



PROJECT SUMMARY

The prominent theme within Plan Baton Rouge II was to reconnect Baton Rouge with the mighty Mississippi River by establishing a connective urban core anchored by the Central Green - a network of greenspaces linking downtown's cultural and civic attractions. The redesign of City Hall Plaza fulfills a major goal of the plan by linking institutions such as the library, Old State Capitol, Shaw Center, and City Hall via a system of greenspaces including, Repentance Park, Galvez Plaza, North Boulevard Town Square, and City Hall Plaza.

The improvements to City Hall Plaza, spearheaded by Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architects, include the removal of underutilized and harsh existing hardscapes in the plaza, replacing them with a large green lawn, an elevated crushed granite promenade, and shade trees. The redesign also provides for better circulation and ADA accessibility throughout the City Hall and River Center Campus, and allows the Galvez Stage to be used from both sides by covering the opening above the parking north of the 'Crest'. City Hall is also incorporated into the City Hall Master Plan by extending a floating "porch" into the greenspace, and closer to the Galvez Stage and Crest sculpture.

DESIGN TEAM: Reed Hilderbrand LLC (Prime) - Trahan Architects, Reich Associates - Forte & Tablada - Assaf, Simoneaux, Tauzin & Associates, Inc. - Jeffrey L. Bruce & Company LLC - Water Management Consultants and Testing, Inc. - LAM Partners, Inc. – WHLC Architects.

CONTRACTOR: Arrighi Construction (Prime)

PROJECT COST: \$4.9 million

FUNDING SOURCE: State Sales Tax Rebate Funds dedicated to Riverfront Improvements

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

CONNECTIVITY

- Make Visual Connections to the River
- Develop an Urban Green to Join Surrounding Institutions and Civic Buildings
- Express the North/South Pedestrian Connection from Third Street to the River Center

CONTINUITY

- Create a New Civic Identity - The Central Green
- Transform the Existing Condition of Fragmented and Disconnected Urban Spaces into
- A Free, Open, and Continuous Space
- Develop a Consistent Vocabulary of Site Materials

FLEXIBILITY

- Allow for a Diverse Range of Use
- Provide the Opportunity for Future Program Needs
- Incorporate Principles of Sustainable Development

PERFORMANCE

- Meet Technical and Functional Requirements of Events
- Create a Durable Landscape on a Civic Scale
- Incorporate Principles of Sustainable Development

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

As City Hall Plaza is situated above two floors of parking, waterproofing and overall weight loads were of high consideration. Trees were required to be planted on the centers of the various structural garage columns as to preserve the structural integrity of the garage. Additional weight loads were kept to a minimum throughout the site using geo-foam to fill voids. The installation of pylons for the structure that covered the open area of the B1 garage directly south of the stage caused the temporary closure of the B1 parking, which required the coordinating of displaced employee parking.

SPATIAL COMPONENTS

FRONT PORCH – An elevated paved area directly adjacent to the western entrance to the City Hall building that extends the City Hall portico into the lawn; offering great views of the stage and additional space for special event programming.

UPPER PROMENADE – The western elevated portion of the plaza adjacent to Repentance Park and the St. Phillip Promenade. The promenade of decomposed granite features seating and event programming space beneath the shade of five Live Oak plantings. The area offers ideal site lines to the stage as well as Repentance Park and the rest of the Central Green.

LAWN – The nearly one half acre of irrigated lawn space located in the center of the plaza provides passive greenspace for event spectators and daily visitors to the plaza. With an engineered lawn that enables optimal drainage, the space will accommodate large crowds and heavy foot traffic. The lawn offers shade from two large red oak trees, and pathways that integrate with Repentance Park and the ‘Third Street Extension.’ The lawn concept follows a European model of design; preserving a sense of openness in its relationship with the rest of the Central Green.

DANCE FLOOR – A large ADA accessible dance floor provides plenty of paved space for spectators during concerts and other special events. It serves as the structural ‘bridge’ that covers the former opening into the B1 garage.

STAGE AREA – Fulfilling a major goal of the project, the Galvez Stage and Crest sculpture can now be used from either the south or north side. The project involved accent lighting of the Crest sculpture, a new equipment ramping configuration, and improvements to the stage’s electrical components. The stage base received a new sandblasted finished concrete surface that increases the overall height of the stage floor by 6”; improving views to the stage from the new City Hall Plaza as well as from Galvez Plaza and Town Square.

AMENITIES – Beyond plenty of open programmable space, the plaza features a sound system for public address and ambient music, fixed and movable seating, a cable trench for sound wiring, pole lighting, and improved ADA accessibility.



CITY HALL PLAZA

The renovation of City Hall Plaza removed the underutilized and harsh existing hardscapes in the plaza, and replaced them with a large green lawn and shade trees. The redesign provides better ADA accessibility and circulation throughout the City Hall and River Center Campuses. The new design allows the Galvez Stage to be used from both sides by covering the opening above the B-1 parking spaces south of the Galvez Stage, and creating an open greenspace that allows views and access from the north and south sides of the stage. The City Hall Master Plan expands the footprint of the western entrance to the City Hall building by extending a “front porch” into the greenspace; allowing elevated views of the stage and additional space for public events.