



Community Planning and Economic Development Department

News Release

Contact: Krista Bergert, (612) 673-5015; cell, (612) 360-8702

Minneapolis City Goals: A Safe Place to Call Home ▫ Jobs & Economic Vitality ▫ Eco-Focused ▫ Livable Communities, Healthy Lives ▫ Many People, One Minneapolis ▫ A City That Works

City unveils new design for a 21st-century Peavey Plaza

Revitalization to create safe, accessible, functional space while paying homage to original design

October 19, 2011 (MINNEAPOLIS) – City of Minneapolis officials and landscape architect oslund.and.associates unveiled today the design for the revitalization of Peavey Plaza. The new design reinterprets signature elements of M. Paul Friedberg’s 1974 design—below-grade central plaza, water features, informal terraced seating and formal plantings of Honey Locust trees—while creating a premier public space for the 21st century that will be safe and accessible to everyone.

“Peavey Plaza has been beloved by Minneapolis for two generations, but in its current form, it could not even be built today,” said **Mayor R.T. Rybak**. “It long ago outgrew the uses that it was originally designed for and no longer can handle the many different needs that we have of it. Minneapolis’ revitalized Peavey Plaza will be a signature gathering space that is safe and accessible for everyone, honors its Modernist past and is fully equipped to meet all its users’ needs in the 21st century, all for less than the cost of preserving a space that is no longer safe, accessible or functional.”

The new design allows for flexible uses from active programming to passive use. Design elements include two expansive pools with dancing fountains; a shaded pergola with adequate infrastructure to house all food vendors; natural seating; flexible performance space designed for event and non-event days; shallow still pools that can be drained and accommodate up to 1,500 chairs set up for events; a water wall near the 12th Street entrance; a prominent accessible ramp to all grades of the plaza (the deepest is 7 feet below Nicollet Mall grade); and active-use options planned for grassy areas on the southeast corner.

“This design reflects the idea of a recessed urban plaza and its use as a performance and gathering space,” said **Tom Oslund, principal, oslund.and.associates**. “The new plaza is about how we have evolved as a city, and the demands of how a 21st-century space should be articulated.”

Replacing the plaza’s existing elements and preserving the current design would not result in an improved design that is safe, functional and accessible for everyone. The current plaza design has

numerous problems that cannot be fixed by restoration alone: Peavey Plaza is not ADA-compliant; its materials and systems have not stood the test of time and have proven costly to operate and maintain; its concrete and fountains are severely eroded; it does not comply with modern storm-water regulations; its infrastructure is inadequate for event use; its trees are severely damaged due to root constraints and utility lines along trunks. In addition, the plaza is plagued by inappropriate social behaviors and falls well short of contemporary Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design standards that help to reduce crime through better design principles.

The new design is a solution to these problems and will allow for a more cost-effective and economically sustainable approach to operations and maintenance. For example, the new water feature will use only a fraction of the amount of water that the current reflecting pool uses; its water can be turned off and stored; and unlike Peavey Plaza today, it complies with contemporary storm-water regulations by keeping storm-water drainage separately from the treated water-fountain systems. The revitalized Peavey Plaza will also add elements that event organizers require but that are current lacking, such as power and data access, which will help make the plaza more economically sustainable.

“It’s about moving forward and utilizing relevant cues from the past while creating a place that reflects the symbiotic relationship between a cultural institution and a usable, memorable and engaging open space within the city fabric,” **Oslund** added.

The vision for the signature plaza was shaped by the community through open houses, interviews with users and stakeholders, and a public, online survey. A 20-person Community Engagement Committee—comprised of neighbors and stakeholders—has met over the last 19 months to share their input regarding Peavey programming and design.

The \$8-\$10 million project is supported by \$2 million in state bond funding, with the balance to come from private contributions that the Mayor and representatives of the Minnesota Orchestral Association have committed to raising. The City and the Minnesota Orchestra are collaborating in the revitalization of Peavey Plaza, which is adjacent to Orchestra Hall, in conjunction with the Orchestra’s \$50 million renovation of Orchestra Hall.

“We are pleased that the renovation of Orchestra Hall is helping to serve as a catalyst for re-imagining Peavey Plaza and making it more accessible and usable for a broad public,” said **Minnesota Orchestra President and CEO Michael Henson**. “This city block, encompassing an expanded Orchestra Hall and revitalized Peavey, is going to be a spectacular destination.”

The City of Minneapolis, in cooperation with the Minnesota Orchestra, will unveil the revitalization design for Peavey Plaza at an open house for the community on today, 4:30-6:00 p.m., at Orchestra Hall, 1111 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis. The public is invited to view the design and ask questions of the landscape architect, Tom Oslund of [oslund.and.associates](#). The public will be able to comment on the design, via the [Peavey Plaza website](#).

oslund.and.associates, a Minneapolis landscape architecture firm, was selected by the City, through a public interview process, in 2010. HR&A, a New-York-based real estate and economic development consulting firm, was hired by the City to assist with space programming. Their recommendations informed the design, operations and maintenance of the plaza.

Groundbreaking is tentatively set for spring 2012 with a grand opening in summer 2013.

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