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# Initiative aims to reimagine downtown San Francisco

News 25 Oct 2021 by SmartCitiesWorld news team

SITELAB urban studio and the Downtown Community Benefit District will develop a public realm action plan to revitalise the 43 blocks comprised of the city’s financial district and Jackson Square historic district.

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## The downtown plan includes a new vision for activating vacant ground floor retail spaces

San Francisco's Downtown Community Benefit District (Downtown CBD) has launched an initiative to reimagine the city's downtown district in response to Covid-19 and changing work patterns.

Downtown CBD has selected SITELAB urban studio to develop a public realm action plan to revitalise the 43 blocks comprised of San Francisco's financial district and Jackson Square historic district.

### **Active downtown**

Since its inception in January 2020, Downtown CBD has been seeking to create a more vibrant, active downtown to directly support the economic recovery of San Francisco. According to Downtown CBD, the historic district remains one of the US's top downtowns for emerging trends in technology, finance, and commerce. But the typical nine to five workforce population has been decimated by Covid-19 as more people continue to work from home.

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“Downtown San Francisco is everyone’s neighbourhood,” said Robbie Silver, executive director of Downtown CBD. “We have to pivot quickly by providing a roadmap of possibilities and opportunities to revitalise this centre of history and business.”

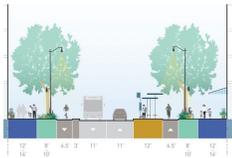
In response to Covid-19 and the change in work patterns, the Downtown CBD launched the partnership with SITELAB urban studio to create and execute “tactical urbanism interventions” paired with a robust community engagement process to develop a public realm action plan that includes short- and long-term 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.

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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.

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or partial car-free streets, parklets, plazas, and temporary street closures for events.

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*“We have to pivot quickly by providing a roadmap of possibilities and opportunities to revitalise this centre of history and business”*

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To understand what San Francisco residents and visitors would like to see, the team will go out into the neighbourhoods for feedback. The final plan will be unveiled in late spring 2022.

“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.”

Crescimano 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 others across the region.

The Downtown CBD has planned several 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 3 December 2021.

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