading clients. This is even more complicated when the State Theater has a performance. I recommend that High Street remain one direction.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/11/2014 9:42:31 PM

First Name: Alice Brooks

Last Name: Spencer

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I don't like elevated parks. They don't seem like a place people will actually use.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/11/2014 9:46:28 PM

First Name: Lucky

Last Name: Hollander

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The final plan needs to be welcoming, accessible and open to all. It needs to have the flexibility to be used for a variety of creative community events.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 5:56:08 AM

First Name: Thomas

Last Name: MacMillan

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I support the ground-level park because of its accessibility and effective use of tax payer dollars. I support keeping Congress Square Park as open to the public as possible. Please do not build an event center and a rump park on Congress Square Park!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 6:03:02 AM

First Name: not given

Last Name: not given

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I like the cost effectiveness and flexibility of option one.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 8:00:13 AM

First Name: Ian

Last Name: Jacob

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 1 succeeds by applying the criteria for an effective park. The ground-level park will provide access for people of all ages and physical abilities; open visual sight lines from Congress St. and High St.; activated edges; a flexible design that can be easily adjusted to changing community needs; and the most usable space at a much lower cost than the elevated park.

Option 2 lacks many of the criteria for a successful park. Its' accessibility is significantly limited by the 481 foot ramp and stairs. The design is not flexible for a wider range of uses and thus limits programming options. The elevated park also creates limited sight lines not only from the street but also within the park by creating hidden corners that would compromise safety. Lastly, its' cost is significantly higher than a ground level park not only in initial construction costs but also in ongoing maintenance.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 8:28:57 AM

First Name: Elizabeth C

Last Name: Parsons

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: In principle, the Park should be on the ground, not elevated. The elevated option sounds too much like a boondoggle for private interests.

But both options offered in the official presentation look out of character so I hope it's not an either-or choice between these two unattractive designs. On the ground one, what's with that weird pergola? On the elevated one, why do we need a huge screen?

Why don't you issue an open RFP? How about inviting students in various local architecture, urban design, and art programs to come up with some options? Whatever happens, try to achieve a better unity between historic and futuristic than the two presented options offer.

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 9:29:37 AM

First Name: Melissa

Last Name: LaCasse

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 1 has my vote. More accessible and versatile, and more likely to draw people walking by into the park. It is the best solution. Option 2 is unaccessible, you cannot see it well from the street, more difficult to utilize as a temporary art space, etc...

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 9:34:42 AM

First Name: maureen

Last Name: hannigan

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: For the sake of the people you all represent, option 1 must be chosen. Quality of life for those who call Portland home especially those of us in wheel chairs makes option 1 the only viable choice. Our park, my park, is option 1 envisioned in beauty...rooted on one level with trees and plants and creativity.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 9:37:25 AM

First Name: Rosanne

Last Name: Graef

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am writing to support Option 1: Ground-level Park for the following reasons:

- * provides more benefit to more people, residents, visitors and businesses alike
- * flexible uses - now - different kinds of activities can be easily programmed for different-sized gatherings and types of activities
- * flexible uses - future - if the park is designed without lots of infrastructure and chopped-up spaces, as population density on the peninsula increases and as people's needs and desires change, the space can be more easily adapted than a roof-top space

- * more affordable - now - the cost estimates are not really comparable since the kiosk/pavilion price was left out of the rooftop option. In addition, if the ground-level park is simply designed, without a lot of extraneous features, it will be less expensive than the plan presented and could be done in phases
- * more affordable - future - the costs of maintenance and security will be lower and the tasks will be

more easily accomplished with the ground level park

* CDBG eligibility not guaranteed for the expenditure of any sale price the city might receive from RockBridge and if it were, why should CDBG money be invested in a building that's owned by a private entity that's not creating a truly open and public space for the benefit of the residents of Portland?

* not encumbered by what is at this point a vague ownership, liability and responsibility agreement between the City and RockBridge - what would the City really own? Who would have ultimate control of the programming, etc. of a rooftop space. This is clear-cut with the ground-level option, not so with a rooftop park. Within a relatively few years, the City could end up in court against RockBridge and perhaps end up with nothing.

* Portland is incredibly lucky to have a public open space in heart of peninsula that's spacious and sunny where people can gather to connect to nature (the sky, birds, greenery, more distant views) and to each other - please do not squander this precious resource!

* in closing, keep it simple - the design, the ownership and maintenance agreements

* and PLEASE make some provisions for public restrooms

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 9:42:10 AM

First Name: Yemaya

Last Name: StClair

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 1 seems like a much better use of space than option 2. It is more open for people of all ages and physical abilities, it allows for a wider range of activities, and the simple design allows for greater long-term sustainability.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 1:06:47 PM

First Name: Solange

Last Name: Kellermann

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I prefer Design #1 because it is more accessible to the public and will allow for a greater variety of uses. the large open area can be used by larger groups.

Design #2 has smaller sections that make users of one section not visible by users of other sections - the event center, a space facing High Street, and a space facing Congress Street. I think this configuration might invite the types of problems voiced earlier about who uses the Park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 3:01:03 PM

First Name: William

Last Name: Cary

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I prefer Option 1. It seems more open, inviting, and accessible and it also seems like more of a blank canvas so future generations can decide to tweak it (adding things, removing things) without having to start from square one. I like the flexibility that it presents.

Thanks,
Will

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 3:34:29 PM

First Name: Alexander

Last Name: Landry

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: A. Value is greater with Option 1. It has more than double the usable space of the rooftop option, and it's all pretty much on one level. Option 2 has half of the usable space. Ramps aren't usable; the green-colored triangles between ramps on High St side are not usable; the stairs aren't usable.

B. Option 1 would be flexible for events & programming, both physically and in terms of being a public space.

Option 2 is nowhere near as physically flexible, and the Westin/Eastland may pre-emptively reserve the space, because of their needs.

C. Edges of Option 1 could be made 'active' in the design process.

Option 2 edges wouldn't be active at all, and provide hiding places in back corner of the looong ramp, and behind the tv-screen.

D. Option 1 improves upon the current Congress Sq Park, and has more room, which would bring more people in.

Option 2 rooftop park will not draw people to it. There are either 43 steps or 481 feet of ramp to go up, to reach it, so it will have fewer people than now use Congress Sq Park.

E. Option 1 concept is flexible, in this design stage, so the design can be fine-tuned.

Option 2 isn't flexible at all. There is comparatively, much less that is changeable in this design.

F. If Option 1 needed adjustment, after it were built, it could be altered later.

If Option 2 were built, it wouldn't be changed for the duration of the 99-year lease.

In summary, Option 1 gives more people enjoying more space, built for less money!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 4:48:18 PM

First Name: Susan

Last Name: McCloskey

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I think the elevated park would be little used except by hotel guests and a few others. Ground-level park is much more neighborhood-friendly.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 5:55:11 PM

First Name: Pat

Last Name: O'Donnell

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The rooftop park will cost the city a lot of money, and it will have barriers for the public use.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 7:35:42 PM

First Name: Nat

Last Name: May

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The elevated park is too disconnected from the street and the people on the street, and has too little public space.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 9:04:47 PM

First Name: Pandora

Last Name: LaCasse

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I sit on this board as the representative to the Portland Public Arts Committee. Over three years ago we made the decision to make Congress Sq., which has been designated the heart of the Arts District a priority site for a major work of art. Since then

PPAC has committed \$200,000 towards this goal. We have also recently put together an art selection committee comprised of the major stakeholders in this area. The Park has had a renewal of positive activity this summer and fall. The Friends of Congress Square Park and community members have helped to make this area a vital and vibrant space.

Public Art both permanent and temporary can play an important role in creating a sense of place and identity and can be a key factor in establishing a unique and culturally active place and an economic engine for the area. PPAC is excited to join in the effort to make Congress Sq. and Congress Sq. Park a destination place with a distinct identity for future generations by procuring an iconic public art work. We are committed to raising the additional funds that will be needed to make this happen.

Congress Square Park is also an important site for temporary art of all nature. Site-lines, accessibility, flexibility are key elements in the placement of public art both permanent and temporary.

A ground level Park offers a variety of visual experiences from different vantage points whether approaching from the south, north, west or east. Each direction reveals a different perspective of the park and its visual and dynamic role and relationship to all the elements of the entire square. There is more opportunity for an art work to visually engage people from a variety of views and allows for a more dynamic relationship with the surroundings. There is also opportunity to have art that is multi unit, activating different areas of the park while still maintaining visual connection to the whole. Site lines are limited with a park on the roof. The system of ramps, stairs, platforms that are needed for physical access create rigid spaces and decreased visibility from one area to another.

Physical Engagement in the art piece is very important to the committee. We want people to be able to have multiple experiences and being able to touch is very important for a public work of art at this location. A ground level Park is clearly easily accessible for everyone from multiple access points along Congress and High St. All areas of the Park could be good sites for a public work of art where the public can engage with it on any level. Accessibility is very restricted with a Park on the roof. Parents with strollers and small children and people like Maureen who lives in the at Congress Sq. Plaza and visits the park daily would struggle to make the trip up this ramping system to attend events or experience public art.

Temporary public art can come in many different forms and a flexible space will allow us to think out of the box. A ground level park is the only option that truly allows for flexibility.

Preservation of the historical and Architectural Character is extremely important at Congress Square. The Square is bordered by historical landmark buildings and two of the edges of the Park are multi-levels of cascading brick facades with varying depths and texture of varied window placement. There is beauty in this layered expanse and depth of structure that expands to the sky. The design of the park needs to respect the inherent beauty and integrity of this space. A ground level park can do this. The roof top park design is inflexible in the required standards, creating a maze of diagonal and horizontal lines climbing up and up with rigid lines and structure that combine to create a visual bulk that doesn't fit visually in this historical area of our city. It is visually awkward.

This Park does not have a huge footprint but the surrounding buildings do and the streets are active with traffic moving in four directions. We need a park whose design has been simplified to its essential elements, that speaks to its potential beauty, allows its elements of nature to subdue the surrounding noise and gives us a moment of pause and makes us all feel wonderful when we are there.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/12/2014 11:02:00 PM

First Name: Michael

Last Name: Roylos

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The City is stressed for money!! The designs that have been submitted are nice and all, but don't address the basic needs of a park. There is no need for a build out or sale to the hotel. If you were serious about making a park, then make a park. Not a Plaza. Fill in the sunken area with dirt, the drainage is there already, get some big rocks from BlueStone and replicate Tommy's Park. There is no need for the overhead poles, stages etc. Just make a park . Bring in some large trees, lay down some sod, and make a Park. Real simple... Make believe that you are spending your own money, not the Hotels, and certainly not the taxpayers... Again, make a park, not some planners dream as to what would look good on their resume. Make A Park!!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/13/2014 12:17:55 AM

First Name: Sally H

Last Name: Nelson

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I fully agree with David Lacasse and prefer the Ground-level Park design for all the reasons he stated. Thank you for your consideration,

Sally Nelson

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/13/2014 5:49:20 AM

First Name: Holly

Last Name: Seeliger

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Performance stage

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/13/2014 6:11:27 AM

First Name: Emily

Last Name: Bruce

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: This space is very important to this city and I'm glad the city is giving it so much consideration. My hope is the square is step one in a longer term park planning process. How this space links to the museum, to Monument Square and to Longfellow would be worthwhile longer term considerations. How pedestrians access the park and how drivers find safe, clean, easy parking will all influence how much the parks get utilized. Thank you for all the work going into this now and especially to Friends of Congress Square.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/13/2014 9:00:24 AM

First Name: Jeanne

Last Name: Paterak

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Although I can see much room for improvement on the ground level design for the park, it is my preferred option. With my education in design and horticulture and my work experience within the architectural community I firmly believe the city would be best served by going with Option 1 the Ground Level Park.

Roof Top Parks most often are designed because there is limited green space available in a more densely built area. Replacing a park with a rooftop park serves the owners of the adjacent property who want to capitalize on more built space, it does not serve the people of the city.

Having a roof top park that few would bother to use and would have some security issues, much like those that people worried before. Who would feel safe walking up to a park that they could not see before they were "trapped" there?

Additional expense of engineering, safety, material etc all warrant red flags as well.

In landscape design the addition of a ramp is typically circumvented unless vast expanses of land are available. Ramps take up valuable space much like stairwells and all that area that could be devoted to food trucks, fair venues or seating and trees for shelter does not make a lot of sense.

The water feature should be thought out further, as a water feature that runs along the wall of Vinland would free up more seating and shade areas and make the most sense. In the winter it could be a display of lights activating it as a gathering spot, and in summer the cool area would likewise attract people, which is the goal is it not?

Finally my last observation is that the pergola structure as designed for this ground level schematic,

seems out of scale. It not as "warm", plant or user friendly as the pergolas in the other schematic. Was that intentional to deter people from preferring the ground level design?

Can this design be revisited and improved upon? I believe it can. Where is the color? The plant selections seems rather limited and further consideration of this can make or break a true green-space. It seems to me more work should be done considering the direction of light as it moves through the day and the seasons to truly capitalize on this very valued space and respite for our small yet vibrate downtown district.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/13/2014 11:51:22 AM

First Name: Judy

Last Name: Schneider

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Having just returned from a walk on the high line in NYC I thought an elevated park would be fun and interesting. But I do NOT believe it would be a good idea for Congress Square because it is an end not a journey. Parks should be able to be walked through and the proposed elevated park for Congress Square is a dead end.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Public Comment received online from 11/16 – 12/4

Form Submitted on: 11/18/2014 7:25:32 PM

First Name: Ben

Last Name: Walter

Address: 53 Clifton Street, Portland, ME

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I understand the complexity public divisiveness has brought to this challenge of finding a great solution to redeveloping Congress Square, but I feel the current path has made finding a great solution problematic.

While I applaud the efforts of all of those who have dedicated much time, passion and effort into the long and ongoing attempts to positively shape the renaissance of Congress Square as the respectable heart of Portland's Arts District, I remain baffled at how the current effort will ever lead us to a good end.

As a designer, I have learned long ago that there are thousands of solutions to any design challenge. Of those thousands, there are quite a few workable solutions and very few truly great solutions. If doors are closed to any of the possibilities, one is limiting their odds of success. Hence, the path to finding a great solution from the thousands is to leave ALL options open.

With this in mind, the current process – to exclude all options other than two per-determined schemes is flawed in concept and, in my opinion, very limiting to success. I sympathize with the designers and the study group who undoubtedly have had many great ideas that cannot be voiced or presented.

As a case in point, the alternative “buried bunker event center with rooftop park” concept only succeeds in making the “plaza only” design look good in comparison. While the designer's did their best to dress it up, neither the public or private spaces could ever be successful in this configuration.

Also, as a public use only space, the proposed “plaza only” design could be great if design were the only consideration. However, as an equitable response to the near 50/50 difference of opinion of Portland's citizens, this solution will serve to ensure that the concerns of nearly half of the citizens of Portland will be ignored. This 49% appreciates both great design/public use AND how any solution impacts the cost of living in Portland, yet there was no reasonable solution considered to get to this end.

Is there really no opportunity to find GREAT middle ground solution that ALL of Portland can embrace? Perhaps your creative designers could offer an option of their own to consider.

I believe there is a great solution out there if the City and the citizens really want to find it. One thing is clear to me: it won't be found through political compromise.

I would be remiss if I didn't say that I really do like the design vocabulary, aesthetics, textures and

particularly, the roadway improvements proposed for Congress Square as a whole. If a great programmatic solution could be found for Congress Square Park, this would be a great win-win solution.

As a final point, it is important to consider that initial construction costs are typically only 10-15% of the total cost of owning a property over 20 years. The remaining 85-90% of the investment is spent on long term operating, programming and maintenance, which must be balanced with income sources. While initial construction costs are informative, they need to be considered along with the long term operating costs and the economic impact/benefit of all options considered so as to demonstrate the true cost of each solution to the citizens.

Again, I appreciate all of the hard work the Council and members of the Congress Square Redesign Study Group have invested in the search for a great solution. I only encourage you to keep the door open to exploring other options until a truly great solution surfaces that represents the needs of all citizens of Portland is found.

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 11/19/2014 9:41:26 AM

First Name: Maple

Last Name: Razsa

Address: 50 Deering St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am strongly in favor of Option 1, which improves the existing park dramatically. The minimal changes that have been made over the past 18 months have already shown that this can be a viable space for the public and Option 1 capitalizes on this urban park for all to be able to use.

To be frank, I am shocked that Option 2 has even been discussed, or that there was ever a plan to privatize the only significant public space in this area of Portland's city center. The idea of privatizing a public park at any time, let alone in the midst of a period of rapid development, shows an utter lack of vision for our city and what it might be. Indeed, what is relatively unique about Portland is that it offers a compact and dense urban center in a small city. We should be developing towards being a more pedestrian friendly place, which means expanding the number of green urban oases, not eliminating them.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/24/2014 9:31:12 PM
First Name: John
Last Name: Branson
Address: 482 Congress St., Suite 304, Portland ME 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: A street level park is for the People. The idea of an elevated park above an event center carries with it all the wrong symbolism about whom this new park would be intended for. As Spike Lee would have said, jus do the right thing.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/24/2014 9:51:20 PM
First Name: John
Last Name: Eder
Address: Johnmichaeleder@gmail.com

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The public has spoken, the people want a ground level public park. Option 2 is an ongoing effort to not take "no" for an answer. No means no.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 6:01:36 AM
First Name: Anne-Marie
Last Name: Watson
Address: 100 State Street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I don't think Congress Square has ever been a park. I've lived here since 1974 and have only known it to be an underutilized plaza. This is a tempest on a teapot.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 7:49:56 AM
First Name: Sarah
Last Name: Cushman
Address: 94 Beckett St., 2nd Floor, Portland, ME 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I would like to see the ground-level park! The elevated park will be too expensive and I don't think people will get there from the ground level. That ramp looks like a big obstacle. Why can't they put the event center on top of the existing one-story building? I will be very disappointed if the Mayor keeps pushing the event center with an elevated park!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 8:30:38 AM
First Name: Stephen
Last Name: Gaal
Address: 176 Eastern Promenade, Portland, ME

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I think the public expressed pretty clearly that they want a park in that space and not a event center. I view the second option as not really keeping faith with public sentiment. A second story park would significantly impair willingness and perhaps ability to access the park for many people.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 8:42:52 AM
First Name: Robert
Last Name: Levin
Address: 94 Beckett St., 2nd Floor, Portland, ME 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Please stick with the ground-level park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 9:24:15 AM
First Name: James
Last Name: Ferreira
Address: rantundrave@yahoo.com

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: A two-level elevated park with events center seems excessive to me. It would negatively alter the feel of the space in my opinion, making it seem much more "corporate." A simpler one-level design, for me, would be the preferred option.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 1:16:28 PM
First Name: RJ
Last Name: Harper
Address: 121 Ashmont St, Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I much prefer the option 1 ground level park concept. This small park space in the congested downtown area should be open, visible and green. An "event center" is not appropriate for this space.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 1:21:04 PM

First Name: Keith

Last Name: Lane

Address: 71 Waterville St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 1 ONLY.

Keep Congress Square Park an open and public space for future generations!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 1:21:52 PM

First Name: Karen

Last Name: Snyder

Address: 72 Waterville St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Keep Congress Square Park an open and public space!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 1:44:54 PM

First Name: Millie

Last Name: York

Address: 71 Waterville

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: this is the way to go..

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 2:59:41 PM

First Name: mary

Last Name: barrett

Address: 87 parsons road

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: want ground level park

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 4:08:34 PM

First Name: Wells

Last Name: Lyons

Address: 97 Danforth St Apt 2 Portland ME 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Dear Members of the Council,

Having reviewed the Congress Square Park design concepts, I write in support of Option 1, the ground-level park. Option 1 affords more usable outdoor space, with better safety, access and options for programming, all at a lower cost than Option 2. Please vote in favor of Option 1 to continue Congress Square Park's transformation into a safe and pleasant neighborhood park.

Kind regards,

Wells Lyons

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 4:59:43 PM

First Name: Michael

Last Name: Boucher

Address: Freeport Maine

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts:

It certainly would be great for the downtown to have a quality convention/event space, and there are some merits to the earlier proposed hotel expansion. However, the two preliminary landscape concepts clearly illustrate just how small this space really is, and how difficult, if not impossible it will be to meet everyone's expectations. Trying to accommodate too many elements or activities will result in an over-programmed, and unsuccessful design. Representative of the citizens should take note and not promise something for everyone. There simply isn't enough space. Let's find another location for the event center space.

Further, despite the best efforts and talents of the current design team, the two design studies prove to me that fitting a well-functioning park atop this relatively small building is not possible. The rooftop scheme is a house with too many corridors and too few rooms. And no living room!

The City should prioritize the types of spaces and activities that are most important, to the most people, and foster a design that focuses on those few things. Keeping ambitions in focus will improve the chances that a simple, flexible, timeless (less fashion-of-the-day) space can be realized for the enjoyment of many future generations.

Finally, the City, should commit to a proper construction budget for such an important space. Somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1 million should not be regarded as a hefty sum to create a high

quality public facility in such an important downtown location. The last time I checked, a synthetic turf ball field costs that much, and has a life of about 10 years. This park and plaza should become a priority of the downtown community.

I look forward to an excellent result.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 5:41:50 PM

First Name: Herb

Last Name: Adams

Address: 231 State Street / Portland Me 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: From the point of view of cost, convenience, and construction the roof-level park with "Event Center " simply makes no sense. Even the most optimistic version of a roof-level park costs a fortune -- how is reasonable handicapped-access to be done ? How can the structure bear the weight of real trees, foliage, and something more than just plant pots and an icing of dirt ? What happens if the structure below the park (the "Event Center ") , which the public does not own, gets sold -- and the new owners don't want a multi-ton city park above them ?

Far better, and much more far-sighted, would be to improve the ground-level park. Portland has the talent, the public has the vision, and taxpayer's investment in open green space in the city center is where the real pay-off will come in the future.

Plus, to again push forward the "Event Center " (which began as a "Ballroom ") is simply to return to the issue which began the big public fight to begin with. Why do this ? Haven't we learned from that exchange ?

Portland would do better to invest its limited taxpayer dollars and abundant community spirit in a public process that improves the ground-level park and to make it what so many talented people know it could be.

Pretending a roof-top "park " is feasible is simply a Trojan Horse to re-fight the battle over selling public park space to a private entity for private profit as an "Event Center. " For many good reasons, a roof-top 'Park " is simply un-affordable, undesirable, and un-doable . Let's get back to the real, honest work at hand.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 6:46:20 PM

First Name: Diane

Last Name: Bienkowski

Address: 124 Pleasant Street Apt C

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I would prefer a ground level park as it creates a cleaner, more open landscape and allows for more diverse "park-like" activities.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 6:59:09 PM

First Name: Christine

Last Name: Hey

Address: 74 High St.

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The ground level park concept is great and is so much more inviting than a roof top event center. It's design lends itself in an attractive, interesting and useful way, by allowing all Portland citizens the ability to gather and make Congress Square park a unique place. A place to share a cup of coffee or tea, food with friends and family, make art, read a book, use wi-fi, take in a planned event, or just simply be. It's a perfect place to embrace the arts center, just stone's throw away from the museum with all this vibrant area has to offer. Keeping the square beautiful, spacious, vibrant, alive, and well cared for, is desperately needed especially during a time in which our city is rapidly developing, begging for more not less, open spaces!

A roof top park would be a ridiculous waste of resources for the few who would want to partake. There are so many reasons why it is not the solution for Portland's citizens.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/25/2014 8:06:35 PM

First Name: Steve

Last Name: Niles

Address: Maine Ave.

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Shrinking the ground level park space reduces the open space feel. It puts up walls in an already claustrophobic area.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/26/2014 8:52:31 AM

First Name: Mary

Last Name: Powers

Address: 46 Eastern Promenade

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: This should remain a city-owned public space, accessible to all from the street level. On the ground, it is a vibrant part of the downtown neighborhood, and the perfect place for ground level events. Making an elevated park, or taking the destiny away from the people of Portland, takes away the inherent ability to actively participate, even if you are just passing by the park. This space was utilitarian and had many wonderful public events in the past, and it could still use some sprucing up, but it is a viable space as the ground-level park, and serves the Portland community better than a privately held option.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/26/2014 8:07:37 PM

First Name: Victoria

Last Name: Bonebakker

Address: 91 Park St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Portland deserves a public park at Congress Square, and realistically, a roof top park will not serve that purpose; it is also an unrealistic design, it will deter users because of its inaccessibility. (How to water grass and keep the roof from leaking!?!?). If CSP is a failed park it is because it has been an ignored and poorly designed space, and this summer's activity demonstrates that it can function well as a gathering place for all kinds of people, rather than a dumping ground. It is important not to let immediate financial benefit overcome the long term benefits to the people of Portland that a well designed, functioning park would provide. Our open spaces are precious and add immeasurably to the quality of life in the city. We must not sell them to what isn't even the highest bidder! Why didn't the hotel think of a meeting space when it was designing the hotel interiors? This seems like a last minute, ill-thought out idea.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/28/2014 9:23:55 AM

First Name: stephen

Last Name: smith

Address: 13 deering st

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: We need a ground level park. A rooftop park is a poor choice as an urban amenity...

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 11/30/2014 9:48:19 AM

First Name: Steve

Last Name: Graef

Address: 30A Salem Street Portland Maine 04102

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The ground level park is clearly the better option in promoting public access and use. Additionally, because the ground level park is closely integrated with the adjacent street and sidewalks, users are likely to feel safer. My own use of this and similar parks is frequent but mainly incidental, as a diversion while walking somewhere. I would likely never use the elevated park. Financially, the ground level park delivers more benefit to the public with less taxpayer investment: the key point that should drive the decision is that the public interest is better served by the ground level park. The specific design concept for the ground level park does a good job including a critical feature - the passthrough or shortcut from Congress to High Street. This will improve the pedestrian experience at this intersection. However, I was hoping to see the park be a little more open and unified; it seems broken up. For example, it is important to have a dedicated open area, for occasional events and for day to day use by food vendors with space for seating adjacent to the vendor.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/1/2014 7:48:19 AM

First Name: Eleanor

Last Name: Ames

Address: 94 Neal Street, Portland 04102

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Dear Councillors,
I am writing in support of Option 1 for Congress Square Park. As a landscape designer and historian, a former board member of Greater Portland Landmarks and founder of the Maine Olmsted Alliance for Parks and Landscapes, it is clear to me that Option 1 provides the most benefits to all citizens of Portland. Such an important public space should provide a wide-range of year round amenities which can only result in an increase in activity and vibrancy which is missing today.

A rooftop park as proposed in Option 2 makes no sense from the point of view of accessibility and safety. I hope that you will deliberate carefully and choose Option 1 as it is by far the best option for the park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/1/2014 10:15:20 AM

First Name: Patrick

Last Name: Costin

Address: One Canal Plaza

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Congress Square Plaza – Repeat the mistake or restore Congress Square?

Congress Square Plaza was conceived in 1979 as an urban renewal project. Destroying a building and replacing it with trees, benches, and a public gathering space was the prescriptive cure for an undesirable urban environment. The city of Portland then spent \$50,000 per year on events in the plaza with the hope of making the space self-sustaining, but that never happened and, in time, the city budget could no longer bear this cost.

Congress Square, once a vital commercial center in Portland, lost definition as an urban square when the plaza was constructed. Similar to a room that has lost one of its walls, its identity was demolished. Now, thirty five years later, rebuilding the same plaza is deemed the prescriptive cure for an undesirable urban environment. The operative principles continue to be that amenities and entertainment in the plaza will deter undesirable behavior and create vibrant community space.

The Congress Square Redesign Committee, under the leadership of Councilors Donahue and Marshall, spent over four years coming up with the current proposal. Their recommendation: have the taxpayers pay \$1.5 million (design + construction) to rebuild the plaza (adding fountains, a trellis, video screens, and a rubber playground). The Friends of Congress Square Park has stated it will raise money to host events. However, what happens when there are no events, or when the entertainment fails to materialize or stops? If the plaza, a fundamentally failed space, did not work in the past why would it work in the future? Would adding plantings to the median of Franklin Arterial mend the furrow that urban renewal created there?

The City of Portland has received a proposal to sell a portion of the plaza so that a building could be built on it. The sale of real estate would pay the entire cost for creating a new, smaller public plaza immediately adjacent to Congress Street. The new plaza would be the same size as the gathering space in the existing plaza and accommodate the events that have occurred there. It could incorporate social and events spaces, public art, a fountain, café tables, and plantings. It would cost the taxpayer nothing and the city would receive property tax income, jobs for neighborhood residents, and year-round economic activity that would benefit businesses in the area.

Alternatively, the city could choose to build a public space on top of a building. It would cost \$1.2 (design + construction), \$300,000 less than the cost of rebuilding the plaza because the sale of real estate would offset project costs.

Neither of these proposals is supported by Councilors Marshall and Donahue. They recommend Portland taxpayers spend more to rebuild what hasn't worked for thirty five years.

The full city council has a choice: spend \$1.5 million again to repeat the mistake made 35 years ago, or create better public space while providing long term improvement of the community; all at no cost (or less cost) to the taxpayer.

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 12/1/2014 4:18:07 PM

First Name: Doug

Last Name: Emerson

Address: 142 High St., #306, Ptlid, ME 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: As a 15year artist who's studio is in The State Theater Bldg., I am in support of the ground-level park over the design with an "events center". The former will be more surface, open-space for the neighborhood as well as tourists who do wander up our way. The latter, will be more "events oriented", & that is NOT what we the voters voted for when we won the initiative. We've got a small venue like "Longfellow Square One", we've got clubs like "Blue, other pubs, The club down Congress near "Subway", AND for larger venues The State Theater Bldg. WHAT WE NEED IS OPEN SPACE that is FREE to the public, NOT a place for people to pay &/or sit for an "event", even if it's a free concert it will be more used by the people if it's a park, a level street park. If the city wants an "events center" redesign "Tommy's Square Park", or the median in the Old Port, where the city spent lots of \$\$\$ redesigning it, with landscaping & then shortly afterwards spent alot of \$\$\$ on "The Wave" debacle, & then spent alot of more \$\$\$, redoing it as it presently is! Our neighborhood needs to remain & have open space! (Another suggestion, where The Portland Museum owns property in the old YWCA location on Spring St., which the city SHOULD HAVE only allowed equal residential units, take it back by eminent domain & make THAT AN EVENTS CENTER!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/1/2014 4:33:17 PM

First Name: Jacob

Last Name: Charette

Address: 119 Morning Street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I realize there is a need for more convention space in Portland, but it seems like a better idea to devote more resources towards another area, maybe the Thompson's Point area. To me, the people have already spoken and what they want at Congress Square is a park not a convention center. Putting a park on top of the convention center seems to make the park secondary, an afterthought that seems unlikely to be used very often. It also seems

unsafe from a height standpoint, not to mention if the present concern is that homeless hang out there too much, having a place to hang out, out of eyesight doesn't seem like it will help and it will be hard to monitor. Finally, if Option 2 were to go through, it seems inevitable that it would be met with opposition as before. Just my two cents.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/1/2014 4:37:27 PM

First Name: Stephen

Last Name: Pride

Address: 570 Congress St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 1 with the metal structure cutting through the square looks like an unfinished construction project. The second option looks upscale and well worth the additional \$400,000.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/1/2014 9:04:25 PM

First Name: matthew

Last Name: baxter

Address: 82 rackleff st portland me 04103

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Whichever design benefits the city's needs economically and structurally (#1) enhances vibrancy (#2) and serves the needs of the tax paying public best (#3) I am most in favor of.

In short, I am tired of the pathetic appeals over space usage in this city. I want what is best for the city as a whole.

Form Submitted on: 12/2/2014 10:06:20 AM

First Name: Roger

Last Name: Cropley II

Address: 559A Congress 3rd floor

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I'm a business tenant in the area and I think the elevated design concept would be more versatile. Plus, being a video editor and film buff, I feel the video screen at the top would be a great way to bring nighttime community entertainment to the area by providing a gorgeous venue for family movie nights, film festivals and could also be used to advertise and promote other community events.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/2/2014 1:27:43 PM

First Name: Steven

Last Name: Biel

Address: 31 Cushman St. #2, Portland, ME 04102

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I support Option 1. The park should be used for public enjoyment, not given over to for-profit private corporations.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/2/2014 4:16:27 PM

First Name: jaime

Last Name: parker

Address: 73 Atlantic st

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am looking forward to moving forward with a ground level park that is part of a greater Congress Square.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/2/2014 5:23:01 PM

First Name: denis

Last Name: nye

Address: 72 Oak st. Portland me 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option creates more of a public place for all to enjoy the open space.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/2/2014 5:55:52 PM

First Name: Rob

Last Name: Lieber

Address: 139 BRACKETT ST

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: A design that allows for elasticity to absorb the desired community far best is Option 1. Many more possibilities for the park to be used fluidly, which is the goal in my opinion. The other options feels like the designers priority is for the hotel to have a dynamic new entrance and more set in stone elements to limit the communities needs. We need more usable - pliable open space in the center of our city that has lots of options already for indoor events.

I would prefer to not be a pedestrian and having a "elevated park" above me with people with cameras or who ever people watching at a spectator height. This maybe a nice idea in another part of the city but it feels that it is unneeded dynamic to add to the area. It is good while we have a chance now to keep the open feeling, everyone in a open public park together or just walking along side on the side walk. If we can come close to what we did at Post Office Park then I will be really happy and from my observations the community will be served well.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/2/2014 6:11:46 PM

First Name: Ebyn

Last Name: Moss

Address: 72 Oak Street, Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I prefer Option 1 as it appears to hold a more flexible space for various uses while also maintaining the public space feel.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/2/2014 9:22:05 PM

First Name: Robert

Last Name: O'Brien

Address: 95 West St, Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I think the highest and best use for Congress Square Plaza is a ground-level park. An elevated public space on top of an event center is not practical or cost-effective.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/3/2014 10:39:52 AM

First Name: Kara

Last Name: Wilbur

Address: 89 West Street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Its been shown that elevated parks do not work as places for people to gather, just as the sunken park has not been an ideal design for promoting safe and comfortable use of the Congress Square Space. Lets get back to basics and design a civic space that we know will work. It doesn't need to be a costly, clever, experimental design. Fill in the hole in the ground. Keep the tables and chairs. Add some games. Activate the ground floor of buildings that frame the park. At the rear of the site, in light of grade change, this could be an inexpensive temporary or permanent liner, with a footprint as shallow as 20 ft.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/3/2014 11:48:59 PM

First Name: Lisa

Last Name: Scali

Address: 64 West St. Portland 04102

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option #1 is the obvious choice to allow this wonderful space to continue to be a source of pride and community engagement. Not to mention just plain fun.,

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park



PCCC comments on Congress Square Plaza Report

November 17, 2014

Councilors:

Like much of the city, the Portland Community Chamber of Commerce has for years maintained a keen interest in Congress Square and Congress Square Plaza. Tonight as you receive the newest report on the issue, and as another phase of the process begins, the Chamber offers a few thoughts for your consideration and for the community's consideration.

In addition to the various boards and commissions that will review the report and its proposal for the Plaza, we urge you, the City Council, to **perform a cost/benefit analysis on all three Plaza options proposed so far, including the original proposal. For this reason we suggest that you instruct the several ensuing reviews, including your own, to include analysis of all three proposals.**

Your analysis will likely show that the Park-Only option (Plan A) will be the most expensive to taxpayers and will bring the fewest economic benefits to the neighborhood and the city. Hence, it is the lowest-value proposal. The same analysis will likely show the original proposal to bring most the value to the city. The Park above the event center (Plan B) will likely fall somewhere in between on the value scale.

We already know the values for the original proposal. The city will get 4000 square feet of new plaza at no cost to taxpayers since the real estate sale proceeds will cover all the cost of the public space renewal (4000 sf x \$100/sf = \$400,000, leaving approximately \$250,000 for design fees and other improvements to the Square).

The next-best value appears to be Plan B: the event center with the park above it. Plan B will cost taxpayers less than Plan A because the real estate sale proceeds will offset the cost of the public space, while also providing long term economic benefit and tax revenue.

Plan A offers essentially the same amenity that we implemented 35 years ago, i.e., **public space which is only activated by programming that the city isn't funding and that private citizens cannot guarantee will happen.** We should be careful about repeating the mistake we made when we created the Plaza, this time at a cost of \$1.5 million to the taxpayers.

The stakeholders have delivered a helpful report to you. They deserve our thanks for the work they did. But now that the issue is back on the policymaking agenda, **the broader discussion moving forward must give serious weight to public value and benefit for the entire city.**

With many fiscal difficulties and uncertainties before us, the city must make the best investment in Congress Square and the Plaza. The public can have high-value renewed public space and economic development that will benefit the entire city if **both Plan B and the original proposal remain in consideration throughout the process.**

Chris O'Neil

Public Comment received online from 12/5 – 12/11

Form Submitted on: 12/6/2014 8:32:24 PM

First Name: Kathleen

Last Name: Finn

Address: 38 Caleb Street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I like the ground level option as it feels more readily accessible to passersby

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/8/2014 9:19:52 PM

First Name: james

Last Name: rohman

Address: 57 elmwood st.

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I strongly believe that a ground level park will serve the public interest better than a rooftop park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/9/2014 10:44:04 AM

First Name: Susan

Last Name: Pye

Address: 151 Congress St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I support a private/public partnership for the Congress Square Redesign. I do not support using tax dollars to redesign this park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/9/2014 12:10:53 PM

First Name: Mark

Last Name: McAuliffe

Address: 141 Preble Street Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am one of the owners of Apothecary by Design. I am hopeful that this review process will recognize the benefits of a combined park and commercial enterprise. Not only would this create a great space for the public it would also create jobs and more opportunities for Portland and the region. I also believe it is premature for a decision to be made yet by the City Council. Much more work needs to be done. Residents and businesses cannot afford a solution that provides no funding for the park. By combining commercial space into the proposal a win/win can be created

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 12/10/2014 9:35:07 PM

First Name: Elizabeth

Last Name: Stoddard

Address: 7 Gable Court Port 04103

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Definitely prefer the grounds level concept.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 9:52:33 AM

First Name: Faith

Last Name: Boudreau

Address: 104 McKinley Court

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I support the 'park only' option, which provides green space at street level.

Having an elevated park does not add to the greenery to those walking through the area, and only adds visual interest to those looking out windows from above. No matter how you dress it up, the space is being taken from the public. I oppose giving up public space to private parties.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 9:55:54 AM

First Name: Janet

Last Name: Hansen

Address: 144 Fore Street, Portland, Maine

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Would prefer the scheme with the event center.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 9:56:34 AM

First Name: Paul

Last Name: Peck

Address: One monument way

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The combined park and event center appear to be a more long term solution to activate the park and reduce the costs to tge raxpayers

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:13:15 AM

First Name: David

Last Name: Very

Address: 67 Codman St.

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: As a taxpayer in the City for over 25 years, there is no question in my opinion that the best use of this square is a private/public mixed use with the agreement to have the hotel build an event center and defray the costs of the City in developing the public area.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:23:27 AM

First Name: Pamela

Last Name: Torrey

Address: 19 Pine St. Portland, ME

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am strongly in favor of working with the hotel to redevelop Congress Square Park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:23:48 AM

First Name: Ellen

Last Name: Murphy

Address: 88 Park Street, Portland 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I do not understand the design for the ground-level park. What is that scaffolding that overhangs the park? It seems to have no relationship to the surroundings and simply looks gimmicky - some architect's fantasy plunked down without rhyme or reason. I am not opposed to an event center, as long as it is thoughtfully designed and access to the space is preserved for the public. The second design as presented doesn't seem to guarantee that.

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:24:48 AM

First Name: Jim

Last Name: Cohen

Address: 62 Deepwood Dr.

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Overall, I like the integration of the Congress Square Plaza area with the Museum area. That alone will help the area. Regarding the two options, there are elements of both plans worth considering, but neither plan is entirely acceptable. Option 1 reflects a necessary improvement over the current plaza as it will improve needed through traffic. However, it offers more of the same -- a plaza bounded by walls on 2 sides. It also does nothing to address Portland's critical need for more

conference space -- which will bring needed foot-traffic to the area. Option 2 offers more conference space, but it is hard to tell if it is enough space. Also, the sloping hill along High Street seems like wasted space, and the rooftop park offers minimal use options and will be virtually impossible to police -- hence, it should only be open for specific events where the space can be monitored, which limits its value to the public. The steps in Option 2 are aesthetic, but limit ground space -- use of this feature should hinge on how much level open space is available.

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:27:17 AM

First Name: Alice

Last Name: Spencer

Address: 52 bowdoin Street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Ground level park is the only sensible solution for Congress Square.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:30:18 AM

First Name: Roger

Last Name: Mayo

Address: 28 Sherman Street, Portland, Maine 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I think it should just be a park. No event center.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:33:04 AM

First Name: Kyle

Last Name: Fair

Address: 174 Neal St # 5

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I think this is a win win for both sides. I travel extensively for work and many cities across the US have utilized similar spaces in this very way. Most notably Cleveland and their new convention center which has a beautiful expansive public space above and modern and heavily used convention space.

I understand cost is an issue. However, the ground level park at roughly \$1.4 million will need to be paid for in whole by either the city (ie taxpayers) or fundraising, which can be a lengthy process. The \$1.8 million elevated park and event center will be a partnership between the public and private entities and gives both sides exactly what they have been asking for.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:36:52 AM

First Name: Tim

Last Name: Brooks

Address: 165 Prospect Street, Portland, ME 04103

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: While I like the elevated park in concept, I fear that in reality it would not work as hoped. The elevated portion likely would be largely unused except by people who'd rather not be seen or have to interact with people at street level. A very nice design, in other words, but one that won't work as anticipated in my opinion. The ground-level design, on the other hand, will create a vibrant interactive space.

My one concern is the right turn onto Free Street when traveling east on Congress Street. A number of cars now go straight from Congress to Free Street, and planners will simply need to ensure that the right turn on to Free Street does not slow traffic at the Congress-State intersection.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:41:27 AM

First Name: Stephen

Last Name: DiMuccio

Address: 149 Western Promenade

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Handicap access will be an issue with Option 2. Large outdoor events will be hindered with the split design of option 2. Both options could include a raised tower for the Union Station Clock, open below right on the corner. This would preserve this important historic landmark. The open area below could have a raised platform stage for entertainment, bands etc.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:44:20 AM

First Name: Don

Last Name: Carlson

Address: 485 Cumberland Ave #19 Portland ME 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: We NEED this public/private partnership. The vote was a complete sham, with it being presented as a private use of public space. This was a con, because as soon as the vote was over, they filled the park with wheeled vehicles conducting private for-profit business in our public space. Get the trucks out of our parks first. Keep our parks free of private businesses.

An event center in the arts district is a win-win for the people of Portland. Taking the trees out of their corrals and placing them at people-level is a win-win.

Please restore our park to the people and away from the food trucks.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:44:10 AM

First Name: Richard

Last Name: Marino

Address: 38 Redlon Pk RdHi

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Hello,
I have always preferred the smaller park concept. Congress Square is already a fairly large open area. By bringing the edge of the proposed area more towards the square I believe it creates a more inviting space.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:54:53 AM

First Name: james

Last Name: gauthier

Address: 57 spruce st

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: the original proposal for freestanding events center and ground level plaza adjacent to congress street remains the best option financially and in terms of urban design

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 11:02:44 AM

First Name: Frederica

Last Name: Jackson

Address: 48 state street # 32 Portland 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Please develop this space

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 11:13:05 AM

First Name: catherine

Last Name: field

Address: 90 neal street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I prefer the open space of the ground level park which is truly public and spacious.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 11:20:31 AM

First Name: Jessie

Last Name: Lacey

Address: 401 Cumberland Ave.

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I think the elevated park idea is the best. It is both unique and allows for a wider range of uses.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 11:34:23 AM

First Name: Joel

Last Name: Pelletier

Address: 1295 Forest Ave, Apt 2, Portland, ME 04103

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I fully support a redesign of the existing park that keeps it at ground level and incorporates new and innovative "green" design elements. Congress Square Park is a public treasure in the heart of the Portland and should be a showcase of what an urban park can and should be. However, under no circumstances should any part of the park be sold to private entities for private development.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 11:39:35 AM

First Name: Mary

Last Name: Jeton

Address: 214 Ocean Ave

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I prefer the public/private concept. Thank you

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 11:51:05 AM

First Name: Cadence

Last Name: Atchinson

Address: 42 Munjoy St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I think a Public Private partnership is the way to go.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 11:53:12 AM

First Name: Isabel

Last Name: Anderson

Address: 124 Pleasant St. Apt. D

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I STILL prefer the Ground-level park. More accessible and cheaper to maintain.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 12:16:47 PM

First Name: Pamela

Last Name: Murton

Address: 139 Whitney Ave. Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I support the ground level park only design for Congress Square. Portland, the "Forest City" is quickly becoming the 'highly developed city' and is losing much of its precious green space. In my travels throughout the United States, I've seen many, many towns - large and small - that have embraced the use of green space for ALL. Please help to make Portland one of those wonderful places, before it disappears in a sea of brick, granite, glass, and concrete. Thanks!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 1:07:11 PM

First Name: Mary

Last Name: Roy

Address: 122 North St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am disappointed to learn that the Redesign Study Group's decision for a "park only" concept, rather than the public-private partnership that would create a park combined with an event center on the site. The public-private partnership has fiscal benefits that are both immediate and long term. It is a win-win approach to a very contentious issue. As a Portland taxpayer, I would welcome the interest of the Westin Harborview Hotel to invest in our wonderful city. It would be very shortsighted on the part of the decision makers to elect the taxpayer-funded public space option.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 1:10:46 PM

First Name: Ned

Last Name: Foster

Address: 211 Cumberland Av

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Serious? This is the choice? Right now you have about ten times more "park" space that you need on site. All that space from the clock back to the hotel is a waste. At the times that people are gathering there, its always right up front between the clock and Congress St. So make something useful out of all that wasted space AND improve the remainder as a nice park. Why even think about doing it the same way all over again. Especially knowing you can't pay for it. Not sure the rooftop thing is even do-able, but these two ideas are a good start but neither one is obviously the answer. It says here 'city council will be deciding between 2 options" but that's silly to limit it like that. Yes make a nice park. Yes make a nice event center. Get private business to pay for it if they're still interested. See what they come up with for a deal and a plan. Then have a straight up referendum on it without all the other stuff we voted on last

time It will pass big if its a good deal

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 1:15:20 PM

First Name: Diane

Last Name: Brakeley

Address: Spirits Alive Board, Eastern Cemetery, Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I feel strongly that a ground-level park is more in keeping with the feel of Portland, Maine

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 1:20:00 PM

First Name: Domna

Last Name: Giatas

Address: 150 Capisic Street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I prefer the park only concept. No events center.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 1:24:53 PM

First Name: nicole

Last Name: meserve

Address: 4 norwood street Portland, Maine

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I don't have any additional comment

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 1:32:27 PM

First Name: Claire

Last Name: Oppenheim

Address: 41 Carleton Street Portland ME

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The park is not used as is! A convention center would add jobs and also put Portland more on the map which is a good thing economically and socially.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 1:38:06 PM

First Name: Michael

Last Name: Mertaugh

Address: 118 Beacon Street, Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am strongly in favor of the ground-level option. Since Portland had a referendum on this question, I consider it inappropriate and a waste of the city's resources that we are still considering an events center option. Isn't the City Council listening?

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 1:46:12 PM

First Name: Edmund

Last Name: McCann

Address: 150 Capisic St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Keep the park and keep footprint and keep access at ground level

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 1:55:03 PM

First Name: Debra

Last Name: Tenenbaum

Address: 18 Rabbit Run, Portland, ME 04102

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I like the one with the event center and park on top. I feel like Portland has so many other pressing needs - such as people needing places to live and food to eat, and children needing help in school. If Portland had a huge surplus that it knew wouldn't run out - ever, I would be fine with just the park version. But really, I would rather see people seeking asylum have a way not to starve to death before being able to get a job. And I would love to see more support in our schools so we don't have so many children struggling. And I would love to not have to raise our tax rate more forcing families to move to other towns because they have lower taxes and better school systems.

As a former event planner, I also know Portland is in major need of more event venues. There are simply not enough venues that host large groups. This would be good for our city in so many ways - offering jobs for people working there, offering another way for groups outside of Portland through attending an event there, to see our city and potentially relocate, and offering the city more money in terms of sale of land and property taxes.

Let's face it, while I applaud the Friends of Congress Square for putting on some events this summer, it's not enough to make it worth it. And the fact that the friends have a place to hang out is not enough to warrant diverting much needed (and rare) city funds to making sure a group of - maybe - 50 people have a place to sit outside and play chess. There are other places already set in town - Monument Square, Tommy's Park, East End, Western Prom, smaller places like Lobsterman Park, Longfellow Square, and even Taylor Park over in that area. These all offer great opportunities to hang outside and join as a community - and frankly, aren't being used to their potential. Why have 6 different plazas/parks that are 10% used instead of 4 plazas/parks that are 40% used?

I am a huge fan of Portland's outside areas. I totally understand their benefit to our city and the people who

live here. I just don't think it's worth putting so much money into setting up and maintaining yet another place that will be used so minimally (even when there's a food truck and tables there). Let's not forget, we are a cold-weather city. Is it worth putting so much money into something that will only be used (for the most part) only a few months out of the year?

I would have preferred the city had sold the whole thing to the Westin and have them develop it all so we could get some money and stop having to maintain it. I would rather Portland put its funds to helping those truly in need - especially when there are plenty of other places for people to gather. But, if I had to choose between these two options, I would take the elevated park and event center.

Thanks,
Deb Tenenbaum

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 1:59:07 PM

First Name: David

Last Name: Plimpton

Address: 1000 Sawyer Road, Cape Elizabeth ME 04107

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am not a resident of Portland, but my interest was born from working on the new Portland Museum of Art (Museum) project in the early 1980s. I served as President and then as a Vice President of the Portland Society of Art/Portland Museum of Art during much of the relevant time period.

The Museum and City \$4.6 M UDAG (now called Community Block Grants) grant application and award contemplated preserving Congress Square Plaza (Plaza) as an important public space complimenting all of the public assets which were part of the Museum and associated Congress Square area projects.

The City, especially in recent years, after getting federal UDAG funds to create and beautify the Plaza, never lived up to its commitments to the public spaces which were created or improved as part of the Museum and Congress Square "precinct", in the parlance of Harry Cobb and I.M. Pei. The vista of the Museum facade from the Plaza was an integral part of the total public ambiance being created and to be preserved.

Now the City, after not living up to its commitments to these public spaces, along with the Chamber of Commerce and the Westin Hotel (the interested private special interests here), want to sell the public's interest in the Plaza down the river, and thumb their noses at all the efforts of Museum supporters and other members of the public over the years for the people of Portland and the whole Greater Portland community as a whole. The proposed event center signifies a shameful and shocking dereliction of the City's duty of stewardship flowing from acceptance of \$4.6 M of federal UDAG funds to help build a new public museum and improve other public spaces, like the Plaza.

The following history is illuminating:

<http://portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/2007>

See also a May 12, 2010 Face book post::

"The City of Portland and the Congress Square Redesign Study Group will host a public forum to discuss the future of Congress Square Plaza and opportunities to redevelop the space to better meet the public's needs. The study group was created by the City Council in response to concerns that the space was being under utilized. The group will evaluate alternatives and make recommendations for potential future use.

The current Congress Square Plaza was created in 1981 as part of a comprehensive program of improvements to Congress Square funded by a federal Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG). The UDAG grant provided funding for the plaza, construction of the I.M. Pei Wing of the Portland Museum of Art, restoration of the HH Hay Building, extensive renovations to the Eastland Park Hotel, a facade improvement program and public improvements within the square. Prior to its conversion into an urban plaza, a small-scale commercial block housing Dunkin Donuts occupied the property.

Although there has been significant investment in the plaza since its construction in terms of programming and events, the potential of the plaza to serve as a true urban asset has never been fully realized. The purpose of the forum is to gather creative ideas from the community to make this space truly function as the heart of the Arts District."

It is my opinion that the City cannot meet Federal HUD standards for selling part of the Plaza (a federally subsidized public space) to a private entity for private use. But due to political connections between City of Portland officials and the Obama administration, it remains to be seen whether HUD will play Pontius Pilate and allow Congress Street Plaza, an innocent victim of private greed, to be crucified.

Sincerely,
David Plimpton

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 2:01:08 PM

First Name: Marc

Last Name: Chadbourne

Address: 24 Deering Street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I prefer option 2 with elevated park and event center. It is not about having a large space it is about what you do with the space you have. The steps design will draw people in as a safe comfortable social space near work, shopping and the arts. Notably New Orleans (at Jackson Park), London, Berlin (around their city squares) and many of the monuments around DC have these large steps which become a natural gathering place to socialize, eat lunch and rest. I also like the idea of not selling the land for the event center but doing a long term lease and receiving recurring revenue.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 2:21:13 PM

First Name: Sam

Last Name: Chandler

Address: 26 poland st

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: As Congress Square Park became newsworthy, so did recognition of the importance of our public spaces. In not too long, the original concerns of the park as a place for unlawful activity were thwarted when the public revitalized the space using public events and simple redesign of the use of the space. The public is fully capable of, given the chance, providing energy to the space without adding an events center. I support a ground-level park, with minimal cost for redesign, and a focus on a community-oriented approach moving forward with the space.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 2:34:32 PM

First Name: Erik

Last Name: Hayes

Address: 30 Vesper Street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Park only

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 2:43:16 PM

First Name: Frank

Last Name: Gallagher

Address: 153 Ashmont St., Portland, ME

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I much prefer the ground-level park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Congress Square Plaza – Repeat the mistake or restore Congress Square?

Congress Square Plaza was conceived in 1979 as an urban renewal project. Destroying a building and replacing it with trees, benches, and a public gathering space was the prescriptive cure for an undesirable urban environment. The city of Portland then spent \$50,000 per year on events in the plaza with the hope of making the space self-sustaining, but that never happened and, in time, the city budget could no longer bear this cost.

Congress Square, once a vital commercial center in Portland, lost definition as an urban square when the plaza was constructed. Similar to a room that has lost one of its walls, its identity was demolished.

Now, thirty five years later, rebuilding the same plaza is deemed the prescriptive cure for an undesirable urban environment. The operative principles continue to be that amenities and entertainment in the plaza will deter undesirable behavior and create vibrant community space.

The Congress Square Redesign Committee, under the leadership of Councilors Donahue and Marshall, spent over four years coming up with the current proposal. Their recommendation: have the taxpayers pay \$1.37 million to rebuild the plaza (adding fountains, a trellis, video screens, and a rubber playground). The Friends of Congress Square Park has stated it will raise money to host events. However, what happens when there are no events, or when the entertainment fails to materialize or stops? If the plaza, a fundamentally failed space, did not work in the past why would it work in the future? Would adding plantings to the median of Franklin Arterial mend the furrow that urban renewal created there?

The City of Portland has received a proposal to sell a portion of the plaza so that a building could be built on it. The sale of real estate would pay the entire cost for creating a new, smaller public plaza immediately adjacent to Congress Street. The new plaza would be the same size as the gathering space in the existing plaza and accommodate the events that have occurred there. It could incorporate social and events spaces, public art, a fountain, café tables, and plantings. It would cost the taxpayer nothing and the city would receive property tax income, jobs for neighborhood residents, and year-round economic activity that would benefit businesses in the area.

Alternatively, the city could choose to build a public space on top of a building. It would cost \$1.43 million, only \$60K more than the cost of rebuilding the plaza because the sale of real estate would offset project costs. The \$60K would be paid back in less than one year by real estate taxes from the event center.

Neither of these proposals is supported by Councilors Marshall and Donahue. They recommend Portland taxpayers spend more to rebuild what hasn't worked for thirty five years.

The full city council has a choice: spend \$1.37 million again to repeat the mistake made 35 years ago, or create better public space while providing long term improvement of the community; all at no cost to the taxpayer.

What do you think they should vote to do? What choice would you make?



On November 5th, the Congress Square Redesign Study Group voted 10-5-1 to recommend to the City Council that the best use and design for Congress Square Park is “option 1”, redesigning the park at ground level in its entire existing footprint.

The Friends of Congress Square Park strongly support the CSRSG’s recommendation. Our successful placemaking efforts over the past 7 months demonstrate that Congress Square Park is a beloved public space that contributes to the social and economic vibrancy of the upper Congress Street neighborhood. The park was quite simply in need of active management and programming, which our organization is committed to continuing to provide if the City commits to keeping the entire public space in its existing footprint.

A thoughtful redesign at groundlevel will allow Congress Square Park to reach its full potential as a vibrant public space. It will address many of the design and programmatic problems that currently exist. It will allow us to make the park **MORE ACCESSIBLE** to people of all ages and physical abilities by eliminating the 5 steps down into the park that currently provide an actual barrier to entry to many neighbors, and a perceived inconvenience to others. It will be **MORE OPEN AND INVITING** by eliminating hidden spots and impermeable edges, and by activating recessed areas, like the back corner, with play structures or permanent kiosks with retail (food/coffee/stores) that attract visitors throughout the year. It will be **MORE FLEXIBLE** to allow for a wide range of amenities and activities to attract a diverse group of people during all seasons. For example, we have received many requests for an ice skating rink and would commit to fundraising to help purchase one next year, making the park a daily destination during the winter season as well.

In comparison, the elevated park over an event center actually worsens many of the recognized design challenges with the current space. Any perceived problems with groups dominating the current park, or lack of use, would just be exacerbated in an elevated space. It significantly reduces accessibility and flexibility, which will make it far more challenging to program, resulting in far fewer people using it. The 481’ ramp and 40+ stairs to the green roof would be a true barrier for many members of our community, moms with kids and strollers and seniors in particular - the very users we need to attract if we want to make a successful park! The elevated green roof (24’ high) would be almost entirely hidden from pedestrians on the street, creating hidden spots that would most certainly affect safety. The initial costs are considerably higher (Wright Ryan’s costs estimates do not include the structural upgrades to the building that would be required and which the hotel has stated they would not cover), but more importantly, ongoing maintenance costs would be significantly higher and would, in all likelihood, exceed our City’s resources resulting fairly quickly in a run down and unused space – especially during the snowy winter months.

In an effort to find a politically convenient “win-win”, Option 2 would instead condemn our citizens to an actual lose-lose: significantly more public resources to fund higher construction and ongoing maintenance costs, for less public space, used less often and by fewer visitors.

Congress Square Park is located in Portland's most densely populated residential neighborhood - home to many low-income families and seniors, as well as to an array of small local businesses and arts organizations. Properly managed through a public private partnership with the FoCSP, Congress Square Park will successfully bring the diverse commercial and residential neighbors together. The square and its park will be a vibrant community gathering place and thriving hub for social and economic development along the upper Congress Street corridor for generations to come.

We ask that you join us in seizing this once in a lifetime opportunity to create a beautiful, flexible and timeless public space by recommending that the Council move forward with redesigning the entire park at ground level. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our placemaking observations from managing the park over the past 7 months, and our vision for its future.

Sincerely,

The Friends of Congress Square Park

Congress Square Park Design Concept Evaluation and Comparison

The Congress Square Redesign Study Group voted 10 to 5 to recommend that the best use and design for Congress Square Park is Option 1 - ground level in existing footprint.

Critical Design Elements for a Successful Public Park	Option 1 14,000 SQ Ft Ground Level Park	Option 2 9,000 SQ Ft Event center with roof top park
Accessibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Easily accessible to people of all ages and physical abilities which will increase activity and vibrancy in the entire square 2. Easy access to ground level events, equipment placement, etc. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited accessibility for elderly and people with mobility issues, mothers with children and strollers 2. A 481 foot ramp or 40 stairs are required for park access 3. Limited access for bands or vendors to get equipment to the roof making programming significantly more challenging
Open Visual Sight Lines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New design can eliminate all hidden areas making the park feel safe and inviting 2. All areas of the park are visible from both High St. and Congress St. encouraging people to enter into the inner park 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited visibility of roof park from street level discouraging use, especially for women and seniors 2. Many hidden areas allowing undesirable behavior to occur out of public view. High costs for patrolling to ensure safety.
Flexible and Timeless Design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Options for a wide variety of amenities, activities, and attractions for all seasons 2. Multiple areas for events & programming 3. Many areas for moveable tables and chairs 4. Good access to food trucks on High St., food trucks could also be located in the park 5. Able to evolve with changing community needs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many fixed structures such as 481 foot ramp and granite stairs that significantly limit variety of amenities and activities 2. Limited and difficult to access event space 3. Limited/hidden area for movable furniture 4. No possibility for shade on steps will make use unlikely during hot summer months 5. No ability to evolve with changing community needs
Permeable Edges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All park activity begins on the edge and moves inward 2. Multiple access points from High St and Congress St to create more pedestrian activity 3. Street level entrances on both sides 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No access from High St. 2. Access from Congress St limited to stairs and ramp. 3. Project for Public Spaces recommends no more than 3 steps up or down to access a park. The barriers to access will significantly reduce usage.
Cleaning and Maintenance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New design can ensure easy maintenance and cleaning in all seasons. 2. Simpler design would allow for higher quality materials to ensure longevity. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High ongoing operating & maintenance costs 2. The 481 foot ramp and 5000 sq ft roof park will be very difficult to maintain in winter to keep clear of snow and ice. 3. Many layers of stairs to be cleaned and maintained 4. Difficult maintenance/mowing of ramp area and roof park grass
Usable Space/ Cost	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 14,000 sq ft to 12,175 sq ft of usable space depending on final design 2. Estimated cost of \$97 per sq ft to \$112 per sq ft of usable space depending on design (per Wright Ryan cost estimate on Nov. 5, 2014). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 7,300 sq ft of usable space 2. \$306 per sq ft of usable space 3. Because the original park was built with UDAG funds, any money gained from the sale of the existing park has to be used on a CDBG approved project and cannot be used for the construction of the roof top park.

Public Comment received online from 12/11 – 12/31

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 3:00:12 PM

First Name: Stephen

Last Name: Gaal

Address: 176 Eastern promenade, Portland, ME

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: We had a city-wide vote on this. The citizens of Portland want a park, not an event center, nor an event center masquerading as a park. The committee charged with evaluating the two proposals voted 10-5 in favor of a park. WE WANT A PARK! Why are we continuing to debate this? Why is the Chamber of Commerce dictating events for our city?

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 3:23:41 PM

First Name: Janet

Last Name: Alexander

Address: 445 Ray St., Portland, ME 04103

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: We moved here in large part because Portland truly seemed a "livable" city and for nearly 40 years we've loved it here. The ground-level park seems to me much more consistent with a comfortable yet vibrant downtown area. Didn't previous public comment come down heavily in favor of the ground-level option?

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 3:49:08 PM

First Name: Deborah

Last Name: Cummins

Address: 22 Hancock Street #503

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 2 is a win-win for the residents and taxpayers of Portland

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 4:36:18 PM

First Name: Ed

Last Name: Collom

Address: 56 Roaring Brook Road, Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: No event center, keep it as is.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 4:47:59 PM

First Name: Jesse

Last Name: Deupree

Address: 50 Morning St. Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Portland needs more than just another small square type park. These are underutilized throughout the city, perhaps because we are a small enough city with wonderful large parks. A space that does more makes sense, thus a design including an event center is best for this city.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 8:29:25 PM

First Name: Lily

Last Name: Newton

Address: 170 Harriet St South Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Although I live in South Portland, I grew up in Portland and spend a lot of time in Portland. This park has been an eyesore and safety concern for as long as I can remember. I believe the best option to revitalize this park and make it attractive and useful (and safe) is to have an event center, with an elevated park. Thank you

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 9:35:33 PM

First Name: Steven

Last Name: Urkowitz

Address: 100 Spruce St, Portland Me

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I oppose the elevated park concept for the Congress Square site. I worked on the campus of the City College of New York in Manhattan where a park and recreation facility was sited on a raised roof of a gymnasium building. For the last forty years it has been unpopulated, desolate, and finally it was closed off from public access. Imaginative design for the ground level option holds far more potential.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 10:50:21 PM

First Name: Martin

Last Name: Steingesser

Address: PO Box 7575, Portland 04112-7575

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: The Elevated Park with Event Center infringes on public space. The City finds adequate funds to design and create parks and recreational spaces. Public use of this public space is a challenge for good urban planning and way to fund and

implement that plan for the benefit of all Portland residents.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/11/2014 11:29:04 PM

First Name: Caitlin

Last Name: Hager

Address: 26 E. Oxford St. Portland, ME

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: A ground level park is more accessible to the public and looks easier to maintain. The ground level park is the best fit for Portland.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/12/2014 9:55:35 AM

First Name: hugh

Last Name: nazor

Address: 50 Federal St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Greater accessibility and more flexibility of use would favor a more open and ground level park.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/12/2014 11:27:00 AM

First Name: Megan

Last Name: Grumbling

Address: 139 Brackett St. #4

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I vigorously support Option 1, the ground-level, all-public design, for reasons of superior accessibility, wider possible range of activities, greater visibility and sight-lines, and -- most importantly -- the civic importance of offering Portland citizens a 100% public space and stake in our urban landscape. Anything less would diminish Portland's international status as a renowned livable city that cares about public space.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/12/2014 12:47:00 PM

First Name: davis

Last Name: Robinson

Address: 40 Seeley Ave, Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I like the elevated park and the event center: win-win.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/12/2014 3:19:08 PM

First Name: Jim

Last Name: Elkins

Address: 8 Raven Terrace Scarborough, ME 04074

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: While not a Portland resident, I value the quality of downtown Portland and believe that option 2 would be the best for both quality of life and economic development.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/12/2014 5:12:22 PM

First Name: Annie

Last Name: Wadleigh

Address: 19 Parris St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am quite amazed that after a referendum, a Task Force recommendation and an extended survey deadline, the elevated park concept is still afloat. The people have spoken clearly and for an extended time that they do NOT want an event center in the park at Congress Square. It doesn't seem fair to keep the issue alive indefinitely until the Chamber receives the outcome they desire.

Respectfully, Annie Wadleigh

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/12/2014 10:03:12 PM

First Name: Michael

Last Name: Mertaugh

Address: 118 Beacon Street, Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am in favor of Option 1 for the following reasons:

1. Handicapped access for the elevated portion of the park under option 2 would be very unwieldy. The access ramp would consume so much space that it would preclude effective use of the space beyond the footprint of an event center.
2. The experience of successful pocket parks, like Paley Park in New York suggests that simplicity of design in small parks is essential to their effectiveness. The requirement of handicapped access via a 450 foot access ramp would inevitably make Option 2 a cluttered and uninviting design. Adding an elevator would be prohibitively costly.
3. Option 2 would entail higher initial costs and much higher ongoing maintenance costs -- including clearing snow and ice from the access ramp -- in order to maintain the standards that are expected by the community. This is intended to be an all-weather park.
4. The ramp and the elevated portion of the Option 2 approach would entail safety risks of falling from

the elevated surface, and the risk of falling on the ramp in inclement weather.

5. The ramp in Option 2 would be a perennial temptation to skateboarders, with all of the liability risks that that entails.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/13/2014 3:24:41 PM

First Name: zach

Last Name: lipman

Address: 10 melbourne

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: this seems more accessible and friendly

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/15/2014 1:02:38 PM

First Name: Jay

Last Name: York

Address: 58 Wilmot Street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I am thoroughly disgusted that the our city leaders are still trying to sell Congress Square Park but not surprised by their underhanded ways of doing it.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/15/2014 9:02:35 PM

First Name: Rick

Last Name: Redmond

Address: 180 High St Apt 46 Portland, ME 04101

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Event center!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/17/2014 4:22:59 PM

First Name: Karen

Last Name: Perry

Address: 10 Congress Sq.

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Has to be ground level for all disabilities whether they are temporary or permanent. I haveA disability due to a stroke. I am also on the city disability re-advisory committee this city of Portland.The park should be open till all Old people, whether they are disabled are not.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 12/19/2014 8:47:41 AM

First Name: Eric

Last Name: Lessard

Address: 75 St. Lawrence St Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Both designs have positive aesthetic qualities. I urge the committee to select design #2. Portland needs to grow and the event center can help. Design number 2 tackles the need for a public park and the event center. It's a nice balance. With the uptick in restaurants & hotels in Portland, we need additional visitors to service the growth in both of these areas. For some reason the event center remains contentious in the community. Is it because of the association with the Venture Capitalist company? To grow, Portland should strive to work with organizations who can help us grow organically and with their added capital (which the city does not have). You never know, a business visitor to the event center can fall in love with Portland and grow his/her organization in Portland...growth is good!

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/22/2014 5:13:21 PM

First Name: Michael

Last Name: Bourque

Address: 137 Noyes Street

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Of these two, I would select the version that includes a partnership with the hotel next to the plaza. Without doing so, I see the same failed space that we've endured for the last few decades. It seems to me that the city would have a hard time prioritizing funding for this space over so many other needs, but a public-private partnership would give an opportunity to actually change the space.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/23/2014 12:00:37 PM

First Name: Richard

Last Name: Farnsworth

Address: 55 Old Mast Rd.

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Option 2 gives us both the access to a park in the Congress Square area as well as meeting the needs for working with the private sector in order to help with some economic development of the area. I think that it is a good compromise in the use of this valuable piece of real estate.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center

Form Submitted on: 12/25/2014 9:01:06 PM

First Name: Ned

Last Name: Foster

Address: Cumberland Av

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: These two options are ridiculous. Its like asking me if I want to eat lima beans or ochra. Yuckers to both.

Why tie both of our hands behind our back? Why aim for the ankles?

Let the city do this right. Put it out to bid/proposals: "What can YOU do with this space, using the Westin as the bankroll?"

4/5 of the "park" is a wasteland. Use it right and recreate a good "park" near the street. Enough of the purist nonsense. This is a real issue.

Look at this recent news from Burlington, VT. They are aiming higher while Portland is satisfied to be a deadwater.

<http://www.vermontbiz.com/news/november/publicprivate-partnership-comprehensively-redevelop-downtown-burlington-mall-200>

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 12/30/2014 10:42:57 AM

First Name: Anne

Last Name: Callender

Address: 138 Pleasant Ave

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: Based on the designs set forth for evaluation for use of the "Congress Square Park", I say neither has any appeal or addresses a coherent urban planning response to the site. The design options are truly a disappointment. The "park" has long been a gapping hole in the fabric of Congress and State Streets at its most visible point where thousands of people travel through Portland on a daily basis. This corner was meant to hold several buildings and it diminishes Portland to continue to under utilizing this space.

Contrary to the all the clamor about improving the park, the goal should be to reinforce the continuity of Congress and State Streets. We have a plethora of beautiful parks and open spaces in the City but we struggle to keep them maintained. The design concepts being explored do not take into account how this parcel works into Congress Street as a whole, and the scale of the existing Congress Square is completely wrong for its location and needs.

Congress Square Park is part of a larger open space with the Portland Museum of Art and the Hay Building, and these buildings and the space in between should be having a conversation, to make it a more unified public space. If you look at the open space between the Museum and the Westin you have

a football field that has no place in this location. It lacks pedestrian scale and purpose. Just designing a standalone park will not fix its inherent problem. In the 20 years I have been working in this area, the current park has been virtually unoccupied due to its size and design features. It could be reduced by two-thirds and still function as it does now. It could be so much more than what is being offered in the redesign schemes.

We have a willing partner in the Westin to improve the site and make an important investment to elevate a major intersection that has languished for over 30 years. It is appalling to not give serious consideration to a company that has just invested \$40 million in Portland. Looking at the design models, we would be better served with a structure that relates in scale to the Hay Building and the Museum park and a park space that is no deeper than the lovely brick building that houses Paul's Food Center. I will argue that having a larger structure that looks out on the greater Congress Square will bring more life and vitality to this area. For decades we have been stuck looking at two uninspiring walls that were supposed to abut other buildings and not face anything.

And while we are dreaming and exploring options, I would love to see the Westin and the Museum of Art discuss a combined use that would further link the Arts District with to the Westin's event space. Let's do something that will enhance the area and add to our tax base. Give us another building in scale with its surroundings that has a wonderful façade facing Congress Street and a park that responds to its surroundings not an ill-conceived notion of filling a vacant lot.

Do you prefer an option?: Neither

Form Submitted on: 1/8/2015 11:15:32 AM

First Name: Margo

Last Name: Dittmer

Address: 27 Norwood Street, Portland

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: I've lived in Portland since 1991, and used to work in offices in the State Theatre building, so I spent a lot of time in the neighborhood. The current plaza space is too small to try to shoehorn in a decent park along with an event center. I know the designs shown are just examples, but it seems to me that an elevated event center would intrude too much on the park, and would create accessibility issues. The juncture of Congress, High & Free Streets could really use some green space, as opposed to another building created by an event center. Since improvements to the plaza by private groups last year, we have seen more usage by people. This area is a natural gathering place for visitors to the Museum and arts district. Creating a nice park there would be a major enhancement to the area. I hope you choose to jettison the event center.

Do you prefer an option?: Option 1: Ground-level Park

Form Submitted on: 1/8/2015 11:39:54 AM

First Name: Bernard

Last Name: Mohr

Address: 28 Farnham St

Comments on the two Congress Square Park Design Concepts: From a quick view it would appear that the elevated park with event center below is a wonderful both/and option.

If it truly is a both/and option why not choose it?

Do you prefer an option?: Option 2: Elevated Park with Event Center