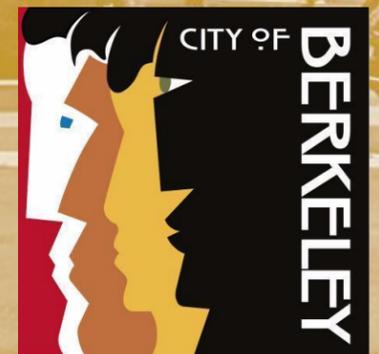


Berkeley Civic Center Project Overview

March 2026

SIEGEL & STRAIN Architects



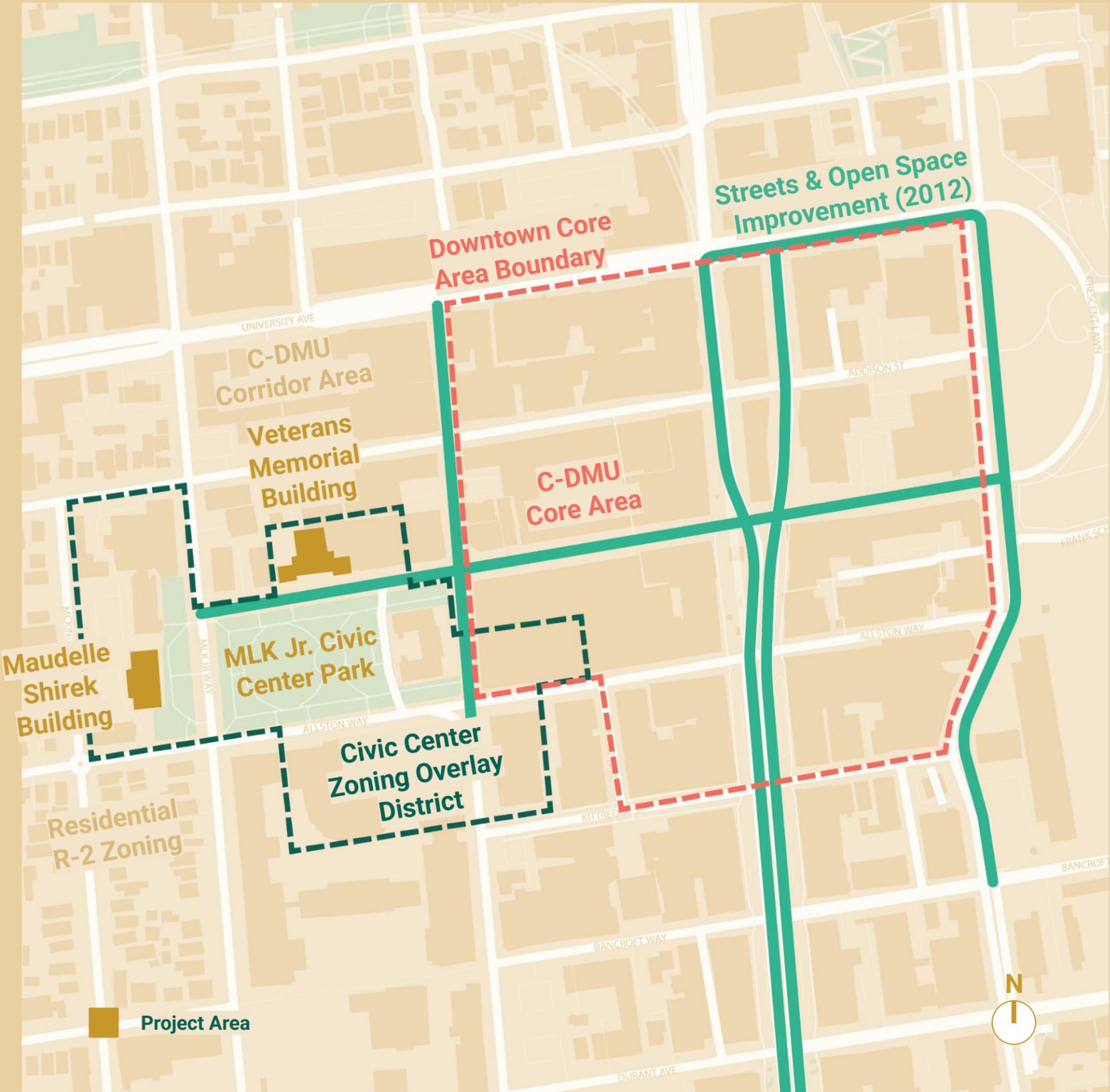
Berkeley Civic Center

Project Beginnings

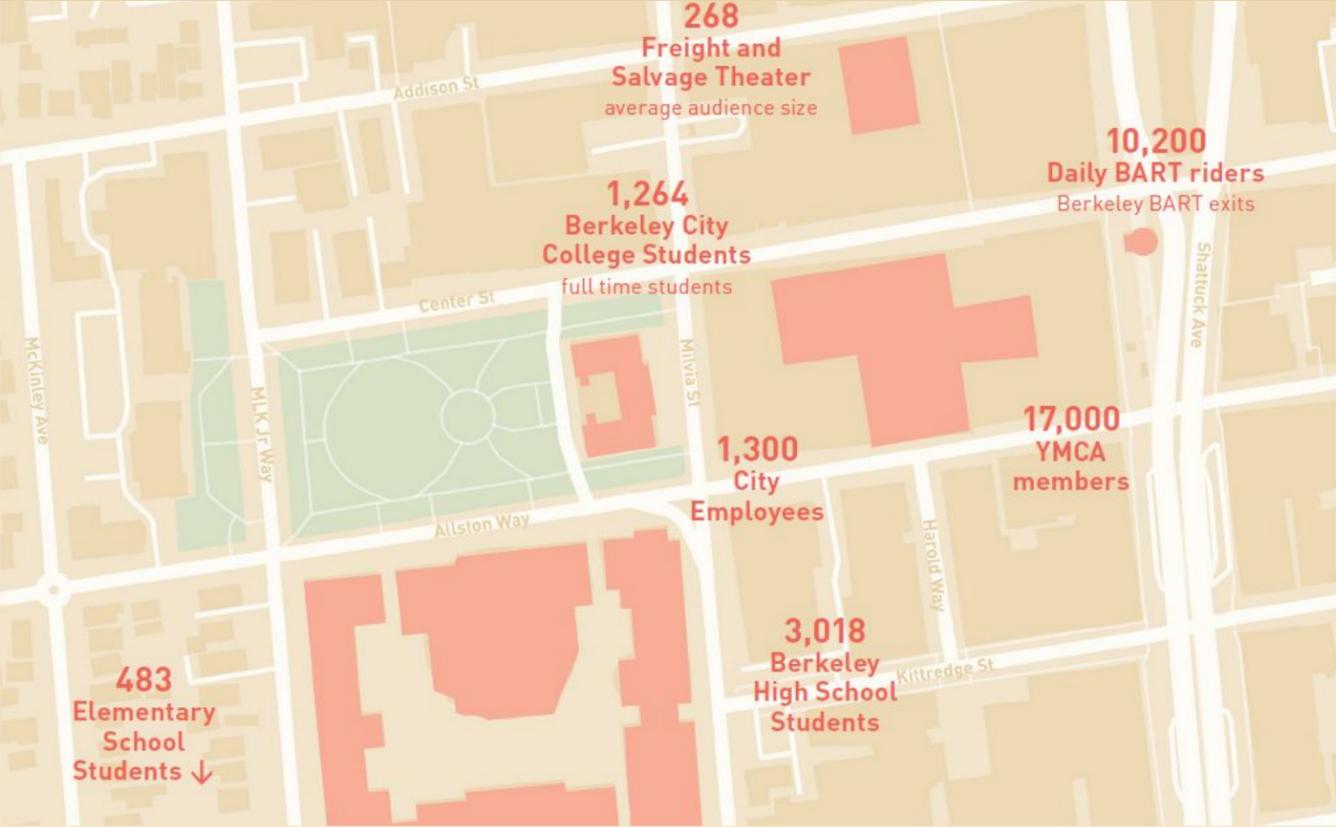
In 2019-2020 a holistic vision plan for the Future of Berkeley Civic Center was developed.....

Project Context

- **Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park**
- **Surrounding Streets**
MLK Jr. Way
Center Street
Allston Way
- **Maudelle Shirek Building**
- **Veterans Memorial Building**



Project Context



↑ Berkeley High School



↑ Center Street



↑ YMCA



On Saturdays, the Farmers' Market attracts a large number of people and transforms Center Street.

Civic Center History

City Beautiful Movement

A reaction to the crowded disorganized city centers, and centered around the belief that more architecturally uniform cities would create more healthful and productive communities

Berkeley Town Hall *[Bakewell and Brown Architects]*

was completed in 1909, and a City Beautiful plan for the Berkeley Civic Center was proposed in 1914. Portions of the plan were realized over the coming decades including:

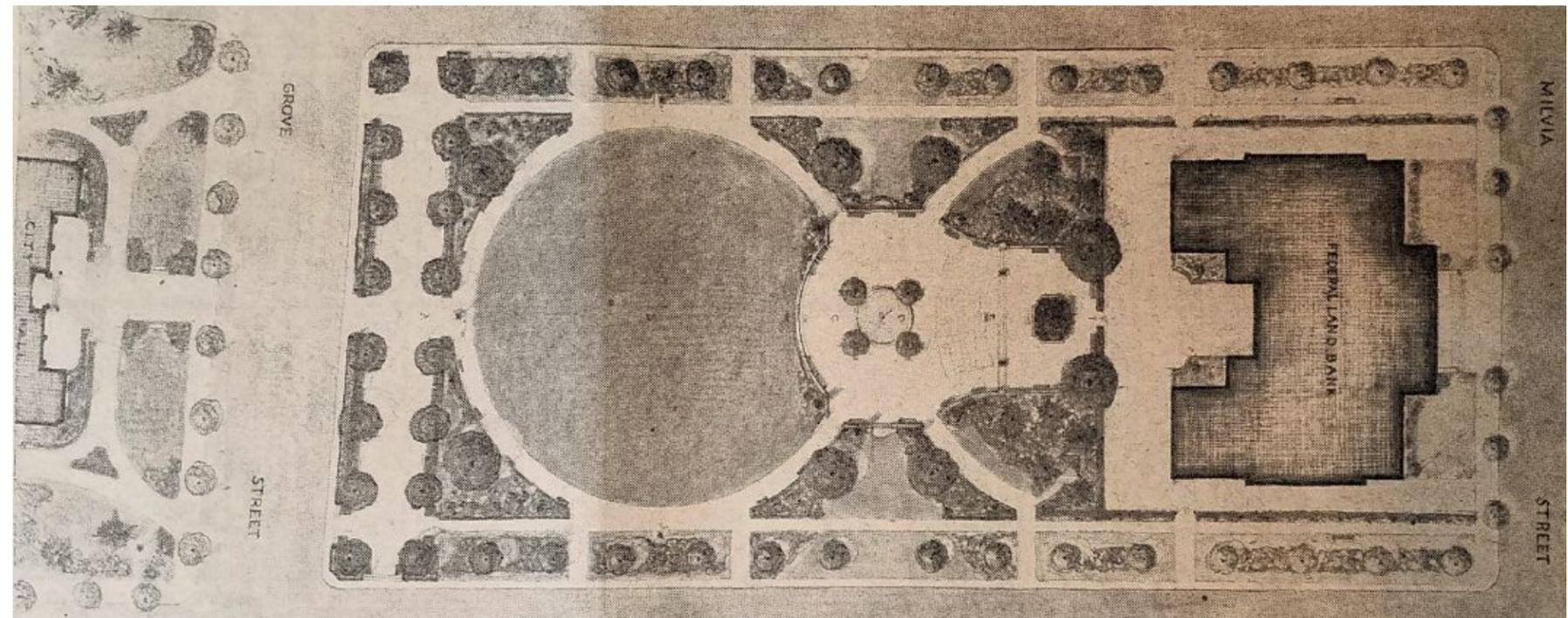
Veterans Memorial Building *[Henry H. Meyers & Mildred S. Meyers]*

completed 1928

Civic Center Park *[Bernard Maybeck, Julia Morgan, Henry H. Gutterson, John Gregg]*

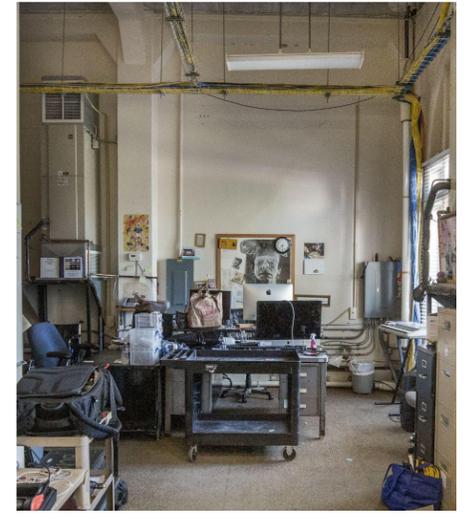
completed 1942

Nationally Listed as Historic District in 1998



Civic Center History

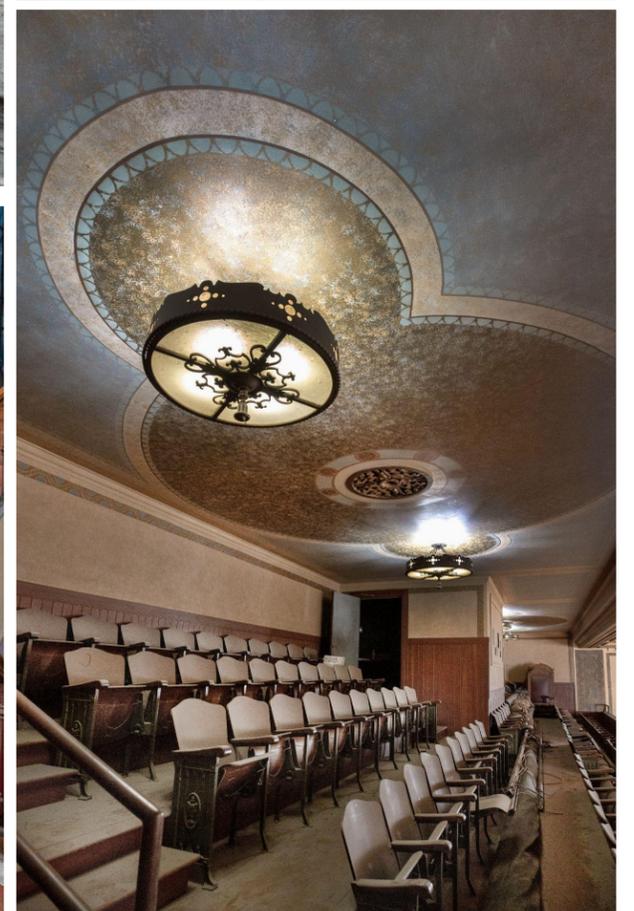
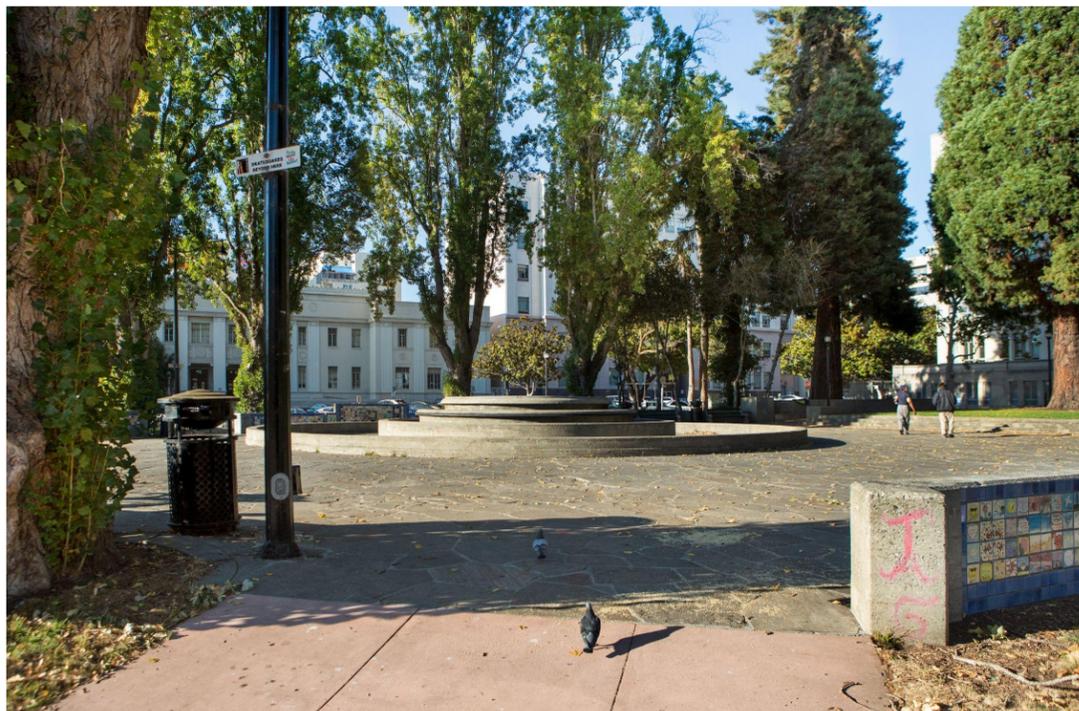
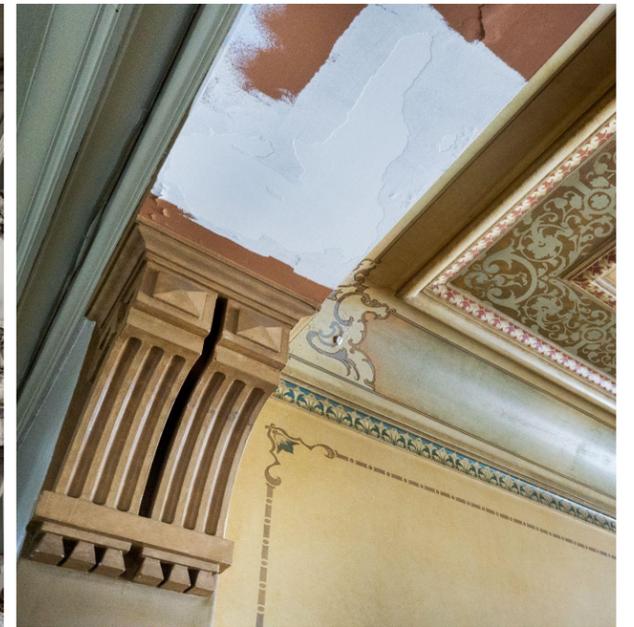
- **Maudelle Shirek Building (Old City Hall)**
City offices and Council Chambers, the site of many innovative legislative actions taken by the City of Berkeley; currently primarily vacant
- **Veterans Memorial Building**
Auditorium, Lodge Rooms, and Banquet Hall, hosted concerts including the Grateful Dead in 1966, and community banquets; currently used as shelter and Berkeley Historical Society & Museum
- **MLK Jr Civic Center Park**
Parade green, World's Fair fountain, hosts protests, festivals, celebrations, Farmer's Market



Civic Center

The historic buildings and park are underutilized, and have entered a cycle of neglect.

- Do not meet modern seismic standards
- Expensive to maintain & modernize
- Primarily vacant, with no City uses identified to return to the buildings
- City Council stopped meeting here 2018



What do other cities do?

→ Pasadena City Hall

Completed 1927

Bakewell and Brown Architects

Renovated 2004-2007 *including seismic retrofit, systems modernization, interior renovation, facade restoration*

\$117 million construction cost

→ San Francisco City Hall

Completed 1916

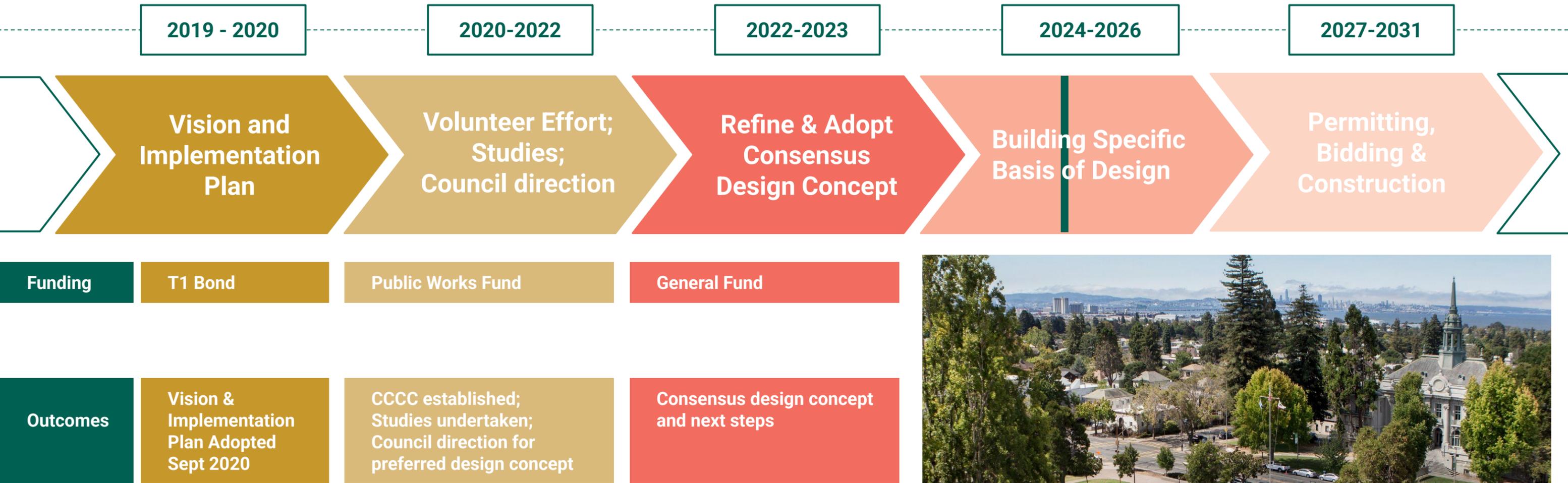
Bakewell and Brown Architects

Renovated 1995-1999 *including seismic base isolation system, historic restoration, system modernization*

\$300 million construction cost



Project History



Berkeley Civic Center

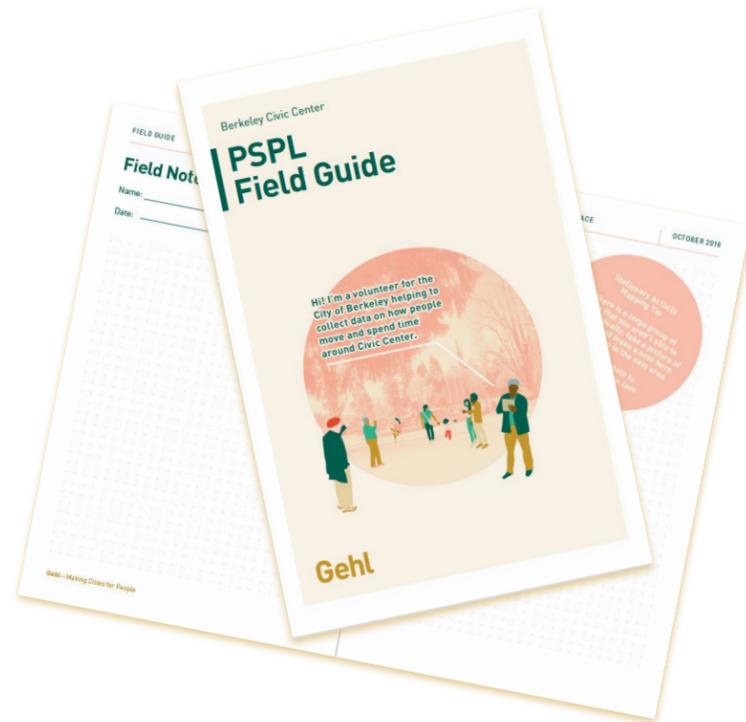
Building a Vision

Input from a broad and diverse audience

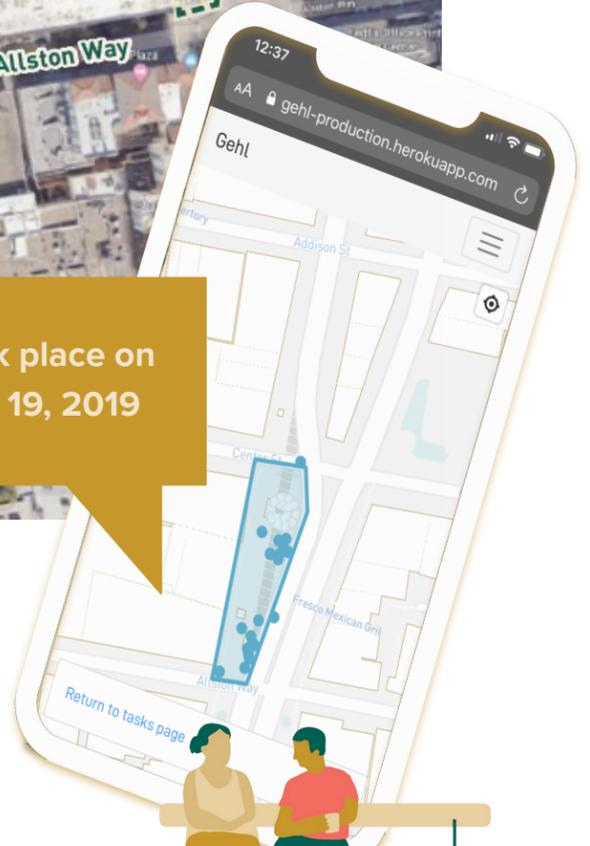
Arts & Culture	Community & Services	Elected Officials and/or Representatives	Heritage & Built Environment	Youth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Berkeley Cultural Trust ● City of Berkeley, Civic Arts ● RLA Conservation City Arts Collection Assessment) ● Berkeley Design Advocates ● Freight & Salvage ● Berkeley Symphony ● Shawl-Anderson Dance Center ● Berkeley Repertory Theater ● Turtle Island Monument Project ● Visit Berkeley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Berkeleyside ● City of Berkeley Clerk ● City of Berkeley, Special Events ● Downtown Berkeley Association ● Ecology Center ● Former Elected Officials of Berkeley ● Options Recovery (VMB Tenants) American Legion Post 7 ● Dorothy Day House (VMB Tenants) ● Berkeley Community Media (OCH Tenants) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Berkeley City Council Members Districts 1-8 ● Berkeley Mayor's Office & Staff ● Berkeley Unified School District Board Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Berkeley Architectural Historic Association (BAHA) ● Berkeley Historical Society & Museum (VMB Tenants) ● Landmark Preservation Commission ● McGee-Spaulding Hardy Historical Interest Group (MSHHIG) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Berkeley High School Principal ● Berkeley Unified School District Superintendent ● Berkeley Unified School District Superintendent ● Berkeley Unified School District Director of Facilities ● Berkeley High School Students ● Teen Center/YMCA ● Berkeley City College

Observing Berkeley Civic Center

Public Space, Public Life



The survey took place on October 15 and 19, 2019



People Moving



Mode Movement Counts



Age & Gender Movement Counts

People Staying



Stationary Activity Mapping



30
Participants in Building Tours with Berkeley Historical Society
Sep 2019 & Mar 2020



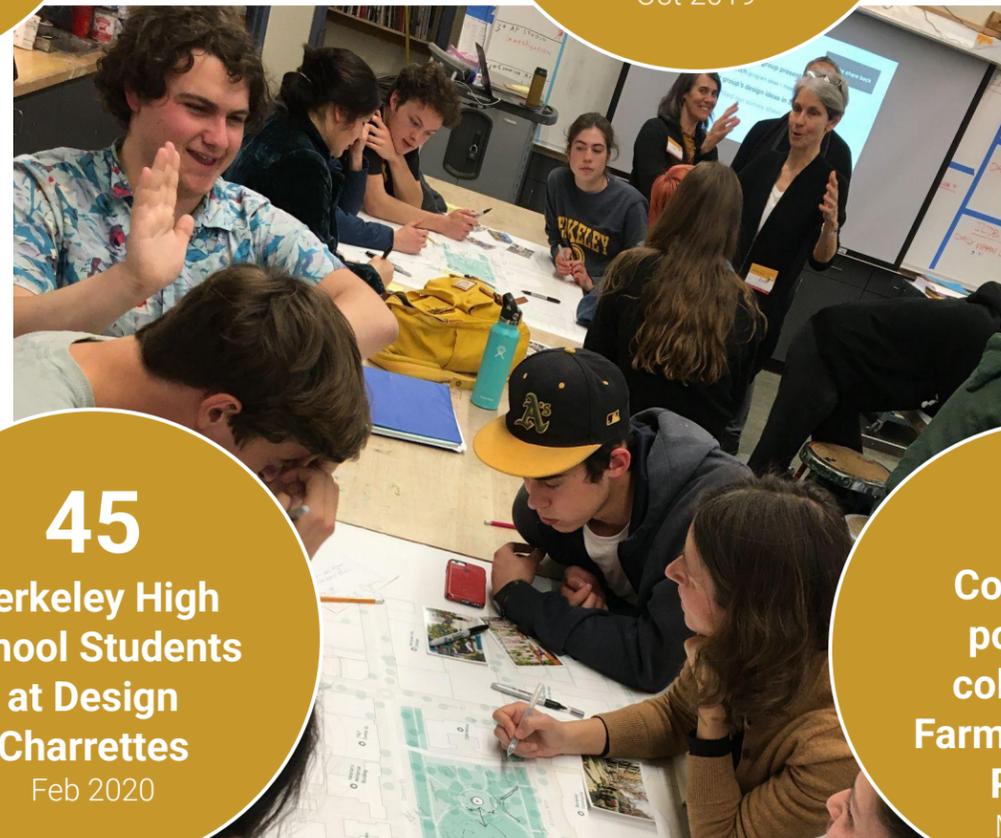
21
Volunteers for Public Space, Public Life Survey
Oct 2019



40
Participants at Visions & Values Community Meeting
Dec 2019



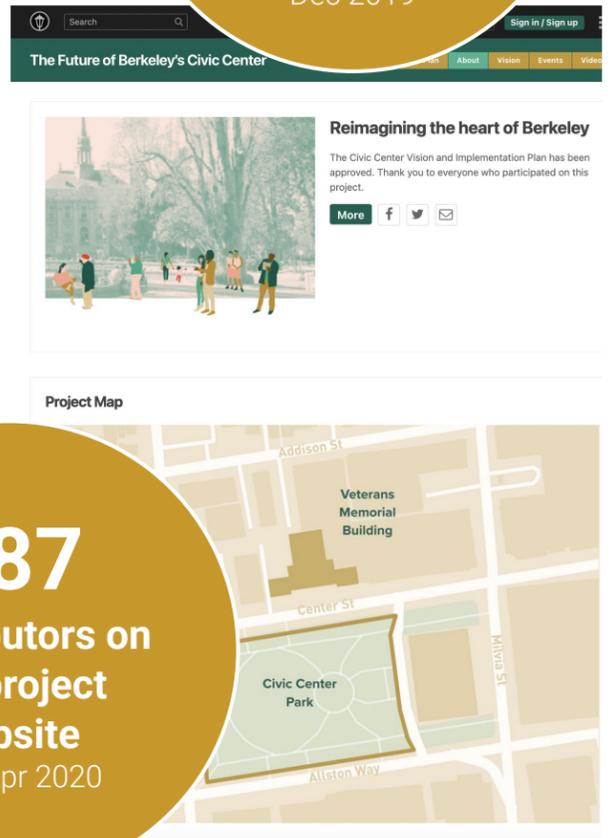
40+
Interviewees at Focused Engagement Sessions



45
Berkeley High School Students at Design Charrettes
Feb 2020

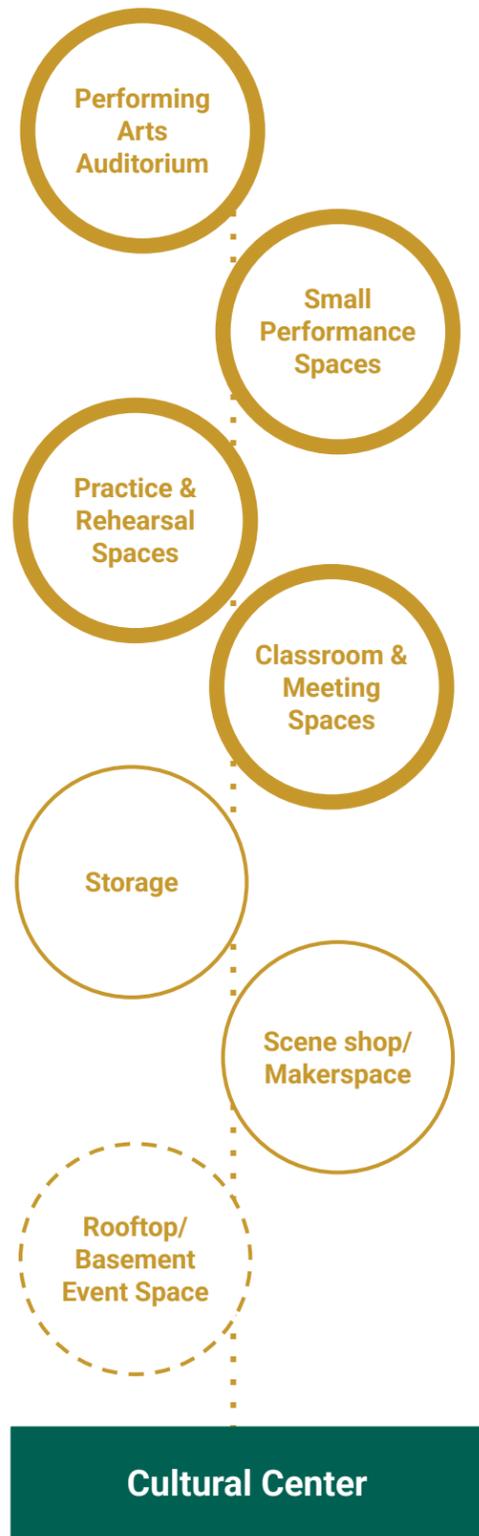


26
Community postcards collected at Farmers Market Pop-Up
Mar 2020

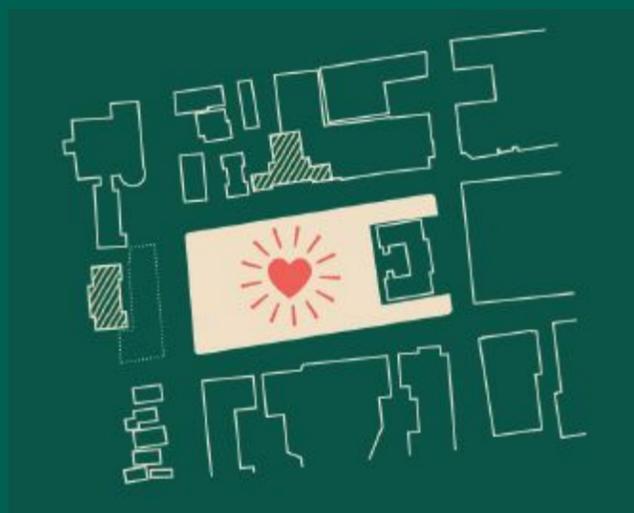


387
Contributors on the project website
Feb -Apr 2020

Existing and New Uses Considered



A Vision for Berkeley's Civic Center



Civic Center will be the heart of Berkeley's community. Civic Center will be the prime space for civic life, culture, and the arts. It will reflect the city's diverse identities, celebrating its history and contributing to shaping its future. A place of shared resources and a platform for free expression accessible to all, the Civic Center aims to manifest the city's values, advance social justice, and demonstrate the power of true public space.

From Berkeley Civic Center Vision & Implementation Plan dated July 10, 2020 and adopted by Berkeley City Council on September 22, 2020

Berkeley Civic Center

Getting to Consensus

Engagement

Broad Outreach

- Open House - Nov 16, 2022
- Online Survey - Dec 2022 - Jan 2023
- Project Website & Listserv updates - ongoing

Focused Outreach

- Super Sub-Committee (City Commissions)
Online Meetings - Sept 2022, Feb 2023
- Technical Advisory Committee (City Staff)
Online Meetings - Sept 2022, Feb 2023
- Current & Potential User/Neighbor Worksessions
Online & In-person Meetings - Sept 2022 - Feb 2023
- Arts Organization Engagement
Online Survey - Jan - Feb 2023
Focus Group Tour & Meeting - Feb 24, 2023
- Community for a Cultural Civic Center
Monthly Meetings throughout project



Engagement Participation



654
Online Survey Respondents
Dec 2022 to Jan 2023



40
Participants at Open House
Nov 2022



20+
Neighbors & Affiliated Groups
'22-'23

16
Arts Focus Group participants
Feb 2023

32
Youth Work-session participants
Feb 2023



79
Arts Survey Respondents
Jan-Feb 2023



200+
Written Comments on Postcards
Nov 2022

Berkeley Civic Center

Design Concept



The Civic Center should be a **place to gather as a community.**



MLK Jr Civic Center Park should be **natural in character**, preserving mature trees and enhancing native biodiversity.



The Park and open space should offer a **safe, clean, and comfortable** place to be outdoors with others.



Many are passionate about **daylighting Strawberry Creek**, while others raised concerns.

Center Street should be **better integrated into the Park** and open space experience



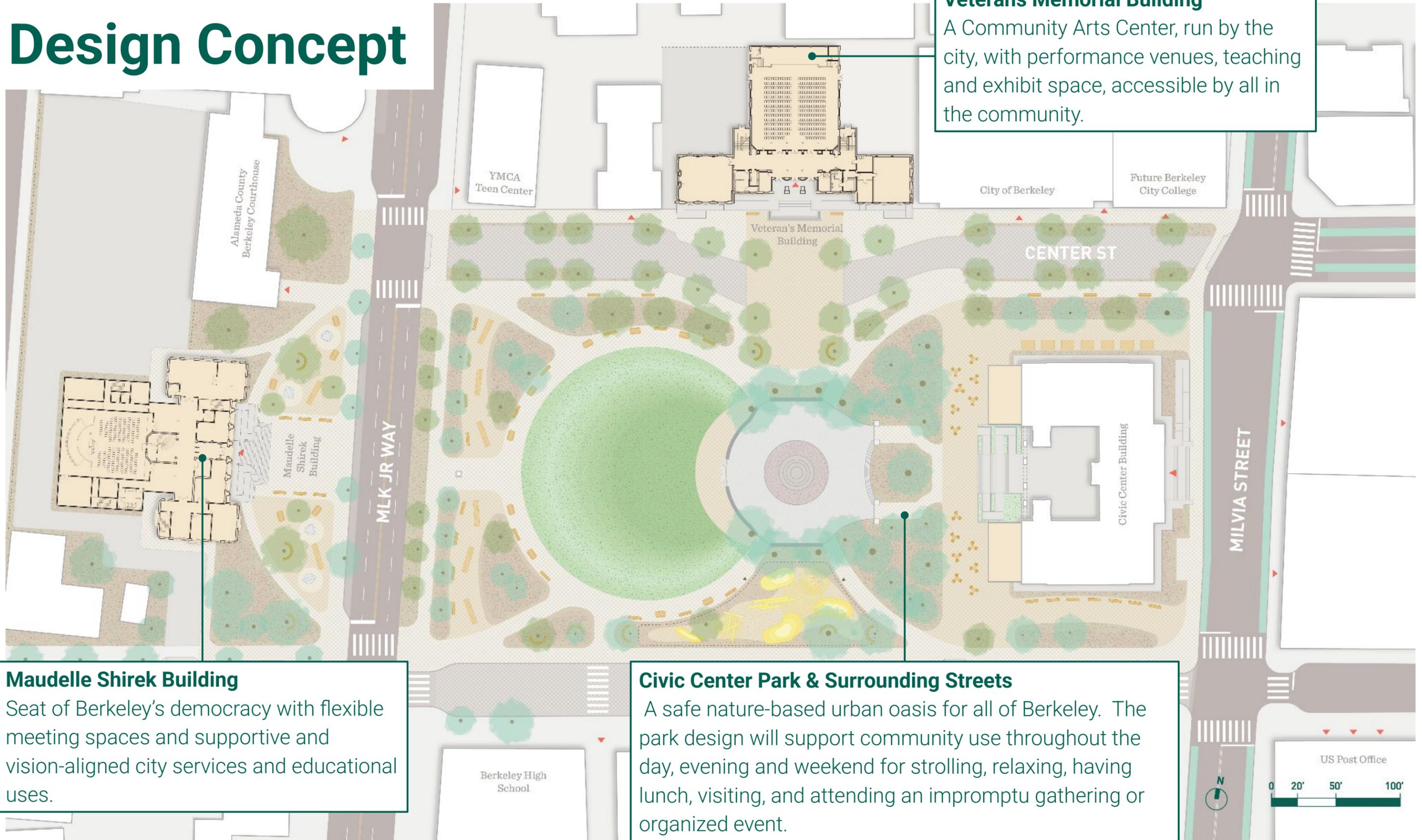
The **Maudelle Shirek Building** should be the seat of **Berkeley's democracy**, with meeting and public-serving spaces supporting civic participation in City government.



The **Veterans Memorial Building** should be a **Community Arts Center** for creative expression, accessible to all.



Design Concept



Veterans Memorial Building
A Community Arts Center, run by the city, with performance venues, teaching and exhibit space, accessible by all in the community.

Maudelle Shirek Building
Seat of Berkeley's democracy with flexible meeting spaces and supportive and vision-aligned city services and educational uses.

Civic Center Park & Surrounding Streets
A safe nature-based urban oasis for all of Berkeley. The park design will support community use throughout the day, evening and weekend for strolling, relaxing, having lunch, visiting, and attending an impromptu gathering or organized event.

Berkeley Civic Center

Maudelle Shirek Building

The seat of Berkeley's democracy

1

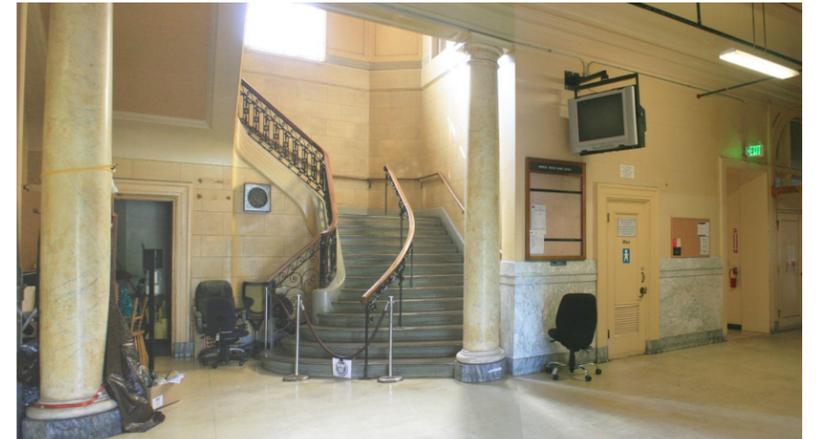
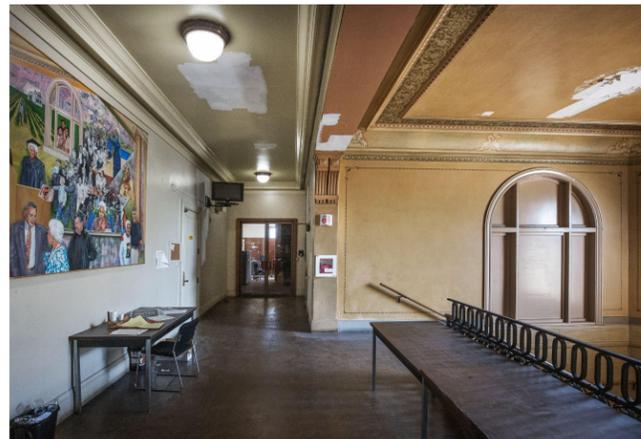
Restore and utilize the historic center of City government.

“It is a historical architectural treasure that needs our love and funding!”



“It is a historic and attractive building that should be restored...and made into a centerpiece of the Civic Center.. ”

“It is beautiful and should be invested in now, to preserve what we have and make it publicly usable again. Don't let it further deteriorate.”



2

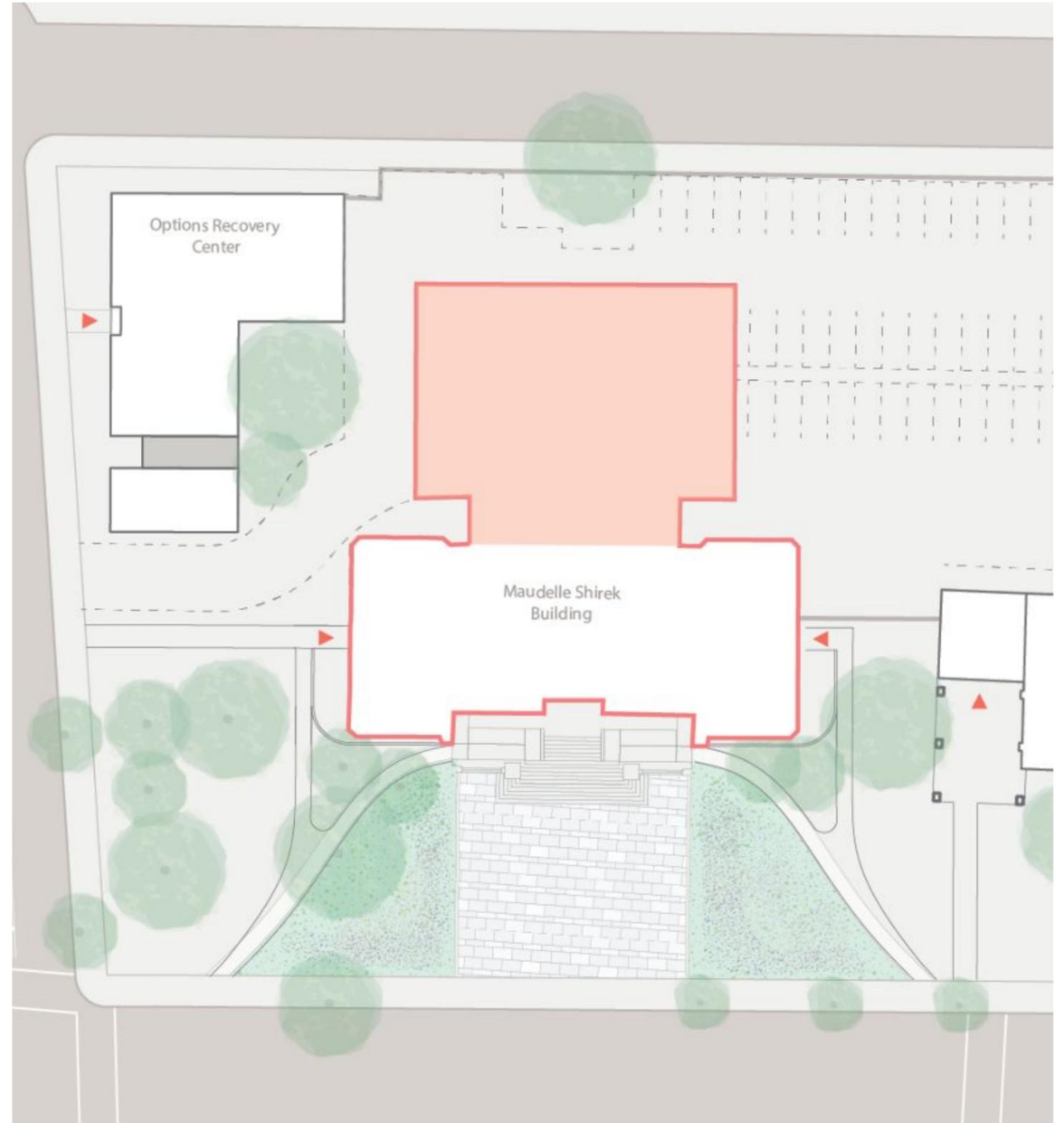
Create an accessible entry and a new rear addition.



Accessible ramp and entry plaza



Existing rear addition

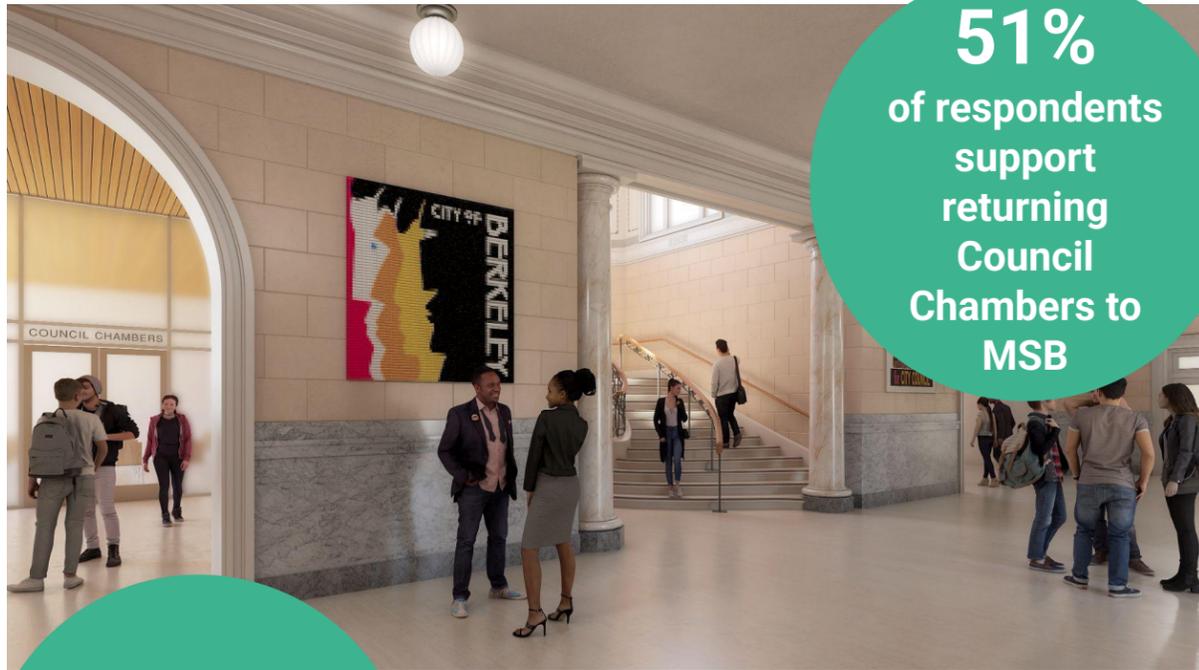


Site Plan with Proposed Addition Footprint



3

Return community action in government to the building. Meeting Rooms & Civic Uses



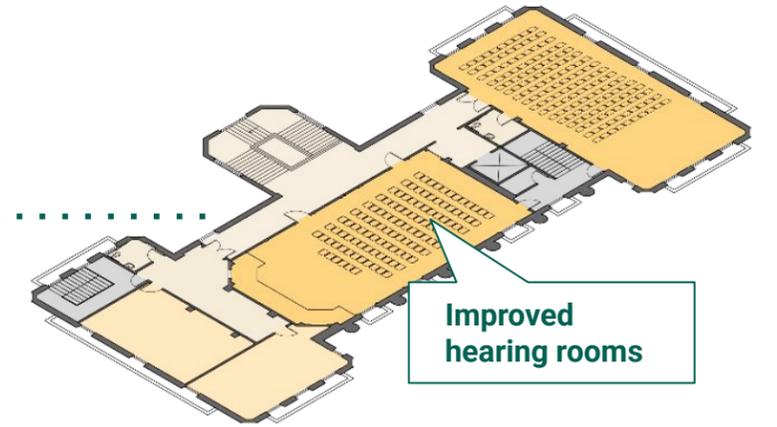
51% of respondents support returning Council Chambers to MSB

350+ public meetings annually in the City

ATTIC (not shown)

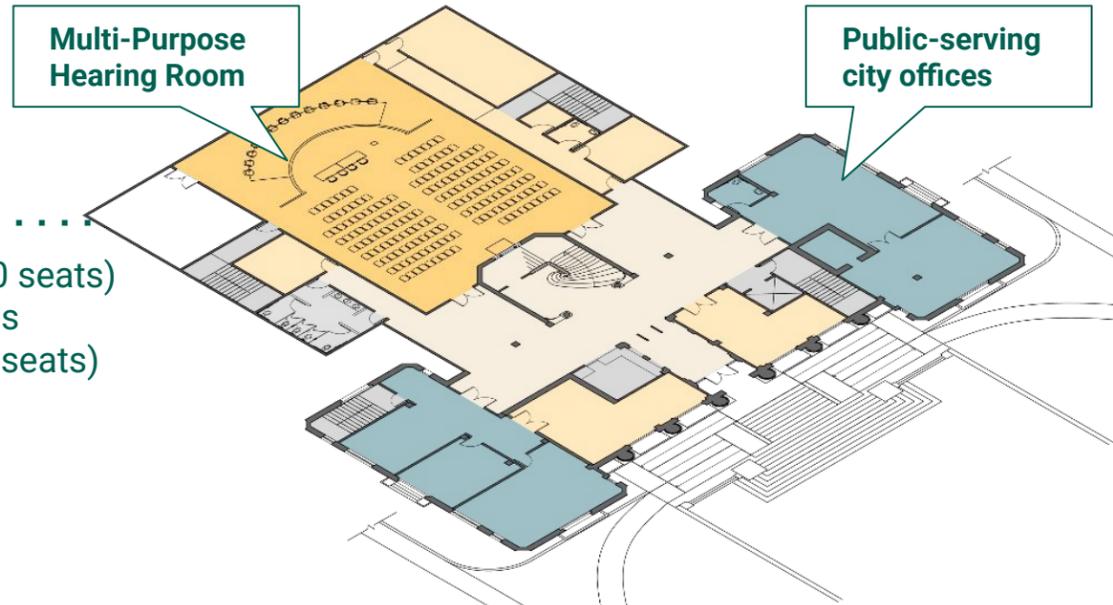
SECOND FLOOR (6,500 SF)

- Small Hearing Rooms (70-120 seats)
- Large Meeting Rooms (20-30 seats)

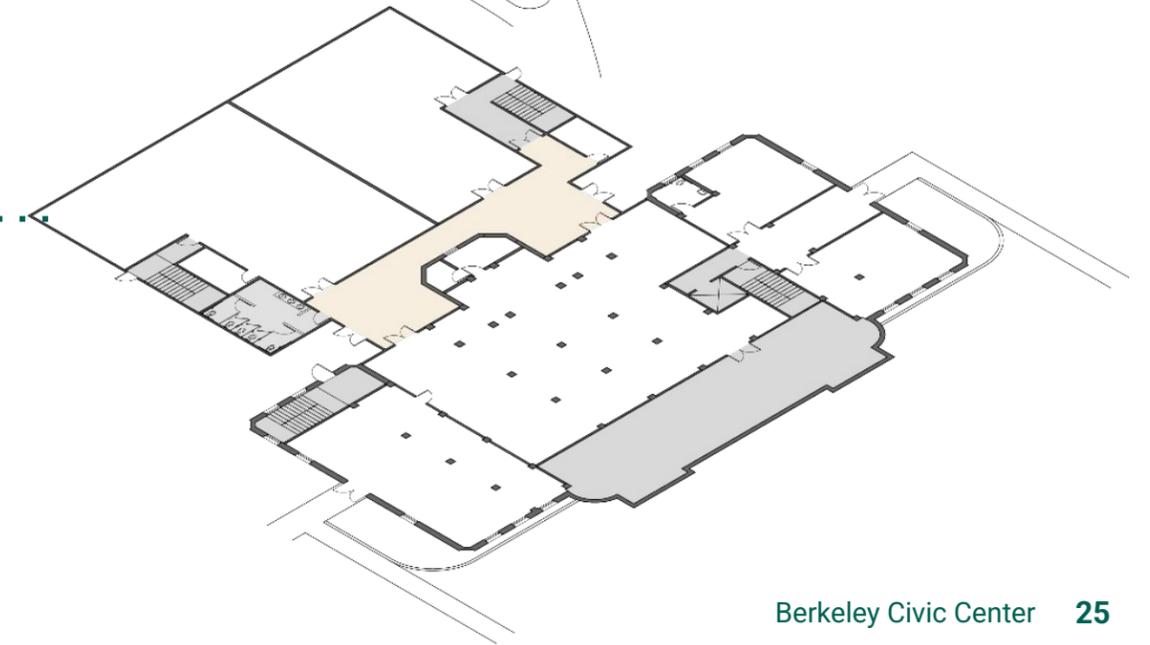


FIRST FLOOR (14,400 SF)

- Large Hearing Room (200-300 seats)
- Hearing Room Support Spaces
- Small Meeting Rooms (10-20 seats)
- Reception Areas
- Offices
- Conference Rooms
- Support Spaces



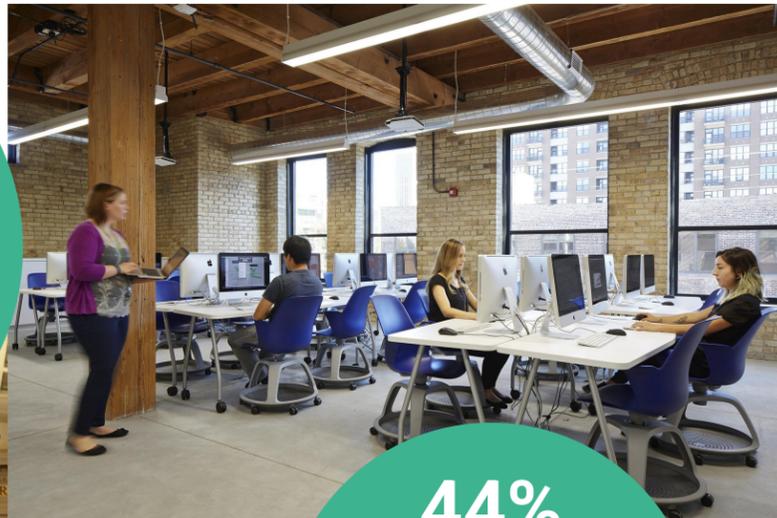
GROUND FLOOR (16,350 SF)



4 Provide space for civic-use aligned non-profits.

Berkeley Historical Society & Museum
 Berkeley Community Media
 Public Policy Institute

70%
 of respondents support Berkeley Historical Society & Museum at MSB



44%
 of respondents support Berkeley Community Media at MSB

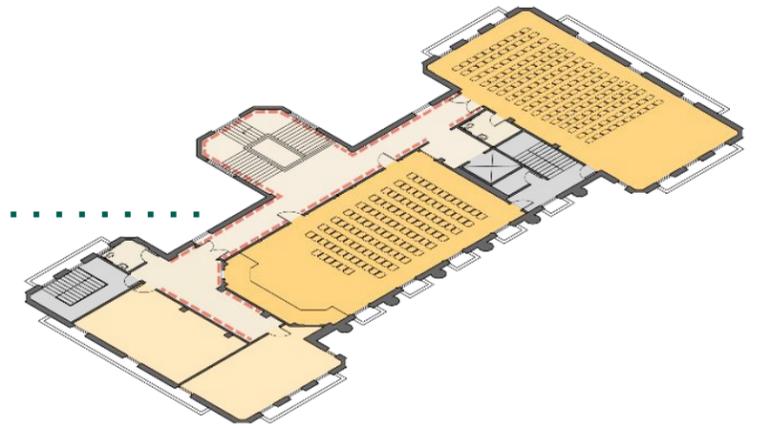


ATTIC (not shown)

(Alternate Archive location)

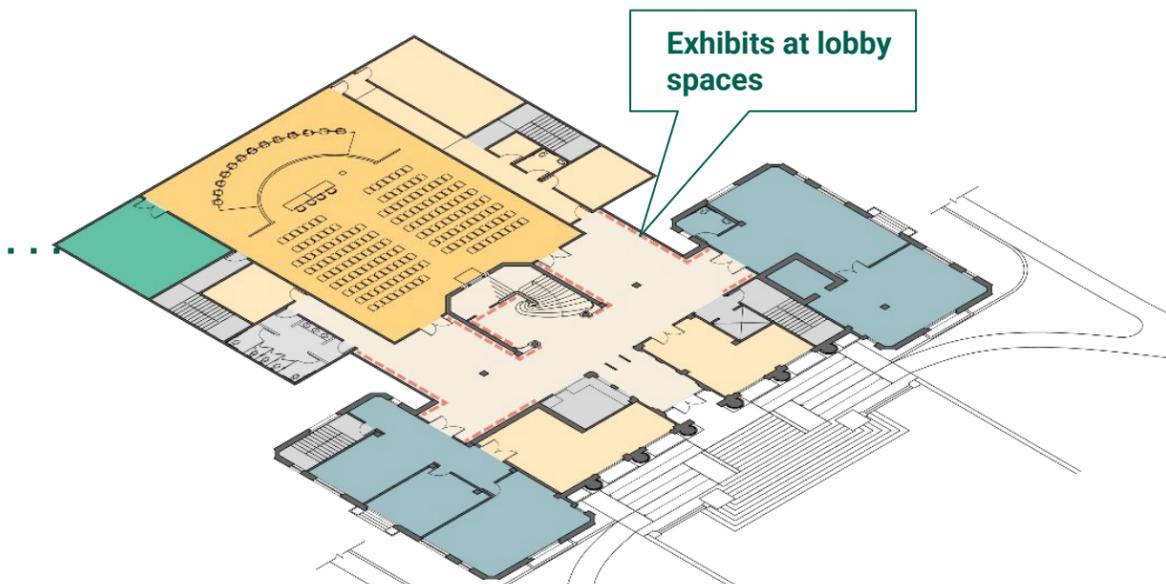
SECOND FLOOR (6,500 SF)

Exhibition Space



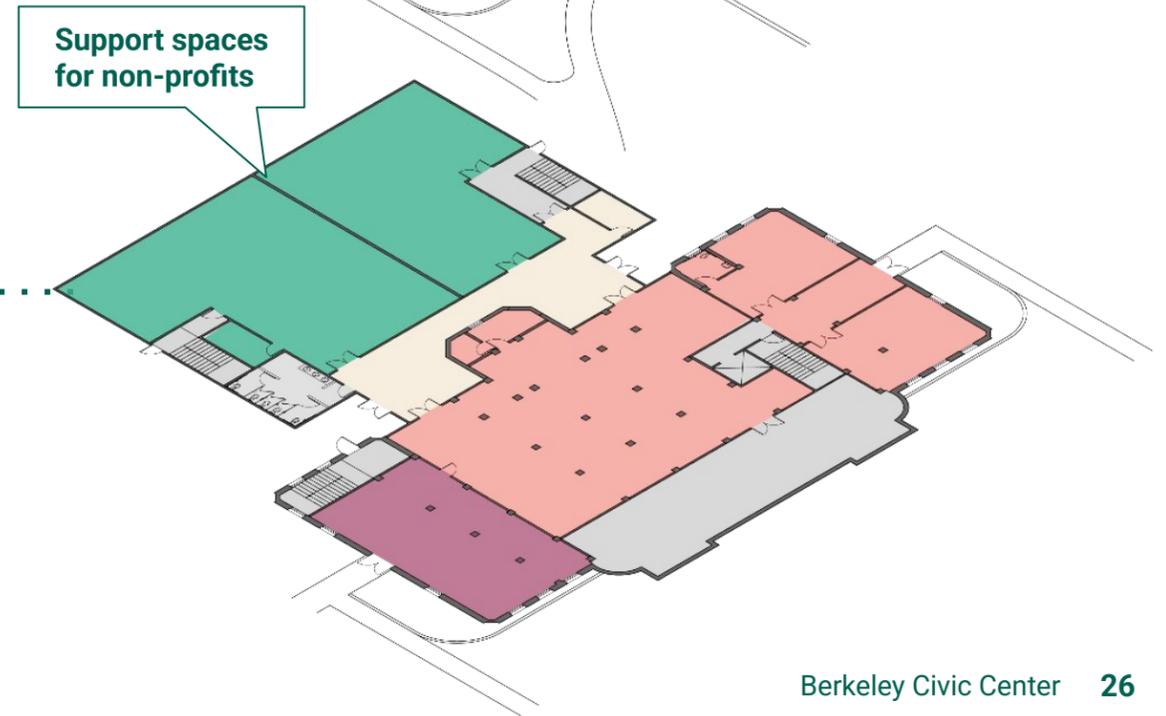
FIRST FLOOR (14,400 SF)

Exhibition Space
 Broadcast Studio



GROUND FLOOR (16,350 SF)

Exhibition Space
 Exhibit Prep Room
 Offices
 Research Room
 Offices
 Editing Suite
 Small Studios
 Lounge/Kitchenette
 Shared Offices



5

Retrofit, upgrade and repair systems and finishes.

“...upgrade to LEED standards, include solar panels...advanced MERV/HVAC...light filled with natural materials.”

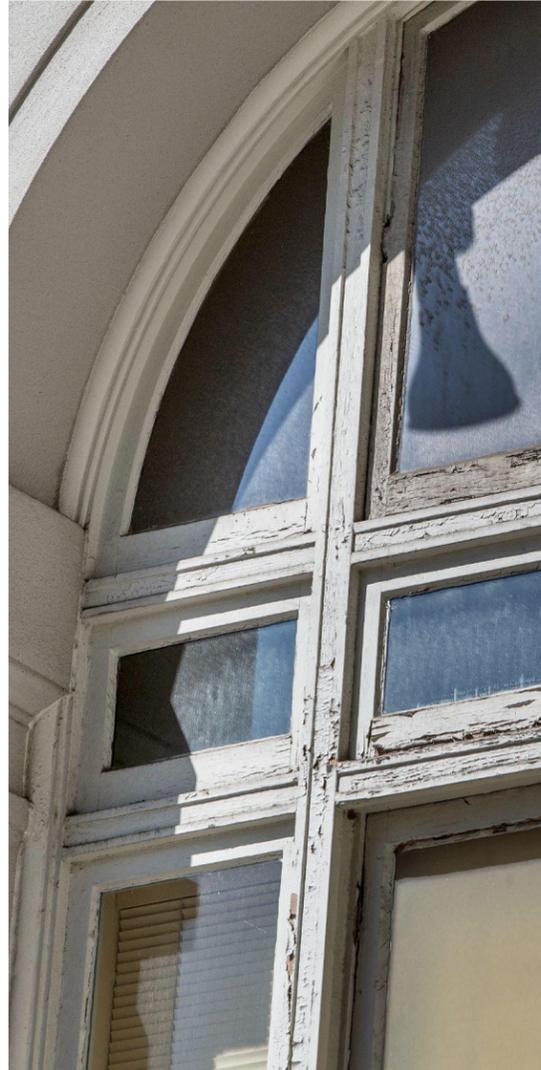
“...accessibility through the front door is important.”

“...it was a pain to get to and move between rooms and floors”

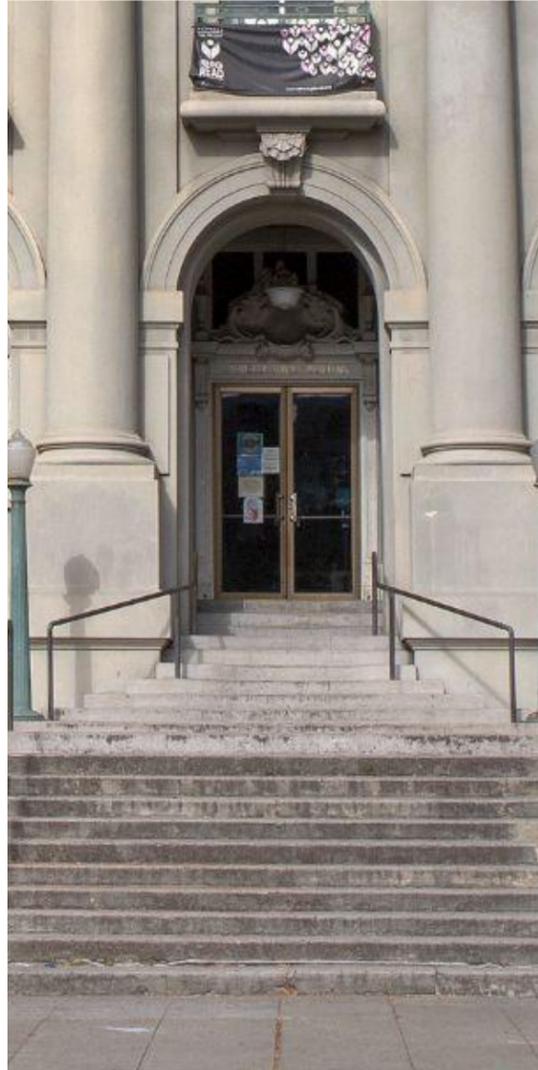
System Upgrades



Envelope Improvements



Accessibility



Finishes



Egress/Safety



Design Concept

Maudelle Shirek Building

Seismic Improvements: Damage Control + to Immediate Occupancy

Approach: The City's Public Works Department recommends a seismic upgrade for the Maudelle Shirek Building to the level of Damage Control Plus (DC+) at the historic structure and the new addition be built to the Immediate Occupancy [IO] level.

At the DC+ level of seismic retrofit, the Maudelle Shirek Building would be occupiable weeks to months after a major seismic event. The addition, built at the IO level, could be re-opened days after a major seismic event.

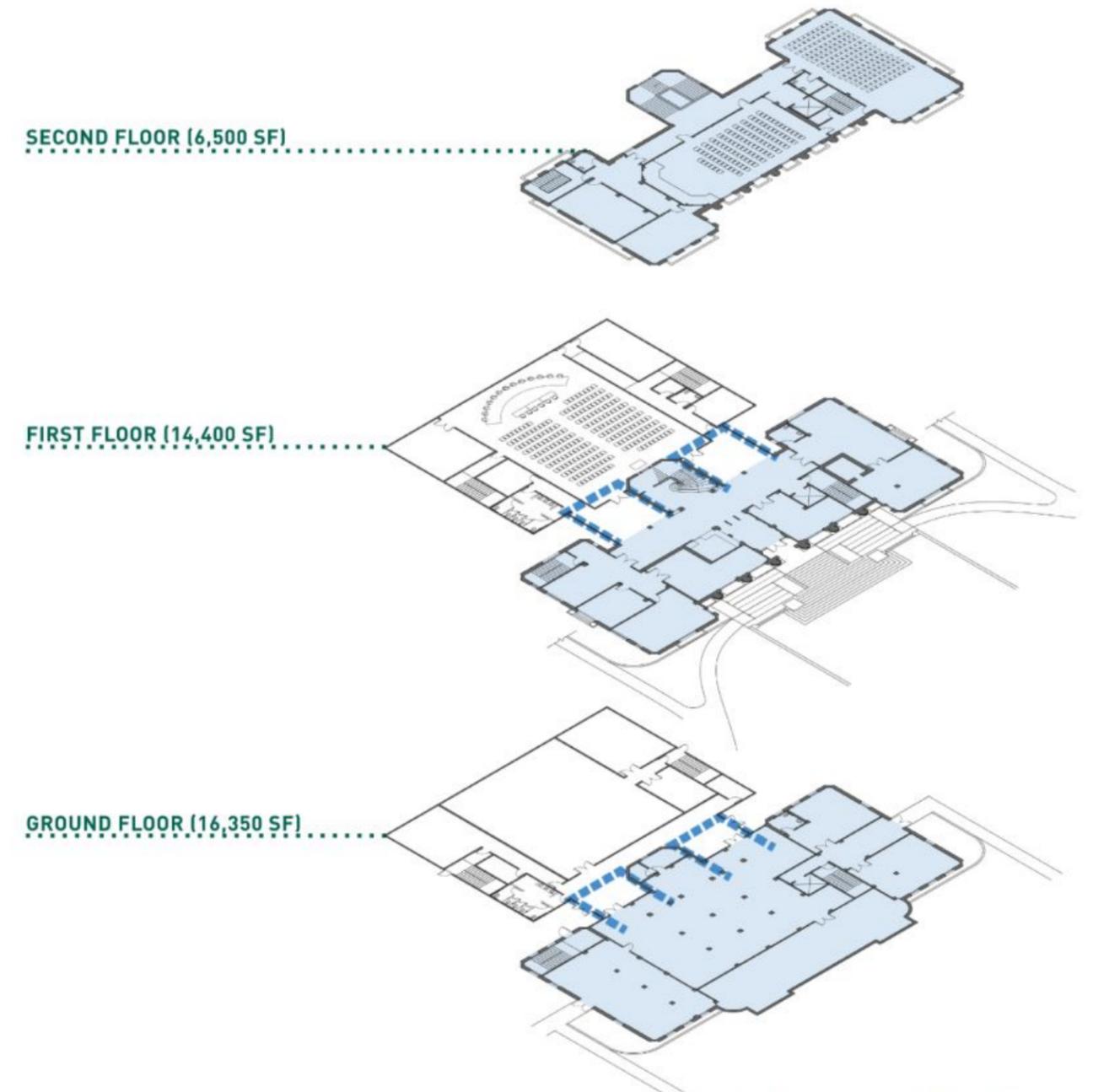
Discussion: This combined DC+/IO structure will provide flexibility for City and public use of this asset now and in the future. After a major seismic event, the combined structure is likely to experience minimal damage. The IO addition should be designed to operate independently of the historic portion, so it can reopen quickly after inspections and minor repairs. The historic structure may need to remain closed pending further repairs, depending on the results of the inspection. With this level of improvement, the building can function

as an operations and service center in the event of natural disasters or other emergencies.

As part of the 2020 Vision Plan, the City investigated an IO solution that featured base isolators either at or below the ground level of the Maudelle Shirek Building. This approach represents a significant cost and potential impacts on usable space.

Tipping Structural Engineers developed a concept for achieving DC+ to near IO levels by addressing structural deficiencies related to lateral and shear strength through additions. This scheme would also involve strengthening individual beams and columns in shear, likely using fiber reinforced polymer sheets. Their study is documented in a report on the Civic Center buildings submitted to Council in August 2021.

Further refinement of this approach to minimize impact on historic finishes while optimizing performance and cost considerations will be required as part of the development of a specific design for the historic building and addition.



Berkeley Civic Center

Veterans Memorial Building

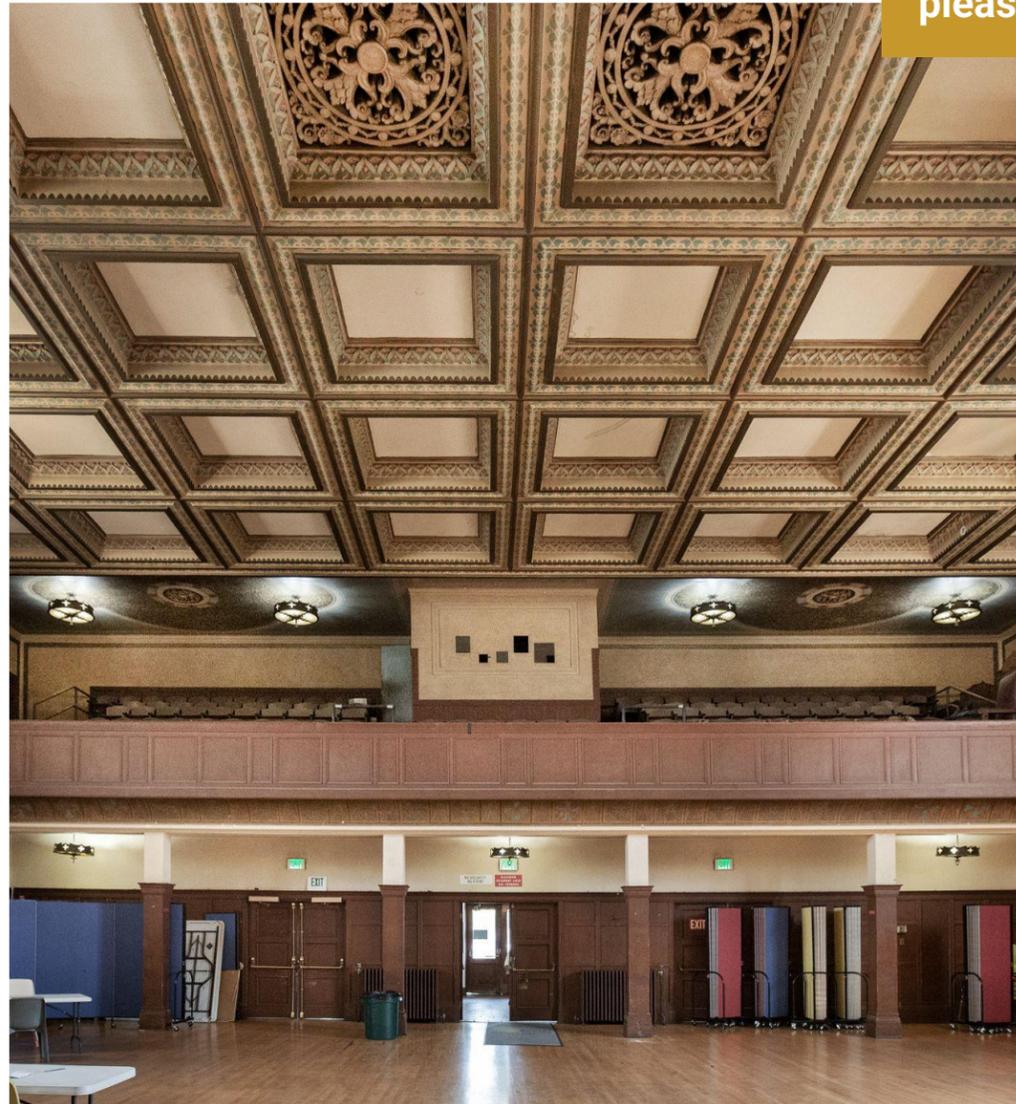
A City-run Community Arts Center

1

Return a historic gathering place to a public use.

“Beautiful building - please preserve it”

“It is beautiful, and an asset to the city.”



2

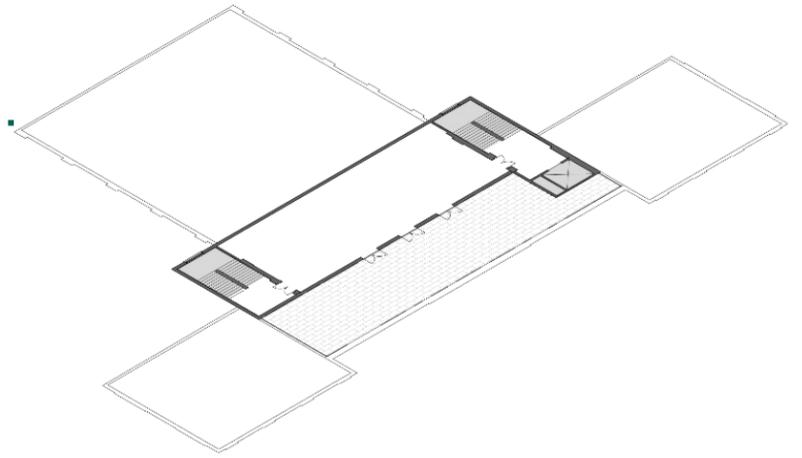
Fulfill a need for multi-disciplinary arts spaces available to rent by the larger community.



72% of arts survey respondents showed high interest in space downtown

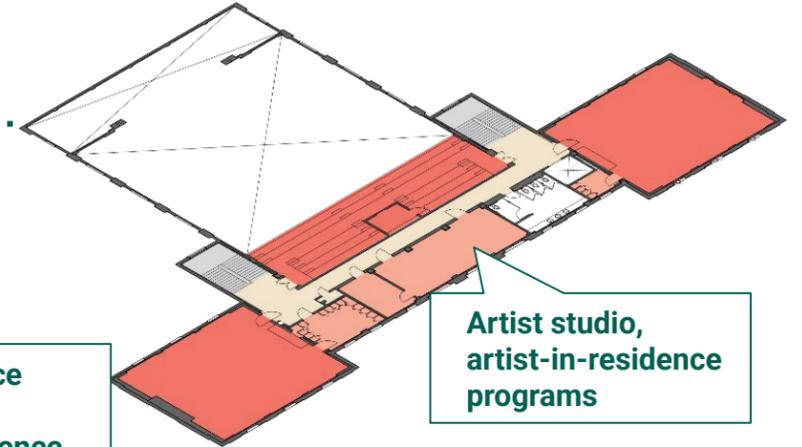


ROOFTOP (4,000 SF)



SECOND FLOOR (6,400 SF)

- Small Performance (60-100 seats)
- Balcony
- Backstage areas
- Learning Lab

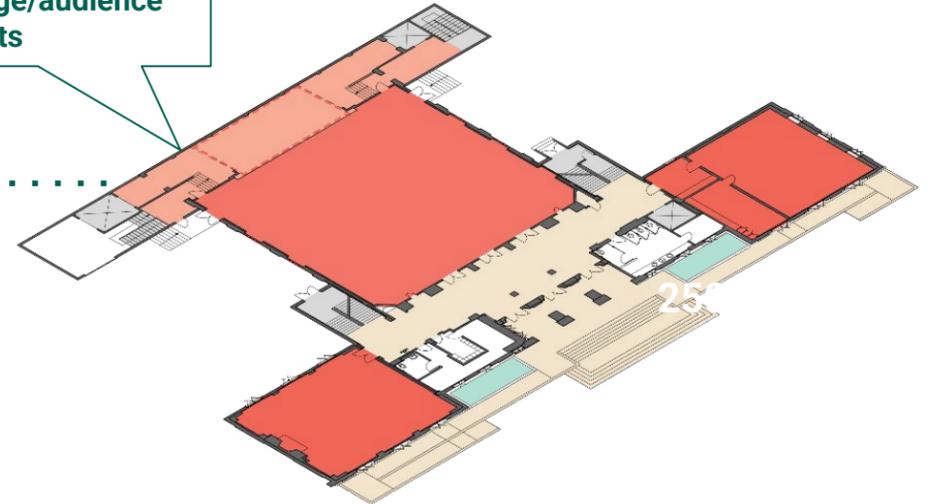


Flexible performance space, supporting multiple stage/audience arrangements

Artist studio, artist-in-residence programs

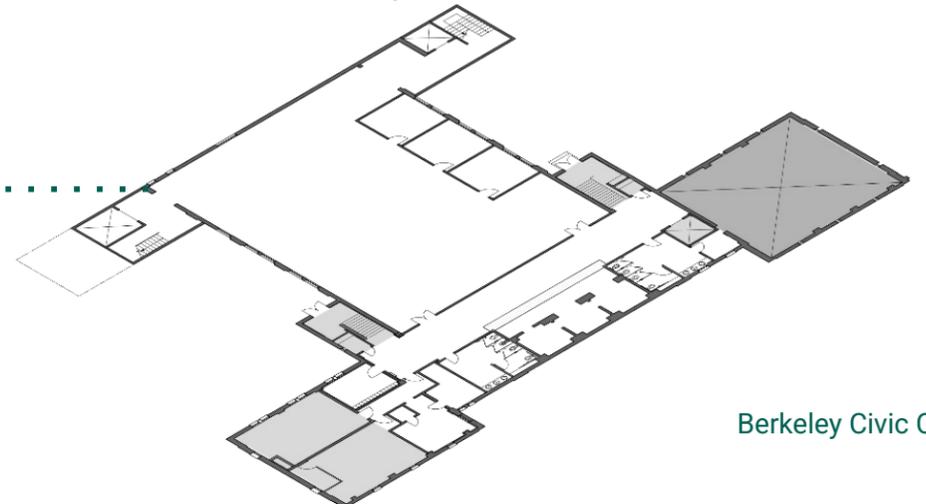
FIRST FLOOR (11,300 SF)

- Auditorium (300-500 seats)
- Gallery/Visual Arts rooms
- Stage & Backstage areas



BASEMENT (10,300 SF)

- Mechanical/Crawl Space

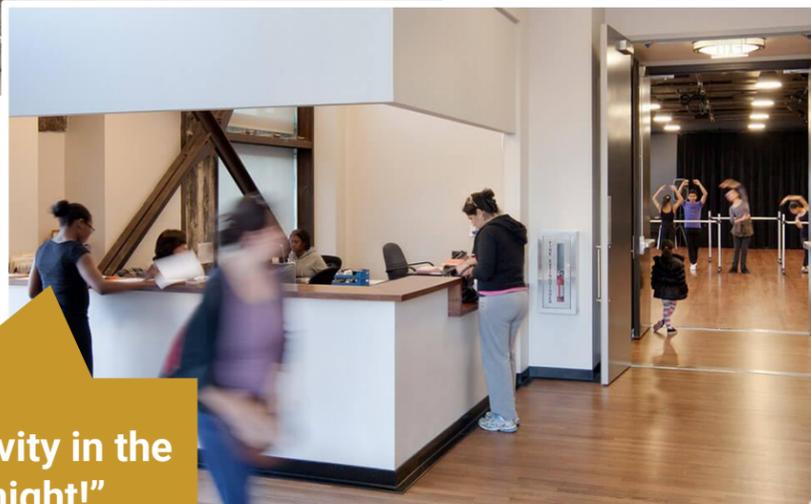


3

Provide significant and high-quality support spaces.



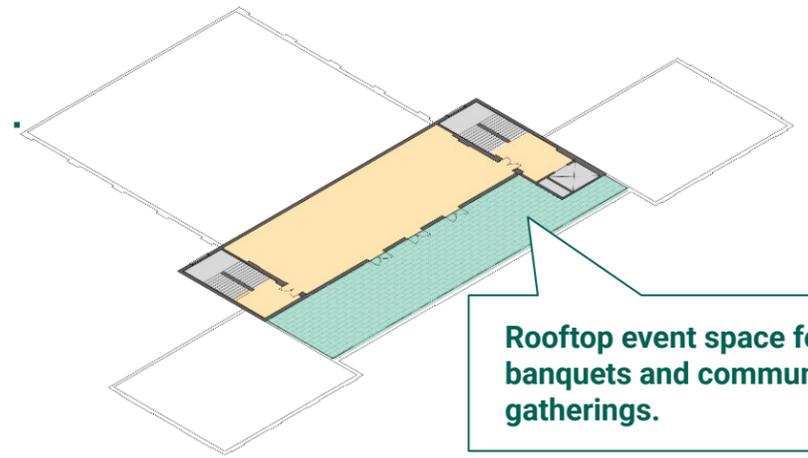
“...need a place for donor functions.”



“Generate lots of activity in the building day and night!”

ROOFTOP (4,000 SF)

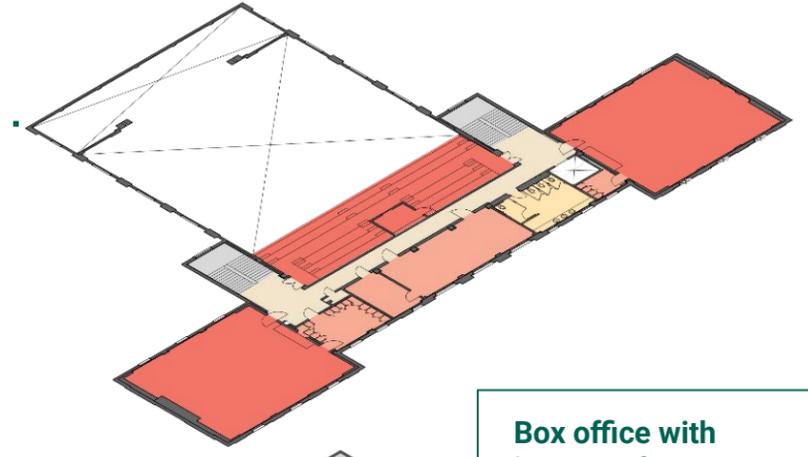
- Event Space
- Roof Terrace



Rooftop event space for banquets and community gatherings.

SECOND FLOOR (6,400 SF)

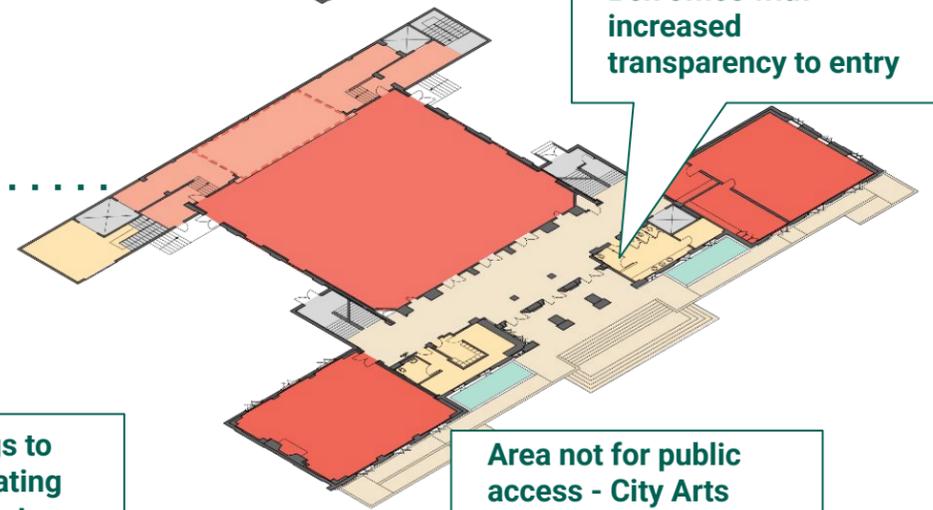
- Storage Space
- Restrooms



Box office with increased transparency to entry

FIRST FLOOR (11,300 SF)

- Offices
- Restrooms
- Box Office
- Backstage Areas

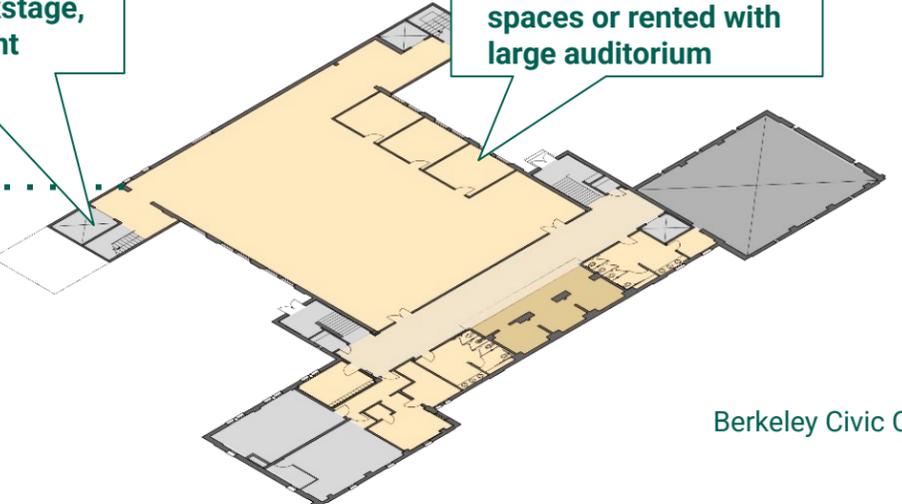


Expand stage wings to west and east, creating loading dock, backstage, access to basement

Area not for public access - City Arts spaces or rented with large auditorium

BASEMENT (10,300 SF)

- Backstage Areas
- Commercial Kitchen
- Stage/Scenery Shop
- Restrooms
- Storage



4

Upgrade and repair systems and finishes.

“Please make sure gender-neutral bathrooms are included.”

It would be fantastic to have a community, municipal arts space in downtown.

“it needs to appear more open, accessible, inviting and welcoming”

“...refurbish front doors and restrooms so visitors have a more pleasant experience.”

System Upgrades



Envelope Improvements



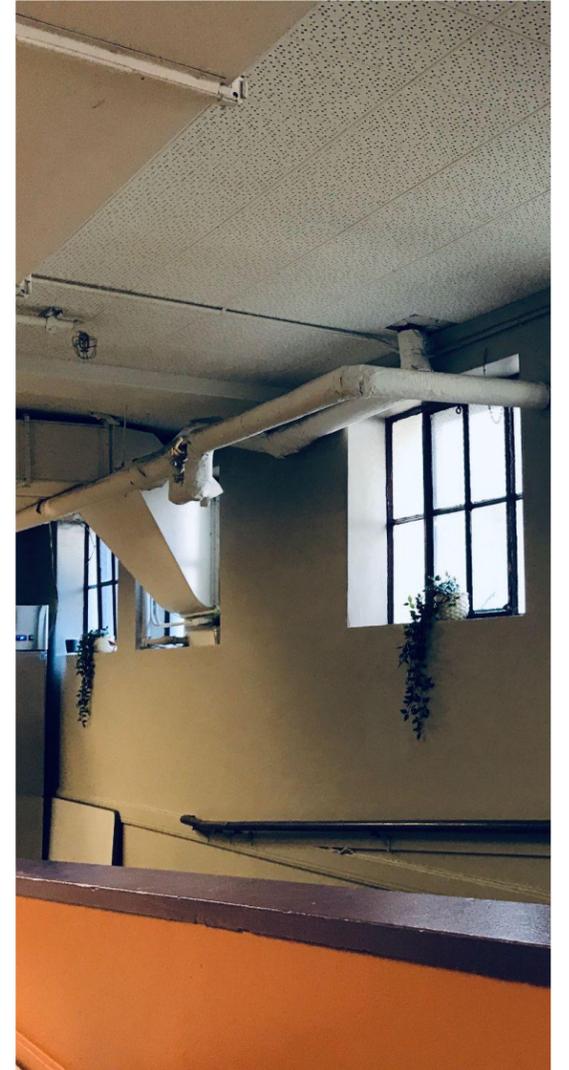
Accessibility



Finishes



Egress/Safety



Design Concept

Veterans Memorial Building

Seismic Improvements: Building Performance Objective for New Buildings Plus

Approach: The City's Public Works Department recommends a seismic upgrade for the Veterans Memorial Building to the level of Building Performance Objective for New Buildings Plus (BPON+).

At this level of seismic retrofit, the building would be reoccupied several months to a year after a major seismic event.

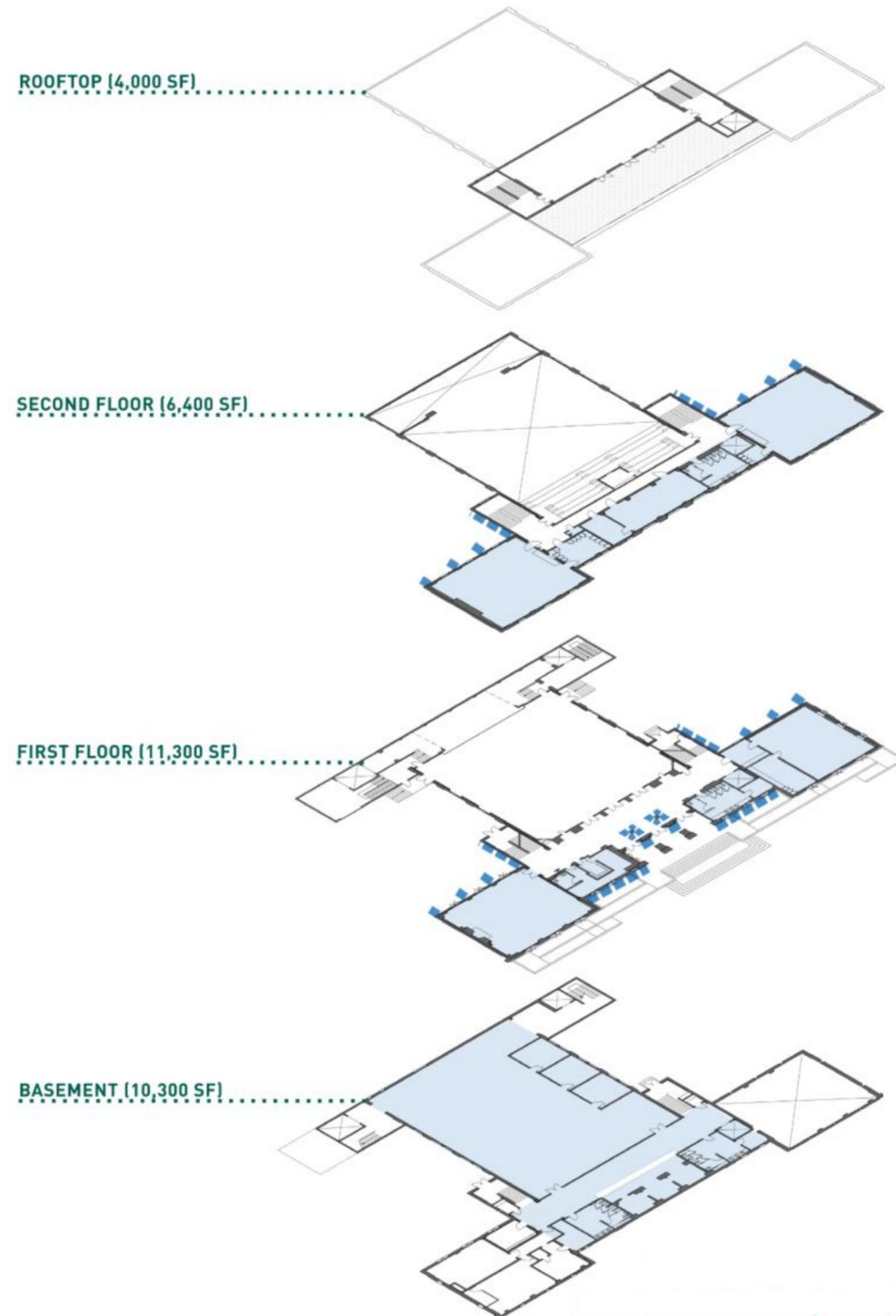
Discussion: Improving the building to the level of BPON+ will provide a low risk of injury in a major seismic event. After such an event, there may be some localized structural damage that would require repairs prior to re-opening. This level of improvement is above code required minimums, providing additional protection to the historic asset.

As part of the 2020 Vision Plan, the City investigated two approaches - Building Performance Objective for Existing Buildings (BPOE), and Immediate Occupancy (IO). The IO approach

represented significant cost, and the BPOE approach is a step lower than what is expected of new buildings designed to current code.

A second seismic report was submitted to City Council by Tipping Structural Engineers in August 2021, proposing a Building Performance Objective for New Building (BPON+) retrofit that addresses a lack of lateral strength and deficient strength at the roof-wall and floor-wall connections. This scheme strengthens the existing diaphragms, improves floor-to-wall and wall-to-roof connections, and reinforces select areas with shotcrete or carbon fiber.

During a specific design phase for the building, further study would be done to locate seismic improvements, including considering exterior fin buttresses at the rear, with the goal of minimizing the impact on historic finishes while optimizing performance and cost.



Preliminary Cost Ranges

Construction Costs

Preliminary construction cost ranges provided in this report are based on the March 2023 Draft Berkeley Civic Center Design Concept Report, the 2021 Civic Center Buildings Study by Tipping Structural Engineers, and guidance from the City of Berkeley Public Works Department. See Appendix A for a full list of exclusions.

	Low (x \$1,000)	High (x \$1,000)
Maudelle Shirek Building - 27,500 GSF Existing + 15,000 GSF Addition	\$ 51,200	\$ 62,600
Seismic Retrofit - Damage Control+ to near Immediate Occupancy	\$ 13,400	\$ 16,400
Envelope & Systems (Electrification, Accessibility, upgrades, finishes)	\$ 15,500	\$ 18,900
Two-story addition on West side	\$ 19,000	\$ 23,200
PVs at new addition, panels & infrastructure	\$ 600	\$ 800
Site Improvement & Utilities	\$ 2,700	\$ 3,300
Veterans Memorial Building - 28,000 GSF Existing + 5,950 GSF Addition	\$ 26,300	\$ 36,900
Seismic Retrofit - Building Performance Objective for New Buildings	\$ 6,300	\$ 7,700
Envelope & Systems (Electrification, Accessibility, upgrades, finishes)	\$ 15,800	\$ 19,400
New Addition at Stage	\$ 2,900	\$ 3,500
Roof Terrace (in high range only)	(excluded)	\$ 4,600
PVs at new addition, panels & infrastructure	\$ 500	\$ 700
Site Improvement & Utilities	\$ 800	\$ 1,000
Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park & Streets	\$ 16,470	\$ 20,130
Paths/paving, planting/irrigation, new trees/tree protection, utilities	\$ 14,670	\$ 17,930
Site Improvements to 2180 Milvia entry, VMB entry, restrooms	\$ 1,800	\$ 2,200
ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS	\$ 93,970	\$119,630
+ Construction Contingency (10%)	\$ 9,783	\$ 11,957
TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS	\$103,753	\$131,587

Other City Costs

Leading up to and during construction, the City will incur costs related to technical studies, existing conditions, design, planning approvals, permitting and management, to name a few. These costs will be further refined in future efforts as more is defined about review process, design requirements and parameters, funding and financing, and timeline.

	Low (x \$1,000)	High (x \$1,000)
Other City Costs (estimated at 20% of construction costs)	\$ 21,523	\$ 26,305
TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS + OTHER CITY COSTS	\$125,276	\$157,892

Operations & Maintenance Costs

Utilizing the 2023 annual Operations & Maintenance budget from the 1947 Center Street building, a \$/SF annual cost was determined for O&M at the common and occupied spaces in city-owned buildings. That was applied to the areas of the Maudelle Shirek and Veterans Memorial Building to arrive at the following annual Operations & Maintenance budgets:

Maudelle Shirek Building	\$1,234,389
Occupied Space -	\$1,167,936
Common Space -	\$ 66,453
Veterans Memorial Building	\$1,069,860
Occupied Space -	\$1,012,900
Common Space -	\$ 56,690

Berkeley Civic Center

What's Next?

Phase III Tasks - Refine the design concept for the buildings

✓ Building Documentation

Laser scan, BIM model complete

✓ Programming & Tenant Identification

Primary use for both buildings identified in Phase II
Civic Center Space Inventory

✓ Refine Design Concept

Preservation Architect and Structural Engineer engaged
Visit to site complete, document review complete

✓ Identify Funding Sources

FEMA Sub-application submitted
2026 Bond Measure under consideration



Funding Sources

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program - 10/14 Council Meeting

From: City Manager

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a letter of commitment of matching funds for a seismic Hazard Mitigation Grant application for the City of Berkeley Civic Center Project-Seismic Retrofit of MSB and VMB to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and subject to its award, to accept the grant, execute any resultant revenue agreements and amendments, accept any additional funding allocations from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), and designate the City Manager as the applicant's authorized agent. If awarded, the grant will underwrite the seismic retrofit of two historic and critical buildings in Berkeley's Civic Center, the Maudelle Shirek Building ("MSB" or "Old City Hall") and the Veterans Memorial Building ("VMB").

Next step: Cal-OES is reviewing sub-applications, will submit application to FEMA in Spring 2026

2026 Recreation and Community Facility Improvement Measures - 9/30 Council Meeting

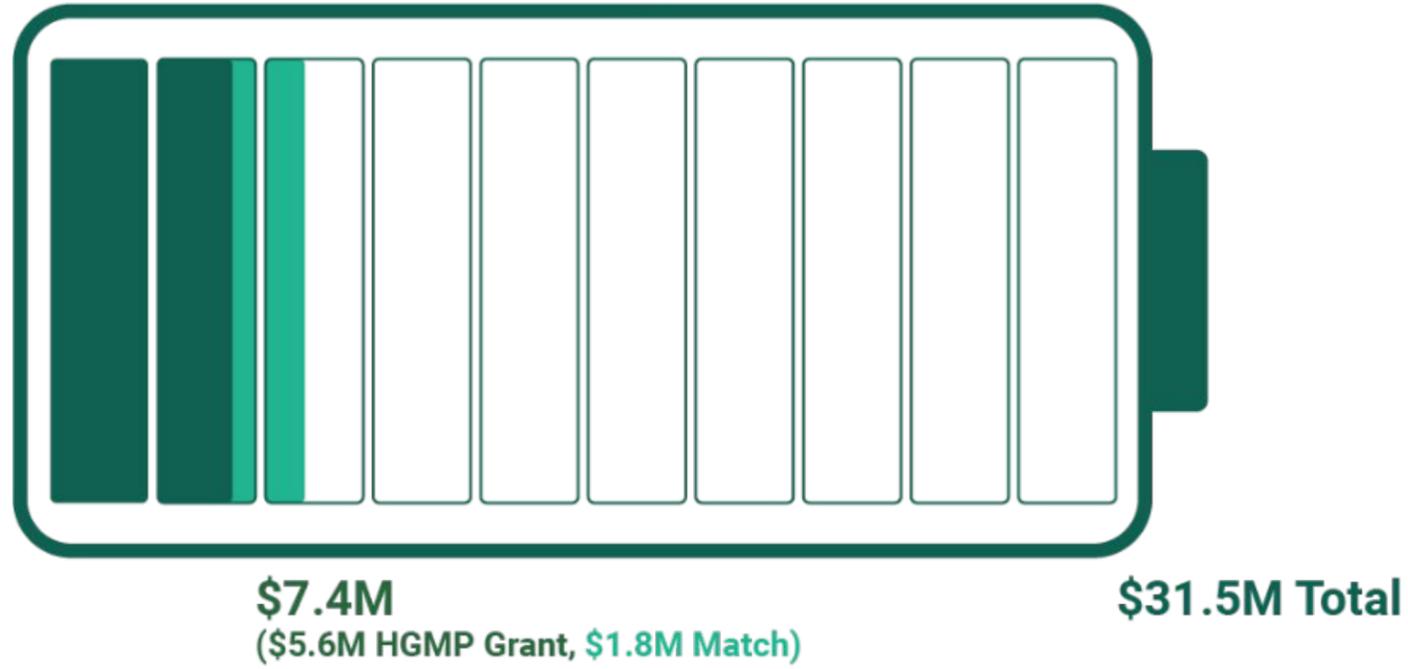
From: Councilmember Taplin (Author), Councilmember Bartlett (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Tregub (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Blackaby (Co-Sponsor)

Recommendation: Refer to the City Manager the assessment of potential revenue measures to finance capital improvements for certain recreational and community-serving city facilities that have completed the conceptual or design phase and return to the city council with recommendations for placing such measures on the November 2026 midterm election ballot.

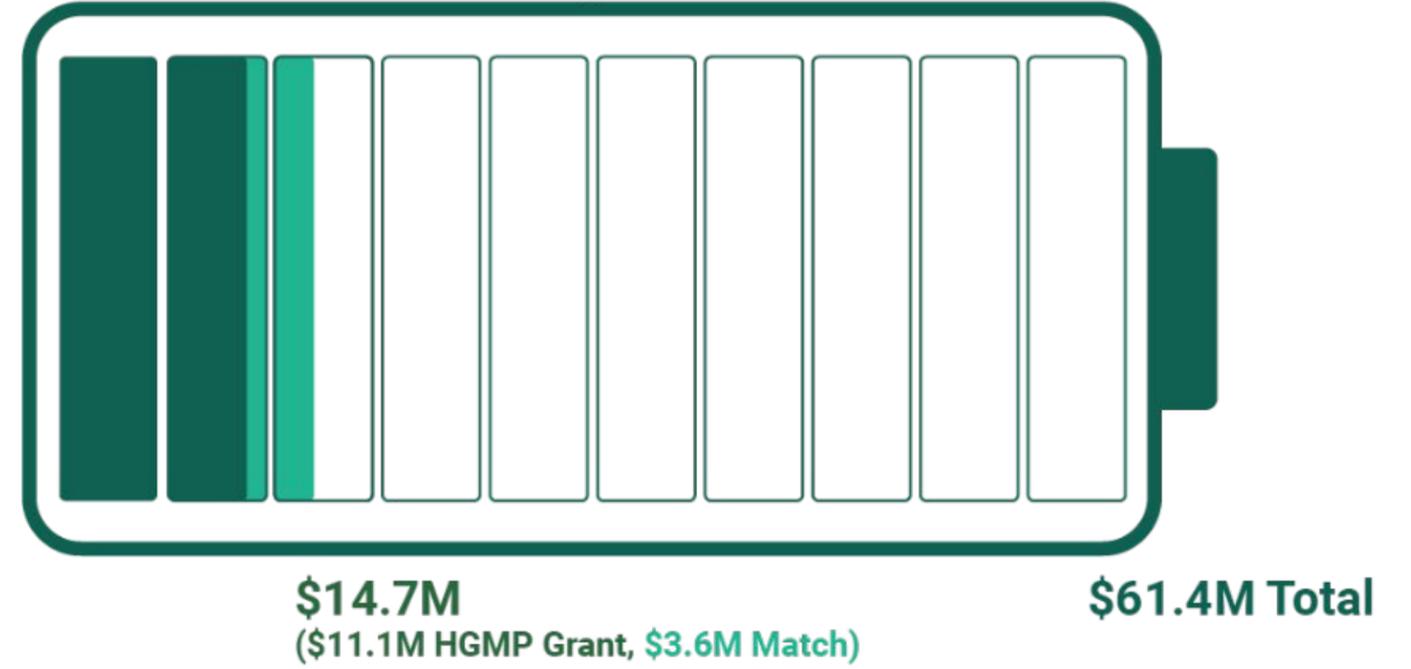
Next step: City Manager is studying the Bond Measure proposal

Funding Totals

Veterans Memorial Building



Maudelle Shirek Building



Thank you

Contact: CivicCenter@cityofberkeley.info

SIEGEL & STRAIN Architects

