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The Music Center

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**THE MUSIC CENTER GETS THE GREEN LIGHT FROM THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES TO RENOVATE
THE MUSIC CENTER PLAZA**

**– Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Approves Renovation Plan
to Create a Dynamic, Welcoming Space for All Angelenos with \$30 Million from the County
of Los Angeles and \$10 Million from The Music Center –**

LOS ANGELES (December 19, 2017) – [The Music Center](http://www.musiccenter.org) today announced approval by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors of the performing arts center’s plan to transform The Music Center Plaza into a highly accessible, welcoming outdoor urban venue in the heart of the Los Angeles Civic Center. With a new plaza, The Music Center will provide a place where Angelenos will not only gather prior to and after performances on its campus, but also come together to share new experiences in a completely refreshed venue with more programming, activities and events, and multiple foodservice options at varying price points. The new design addresses the aesthetic, functional and accessibility aspects of the plaza by updating the 53-year-old space and providing new amenities and the necessary infrastructure to appeal to even more Los Angeles County residents and visitors. This is the first renovation of the plaza since The Music Center opened in 1964. The award-winning and Los Angeles-based multidisciplinary architecture and design firm, [Rios Clementi Hale Studios](http://www.riosclementihalestudios.com), which also designed Grand Park and Grand Avenue Streetscape, and led the renovation of The Music Center’s Mark Taper Forum, is at the helm of the plaza redesign. Funding for the project includes \$30 million from the County of Los Angeles and \$10 million in capital support from The Music Center; The Music Center will also raise \$5 million for free and low-cost public programming, which will take place in the new space.

“We are grateful to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and to our many donors and funders for their support for this critically important project to renovate one of the county’s crown jewels,” said Lisa Specht, chair, The Music Center Board of Directors. “Once again, much like in the early days of The Music Center, a public-private partnership is making it possible to realize the dream of creating a place where people can enjoy free programming and the opportunity to share and delight in new experiences,” she added.

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According to Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, the renovation of The Music Center Plaza will create a destination that appeals to even more Angelenos within the diverse communities of Los Angeles County. “This new plaza will become a much-sought-after gathering space – Los Angeles’s town square – for all of our county residents,” Supervisor Solis said. “This warm and inviting space builds upon our collective desire to make the arts both inclusive and accessible while extending a welcoming message: this is everyone’s Music Center.”

With a new plaza, The Music Center effectively adds a true front door for The Music Center and a fifth venue to its campus. The plan calls for the widening and flattening of The Music Center’s Grand Avenue pedestrian entry, adding escalators that will take guests from Grand Avenue up to the plaza, and raising the “sunken” portion of the plaza, making it possible for The Music Center and its resident companies to significantly increase free and low-cost programming with much larger capacities than currently possible. The Jacques Lipchitz-designed *Peace on Earth* sculpture, which is currently located in the center of the plaza’s fountain, will be moved due west to allow for more contiguous use of the space. In fact, the plaza design doubles the capacity of the space from 2,500 to 5,000 people.

“The new plaza is a physical manifestation of The Music Center’s commitment to access and inclusion, making it possible for us to present artists, festivals and special events that will engage audiences of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, personal resources and age,” said Rachel Moore, president and CEO of The Music Center. “We are excited about the opportunity to ensure The Music Center not only has something for everyone, but also celebrates how the arts can enrich and transform lives,” she added.

In developing the design, Rios Clementi Hale Studios paid homage to the original 1964 plaza project by landscape architecture firm Cornell, Bridgers and Troller, in association with Welton Becket, architect for The Music Center campus. Rios Clementi Hale Studios updated the space with new amenities, including five buildings – a full-service restaurant, a wine bar, a coffee house/grab-and-go, a welcome center and permanent restrooms that will replace the temporary facility currently adjacent to The Music Center’s Mark Taper Forum. These new features will enhance the guest experience when seeing a performance, participating in public programming or enjoying the plaza as a central gathering space. The design is a natural extension of the Grand Avenue Project and will greatly enhance the Grand Ave. Arts corridor. It will visually connect The Music Center to Grand Park and improve visibility to and from The Music Center, helping to leverage the synergies between two major county assets. In its design approach, Rios Clementi Hale Studios will create lush, landscaped vistas that will overlook Grand Park on the eastern end of the plaza. In addition, ADA access to the plaza will be substantially improved.

“Playing off our design experience of Grand Park and the Grand Avenue Streetscape, our objective is to redesign the plaza to create a cohesive feel throughout the space,” said Bob Hale, partner at Rios Clementi Hale Studios. “Our goal in adding these new amenities was to create a welcoming gathering place where visitors can have memorable and exciting experiences while enjoying the rich and diverse programming that is offered by The Music Center.”

According to Moore, The Music Center wanted to provide many more food options to those who visit the plaza and its theatres. “Our new full-service restaurant, Abernethy’s, will feature a rotating focus on local up-and-coming Los Angeles chefs from throughout the County who will provide food options in response to the tastes and interests of the community. The coffee bar will feature an artisanal coffee brand along with convenient, low-priced food items, while the wine bar, Mullen’s, will feature wines and cocktails created and curated by local mixologists that thematically connect to the chef’s creations at Abernethy’s,” she explained. In addition, for the first time, The Music Center will greet guests with an on-site welcome center, the Lisa Specht Welcome Center, which will provide information and personalized guidance for county residents and guests along with the many tourists who visit The Music Center every day.

Working closely with Rios Clementi Hale Studios, Matt Construction and Cumming Corporation, The Music Center conducted extensive due diligence for the plaza renovation since the county approved \$2 million for design, environmental documentation and preconstruction activities in July 2016. That work uncovered the need to increase construction costs from the original preconstruction estimate of \$30 million to \$40 million. As a result, the County agreed to increase its contribution to \$30 million, while The Music Center will increase its capital contribution to \$10 million. “We conducted extensive due diligence far beyond the standard for projects of this nature with the intent of covering all bases. That was a critical step to ensuring the total viability of small- and large-scale events at our new plaza and, therefore, the soundness of the actual projected cost for this project,” Moore said. “The timing is right for the renovation of our plaza as Los Angeles begins to ready itself for its role as host of the 2028 Olympic Games, and we anticipate the opening of the Grand Ave. Arts Metro stop,” she offered.

The Music Center has raised \$6.8 million in capital for the plaza renovation and \$2 million for programming to date. Plaza supporters include Bob Abernethy, vice chair, The Music Center; The Ahmanson Foundation; Kiki and David Gindler, board members, The Music Center; Cindy Miscikowski, vice chair, The Music Center; Peter Mullin, chairman, The Music Center Foundation and Merle Mullin; The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation; Lisa Specht, chair, The Music Center; The Blue Ribbon of The Music Center; and Marc Stern, board member, The Music Center, and Eva Stern.

The vote for plaza funding also included the authorization for the county to enter into a long-term operating lease with The Music Center through 2064 for the 12-acre Music Center campus that includes the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Mark Taper Forum, Ahmanson Theatre and Walt Disney Concert Hall, as well as the plaza.

More information about the plaza renovation can be found at musiccenter.org/plaza.

About The Music Center

The Music Center is Los Angeles' home to the world's greatest artistic programs and events with four iconic theatres and an outdoor plaza. In addition to its four-renowned resident companies – Center Theatre Group, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, LA Opera and LA Phil – The Music Center presents an international dance series, free and low-cost public programming and special events and activities for all ages. From its early days, The Music Center has been a pioneer in arts education and offers a multi-faceted program from K-12. With The Music Center On Location™, the non-profit performing arts organization brings programming to locations outside of its Downtown Los Angeles campus. The Music Center also programs and manages Grand Park, a 12-acre adjacent greenspace, with year-round free programming. For more information, visit musiccenter.org. Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat (@MusicCenterLA).

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