

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 22, 2021

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San Francisco's Downtown Community Benefit District Launches New Initiative to Reimagine the Future of Downtown

SITELAB urban studio and the Downtown CBD will develop the Downtown San Francisco Public Realm Action Plan to revitalize the 43 blocks comprised of San Francisco's Financial District and Jackson Square Historic District

San Francisco, CA (October 22, 2021) - In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the [Downtown Community Benefit District](#), a special assessment district providing supplemental cleaning, safety, marketing services and placemaking, has selected [SITELAB urban studio](#), a leading SF-based strategic urban design firm, to reimagine the future of Downtown San Francisco through the development of a public realm action plan.

Since its inception in January 2020, Downtown CBD has been creating a more vibrant, active downtown to directly support the economic recovery of San Francisco. This historic district remains one of the country's top downtowns for emerging trends in technology, finance, and commerce. However the typical 9 to 5 workforce population has been decimated by COVID-19 as more people continue to work from home. "Downtown San Francisco is everyone's neighborhood," said **Robbie Silver, Executive Director of the Downtown San Francisco Community Benefit District**. "We have to pivot quickly by providing a roadmap of possibilities and opportunities to revitalize this center of history and business."

In response to COVID-19 and the change in work patterns, the Downtown CBD launched the partnership with SITELAB urban studio to create and execute tactical urbanism interventions paired with a robust community engagement process to develop a public realm action plan that includes short and long term strategies. **Claude Imbault, Director of Public Realm** for the Downtown CBD will serve as the project lead and convene district stakeholders to gather a cross section of visions and ideas for downtown San Francisco.

The Downtown San Francisco Public Realm Action Plan recommendations will include a new vision for activating vacant ground floor retail spaces, investing in more public art, increasing accessibility and flexible seating, as well as inclusive community programming. Furthermore, the action plan designed by SITELAB urban studio will include new micro-mobility solutions, and could include proposals at a variety of scales, such as full or partial car-free streets, parklets, plazas, and temporary street closures for events. To understand what San Francisco residents and visitors would like to see, the team will go out into the neighborhoods for feedback. The final plan will be unveiled in late spring 2022.

Laura Crescimano, Co-Founder and Principal of SITELAB urban studio, brings over 20 years of expert urban design and entitlements experience. Believing that the built environment can be a catalyst for social change, SITELAB advances ambitious plans that benefit its surrounding communities. Laura produced the urban design frameworks for Brookfield’s Pier 70 and 5M in San Francisco and Google’s North Bayshore and Downtown West projects, among many others across the region.

“We believe creativity comes from taking on challenges and that the most successful, authentic plans are place-based and built from many voices,” **said Laura Crescimano, Co-Founder and Principal of SITELAB urban studio**. “By engaging directly with the community and enlisting a number of creative partners to implement both small and large solutions to elevate the rich historic district of Downtown San Francisco.”

“A unified vision for Downtown San Francisco will solidify its future as a formidable economic hub and development region. We are committed to outlining a plan for a new public realm, one that looks to the future of a more resilient, walkable and equitable downtown,” **said Robbie Silver**, “Downtown CBD welcomes its fellow partners in helping shape a community that will not just survive but thrive in a post-COVID world.”

In the meantime, the Downtown CBD has planned a number of pilots to activate Downtown San Francisco including “Downtown SF Night Lights,” which is the largest projection mapping event on the west coast to bring together art and technology during the holiday season starting December 3, 2021.

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About Downtown Community Benefit District

The mission of the Downtown Community Benefit District is to improve the district’s vitality through best-in-class clean and safe programming, infrastructure enhancements, dynamic partnerships and productive marketing.

About SITELAB urban studio

Founded in 2012, SITELAB urban studio is a San Francisco-based strategic design firm focused on using research & visualization to create great places, through big plans and small interventions. The studio operates at the intersection of analysis and inspiration, with projects that range from strategic planning & programming to urban design and public outreach. Throughout every project, SITELAB transforms information—from spreadsheets to people’s stories (and in most cases, both)—into plans for action. SITELAB urban studio is led by architecture and urban expert Laura Crescimano.