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A revitalized Leidesdorff Street is a key part of a plan to improve downtown San Francisco. (Illustration courtesy of the Downtown Community Benefit District)

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by: [John Ferrannini](#)

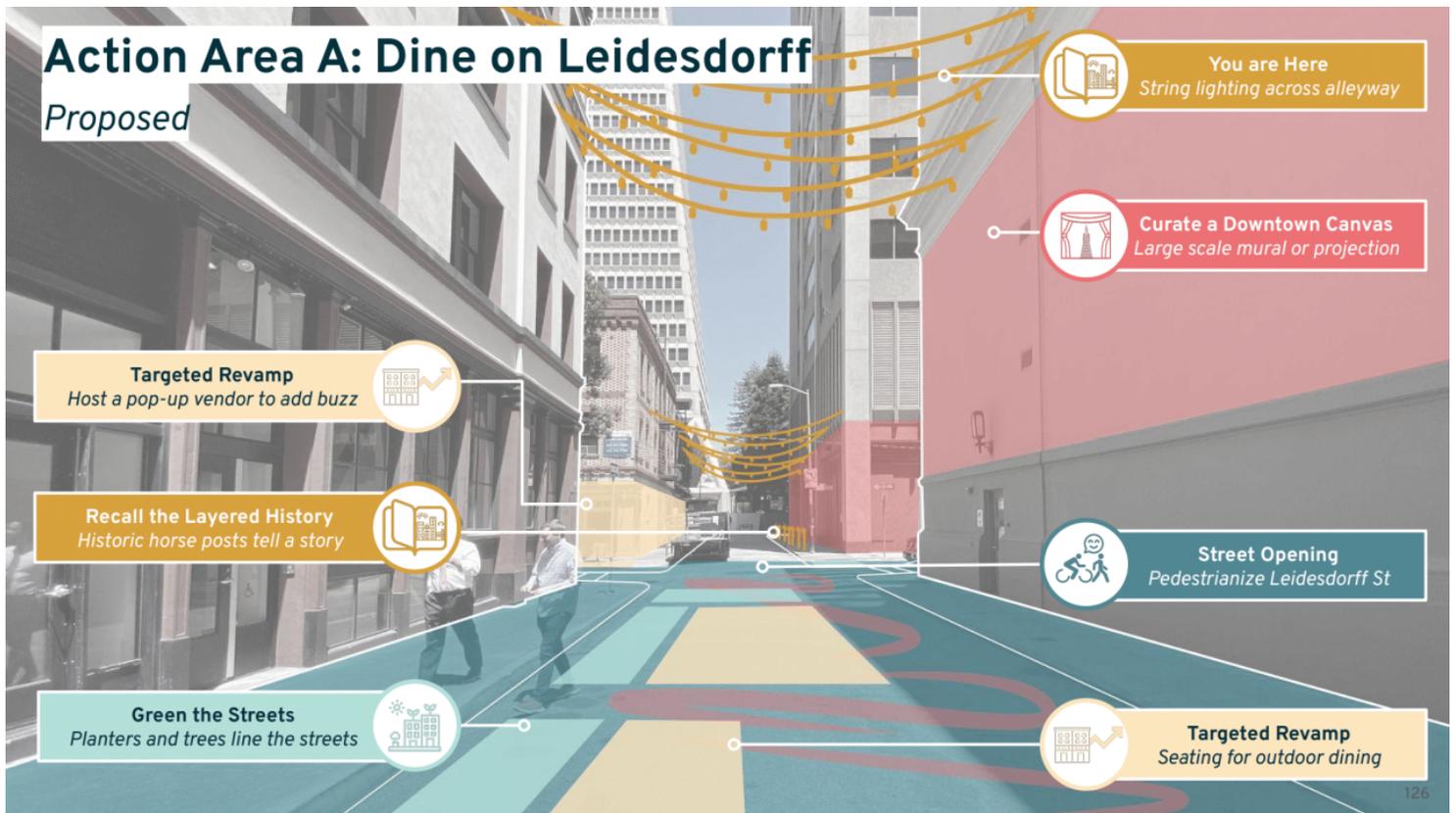
Posted: Jul 21, 2022 / 07:57 AM PDT

Updated: Jul 21, 2022 / 01:53 PM PDT

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SAN FRANCISCO ([KRON](#)) – As downtown San Francisco’s economic recovery lags behind other major U.S. cities, the community benefit district that oversees the Financial District and Jackson Square has teamed up with an urban design studio to reimagine the future of the area in hopes of making it a “pedestrian paradise.”

“At the moment, 60% of people who live and work in downtown San Francisco walk or take transit, yet the typical street allocates only 34% to pedestrians,” the Downtown Community Benefit District (also known as the Downtown SF Partnership) stated in a press release. “The pedestrian experience feels disjointed with few welcoming places to spend time on sidewalks, a lack in mid-block crossings which often leads to people crossing outside of designated crossings, and minimal bike infrastructure despite being the most transit-friendly destination.”



This graphic shows proposed changes to Leidesdorff Street. (Courtesy of the Downtown Community Benefit District)

The [Downtown SF Public Realm Action Plan](#), released Tuesday, was not created in cooperation with city leadership; however, it does contain several broad strategies at re-energizing downtown and gives examples of how they could be put into practice.

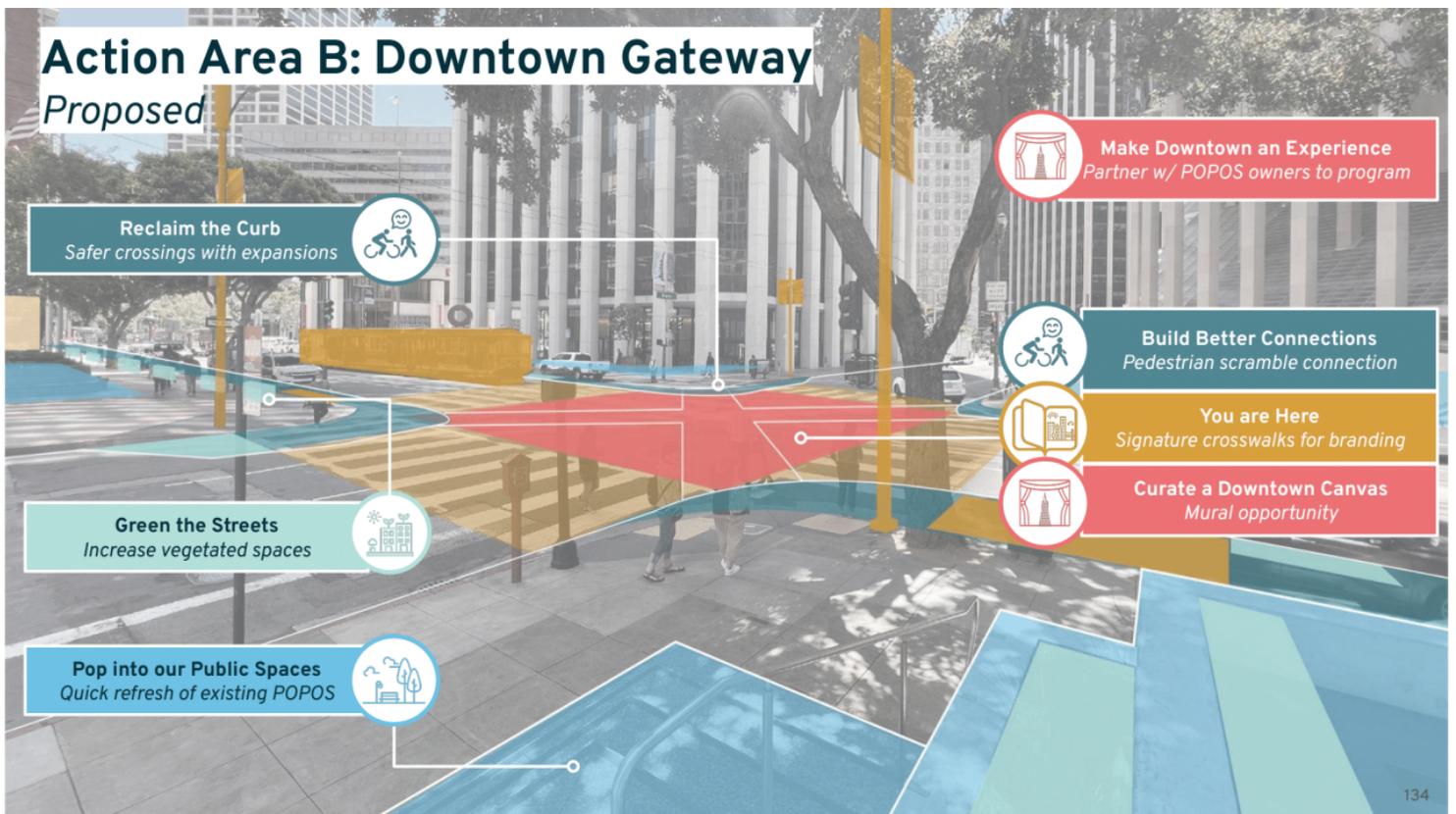
These strategies include implementing select open streets for pedestrians, improving infrastructure for bicyclists, integrating pop-up food and shops, increasing signage, adding more trees and planters to the area, introducing more public art, and developing history-themed tours of one of California’s oldest urban areas.

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The action plan claims to be based on feedback from over 830 online surveys.

More specifically, the plan includes proposals to turn Leidesdorff Street into a vibrant public space with outdoor dining, murals and planters; opening up ground-floor space in buildings such as Steuart Street’s One Market Plaza; and utilizing privately-owned public spaces such as at 555, 101 and 100 California Street, One Montgomery, the Citicorp Center Atrium, and the Transamerica Redwood Park.

Many people are not aware they can use privately-owned public spaces freely, the plan states, and most “lack a variety of seating types and key amenities,” in addition to lacking “compelling programming and events.” Of the 34 privately-owned public spaces in the community benefit district’s footprint, 75% have no signage indicating they are public spaces and 44% are not directly accessible to the public.



This graphic shows proposed changes to the so-called Downtown Gateway at California Street. (Courtesy of the Downtown Community Benefit District)

The plan also recommends creating additional bike facilities at California and Drumm streets, using Sansome Street to create “a continuous pedestrian zone” between 1 Bush Street and CitiCorp Plaza, and placing tables, art, music and temporary events at 1 California Street.

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District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin, who represents downtown on the board of supervisors, stated his support for the proposals.

“As the legislative architect of the permanent Shared Spaces program and safeguards to ensure [privately-owned public spaces] are truly publicly accessible, I’m pleased to see this forward-thinking Public Realm Action Plan,” Peskin stated. “Downtown can be a vibrant neighborhood replete with a vital network of alleyways like Belden Place and welcoming groundfloor businesses when we design with the public in mind.”

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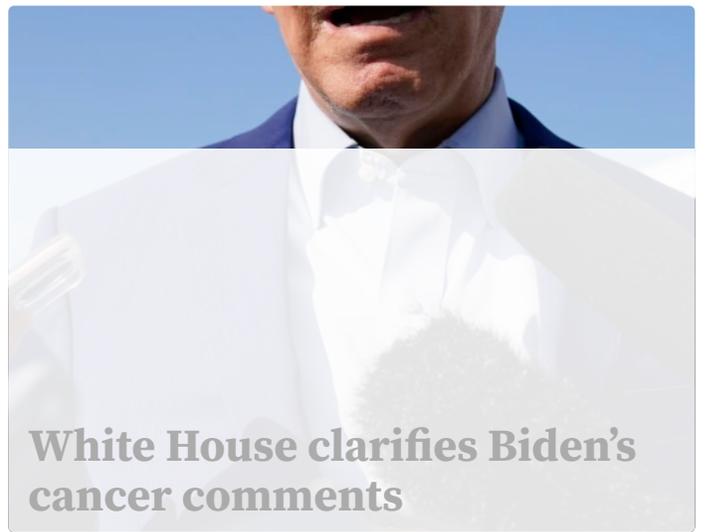
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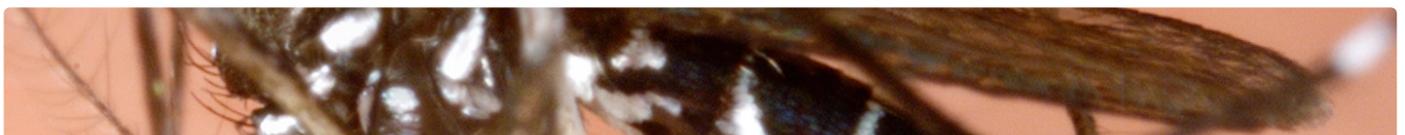
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