

# Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza Final Report

October 2018

## Project Scope

The City of Cambridge established the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza Working Group (“Working Group”) to work with City staff and a *Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza Programming and Use* consultant, Project for Public Spaces (“PPS”) to develop recommendations for the future use, stewardship, curatorship, programming, governance, and operation of the Harvard Square Kiosk (“Kiosk”) and surrounding plaza (“Plaza”). The City Manager appointed the 16-member Working Group to represent a diverse range of perspectives, which included residents, business and institutional representatives, and subject matter experts. The Working Group’s recommendations are presented in the *Vision* and *Recommendations* sections of this report.



Diagram of Kiosk, Plaza, and surrounding streets

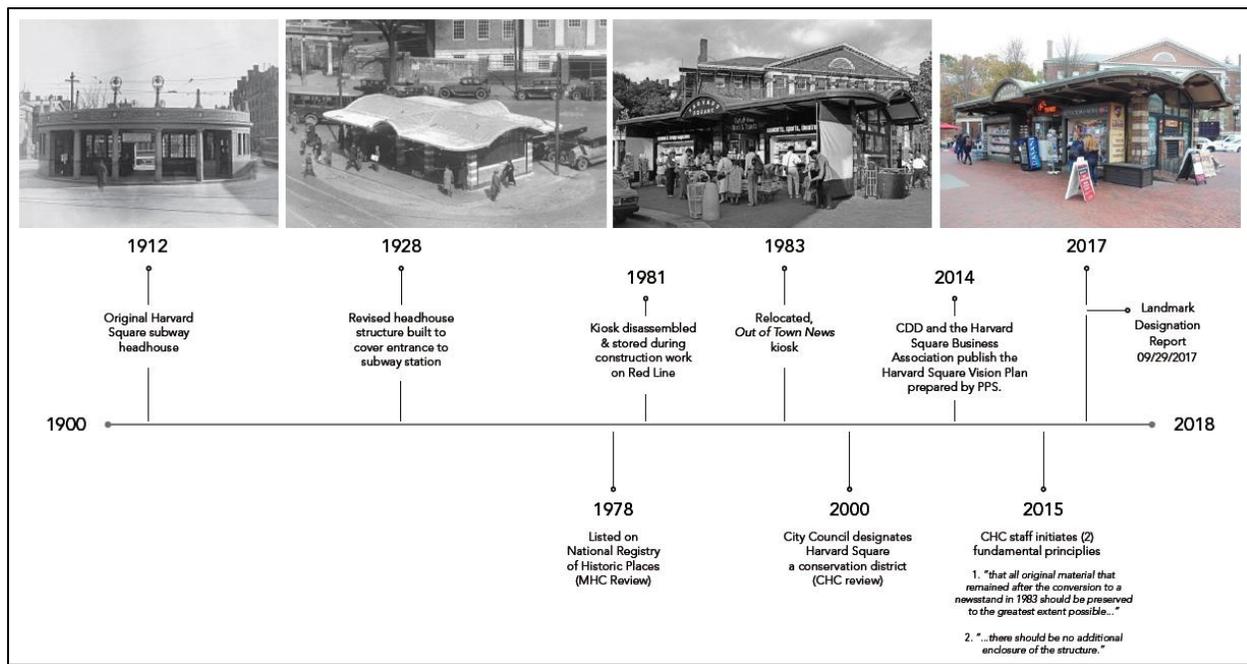
In addition to the recommendations, the Working Group process informed the redesign of the Plaza and the restoration and renovation of the Kiosk. The City engaged a team led by HDR Consultants and Halvorson Design (“Halvorson”) as a *Harvard Square Plaza* design consultant to lead the design work for the Plaza with the purpose of accessibility for all users and increasing the flexibility and utility of the space. The City also engaged a team led by Touloukian Touloukian, Inc. (“Touloukian”) as a *Harvard Square Kiosk Architectural Restoration/Renovation* consultant to restore the historic Kiosk structure and renovate it to accommodate the future use.



Aerial view of Kiosk, Plaza, and surroundings (Philip Greenspun)

## History and Context

The Harvard Square Kiosk was constructed in 1927-28 as a headhouse and entrance to the subway line below, replacing a larger headhouse built in 1912. In 1979, the Kiosk was disassembled, removed, and stored while most of the station below was demolished during construction work to extend the terminus of the Red Line from Harvard to Alewife. A new headhouse was constructed in its place, and in 1983, the Kiosk was reassembled with some modifications to accommodate its use as a newsstand, including exterior magazine racks and a projecting cashier's booth. Since then, the City of Cambridge, which owns the structure, has leased it to multiple businesses operating as Out of Town News. The newsstand was originally founded in 1954, occupying a succession of stands that accompanied the Kiosk in what was then a small traffic island. During the construction of the Red Line extension, the traffic island was also expanded into the larger Plaza that exists today.



*Kiosk timeline (Touloukian, Touloukian, Inc.)*

Out of Town News is currently operated by Muckeys Corporation and sells a range of newspapers and magazines, as well as souvenirs and other items. The Plaza accommodates activities such as informal social gathering, impromptu performances, and chess playing. Supplementing regular City maintenance, the Harvard Square Business Association provides upkeep of the tables, chairs, and planters in the Plaza, as well as hosting period programming and events in the Plaza.

In 2013, the City collaborated with Harvard University and the Harvard Square Business Association to host the first of three community workshops with initial consulting support from PPS. These workshops addressed ideas for short- and long-term improvements and programming, and included discussion about the restoration and repurposing of the Kiosk. Ideas from the first workshop were documented in the May 2014 *Harvard Square Vision Plan*, and were later substantiated in the second and third community workshops. The Plan highlighted opportunities for the Kiosk and what it needed to promote activation in the Square, including more transparency, flexible use of space, better integration with the rest of the Plaza, more public engagement opportunities, and restoration of the historic structure. Some of the short-term ideas that came out of the community meetings have been implemented: specifically, placing loose tables and chairs in a portion of the Square as well as landscaping improvements.



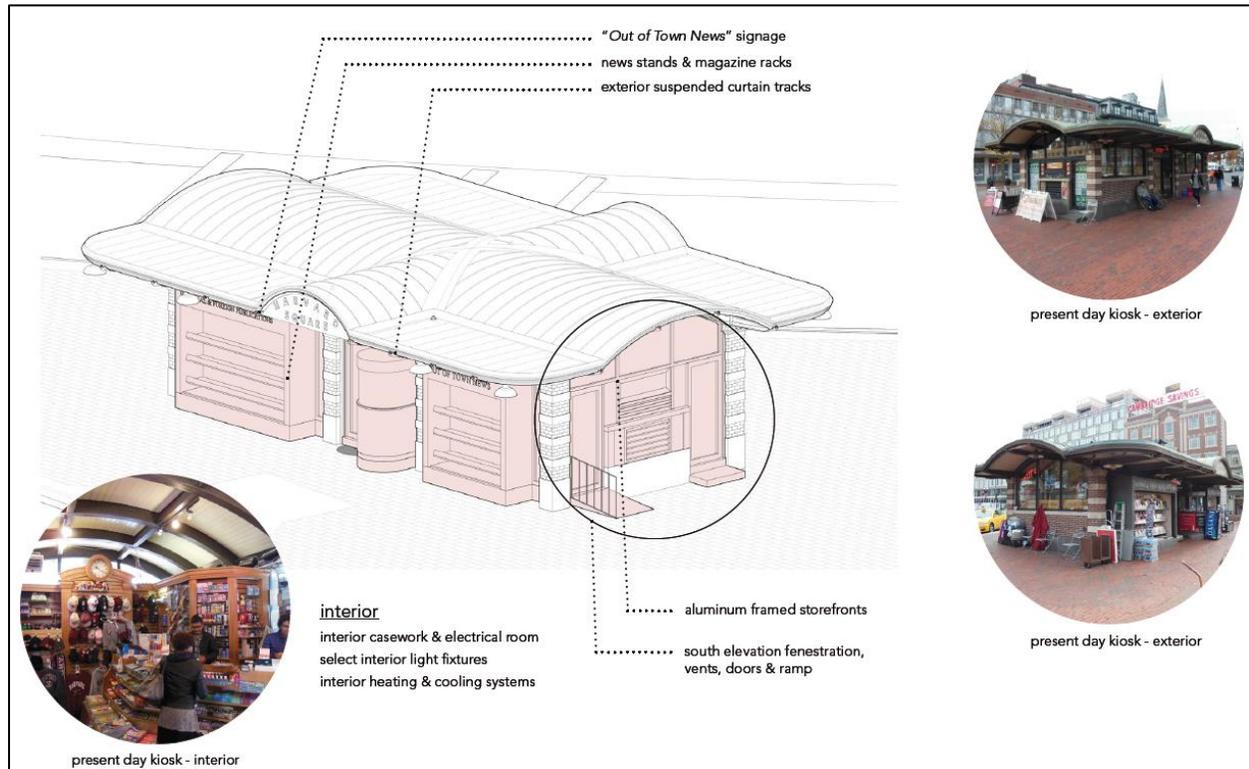
*Kiosk, ca. 1938, functioning as headhouse (Boston Elevated Railway Collection, Cambridge Historical Commission)*

In 2015, the City engaged a team led by The Galante Architecture Studio, Inc. as the *Harvard Square Kiosk Schematic Design* consultant. This effort, now complete, included the identification and preliminary analysis of critical design issues, including but not limited to:

- Floor plans which would facilitate flexible uses
- Façade and roof treatments
- HVAC modernization
- Interior and exterior lighting
- Signage
- Utility requirements
- Integration with overall Plaza design

In 2015, the City also engaged the *Harvard Square Plaza* design consultant, a team led by HDR Consultants and Halvorson Design to perform a feasibility study to determine options for utilities, re-grading, urban design, and other public realm infrastructure improvements at the Plaza and to develop design and bid documents for a preferred set of public realm infrastructure improvements.

In December 2017, the City engaged the *Harvard Square Kiosk Architectural Restoration/Renovation* consultant, a team led by Touloukian, to coordinate with City staff and the Working Group to provide study, design, and construction administration services for restoration/renovation of the historic Kiosk.



*Kiosk with elements added in 1983 highlighted (Touloukian, Touloukian, Inc.)*

During the same year, the City established the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza Working Group, composed of residents, business and property owners, representatives from local institutions, and subject matter experts, to create a vision for the future use, operation, and governance of the Kiosk and surrounding Plaza. The Working Group process has involved broad public input, which have provided a wide range of ideas to inform the Working Group's discussions. Based on this community feedback, and with the support of City staff and the three project consultants, PPS, Halvorson, and Touloukian, the Working Group developed the recommendations captured in this document.

The City Council has appropriated \$8.6 million for the redesign and reconstruction of the Plaza, to improve accessibility and enhance the flexibility of the space, and for the restoration and renovation of the Kiosk.

## Public Process

In the framing of PPS, the essence of the Working Group process was *placemaking*, where people collectively and deliberately shape their public spaces to facilitate social interaction and improve their community's quality of life.

The Working Group process has involved broad public input, including surveys, community meetings, pop-up workshops, and a Call for Ideas. Based on this community feedback and regular meetings, the Working Group developed a set of recommendations for the future of this space in the heart of Harvard Square, featured in the *Vision and Recommendations* sections of this report. What follows here is a summary of the trajectory of that process and how the ideas and discussions unfolded throughout its course.



Kiosk in 2016 (Cambridge Historical Commission)

## Early Working Group Meetings

During the first Working Group meeting, staff from the Cambridge Historical Commission, the Community Development Department, and the Department of Public Works kicked off the process by providing historical context for the Kiosk, reviewing previous community discussions about the Kiosk and Plaza, and sharing some early work done to explore design and infrastructure related issues for the Kiosk and Plaza. In the second meeting, Working Group members shared observations from visits to the Kiosk and Plaza, and had a discussion of concepts for what the Kiosk and Plaza could be. In the third meeting, PPS provided some framing about placemaking and some precedents and concepts from projects around the country, and the Working Group discussed strategies for engaging with the broader community to bring additional perspectives into the process. PPS also presented a summary of early ideas and aspirations drawn from the previous Working Group discussion, which included:

- A flexible multi-use space
- A place to hang out
- Formal and informal programming
- A place to exchange ideas
- Inclusive programming
- A place to enjoy coffee and local foods
- Support businesses of Harvard Square
- Information for visitors
- Seasonal strategies
- Experiment with a variety of uses
- A unified identity
- A place that is memorable
- Art that engages
- Celebrate the history of Cambridge
- A safe, flow-through space for pedestrians
- Serve all modes of transportation
- A place that is welcoming to all
- A place to meet up
- A place for spontaneous interaction
- A place for community gatherings
- A curated, managed place.

The Working Group also established the following early goals for the project – that the Kiosk and Plaza should be:

- Flexible and adaptable – across seasons, different times of day, month, or year
- Welcoming and safe for all users
- A community gathering space
- Navigable – maintaining the space as a busy transit thoroughfare
- Dynamic and engaging

### First Community Meeting and Community Engagement Findings

At the first community meeting, in October 2017, PPS reviewed some of the concepts previously discussed by the Working Group as well as some observations and precedents from other places. Attendees were divided into groups to generate ideas for the Kiosk and Plaza, using five guiding questions. Below is a summary of the range of the ideas generated through those discussions, organized under each of the five questions.

1. How would you describe the experience you would like to have at the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza?
  - The place should be legible, navigable, comfortable, safe, iconic, and tasteful.
  - The opportunity to invite social activity or accommodate programming in the Plaza should be balanced with the need to maintain space for pedestrian circulation.
  - The place should serve the needs of both locals and visitors.
  - The place should be dynamic, channel the intellectual and diverse energy of the area, and encourage an exchange of people and ideas.
2. What are your ideas for the future of the Kiosk?
  - The Kiosk can be an open, flexible space and accommodate multiple functions, providing news and information, space for events, art installations, etc., and serve as a central, recognizable “hub” of activity.
  - There are multiple options for how the legacy use of news can be integrated into the future of the Kiosk: it could maintain some newsstand functions, or it could shift focus away from print but convey information through other creative means.
  - The Kiosk could be a central place for civic functions, providing information and resources much like Find It Cambridge does online.

- The Kiosk can provide guidance and wayfinding information to visitors, using ambassadors.
  - Some imagined functions for the Kiosk could also happen elsewhere in Harvard Square, such as below ground in the MBTA station space.
3. What activities and uses would help support your ideas for the Kiosk and experience?
    - Trees, a water feature, or art to make the Plaza a place for rest and refuge
    - Pop-up businesses or food trucks
    - Tours or a focus on history
    - High quality street performers – make it easier for buskers to play
    - What people bring to the space (not just pre-planned programming)
  4. What amenities or physical improvements would support those uses, activities, and experiences in the Kiosk and on the Plaza?
    - Seating – movable, fixed, and bleacher style
    - Reduced elevation changes, to make it easier to move through the space and simplify the Plaza
    - Trees and shade
    - Enhancing the permeability of the Kiosk’s exterior – sliding or pivoting doors or walls to accommodate both winter and summer use; improving the southern façade; reopening the cashier window
  5. What partnerships would support these efforts?
    - City entities or affiliates, such as: the Cambridge Public Library, Cambridge Community Television, Department of Public Works (book exchange drop-off), Cambridge Arts Council, and the Cambridge Office for Tourism
    - Harvard Square based entities, such as: Harvard Square Business Association, Harvard Square Neighborhood Association, Harvard University, developers
    - MBTA and/or State of Massachusetts



*Discussion at first community meeting*

The day of the community meeting, PPS staff engaged with passersby to generate feedback and discussion, and participants rated the quality of the place based on several characteristics. Later in the day, just before the community meeting, City staff, PPS, and community members assembled at the

Plaza to observe the site together and hold a discussion. Participants then conducted a similar rating activity individually. In both activities, ratings were based on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 is “poor” and 4 is “good.” The median ratings from each activity is presented in the table below.

Criteria	Median Rating from Pop Up Workshop	Median Rating from Community Meeting Site Visit
<b>Comfort and image</b>		
Overall attractiveness	3	2
Feeling of safety	3	3
Cleanliness / quality of maintenance	2	2
Comfort of places to sit	2	2
<b>Access and linkages</b>		
Visibility from a distance	N/A	3
Ease in walking to the place	4	3
Transit access	3	4
Clarity of information/signage	2	2
<b>Uses and activities</b>		
Mix of stores/services	2	3
Frequency of community events/activities	2.5	2
Overall busy-ness of area	2	3
Economic vitality	N/A	3
Quality of programming in this area	2	N/A
<b>Sociability</b>		2
Functions well as community gathering space	2	2
Welcoming to everyone	4	2
Presence of children and seniors	1	2
How well this place reflects the identity of Cambridge	2.5	2

*Median responses from pop-up workshops and community site visit activities*

A 13-question survey was distributed digitally and in paper form and was open for responses for 4 weeks. 194 responses were collected online and 25 were collected in paper form at the Plaza. Questions were related to perceptions and feelings about the existing conditions of the Kiosk and Plaza, what activities and uses respondents participate in, and what future activities would be attractive and desired in the Kiosk and Plaza. The following is a selection of findings from the survey:

- 20% of respondents aged 35 and under self-identified as patrons of Out of Town News, compared to 44% of those aged 65 and older.
- 12% of survey respondents indicated that they typically remain on the plaza for more than 15 minutes.
- Men were more than five times as likely than women to indicate they typically stay more than an hour at the Plaza.
- 90% of respondents use the Harvard Square MBTA station, and over 65% pass through the Plaza at least 2-3 times per week.
- The top three survey responses for desired uses and activities, selected from eight multiple choice options, were live music and performance, art exhibits, and community events.

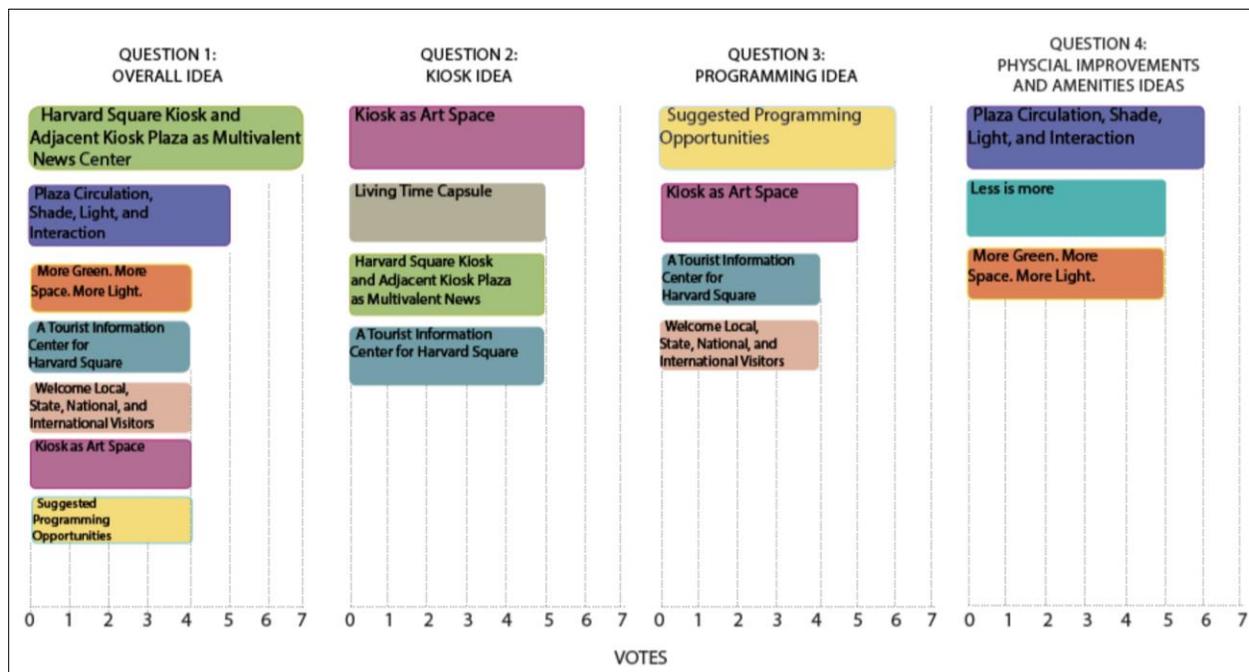
## Intermediate Working Group Meetings and Call for Ideas

During September and October of 2017, the City invited members of the public to propose visions for the future use and programming of the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza. All submitted ideas can be found at [www.harvardsquarekiosk.tumblr.com](http://www.harvardsquarekiosk.tumblr.com) and are featured in *Appendix B* of this report. Proposals were asked to reflect the set of early goals established by the Working Group and to consider:

- The Kiosk is a historic building and any modification must be historically consistent.
- The MBTA station head house structure will remain.
- The MBTA station elevator will be renovated.

During the fourth Working Group meeting, PPS presented a summary of feedback from the community meeting and community engagement efforts. Working Group members reviewed the submitted proposals to the Call for Ideas in small groups with the goal of identifying elements of proposals that either resonated with them or highlighted potential constraints to consider. The groups also considered what populations would be primarily served by a proposal; the time of day, week, and year during which a proposal would generate activity; and the character of the experience for users of the Kiosk and Plaza under different scenarios.

Working Group members later filled out a survey to identify favorite overall ideas and favorite ideas for the Kiosk, for programming, and for physical improvements and amenities. The three proposals with the greatest number of total votes (or a greater number in most cases due to ties) for each of the four above categories were included in the diagram below. The intention with this exercise was to highlight a range of interesting ideas that would inform the Working Group’s discussions.



*Call for Ideas submissions most frequently voted on by Working Group members in survey, under four categories*

In the following Working Group meetings, the Working Group started to develop a set of ideas and recommendations that were eventually presented at a second community meeting in April 2018. Those

recommendations have since been further refined and are featured in the *Vision and Recommendations* sections.

During the fifth Working Group meeting, PPS presented a series of preliminary conceptual schemes for incorporating various combinations of use, programming, and design features into the Kiosk and Plaza. In response, the Working Group expressed strong preference that the interior of the Kiosk be open and flexible.

In the sixth Working Group meeting, Halvorson and Touloukian introduced each of their firms and provided some preliminary considerations and concepts for approaching the Plaza design and the Kiosk restoration and reuse. PPS presented some additional programming, use, and design ideas for discussion. During the seventh Working Group meeting, City staff attempted to distill the essence of the emerging vision, presented some considerations for operations, management, and governance of the Kiosk operation. Halvorson presented a more detailed analysis and conceptual design for the Plaza and how this would relate to different uses and conditions. Touloukian presented a series of case studies illustrating how design options for the Kiosk envelope would affect the character of the use and the relationship between the interior and exterior of the Kiosk, as well as how different kinds of uses such as performance, civic functions, social seating, board games, and family activities could interact with the building.

### Second Community Meeting and Subsequent Working Group Meetings

Members of the public were invited to attend a second community meeting, in April 2018, to discuss the preliminary recommendations from the Working Group. PPS presented the community engagement efforts and findings, a series of programming ideas discussed by the Working Group, and a discussion of management and governance, as well as possible revenue sources. Halvorson presented on the Plaza design approach, and Touloukian presented on the Kiosk design and use concepts. Afterward, there was time for public comment and for breakout discussion.

PPS summarized the feedback from the community meeting at the eighth Working Group meeting, grouping the ideas into the following major themes:

- Celebrate the past
- Welcome visitors
- Retain some news
- Display information
- Serve visitors and locals
- Offer spontaneous and programmed activities
- Retain the unique character of Harvard Square

PPS and City staff also provided estimated expenses and potential revenues for the Kiosk operation (see: *Appendix A*). Staff circulated a draft report of Working Group recommendations, which aimed to distill the discussions to date into a clear, written form.

Members of the public and Working Group members were invited to submit feedback on the draft recommendations, and that feedback was discussed at the following two Working Group meetings.

## Discussions

The following narrative serves to elucidate a series of discussions held and commentary voiced during the process that have informed the Working Group's thinking, containing ideas and detail that go beyond the recommendations.

### *Programming and Operations*

A recurring idea heard through multiple parts of the process is that there should be a balance between programmed and spontaneous or informal activities in both the Plaza and in the Kiosk. Some have said there is too much emphasis on performance, special events, and other planned activities, risking that the informal, everyday activities like resting or socializing could be crowded out. Two Working Group members imagined that during some periods without active programming, the Kiosk could feature an art installation or historical exhibition, perhaps supplementing the time of year or a topic of interest. It was also suggested that activities in the Plaza and Kiosk complement activities in adjacent spaces, such as the plaza in front of the Smith Center. Several people have suggested experimentation with different kinds of programming to see what work best and adapting based on that experience. A Working Group member suggested making it as easy as possible for community groups to use the Kiosk in creative ways without the need for costly setup. One commenter expressed concern about activities for families in the Plaza, citing the proximity to traffic; another commenter mentioned there are currently successful events that occur in the Plaza such as book readings.

There was some discussion of stewardship and ownership: while the operator would take on some degree of responsibility for stewarding the space, the Plaza would remain a public space, the City would continue to regulate activities in the Plaza through permitting, and outside groups would continue to be able to apply for permits to host activities in the Plaza. Some commenters expressed a desire to require a minimum amount of programming in the Kiosk organized by nonprofit or City entities.

Several commenters emphasized the goal of keeping the Kiosk open and active for as many hours as possible, to help make the Plaza feel inviting and safe. Some suggested that having just one person staffing the Kiosk at a time would be insufficient and that two or more staffers and/or volunteers would be optimal.

### *Visitor Information*

Feedback indicated a desire for maintaining and enhancing clear and robust visitor information while striking a balance between serving the needs of tourists and locals. A Working Group member suggested that the information provided could serve to underscore that the area is a center of world-class research and thought leadership. One commenter suggested that the operator of the Kiosk could collect data on visitors to Harvard Square in order to refine its offerings, and another suggested that careful attention be paid to the placement of maps. Another commenter recommended coordination amongst tourism related entities in Harvard Square with attention to providing accurate and consistent information.

### *News*

Participants in the process have voiced diverging views on the future of news at the Kiosk. Some have pointed to shifting news consumption habits and expressed that maintaining some news sales in the Kiosk would be a waste of limited space. Others have said the City should honor the legacy of news at the Kiosk and either continue with some news sales or find creative ways to incorporate the theme of news and information into the future of the Kiosk, such as through digital displays or providing

periodicals to read in the Kiosk. At least one commenter pointed to the engaging visual aspect of the existing news racks along the western façade of the Kiosk and suggested incorporating a news rack somewhere on the exterior of the building.

### *History*

Harvard Square has a rich history, and many commenters have expressed a desire to showcase historical narratives in the Kiosk and Plaza through exhibits and displays. The idea of incorporating statues or monuments or statues of historical figures, such as John Eliot or Ann Hutchinson, was raised at the second community meeting. The Working Group discussed a preference for more dynamic or “performative” means of showcasing history, such as reenactments or other creative, history-themed activities, perhaps timed to align with anniversaries of historical events. One Working Group member proposed establishing a “time capsule” feature of the Kiosk as an installation or permanent feature; the Kiosk would collect personal histories and stories about Cambridge and Harvard Square to be featured in the Kiosk or elsewhere, perhaps during reunions or other periods. Others said that displays and/or professionally-curated exhibits can be engaging and interactive and can include regularly changing content, possibly including historical photographs, timelines, artifacts, etc. The notion of featuring relevant historical information in coordination with the timing of holidays or historical events was also discussed. Some commenters expressed a desire to sell tastefully curated Cambridge-made and/or -themed keepsakes, such as miniature models of local buildings, a revolving selection of postcards featuring artistic views of the city, “shares” of the City’s Community Supported Art program, books on Cambridge history, etc. One commenter suggested that activities should be coordinated with or supported by the Cambridge Historical Commission and Cambridge Historical Society, and that there should be coordination between the tourism and history functions. There was some discussion of the possibility of setting expectations for a specified minimum amount space or time devoted to history related content.

### *Kiosk Design*

The notion of keeping the Kiosk open and flexible was a recurring theme. Many commenters voiced a desire to pay close attention to architectural details in restoring the Kiosk. One commenter emphasized the need to think about building details such as trash receptacle placement, coat hangers, storage needs, and security of the building or any outdoor furniture when not in use. A Working Group member suggested incorporating a retractable, wall-mounted bench concept into the interior of the building to enhance the flexibility of the space. There was some discussion of opportunities for fixtures or movable objects that could be in the Kiosk for a limited amount of time to support a seasonal installation or activity. Many commenters expressed a desire for heat and air conditioning to make the space comfortable during the full range of temperatures experienced year-round, and some others expressed a desire to provide water inside the Kiosk to enhance flexibility of structure to accommodate additional uses that may benefit from presence of water, as well as making it easier to water plants in the Plaza. Multiple commenters expressed support for retaining the iconic, neon “Out of Town News” sign in the renovation in some way.

### *Plaza Design*

Several commenters were interested in ways to make the space feel more comfortable, inviting, aesthetically pleasing, and distinctive such as through additional trees and landscaping to buffer traffic, the use of flexible shade structures, or the creation or preservation of intimate spaces for social or solitary activity in the Plaza. Some commenters said a drinking fountain or a water feature would be

desirable. Others were interested in accommodating phone charging in the Plaza to encourage additional lingering and social activity. Other commenters suggested incorporating elevated platforms in the Plaza to serve as “soap boxes” for planned or impromptu “speaker’s corner” type events or a sort of stage for various kinds of performances or talks. Some expressed a desire to accommodate rallies, small demonstrations, or vigils in the Plaza.

The current design modifies the existing taxi stand area, eliminating two spaces closest to the building to relieve a narrow portion of the Plaza adjacent to the Kiosk and allow pedestrians to move more easily. An additional space is added closer to Dunster, so one net space is eliminated. One commenter suggested that additional taxi stand area be removed to further expand the Plaza area, while another said that many value the taxi stand, especially for those who transfer from the MBTA to a taxi at this location and are either carrying luggage or have a disability.

### *Accessibility*

While accessibility remains a fundamental driver of the project, particularly the redesign of the Plaza, one commenter highlighted several considerations for making the Kiosk and Plaza more accessible: suggesting that steps in the Plaza have rails, entrances be wide enough for those using wheelchairs, and visual displays in the Kiosk be low enough for people using wheelchairs to view. Additionally, the commenter encouraged consideration of how people with visual or hearing impairments would interact with the Kiosk and Plaza.

### *Commercial Activity and Revenue*

While there have been diverging views about the role of commercial activities at the Kiosk and Plaza, a recurring theme has been the desire to limit the intensity, frequency, or footprint of commercial activities to an appropriate degree so they avoid becoming the dominant use or overwhelming the identity of the space. Some have argued there should be no sales at the Kiosk, specifically so as not to compete with existing businesses in the square. Others have suggested a range of commercial activity may be appropriate, ranging from pop-ups in the Kiosk to food trucks/carts to market events in the Plaza or on an adjacent street, etc. Some thought the opportunity to use the Kiosk to host a vendor occasionally, such as one selling food or drink, would be desirable. Two commenters were opposed to coffee vending in particular. There was general consensus that commercial activity should not be the focal point.

As for other potential revenue sources, the idea of displays for public service announcements or advertising was a point of discussion. There was a general preference for not having advertising, but acknowledgement by some Working Group members that if it becomes an essential source of revenue to support the operation of the Kiosk, that it may be acceptable. Touloukian presented some preliminary concepts for incorporating displays to the Kiosk exterior, including one application that involved recreating the placement and proportions of historic signs formerly installed on the Kiosk roof. Some commenters focused on the extent to which displays on the roof or on the larger western facing windows would be too prominent. The idea of placing a transparent display on the relatively modestly sized, northern or southern facing windows aroused a milder reaction. As discussion of advertising progressed, some members of the public and Working Group suggested that deriving revenue from other sources such as sales may be more appealing. Some Working Group members doubted that sales would generate significant revenue, voicing that there may be a need for some advertising, provided that it be carefully managed. The notion of using displays to feature visitor information, community

announcements, or other information generated some enthusiasm. One commenter suggested establishing a style guide for display content to minimize visual clutter. Several commenters cautioned that displays should not detract from the building's aesthetic appeal, and could perhaps be located elsewhere in the Plaza. One commenter was concerned that national chains would have an opportunity to compete with local businesses by advertising or promoting themselves at the Kiosk and suggested that local artisans and very small independents should be given priority. There was some discussion that the Advisory Committee should play a role in providing input to the City and operator on this issue.

#### *Innovative Technology*

Some Working Group members and others expressed interest in incorporating innovative technology into the Kiosk. One Working Group member proposed the time capsule concept (see: History, above). Another proposed that there be a way to feature social media activity in real time inside the Kiosk in some way, to provide a way for the Kiosk to channel ideas, stories, or other crowdsourced content from the broader community and to engage the younger generation. In addition, the idea of digital windows along the Kiosk exterior was explored, which could convey information during some periods and become fully transparent during other periods. Finally, some suggested that historical and visitor information could be presented on digital panels inside the Kiosk so as to stay updated or provide a reason for people to visit repeatedly.

#### *Public Art*

Throughout the process, the Working Group members and other meeting participants discussed a variety of opportunities for incorporating art into the project. One approach that was discussed involved incorporating functional elements such as seating, lighting, or bicycle parking that have an artistic component. Another idea discussed was featuring temporary installations or sculptures, in the Plaza and/or inside the Kiosk. Additionally, participants also expressed a desire to feature performance art in the Kiosk and Plaza. Finally, there was some discussion of creatively featuring news or headlines for passersby to see.

#### *Social Services*

Multiple Working Group members and other commenters emphasized that the Kiosk and Plaza should be inclusive, ensuring that Kiosk provides accessible and relevant information and services to marginalized populations, such as people with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, people experiencing homelessness, low income residents, immigrants, etc. Information or services could relate to issues such as housing, food, career training, vocation, or legal support. Several commenters suggested that the Kiosk could be a central beacon that provides listings, brochures, and information about a range of social services provided in the area, such as services catering to homeless or near-homeless individuals. A Working Group member suggested that Kiosk programming include events in partnership with local organizations, City entities, or local businesses such as workshops on financial literacy or resume creation, and recommended that ambassadors providing visitor information in the Kiosk should be sufficiently knowledgeable about services in the area. There was also discussion of featuring service providers in the Plaza or Kiosk, such as distribution of produce, voter registration drives, etc. Some commenters said that activities such as the collection of warm weather clothing or food donations would be better placed elsewhere. Some commenters suggested providing some incentive or requirement for the operator to work with service providers or nonprofit organizations, in addition to businesses.

### *Reflecting Cambridge as a Whole*

Several members of the public and of the Working Group emphasized that the Kiosk should highlight the full Cambridge community and not merely feature activities, events, organizations, and businesses based in Harvard Square. Instead, the Kiosk and Plaza should include entities and activities from elsewhere in the City and should also provide information about those areas.

### *MBTA*

Some commenters called for renovations to the MBTA headhouse or to the underground station area, referencing an unpleasant experience in the station entrance, mezzanine, and lower level. Others suggested that the Kiosk structure be relocated to serve as the station entrance, as it originally did. The scope of this project does not include the MBTA headhouse, but the City continues to engage with the MBTA on their capital planning and advocate for improvements to the MBTA station.

### *Circulation and Navigation*

The Plaza is a major thoroughfare and the station serves as a major transportation hub, and comments consistently emphasized the importance of being mindful of these functions in the Plaza design and programming. Noise and pedestrian safety in relation to surrounding traffic were also highlighted. Comments also focused on enhancing accessibility and ease of movement through the Plaza, especially given the existing grade changes. Some commenters suggested providing navigational signage in the Plaza or for those entering or exiting the MBTA station leading to points of interest, such as the Harvard Yard or public bathrooms.

### *Operator Selection and Governance*

Some commenters highlighted the benefits of hiring an operator with ties to the community, mentioning an ability to form partnerships to bring more of the life of the community into the Kiosk and Plaza. Others posited that groups without preexisting ties to the community could also bring benefits, bringing in fresh perspectives. Some commenters cautioned that the operator should not have affiliates represented on the Advisory Committee.

## Vision

The Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza Working Group envisions the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza to be flexible, dynamic, and welcoming community assets that enhance the everyday life of Harvard Square, act as platforms for community gatherings, including civic, artistic, and social activities, and attract and serve a broad range of people, including residents, students, visitors, etc.



*Depiction of activity around renovated Kiosk and reconstructed Plaza (Halvorson Design)*

The interior of the Kiosk would function as a flexible space accommodating permanent and temporary community uses. Permanent uses would feature a Visitor Information Center with displays focused on Cambridge history and happenings and the provision of news, brochures, and other materials. Temporary uses would occupy a portion of the interior space intermittently during the span of a typical week, including informal public seating for gatherings. The Plaza would also accommodate a range of temporary programming serving the community. During periods of both temporary and regular use, the interior space would, in addition to acting as a space for relaxing, sitting, reading, meeting, etc., address in part key themes identified by Kiosk Working Group members and other participants in the public process, namely: local history, news, information about local events and services, and visitor information functions.

# Precedent Images



Visitor Information



Concierge Desk



Arts and Crafts



Magazine Rack



News for Perusal



Historical Exhibit



Micro Market



Plantings and Amenities



Pop-Up Library



Book Vending



Puppet Show



Interactive Installation



Historical Reenactment



Jazz Performance



Community Event



Festival



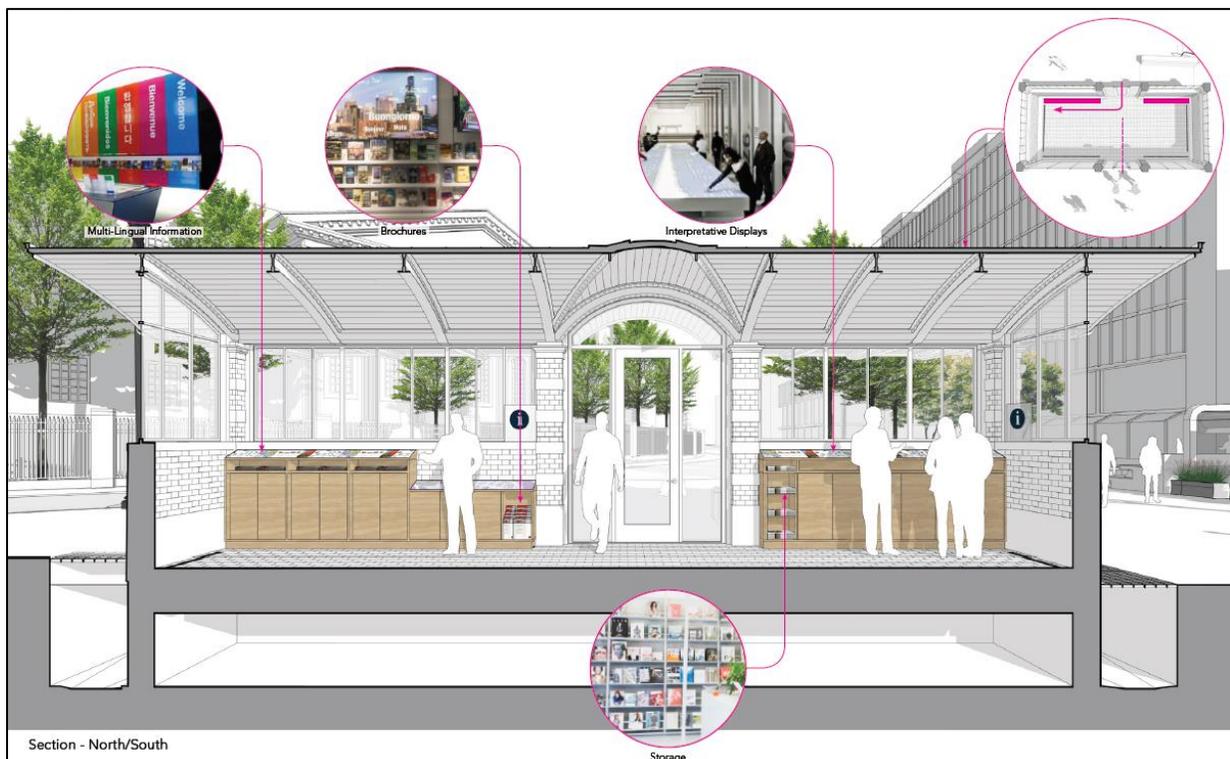
Promotional Activity

## Recommendations

The Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza Working Group envisions that the Kiosk and Plaza would each accommodate regular daily uses year-round, with a focus on information and news, while retaining sufficient flexibility to host temporary programming, as detailed in the following sections.

### Daily Uses

A portion of the Kiosk would provide information to visitors and would notify passersby of events in the area including entertainment, civic and cultural activities, etc., and provide pertinent updates about Cambridge history, current activities, offices serving the public, and community life. Greeters would provide guidance to visitors, assisting them with navigation, offering brochures or other materials on activities and amenities, and providing historical information about the area. If feasible, they may also sell tickets for nearby events. The Kiosk would also feature a modest range of print news publications for perusal and/or sale.



*Depiction of daily uses in Kiosk featuring visitor information and news (Touloukian Touloukian, Inc.)*

### Temporary Programming

Intermittently throughout a typical week, the Kiosk would host a variety of functions of varying intensities that contribute to the vibrancy of Harvard Square. The range of programming in the Kiosk would celebrate community and creativity, promote civic engagement, highlight the historical legacy of the area, support Cambridge businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations as well as Cambridge festivals and activities, inform passersby of City services, and contribute to making Harvard Square a more delightful, engaging place. Kiosk programming would include functions such as:

- Small performances (e.g., jazz trio, poetry reading, etc.) with sound flowing into the square

- Voter registration and other civic functions
- Art installations
- Interactive and/or family-oriented programming (e.g., arts and crafts, face painting, etc.)
- Collection of warm-weather clothing or food donations
- Small lecture or roundtable style events (e.g., book talks)
- Exhibits/installations on the history of the area
- Sampling/promotion of goods, services, or activities for local schools, nonprofits, businesses, or other organizations (e.g., chocolate samples, poetry recitations, calligraphy lessons)
- Other entertaining, educational, or festive activities



Examples of temporary Kiosk activities, from top left: performance; voter registration; family activities – storytelling with arts and crafts (Touloukian Touloukian, Inc.)

A portion of Kiosk programming may also generate revenue to help offset operational costs. This programming may include temporarily hosting a group or business that pays to use the space for

promotional activities that contribute to the life of Harvard Square and/or financial self-sufficiency of the operation, such as giving away free samples of a product or operating a fun or meaningful activity that relates to the work of this group. However, all activities in the Kiosk or Plaza would need to be fully open to the public, with no entrance fees, and there should be an emphasis on nonprofit and community based use.

The Plaza would function as a community resource for informal social seating and community gathering, and would also occasionally host temporary uses, such as the following:

- Performances (both impromptu and planned)
- Interactive installations (e.g., public piano, artistic sculptures/seating, etc.)
- Family-oriented activities (e.g., storytelling, face painting, etc.)
- Spaces for community groups, demonstrations, etc.
- Outdoor markets (e.g., selling books, crafts, food/produce, etc.)
- Other entertaining, educational, or festive activities



*Illustration of discrete activity zones in the Plaza (Halvorson Design)*

Operation of activities in the Plaza would be coordinated so that they do not unnecessarily duplicate activities elsewhere in the square. Specifically, adjacent to the Plaza is Harvard University's Smith Campus Center, currently under renovation and scheduled to reopen in 2018. The Campus Center will

include flexible indoor and outdoor gathering spaces, including space for exhibitions, events, performances, and food offerings. Programming in the Kiosk and Plaza should be operated to complement these activities.

Programming in the Plaza must not obstruct paths of heavy pedestrian flow, specifically the following: the path abutting the storefronts along the edge of the Plaza; the primary pedestrian paths flowing from the MBTA headhouse entrance, and the pathway north of the Kiosk connecting the crosswalk at the northeast of the Plaza and the crosswalk immediately to the west of the Kiosk.



*Depiction of reconstructed Plaza (Halvorson Design)*

## Management and Operations

The City Council has appropriated \$8.6 million for the redesign and reconstruction of the Plaza and for the restoration and renovation of the Kiosk, and the City is exploring the use of Percent-for-Art funds for temporary installations and performance-based art during the initial years following construction. The City also expects that the Cambridge Office for Tourism, of which the City is a principal funder, would operate the visitor information function of the Kiosk. Beyond those sources of funding and operational support, the intention is that the operation of the Kiosk and Plaza would be financially self-sufficient and could draw from a range of potential revenue streams and in-kind resources to offset operational costs, such as:

- News sales at a modest scale
- Selling tickets for walking tours, theater, concerts, and other local events
- Sponsored activities (such as a fun activity or a concert series sponsored by a business)
- Promotional activities for products, services, and nearby stores/restaurants (e.g., as providing samplings of products or dishes) and occasional sale of goods
- Interior displays with paid messages

- Advertising (appropriately scaled, not obstructing the translucent nature of the Kiosk, and maintaining the Kiosk’s historic charm)

See *Appendix A* for sample financial estimates, which would be subject to change based on the operator’s approach. The degree of revenue generation will need to match operational intensity (in terms of hours of operation, programming intensity and frequency, etc.) and will require creativity on the part of operator to achieve financial self-sufficiency. The Working Group expressed a preference for revenue generation of an active or “performative” character when possible.

### *Seeking an Operator*

The City would hire an operating entity through a fair, transparent, and open bidding process to operate the Kiosk daily and execute temporary programming, consistent with the *Vision and Recommendations* outlined in this document. These activities could include the following:

- Site maintenance, security, and cleaning (supplementing the services already provided by the City) of the Kiosk and Plaza
- Onsite staffing (executing daily activity and temporary programming – supplementing staffing support from the Cambridge Office for Tourism)
- Offsite management (planning and scheduling events, marketing and promotion, financial management, etc.)

The process to seek and hire a Kiosk operator would start with a Request for Information (RFI), before proceeding to a Request for Proposals (RFP). In an effort to encourage a broad range of potential operators and seek the best outcome for the City, an RFI would enable interested parties to offer further considerations into the operations and feasibility of various aspects of the scope proposed by the City. This process could also accommodate additional flexibility beyond what just an RFP could accomplish; based on the areas of core expertise and capacity of a responder, the RFI process may uncover information that would be useful in crafting the RFP scope and comparative evaluation criteria.

At the conclusion of the RFP process, the City would seek to select an operator; criteria to evaluate proposals may include:

- Capacity and experience necessary to plan and execute publicly accessible programming in the public realm
- Ability to form successful partnerships and collaborate with City entities and nonprofits to leverage external capacity and in-kind resources
- Diverse programming schedule, offering frequent events, catering to a wide variety of people in the community, including visitors
- Programming schedule reflects goals as outlined in this document, including: celebrate community and creativity, promote civic engagement, increasing awareness of the history of the area, support Cambridge businesses and organizations and Harvard Square festivals and activities, and contribute to making Harvard Square a more delightful, engaging place
- Revenue-generating activities avoid over-branding and optimally align with the values of the City of Cambridge.
- Programming schedule complements City goals, community engagement efforts, and programs (e.g., through voter registration, publicizing of events, promotion of Harvard Square and

- Cambridge as destinations, providing a platform for civic engagement, promoting Cambridge history, nonprofits, businesses, etc.) and serves a diverse array of people in the community.
- Capacity and experience necessary to effectively cater to and be mindful and inclusive of diverse communities, including people with disabilities, local artists, children, people experiencing homelessness, the LGBTQ community, people with low incomes, etc.
  - Operations plan provides sufficient staffing coverage to accomplish the following:
    - Accommodates fluctuations in needs throughout the day, week, and year
    - Kiosk stays open and accessible to the public for majority of the day, ideally approaching Out of Town News' hours of operation

### *Governance*

The City would manage a contract with a Kiosk operator. The contract would be structured to allow for sufficient flexibility on the part of an operator to manage a creative and dynamic schedule of programming and services, while ensuring that the City can apply appropriate limitations on activities, particularly on those that generate revenue. Revenue generating activities would not be allowed to generate too prominent of a presence or to overwhelm or dominate the essence of the place as a cherished hub of community.

The City Manager would appoint an Advisory Committee, representing a range of expertise, involving financial management, operations, arts and culture, and civic life, and will include Cambridge residents, as well as business, institutional, nonprofit, and neighborhood representatives. The Advisory Committee would meet 2 to 3 times per year to review operations and finances of the Kiosk and Plaza, including the schedule and approach for programming. The committee would establish clear metrics for review and evaluation, relating to measurable factors such as: number of event attendees, diversity of audiences, surveyed attitudes of event attendees, numbers of visitors, revenue and budget projections, etc. The committee would provide recommendations to the City Manager to help ensure the operation of the Kiosk and Plaza are consistent with the vision outlined in this document.

## Appendix A: Sample Operator Financials

Amounts shown below represent estimates for expenses by category and for net operating income to an operator for each proposed activity. Estimates are based on research in consultation with entities including the Musicant Group (an interdisciplinary placemaking and public space management firm and sub consultant to PPS); area visitor information centers and ticket sales venues; and Outfront Media. Note: temporary vendors and/or markets were estimated to generate an average net operating income close to zero and were not listed below.

### Expenses

Uses	Estimate
Offsite Management (\$40/hr; 0.5 full time equivalent)	(\$45,000)
Program Coordination & Execution (\$25/hr; 1.0 full time equivalent)	(\$50,000)
Onsite Kiosk Staffing - 15 hrs/day (\$16/hr; 2.7 full time equivalent)	(\$90,000)
Site Maintenance, Security, Cleaning, & Operational Support (\$16/hr; 0.75 full time equivalent)	(\$25,000)
30% Labor Inflator (health insurance, payroll taxes, etc.)	(\$65,000)
Programming (5 small-scale activities per week, average of \$150 per activity; 4 signature events per year, \$3,000 per event)	(\$50,000)
Marketing & Promotion	(\$10,000)
Capital Expenditures, Supplies, etc.	(\$10,000)
Maintenance Materials & Repairs	(\$10,000)
Misc. Expenses	(\$10,000)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$365,000)</b>

### Revenues

Sources	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Advertising	\$50,000	\$100,000
Interior Displays	\$20,000	\$40,000
Ticket Sales (commissions for tours, entertainment, museums, etc.)	\$10,000	\$75,000
Visitor Map (with advertisements from local businesses)	\$10,000	\$30,000
Promotions (25 to 60 sessions annually at \$1,000 revenue per session after permit costs)	\$25,000	\$60,000
Sponsorships (25-session weekly series of performances at \$2,500 to \$5,000 per session, minus \$400 per session for performer)	\$50,000	\$115,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$165,000</b>	<b>\$425,000</b>

## Appendix B: Call for Ideas

During September and October of 2017, the City invited members of the public to propose visions for the future use and programming of the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza. All submitted ideas can be found here: [www.harvardsquarekiosk.tumblr.com](http://www.harvardsquarekiosk.tumblr.com).

Proposals were asked to reflect the following goals:

- Flexible and adaptable – across seasons, different times of day, month, or year
- Welcoming and safe for all users
- A community gathering space
- Navigable – maintaining the space as a busy transit thoroughfare
- Dynamic and engaging

Proposals were also asked to consider the following:

- The Kiosk is a historic building and any modification must be historically consistent. More information on the historic status of the building can be found in the Landmark Designation Report.
- The MBTA station head house structure will remain.
- The MBTA station elevator will be renovated. (See rendering)

In an effort to evaluate the proposals, Working Group members filled out a survey which included the following prompts:

- Please select your five favorite ideas overall.
- Please select up to five of your favorite ideas for the Kiosk.
- Please select up to five of your favorite ideas for programming.
- Please select up to five of your favorite ideas for physical improvements or amenities.

Below is a record of each submitted proposal.

### Cambridge Care: Network of Services

By Caroline James

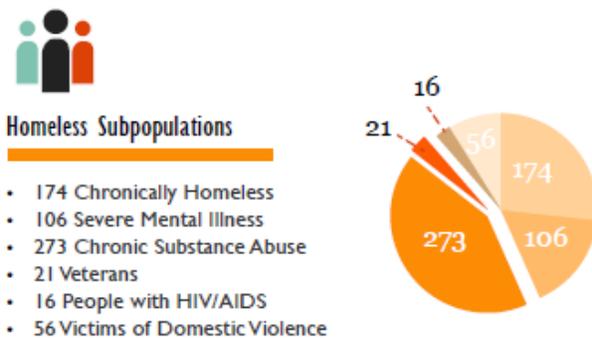
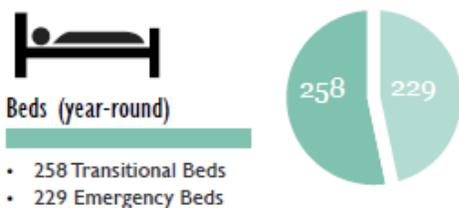
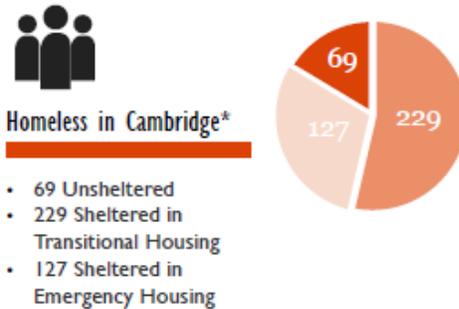
Cambridge Care: Network of Services proposes a unified information hub that is useful to diverse populations, from residents, out of town visitors and the homeless. It would provide a welcoming place in the heart of Harvard Square for everyone along a spectrum of need to get the information they need to thrive. For example, many of the homeless have psychiatric issues, sometimes untreated mental illness and/or substance abuse. Harvard Square is also a destination point for homeless LGBTQ youth. Making room for a unified hub would give agency and support to the many local non-profits and religious organizations to best serve diverse populations.

Cambridge Care would take the form of ATM or Information Kiosk located in Harvard Square, specifically one facade of the Out of Town News, or Cambridge Savings Bank. Placing in a central location is practical and symbolic: getting and giving help is convenient, and also deeply embedded in the heart of Cambridge’s mission. This hub would be beautiful, welcoming, and meticulously maintained. It could also be manned by “Social Ambassadors” during peak hours by outreach staff of various organizations. Being for everyone along a spectrum of need would ensure that giving and receiving of social services is fringe, stigmatized or tucked away “out of sight, out of mind.” It would serve to cultivate compassion and empathy through awareness-building through giving and receiving care.

The programming and exact offerings would be developed in correlation with local organizations including: Y2Y, Youth on Fire, Bridge Over Troubled Waters, The Cambridge Community Foundation, Cambridge Continuum of Care, Salvation Army, Harvard Square Homeless Shelter, Phillips Brooks House, First Parish, and others.

The interactive displays would share information, updated on a daily/real-time basis. There would be features including phone, recording device for collecting anonymous tips and information, as well as “ATM” for dispensing food stamps, etc and also collecting donations to social services. The services could include, for example:

- Health
  - Book an urgent care appointment



Source: HUD’s 2013 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs

- View the schedule and location for Bridge over Troubled Waters van in Harvard Square
- Food
  - Learn where warm meals are being served for the day
  - Sign-up to volunteer in a soup kitchen
- Shelter
  - Book a bed for the night in one of the area shelters
  - Get help on how to apply for affordable housing in Cambridge
- Women’s Health
  - Find where to receive free counseling
  - Learn about a women’s exercise group is meeting
- Community
  - Learn how to get involved with HonkFest! organizing
  - Make a donation to NGO providing services

Cambridge Care harnesses from our collective wisdom and compassion, and pools our resources.

[Additional PDF slides here.](#)

## Less is More

By P. E. Kutcher

This is not so much a big idea but a call for tweaking and rejiggering to feature what is most valued in Cambridge: history, community, culture, and place. The kiosk/plaza is already a PLACE, and needs less “placemaking,” and more focus on what has made it a place over time.

The Harvard Square Kiosk and surrounding plaza is an “iconic” site in the sense that this is the most common visual image that people (locals & visitors alike) retain in their memory/perception for Cambridge, Massachusetts. As articulated in Wallace Stegner’s *Sense of Place*, there is no substitute for the organic nature of the process and creation of a sense of belonging over time. He states, “... a place is not a place until people have been born in it, have grown up in it, have lived in it, known it, died in it—have both experienced and shaped it, as individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities, over more than one generation.” The Kiosk/plaza clearly qualify already, and it would be make sense to bring out the essence of what has collected there over the years.



The kiosk itself, still features beautiful original material and detail that should be retained to the maximum extent possible—on the inside as well as the outside. It reflects a level of craftsmanship that aligns with today’s focus on “STEAM” and Maker Culture, but is often overlooked in the clutter and chaos of activity on the plaza. The kiosk is a common meeting place and a shelter from inclement weather; those uses could be made easier by installing a couple of benches inside as well to provide refuge, and eliminating the exterior congestion.

The current newsstand use may not be appropriate to continue in its current structure. Yet the kiosk may be a perfectly appropriate place to celebrate the tradition of printing, scholarship, books, and paper in Cambridge ... along with digital displays and access to information. There may be room for a mix of physical and digital materials. Perhaps a place to display and/or sell “made in Cambridge” objects, postcards, or CSA art collection. And also point people digitally toward Cambridge events, organizations, businesses & institutions. Or to engage digitally with Cambridge history and current/future initiatives & accomplishments.

The City could consider collaboration with the Cambridge Public Library, which is already considering the Library’s future as a catalyst for conversation & ideas; a place to exchange information and stimulate thinking & problem solving. Or there could be a partnership with one or more of the local bookstores, where there would be physical copies of periodicals, poetry, books, or newspapers (local & global) for perusing on site (with purchases or borrowing directed to the appropriate source). The bookstore at the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts on Quincy Street is an interesting example of a nonprofit/institutional collaboration within flexible space (<https://carpenter.center/bookshop/motto-books-at-ccva> or <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2016/3/2/ccvacrbookshop/>). The attached photos taken on a rainy day in the periodical section of Philadelphia’s Rittenhouse Square Barnes & Noble, show the space being used by a range of individuals seeking respite—but it is effectively an extension of one of the country’s most successful urban open spaces, which can be seen from the window.



The priority for the surrounding plaza should be its role as point of access to the MBTA Red Line and local bus routes. Clutter and congestion of crowds should be reduced so that people of all ages/abilities can pass through and enter/exit the T station safely. Ideally, the more recent information kiosk in front of the main station entry should be removed to facilitate the flow. The historic H2 kiosk (particularly the side facing the MBTA entry) could be used for this same information function. Moving forward, the City should not feature or provide commercial advantage to any one business on public property, but could, more fairly, provide information about all available options (e.g. tour providers). Any open-air vendor spots should be carefully sited and supervised by the City for safety purposes, and should be awarded based on fair competition. The plaza should be enticing throughout the year and in all weather—interesting (yet energy efficient) lighting could be helpful in conjunction with true moveable (durable) furniture & plantings or art installations.

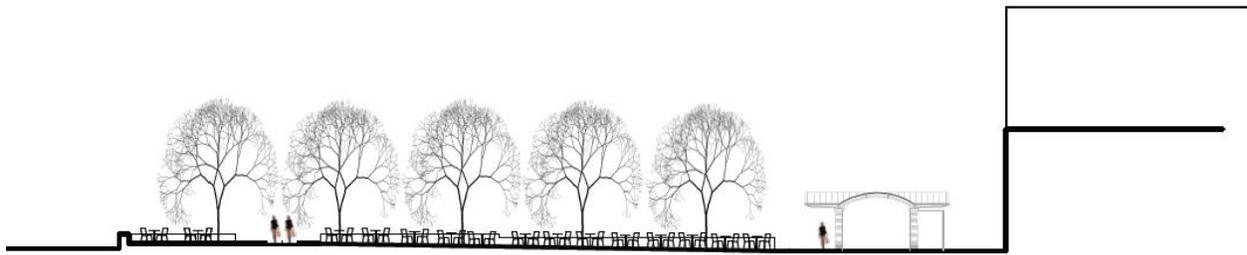
## Four Ideas for Harvard Square

By Brad Bellows

### 1. Integrate the Plaza, Headhouse and MBTA Station

The MBTA station is a major gateway to Harvard Square and a critical factor in the practical functioning of the Square. It is also clear that the station and headhouse are ugly, deteriorating, dysfunctional. The notion that a major subway entrance would deliver passengers to a pit several steps below the surrounding street elevation is obviously perverse, and creates needless obstacles and complexity for the planning of the surrounding area. In this context, spending \$4,000,000 on a plaza renovation that does not address the gross deficiencies of the existing headhouse and station will be a very poor investment. It is unfortunate therefore that one of the City's stated requirements for the Plaza work is that changes to the existing MBTA headhouse and related steps will not be considered, and that the plaza reconstruction must therefore, by default, take these obsolete structures into account. While in no way diminishing the challenges of coordinating with the MBTA, we believe this premise is misguided.

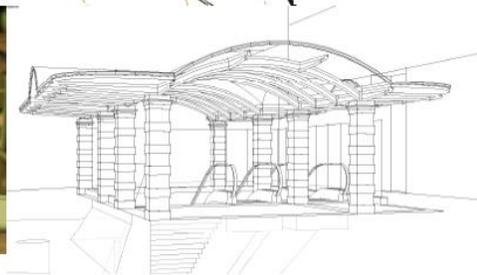
As the importance of mass transit has increased over the years, the shortcomings of the station, and particularly the headhouse, have become ever more severe and intolerable. The Red Line is a major gateway to Cambridge, and should create a single, harmonious user experience reflective of the city's values. It should be at least as welcoming, well-designed, and well-managed as the best examples anywhere in the world, as it once was. The current reality falls very far short.



**Site Section**



**Site Plan**



**Site Concept - A Square For Conversation**

The Kiosk is restored to its original function as a headhouse. A grove of trees is planted on the newly open area, protected from traffic by low granite walls, with tables and chairs to foster conversation and the thoughtful exchange of ideas. Uplighting below the trees. Permeable surface, SilvaCell system, and drip irrigation as needed to sustain the trees with the limited available soil depth.

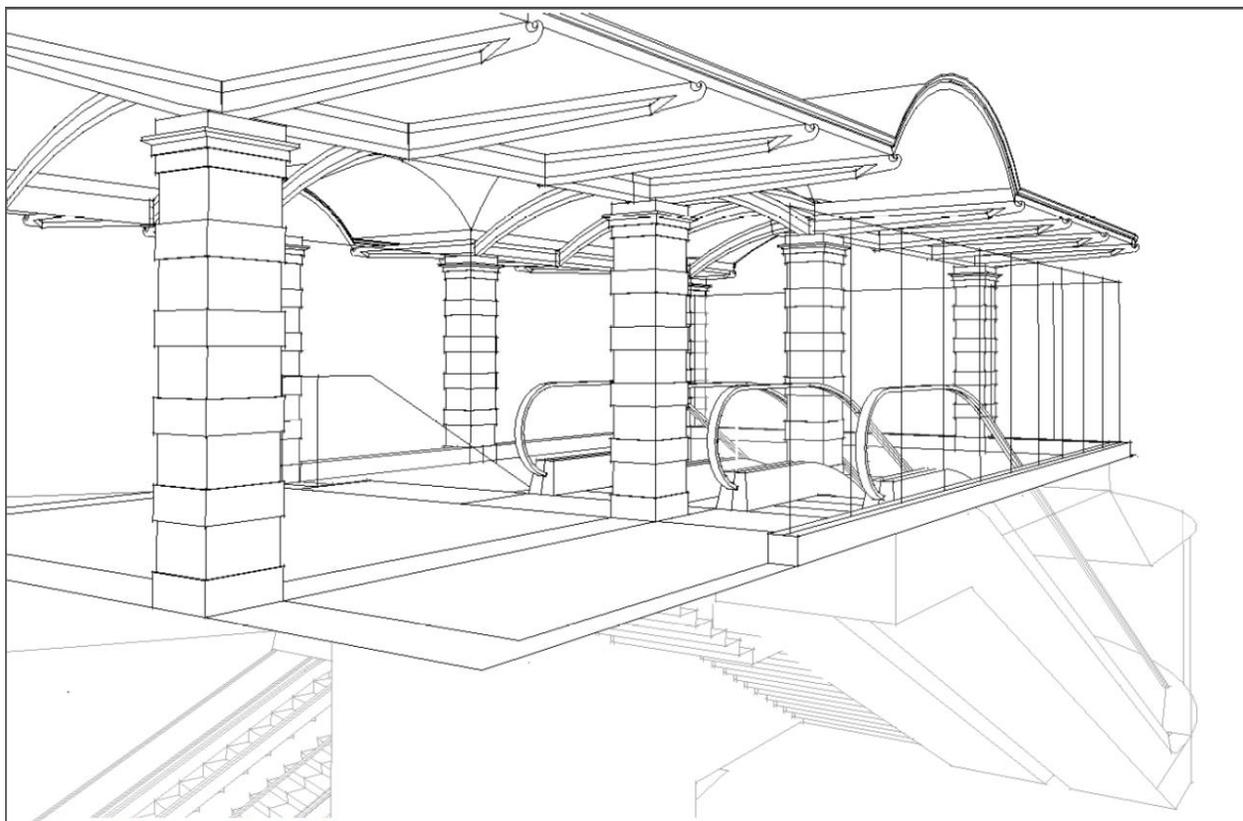
Brad Bellows Architect - Cambridge Massachusetts      November 1, 2017

After passing through a squat and deteriorating bunker, passengers descend past disintegrating concrete and makeshift gutters into a gloomy mezzanine whose major feature is an semi- abandoned

ticket window. Pity the poor visitor who doesn't know this is all part of the charm. From there, one glimpses the heroic scale of the station hall below, its floor area now littered with random retail fixtures, its walls and ceiling covered with electrical conduit, junction boxes and random mechanical equipment that no normal building owner would accept in their lobby. Cambridge deserves better. The station needs a total renovation and better management, and the headhouse needs to be replaced. Recent reconstruction of the Government Center station and headhouse, while larger in scale, shows what a difference such modernizations can make.

In short, the Plaza and Station are interconnected problems that need to be addressed holistically. Doing this will not only avoid the waste that will almost certainly occur if the new design has to be adapted to obsolete conditions, but will greatly expand the design opportunities.

Provided the MBTA is not expected to bear the cost on its own, and given age and condition the present station and headhouse, there is no reason to believe a suitable arrangement to address these issues can't be found.



**Detail of Restored MBTA Headhouse**

View of restored headhouse looking east. New escalators would descend to a Visitor's Center at the station mezzanine level (visible at lower right), putting an existing unused ticket office to better use. The 90' curved wall of this space would be ideal for digital displays on Cambridge's rich history, culture and innovative spirit.

Brad Bellows Architect - Cambridge MA - November 1, 2017

**2. Restore the Kiosk to its original function**

The original 1928 headhouse that now serves as the home of Out Of Town News, was originally an open pavilion – 8 brick columns and an elegant copper roof - sheltering the entrance to the Red Line station below. When the station was expanded in 1978 this structure was removed and put in storage for

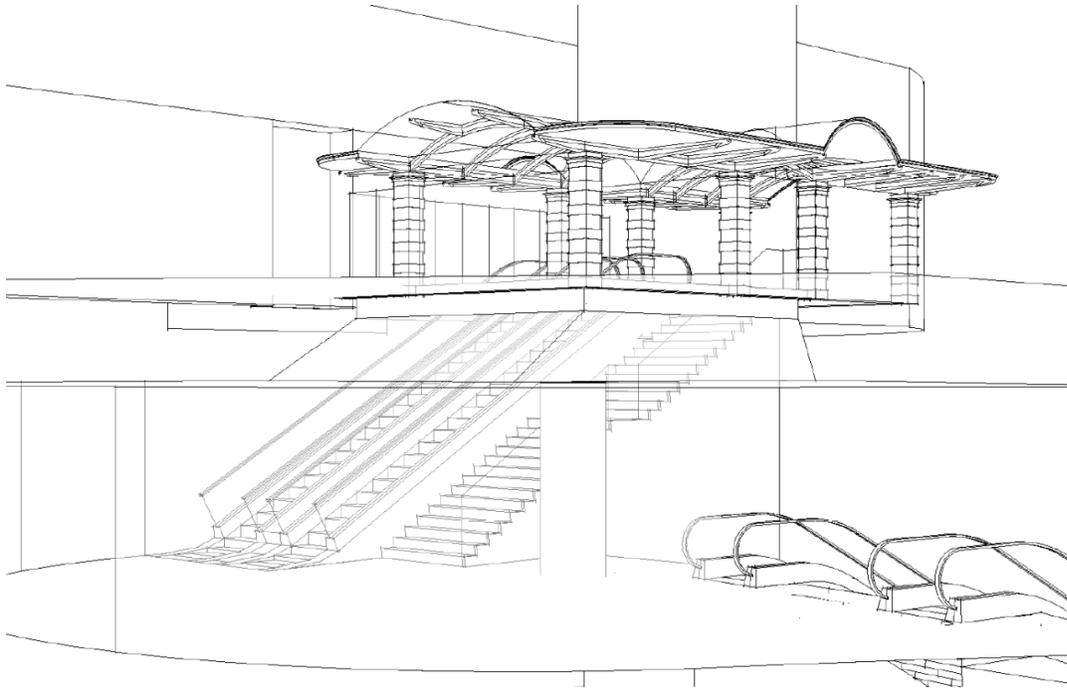
several years, and then reinstalled and modified for its new role as a retail store. While the copper roof and some of the supporting structure are original, much is not. As we now consider how best to preserve it, we should bear in mind that the “Kiosk” has not been used for its original purpose since 1978, is not in its original location, and has been extensively modified to accommodate a very different use than that for which it was intended. These changes include the removal of 100% of its original glazing, and the installation of an unsympathetic 1980’s storefront and retail fixtures that obscure and distract from much of what remains.

As noted above, its 1978 successor is now in need of extensive repair or replacement. It is tempting therefore to consider whether that original, and much more elegant structure could be adapted to serve in this role again. In fact, there are substantial advantages to merging the two problems and restoring the Kiosk to its original purpose. While shifting its location by 50’ might seem transgressive for a historic structure, there is ample precedent in Cambridge for such moves, which in this case would accomplish a number of key preservation goals, most importantly, the restoration of the structure’s original function.

It would also greatly expand design options for the plaza by reducing the number of structures competing for limited space on an awkward triangular plot. In its current form, the plaza is a congested obstacle course obstructed by no less than 4 buildings and a host of walls, stairs and level changes that thwart pedestrian flow in every direction. Opening up the central portion of plaza’s limited surface area would be transformative.

A further advantage of folding MBTA renovations into the plaza work is the potential to eliminate the depressed “pit” into which passengers are now discharged. Eliminating the need for a “pit” would greatly improve handicapped accessibility, reduce drainage problems, and make presently fragmented plaza much more useable. This would require that the upper bank of escalators be replaced, and the stairs extended, a not insignificant expense, but partially offset by the greater efficiency and reduced service cost of modern escalators.

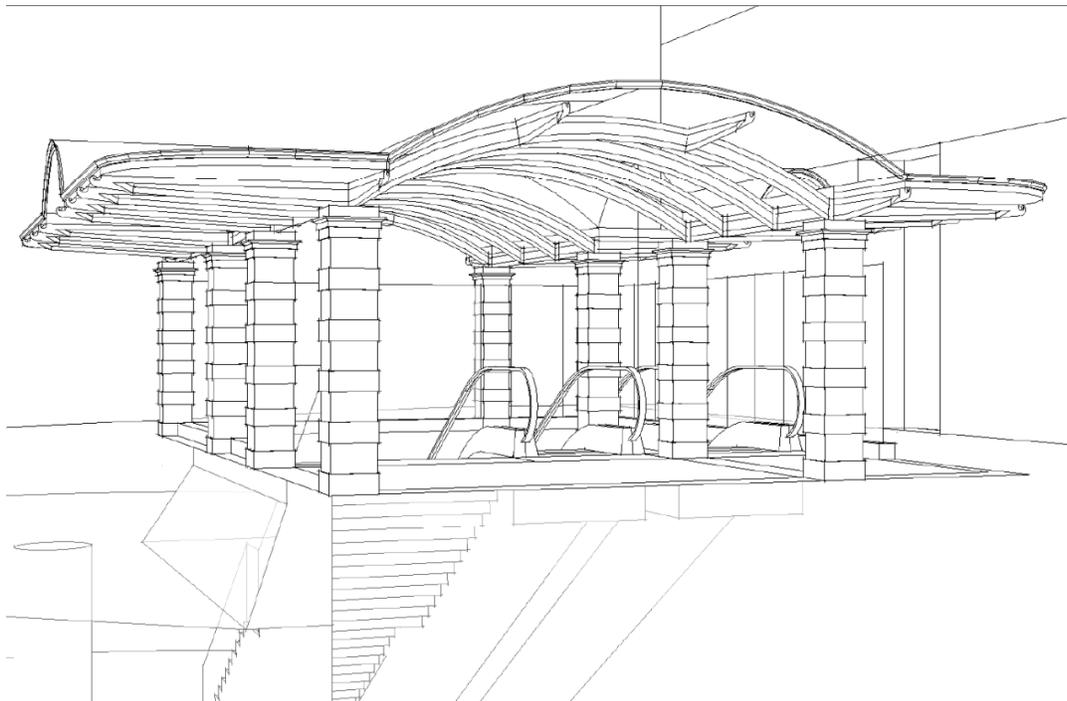
One of the design goals for the current headhouse, which led to its being set below sidewalk grade, and to its squat proportions, was the Cambridge Savings Bank façade. After decades of living with the adverse consequences of the current design CSB might greatly benefit from a more elegant and transparent neighbor, even if it were a few feet taller. Furthermore, improvements to the plaza itself, possibly including the linking of Forbes Plaza and the Harvard Square plaza, would be a vast improvement for the Bank, sufficient to offset any perceived negatives.



**Cutaway View of Restored MBTA Headhouse and Visitor Center Concept**

The original 1928 headhouse replaces the existing deteriorated 1978 headhouse. New escalators bring passengers all the way up to sidewalk level, eliminating the need for a "pit". The large curved mezzanine space becomes a Visitor Center with 70' of digital displays, a "digital diorama, with 20' wide service counter in the center.

Brad Bellows Architect - Cambridge MA - November 1, 2017



**View of 1928 headhouse restored to its original function**

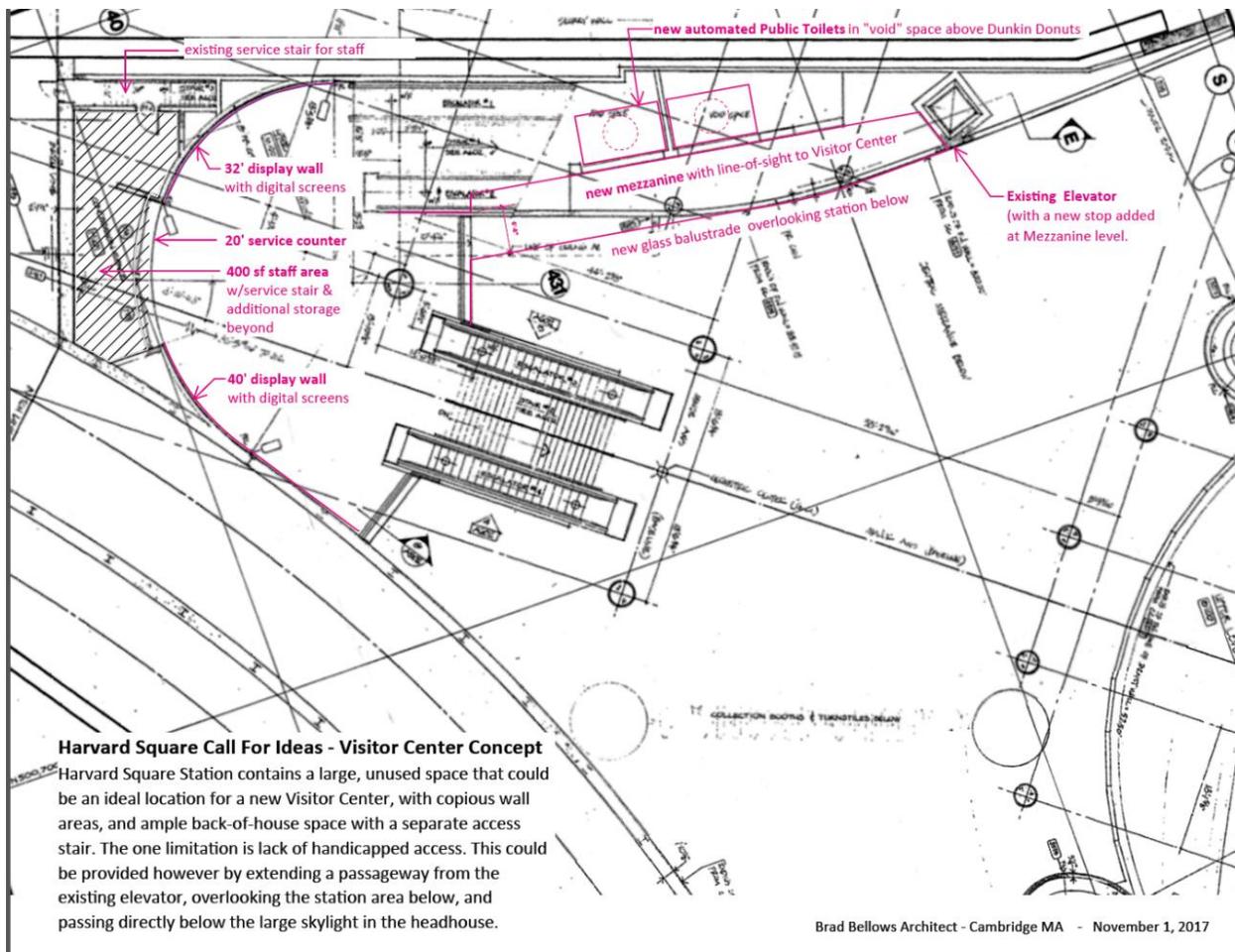
The 1928 MBTA headhouse, now used as a retail store, could be relocated and returned to its original function, replacing the current deteriorated 1978 structure. New banks of escalators would rise to grade and eliminate the need for a "pit". This reuse concept would also open up the current Kiosk site for tress and outdoor seating.

Brad Bellows Architect - Cambridge MA - November 1, 2017

### *3. A Visitor's Center and 'Digital Diorama'*

Harvard Square has become a destination for visitors from across town and around the globe, whom we want to welcome and support with at least as much consideration as they show us when we visit them. This means sharing our story, past and present, and doing this well requires more than a tiny booth 8' in diameter stocked with pamphlets and staffed by volunteers. While surface real estate in this location is scarce and expensive, there is a large underused area, in the MBTA station mezzanine, just 15' below grade that appears to be ideal for this purpose. As every Cantabrigian knows, the first thing one sees upon descending the Red Line escalators (or rising from the station below) is a 90' long curved wall clad in red and beige tile, covered with electrical conduit, and punctuated by an often shuttered information window. This mezzanine is much larger than needed for passenger circulation alone and there is an additional 400 sf of staff space behind the information desk, with a separate stair and additional storage. These unused and underused spaces could easily accommodate a well-functioning Visitor Center. Floor to ceiling digital displays installed on the wall areas to either side could provide a dazzling, 70' wide digital diorama of Cambridge past, present and future, likely to be every bit as much interest to Cambridge residents as to visitors - all this in a space that is currently an underused eyesore, through which tens of thousands of people pass every day.

But there is one problem - the lack of handicapped accessibility. The existing elevator serves only the lower level of the station, bypassing the mezzanine. It appears however, based on the original construction drawings, that this problem could be resolved fairly simply by adding a mezzanine stop to the new MBTA elevator shaft, and a short hallway linking it to the Visitor Center, in apparently unused space above the Dunkin Donuts concession. This hallway could be attractive and overlook the station area below, with line-of-sight view of the Visitor Center from the elevator and vice versa. As an added bonus, there appears to be sufficient unused space adjacent to this hallway to accommodate one or more automated pay toilets (J.C. Decaux "Sanisette" or similar). This would relieve a maintenance burden and allow the existing, very squalid (non-automated) MBTA restroom to be repurposed for a retail use on the station's valuable main level. The vast banks of obsolete pay phones are also prime candidates for more productive use.



#### 4. Nature and conversation in the heart of the Square

So, with the pit removed, the Kiosk serving again as the station entrance, and a proper Visitor's Center replacing the current info booth, what could be done with the resulting open plaza space? Yes we could build a structure, or keep the existing one, but however noble the purpose, is this the best use for a precious open space?

As we consider our dual challenges of climate change and political implosion, what better at the heart of our city than a verdant space for conversation amidst the urban bustle - a grove of trees, with loose tables and chairs below, to foster the conversations that have always been at the heart of Cambridge, and appear now under siege across much of our increasingly fragmented and alienated polity - a place to meet friends and make new ones, to have debates and find common ground.

There should be uplighting below the trees, with permeable paving, compaction protection and perhaps drip irrigation to sustain them, and low granite walls at the perimeter to as a buffer from passing vehicles.

Years ago, before the internet, the original Out Of Town News offered a direct connection to the world, with electricity in the air as bundles of foreign newspapers arrived from Logan Airport, hot-off faraway presses. OTN hasn't had this sense of purpose for a long time.

[\[Video of proposal\]](#)

## Plaza Circulation, Shade, Light, and Interaction By Peter Torpey

### *Pedestrian Circulation*

The current plaza design functions not as a destination in itself, but a waypoint. Thus, the flow of pedestrian traffic—some continuing through on foot, others changing modes to or from bicycle, bus, subway, taxi—should be a key design consideration. Pedestrians need be able to move through the space efficiently or invited to linger if they choose. Orienting and finding the route to a desired destination should be easy.

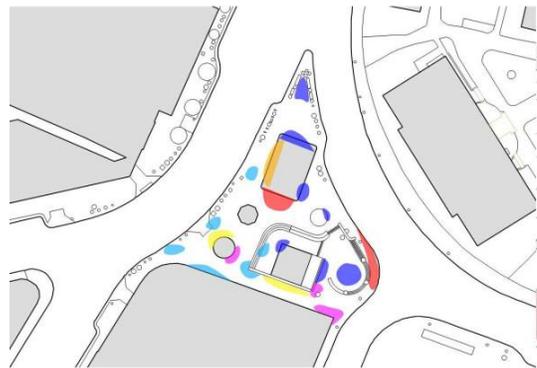
One reason that the Harvard Square plaza does not feel welcoming or appealing is that the current site plan does not meet these needs. Structures in the plaza appear as obstacles along pedestrian desire lines. Changes in grade via steps, the placement of bollards, trash receptacles, and hardscape elements are also obstacles to pedestrian flow. The vast majority of foot traffic is relegated to the corridor between the headhouse and the building facade at the south edge of the plaza. The high throughput there leads buskers, panhandlers, and street vendors to gather, further constricting flow.

Letting the desire lines dictate the plan of the plaza will create a more usable space. Removing some obstructions, realigning crosswalks along Massachusetts Avenue in ways that do not impact traffic flow and signaling, minimally expanding the plaza paving, and reducing discontinuous changes in grade clears the way for more direct circulation paths. The negative spaces resulting from the modified desire path form natural, usable spaces for a variety of activities. Creating porous enclaves in these spaces reduces congestion along circulation routes and desirable zones that are easy to enter and pleasant to inhabit. Seating areas, programmed areas (kiosks, carts, performers), landscaping, illumination, interactive displays, and public art should be situated in the cavities carved out by the desire paths.

### *Light, Shade, & Public Art*



Desire Paths in Current Plan

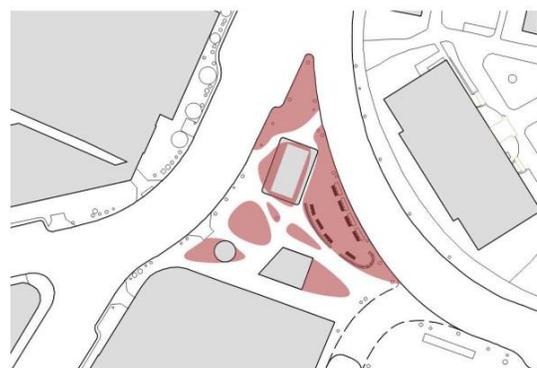


Typical Non-Circulation Activity Zones

- Brief Linger
- Long-term Linger and Sitting
- Street Vendors
- Retail
- Busing
- Programmed/Services



Desire Paths in Modified Plan



Natural Activity Zones

In addition to their utilitarian function, the best examples of shade structures help to define the character and boundaries of the space as existing as artistic, sculptural works. Innovative and forward-thinking shade structures can be one component of defining a distinctive and functional public space.

Shade structures need not be static fixtures in the plaza. An innovative use of physically-actuated or variable optics can provide responsive shade. Numerous buildings use time-of-day responsive skins composed of articulated louvers, cells, or portals to block direct sunlight from entering the building. Additionally, sensing within the seating areas can selectively provide localized shade only where it's needed—where someone is seated or lingering—during the summer months.

While the shade structures themselves can and should be sculptural objects, the medium of light that they manipulate is more than simply brightness and dark. By carefully designing the shading elements, the shadow patterns cast can take a deliberate form. Sculptural arrangements of objects that seemingly impossibly cast detailed images as shadows. Different images can be projected as the orientation of illumination changes. What imagery or pattern could be cast across the Harvard Square plaza and how might it change as the sun transits?

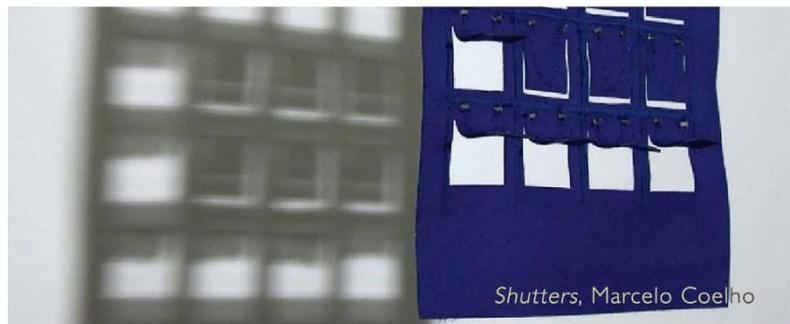
At night, lighting plays an essential role in defining the space, making it feel welcoming, and safe. A shade structure by day can also double as a source of illumination at night, casting pools of warm over the seating and walking zones. Solar panels on top side of shade structures can harvest power for nighttime illumination.



Regardless of the type of lamp used, the color temperature should be consistent with existing street illumination. Additional architectural lighting should be used to create a sense of place by highlighting large-scale focal points in the area.

### *Interactive Displays*

A digital presence in the plaza can ensure that there's always something new to see or experience within the square. While an overwhelming digital presence in the form of screens within the Harvard Square kiosk or plaza is not desirable, integrating display technologies into the redesigned site can provide value for visitors and community.



Displays can provide practical information for tourists and visitors, such as transportation schedules, real-time T signage, and as a meeting point for upcoming tours.

Displays can also provide wayshowing signage at a glance and provide wayfinding tools to Harvard buildings and businesses during interactions. The community can be engaged through interaction in the curation of a constantly evolving directory. The digital program can continually evolve for some time, meeting new needs, without updating the infrastructure. The display content can be branded and repurposed for special events. Use of these displays for commercial advertising is discouraged.

With minimal additional infrastructure, display installations can detect proximity or engagement of passersby and adapt the content accordingly. The normal display state can be large-scale signage visible at a distance, while more detailed information can be shown when an individual is close.

The design of the display content, outside of particular branded events, should be tasteful, complimentary to the space, and not garish. If illuminated at night, the quality of light emitted should be natural, warm, and not distracting. A uniform visual design language and color palette should be adopted. Doing so not only provides a clean, attractive, branded visual experience, it simplifies the creation and maintenance of digital assets and content programming.

Though transparent displays have existed for some time, their use is still relatively uncommon. Using transparent displays in an outdoor media installation, an indoor kiosk experience, or the windows of the kiosk can provide a fresh visual approach to multimedia interaction in public space.

A unique alternative to touch screen interactions that is also maintenance-friendly, is to rely on visitors to use their own mobile devices to interact with the larger experience. Such dual screen-interactions are increasingly seen in artistic contexts. Although a bespoke mobile app is not required for such an experience, it can be used to encourage the installation of a Harvard Square branded mobile app with additional resources. It is vital that the installation experience provides value to all, regardless of interaction.



Transparent LCD Displays



Mobile Devices

In a small area, such as inside part of the kiosk, digital displays can provide an interactive glimpse into the lengthy and profound history of Harvard Square. Arranged around a narrow vantage point, transparent LCD panels can act like an augmented reality display without the need for handheld devices or special headwear. Historical images taken from near the center of the square can be overlaid onto the actual physical view of the present-day buildings beyond the glass. The installation becomes a lens into the past, as visitors can dial in a time period, look around the square, and learn more about this significant spot in history.

The full discussion of these ideas can be found at:

[http://petertorpey.com/projects/harvard\\_square/hsq\\_patorpey.pdf](http://petertorpey.com/projects/harvard_square/hsq_patorpey.pdf)

### More Green. More Space. More Light.

By: Elena Saporta, ASLA, RLA, LEED AP, Elena Saporta Landscape Architecture

The plaza and kiosk function fairly well currently, however, this being the heart of Harvard Square, one should expect more of the place:

- There is a single sad tree in the entire sea of pavement. How do we introduce more green to the plaza?
- The kiosk is completely cluttered with merchandise and advertising. One scarcely notices the structure at all. How can we create more space, both within the kiosk's footprint as well as at the pedestrian pinch points adjacent to the kiosk?
- The Harvard Square subway station, aside from being in a state of disrepair is a dark and dreary place. How do we bring more light to this four-level subterranean world?

The proposed design addresses these three questions, as follows:

#### 1. *More Green*

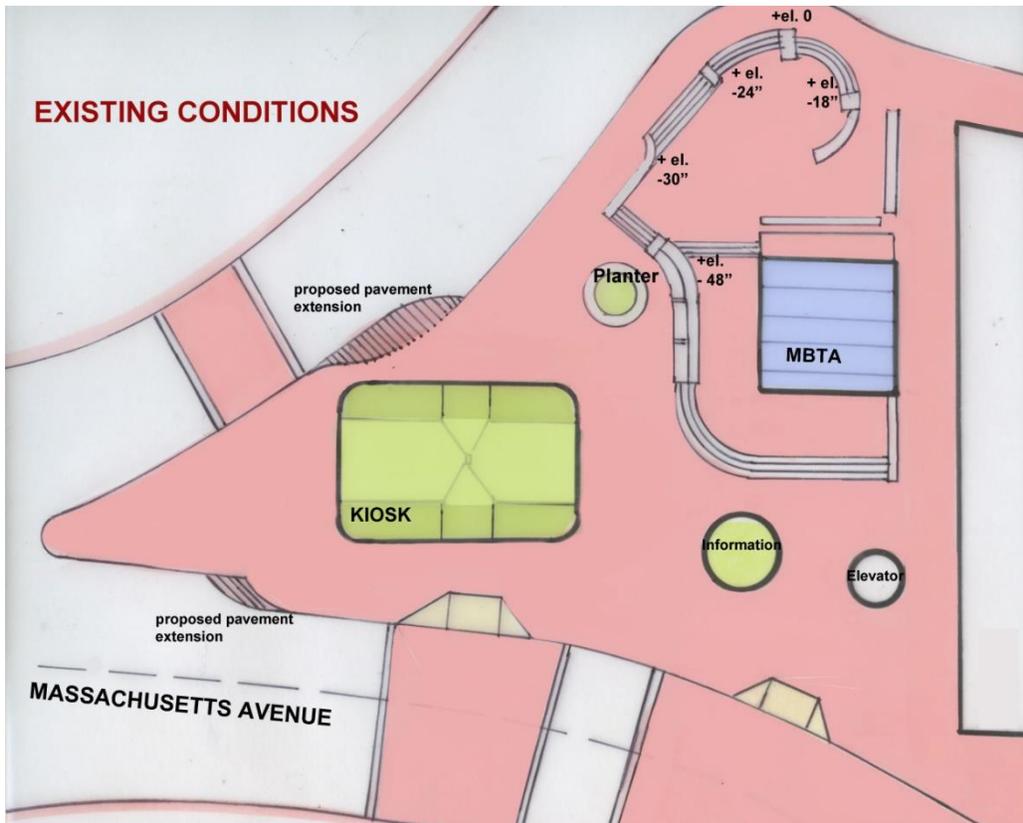
The "Pit" goes away. Pavement elevations inside the current "Pit" are elevated to meet the grades of the surrounding walkways, creating an even pavement surface. By raising the level of paving, we end up an over four feet depth of soil above the subway structure making it feasible to plant shade trees here. Trees will make the square more inviting by providing comfort and visual appeal. Essentially, what has been created is a sort of 'plaza within a plaza.' A new planter, placed at the location of the existing sloped brick wall at the eastern end of the station's head house, provides an opportunity to include even more green.

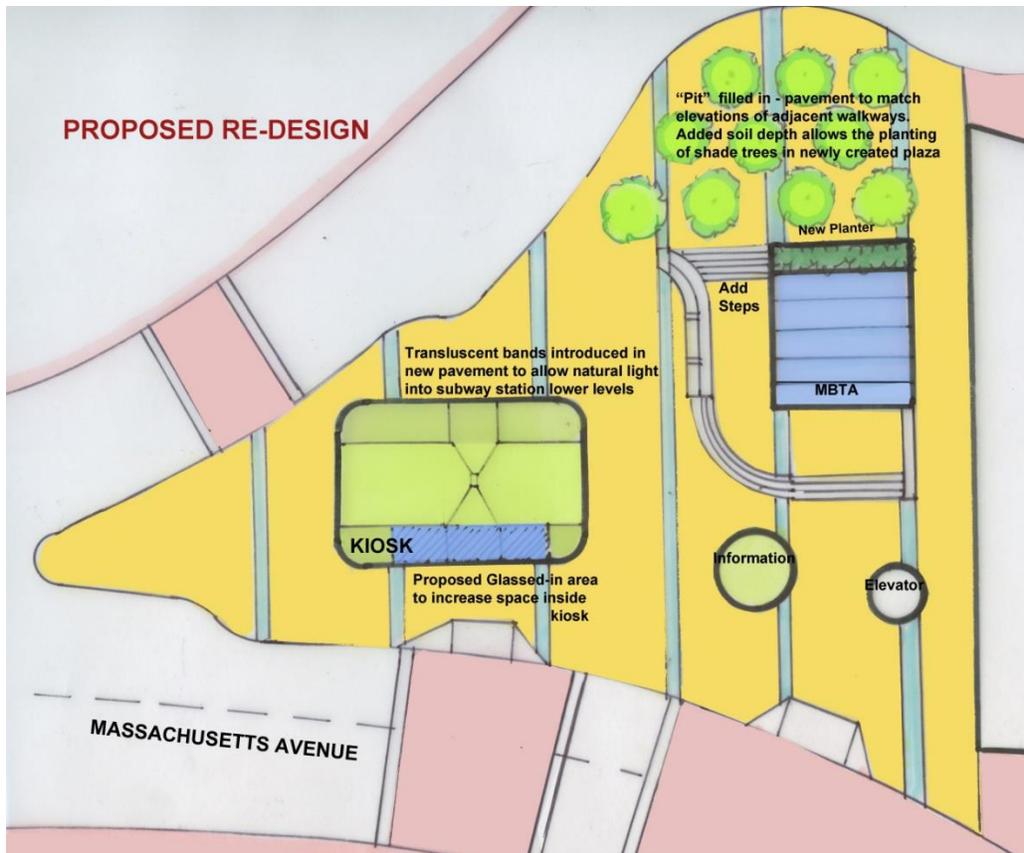
#### 2. *More Space*

- The kiosk, despite its generous overhangs, occupies a very small footprint. Whatever uses end up being assigned to this space, present day clutter surrounding the structure signifies a need for additional space. In the proposed design, a glass enclosure is introduced to create more usable area. The proposed glass enclosure sits between the kiosk's brick-banded columns and extends westward to the roof line of the structure.
- Walkways adjacent to the kiosk are fairly narrow, creating tight conditions between the building and the streets that run alongside it. The size of the plaza is increased by shortening the length of the drop-off bay as well as removing the first parking space in the taxi stand.

### 3. More Light

Entering the Harvard Square 'T' is an experience of going from daylight into relative darkness. The station at Government Center, once had a similarly dingy feel until it was recently re-designed. With the introduction of the new glassy head house there, a significant amount of daylight now filters down to the Government Center station's lobby and mezzanine levels. A new head house for the Harvard Square station would work in much the same way. As part of the proposed re-design, at the plaza level, translucent bands have been inlaid in the proposed new plaza. The bands are designed to disperse natural light throughout the building, particularly down to the level of the inbound and outbound station platforms.





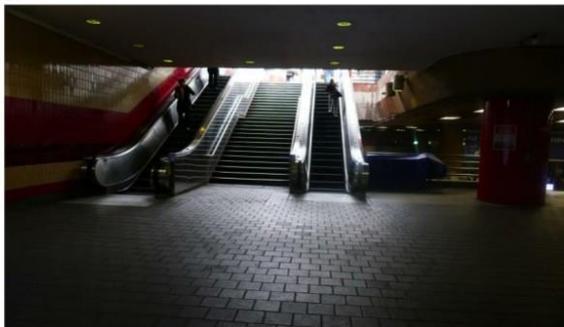
*Observations and General Recommendations*



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. Raising the elevation of the "Pit" to meet adjacent sidewalk grades allows enough soil depth to plant trees in this location.

2. Providing a glass enclosure along the eastern elevation of the kiosk would expand the capacity of the kiosk building.
3. Harvard Square station is notoriously dark. Translucent bands inlaid in plaza pavement help bring daylight into the station.
4. At Government Center, Boston, major tree planting in the once barren plaza and the new head house serve as inspiration.

*Elena Saporta is a Cambridge-based Landscape architect whose firm specializes in the design and greening of urban spaces.*

## Don't Over-Program the Kiosk and Important Public Spaces

By James M. Williamson

At his recent Dan Urban Kiley Lecture on Landscape Architecture the supremely intelligent and sensitive Toru Mitani talked about how urban landscape interventions in the middle of dense cities should not be about over-programming. His current GSD exhibit should be a must visit for all working on the Kiosk and Plaza.

[See: [www.gsd.harvard.edu/event/toru-mitani/](http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/event/toru-mitani/)]

The Plaza and Kiosk should be free of “programming.” The entire Plaza and Kiosk must be stripped of all advertising.

The T head house (what was intended to be a transparent cover to the Harvard Square entrance) should be stripped of all advertising. Come on! Cut the crap! We can AFFORD IT!

The Plaza should be rendered a place — where people can pause, and sit, and meet — but not where contrived things have to be “happening” all the time. LET IT BE. LET THE PEOPLE BE.

The Kiosk should be ELEGANT & SIMPLE.

ELEGANT...

&

SIMPLE.

BEAUTIFUL.

SOULFUL.

A City History Museum. (Especially Harvard Square.)

A Newstand. (Small.)

A Civic Information Center.

Compact. Compact. Compact.

A Visitor Center. (Nothing too complicated.)

Space for nothing.

Space for something.

Space for you and me.

A place to find momentary shelter; with a cup of coffee (or tea; purchased from a trike, or coffee-cart, managed by CRLS culinary arts and/or food business kids); grab a paper; watch people perusing the well-designed displays (Gallagher?) that reveal Cambridge History, or sit on a stool and look out through the newly restored “transparent” building on the hustle and bustle of ever-busy Harvard Square.

Half Versatile “Information” Center — Half “Open” Cafe.

(We need help with internal design ideas. Let’s hear from a variety of design professionals (and amateurs!))

Make it beautiful!

Make it fun!

KEEP IT SIMPLE!

## Crumpled Newspaper

By Patrick Barton

The proposal is for a time limited art installation that will cover the kiosk with a giant crumpled newspaper sculpture: perhaps lit from inside. Inspiration for the installation is drawn in part from work of sculptor Claes Oldenburg, the works of environmental artist team Christo and Jeanne Claude, and the architecture of Frank Gehry. The installation will serve as a placemaker; and establish the area as a platform for a series of time limited commercial art installations. These juried, and paid, installations will generate an endowment for the preservation of the kiosk, and programing for the plaza in the public interest.

The City of Cambridge can bring an art superstar such as African American woman artist Kara Walker to Cambridge for a large public art installation without paying much cash for the honor. Walker has had large commissions in Brooklyn and New Orleans. The final paragraph suggests how this might be accomplished in Harvard Sq.

The proposal for the kiosk is to wrap the existing kiosk in a giant crumple newspaper form for some term of time. The sculptural form could be removed to another location for a later exhibition. It might be auctioned off. It might be famous. This would establish the kiosk the area as an installation space, but not necessarily permanently one

The newspaper motif is significant. There has been a newsstand in the area since 1955. Just yards from the location, on Dunster St., the birth of moveable type printing in British North America occurred. Printing is an industry that defined the colony, and then the U. S. Gen. Geo. Washington’s first headquarters is across the street at Wadsworth House; the property of oldest college in English speaking America which



required locally printed books for its success. Presently, we are living in a era of reduced circumstances for paper form news media. The crumbled newspaper form reflect this fact. Perhaps, paper newspapers are “yesterday’s news”.

Subsequent to the crumbles newspaper form installation, a series of time limited commercial installations for the kiosk is proposed. The object is to generate revenue while engaging the public visually. These installations would be put out to bid, but also subject to a jury process The core idea is to generate an endowment of funds for a more long lasting use for the kiosk in the public interest. The commercial installations shall provide a spectacle for public pleasure, as department store windows, and corporate publicly displayed art and architecture have done for many decades. Consider the railroad station palaces of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It should be recognized that the newsstand was always a profit seeking commercial enterprise, this is reflected in the commercial art installation proposed for the kiosk. However, it is not proposed that this be a permanent situation.

This type of time limited environmental art has proven to to capture a huge media presence internationally. It will focus thought on Harvard Sq and its future; it will bring many visitors to Harvard Sq. specifically to witness the installation of the piece.

By obscuring the kiosk for a term of time; new thoughts on the future of Harvard Sq will be provoked. The absence of the kiosk in Harvard Sq has not been seen for more than thirty years, when the Red Line extension was in progress.

The free form museum, music venue, and art venue architecture of Frank Gehry is a partial inspiration of this proposal’s concept. Gehery built the museum in Bilbao, Spain; the Disney Concert Hall in LA; the Bard College Fisher Center for the Performing Arts; and the Stata Center at MIT.

Inspiration also comes directly from the work of environmental artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Their time limited environmental art projects include Gates in Central Park, NYC; Running Fence, in California. Their wrapping projects: islands in Florida, the Ponte-Neuf in Paris, the Reichstag in Berlin have established this style of art. Sculptor Claus Oldenburg is certainly an inspiration too.

Given the fame of Harvard Sq, and enormous volume of foot traffic found there, which includes people from all over the world, and local people too, the famous and the anonymous, the expectation that the commercial installation proposals will be of high quality and with significant funding seems a realistic hope.

It is possible that leading corporations would engage in patronage with the leading artists for the honor and prestige of having a time limited art installation in Harvard Sq. In this way, Kara Walker a leading African American woman artist could be brought to Harvard Sq, Cambridge, a location with important African American and women’s history.

## Living Time Capsule

By Janet Si-Ming Lee

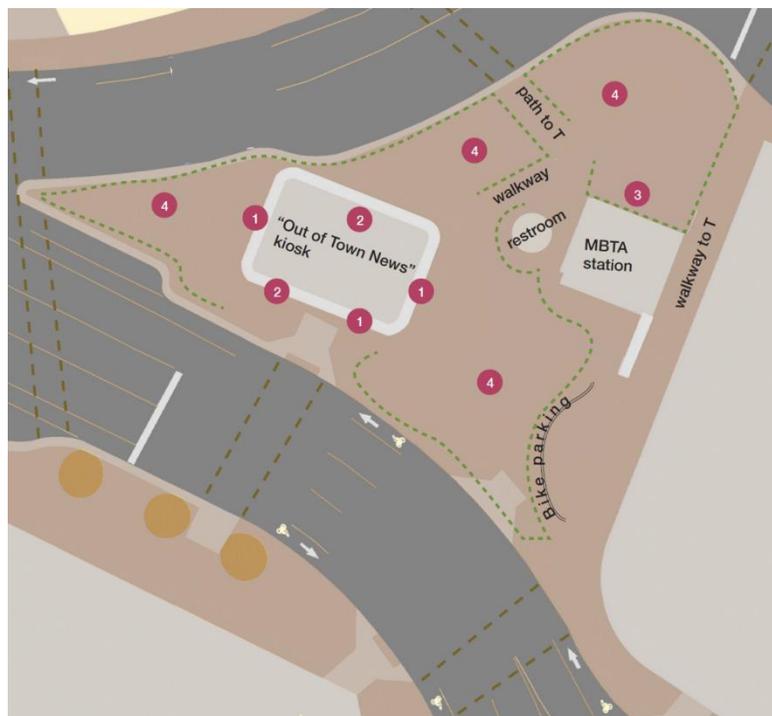
*Historical & Personal Recollections — Interactive time-capsule display documenting both the city’s history and community’s personal memories*

- People can find and enter their personal memories of Harvard Square for collective memory-building. Popular establishments like Algiers Cafe and Herrell’s Ice Cream that go out of business can upload photos, videos, or article documentation into a time capsule display. Locals and out-of-town visitors can tap into this archive of favorite places and also enter their memories as part of the city’s history on a personal scale.
- People can enter their recommendations for visiting personal historic significance or current favorite places.
- Larger-scale comprehensive annual social programming and decoration of plaza that may be time-period-based like recreating Harvard Sq of the 1800s, 1920s, 1950s, 1970s, 1980s, future times, etc. This is centered at the plaza as starting point but may have a larger footprint extending to more participating restaurants in the way that the Chocolate Festival invites local businesses to interpret menus and sell vintage items.
- Out-of-Town News remains as an entity but the concept of “news” and time is reimaged.

*Evergreen Design + Annual Programming*

**1. Large Interactive screen panels display news and personal accounts across time**

- *Past:* Personal and historical recollections of the city
- *Current:* Twitter and facebook news feeds surfacing Cambridge-area, Boston, and/or Massachusetts residents thoughts on various hashtag themes. City can capture public sentiments on their polls.
- *Future:* Recommendations on places to visit in the city for food, services, and products.



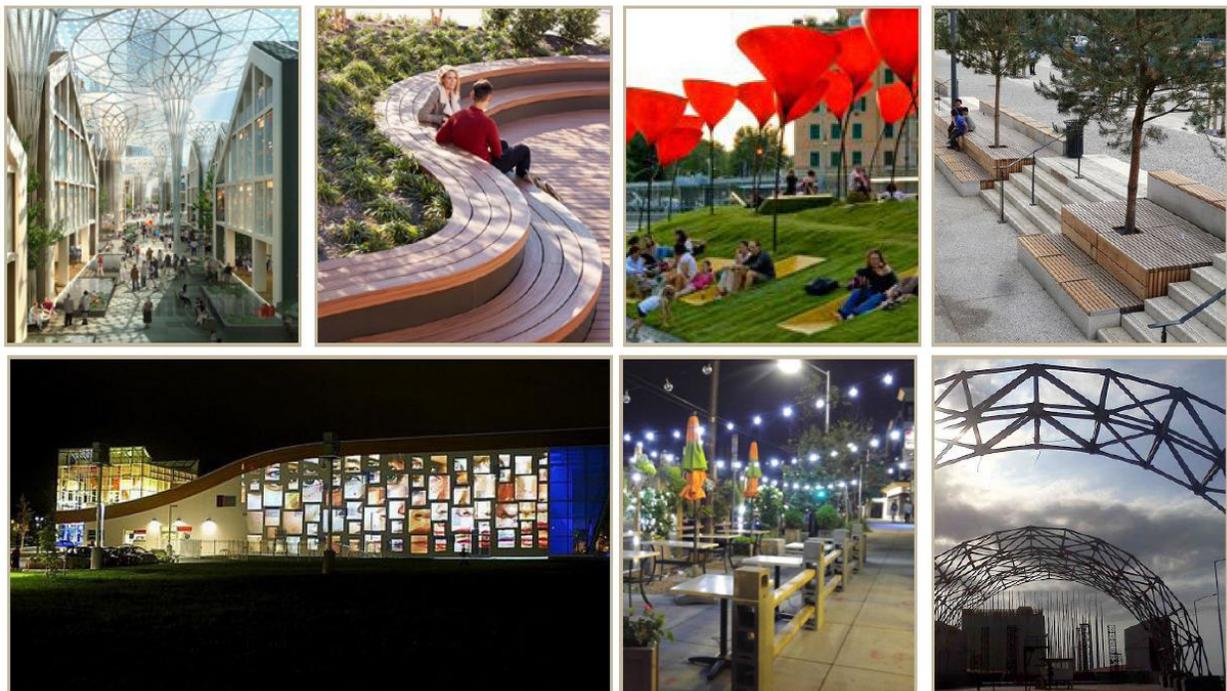
**2. “Out of Town News” serves as a Welcome Center directing tourists and locals to both evergreen information on sightseeing and establishments participating in that decade.**

- Intro to City and History — Current Info booth is removed and its function absorbed into “Out of Town News” kiosk to consolidate space.
- Micro-Museum — Display cases inside the kiosk feature historical artifacts, books, videos, art, etc. within this kiosk reflecting on that selected era and includes info about how the kiosk used to look at that time.
- International icon — International newspapers continue to be sold inside.

3. Movie Screen to feature films throughout the year from a selected time period or reflecting on that time as a documentary or fictional piece set in that era.

4. Public seating areas w/ Solar-powered phone-charging areas

- People can sit in these areas underneath solar-powered sculptural flowers to charge their phone. They can play enter their personal memories of Harvard Square into this collective system their memories.
- The areas here would be partially semi-enclosed with porous slender trees or floral sculptural elements for more semi-inclusive feel from external world of Harvard Square.
- Thematic chairs and tables based on the time period will placed here. Food from that time period could also be served in these public seatings.
- Tables for dining and board game playing. Perhaps, they could be interactive screens that people could choose a game to change the table displays to play



*Sample Annual Theme: 1950s-Inspired*

- Thematic chairs and tables based on the time period will placed here. Food from that time period could also be served in these public seatings.
- Concept: Imagine Norman Rockwell paintings of an idyllic 1950s lifestyle with friends and dates at the soda fountain parlours. Girls in poodle skirts and ponytails giggling over ice cream floats and shakes served by local participating Harvard Sq vendors and pop-up caterers. Dining tables and chairs of lustrous reds, teales, pastels, set in industrial chrome and painted wire-backed chairs cluster along the plaza. Ornate iron '50s lanterns or sputnik themed lamps outline the perimeter of the plaza. Elvis Presley's "Are You Lonesome

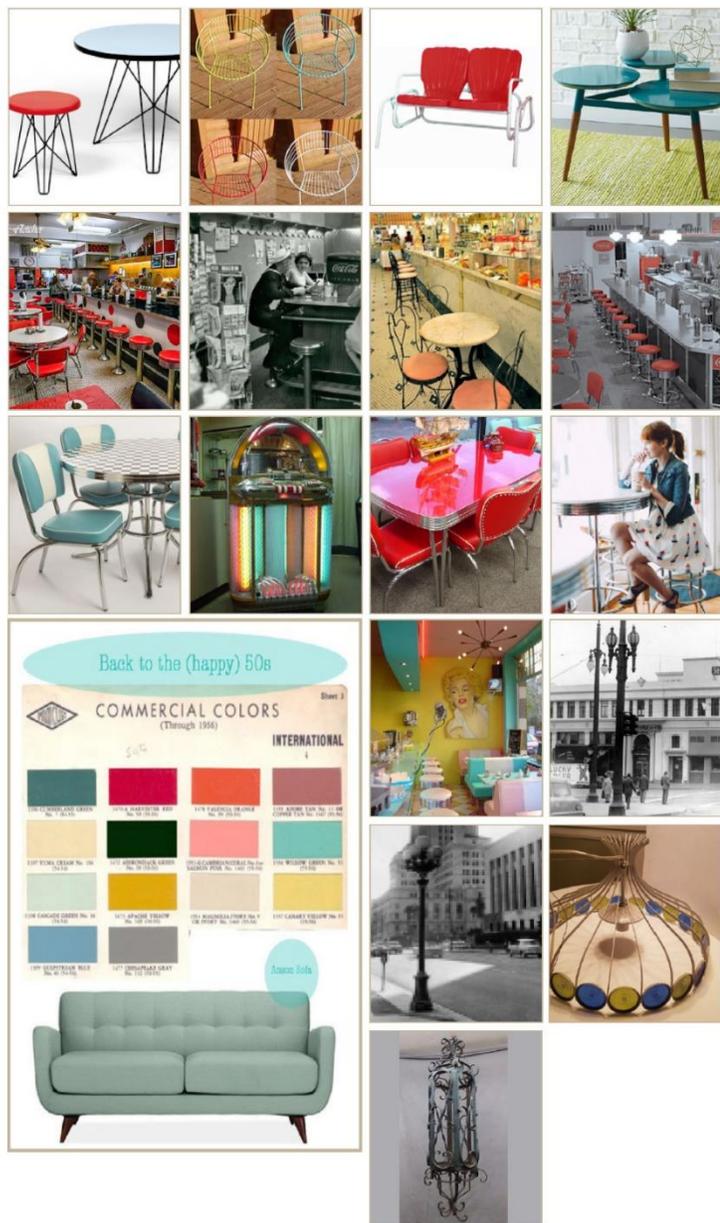
Tonight?" plays over the jukebox in the plaza as couples get up to dance on the lawn on a Saturday summer night. Later tonight, Marilyn Monroe will light up the screen again in "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" as an elderly couples at a Harvard Reunion wander over to sit at chairs lit below Sputnik chandeliers to watch the film. Grad students study the large interactive display panels alongside the kiosk and notice "Grease" will be playing here tomorrow night and "Casablanca" will be featured next week. A tourist notices 1950s-themed talks listed on the display hosted by The Harvard Bookstore, Cambridge Forum, Harvard, MIT and at other neighboring colleges. This year's topics include JFK's space age call to action, Cold War, and civil rights movement.

*Sample '50s Events & Programming*

EVENT IDEAS:

- Participating restaurants and pop-up caterers serving '50s-inspired dinners and snacks in plaza and around town
- Harvard Sq stores sell 1950s-themed goods.
- Talks and featured books on 1950s-era issues at Harvard, MIT, Cambridge-area book stores
- '50s art exhibits and history artifacts featured in kiosk and throughout Cambridge area.
- Dance lesson nights (e.g. swing, Lindy, rock 'n roll, bop / Charleston) and '50s music concerts
- Movie nights featuring '50s films and movies set mid-century such as *On the Waterfront*, *Rear Window*, *Seven Samurai*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *North by Northwest*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Christmas Carol*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Lady & The Tramp* (animation), *Grease*, *Back to the Future*, etc.
- Sponsoring '50s Board Games and Other Activities (e.g. Hula

Furniture & Decor Inspiration



Hooping, Pogo sticks, Play-Doh Crafty Days, Frisbee)

#### MENU IDEAS:

- Ice cream floats and shakes
- Jello salads — sweet and savory
- Hawaiian-inspired spam recipes
- Pineapple Upside-down cakes
- Casseroles
- Fricassee chicken, lamb stews
- Duck a l'orange
- French-style green beans
- Blini canapés

#### *Sample Annual Theme: 1920s-Inspired*

- Thematic chairs and tables based on the time period will be placed here. Food from that time period could also be served in these public settings.
- Concept: Imagine a country celebrating the conclusion to World War I, a country that throws off its mourning robes to a new joie de vivre. The women in flapper dresses let down their hair in little curled ringlets and life seems light again like the feathers of their headpieces. They rejoice in a new golden era inspired by Parisian-led art movements. Champagne is flowing at the parties again while the singles cluster around the elegant picnic tables overflowing with dainty finger foods and sandwiches. Ornate black geometric art deco frame the golds of the tall columns throughout the plaza. Couples get up from their scalloped chairs or art nouveau and art deco-inspired backed metal benches to dance to Charleston while jazz band plays. Ribbons spiral down to embrace the plaza and tall floral displays. It's autumn and the returning college students watch silent films while multi-tasking to their homework essay writing. A tourist notices 1920s-themed talks listed on the display hosted by Harvard Bookstore, Cambridge Forum, Harvard, MIT and at other neighboring colleges. This year's topics include: jazz, birth of mass culture and the rise of the "new woman", prohibition movement, cultural civil wars with "Great Migration" of blacks into cities and the anti-Communist "Red Scare."

#### *Sample '20s Events & Programming*

#### EVENT IDEAS:

- Participating restaurants and pop-up caterers serving '20s-inspired dinners and snacks in plaza and around town
- Harvard Sq stores sell 1920s-themed goods.
- Talks and featured books on 1920s-era issues at Harvard, MIT, Cambridge-area book stores
- '20s art exhibits and history artifacts featured in kiosk and throughout Cambridge area.
- Dance lesson nights (e.g. Foxtrot, Charleston, Swing, Waltz, Tango, etc. ) and other Jazz Age dance concerts

- Movie nights featuring '20s silent films starring Charlie Chaplin, Rudolph Valentino, etc. and modern movies such as The Great Gatsby, The Artist, Chicago, Midnight in Paris, The King's Speech, etc.
- Sponsoring '20s Board Games (Dominos, Yahtzee, and card games Poker, black jack, Canasta, Hokum and Tiddledy Winks etc.) and Other Activities (e.g. Murder Mystery games, costume parties, lawn games, etc.

MENU IDEAS:

- Oranges and Lemon-themed foods — lemonade, lemon cakes, etc.
- Mint juleps and champagne
- Baked ham
- Hors d'oeuvres and other finger foods (e.g. Deviled eggs, shrimp cocktail, Oysters Rockefeller, stuffed mushrooms, crudités with dips, salmon mousse on sliced bread, roasted nuts, olives, dainty finger sandwiches, stuffed celery)
- Salads — Waldorf, Caesar, Molded (jello) salad
- Clam broth
- Walnut bread
- Pastry pigs / Pigs in Blanket
- Fried chicken
- Turkeys stuffed with sage, onions
- Mashed potatoes and pork sausages



Truth Bridge Café

By Franziska Amacher

*The kiosk to be transformed into a TRUTH BRIDGE CAFÉ, Education for Democracy*

The Café will serve coffee and tea and have constant videos showing facts that address current issues in politics. The videos will be managed by rotating groups of students from different local universities with the help of websites that provide factual information. These information sources will be evaluated by student groups and discussed.

These videos will be visible from both inside and outside of the café.

We propose a minimal renovation to the structure, replacing the walls with floor to ceiling glass to make the café open and inviting from all sides and to preserve it as a symbol for Harvard Square and the kiosk's history as a place for exchanging news from the world.

A center Café bar will serve the drinks with stools and tables on either side for users.



As a necessary facility for Harvard Square, Toilet facilities will be located in the MBTA station and accessible to ALL against a small fee, including the Café users.

Putting the toilets into the MBTA station will free up the café, so no solid walls are necessary and the café is truly open.

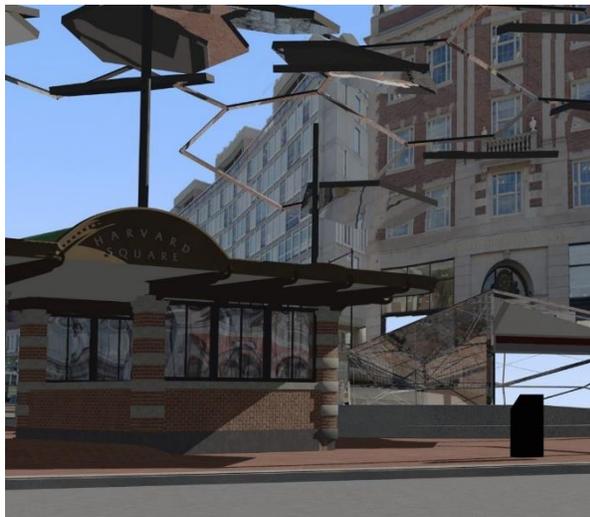
### Harvard Square: Waypoints

By Caroline James, Pebble Gifford, Peter Torpey, and Heli Meltsner (Curator, Cambridge Historical Society. Views represent the individual, not the organization.)

#### *Pergola as Placemaker*

Many cities and towns have erected dramatic canopies over their significant spaces, creating special places for gathering and appreciating the surrounding area. There are many possible methods of creating this placemaking structure but most are striking, imaginative and transparent so sightlines out are open and focused. One concept is to make a canopy have reflective surfaces along varied angles to reflect and refract the hustle and bustle of Harvard Square. Alternating surfaces and openings to the sky would provide shade in some areas while allowing views of the sky.

A canopy structure over Harvard Square could also be combined with green infrastructure. Cultivating plants and vines along the base of a canopy structure would create a welcoming shade, natural shelter and uniting the space as a destination. The resulting effect of the pergola concept is a complex fabric creating multiple views and perspectives, representing our robust, sanctuary city that encourages collaboration between diverse points of view.

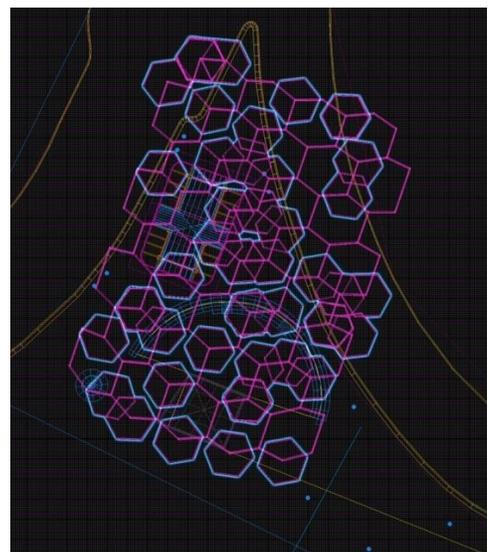


A dramatic placemaker such as a canopy/pergola will draw the whole Kiosk plaza together, attracting people to its shelter, inherent drama and creation of a gathering point. It will further distinguish this historic site in the middle of a busy road system.

#### *Harvard Square Kiosk*

Our idea for Harvard Square “Out of Town News” Kiosk calls for a multi-purpose building in a restored Kiosk that will serve the needs of Cambridge residents and visitors alike. As such, it is both a destination, a stopping place, a meeting place and a source of help for all comers.

#### *Information Center*



Cambridge, unlike many cities of its size in the United States and almost all cities in Europe, lacks a central information center where visitors and residents can get information such as maps, timetables, performance dates and places, exhibit information, local attractions like museums, parks and the like. The current facility is too small for this purpose, often unmanned and not immediately noticeable as a source of basic information.

Harvard Square is an ideal spot for such a center. Importantly, the Kiosk is eminently accessible, being adjacent to the Harvard Square Red line entrance, making it convenient for any user of the T transportation above and below ground systems. It is the focus of lively Harvard Square, itself a principal tourist site in the city. And as the historic center of Cambridge, the Kiosk is a logical place to start exploring the city. Already a gathering place for city residents, the historic structure and its immediate surroundings can be much improved by the introduction of service amenities such as shade, potable water, phone charging outlets and the like.

A primary role of the center would be to distribute information to visitors and residents in verbal, paper and digital formats. While it is true that much of the population now has a world of information in their purse or pocket as a phone or pad, neither can replace an informed human, knowledgeable about the nearest museum, the newest art exhibits or the site to find a walking map of Cambridge revolutionary sites. Tourists need real paper maps, time tables, information on how to access a cemetery or a lecture hall.

#### *News Point*

Since 1955, the Kiosk has served as a distribution center for local, state, national and international news. Many Cambridge residents are reluctant to see the end of this valuable function and saw the Out of Town News as a real drawing point. Residents and visitors might still need a reliable place to pick up a Crimson newspaper or the Cambridge Scout and Chronicle and selected media outlets. Standing screens, either inside or outside the Kiosk might broadcast local and significant international events. A moving zipper conveying news that would not impact the historic fabric could also convey this function.

#### *Cambridge History Point*

Cambridge has a rich history its residents should be proud of and visitors delighted to learn. Unfortunately, access to this heritage is not readily accessible to most. The Kiosk might display historic objects or documents, provide information on the town and city's historic sites and also display videos or websites with additional access to historic information.

#### *Services Point*

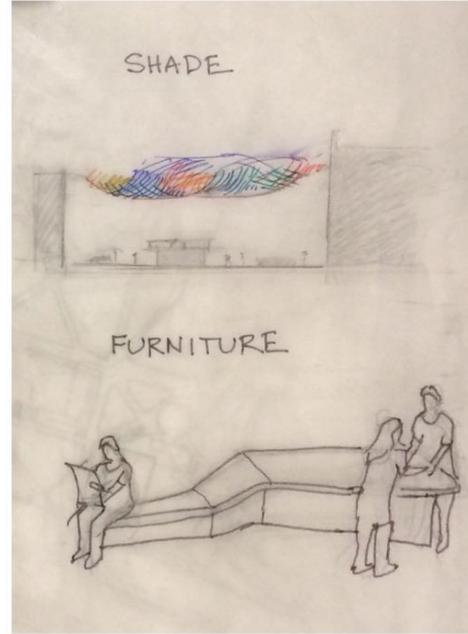
The vicinity of the Kiosk currently provides much toileting facilities. But visitors also keenly need a water fountain for refilling bottles, a phone charging station and possibly a gas pump for bicycle tires, all in short supply in the vicinity. These facilities will guarantee the continuing usage of the plaza.

### [Shade + Seating + Civic Engagement = !!!](#)

By Allison Green and Caroline James

*Concept for an integrated seating, service, and resource intervention*



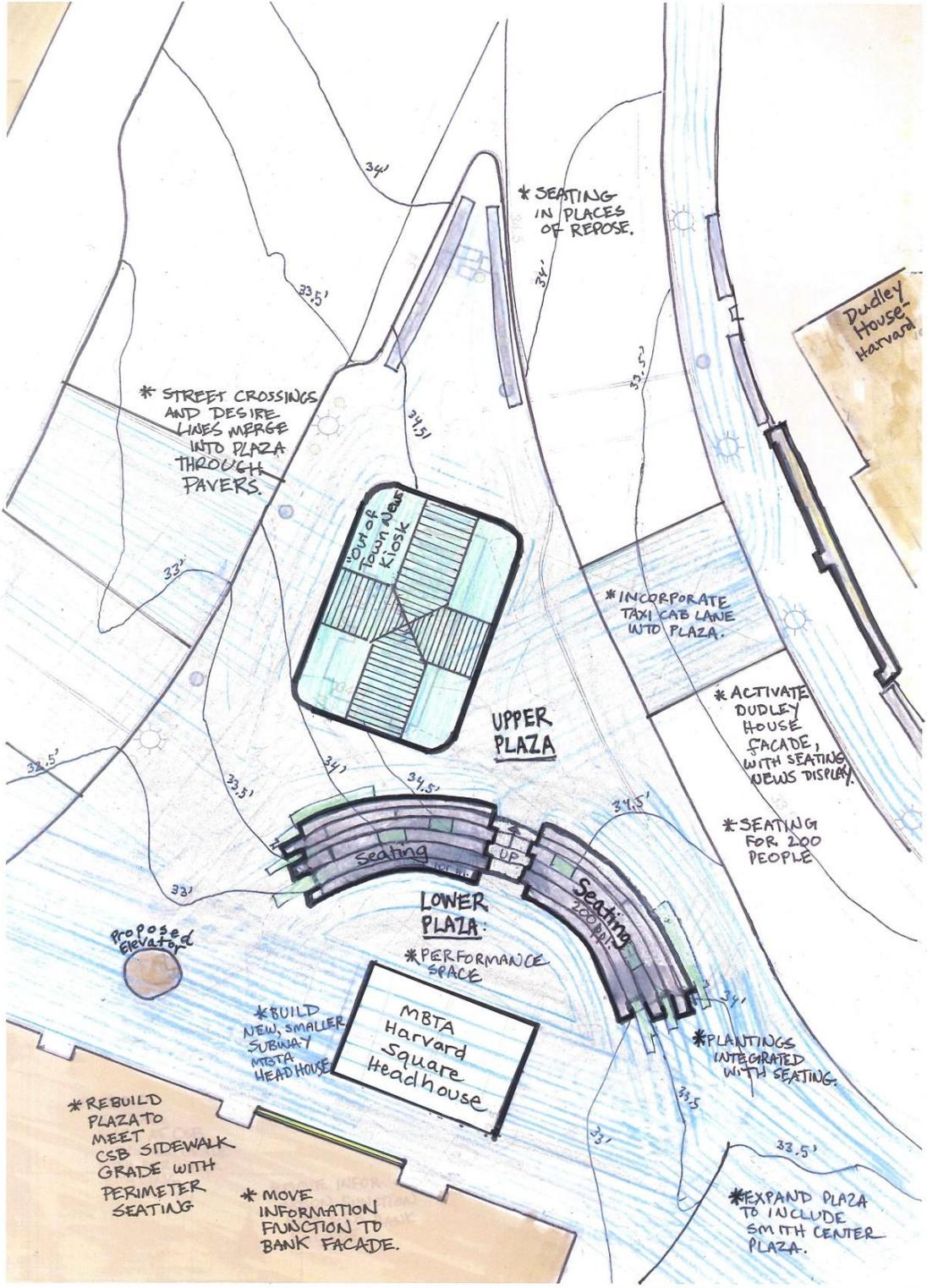


## Harvard Square as a Destination in Itself

By Peter Kroon and Caroline James

### *Conceptual overview*

- Build new, smaller subway head house, adding 6 feet to central plaza.  
Incorporate taxi cab lane, adding 8 feet to the plaza.
- Create two plaza levels – the lower central level and the upper perimeter level.
- Restore kiosk and make it the focal point of the upper level.  
Create a performance area on north side of the new head house.
- Build amphitheater style seating for 150+ people as the transition between the upper and lower levels.
- Install radiant heat under seats and performance area to keep clear of snow and to make comfortable almost year round.
- Program this new venue to include music (including classical), public speaking, and group watching (sports, elections, movies, events, etc.).



**HARVARD SQUARE**

**PLAZA PROPOSAL**

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



### *Existing subway head house*

- It is wider than it needs to be due to light well.
- It is tired and unnecessarily tall under the roof glass.
- It is ugly and a poor reflection on CSB located just behind it.
- The two steps down from sidewalk grade are not ADA compliant.
- The exposed concrete is scaling and rainwater gets into the station.
- The escalators are 40 years old and probably need to be replaced.
- The one public bathroom in the T station is disgusting and an embarrassment to our city and our country.

### *Proposed new subway head house*

- Build new head house just big enough to enclose the stairs and escalator (i.e. less wide, no longer enclose the light well).
- Use glass and modern design to achieve aesthetic beauty (but no taller than the existing head house).
- Roof should still be glass and should admit much more light.
- Use glass pavers to fill existing light well, define performance area, cover the decaying concrete and solve the rainwater problem.
- Install new escalators that terminate at sidewalk grade.
- Build 8 modern, unisex individual bathrooms in the landing of the T station to serve tourists and patrons of the performance area.

### *Harvard Square T station bathroom is disgusting!*





## Speakers Corner Concept for the Harvard Square Kiosk

By Marc Levy

My idea reflects Harvard Square's history as a center of free speech and as an ideas exchange – but also as a center of tourism that I feel needs even more vibrancy.



I experimented with this concept a couple of years ago on my own, bringing people every Sunday to The Pit in Harvard Square, but the opening of the kiosk to new concepts could make my concept a year-round thing. Again, that would mean not just a place for Cantabrigians to go every Sunday to share their thoughts or hear from others, but a draw for tourists and a boon to retailers who want to serve those tourists.

The concept:

There's been a Speakers' Corner in London since the 1830s – a proud tradition of free speech in which anyone can talk publicly about the things that matter to them. Sometimes the topic is unpopular. Sometimes the crowd talks back. But it is a great thing, and especially in a country, state and community with a First Amendment to celebrate and so much to talk about, doesn't it seem like we should be doing this too?

So how about a Speakers' Corner in Harvard Square? (Renamed for its home, perhaps?)

Although anyone can speak, the event could be (and maybe should be) seeded through the CAC with poets, storytellers, comics, philosophers, futurists and thinkers who will get this tradition off to the best start possible and sustain it over time.

(The Speakers Corner Trust in London, has this "Model Code" for speakers: "Speakers' Corner is your platform. You may use it to express any view, idea or opinion, so long as it is lawful. There are no rules, but you are asked to observe the following code: Please don't use offensive language; please respect alternative opinions; please show courtesy to other speakers and members of the public; if others are waiting, please limit your time to a maximum of 10 minutes. Use this site to engage, inform and enrich opinion.")



To see some of the talks that took place over the months, visit the Speakers Circle Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/SpeakersCircleC](http://www.facebook.com/SpeakersCircleC).

I'm attaching some photos from the Speakers Circle events I ran, in which you'll see speakers, interested listeners and some dialogue from the crowd.

## Harvard Square for People

By James Overly

Boston / Cambridge is considered by many to be the most European like city in the US. This is due to our scale and having a closer to livable city centers than other US cities. Currently if a tourist ventures out on the Red line to Harvard square, they are deposited in the middle of a traffic jam and are just as likely to head back into Boston as they are to explore the area. Even if they do stay and explore, they are greeted by busy crowded sidewalks and endless traffic. They might say they enjoyed visiting Harvard itself but I cannot imagine them being too impressed with the Square itself. There might be those who disagree, let's be realistic.

Harvard Square is plagued with traffic, most of it are just people cutting through. Every car that pass through Harvard Square without stopping to support a Business actually reduces the character of the Square and reduces the number of people who are willing to put up with the mess to head down to the square.

I propose that Harvard Square be closed to Automobile traffic and only allow Bicycles, Pedestrians, and Buses. This will allow for a much more friendly and interesting Square. There already are occasions where the square is closed to traffic such as the recent Oktoberfest. Why can't the Square be like this 365 days a year? Eliminating traffic through the square would allow restaurants to expand outdoor seating in the summer and provide more space for street vendors and performers. This would also enable a much more relaxed atmosphere.

While creating these pedestrian malls in Europe initially met with local business resistance, asking them now to go back would be met with even greater resistance. This is not just a pie in the sky vision, this is a math reality. A parked car in the Square generally brings in one person yet takes up the space for that car plus the space for the roads that brought it in. We cannot provide enough parking without bulldozing much of Cambridge around the Square to provide parking. Look at the size of lots around suburban Malls. Shopping malls attempt to recreate what we already have here in the city.

I'm not saying we eliminate all parking around the Square, but I am saying that we should do more to encourage alternate methods of getting to the square including biking, walking and transit. Many tourists who visit Boston are already depending on transit to get around. With the Red line stop, Harvard square could be a must see destination. They might come to see the Harvard campus but they will stay to enjoy the shopping and restaurants of the square, perhaps even making the square more of a destination than Harvard.

Walk through Harvard square with the eye of a tourist and tell me if this is really a pleasant place to be with the traffic, and narrow sidewalks. Harvard Square can be so much more. Revamping it will not only let the world know that while we are not turning our back on automobiles, we are no longer requiring them to be the default form of transportation. This will help promote Cambridge as being the green city that it desires to be.

## One Check Away

By Danielle Pierre-Louis

### *About Me*

I am a mother, auntie, and artist from Haiti. I was a banker and accountant for twenty years in Haiti. I wear a lot of hats! I believe in the philosophy: "Do It Yourself!"

Don't waste your time! Don't wait on people to do something! Do what you can do yourself first! I am interested in changing the face of homelessness in Harvard Square and use the proposal to inspire another cities, countries, and worldwide. I have been motivated, impacted, impressed by a movie about a Police Officer who became friend with an homeless lady. She said: Homelessness can be for everyone because it is only "one check away" for many people. As a Minister of God, I feel strongly that God is calling me in that Special Ministry, to help in my own way with all the great programs that are already in place. Just a little added touch from me!

### *Description of Idea*

What it's like right now

Around Harvard Square, homeless people drag dirty suitcases, cartons, and blankets as their belongings and private property, asking for money and sleeping on the ground.

What it can be

Organized, modular ateliers in the plaza where pedestrians can see homeless people selling things made mostly with recycling material from groceries, displayed them neatly, and also people can see them being made by teaching how to do everything with recycling material. They can inspire people how to make money, to create jobs everywhere, and becoming self-sufficient with a "DO IT YOURSELF" Lifestyle.

What it's like right now

Pedestrians in the majority ignore homeless folks or think negatively about them and so they avoid them. Isolated homeless individuals think or talk to themselves. They are sad. Some even cursed. Conversations feel forced. This is the reality, not only in Harvard Square, MA but almost everywhere in the United States and worldwide! I dream of a Program like that for my own beloved country, Haiti!

What it can be

By creating an Active Creative Force with our ignored Brothers and Sisters, transforming them into a workforce, Pedestrians and sellers will become curious about each other. The crafts, the Art Work, The New Idea of reuse, retransform, and reduce waste is something everybody is interested about! It will be something they all want to talk about, and they will get to know each other casually.

What it's like right now

In General, Our Homeless Population living in the Streets wear the same dirty clothing for a long period of time. I don't think, it is really what they want. This not their real identify.

What it can be

Transforming them into Sellers, Vendors, Owners of their small businesses, they could wear colorful uniforms participating about a large campaign for the Greenest Future for our Planet. They can be a Part of the climate change, control, and renewal. Because, the Planet belongs to them also! And add a name badge so people can identify them and their businesses.

*Image List*



### 1. The Problem

Right now, if an artist wants to sell their wares, they place them on the ground, maybe with a rock on top to keep them from blowing away. The seller and the wares are both on the dirty ground.



### 2. Zero Land-fill Uniform

A clean, recognizable uniform - something as simple as an apron - with name badge and Logos that describe "net-zero impact" on the environment. Pedestrians, Visitors, Tourists can know the person's name and know them as a seller from their uniform. The Vision is to make Harvard Square a Touristic Place also for the Homeless People. The image of the Square will be more attractive, more prosperity for

the homeless, more happiness for everybody! With their earnings, they could give a Part to the city to create “A Recycling Village” out of town, if there is no space available around Harvard Square, MA. They could come to the Harvard Square in their own Transportation Bus made for the most parts with Groceries Recycling Material. And More ideas!



### 3. Modular Ateliers

An example of using recycling materials to create a modular space to sell wares. No contact with the ground, can be reassembled to spec. The Idea is to create the Modular Ateliers, chairs, décor etc. only with Groceries Waste!



### 4. Mobile Atelier

This is an example of a mobile way of selling. Lucas Spivey parked his Mobile Incubator on the corner of Harvard and Western Ave in Allston, MA.



## 5. Groceries Memories Installation

This is an example of my own work. I create assemblages and decoration with my Own Groceries Material, for décor, utilities, events, installations and so more!!! For many years, I adopted a Lifestyle of Zero Waste Policy. I don't practically throw away anything. I do Art Work, cut Plastic Material, use Bottles for Décor and More, Etc. To have a better idea of my work from home, go to my online store to see some samples from millions of images that I accumulated over more than 10 years. This my passion, my happiness, my wellness, this is what I do!!! I strongly believe that Recycling Everything from your groceries is the future!!! With this Kind of Lifestyle, Trillions of Dollars can be saved. Using Recycling Material From Groceries for Housing, Transportation, Furniture, Décor etc. will reduce poverty and put a big relief in every single household! It will keep everybody busy, healthy, worthy, wealthy. No loitering, less violence, more value in the economic realm!!! I intend to create a "SMATHIES" Group to help and I wish to initiate my own fashion line with my designs. Go to Google.com, type: to-amaze.myshopify.com, wait to see Catalog and click on it.

## [A Tourist Information Center for Harvard Square](#)

By Charlotte Moore and Jim Shea

As former tourism professionals\*, we would like to offer our recommendations for a professional tourist information center (TIC) in the Harvard Square Kiosk. We feel it is shocking that the City of Cambridge, one of the most historic cities in the country, has no TIC where people can find answers to their questions, get brochures about local attractions, and purchase souvenirs.

Cambridge tourists by any definition include those who come primarily to visit a family/friend who is a student/faculty and then want time to explore Cambridge. Then there is the incidental tourist, a family from the suburbs, perhaps, on a weekend excursion. And residents, themselves, looking for specific information.

We sincerely believe that it is the responsibility of the city to create a TIC that is professional, fully funded, and responsive to anyone – resident or visitor – who needs help navigating.

We both have traveled extensively as well and note that information centers exist in cities that are not necessarily historic nor large. Those in historic town centers are generally located in historic buildings. The Kiosk fits the criteria for a true information center – it is in the heart of the most visited and historic part of the city, is adequate in size, and can be re-fitted without damaging its historic fabric.

TICs can and usually do offer a variety of services. There are numerous models, especially in Europe, although the Boston Common Visitor Center is a good one to compare as it is relatively small in size and serves many thousands of visitors a year.

For about 12 years (1985-1997) Cambridge Discovery (CD) operated a TIC from an office and information booth on the Harvard Square Plaza. It will serve here as an important model of what can be offered by a TIC. It was as professional as could be accomplished with virtually no money and too little space to display information and articles for sale to support its activities.

**OBJECTIVE INFORMATION:** All the information available in the CD booth, as in any professional TIC, was neutral in that the information was not be paid for by any entity. (For example, restaurants will pay hotel concierges to recommend them to visitors.)

**REPRESENTATIVE BOARD:** CD's board of directors included representatives from Harvard, MIT, the Historical Society, Historical Commission, and the business community. Sheldon Cohen paid for a temporary information booth that stood on the plaza. CD paid the City one dollar per year to rent the space.

**VOLUNTEER AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF:** Some 15 volunteers kept the booth open 365 days a year, from 9am until 5pm. Every day a single Cambridge event was pasted on poster-size paper in one of the windows. A full agenda of Cambridge events was available in the booth notebooks, updated weekly.

**FUNDING:** The City granted CD \$27,500 annually. This was supplemented by about 10,000 printed walking tours of historic areas, for \$1 each. There were discussions with the Harvard Coop about creating Cambridge-based souvenirs.

**TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION:** Once a week, a volunteer went to the MBTA Parker Street station to pick up a carton of train and bus schedules, which were in high demand.

**MAYOR'S OFFICE SUMMER JOBS:** The volunteers were assisted during the summer by high school students, paid by the Mayor's Office. They were also trained to lead guided tours of "Old Cambridge" (Harvard Square).

**REGIONAL IMPACT:** CD worked with the Greater Boston Tourist and Convention Center to give "fam tours." These tours introduced busloads of tourism professionals to Cambridge sights, museums, restaurants, hotels, and businesses.

**COORDINATION WITH OTHER CITY ENTITIES:** CD received grants and donations to fund the research and development of the African American Heritage Trail, in partnership with the Historical Commission.

Questioners are constant when there is a person available to approach. We think that the present information booth in Harvard Square does not accomplish the services offered by a professionally run TIC with actual employees, paid or volunteer. There is nothing more off-putting than an empty booth with a flickering computer screen that sometimes does not function. We have witnessed people

approach the window, only to find no one inside. The booth itself is visually chaotic and unattractive, and it clutters up the plaza.

We believe there is a huge void in city planning with little statistics on tourism and all its dimensions, cultural or otherwise. Jim did attend a presentation from “Envision Cambridge” a couple of years ago and there was nothing about tourists and tourism. When questioned about this, the presenter said it was not part of their study/planning. This is dumbfounding since Cambridge is a major tourist destination year round.

Let us proceed, however, with this proviso: Before making decisions on how best to utilize the Kiosk, we would hope that the City of Cambridge would take a serious look at tourists/tourism in Harvard Square. We do not need creative ideas, as there are many, but let’s be practical and observe/study the current situation and plan for the future.

Thank you very much.

\*Charlotte Moore ([chasm@tiac.net](mailto:chasm@tiac.net)) is retired director of Cambridge Discovery, the City’s first fully operating information center. In 1988, Charlotte took a year’s sabbatical to meet with top officials of the British tourism board and to visit TICs all over the UK. She converted her findings to fit the circumstances she met in Cambridge.

\*Jim Shea ([jimmshea@comcast.net](mailto:jimmshea@comcast.net)) worked for the National Park Service for 32 years; and for the last 20 years of his career, he served as Director/Museum Curator of the Longfellow House (Longfellow House/Washington’s Headquarters NHS in Brattle Street in Cambridge. This included oversight and management of the day-to-day operation of their Visitor Center with an average of 60,000 visitors per year, seasonal operation. (June-October).

## Harvard Square in All Seasons

By Mater Al Mishalawi

Harvard square is a wonderful location.

I can imagine grape vines in summer as shade, with tourists walking underneath along the general street.

Also, jasmine flowers planted for their fragrant aroma, intermingling with the breeze to give the area a sense of romance.

In wintertime we can light bonfires in the square.

*Translated from Arabic by Ali Karimi*

## HARVARD SQUARE IN ALL SEASONS

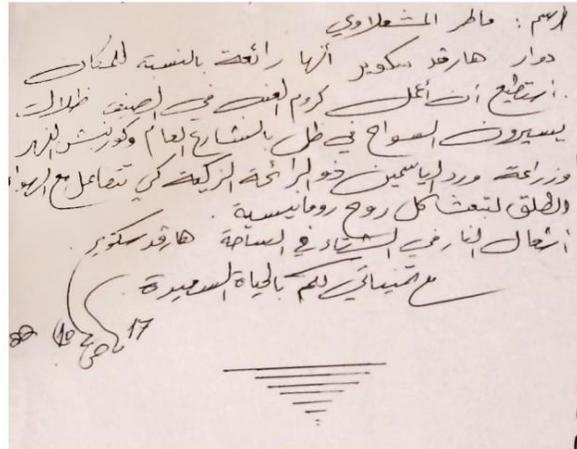
Harvard square is a wonderful location.

I can imagine grape vines in summer as shade, with tourists walking underneath along the general street.

Also, jasmine flowers planted for their fragrant aroma, intermingling with the breeze to give the area a sense of romance.

In wintertime we can light bonfires in the square.

October 22, 2017  
By Mater Al Mishalawi  
Translated by Ali Karimi



Grape arbors



Jasmine intermingling with breeze



Fragrant aromas

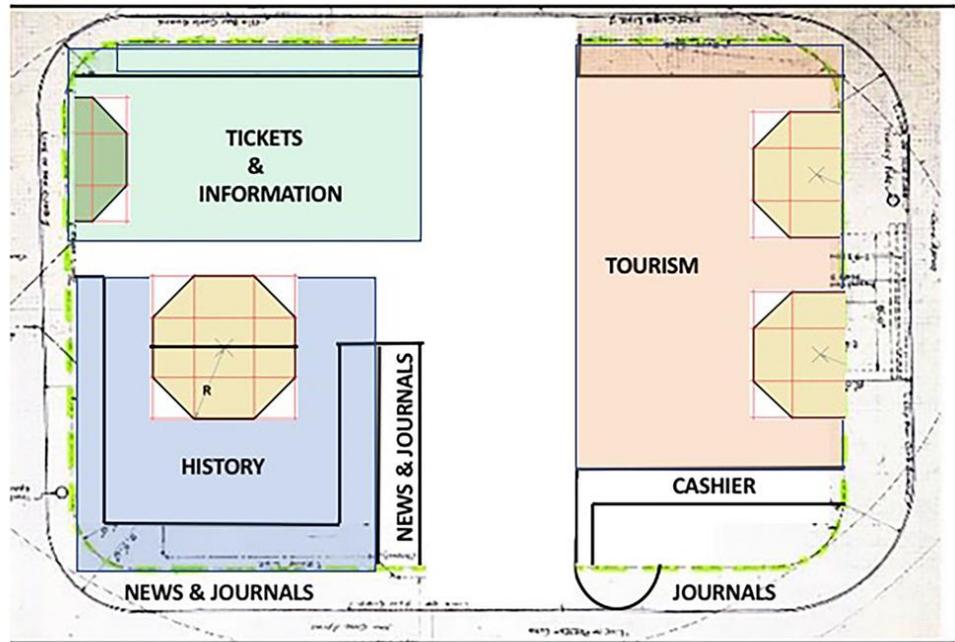


In wintertime, there can be bonfires

## Harvard Square Kiosk and Adjacent Kiosk Plaza as Multivalent News Center

By Friends of Harvard Square, including representatives from Harvard Square Neighborhood Association and Others

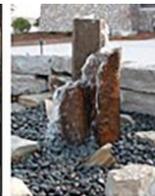
This proposal includes two plans - one for the Kiosk itself and one for the adjacent Kiosk Plaza area. Both focus on the larger theme of "News," consistent with the longstanding recent identity of the Kiosk and the surrounding area with Sheldon Cohen and Out of Town News.



Harvard Square Kiosk as Welcome Center: Plan using OTN-Cabinets



Water features



umbrella & chairs



elevator



Art, history, & science exhibits



Pull up or down screen

Below: Place/Time: directions & time capsule

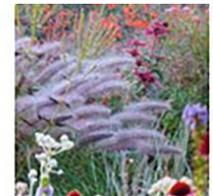


fountain



**Kiosk Plaza with new Features:**  
Gardens, water, Place / Time feature, fountain, awnings, Changing Art, History & Science Exhibits

To Palmer St. Farmer / Craft Market



awnings



The Kiosk itself would become a Welcome Center (complete with a Ticket Booth, Tourist Center, Newsstand, and small History Museum with rotating exhibitions). With the Kiosk Plaza, the plan is not only to expand this area, but also to add rich sensorial elements (landscaping, water) plus a time-space element (directions sculpture and time capsule), a pull up or pulldown screen for sports or news viewing, an umbrella tree with seat and small table storage, a space for small pop up art and science exhibitions, and space for Mom and Pop carts.

This proposal in vital ways enlivens and unifies the Kiosk and the Plaza around it by addressing key News-related themes – current events, recent news, little known information about Harvard Square and Cambridge, new ideas shaped through small changing art and science exhibits as well as vital sensorial elements that influence one’s life 24 hours a day and 12 months of the year. Our larger aim is to transform the Kiosk and surrounding plaza into a space that is exciting and welcoming on an ongoing basis to local Harvard Square residents, workers, and students as well as visitors from near and far.

Related background materials (PDFs):

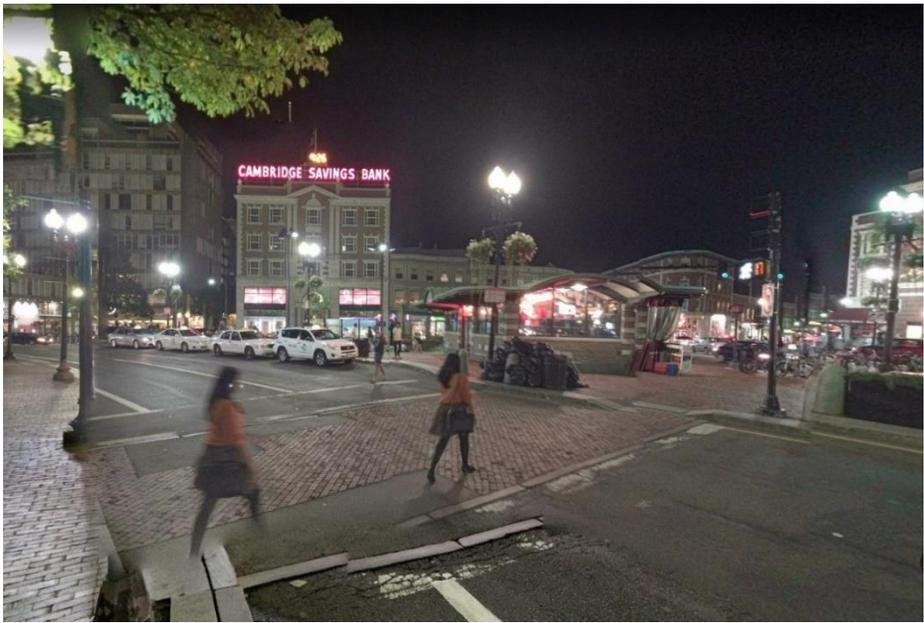
- [Kiosk News Sketch Plan \(complementary imagery for the Kiosk\)](#)
- [Kiosk Plaza: Time for a Change \(complementary imagery for Plaza\)](#)
- [Kiosk and Plaza as News and Welcoming Center](#)

## Let There Be Light

By Kenneth E. Taylor, A.I.A.

*To enhance the after-dark environment, relight the Square more appropriately.*

- Light the kiosk to emphasize its historical characteristics, the rooftop, and the ceiling. This lighting should be architectural rather than haphazard twinkle ropes.
- Remove all the “acorn” lights from the center.
- Develop a more nuanced storefront lighting program with merchants.
- Install architectural lighting for the façades on the background buildings that form the Square:
  - Cambridge Savings Bank
  - Lehman Hall
  - The Coop
- Install architectural “feature” lighting to light important Square landmarks:
  - Kiosk
  - Abbott Building
  - First Parish Church



## In Transit

By Kenneth E. Taylor, A.I.A.

Harvard Square is a transit point - for local residents, students, employees, and employers, visitors, and shoppers.

In the small space available in the landmark, we should house elements that promote the enjoyment and convenience of all. I propose:

- In the main interior space, a flexible, open meeting/event space available to the “community.”
- At the north interior wall, a “Historic Cambridge” exhibit directing people to the Cambridge Historical Society and identifying other sites.
- At the south interior wall, a visitor’s exhibit directing people to the Visitors’ Information Center (relocated from the Square to a larger space nearby).
- Outside the kiosk, at the north end, a newsstand module, a clean box clear of the kiosk structure approximately 5’ deep x 15’ wide x 8’ tall. Fitted with a pair of doors, the unit could be opened to double the merchandise display space.



*Newsstand*

- Outside the kiosk, at the south end, a florist/produce module, the same size as the newsstand module. Each might buyers to a nearby full-stock merchant.



*Flower stand*



*Produce stand*

## Book Station

By Gabe Dardik

The inside of the kiosk should be turned into a book station, where people can take books that they are interested in and keep them free of charge, and people who have finished books can donate books they don't want. The idea is to promote reading and the spread of knowledge/books. Additionally, the outside and/or walls of the station could be decorated with murals done by local artists with the theme of knowledge/books etc. I think it's fitting to make a mini monument promoting the free spread of knowledge outside one of this country's greatest institutions of learning.

## Welcome Local, State, National and International Visitors

Dan Andrew Bodt, Cambridge City Resident and Owner of Trademark Tours

The city's decision to repurpose *Out of Town News* is a critical moment. The make-up of Harvard Square will be altered. I urge the city to maintain the historic value and traditions of the square, while keeping the space locally maintained and operated.

I strongly support the stance that many Harvard Square community leaders have already voiced; the famous Out-of-Town News space should continue to be locally operated with an eye towards maintaining tradition. In recent conversations I have had with local business owners, municipal workers, students, professors and visitors, everyone has expressed their hope for local management of the space. The square faces uncertainty due to near-constant turnover of large property landlords. It's more important than ever that the square maintain an attractive, unique and locally run business or community entity alive at out of town news.

There is intrinsic value in preserving the historical traditions of the square. Out of Town News should be run to welcome local, state, national and international visitors who come to Harvard Square seeking a unique and memorable experience.

Three-fold vision for the Out of Town News:

- Maintain the nostalgic essence of the current Out of Town News location by continuing to sell the most popular newspapers and magazines in the small outdoor areas of the store. Keep the classic signs, work extensively with the Cambridge City Council, Harvard Square Business Association and other stakeholders in determining how to maintain the classic essence of the building.
- Staff the space for all-seasons and times of day. It's important to note that the business currently occupying Out of Town News is open 7 days a week with long hours. This is crucial to the overall safety of Harvard Square. Allow community programming to bring positive attention to the area
- Support these efforts through dedicated tourist, visitor and local sponsorship revenue. Build on the 25 years of experience of the Cambridge Office For Tourism, Harvard Square Business Association, local tour companies and non-profits. Promote Harvard Square entities of all kinds through a highly trained, knowledgeable and personable staff.

## Harvard Square Proposal

By I. Bider

I think you'll all agree with me when I say that for many of our young folk, Cambridge is a magical college wonderland. And we certainly have a lot of young folk.

But it gets me bummed that many of our nation's university students don't get the opportunity to benefit from the wonderful college town we have ourselves. Our schools are really tough to get into. None of my kids or grandkids ever stood a chance. Cambridge has only ever had fancy, exclusive universities.

So that's why I would propose building a community college in the Harvard Square. I'm not sure how much space is needed for such a thing, and I don't know how much space is available in the square. But I don't really think it matters. A good architect knows how to get around these problems. I just really believe that we shouldn't let our goldmine go to waste for so many American college students. We can give people a truly great college experience, and we can also make Cambridge an even more exciting place. For these reasons, I would propose building a community college in the Harvard Square.

## Beware

By Tuv Levov

All structures must fall.  
All power is oppressive.  
Beware the kiosk.

## Being Mindful

By Matt Jelen

In planning any changes to the Harvard Square Kiosk, it is vital that the City of Cambridge keeps in mind the men and women who live, sleep, socialize, and otherwise find shelter in the Square. After all, the space belongs as much to those who traverse it daily as it does to those who are forced to call it home.

Cambridge's homeless population has it hard enough already. Despite admirable efforts by area shelters, financial and space constraints mean dozens of residents are left to find refuge in the cold city streets. For many, Harvard Square has been that refuge—whether this means taking cover beneath the awning of the kiosk or hunkering down on one of the pit's concrete benches.

Any plans for the Square ought to provide a better home for those who have no other. Maybe the City could introduce comfortable places to sit and lie down, or shelter from the elements, or even an outdoor heating system. But ignoring the realities of our streets will only make things worse for all of us.

## The Cantabrigian Cafe

By O. Robert Simha

Establish a coffee shop in the kiosk and let it be run by the CRLS culinary program. The tables and chairs are already there. This would give our high school students and their faculty a real chance to show their talents and contribute to the life of the square and generate income and experience for students and the culinary program. They can do a better job at less cost than Starbucks and all the other mega cost purveyors of coffee colored water...

## How to Integrate “Unique Local Business” Into Harvard Square Plaza

By Joe Tyburczy

Harvard Square has a long history of hosting unique local businesses that give it its distinctive character and individuality. Of these, only a few, like Oona’s used clothing and the Million Year Picnic bookstore, are left. High leasing costs for retail space means increasingly more chain stores, more banks and phone stores – and fewer bookstores, no local music stores, and fewer local residents using the Square for commercial needs.



### *Challenge*

How can the design of Harvard Square Plaza not merely “remember” the influence these unique local businesses have always had on the Square’s personality – but actually keep this experience alive for future generations?

### *Mobile Retail Space*

One way to accomplish this might be to include a space that allows a local retail business to inhabit the Plaza via a suitably weatherized mobile platform, similar to a food truck or the pop up store vehicles currently used in Los Angeles and Miami. The “dock” might be as simple as a curb cut allowing a truck to drive onto the Plaza. Or it could be a finished feature that creates a more seamless visual integration with the Plaza.

Occupancy of this “pop up” retail space could be on a rotating basis, with a different unique local business appearing every 1-3 days. To encourage diversity, a generic (unbranded) mobile platform could be made available for existing Cambridge-based small businesses to use. Consideration might also be extended to food trucks, provided they meet criteria establishing them as local small business retailers.

### Kiosk as Art Space

By James Mahoney

Cambridge has many resident artists of all media who have limited outlets for bringing their work to the public eye. The Kiosk could be a great “pop-up” space for two or three artists at a time to display and sell their work. Each show could be a month long. Artists could be selected by lottery.

This idea would give up to 36 Cambridge artists a venue for reaching a wide and diverse audience (up to three artists per month over a year).

Perhaps the Cambridge Art Association (and similar groups) could be enlisted to staff the kiosk for regular hours. In addition, a condition of exhibiting in the space would be that the artists commit a certain number of hours to staffing the kiosk while their work was on display.

### Revert Kiosk to Original Usage!

By Anonymous

No one group can claim this iconic structure, it belongs to us all. Please consider bringing it back to what it really is - the entrance to the T station! Any other use would degrade it and force unnecessary changes to the structure. It is in disrepair and the city is responsible (and long over due) for an historical renovation of this beautiful landmark. Please do not give our cherished structure to tourists, or any other special interest group - fix it and restore its original use!

### Sell It

By David Golber

The City should sell the space to a real estate company. Take bids and sell it to the highest bidder.

The City should know where the responsibility of the City stops, and not try to decide what the “right” business for the space is. The City should not be in the real estate business.

## “Explore Cambridge” Kiosk

By Aryt Alasti

Why not make this centrally located structure a place where people could do Google Street View tours of Cambridge, which perhaps some entity with expertise such as MIT’s Media Lab could be contracted to create? Historical imagery could be overlaid on the contemporary views. An associated app could be created, so that people could be out and about while experiencing an enhanced reality of Cambridge, thus easing the occupancy demand for this small structure.

## Suggested Programming Opportunities for Harvard Square Kiosk

By the Harvard Square Business Association

- The Kiosk should be staffed every day from early in the morning until and throughout the evening all year long.
- These events should take place throughout the year, as appropriate.
- Voter registration, Wayfinding, Maps, Public Toilet locations, Tours, Harvard Square business listings, City-wide festival and events listings, Historical information etc.

Community Partners:

- Cambridge Arts Council curates art shows.
- CCTV records BeLive from Harvard Square.
- Alternating Museum Schedules...Harvard Art Museum, Peabody Museum, Museum of Natural History, Museum of Science, etc. (displays, information etc.)
- Friday Forums – similar to TED talks....but done by Cambridge people.
- Saturday night – Meet & Greets, sponsored by alternating restaurants (food sampling, mocktails, and live music).
- Sunday evenings – Alternating concerts....Longy, New School of Music, Passim, Choir of St. Paul’s, Revels, Blue Heron, Cambridge Symphony, Folk New England and the CCAE.
- Book readings sponsored by alternating Harvard Square book stores with book groups discussions and featured authors.

### *SEASONAL PROGRAMMED EVENTS AT HARVARD SQUARE KIOSK*

All events are FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

#### *Winter Carnival*

January

- January 8 – Harvard Square’s 8th Annual month long Winter Carnival commencing with the Boston Celtic Music Festival & Club Passim – live in Harvard Square Station.....MLK’s I Have a Dream speech, recited by Cambridge public school children.
- January 22-23 and 24th – Taste of Chocolate Festival in Harvard Square! Find a chocolate sponsor i.e. (Lindt) to sample at Harvard Square Station....(Lindt is a featured chocolatier at Cardullo’s and other shops in Harvard Square).
- January 30th – Hasty Pudding Woman of the Year Parade! Parade at 3pm with a stop at Harvard Square Station ....followed by her award presentation and roast.

## February

- February 6 – Display the trophy and accept the ballots for the 8th Annual “Some Like it Hot Chili Cook-off” from 1pm – 2:30 pm (the day before the Super Bowl)....where the public can enjoy samples of chili from some of Harvard Square’s HOTTEST restaurants while enjoying musical entertainment! Cast your vote for the best “Some Like it Hot” Chili in Harvard Square in the Harvard Square Station.
- February 7 – Super Bowl Sunday in Harvard Square! Invite folks to come to watch the Super Bowl in various Harvard Square establishments....however, invite them to stop by Harvard Square Station to drop off canned and boxed goods to replenish Cambridge food pantries...
- February 14 – 15 – 16 – Lovin’ the Square. This year’s Valentine’s event will feature fabulous food and drinks from Harvard Square’s restaurants, romantic and fun deals from our retailers and a variety of interesting, cozy and entertaining things to do from all of our cultural icons. Meet at Harvard Square Station to create a special valentine. (Partner with an appropriate sponsor who will provide all the necessary arts supplies.)
- February 23 - Chinese New Year. Come celebrate Chinese New Year in Harvard Square! 2014 is the year of the Horse and the 59th Anniversary of the Hong Kong in Harvard Square. As usual, Massachusetts Avenue from the Hong Kong to Harvard Square Station will be festooned with red and gold lanterns hanging from our wrought iron lampposts as we prepare for our grand Chinese New Year procession through Harvard Square and our cultural “Open House” at the Hong Kong! Lion Dancers will stop at Harvard Station for a special performance.

## Early Spring

### March

- March 1st – Women History Month in Harvard Square. Breakfast meet and greet at Harvard Square Station with Harvard Square’s civic, business, academic and political leaders.
- March 2nd – The 86th Annual Academy Awards Oscar Sunday – Harvard Square establishments will be hosting viewing parties. Prior to the party, please come by Harvard Square Station with your gently used gowns and evening wear...which will be donated to Belle of the Ball. Belle of the Ball/Anton’s Cleaners will clean your gowns and donate them students unable to afford Prom gowns.

- March 16th – March 21st & March 23rd – March 28th – Winter Restaurant Week in Harvard Square! Come by Harvard Square Station to sample delicious restaurant offerings.
- March 17th – Harvard-Go-Brach events! Join us in Harvard Square as we celebrate our Irish Cultural Heritage! Come by Harvard Square Station to take an Irish step-dancing class...dance the Irish jig...and listen to live Irish music and poetry!

### *Spring*

#### April

- April 18th – 27th – The 9th Annual Cambridge Science Festival. Harvard Square is full of scientific surprises! Come by Harvard Square Station where science projects created by Cambridge public school children will be on display.
- April 26th – The 7th Annual Bookish Ball and Shakespeare’s Birthday Celebration! Partnering with the Cambridge Public Library, Actors’ Shakespeare Project and Harvard Square’s bookstores, please join us for bookstore strolls, music, dancing, performances, and birthday cake which will be served in Harvard Square Station from 2:00 until 3:30 p.m. along with a fun and surprising round of POP- UP SHAKESPEARE!

#### May

- May 1st – May 4th – The 24th Annual Harvard Arts First Festival – Join hundreds of Harvard undergraduates, graduates and faculty in Harvard’s annual celebration of the arts! Join us at Harvard Square Station where art work created by Harvard students will be on display.
- May 4th – The 33rd Annual Mayfair Featuring six stages of live entertainment, dozens of restaurant vendors, hundreds of street vendors selling artwork, jewelry, vintage clothing, neighborhood sidewalk sales, and the Rotary Club of Cambridge’s Annual Chalk on the Walk! From noon – 6pm. Harvard Square Station will be the information center of the festival. Lost and Found, Information, Command Central.
- May 5th – Cinco de Mayo – Mexican heritage celebrated in the restaurants of Harvard Square. Join us at Harvard Square Station for a performance by Mariachi’s de Veritas....a fabulous Mariachi band made up entirely of Harvard Students.
- May 11th – Mother’s Day! Stop by Harvard Station to leave a post-it note message for mom. Messages will be placed on the walls of the building. Post-it notes will be provided....
- May 29th – 367th Harvard Commencement. Harvard Square Station will be the centerpiece of the activity....with plenty of outside seating, planters overflowing with flowers and street musicians playing to the crowds.

### *Patios in Bloom*

#### June

- June 2nd – Harvard Square’s Annual Patios in Bloom Festival. Come celebrate as we officially open patio season with the installation of our Victorian Flower Baskets both on the lampposts....and at Harvard Square Station.

- June 6th – June 15th – Gay Pride in Harvard Square. Public discussion held in Harvard Station led by GBLT groups from the City of Cambridge.
- June 15th – Father’s Day! A father and child(ren) walk around the Square will begin and end at Harvard Square Station. Followed by a light breakfast sponsored by the Harvard Square Business Association.
- June 21st – 7th Annual Make Music Harvard Square, Fete de la Musique! A square wide musical celebration held in every nook and cranny, park and plaza and street and patio throughout the day and evening...with special musical performances at Harvard Square Station.

### *Summer*

#### July

- July 4th – Harvard Square Station, festooned with red, white and blue balloons...is a reception center for all the visitors coming in for the firework celebration on the Charles River.
- July 13th – Bastille Day! Join us on Holyoke Street for a stormin’ French street festival featuring fabulous French food, music and dance! Harvard Square Station will feature French music and French coffee and mini croissants...(we will find a sponsor for this event.)

#### August

- Summer Restaurant Week in Harvard Square. Samplings from some of Harvard Square’s finest restaurants will take place in Harvard Square Station.

#### September

- September 1st – 30th – 6th Annual Revival Month in Harvard Square. Join us at Harvard Square Station for a 50’s style Hootenanny, and old-fashioned jam session....in partnership with Passim.
- September 21 – 4th Annual Folk Music Festival in Harvard Square.
- Some of today’s hottest up and coming folk artists will be playing our free festival on Palmer Street....and in Harvard Square Station.
- September 21 – 13th Annual Riversing, presented by the Revels. Morris dancers will be on hand to give a performance at Harvard Square Station!
- September 27 – The 6th Annual Americana Music Festival in Harvard Square. 3 days of music and activities...with special performances at Harvard Square Station.

### *Fall*

#### October

- October 9th – 38th Annual Oktoberfest and HONK Festival features six stages of 8 live entertainment, dozens of international food vendors, hundreds of street vendors selling artwork, jewelry, and vintage clothing, neighborhood sidewalk sales and HONK! bands from

around the country. Harvard Square Station will be the centerpiece of the event. (Information, Lost & Found, Command Central)

- October 18th – 19th – The 52th Annual Head of the Charles Regatta, the world’s largest two-day rowing event, brings 7,500 athletes from around the world to compete in 55 different race events. Harvard Square Station will be the “Welcome Center” ....to the thousands of visitors.
- October 31st – November 2nd – Harvard Scare! Spooky and fun activities throughout the Square. Costumed children of all ages are invited to join us at Harvard Square Station where we will gather to parade around the Square....and join us as we trick-or-treat at numerous Harvard Square restaurants and shops where goodies await.

## November

- November 1st – 30th – 6th Annual Folk Music Month in Harvard Square. This month-long event will feature special displays of FOLK memorabilia (think Bob Dylan, Joan Baez) at Harvard Square Station.....culminating in a very special folk music performance at the end of the month....also in the Station.
- November 22nd – 13rd Harvard/Yale Game at Harvard. Meet your friends at Harvard Square Station for complimentary hot chocolate or hot cider before the game!
- November 27th – Thanksgiving! Starting November 12th and running through November 25th, the Harvard Square Station will be set up to receive your donations of frozen turkeys, fresh veggies and thanksgiving fixings....which will be distributed to various social service agencies and food pantries throughout the city.

## *Sparklesfest*

- November 28th – Kick-off the holiday shopping season with Plaid and Black Friday events. Get your Harvard Square recycled Holiday Shopping bag at Harvard Square Station.
- November 29th – Join us at the Annual Tree Lighting at the Charles Hotel....and later on walk over to Harvard Square Station for a Victorian Caroler Sing-along!

## December

- December 1 – December 24th – We will hire (or get volunteers) to Christmas wrap presents in Harvard Square Station....All proceeds from the wrapping will go to Youth on Fire.
- December 4th – Harvard Square Station will feature a giant community-wide “Make Our Own Cambridge Gingerbread House” which will be displayed until Christmas.
- December 20th – The “Some Like it Hot” Everyone Loves Latkes Party! From 1pm – 2pm, the 8th annual Everyone Loves Latkes Party features the most delicious, most creative and best-looking latkes and condiments around! This free event features latke donations from the fabulous restaurants of Harvard Square. There will be a very special Klezmer music performance....and a reading of the Runaway Latkes, by Leslie Kimmelman, Paul Yalowitz (Illustrator) at Harvard Square Station.

## Thoughts on Program Elements and Design Considerations

By Tim Shaw

- The pit was a bad idea – not safe, not navigable. The plaza should all be on one level as much as possible.
- Very heavy foot traffic here (busy transit thoroughfare) – this argues for all hardscape. Greenery is universally popular, but successful urban green spaces require intense management after construction, something the City will not be able to do. PO Square, the best example of successful urban greenery, is maintained by a private endowment. You have only to look at the condition of the City’s street trees to see what would happen to a greenery-heavy design.
- Paving should be simple. Many different pavers and brick types and stone accents and intersecting curved lines are hard to install correctly and don’t wear well. You end up with many minor changes of level and missing pavers. Paving should be closely and evenly set and uniform(navigable).
- Dynamic is fine, but there is plenty of dynamism all around, with hundreds of pedestrians, roaring traffic, street performers, etc. Should be simple and as far as possible, restful. We’re designing the center of a city square where people live, not an amusement park. It doesn’t necessarily have to be a place to rest: I’m talking about visually restful. The video screen idea people keep talking about is an example of a bad use because it introduces visual and aural chaos and sensory overload. For the same reason, the architecture and landscape of the kiosk and plaza should not be designed around music performers.
- Must have a real, sustainable use. Visionary ideas generally don’t provide real, sustainable uses that will attract a variety of people over time. Although in its present state it’s a dump, Out of Town News is a good anchor because it sells things. All the European squares that people think of when they think of successful urban spaces are anchored by cafes. A food use, like coffee and bakery, would be welcome. With a “civic” use, such as displays about the history of Harvard Square, it’s hard to avoid a static dead end, at least for residents.
- There must be some sort of permanent special endowment or allowance for extra maintenance and cleaning, even if can’t be done to the level of PO Square park. Whatever design is accepted, the plaza will naturally be a trash magnet. Even if the City does the program and the design perfectly, it will not be successful if it’s not intensively maintained.
- Should be open, with good sightlines and no blocky structures (welcoming and safe). Bleachers for music performers are an example of the wrong idea for this space, albeit an exceptionally bad idea as well as wrong.