



REFLECTIONS ON URBAN SPACE BY WILLIAM H. (HOLLY) WHYTE  
"What attracts people most, in sum, is other people."

# Living Plaza

## April 27, 2011

A celebration and temporary build-out of the  
1983 William H. Whyte Study of Dallas City Hall Plaza

Setup: 9:00-11:00 ♦ Lunch: 11:30-2:00 ♦ Take down: 2:00-4:00

The Dallas CityDesign Studio and The Better Block are planning a temporary installation of the City Hall Plaza improvements & programming recommendations made by William H. Whyte in his 1983 presentation to the Dallas City Council. The goal will be to help activate the plaza and engage city staff in a discussion about urbanism and how great public spaces increase quality of life, improve safety and stimulate the economy.

### THE ISSUE

City Hall Plaza has approximately 1,700 people working right next to it, yet few people use it. Something must be done to make the plaza a more lively and better-used space.

### PROJECT

The plan is to activate the area between the Henry Moore sculpture and the pool with movable chairs and tables, a pavilion, food concessions and entertainment. The pavilion will offer visitors the opportunity to learn about the development history of City Hall and the plaza, about William H Whyte's 1983 study, and how urban design can help elevate the plaza's viability and importance in the community.

### THE PROBLEM(s)

The problems with the plaza are apparent. First, it is enormous. At just over five acres, the plaza is 2.5 times larger than Dallas' Main Street Garden and twice as large as St. Marks Square in Venice. It lacks enclosure by its surroundings, is removed from the more vibrant parts of downtown, and it is out of scale with the individual. City Hall itself does not engage the plaza well at the ground level presenting blank walls and only one entry point to/from the plaza. The plaza is hot, seating is limited, and what little seating is available is generally unprotected and uncomfortable. Lastly, without programmed space or concessions, the plaza becomes more a space for maintenance rather than people.

### PLAZA FACTS

- 5.2 acres / 226,800 total square feet ( 2.6 acres concrete, 2.0 acres green, 0.6 acres water)
- 3 flagpoles, 31 light poles, 19 concrete benches, 132 bollards, 2 -public art pieces, 495 feet of blank Wall and 65 feet of clear glazing facing the plaza· opened 1978

### JOIN IN...

acting out William H (Holly) Whyte's 1983 recommendations:

- **Staging 9:00 to 11:00** - Come help or just come watch the transformation.
- **Café / Plaza Open 11:30 to 2:00** -Bring your sack lunch or enjoy vendors with Crepes, Tamales, Fruit and more.
- **Take-Down 2:00 to 4:00** - Stay to help take down the event or just watch the time-lapse video that will document the entire process.

### COLLABORATORS

Dallas CityDesign Studio  
The Trinity Trust  
The Dallas Institute

STASH-DESIGN  
The Tamale Company  
Better Block

bc WORKSHOP  
Ruibal's Plants of Texas  
Fox & the Bird

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