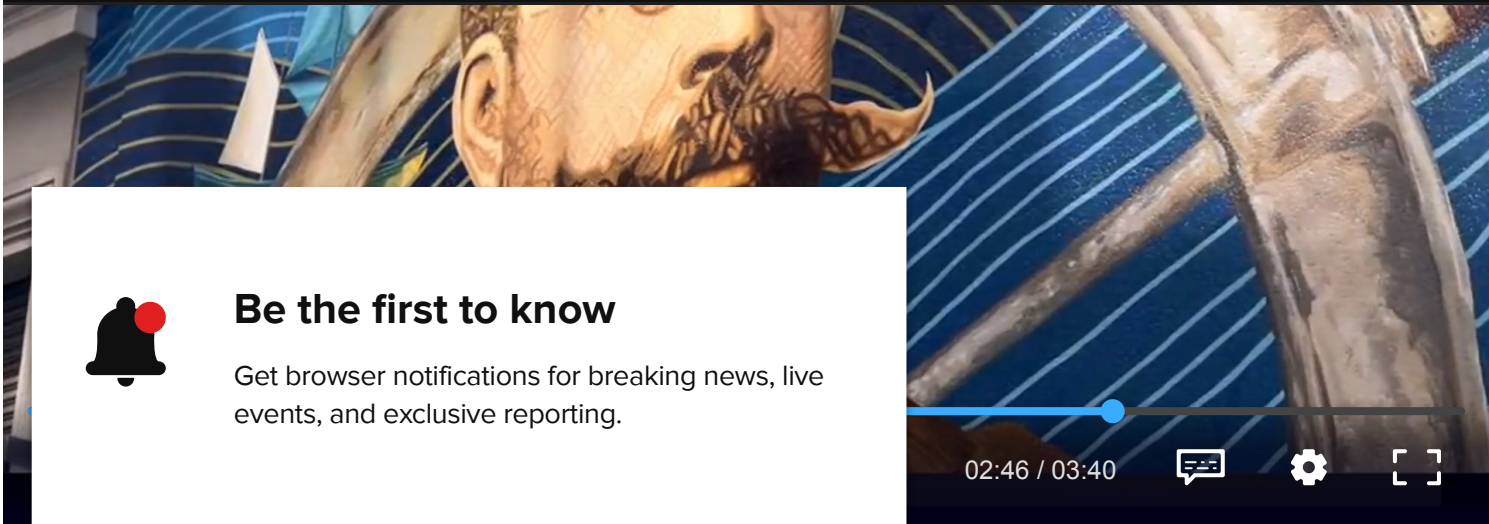


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San Francisco aims to make historic downtown alleyway a destination for good times



BY WILSON WALKER
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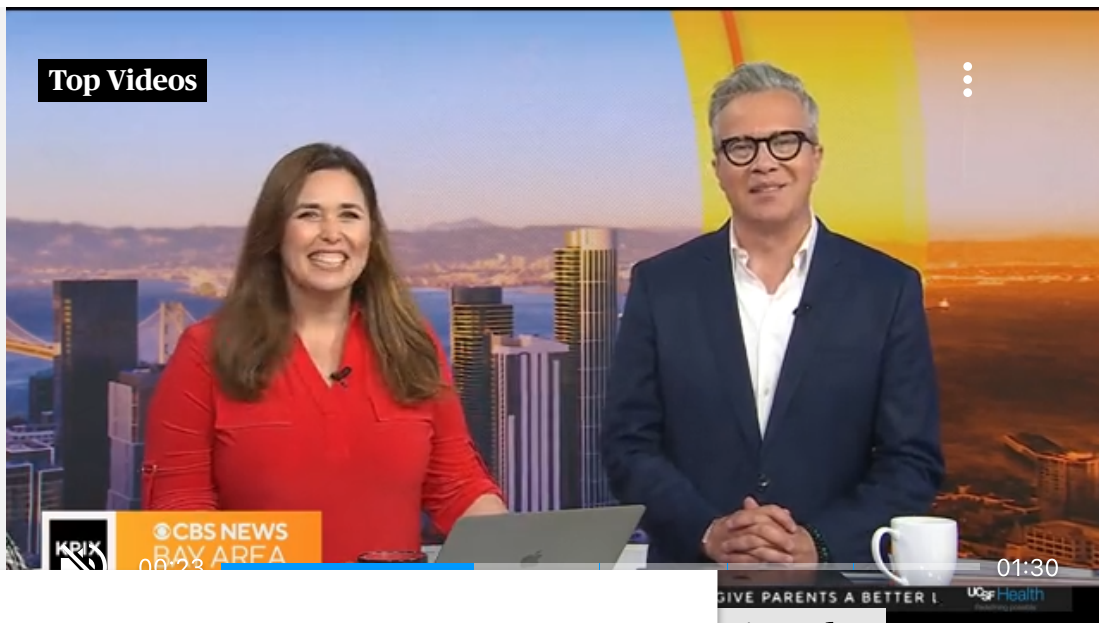
SAN FRANCISCO -- City leaders in San Francisco had a message of optimism Thursday as they outlined one of their strategies to breathe new life into downtown at an overlooked alleyway.

It was a good day for businesses near Leidesdorff Street in Downtown San Francisco.

"They have been making this kind of party happen every Thursday," said Urean Saldana. "Which has been pretty nice for us."

Saldana's eatery Tlaloc Sabor Mexicano was packed, partly with the help of the event the city was throwing outside. While it was nice, it was nothing like what lunch and the evenings used to look like every day at the restaurant.

"This is 30% of what we used to have," Saldana explained. "Everybody's working from home and it's like you know we can't make tacos from home. Where are you gonna get your food?"



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to the ground," said Board of
experienced the 1906 earthquake and

With a theme on downtown's long history of recreation, the city launched an expansion of the Thursday party idea dubbed "Landing at Leidesdorff." The hope is that closing streets to vehicle traffic, hosting live music, and providing an overall improved public space will help draw people back. Another new plaza is about to open at the foot of the renovated Transamerica Pyramid just a block away.

"And we see so many new creative ideas happening, including the ones that we are talking about today," said Mayor London Breed.

"It's awesome that the city is seeing what needs to happen and trying to influence and put money back into the streets where the people are." Saldana said. "And it's fun to see what they're doing, but you know, we'll see what happens."



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This space is named after the alleyway that runs through it. And William Leidesdorff is certainly a name San Franciscans should know a little bit about.

"He was born on the island of St. Croix," explained Leidesdorff descendant Thor Kaslofsky. "He made his way to San Francisco. He's known as the African founding father of California. Leidesdorff's business ventures earned him the accolade of being one of the first Black millionaires in America, and one of the first Black ambassadors for his role as the U.S. consul to Mexico."

Kaslofsky, Leidesdorff's great great great grand-nephew, works in the mayor's office. Leidesdorff has an incredible biography that's referenced in a new mural. And there are

paint on the street marks the



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Wilson Walker joined KPIX 5 in July 2007. After 10 years producing newscasts, Wilson became a Multimedia Journalist (MMJ) in 2012, meaning he shoots, writes and edits all of his own stories.



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