

## **COHEN PLAZA--** *Soon to be revitalized at St. Paul's City Hall/County Courthouse*



Current plaza designed in 1991

Cohen Plaza is located at Wabasha St. and Kellogg Blvd., overlooking the river.

Cohen Plaza will be designed as a vibrant, welcoming public plaza that honors former Mayor, Commissioner, and Chief Judge Larry Cohen.

The City and the County passed resolutions to create Cohen Plaza. Project funding is from public and private donors.

The plaza will reflect Cohen's belief that diverse citizenship adds vitality and richness.

Three concepts are shown here for your review.

Your feedback is welcome at this link:

[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/VPFKKL](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/vpfkkl)

# WHO WAS LARRY COHEN?

Larry Cohen held the three highest positions in local government. He was:

**Chief of Ramsey County Commissioners**

**Mayor of Saint Paul**

**Chief Judge of Ramsey County District Court.**

Mayor Cohen gave voice to neighborhoods by creating St. Paul's 17 District Councils. He was the first mayor to require affirmative action, and to integrate the city's work force. Mayor Cohen helped save the Landmark Center.

Judge Cohen created court interpreter programs for people who do not speak English, and a restorative justice system that works to end violence. To serve the Hmong, he created sentencing circles where all parties talk together to agree on a sentence, applying First Nations tribal justice methods.

Judge Cohen spread sunshine, used humor, and always asked,

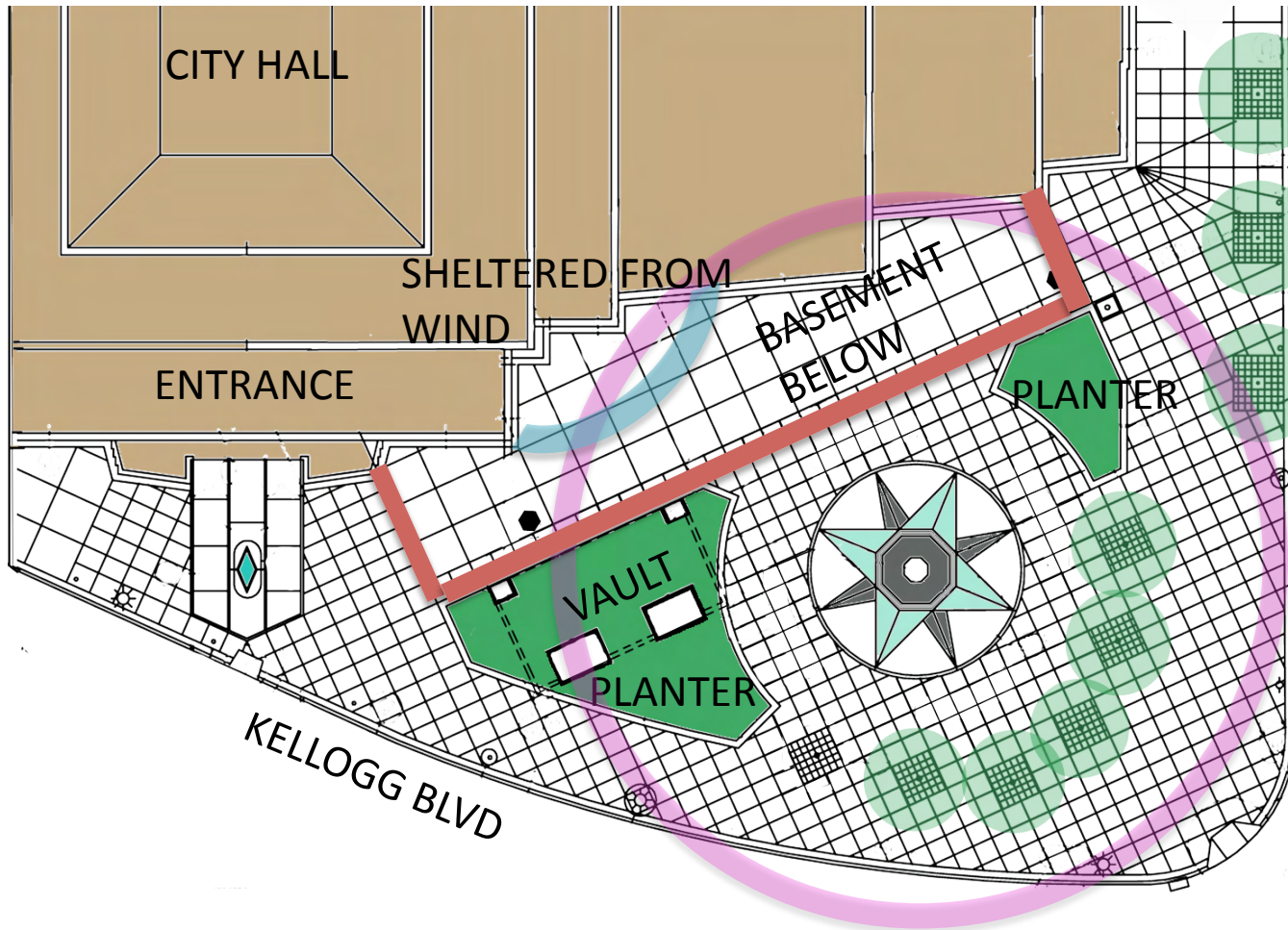
***"How can I make this better?"***

***Then he DID make it better.***



# WHAT IS THE SITE LIKE?

- It faces south, is windy and sunny.
- A basement and vault lie below.
- 100' tall flagpole is in the center.
- Two large black granite planters were built in 1991.



***THERE ARE THREE CONCEPTS TO CONSIDER,  
AND WE WANT YOUR INPUT!***

[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/VPFKTKL](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/vpfkttl)

- 1. YOU ARE WELCOME***
- 2. SOLAR RADIANCE***
- 3. CIRCLE OF DOVES AND LIGHT***

Each concept uses the flag pole as the center of a circular scheme.

The flag pole is our symbol of democracy, and democracy deserves our respect. The 100'-tall flag pole is centered in the plaza.

The circle played an important role in Cohen's alternative justice system -- Circles of Peace.

Circles are healing forms, and a sign of inclusion and belonging.

## ***YOU ARE WELCOME*** CONCEPT

This is a circle of lawn, surrounded by a circle of relaxing chairs. Chairs beckon people to ease their burdens, and relax more than benches do.

A circle of people creates a sense of unity, equality, and community.

Cohen worked hard to make all people feel welcome.

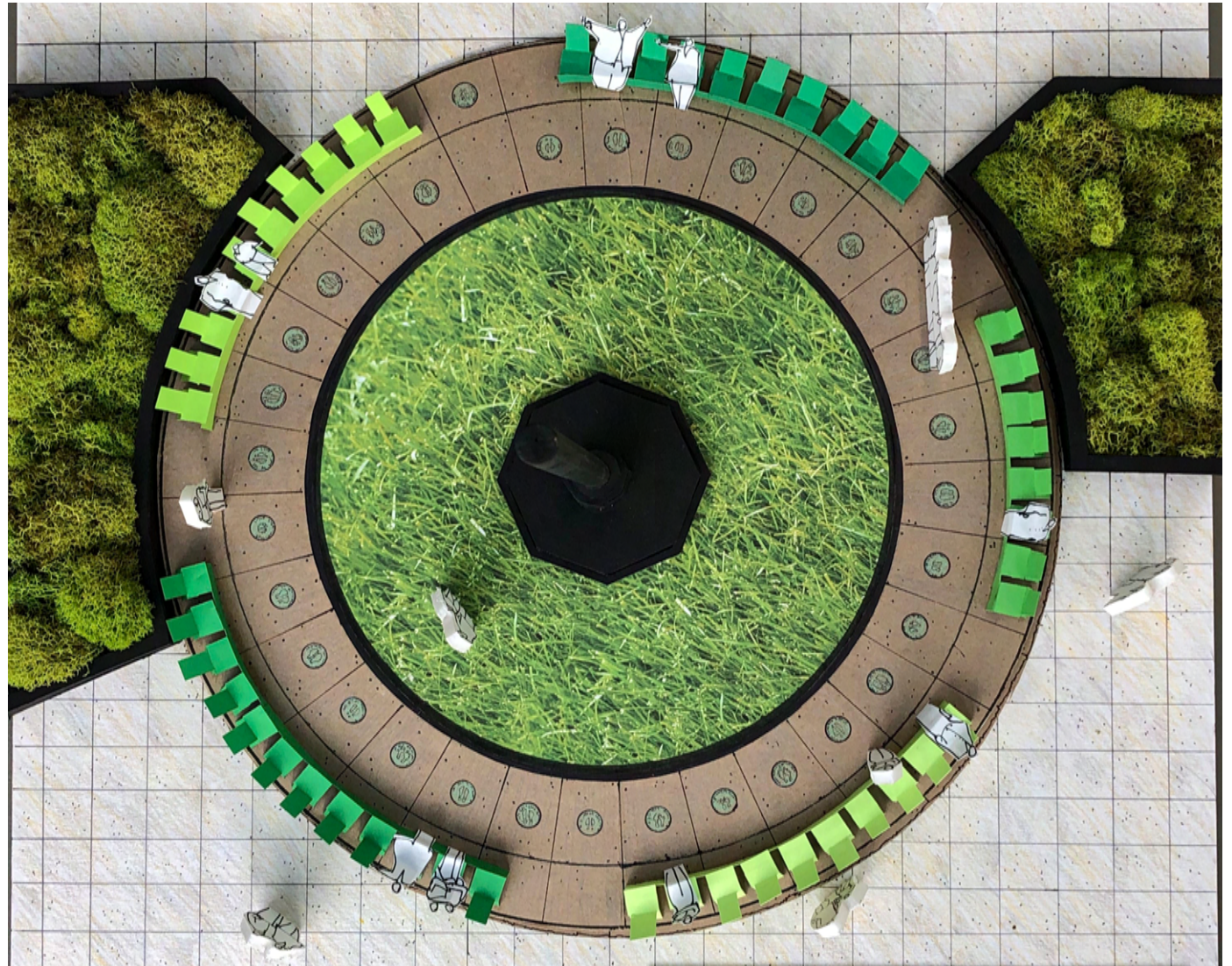
To honor Cohen, the plaza should be welcoming to all cultures.



# ***YOU ARE WELCOME*** CONCEPT

The aerial view shows a circular lawn added around the flagpole to soften the plaza.

The small circles in front of chairs are plaques in the pavement that share Cohen's sense of ethics.



## ***COHEN'S ETHICS: A JOURNEY IN HIS FOOTSTEPS***

Can we follow in Cohen's footsteps? Can we fit into his shoes?

Circular plaques in the plaza floor contain ethical beliefs Cohen practiced. You are invited to step into his footsteps and consider your own outlook on life.

Here are some examples of Cohen's ethical beliefs that guided his career as Mayor, Commissioner, and Judge.

- I build bridges between people.
- I seek fairness
- I make time to listen
- I love to learn
- I am brave and try new solutions
- I see potential in others
- I am an acute observer
- I am inclusive



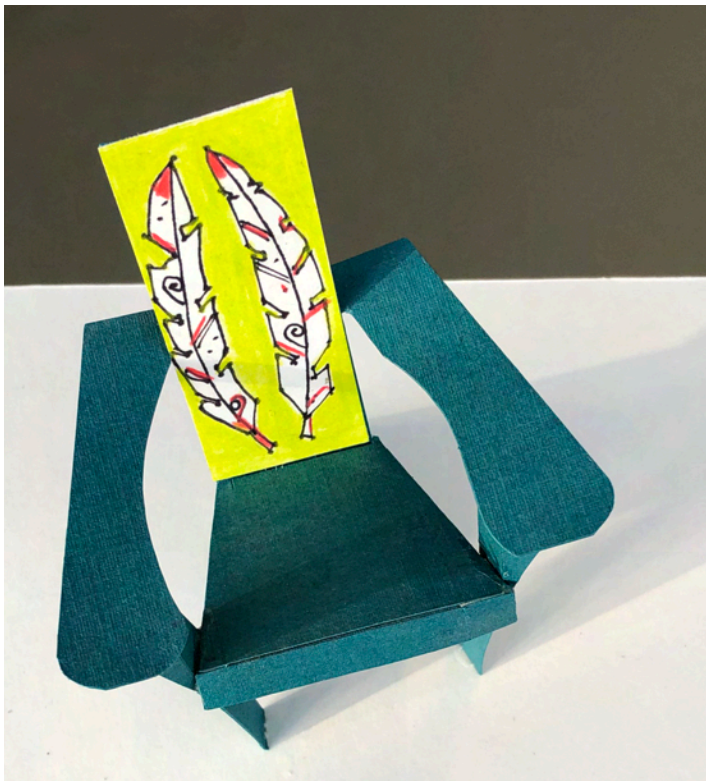
## ***YOU ARE WELCOME*** CONCEPT

The Welcome Concept offers opportunities to engage artists from many cultures.

This scheme creates a circular outdoor gallery of artist-painted chairs.

Selected artists might comment on cultural pride, social justice, immigration, or ?

Chairs could be auctioned off annually to keep the program going.



Target's "Moore Polywood Chair", \$200  
Measurements: 32.25" high x 30.25" wide x 32.25" deep



## **SOLAR RADIANCE** CONCEPT

This scheme focuses on a pavement design that celebrates the sun. The pavement design includes symbols from artists of many cultures that will collaborate to create a giant sun.

Cohen exuded warmth and good will.

People felt “sunshine” when he entered the room.

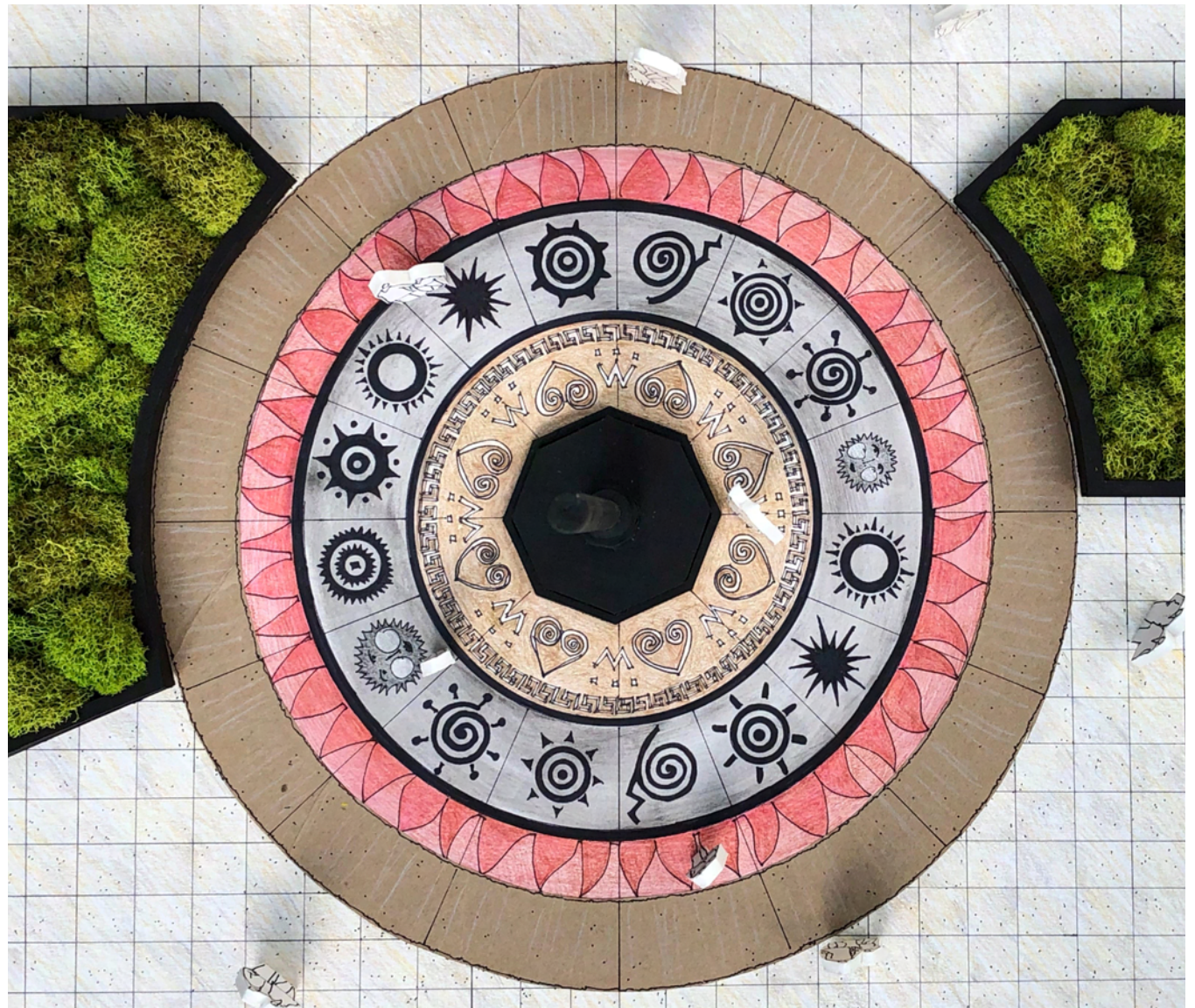
Cohen’s energy made people grow strong, like the sun’s energy.



# **SOLAR RADIANCE** CONCEPT

The aerial view shows there is a lot of flexible space for rallies, events.

All the “art” is on the plaza floor, and it is permanent and unchanging.



## **SOLAR RADIANCE** CONCEPT

This scheme might be accompanied by a vertical sun sculpture with an oculus, drawing eyes to the sky.

Sun passing through the oculus would create patterns and colors on the ground.

Movement can be incorporated into the sculpture.



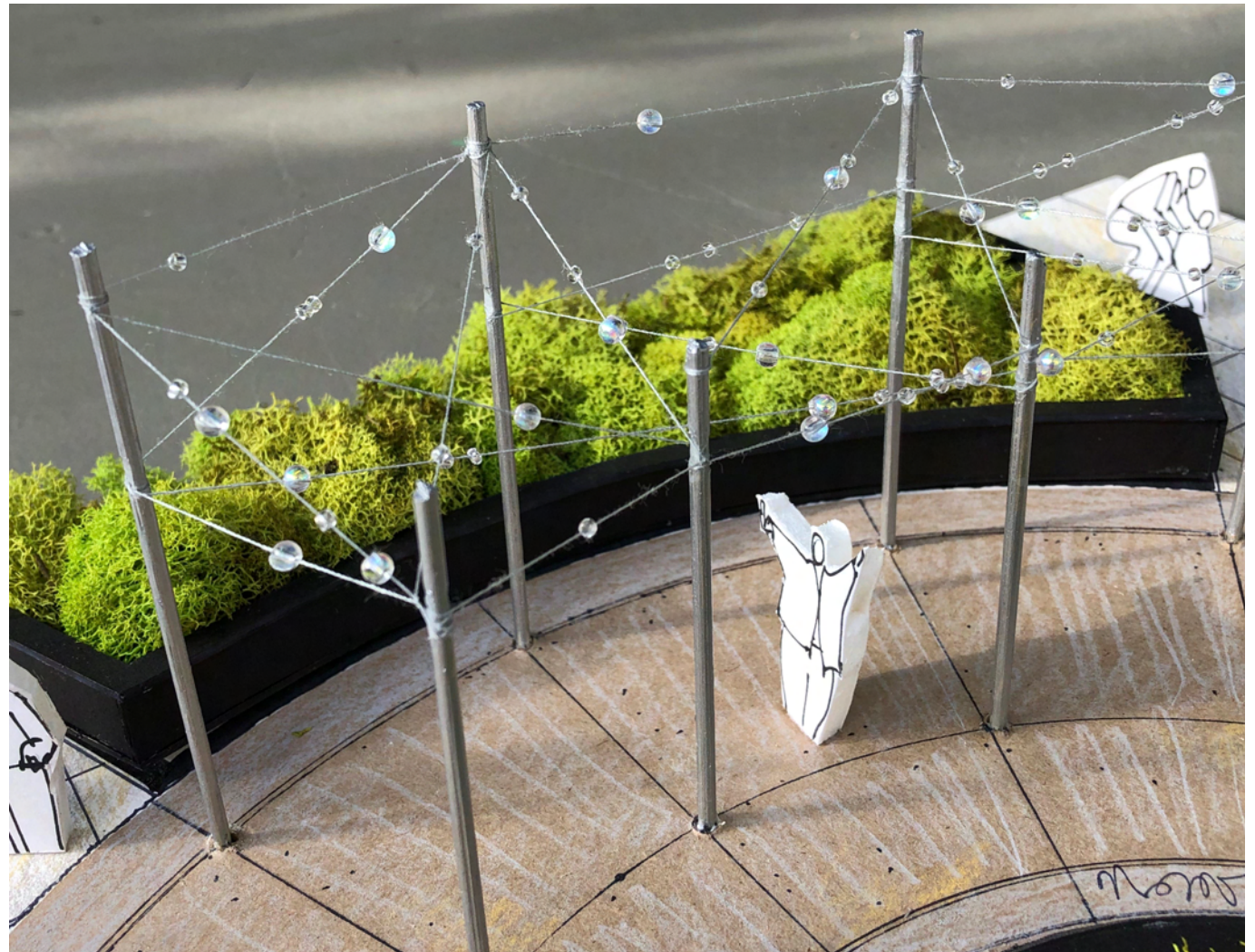
## **CIRCLE OF DOVES AND LIGHT CONCEPT**

This concept embraces visitors with an overhead circle of “doves” and light to embrace and dazzle visitors.

Cohen worked for peace and enlightenment in our community.

Doves symbolize peace, as does the circular form.

This scheme makes the plaza more intimate with a subtle sense of overhead enclosure.



## **CIRCLE OF DOVES AND LIGHT CONCEPT**

Abstract doves on cables (represented here by beads on string) gleam and flutter, drawing your eyes up.

Vertical stainless steel posts recall the gleaming mullions of the building.

Plantings surround the flagpole to soften the plaza.

Quotes can be engraved on posts and pavements.

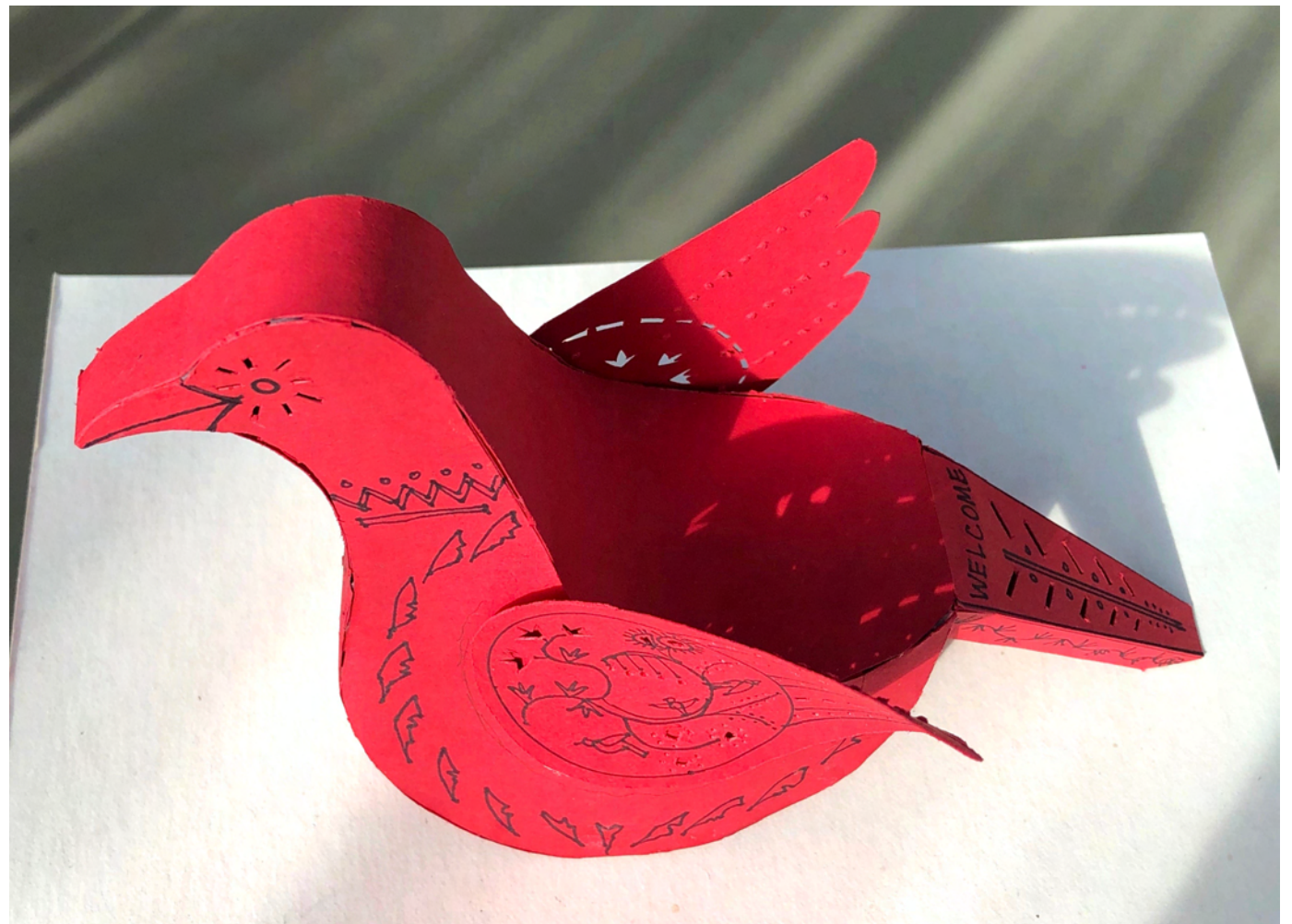


## **CIRCLE OF DOVES AND LIGHT** CONCEPT

Dove chairs are scattered across the plaza to offer fun seating opportunities. You sit upon the dove's back facing the tail in a laid-back sitting position.

Artists of diverse backgrounds would create perforated designs in the metal chairs to tell cultural stories.

At night, the chairs will be lit from inside to become lanterns upon the plaza floor.



## **CIRCLE OF DOVES AND LIGHT CONCEPT**

Here is an example-- “Brilliance” by Creative Machines-- that shows how light emerges from perforations to cast color onto the plaza floor.

You can see that type and symbols can be cut into the steel to create meaningful stories.

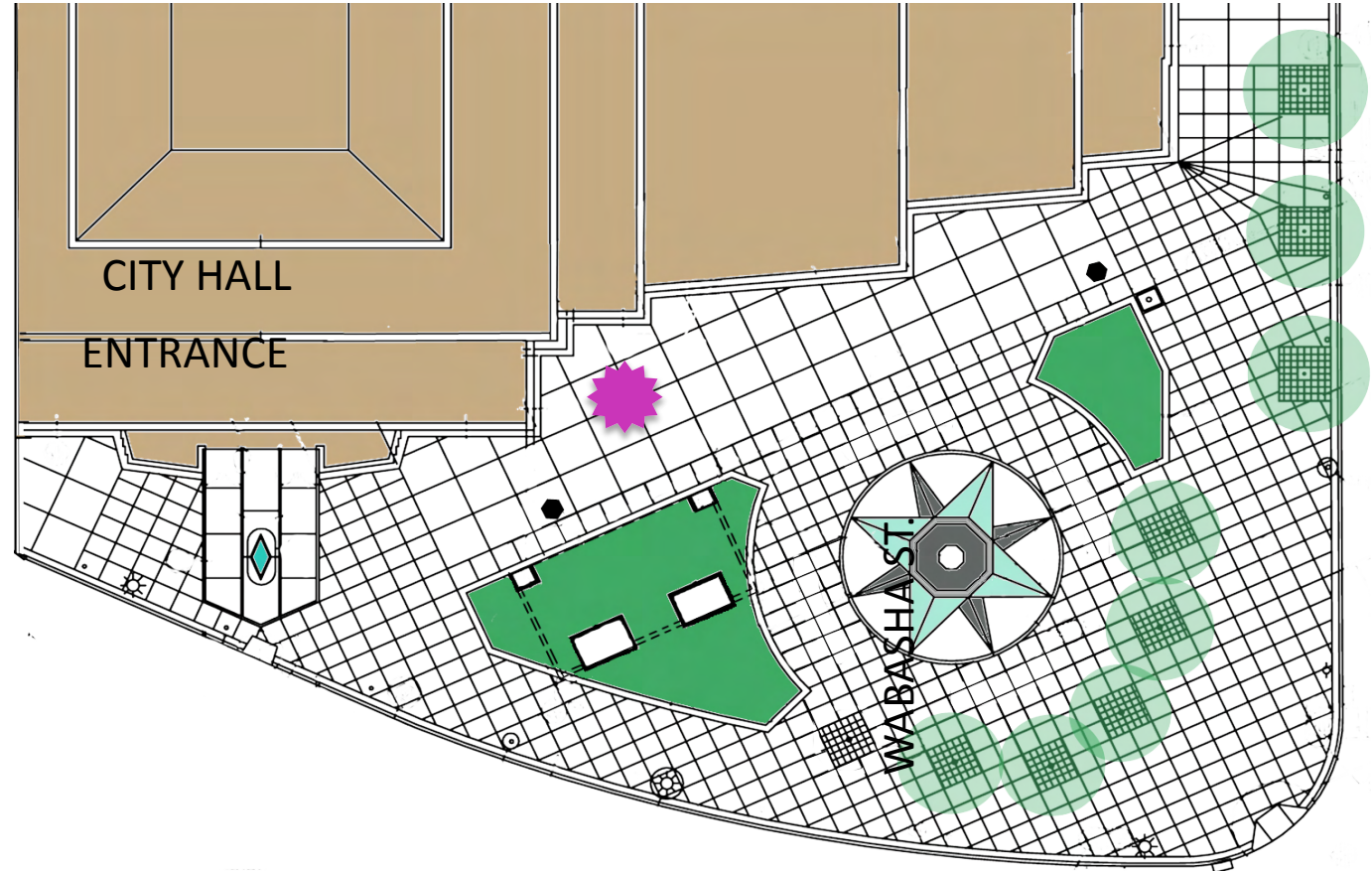


# ***IN EVERY CONCEPT WILL BE A MEMORIAL SCULPTURE***

An intimately-scaled sculpture will memorialize Larry Cohen's legacy, and share some of his stories.

The design of this memorial will evolve after a single concept for the plaza is selected. Many options are being explored at this time.

The general area identified for this sculpture is the pink star.





# **WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE COHEN PLAZA CONCEPTS?**

These are not finished plans, but ideas that will develop and change.

One concept will move forward to get further developed.

It might be one of the three concepts shown, *or*  
*it might re-combine elements to make a revised concept.*

***And your feedback*** might lead to a totally new concept! Please leave your comments by using this link:

[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/VPFKTKL](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/vpfkttl)

Please reply by Sunday, February 23.

***Thank you!***