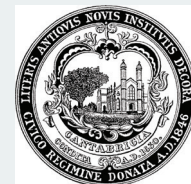


HARVARD SQUARE KIOSK AND PLAZA

WHAT'S YOUR VISION?

Summary of Community Engagement
September-October 2017



OUTLINE OF ENGAGEMENT SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

1. Informational Operations Interviews
2. Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza Working Group
3. Pop Up Workshops
4. Community Meeting
5. Site Visit and Place Game

1. INFORMATIONAL OPERATIONS INTERVIEWS

Project for Public Spaces and Cambridge Community Development Staff held a series of interviews in order to better understand the Kiosk and Plaza spaces.

Cambridge Arts Council

Cambridge City Manager

Cambridge Historical Commission

Cambridge Office for Tourism

Cambridge Police Department

Cambridge Department of Human Service Program

Cambridge Department of Public Works

First Parish Church

Halvorson Design

Harvard Square Business Association

Harvard Square Neighborhood Association

Harvard University

MBTA

Y2Y Harvard Square

2. HARVARD SQUARE KIOSK AND PLAZA WORKING GROUP #3 SEPTEMBER 12, 2017

7:00 PM

During this Working Group Project for Public Spaces (PPS) presented on the concept of Placemaking and facilitated break-out group discussions about the Kiosk and Plaza. There was also a time for public comment.

BREAK-OUT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are the five most important qualities you would like to see at the Kiosk and Plaza?
- What are the five most important functions of the Kiosk and Plaza?
- What words describe the feeling you would like the Kiosk and Plaza to convey?

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

After group discussion each group presented 5 top words which convey the qualities and feeling desired for the Kiosk and Plaza, key themes which arose were:

- 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

Group #1:

Timeless

Adaptable

Open/Public

Accessible

Vibrant

Gathering Space

Group #2:

Welcoming to everybody

Informative

Community centric (hub)

Historical Identity

Group #3:

Welcoming

Gateway to all of Cambridge

Navigable

Safe

Dynamic

Engaging

PUBLIC COMMENT

- In the community engagement process be aware of those who may not have access to digital formats (survey, information, etc.) Be sure reaching people who are experiencing homelessness and also older people, quirky academic people who may not be reached in usual information gathering ways.
- Please be sure to share openly and transparently throughout this process
- Everyone has common desire to improve the space make it – more powerful, useful and meaningful. Not addressing yet what isn't working currently in the space. Focus and target conversation around what isn't working.
- This process is fascinating and overwhelming – the words are nebulous and mean different things to different people. Photos shown by PPS are interesting. But this is a very small space so keep this in mind. Don't want the preservation and the importance of the details of the building don't want them to get lost in the upgrades and businesses of new designs. Consider tourism and accommodating volume of groups
- Don't forget children and uses and activities for children in this space

3. POP UP WORKSHOP #1

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2017

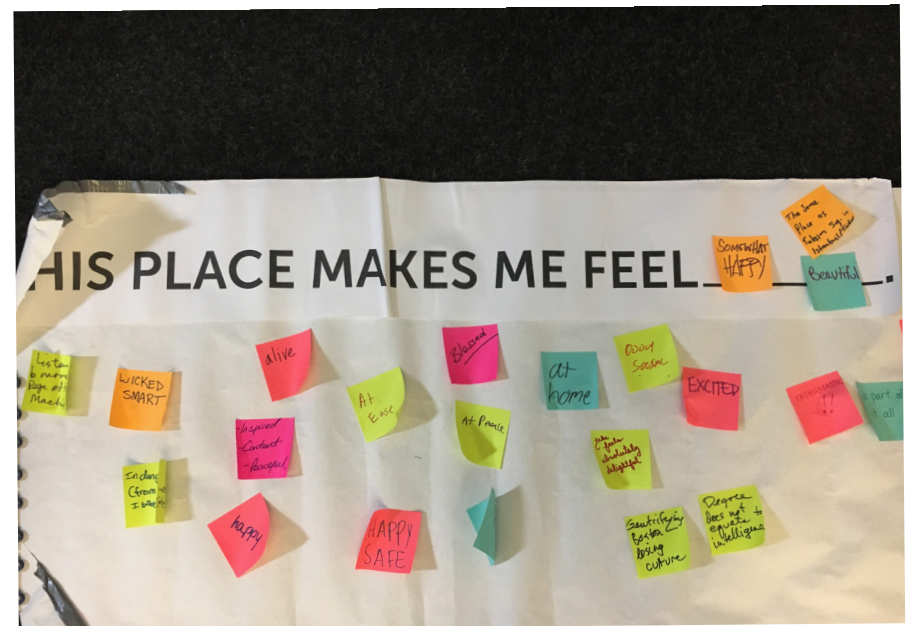
The first Pop Up Workshop was set up in the Harvard Square Plaza at the MBTA headhouse. Three questions were posted to prompt comments and ideas from passerbys, which were written on colorful post-it notes and hung. The Pop-Up Workshop station operated for two days.

QUESTION #1: "I WANT TO _____ HERE"

- Evaluate life
- Eat McDonalds
- Elevator needs to be bigger
- More street performers
- Hang out
- See chain stores leave
- Study for my Master and PhD degree
- See my favorite city sweep
- Maximize locality and minimize commercialization
- Perform
- Start New
- Play
- Live
- Feel free
- See the world change
- Eat
- Feel welcome
- Play chess
- Not get harassed by cops
- See all people welcomed
- Eat
- Have more space for people (less for cars)
- Be proud
- Feed birds
- Hangout with more kids (12+/-)
- Eat ice cream
- Clean
- I would like to be able to live here (affordability)

QUESTION #2: "I LIKE TO ____ HERE"

- Have fun
- Reflect, plan, be silent
- People watch
- Laugh
- Shop/adventure
- Promote art
- Busk
- Wifi
- Read
- Meet people and art
- Watch
- Dance
- Be in the yard
- Be
- See
- Be able to afford things here



QUESTION #3: "THIS PLACE MAKES ME FEEL _____"

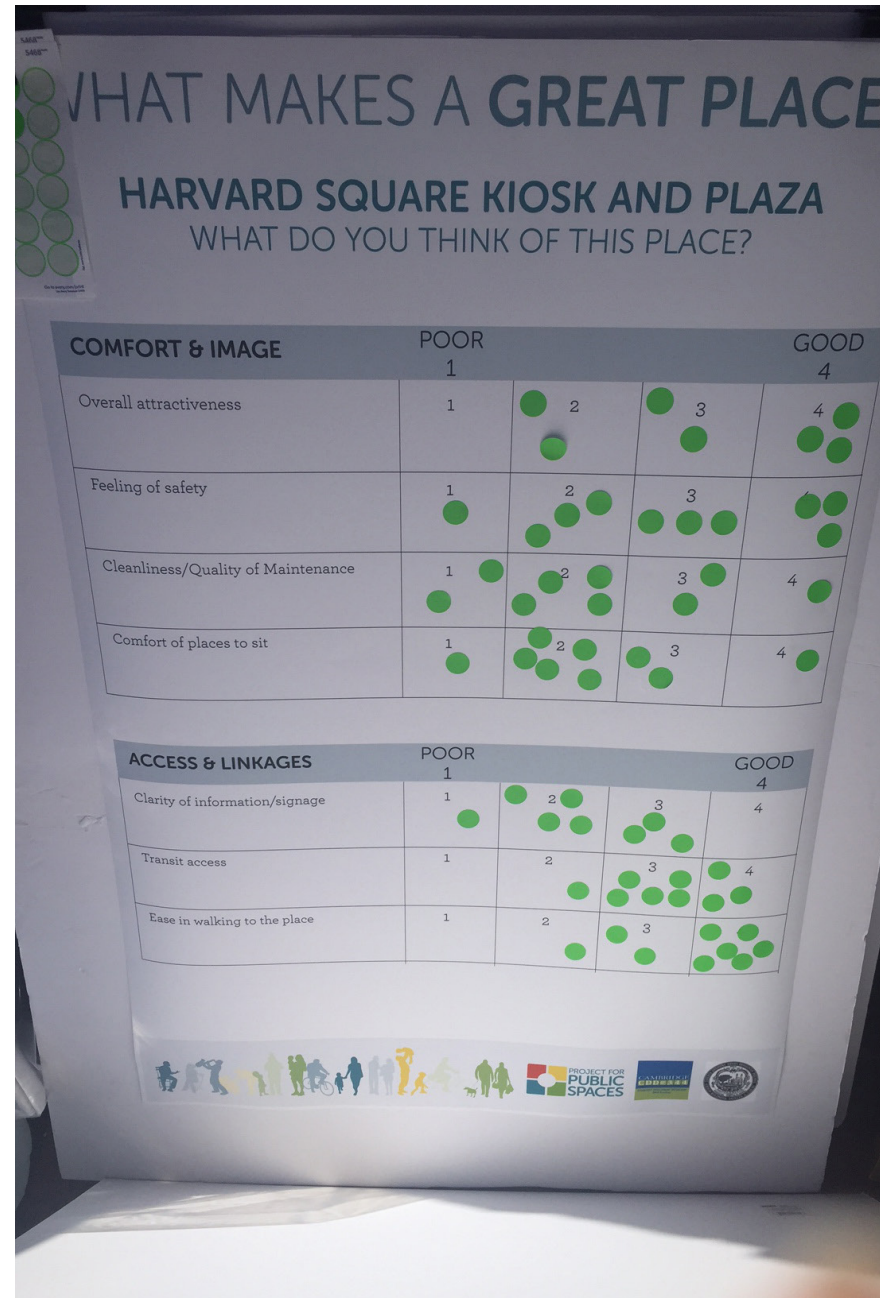
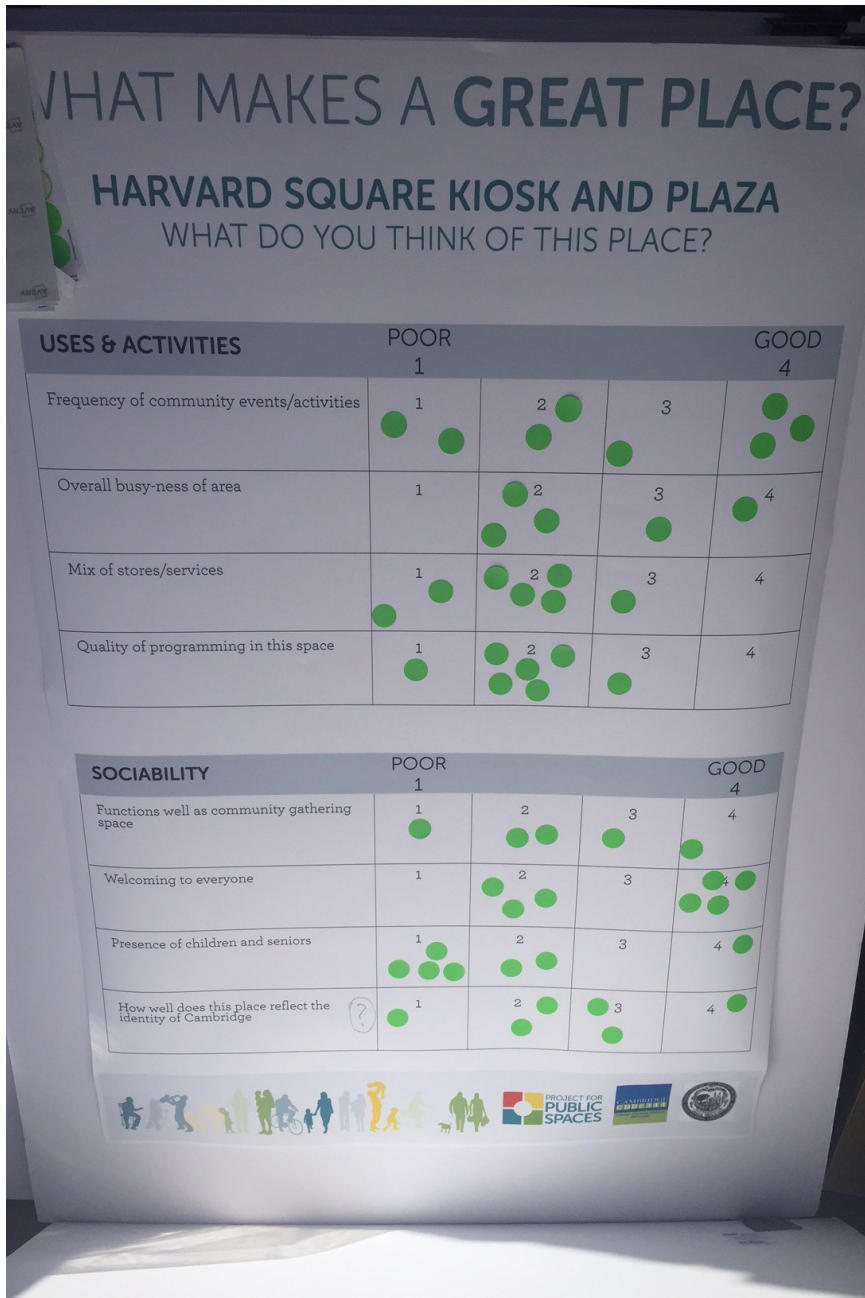
- Alive
- Wicked smart
- In danger from drivers when I bike through
- Happy
- Inspired
- Content
- Peaceful
- At ease
- Happy and safe
- Blessed
- Nostalgic
- Oddly social
- Excited
- At peace
- Absolutely delightful
- Gentrifying Boston losing culture
- Enthusiastic
- Somewhat happy
- Beautiful
- Connected
- Its expensive!
- Feeling of success
- The diversified humans of this planet
- A part of it all
- The same as Taksim Square in Istanbul, Turkey

POP UP WORKSHOP #2 OCTOBER 4, 2017

The second Pop Up Workshop was set up in the Harvard Square Plaza under a tent against the east side of the Kiosk. Six boards were set up with questions about ideas for future uses and activities in the Plaza and Kiosk as well as two dot boards asking passerbys to vote on characteristics that define great places and perceived quality of these characteristics in the Plaza. An inspiration board with images was also hung.



DOT BOARDS



INSPIRATION

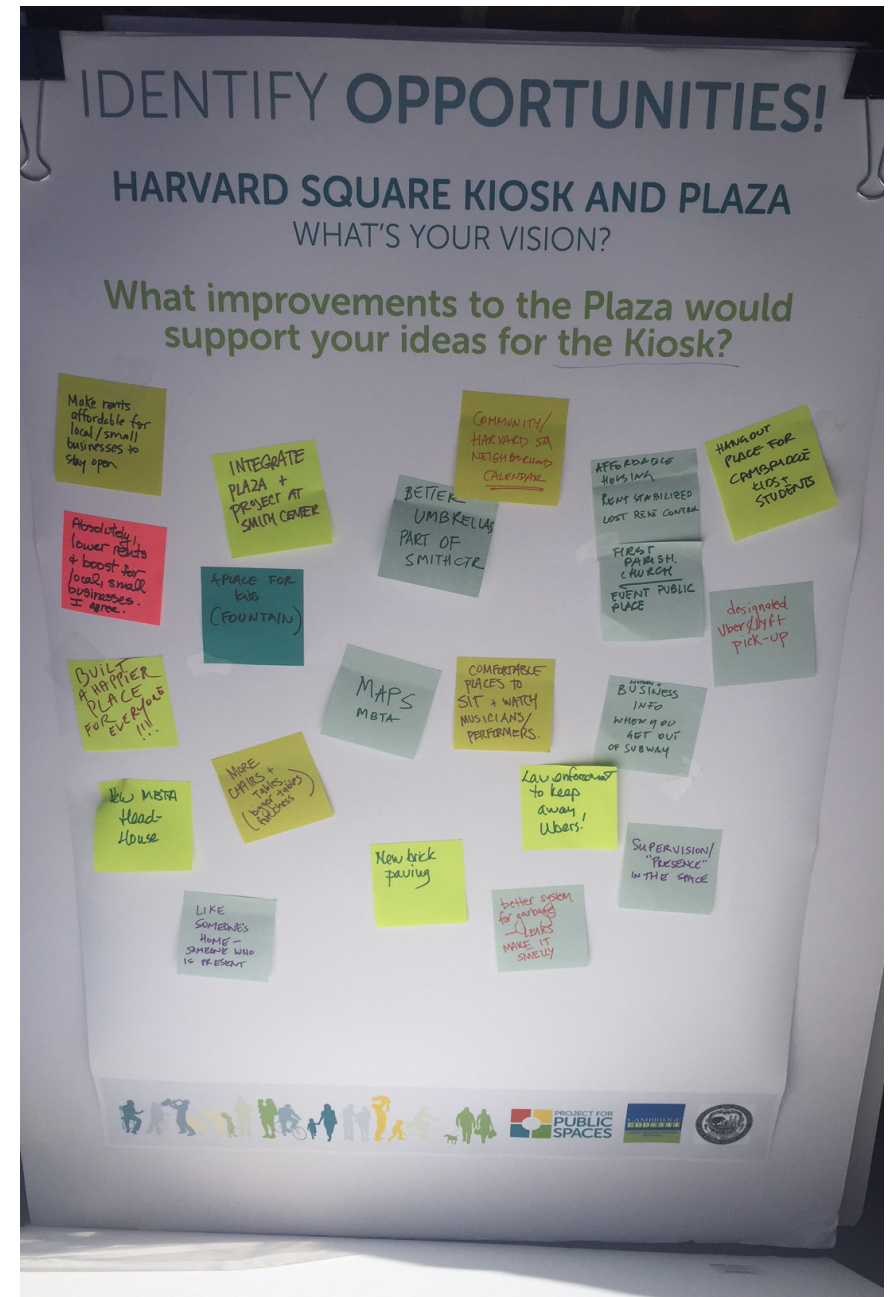


WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE KIOSK?

- More family oriented stuff
- Bring the mystique back
- Restore Kiosk, keep it simple
- Kiosk should remain the same
- Kiosk should remain newsstand and Harvard stuff
- Improved feeling of safety
- Please keep the newsstand/Kiosk. It IS Harvard Sq
- Get rid of Out of Town
- Start a water fountain
- Ethnic and international stores or market
- International newspaper or keep information
- No market night at the square please
- Make windows more see through, so much stuff
- Keep international magazines and papers and newsstand, independent business
- Bigger info center
- More info center inside campus

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT THIS PLACE?

- The chairs and umbrellas (need better umbrellas)
- The chess playing
- Sitting in the sun
- Keep big business out
- More trees
- Shade and sun options
- They took away the best stores in the square: Crimson Corner (rent), too many pizza
- International local artisans
- Keep Kiosk
- Do something for traffic, close off Dunster
- Starbucks



WHAT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PLAZA WOULD SUPPORT YOUR IDEAS FOR THE KIOSK?

- Make rents affordable for local/small business to stay open
- Absolutely lower rents and boost local, small businesses
- Integrate Plaza and project at Smith Center
- A place for kids (fountain)
- Community/Harvard Square neighborhood calendar
- Better umbrellas
- Make part of Smith Center
- Build a happier place for everyone!!!
- New MBTA headhouse
- More chairs and tables—make tables bigger for chess
- Like someone is home—someone who is present
- Maps (MBTA)
- Comfortable places to sit and watch musicians/performers
- New brick paving
- Affordable housing, rent stabilized, lost rent control
- Hang out place for Cambridge kids and students
- Designated Uber/Lyft pick-up
- Business info when you get out of subway
- Law enforcement to keep away ubers!
- Supervision/"presence" in the space
- Better system for garbage—leaks make it smelly
- Need Target, Walgreens (major) to get stuff
- Please NO big stores!
- Small independent stores

4. COMMUNITY MEETING #1 OCTOBER 4, 2017

The first community meeting consisted of several engagement techniques. After an introduction presentation by PPS, participants discussed ideas in break-out groups and reported back and shared the ideas generated through discussion. Participants were also given index cards upon arrival on which they wrote down three words they felt described the Kiosk and Plaza as they see it now, and as they hope to see it in the future. These words were collected during the workshop and turned into a real-time word cloud reflecting the most frequently used words in response to the prompt. As participants entered they were also given four dots and asked to mark on a map their favorite places in or around the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza. Lastly, postcards were provided for participants to expand on ideas or provide additional feedback which was collected at the end of the meeting.

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How would you describe the experience you would like to have at the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza?
- What are your ideas for the future of the Kiosk?
- What activities and uses would help support your ideas for the Kiosk and experience?
- What amenities or physical improvements would support those uses, activities, and experiences in the Kiosk and on the Plaza?
- What partnerships would support these efforts?

SUMMARY OF REPORT BACK IDEAS

GROUP 1

- Open up the space; remove the containers
- Have the Kiosk return to its original function as a head house, which would open up the rest of the space. Put it on top of the T station.
- Little free library – book exchange – community television. Leverage media that used to be print.
- Lighting – create a beacon.

GROUP 2

- Linger longer
- Place has an opportunity to be a convergence and exchange of info and people. Information may or may not be print.
- Not what we DO to it, but what people BRING to it.
- Future lies in its simplicity. Elevation needs to be leveled.
- Partnership: library.

GROUP 3

- Crossroads of the world
- Energetic and dynamic, bordering chaotic
- Balancing the needs of the whole community
- Kiosk should be news and information

- Activities: not big, programmed events, but spontaneous small ones as people pass through.
- Need to allow people to pass thru if they want to pass through.
- Get rid of info booth but maintain that function in the Kiosk.
- Taxis – could use that lane for other things.
- Way-finding.

GROUP 4

- Make it easier to congregate
- Civic opportunities and information
- Get rid of taxis, put in food trucks at almost no-cost
- Inflatable topography to solve issues of pit/point etc

OTHER IDEAS

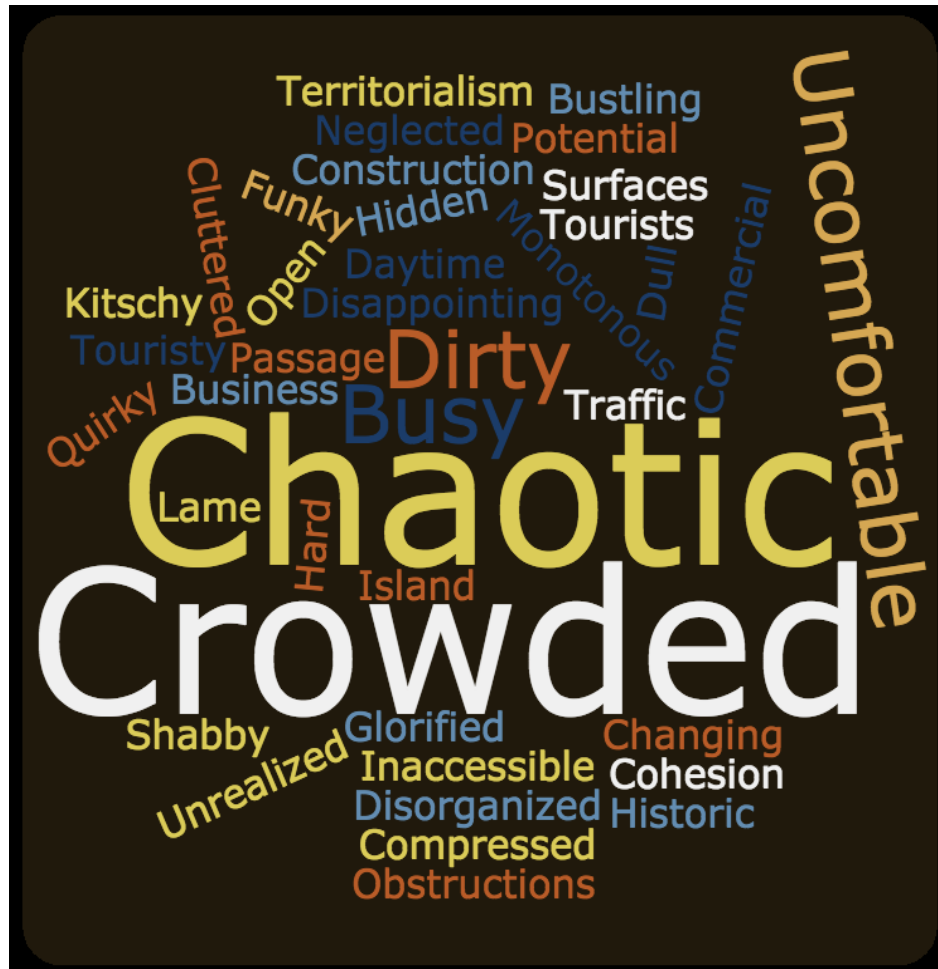
- Speakers corner!
- Community screen wouldn't be too horrible. For some it's controversial, for others it's worth exploring.
- Landmarks at the ends of each exit – First Parish Church, etc. – if they were properly lit, you'd get a sense of identity by highlighting those surroundings.

WORD CLOUDS

Word clouds generated by participants during the workshop show predominant feelings about the Plaza and Kiosk's existing conditions and aspirations for the future.

NOW:

WHAT THREE WORDS DESCRIBE THE HARVARD SQUARE KIOSK AND PLAZA TODAY?



FUTURE:

WHAT THREE WORDS DESCRIBE YOUR VISION OF THE FUTURE IN THE KIOSK AND PLAZA?



POWER OF TEN MAP



LONG FORM NOTES FROM BREAK-OUT GROUPS

GROUP 1

1. THE EXPERIENCE

- Make space more cohesive (fragmented—too broken up)
- Make it a “place” by defining edges and boundary (container concept)
- At night: lighting to frame buildings
- Make it a square—fountain elements and clusters of trees
- Change of paving to mark difference, design queues memorable objects

2. FUTURE of Kiosk

- Tourist destination vs community based use(s)
- Small footprint is challenge/constraint to uses
- Basement of Abbot building
- Maintain some newsstand functions
- Below grade mezzanine level T : opportunity for tourist orientation
- Expand bound
- Civic function destination
- Other ingredients in Harvard square
- International
- “Find It Cambridge”

3. ACTIVITIES AND USES (in Plaza)

- Moving Kiosk—makes more space!
- Destination/refuge: sitting under trees w/ integrated seating w/ water feature or art element/feature
- Example: met-bosques: government or Kiosk/bosques (Lehman Hall—remove fence and repurpose lawn)

- Passing through use also important
- Desire lines difficult
- Quincy square is good precedent

4. AMENITIES/PHYSICAL MAP

- Brick on brick too much
- Seating— moveable and fixed
- Shade/trees

5. PARTNERSHIPS

- MBTA and State
- Cambridge Public Library
- CCTV Studio
- DPW Book Exchange

GROUP 2

1. IDEAL EXPERIENCE

- Linger longer: a place that makes me move slower
- Safe (too much traffic near the “point”)
- Creative
- Education — for locals, not just tourists.
- Surprising
- Permeable / free movement / less congestion
- Tasteful (less of a hodgepodge)

2. USES

- Art gallery / information point
- Open up the space — it’s cluttered and oppressive as is

- Have ambassadors - for wayfinding and to help
- Like the concept of news, but we don't use it anymore. There's enough print media at the bookstore. Maintain information as a function, while looking at the future. Not necessarily print.
- Intellectual exchange & convergence of information, people and scholarship. For example the Library can have an electronic station where you can flip / swipe through periodicals or international newspapers, which you can't get at the bookstore
- Leave room for alternating displays — art, events, etc.

3. CHANGES

- It's not what we do to it; it's what people bring to it. People are what activate this space, rather than deliberate programming per se.
- Physically open — the rest of the "piazza" should flow in and out.
- Needs to be flexible.

4. PHYSICAL CHANGES

- The future is in its simplicity. Right now, it's trying to be too many things for too many people.
- Chairs need to be movable (unchained!). What's good with seating is that it's highly utilized — users change throughout the day. That might be enough for a place like this — let people make their own place.
- More trees — shade, more inviting
- For open concept, have sliding / pivoting doors and walls for alternating summer and winter use.
- Elevation changes make it impossible for you to look at anything other than your feet.
- Gather artists / musicians off the circulation paths. Need to improve ability to move along beyond the strip next to the T station. Eastern edge / sidewalk is non existent but definitely would be a desire line.

5. PARTNERS

- Library — donate old periodicals? or library online catalogue?
- Harvard
- Developers can fund / sponsor exhibits

GROUP 3

1. SPARK UNEXPECTED CURIOSITY

- Positive energy, intellectual energy
- Tourist/local balancing needs (whole community)
- Place of transportation—crossing place, busy, noisy
- Crossroads of the world
- Dynamic
- Big exchange of people
- Diverse energy, lots of different things happening
- Destination/transient—balance of programming/be able to get through
- Some people linger
- Can do many different things from this base

2. IDEA FOR FUTURE

- Stronger marketing entity
- Not info center (need to keep info booth and improve)
- Information
- Part of tourist circuit
- Out of Town News—unique news from around the world
- Kiosk as hub—creates sense of place that is recognizable
- Could be multifunctional
- Useful for both residents and tourists
- Copy machine

- News and info—could be multifunctional
- Harvard's global reach
- More inviting pedestrian space

3. PROGRAMMING-Lots currently

- Tours begin there
- Self-guided tours
- History
- Don't need taxis here
- More elbow room
- Balance pass-through activities and spaces where people can stay—spontaneous small things rather than destination programming
- Bleacher style seating? Power?
- Shade
- Warming hut for winter
- Food trucks? (probably not)
- Pop-up businesses?
- Flatten space to make bigger space
- Pit could be more inviting?
- Accommodate more people (currently only 1-2 groups)
- Quality of buskers? (good ones thrown off by regulations?)
- Expand pit?

4. PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

- T stop improvements
- Different traffic access
- Bus platform/area below/partnership
- Improvement district?

- South façade of Kiosk improvements
- Cool interactive tech-y things (tricky with existing glass)
- Community features
- Reopen cashier window on Kiosk
- Combine Out Of Town News and information Kiosk
- Train and update people
- Kiosk could operate different ways

5. WHO COULD BE INVOLVED

- Cambridge Arts Council
- Harvard
- Office for Tourism
- Cambridge departments, public works, etc.
- HSBA
- Create super committee
- Harvard Square Neighborhood Association

5. SITE VISIT AND PLACE GAME OCTOBER 4, 2017 5:00 - 5:45 PM

18 people participated on a on-site discussion at the Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza and participated in the Place Game activity which asks participants to observe the site and rate the quality of the place based on several characteristics. The graphs below show ratings based on a 1-4 scale where 1 is POOR and 4 is GOOD.

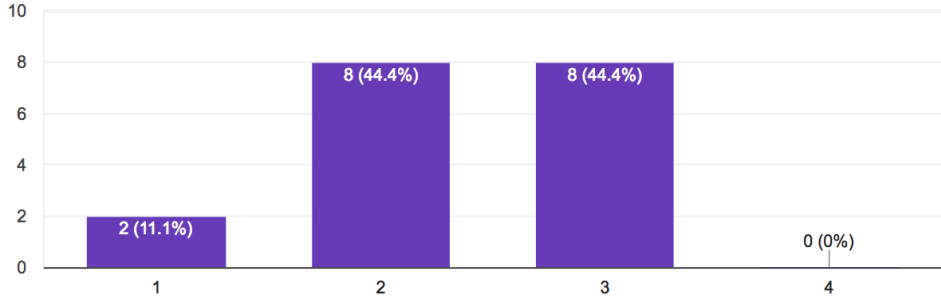


COMFORT AND IMAGE

Overall attractiveness

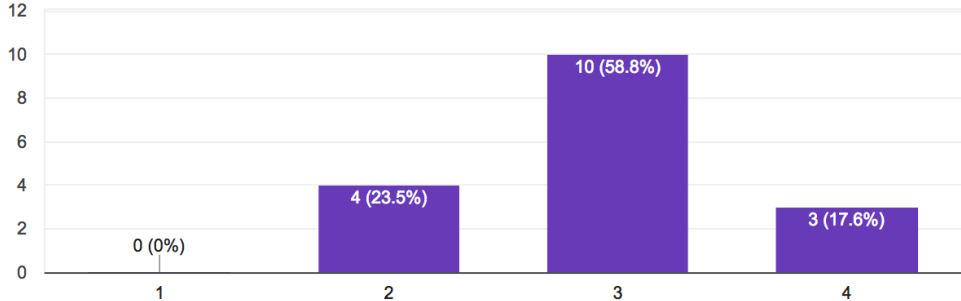


18 responses



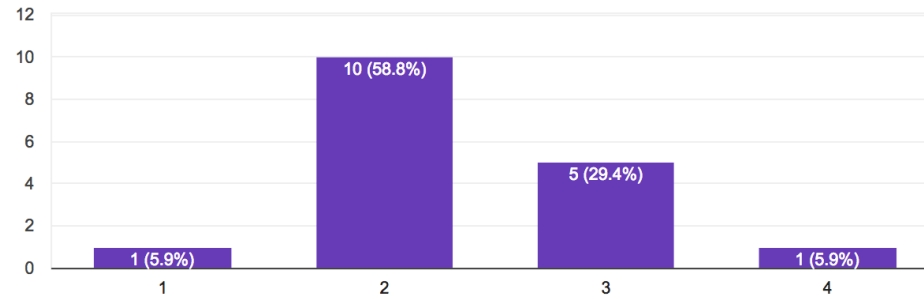
Feeling of safety

17 responses



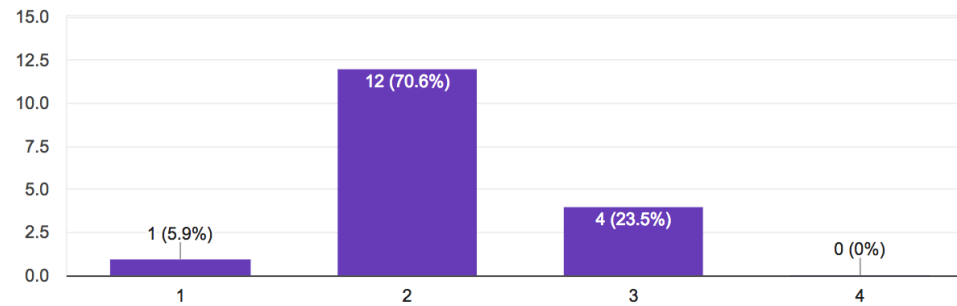
Cleanliness/Quality of Maintenance

17 responses



Comfort of places to sit

17 responses



Comments/Notes:

2 responses

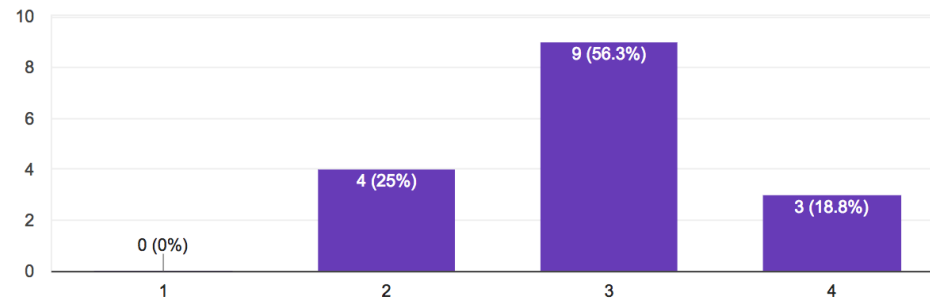
Back rest of stone seating poor

Depends what spot and what time of day

ACCESS AND LINKAGES

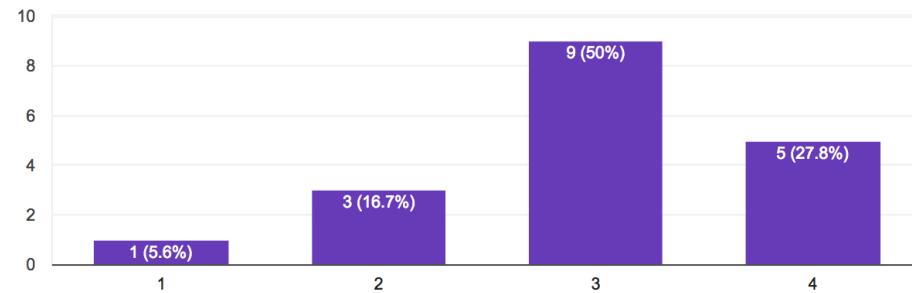
Visibility from a distance

16 responses



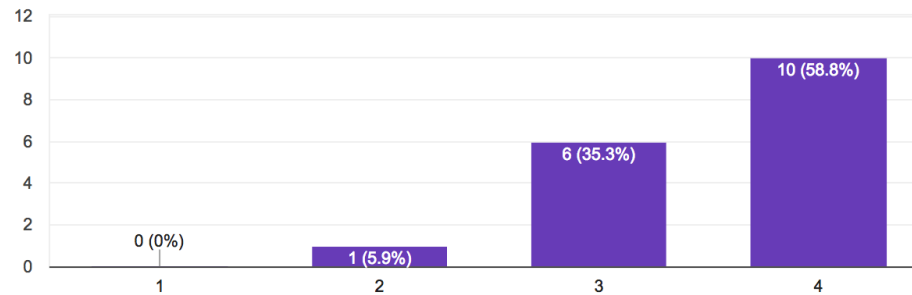
Ease in walking to the place

18 responses



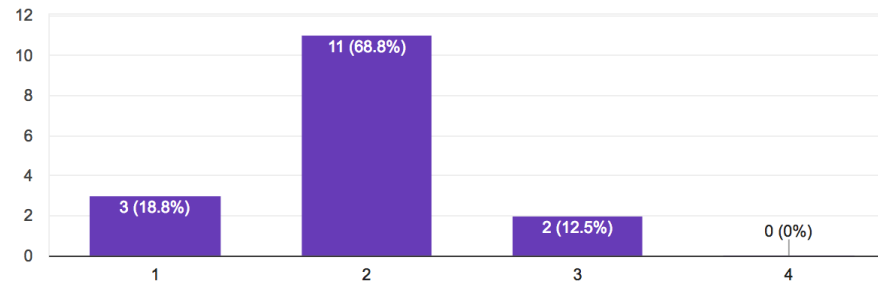
Transit Access

17 responses



Clarity of information/signage

16 responses



Comments/Notes:

2 responses

Access to T entrance and plaza circulation often blocked with clutter

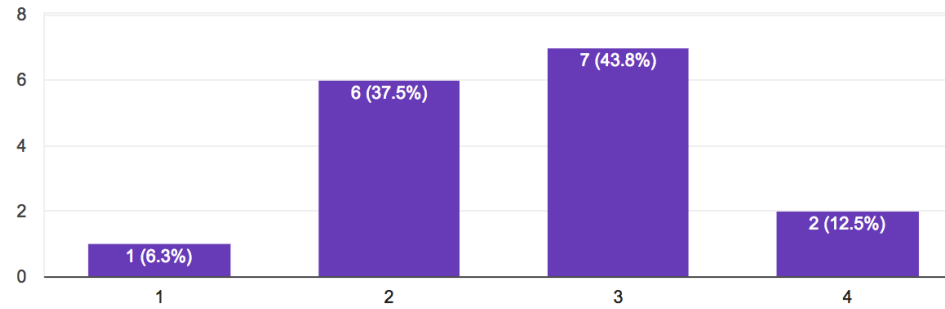
Too much crap!

USES AND ACTIVITIES

Mix of stores/services

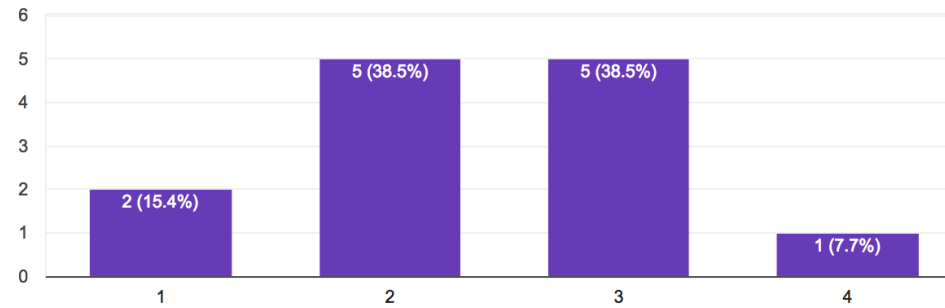


16 responses



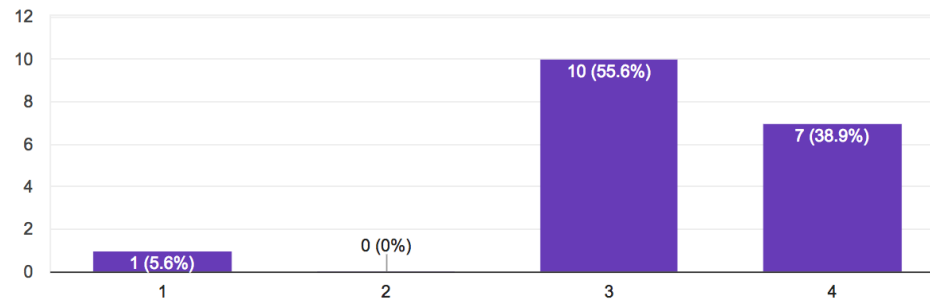
Frequency of community events/activities

13 responses



Overall busy-ness of area

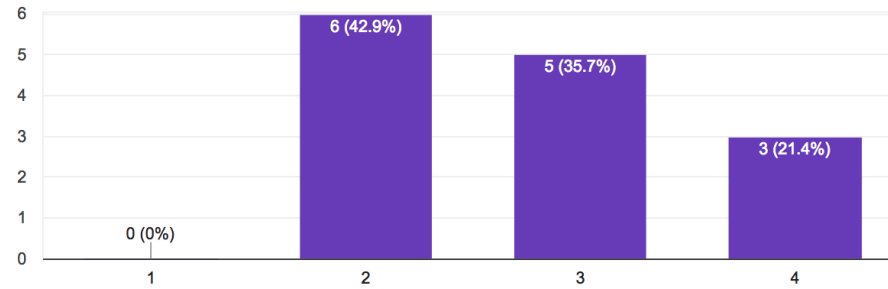
18 responses



Economic vitality



14 responses



Comments/Notes:

2 responses

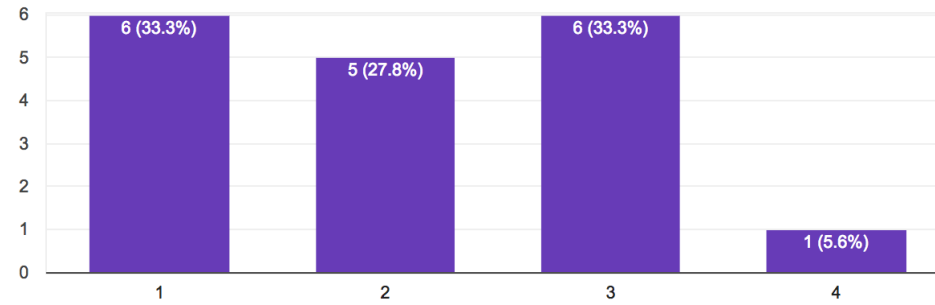
Busyness is ephemeral

Depends on time of day/day of week, vacant stores and store mix future is a real worry

SOCIABILITY

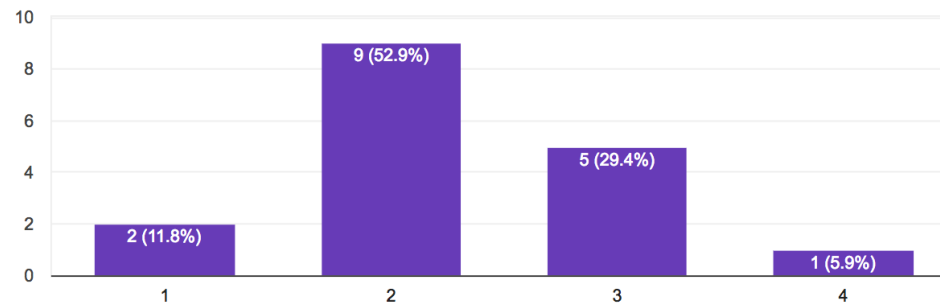
Functions well as community gathering space

18 responses



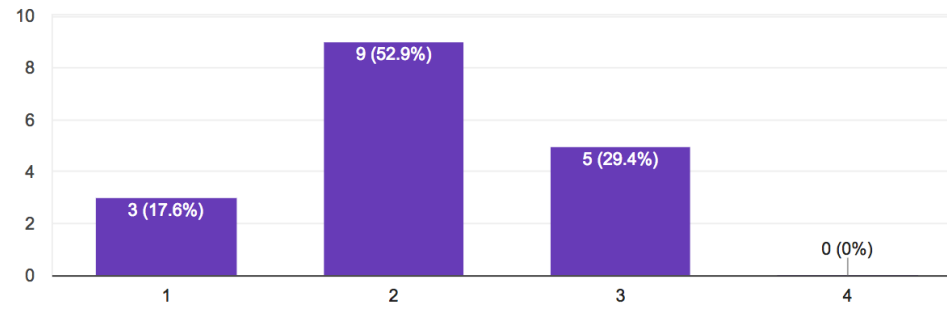
Welcoming to everyone

17 responses



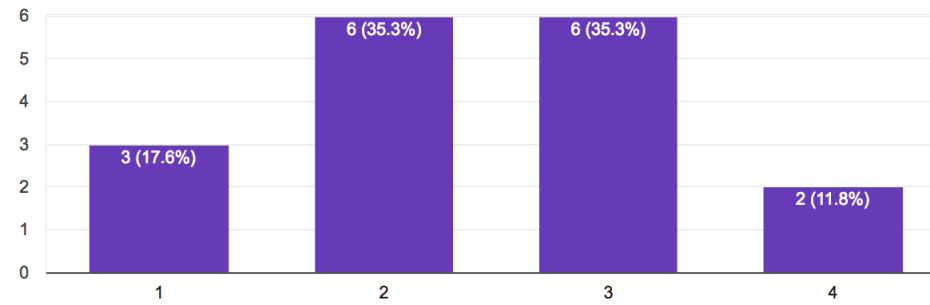
Presence of children and seniors

17 responses



How well does this place reflect the identity of Cambridge

17 responses



IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT THIS PLACE?

(18 responses)

- Very good for tourism
- Energy level. Availability of newspapers and magazines!
- Sunlight, bustling, diversity, pedestrian activity
- Diversity
- Meeting place, crossroads
- Location is central! So many possibilities!
- Crossroads of academia, residents, printed news and eccentrics
- Accessibility
- Its lively and chaotic
- Transit access is main virtue and even that is eroding and poorly maintained, need new head house
- Openness and variety
- Convenient
- Key gateway/access point. And the Kiosk structure itself is beautiful and sweet and sadly misused. The domination by one tour group is INSULTING
- Nexus
- Central location
- Kiosk! Sunshine!
- Perception safe? Anything goes, everyone is welcome but some may not feel "comfortable"
- It is a crossroads with a positive buzz
- It's open, its in the center of the square. Kiosk lowrise, historic character

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE KIOSK?

(17 responses)

- Close by in the square
- Sell newspapers and magazines
- Outdoor cafe, independent—not too high end
- Vendor selling unique cuisine
- Open arcade that can host a variety of events
- Open it up, no walls—activate edges
- Ideally should be like Sullivan's at Castle Island in South Boston—hot dogs, people of all ages, meeting place. Also would be great with moveable chairs and TV for Red Sox games and other major events.
- Historically preserved
- Some printed material remain
- historic and tourist material available but something not focused on tourism
- Public uses— a celebration of free speech a la Hyde Park Speakers Corner concept
- Restore Kiosk
- Provide state of the art digital interactive panels on history and current vitality of city for visitors and residents
- A better newstand
- The Kiosk and useful and needed, keep it as part of the Plaza
- Too detailed for this space—will submit later. But would like to build on the information/newstand theme, preserve historical detail
- Make it truly iconic
- Welcoming area with space for performances
- Some news and information, a cup of coffee? History of Cambridge? Small exhibit? A place to sit and people watch?
- Open, inviting, programmed. Food and drink, community uses

- I would like to be able to move through it. It should be the framework that activity grows from
- Something real, which means a place that sells things, cup of coffee

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PLAZA WOULD SUPPORT YOUR IDEAS FOR THE KIOSK?

(16 responses)

- More open space but not block the T entrance
- More seating
- Remove glass in summer
- Relocate a local coffee shop to the square
- More accessibility, more landscape, more seating, more variety of events
- Less walls/subdivision of space
- Flexible seating/dining
- Integration of spaces but don't make Kiosk sterilized or stripped to get entertainment plans. Need more passive space not "entertainment"
- Plaza is too small for overprogramming
- Warmers for colder seasons; places for food carts
- Trees
- Better winter surface maintenance and drainage
- The surrounding Plaza needs to be kept cleaner
- Clear out the clutter and let the Kiosk shine! Allow easy navigation to MBTA and consider people with luggage and disabilities. Ban smoking from Plaza, more shaded seating with back support. Too many big groups takeover Plaza
- reimagine the Kiosk, modify the Plaza to support
- reconstruction
- De-commercialize! Clean up the T entrance and remove advertising
- Making the ground plane of the Plaza more open, welcoming and flexible so flow and gather works better
- I like the Plaza—mostly hard surfaced with some vegetation, a variety of horizontal surfaces and

good range of fixed places to sit and moveable seats that do not obstruct pedestrians moving with purpose. The back side of Kiosk is light used portion of Plaza

- Level out the pavement, no sunken areas.

WHAT LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS OR LOCAL TALENT CAN YOU IDENTIFY THAT COULD HELP IMPLEMENT SOME OF YOUR PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS?

(13 responses)

- Change is good. Harvard and City of Cambridge, HSBA, The T needs to be cleaner
- HSBA
- MBTA or donor to renovate the headhouse
- I would prefer that local musicians would provide talent on their own, let the HSBA coordinate the big events
- Please don't cater to the business association which has conflict of interest and limited scope in context
- CAC, HSBA, HSNA?
- MIT Media Lab, CCTV, CHC
- Cambridge Office for Tourism
- Cambridge Office for Tourism contributes a lot with Kiosk staffing. They could use more volunteers.
- Harvard University, Cambridge Public Library, Barnes and Noble/Coop, Grolier book shop, Harvard Bookstore, Raven Bookstore, Cambridge Craft Group
- If T open to improving head house? Tourism/tour groups (move away), Arts Council, PAZ, Public art commission, developer/donor funded partnerships in HSQ to fund T
- I see street artists and musicians and micro vendors working in and around the Kiosk—maybe affiliations with Cambridge multi-cultural arts and local galleries? Can we ditch the taxi stand? No riders for 15 minutes at rush hours
- People to help design a modest exhibition space