

STAR LIGHT

STARLIGHT SQUARE 2020

PROJECT INFORMATION + TIMELINE



Central Square



TEAM

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Michael Monestime, Executive Director, Central Square Business Improvement District

Nina Berg, Creative Director, Central Square Business Improvement District, partner at Flagg Street Studio

Matthew Boyes-Watson, partner at Flagg Street Studio

Mark Boyes-Watson, architect and principal at Boyes-Watson Architects

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Kim Massenburg, Executive Director, Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House

Eryn Johnson, Executive Director, Community Art Center

Darrin Korte, Executive Director, Cambridge Community Center

Kathryn Fenneman, Executive Director, Tutoring Plus of Cambridge

Gary Strack, owner, Brick and Mortar

Reverend Ellis I. Washington, St. Paul AME Church

Peter Dimuro, Artistic Creative Director, The Dance Complex

Cathy Carr Kelly, Executive Director, Central Square Theater

Cassie Chapados, Production Manager, Central Square Theater

PUBLIC ART CURATION

Liza Quiñonez and Victor “Marka27” Quiñonez, Street Theory

INSTALLATION PARTNERS

Commonwealth Scaffolding

Boston Building Wraps

High Output

United Rigging and Scaffolding

Suffolk Construction

Contraire Studio

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Starlight would not be possible without the support of Cambridge City Manager Louis A. DePasquale and the collaboration of City of Cambridge Departments including Traffic, Parking, and Transportation, Community Development, Finance, Public Works, Inspectional Services, and the License Commission.

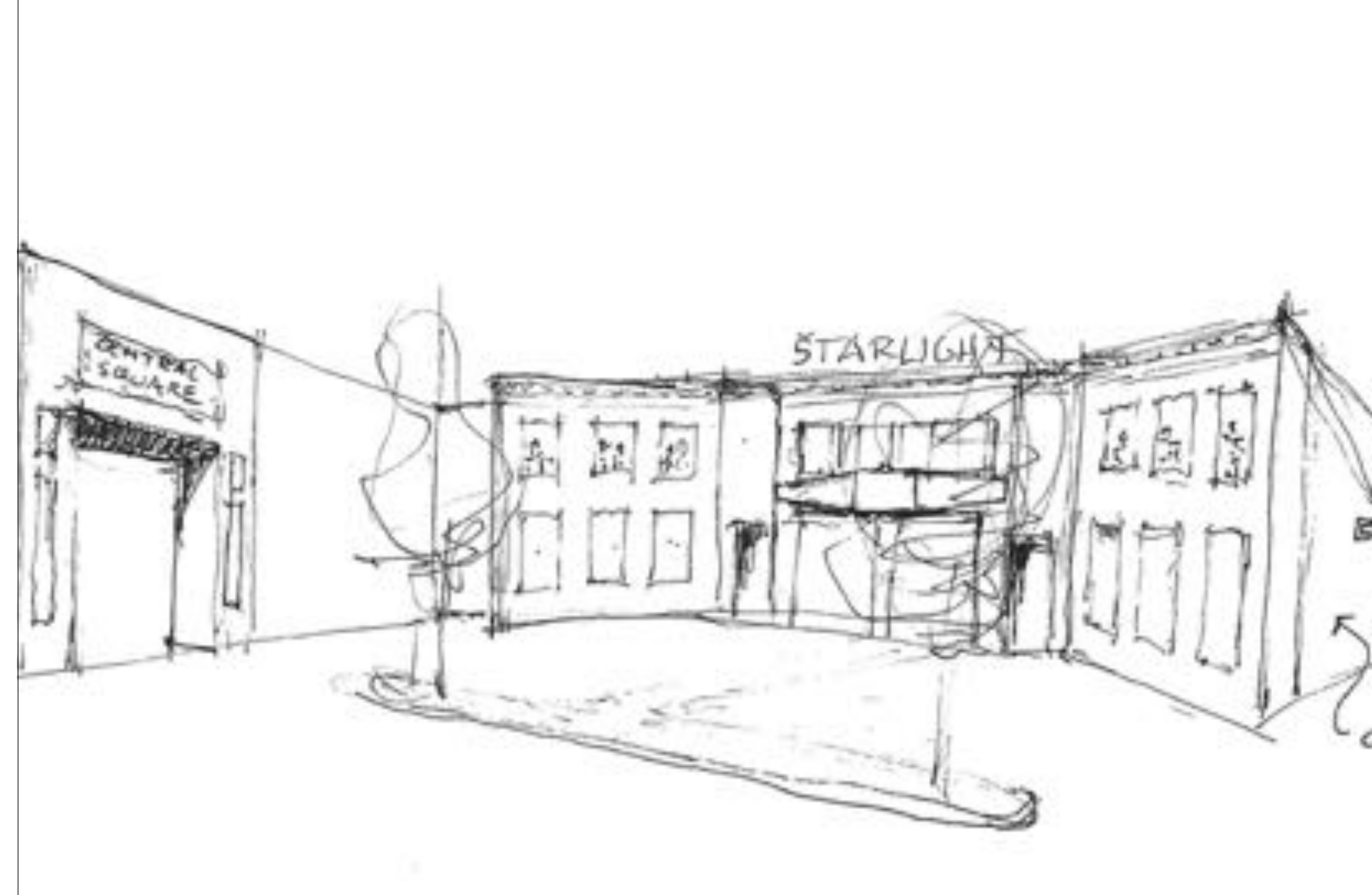
Our sincere thanks to Joe Barr, Brooke McKenna, Matt Nelson, Owen O’Riordan, Iram Farooq, Melissa Peters, Ranjit Singanayagam, Nicole Murati Ferrer, Nancy Glowa, Sean Mckendry, Arthur Goldberg, and all of their staff.

PROJECT HISTORY

Starlight Square is a temporary intervention created by the Central Square Business Improvement District, Flagg Street Studio, and Boyes-Watson Architects in collaboration with many community partners. It transforms City-owned land into public space, a parking lot for cars into a place for people. Designed and constructed during the COVID-19 crisis, Starlight builds capacity within the Central Square community for outdoor performance, commerce, learning, dining, and healing, creating safe space for the essential parts of our daily life to happen outdoors.

Before the pandemic, however, this idea was pitched as something much simpler. Still using scaffolding and scrim, the Flagg and BWA teams imagined using a portion of Lot 5 to create a square in the Square, a civic commons in the heart of the city.

In the last year, most notably during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Flagg, BID, and BWA teams have advanced the original idea to meet the scale of the crisis. Continue reading to see the project timeline, noting the decades' worth of city planning and participation from the Central Square community that went into this culminating effort.



Credit: Kyle Klein Photography

PROJECT TIMELINE

CITY PLANNING PRECEDENT

DECEMBER 2011

City of Cambridge publishes The Mayor's Red Ribbon Commission on the Delights and Concerns of Central Square.

"If we imagine Central Square's future as being more of what it already is, rather than trying to make it like someplace else, we can imagine a new urban planning paradigm, amplification, that accepts new uses, activities, and buildings in Central Square even as existing uses, activities, and buildings remain."

DECEMBER 2013

City of Cambridge publishes Kendall Square Central Square Planning Study Central Square Final Report.

"By virtue of its ownership of the land, municipal parking lots represent one of the City's greatest opportunities for realizing a vision we have for Central Square. We urge the City to use that leverage and explore alternate uses for the parking lots. The Committee has voiced, and has heard from residents, ideas for many possible uses, all of which add more to the Square than surface parking. These include the construction of mixed use buildings that would include housing and ground floor retail, the creation of a public market, and of more public open space. We believe that the City should explore these possibilities and aggressively consider the public-private partnerships required to bring development of the selected alternatives to fruition."

JUNE 2019

City of Cambridge publishes Envision Cambridge: A Plan for the Future of the City.

"Carry out public realm improvements to support placemaking in Cambridge's commercial districts and corridors."

CREATING A SQUARE WITHIN A SQUARE

JUNE 10, 2019

Cambridge City Council unanimously votes to approve the formation of the Central Square Business Improvement District (CSBID). Led by Executive Director Michael Monestime, the BID launches with a placekeeping mission.

At public comment, Peter Valentine imagines Starlight Square.

JUNE 16, 2019

Flagg Street Studio (FSS) pitches Central Square BID on a "Square in the Square" pilot.

AUGUST - NOVEMBER 2019

Flagg continues design and development of a Square in the Square.

NOVEMBER 16, 2019

CSBID and Flagg reconvene to review new plans for summer 2020 opening of a Square in the Square.

MARCH 9, 2020

CSBID and Flagg present final plans for a Square in the Square to City of Cambridge's Special Events Committee, and are provisionally approved.

GLOBAL PANDEMIC INSPIRES STARLIGHT

MARCH 10, 2020

Governor Charlie Baker declares a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in response to COVID-19 pandemic.

MARCH 15, 2020

Governor Charlie Baker issues an emergency order limiting gatherings to 25 people and prohibiting on-premises consumption of food or drinks at bars and restaurants, beginning on March 17. This closed all cultural venues in the state.

MARCH 16, 2020

City of Cambridge closes all offices and cancels all events and programs until further notice.

Strategic scramble to reimagine a Square in the Square in the context of COVID-19. Conclusion: go bigger, go bolder. Quick to build, quick to impact.

MAY 22, 2020

CSBID, Flagg, and BWA re-present a Square in the Square as Starlight Square to Louis A. DePasquale, Cambridge City Manager, Joseph Barr, Assistant City Manager, Traffic, Parking, and Transportation, Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager, Community Development, David Kale, Assistant City Manager, Finance, and Owen O'Riordan, Department of Public Works Commissioner.

JUNE 10, 2020

Through Executive Order by Cambridge City Manager Louis A. DePasquale, use of Lot 5 is granted to the Central Square Business Improvement District for 120 days beginning July 15, 2020.

Jubilance. Blinders. BID, Flagg, and BWA teams buckle down for sprint design and development phase and fundraising effort. Weekly design charrettes are convened remotely with Cultural Partners, Community Center partners, F&B partners, and Construction partners.

JULY 15, 2020

CSBID, Flagg, and BWA begin transformation of Municipal Lot 5.

- ◆ **AUGUST 8, 2020**
Starlight slated to open to the public.
- ◆ **OCTOBER 31, 2020**
Closing Ceremony for Starlight Square.
- ◆ **NOVEMBER 1, 2020**
Scaffolding and scrim disassembled.
- ◆ **NOVEMBER 15, 2020**
Municipal Lot 5 returned to existing condition.





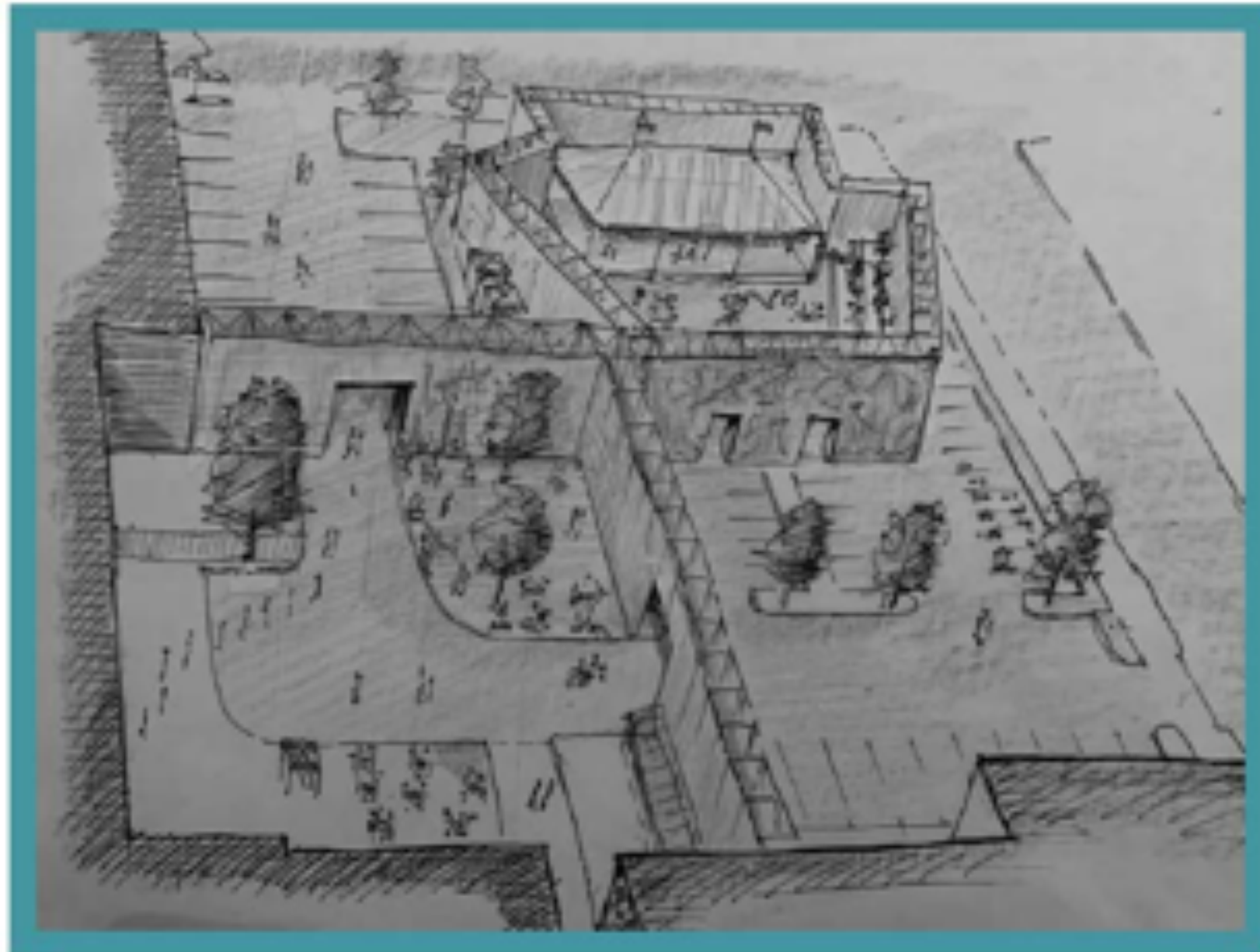
Problem: It is no longer safe to be inside

We are at a pivotal moment as a city, Commonwealth, and country, navigating the coronavirus pandemic in the midst of a civil rights movement.



Solution: A city-sponsored public space

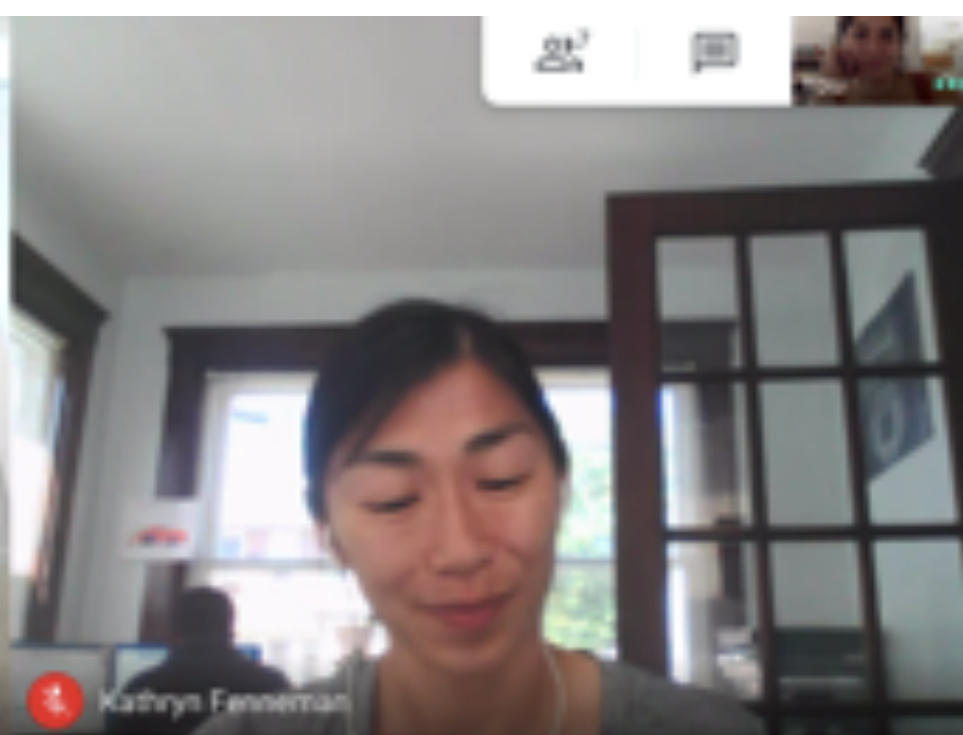
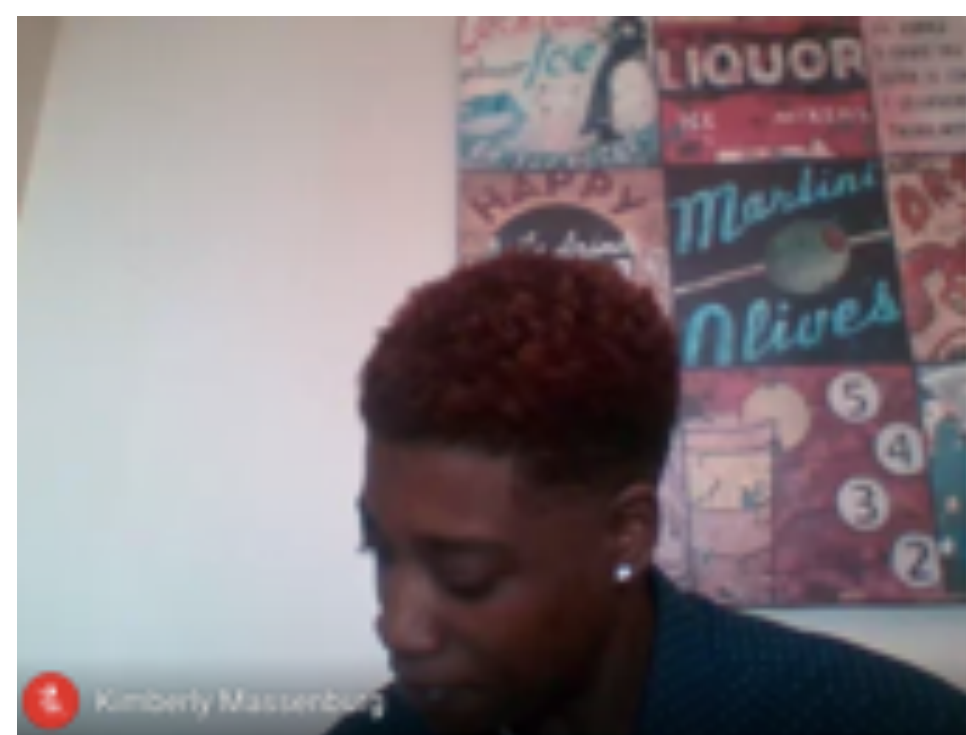
Outside is where economic recovery and healing will happen. Starlight is a temporary intervention that transforms city-owned land into public space.



INTENTION

Ensure the survival of Central Square's Cultural District anchors (arts institutions and youth non-profits) through shelter-in-place mandate and Governor Baker's phased reopening plan.















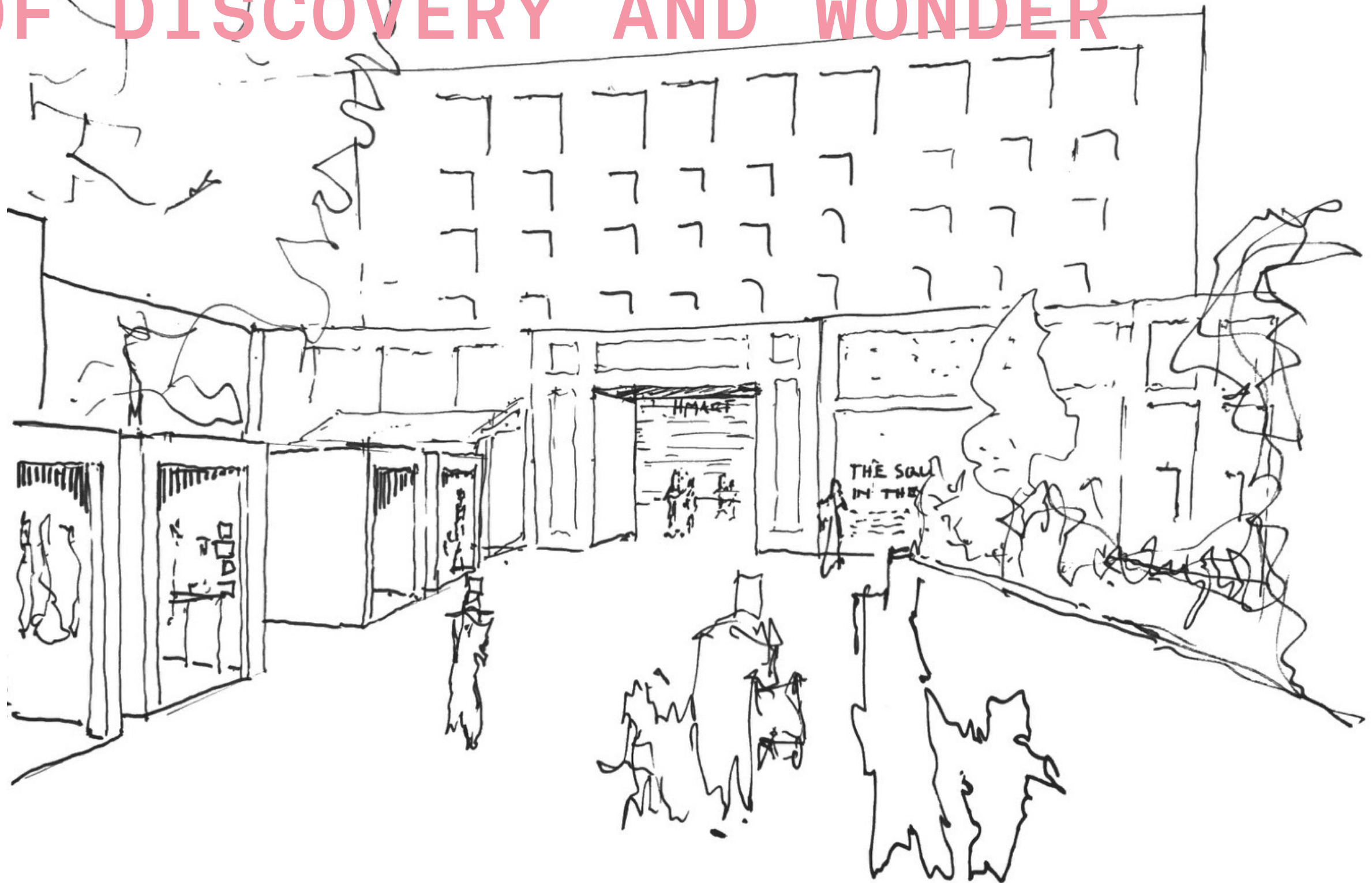


100 DAYS OF
PERFORMANCE
LEARNING
DIALOGUE
HEALING





CREATE A DESTINATION OF DISCOVERY AND WONDER



HIGHLIGHT LOCAL MAKERS









STAR LIGHT



Central Square

