

Kimmel Center Public Space Project

Moderator Notes

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- **Users of public spaces in KC, currently and in the future**
 - Current night time users
 - But others could be interested in day time use.
 - Existing stakeholders are, Merck Education Program and Youth Jazz Orchestra (not now on Wednesdays).
 - Resident companies bring in bus loads of kids (elementary and high school students) to KC. But, there are no food/beverages for them within KC; food and beverage facilities are closed. Students bring their lunch and sit.
 - TAFY (American Theater Arts for Youth), these are Youth concerts goers.
 - Tourists
 - Retirement groups have needs and can be a future user of the KC.

- **Uses of public spaces in KC, currently and in the future**
 - Music lessons for teenagers.
 - Actors and orchestra members interact, meet and talk, with their audiences.
 - There should be several levels of restaurants open for lunch and dinner to draw different publics and increased revenue.
 - Jazz enthusiasts would enjoy “outdoor” concerts.
 - Jerry Blavat crowd, (this audience enjoys contemporary music from the 50’s 60’s and 70’s.)
 - Different generations and groups could have talks about books and movies.
 - Advertise to neighboring crowds to have lunch in the PECO lounge, music should be part of the advertisement.
 - Decorative art, fashion shows and performance artists used to give breaks in public spaces.
 - Place chess sets on tables around the Plaza, large human size chessboards should be used.
 - The Gift shop should have an entrance on Spruce Street.
 - KC should serve as an indoor alternative when bad weather prevents outside meeting activities. The space should be donated free.
 - “Meetup.com” could be used to let the public know that the KC is a place to bring folks together.
 - The public uses KC as a pedestrian thoroughfare, a “cut through”. As they walk, they look up at the soaring glass roof and see friends at the information desk.
 - Small art exhibits, satellite exhibits, and displays (as seen at the Atwater Kent Museum) would breakup the public space and serve as a guide through.
 - Mummers outfits are on display during the parade.
 - Image projections are used on the walls.
 - There are open jam sessions, like “Free in the Plaza” on the black stage.
 - KC rent public space at times.

➤ **Barriers at KC**

- There's limited physical space available for the Gift shop and other retail areas.
- Lack of doors when big crowds are at KC
- Because of bare walls and poor outside lighting, the public can't tell if KC is open.

➤ **Challenges**

- Can public uses support themselves financially, and where will the money come from?
- There needs to be a "pedestrian "scale within the mammoth space of KC, a sense of comfort, comfortable chairs (seating) and colorful table clothes on tables.
- KC website doesn't draw. There needs to be a common website for the arts.
- There are architectural restrictions on decorating and wall uses.
- There are budgetary or dollar constraints.
- Redesign the information desk, including its draws and shape of cubbies.
- Cadence Restaurant, on the 2nd floor, will not draw street traffic. A restaurant on street level will draw the lunch and dinner users even if there are no events.
- Have the Gift shop enter into the restaurant.
- KC isn't in the restaurant business. It should partner with a star or (?) to bring in younger crowds.
- One should be able to in the elevator from Broad Street, (users would take the elevator to Cadence.)
- Cadence could be a destination place if there's a reason to go there.
- KC needs a marquee on Broad and Spruce streets.
- Getting the "word out" to diverse audiences

➤ **What group members like about public spaces in KC**

- The Hamilton Rooftop Garden is liked. The area needs seating and temperature control during the summer, it can feel like a sonna.
- Glass roof
- The Plaza, it represents an Italian piazza. It is envision with plants and trees to make it feel warmer.
- Beauty in natural materials
- Use of public art in nooks and crannies of KC
- Terrace outside of Cadence.
- The "wow!!!" effect when one walks into the Plaza. Also the websites that lead tours here.
- One group member liked all of KC.

➤ **How to improve public spaces**

- Make it feel warmer:
- Use of art displays that are easy to put up and tear down.
- Public space should be human scale.
- Breakup the space
- Use plants:
- add "green" to greenhouse effect
- put plants in the center of the "round seats"

- plant displays should be mobile and easily moved out of the way to accommodate large crowds
- Be flexible in uses and materials.
- Space should convey spontaneity at times and planned events at other times.
- It should be low cost with high impact, more bang for the buck.
- Retail shop open during regular hours.

➤ **Ideas/Thoughts**

- Outside of KC need plants and foliage, retail on Spruce Street to attract activity.
- Address the next generation needs, teens and young adults. What do they want?
- Art community access to the building, i.e. Fringe Festival, University of the Arts and CAPA.
- Street theater (outside KC) should be on the Vienna/Paris models, open house people work for tips.
- The name “Commonwealth” (referring to Commonwealth Plaza) conveys an image of politics; it’s not an attractive name.
- The building is so large that people can disappear.
- The Gift shop is not open most of the time, not during performances and rehearsals.

➤ **Principles**

- Public space should be for all different groups, ages and ethnicities; even if not for all uses.
- Public space should be welcoming.
- It should foster a sense of community.
- Public space should recognize or incorporate the street.
- Imaginative use of marquees
- Have more partnerships that result in “cheerleading” for KC.
- KC should be affordable, i.e. pay \$1.00 for coffee not \$3.00.
- There should be music inside public spaces.

➤ **Final Thoughts**

- Have exhibits explaining, with sound, art.
- Marquees at KC should be like those at the Academy of Music.
- Not enough elevators at KC.
- There are acoustic problems in Verizon Hall.
- “Why do this”, have a discussion about public space and its uses?
 - If to make money, then which makes the most money?
 - If it is to draw resident companies, which ones?
 - If it is to fill community/public needs, the Plaza’s mission, then which will do that and bring its own support?

➤ **Summary**

- Group members felt the work of the evening was a success. It was an opportunity to voice their concerns and give suggestions on improvements to KC. They are looking forward to the next steps.