

08/14/14

On July 18, 2014 the Portland Planning and Urban Development Department issued a report presenting various options for the future of Congress Square. Three redesign scenarios were outlined with basic rule of thumb cost estimates. On 8/4/14 the City Council passed order 34-14/15 directing the Congress Square Redesign Study Group to evaluate two of the options.

Option 1: The existing footprint of Congress Square Park without an event room.  
Option 2: Event room with a Public Park over the event room.

This memo seeks to further refine the estimated cost of the two options by using cost information provided by the construction and design firms involved with similar completed projects.

**Option 1 -- The 14,000 SF existing park without an event room.**

Example 1: Post Office Park , Portland

A good estimate can be derived from the cost of the last urban park to be built in Portland. Post Office Park was a city-owned parking lot that was completely reconstructed as a successful park in 1992.

Post Office Park in Portland

Cost (adjusted to 2014 dollars) -- \$613,191

Cost per SF -- \$89 per SF

Cost to demo and rebuild Congress Square Park from scratch based on Post Office Park at \$89/sq ft -- \$1,250,000

The cost could be higher or lower than Post Office Park depending on the level of construction and amenities included. If the construction is only an upgrade, similar to Fort Allen Park, the cost would likely be lower. Further the upgrades could be done in stages. However, \$1.25 M should be a good average estimate based on a known park in Portland.

## **Option 2 -- An event room with a Public park on the roof:**

Example 1, An elevated grass roof on top of a building:

At the July 21 st workshop, City staff used the Hypar Pavilion at Lincoln Center as an example for option 2. Hypar Pavilion is a one story building with an elevated grass roof.

Diller Scofidio +Renfro Studio, the firm responsible for the design of the Hypar Pavilion with the grass roof, advised us that the structure is about 12,000 SF and includes a 7,200 SF roof lawn. The roof lawn uses 4” of soil for grass and has no trees, shrubs, flowers, planters, etc. The total construction cost for the building was \$15,600,000. This cost did not include any interior buildout costs or elevator to access the grass roof.

Building cost -- \$1,300 per SF.

The cost of a comparable 10,000 SF building with only a grass roof in Congress Square -- \$13,000,000.

Example 2, Ground level park on top of a structure.

A good example of a park on top of a structure (a below grade, 7 level parking garage) is the Norman B. Leventhal Park at Post Office Square in Boston. Leventhal Park is at ground level and contains many of the same features and amenities that the Portland community expressed a desire for during the City’s public visioning process in September 2013, such as shade trees & green space, art, movable furniture & benches, outdoor dining, water feature, and programmable space.

The construction of this park required 3.5 feet of top soil to accommodate the trees and shrubs. The structural building modifications to support this amount of soil, people, plantings and activities would require a structure rated for a loading of 500 lb per SF not the normal roof of 50 lb per SF.

Cost of structural building modifications -- an additional \$200 per SF. added to the normal building cost (This cost was supplied by both LeMessure Consulting of Boston and Mohlin and Co.of Saco , companies that have designed buildings with roofs built for 500 lb per SF loading)

Cost of building the park alone -- \$200 per SF. (This cost was supplied by Halvorson Design of Boston , the Landscape Architects and Urban Designers responsible for the Norman B. Leventhal Park)

Combined cost of building the Leventhal Park over a structure --\$400 per SF (This does not include the cost of building the sunken garage or design cost)

Note: Norman B. Leventhal Park is not an elevated space therefore did not require any additional access and the landscaping was done at ground level. The landscaping cost for an elevated park similar to Leventhal Park would be at least \$50 per SF more than a ground level park

Based on these comps, the cost for an elevated park in Congress Square built on top of a one-story event room is at least \$4,500,000 for the upgraded building structure and landscaping alone. This **does not include** the cost of the event room itself or any additional cost for the required access to the park.

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Example #1



Hypar Pavilion at Lincoln Center

Example #2



Norman B. Leventhal Park at Post Office Square in Boston